

The Long New Right and the World It Made

Daniel Schlozman
Johns Hopkins University
daniel.schlozman@jhu.edu

Sam Rosenfeld
Colgate University
srosenfeld1@colgate.edu

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Richard Richards, chairman of the Republican National Committee, sat, alone, at a table near the podium. It was a testy breakfast at the Capitol Hill Club on May 19, 1981. Avoiding Richards were a who's who from the independent groups of the emergent New Right: Terry Dolan of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, Paul Weyrich of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the direct-mail impresario Richard Viguerie, Phyllis Schlafly of Eagle Forum and STOP ERA, Reed Larson of the National Right to Work Committee, Ed McAteer of Religious Roundtable, Tom Ellis of Jesse Helms's Congressional Club, and the billionaire oilman and John Birch Society member Bunker Hunt. Richards, a conservative but tradition-minded political operative from Utah, had complained about the independent groups making mischief where they were not wanted and usurping the traditional roles of the political party. They were, he told the New Rightists, like "loose cannonballs on the deck of a ship." Nonsense, responded John Lofton, editor of the Viguerie-owned *Conservative Digest*. If he attacked those fighting hardest for Ronald Reagan and his tax cuts, it was Richards himself who was the loose cannonball.¹ The episode itself soon blew over; no formal party leader would follow in Richards's footsteps in taking independent groups to task. The moment encapsulated a deep transformation in American party politics in the late twentieth century, as the right's loose cannonballs came eventually to dominate and define the Grand Old Party.

Modern American conservatism hollowed out the American party system. That it also *polarized* the party system captures a central paradox of our times.² This paper, based on

¹ ATTENDEES AT THE DICK RICHARDS BREAKFAST" and memo from Morton Blackwell to Elizabeth Dole, May 20, 1981, NCPAC folder 1, box 14, papers of Morton Blackwell, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (Simi Valley, Calif.); Richard Richards, *Climbing the Political Ladder One Rung at a Time* (Ogden, Utah: Weber State University Press, 2006), 227.

² This paper forms part of a larger project (i.e., a book in progress) seeking to make sense of how American parties got from Martin Van Buren to Donald Trump. See, for early soundings, Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "The Hollow Parties," in *Can America Govern Itself?*, eds. Frances Lee and Nolan McCarty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "Prophets of Party in American Political History," *The Forum* 15 (2018): 685-709; and Daniel Schlozman and Sam Rosenfeld, "Party Blobs and Partisan Visions: Making Sense of Our Hollow Parties," in *State of the Parties*, 8th ed., John C. Green, Daniel Coffey, and David Cohen, eds. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). Some themes here first appeared in rudimentary

extensive archival research, traces how what we term the Long New Right fused substance, style, and strategy in service to a vision of electoral majority. An approach to politics centered on a take-no-prisoners mobilization of resentment and defined by a mercenary approach to institutions emerged in the postwar era, coalesced as a project for power in the 1970s, and took over Republican politics by the new century.

The Long New Right favored unmediated action over partisan stricture.³ The Republican Party would serve as a continual foil and punching bag (“a social club where the rich people go to pick their noses”⁴) even as it provided the New Right its vessel to power. It had little use for the old Van Buren form, or its Whig variant that sustained conservatism down through William Howard and even Robert Taft.⁵ Indeed, it took that impulse further than the liberal reformers of the McGovern-Fraser era, who operated within a traditional paradigm that treated party forms as important and party contestation as a special category of conflict in the political system. The Long New Right precipitated a more drastic break.

A vision less of party than of *partisan majority* motivated the Long New Right.⁶ “Conservatism is the wine,” William Rusher, longtime publisher of *National Review* liked to say, “the GOP is the bottle.”⁷ What defined their prophecy was a long, public search for how to use the political system to wield power. In the pages that follow, we bring together two lines of inquiry typically explored separately: one about conservative and right-wing politics, and the

form in Daniel Schlozman, “Trump and the Republicans,” *n+1*, March 11, 2016, <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/trump-and-the-republicans/>.

³ This theme resonates with Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Policy State: An American Predicament* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

⁴ The line is from the National Conservative Political Action Committee’s Terry Dolan. See Myra MacPherson, “The New Right Brigade,” *Washington Post*, August 10, 1980, F1.

⁵ Michael J. Korzi, “Our Chief Magistrate: A Reconsideration of William Howard Taft’s ‘Whig’ Theory of Presidential Leadership,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (2003): 305-24; Robert A. Taft, “The Republican Party,” *Fortune*, April 1949, 108-18.

⁶ We here expand and depart from the visions we explored in respectively Daniel Schlozman, *When Movements Anchor Parties: Electoral Alignments in American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Sam Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers: Postwar Architects of Our Partisan Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

⁷ Quoted in Jay Nordlinger, “#ExGOP,” *National Review* online, June 7, 2016, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/06/exgop-shock-disaffiliation-leaving-gop/>.

other about the changing role of political parties. We argue that the passing of parties' traditional role as conciliators and brakes on the whims of the masses, and the asymmetric breakdown in American politics, trace back to elites *on the right*, acting distinctively as elites *of the right*.⁸ If there is any truth to E.E. Schattschneider's endlessly quoted assertion that democracy is unthinkable save for parties, a reckoning with contemporary democratic discontents requires serious engagement with the Long New Right.

Taking a leaf from the Long New Right itself,⁹ we tell a generational group story. The battle over McCarthyism in the early 1950s and the conservative critique of Eisenhower in the later 1950s (the First Generation) served as a crucible for its pugilistic style. Still, the political predicament of a small-government, anti-redistributive party seeking voter support in the long shadow of the New Deal bedeviled conservatives for decades.¹⁰ The leaders of the 1970s New Right (the Second Generation), inculcated in Barry Goldwater's campaign of 1964, weaponized the politics of conflict. Their substantive themes, again nascent in the postwar right, included an emphasis on social issues and an affective distance from Big Business, deemed too cozy with the postwar settlement. In the 1980s, young, media-savvy conservatives (the Third Generation) pursued ever more performative cultural combat through a brand of smashmouth politics that fused style and substance.

At the same time, we shine light on particular prophets who exemplify key facets of the Long New Right's institutionally opportunistic mobilization of resentment. Seen together, the points of contact in their prophecy point up the common threads of the right's development across the latter half of the twentieth century. Paul Weyrich, the quintessential figure of the

⁸ Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁹ *The Third Generation: Young Conservatives Look to the Future*, ed. Benjamin C. Hart (Washington: Regnery, 1987).

¹⁰ On the pursuit of majority as the defining frame for intra-GOP politics during the New Deal Order, and conservatives' advantage in those debates by the 1970s, see Robert Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. 216-281.

Second Generation, developed and applied the strategy to push rightwards by mobilizing voter blocs that could supplant the New Deal coalition. Weyrich prophesied a majority in which, whatever the role of the Republican party apparatus, the old fetters of party—its concerns about form over content and its claim only to a partial democratic vision—melted away in the service of wielding power.¹¹ Newt Gingrich, Weyrich’s finest pupil, deployed and extended that strategy, transforming Congress in the process. Gingrich, never a particularly doctrinaire conservative, proved a master at exploiting his liberal opponents’ weaknesses without letting any notions of institutional propriety stand in the way.¹² Finally, Pat Buchanan looms large from the vantage point of 2018. Less a tactician of majority than the most uninhibited practitioner of the politics of resentment, his is a rich vein to mine for a narrative of the right that moves beyond the pieties of movement conservatism and Republican triumphalism.

“The New Right,” as a phrase to describe the 1970s right-wing orbit, originated with Kevin Phillips, and no single definition, let alone a common program, applies to the full constellation of figures associated with it.¹³ Many initially dissociated themselves from the term. In 1978, Mickey Edwards, an Oklahoma representative who chaired the American Conservative Union, resorted to the time-tested hedge that “By every classical definition, I’m a 19th century liberal.”¹⁴ Soon, however, Richard Viguerie embraced the label, jauntily entitling his 1981 book,

¹¹ See on similar themes Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum, “The New Conspiracists,” *Dissent*, Winter 2018, 51-60.

¹² Thus, we largely agree with Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism* (New York: Basic Books, 2012); and Sean M. Theriault, *The Gingrich Senators: the Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), but situate the critical junctures earlier. Barbara Sinclair, *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006) tells a complementary story to ours, rooted in the internal development of Congress and moving outwards.

¹³ Postwar movement conservatives first used the appellation of “New Right” to describe “the bright face of the new conservatism.” See, from the magazine of Young Americans for Freedom, Lee Edwards, “The New Right: Its Face and Future,” *The New Guard*, July 1962, 6-7. A short-lived use of the term applied it to libertarians of Murray Rothbard’s ilk. See Stan Lehr and Louis Rossetto, Jr., “The New Right Credo—Libertarianism,” *The New York Times*, January 10, 1971.

¹⁴ Alan Ehrenhalt, “The Right in Congress: Seeking a Strategy,” *CQ Weekly Report*, August 5, 1978, 2022.

The New Right: We're Ready to Lead.¹⁵ Borrowing from historians the practice of revision via re-periodization, we put it to our own uses in our depiction of what we call a “Long New Right.”¹⁶ More than any biographical or institutional continuity, our actors’ *approach to politics itself* marks the through-line from the 1950s to the age of Trump.

Paul Weyrich, activist and coalitional broker *par excellence*, drew the connection most explicitly between the New Right’s project and broader changes in the party system. A 1979 memo laid out a blueprint for one of the several organizations he both co-founded and named: Moral Majority.¹⁷ Discussions of that term have usually focused on “Moral.” But “Majority” unlocks mysteries of its own. Both the New Deal coalition that Roosevelt birthed and the parties that served as organizers of conflict seemed to have reached the end of the line. “With the old coalition dead and political parties dying, there is a vacuum,” the memo explained.¹⁸ The challenge to fill the vacuum, then, was to “identify the elements of, and form, a new coalition” and to “achieve political power through the coalition, which will be guided by the philosophy of individual freedom and personal responsibility.” Thus did the New Right arrogate to themselves the integrative role of the political party.

¹⁵ Richard Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church, Va.: Viguerie Company, 1981). See also Robert Whitaker, ed., *The New Right Papers* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982). Whitaker later became a virulent white nationalist, best known for his 221-word “Mantra,” with its final line that “Anti-racist is a code word for anti-white.” <http://www.whitakeronline.org/blog/the-white-mantra/>.

¹⁶ The tactic elongates or constricts either calendar periods or conceptual phenomena—a “long nineteenth century,” a “short American Century,” a “long civil rights movement”—as a way of bundling and delineating the key distinguishing themes. See, respectively, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (New York: Random House, 1987), which was the first in his tetralogy on modern history to use the phrase “long nineteenth century”; Andrew Bacevich, “Life at the Dawn of the American Century,” in *The Short American Century: A Postmortem*, ed. Andrew Bacevich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1-15; and Jacquelin Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91 (2005): 1233-1263.

Inverting our approach to periodizing Republican conservatism so as to isolate the specific, pivotal work of the core set of New Right activists, Laura Kalman frames her political history as an account of “the short 1970s” in *Right Star Rising: A New Politics, 1974-1980* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), xx-xxi.

¹⁷ “THE MORAL MAJORITY: (An Answer to the Challenge?)” unprocessed accretion of September 1986, Papers of Paul M. Weyrich, American Heritage Center (Laramie, Wyo.). See also, for a public framing emphasizing family, Paul Weyrich, “Building the Moral Majority,” *Conservative Digest*, August 1979, 18-19. The Weyrich papers were fully catalogued between our visits, so the box numbers do not match.

¹⁸ Regarding party decline, the document references Rhodes Cook, “Bill Brock Concentrates on the Grass Roots, But Conservatives Are Critical,” *CQ Weekly Report*, April 28, 1979, 775-79.

For the Long New Right, the goal to smash liberalism came first. Paradoxically, however, such a Manichaeic view fueled a politics consumed as much (if not more) by symbol as by policy, filled with over-the-top appeals for money, phony controversies, fixations on trivialities, larger-than-life media personalities, and lurid scandals. The commitment to conflict and the ruthless instrumentalism toward institutions have combined to produce a politics devoid of either internal checks on extremism or, in contrast to traditional understandings of conservatism, a sense of limits, whether tactical or substantive.¹⁹ If the wattage of our own coverage here seems higher than in the usual academic treatment of party politics, that is precisely the point.²⁰

It was an approach rooted in conflict. In the prophecy of the Long New Right, social conflict was both inevitable and desirable. The late New Deal regime had denied as much, and

¹⁹ This is the key point where our account departs from that of Matthew Grossmann and David Hopkins, notwithstanding our agreement on the deep asymmetry of American party politics. To us, the right's specific approach to a politics of conflict, rather than an alleged commitment to an ideology, accounts for its distinct partisan manifestation. Grossmann and Hopkins, *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). For an understanding of the right resonant with ours, see Jean Hardisty and Deepak Bhargava, "Wrong About the Right," *The Nation*, November 7, 2005, 22-26. See also Jean Hardisty, *Mobilizing Resentment: Conservative Resurgence from the John Birch Society to the Promise Keepers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999). Hardisty spent decades at Political Research Associates compiling information about the right, and we take advantage of PRA's extensive files at Tufts University. On the related theme of threads connecting conservative reaction across changing historical and ideological contexts, see Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Donald Trump*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

²⁰ We thus attempt to synthesize the emphasis on sleaze and hucksterism in Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014); and the rebuke not to let flash and sizzle distract from political economy in Judith Stein, "The Rise of Reagan's America," *Dissent*, Fall 2014, 123-26.

More broadly, our account resonates with those of scholars who have challenged the historiographical tendency to echo the conservative movement's own in-house chroniclers in sharply distinguishing a respectable, tightly-knit groups of actors and organizations from fringe and disreputable extremists in their midst. Because we see a rejection of limits and the absence of internal checks on extremism as intrinsic to the Long New Right's prophecy, we endorse the push to bring the fever-swamps back in, as it were, to analyses of the American right. See, among others, Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michele Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women of the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); D.J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014); Edward H. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); George Hawley, *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016); and Rick Perlstein, "I Thought I Understood the American Right. Trump Proved Me Wrong," *New York Times*, April 11, 2017. In her survey of the vast literature on the rise of the right, Kim Phillips-Fein similarly calls for renewed attention to the extreme right. See "Conservatism: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 98 (2011): 723-43. Leo Ribuffo presaged several of these themes in an earlier engagement with the historiography of conservatism in "Why is There So Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything About It?" *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 438-449.

survived only through accumulated giveaways. While the issues in play and even the specific group identities mobilized changed repeatedly over the years, the loadstar of New Right politics remained the exploitation of grievance and status resentments—“knowing who hates who,” as Kevin Phillips had put it in 1968.²¹ Political institutions, for their part, served in this view not as means to cross-cut or tamp down underlying conflict, but as instruments of power to extend the domination, or to prevent the domination, of some groups over others.²² Earlier generations of conservatives had flinched before making that critical move.

These prophets decisively broke with the nineteenth-century inheritance of parties as the polity’s supreme organizers of conflict. Rather, they adopted a more broadly instrumental and mercenary approach to institutions writ large. Other prophets of party tended to embed themselves and their efforts in specific realms: Progressives in the executive, postwar programmatic liberals in state parties, McGovern-Fraser reformers in the national Democratic party and its network of outside organizations.²³ The Long New Right, instead, has pursued its politics through a changing array of institutions, from media to the organizational GOP to the courts to Congress to the presidency, depending on the contingent opportunity for power. What was needed, the young activist Lee Edwards wrote in 1962, was “not a Five Year Plan but a Twenty-Five Year Plan” to place conservatives “in the television networks, in the universities, in corporations and companies and, perhaps most important of all, in the Federal Government.”²⁴

²¹ Reported by Gary Wills in “The Politics of Grievance,” *New York Review of Books*, July 19, 1990. Centering the mobilization of resentment in an account of modern conservative politics helps to recast the rise of the Christian right as one manifestation of a broader phenomenon. On the connection between cultural and social resentments and conservative Protestant politics across western democracies, see Steve Bruce, *Conservative Protestant Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21-23.

²² Though we do not root our analysis in his Marxian idiom, we end up in a similar place as Walter Dean Burnham’s analysis of Reaganism in 1982: “right-wing thought and practice accepts the reality of major conflicts among classes over the social product, but provides its own characteristic justifications in terms of a general and national interest.” Walter Dean Burnham, “The Eclipse of the Democratic Party,” *Democracy*, July 1982, 17.

²³ See Schlozman and Rosenfeld, “Prophets of Party in American Political History.”

²⁴ Lee Edwards, “Needed: A Conservative Establishment,” *The New Guard*, June 1962, 2, 7.

Despite being profligate group-starters, moreover, these activists were not, to use Hugh Heclo's term, "institutionally minded" in pursuit of their project.²⁵ Most of the organizations they built and through which they moved—Young Americans for Freedom, the American Conservative Union, the Republican Study Committee, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, *Human Events*, *Conservative Digest*, and, looming behind them, the John Birch Society—are either defunct or obsolescent. (The Heritage Foundation and, in the states, the American Legislative Exchange Council, are notable exceptions.) In many instances, they failed to make a critical transition away from a charismatic founder.²⁶ Yet the Long New Right continues its long march through the institutions of American politics.

The Long New Right's prophecy, and its long-term impact in hollowing out the Republican Party, help to make sense of a different problematic: the dance of plutocracy and populism in modern conservative politics. The New Right faced squarely the electoral dilemma of antigovernment conservatism, and even some in its own ranks assumed that a more fundamental break with small-government and pro-business tenets would be necessary. Writing in 1982, Kevin Phillips noted that the New Right's "fundamental political loyalties are to antiestablishment cultural and social values, not to the free market," pointed to the thinness of popular support for Reaganomics, and anticipated a coming "post-conservative America."²⁷ Countless soothsayers since have also foreseen either a principled conservatism that would abjure racism entirely and seek opportunity through the market for all, or else a genuine economic nationalism that would take the fight to the Rockefellers and the globalists on behalf of the forgotten man. Neither vision ever came to pass. More than the dogs that didn't bark, they are the dogs that never barked.

²⁵ Hugh Heclo, *On Thinking Institutionally* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Leslie R. Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant, *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 169-72.

²⁷ Kevin Phillips, "Post-Conservative America," *New York Review of Books*, May 13, 1982.

The reasons go beyond any contingent event. The New Right may not have preferred the plutocrats' economic agenda, but they repeatedly accepted it in a logroll to gain access to power. The plutocrats may have regarded the New Right as uncouth and their social agenda as divisive, but they, too, preferred it to any available alternative. Though various figures have jumped ship, neither side ever seriously moved for exit. The secret to the deal is precisely how paper-thin has been both the New Right's opposition to a narrow agenda for the super-rich and the plutocrats' opposition to the substance and style of the New Right, including its views on race and gender. Seen in this decades-long light, the choices of the Republican Party during the course of 2016 no longer appear so mysterious. Neither does the trajectory of plutocratic policy under the administration of the right-populist president, Donald Trump.²⁸

In positing continuity in a strand of right-wing engagement with party politics across a half century—a strand that came eventually to dominate Republicanism itself—we seek neither to flatten partisan and ideological developments nor to render right-of-center politics a monolith.²⁹ Disagreement both substantive and strategic abounded among self-identified conservatives throughout these years. Moderates drawing on potent traditions of their own waged factional battles with the right that provided much of the internal drama and dynamism of Republican Party politics.³⁰ Such diversity only underscores the significance of the Long New Right's triumph. The through-line we emphasize is found neither in a specific doctrine nor some intrinsic pathology, but rather in a particular political approach that undermined the very means—both institutional and intellectual—by which boundaries could be enforced and a

²⁸ Paul Pierson, "American hybrid: Donald Trump and the strange merger of populism and plutocracy," *British Journal of Sociology* 68 (2017): S105-S119.

²⁹ Geoffrey Kabaservice offers a broadside critique of the historiography on conservatism for doing just that in "Liberals Don't Know Much About Conservative History," *Politico*, September 9, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/09/09/liberals-dont-know-much-about-conservative-history-219742>.

³⁰ Nicol Rae, *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans from 1952 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

collective direction could be set. Less the resemblance than the *interpenetration* of extremist and mainstream elements has defined conservative politics across this era. The dangerous potency of that dynamic manifests itself in a hollowed-out Republican Party.

The Crucible of McCarthyism and the First Generation

If style more than organization or doctrine defines the Long New Right, the Second Red Scare and the debate over Senator Joe McCarthy stand as crucial, formative conflicts. Right-wing populism and revolts against an overweening state have, of course, a longer history still. But it was in the early Cold War years that factional Republican incentives, a nascent conservative movement ideology, and a grassroots revanchism nurtured in the suburban landscapes of the postwar boom came together in support of over-the-top grievance politics.³¹ The fervid demonization, the headlong transgression of institutional and behavioral norms, the suffusion of political debate with potent social resentment—all these hallmarks of the Wisconsin demagogue’s style would become core elements of a broader, more durable political tendency. Postwar intellectuals like Daniel Bell and Richard Hofstadter later came in for criticism for pathologizing the anticommunist right as a manifestation of status anxiety, and their emphases on insecurities and projection may have missed the mark.³² But the notes of group resentment were

³¹ On the prior decades, see George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934–1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962); Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982); Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Religious Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983); John E. Moser, *Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Eliot A. Rosen, *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014); Kathryn S. Olmstead, *Right Out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism* (New York: The New Press, 2015); and Lawrence B. Glickman, “Free Enterprise vs. Socialism: A Brief History,” *Dissent*, March 25, 2016, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/free-enterprise-vs-socialism-brief-history-bernie-sanders-chamber-commerce. On the still-deeper roots of the postwar right, see the sources and discussion in Phillips-Fein, “Conservatism,” 737-38.

³² The initial diagnosis is found in *The New American Right*, ed. Daniel Bell (New York: Criterion Books, 1955); which was updated at a moment of peak public interest in the John Birch Society and other hard right groups in *The Radical Right*, ed. Daniel Bell (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Co., 1963). See also Richard Dudman, *Men of the Far Right* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1962); and Arnold Forster and Benjamin Epstein, *Danger on the Right* (New

hardly subtle. In McCarthy's infamous, career-making Wheeling, West Virginia speech in 1950, he revealed the people "who have been selling us out" to be

"those who have had all the benefits the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer—the finest homes, the finest college educations, and the finest jobs in the government that we can give. This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouth are the ones who have been worst."³³

The senator, working with his tenacious chief counsel Roy Cohn, would pursue targets in the ensuing years meant to stir similar cultural resentments, from academic China scholars like Owen Lattimore³⁴ to the shadowy ranks of "communists and queers" in government who, McCarthy alleged, "have the people in a hypnotic trance."³⁵

McCarthyism, of course, extended far beyond the exploits of the man himself. The midterm elections that brought McCarthy to the Senate in 1946 were broadly notable for the slashing attacks made by Republicans against "socialistic" New Deal policies they were already associating with the reds. That trope would only grow more central to Republican politics as the Cold War hardened, a revolution swept China, and war broke out in Korea.³⁶ Other institutional vehicles for the -ism that bore the Senator's name, like the House Un-American Activities Committee and the multiple "little HUACs" active at the state level across the country, expanded the ranks of targets to incorporate Hollywood and other culture producers, academics and educators, and, always, left-liberal activists of all stripes.

York: Random House, 1964). Alan Brinkley and Lisa McGirr offer representative articulations of the historiographical critique of the status anxiety thesis in, respectively, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 411-412; and *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 6-11. See also Michael Paul Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967).

³³ Joseph McCarthy speech, Wheeling, W. Va., February 9, 1950, accessed at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6456>. See also Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Sources of the 'Radical Right,'" in *The New American Right*, 210-214.

³⁴ Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 250-258.

³⁵ Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: A Biography* (New York: Stein & Day, 1982), 278. And see, more broadly, David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Prosecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

³⁶ Mason, *Republican Party and American Politics*, 115-116, 128-134.

Anticommunist politics served as the coin of the realm for an array of fights, North and South, over status and power—over who hates who. The flashpoint of McCarthy’s personal crusade gave way in the 1950s and 1960s, amid the stirrings of the black freedom struggle, to a broader organizational flourishing. Within that milieu, the vast overlap between anticommunist networks and conservative Christian organizations, on the one hand, and anti-civil rights activism, on the other, pointed to important dimensions of social conflict beyond McCarthy’s swipes at the men in striped pants. The delayed efflorescence of state-level McCarthyite efforts in the American South is particularly telling. Relatively quiescent during the Red Scare’s late 1940s and early 1950s heyday, southern anticommunism roared to life in the wake of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Georgia Attorney General Eugene Cook worked with HUAC staffers to reveal *The Ugly Truth About the NAACP* in a 1955 report—that it was “part and parcel of the Communist conspiracy to overthrow democratic governments of this nation and its sovereign states.” Southern red-hunting committees coordinated across state lines and with anticommunist groups like Billy James Hargis’s Christian Crusade to battle civil rights organizations for years to come.³⁷ Tropes about civil rights as a Communist plot would become familiar ones for the John Birch Society.³⁸

Arguably just as formative for the Long New Right as the substance of McCarthyism was the *debate* over it. Seven moderate GOP senators led by Maine’s Margaret Chase Smith called on their co-partisans to shun the “hate and character assassination.”³⁹ Party leaders like Robert Taft and Dwight Eisenhower made opportunistic use of McCarthy’s exploits while refraining

³⁷ M.J. Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935-1965* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 251-252, 260-262.

³⁸ Manning Johnson, *Color, Communism, and Common Sense* (Belmont, Mass.: American Opinion Reprints, 1963 [1958]); John Rousselot, “Civil Rights: Communist Betrayal of a Good Cause,” *American Opinion*, February 1964, 1-11; Alan Stang, *It’s Very Simple: The True Story of Civil Rights* (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1965).

³⁹ Alfred Friendly, “7 Senate Republicans Assail ‘Smearing,’ Exploiting ‘Fear,’” *Washington Post*, June 2, 1950.

from public praise and, eventually, maneuvering to sideline him.⁴⁰ Such treatment galvanized a new cohort of conservative intellectuals and activists to defend McCarthy's cause and, if not on all points, his methods.

William F. Buckley, Jr., still in his twenties, co-authored with L. Brent Bozell a book-length engagement with *McCarthy and His Critics* that epitomized this style of argumentation, offering a more full-throated *anti-anti-McCarthy* case than a pro-McCarthy one. Distinguishing McCarthy the flawed man from *McCarthyism* the worthy “program of action against those in our land who help the enemy,” they condemned critics for conflating the two while calling on conservatives to “close ranks” rather than allow quibbles over means to undermine the anticommunist cause.⁴¹ The argument set Buckley on the path of combative engagement with the GOP's moderate wing that he would soon showcase in the pages of *National Review* and the manifesto *Up From Liberalism*. More generally, “anti-anti” arguments would become a Long New Right staple—providing, as they did, one means by which to evade, or reject, the task of policing boundaries against extremism.⁴²

It was precisely the porousness of the boundary between extreme and “mainstream” elements of the right that defined the vibrant organizational terrain of the later 1950s and 1960s.⁴³ The John Birch Society (JBS) was founded and, until his death in 1985, dominated by

⁴⁰ Mason, *Republican Party and American Politics*, 132, 154.

⁴¹ L. Brent Bozell, Jr., and William F. Buckley, Jr., *McCarthy and His Enemies: The Record and Its Meaning* (New York: Regnery, 1954), 329, 335. See also George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 84-130.

⁴² See, for instance, Sam Francis's argument that “Joe McCarthy tore a mask from the face of liberalism.” Samuel T. Francis, *Beautiful Losers: Essays on the Failure of American Conservatism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 151. The John Birch Society offered more straightforward appreciation. See, e.g., James J. Drummey, “McCarthy: The Truth, the Smear, and the Lesson,” *American Opinion*, May 1964, 1-10.

⁴³ The alarm—and no small amount of paranoid overreach—that early 1960s conservative activism kindled among liberal politicians and analysts also instigated a long-running feat of sustained documentation that serves as an archival bedrock to this essay. Group Research, Inc. was a tiny liberal operation that, by subscribing to publications and monitoring mailings, amassed a vast storehouse of knowledge on the intricacies of the American right, which it disseminated in monthly reports to subscribers. Its sole editor, journalist Wesley McCune, worked as an aide in Truman's agriculture department and ran public relations for the National Farmers' Union before starting Group Research in 1962. Assisted only by Gladys Segal, he ran it on a shoestring for 34 years until he finally retired at 80 and shuttered the publication. George McGovern recalled in 1987 that the reports have “been my principal source of

Robert Welch, a former candy manufacturer and National Association of Manufacturers board member. JBS managed to grow a mass membership in cell-like federated chapters, approaching 100,000 in the mid-1960s, by reasonable estimates,⁴⁴ The Society modeled its rigidly hierarchical and secretive internal structure, with every member carefully monitored via an elaborate system of index cards, off of communist organizing.⁴⁵ The eccentric, even megalomaniac, Welch ensured that the Society bore the brunt of popular alarm and ridicule over the right's gonzo conspiracism.⁴⁶ Dwight Eisenhower was a "dedicated, conscious agent" of international communism, while Welch eventually traced The Conspiracy back to the eighteenth century Bavarian Illuminati.⁴⁷

Yet the paranoid style⁴⁸ ranged well beyond Robert Welch. A national right-wing media infrastructure, both in publishing and broadcasting, linked together locally rooted anticommunist groups as they took in the likes of legal scholar and JBS board member Clarence Manion and ex-FBI agent Dan Smoot.⁴⁹ Religious groups like Hargis's Christian Crusade, Fred Schwarz's Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, and Carl McIntire's American Council of Christian Churches connected fundamentalist conservatism to Cold War militancy and free-market economics.⁵⁰ Hargis, a Bircher, promoted annual protests against UNICEF's Halloween donation

information on the right wing and extremist activities during my entire public career," to which William Rusher, also a subscriber, replied, "That explains a great deal." See "Oral History Interview with Wesley McCune," <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/mccunew.htm>; Lloyd Grove, "The Liberal Watch at 25," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1987.

⁴⁴ Mulloy, *World of the John Birch Society*, 2, 75, 213fn9.

⁴⁵ "Leaders' Manual," Box 15, Folder 33, John Birch Society Papers, John Hay Library, Brown University (Providence, R.I.).

⁴⁶ According to the fulsome praise in a JBS recruitment pamphlet, Welch worked on Fermat's Last Theorem, played chess masters to a draw, "read all of Goethe in German, and, even now, can quote many of La Fontaine's *Fables* in French." "Mr. Robert Welch," Box 27, Folder 20, JBS Papers.

⁴⁷ Robert Welch, *The Politician* (Belmont, Mass.: privately printed), 1963); *Seventeen Eighty Nine: An Unfinished Manuscript Which Explores the Early History of the Communist Conspiracy* (Belmont, Mass.: American Opinion, 1968).

⁴⁸ Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *Harper's*, November 1964.

⁴⁹ Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right*.

⁵⁰ Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011), esp. 141-195.

drives—funds from which were siphoned, he alleged in 1962, “for the U.N. military operation against our friend in the Congo, Moïse Tshombe, President of Katanga.”⁵¹ The right-wing celebrity martyr Edwin Walker, persecuted for his Birchism while a Major General in the Army and then briefly committed to a mental asylum for his role in instigating an anti-integration riot at Ole Miss, in a summer 1963 speech in Little Rock offered a theory about Fidel Castro’s blackmailing of John F. Kennedy. “I’m not saying it’s true,” Walker added, in typical form, “but I don’t mind spreading the story.”⁵²

The shadow of the Red Scare loomed large. Single issue-mongering—the politics of the cause célèbre that would come to define New Right campaigns of the 1970s—germinated in ad hoc efforts in the 1950s and 1960s challenging Cold War consensus politics in foreign policy. Ex-Communists who turned hard right, such as James Burnham, Whittaker Chambers, and Marvin Liebman, brought with them their indefatigable zeal, suspicion of factional opponents, and belief in politics as a defining struggle. Liebman, who learned to build up single-issue groups as a member of the Young Communist League and would go on to mentor Richard Viguerie, was at the center of the National Committee Against the Moscow Treaty, the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of China to the United Nations, and the Congo- and Rhodesia-focused American-African Affairs Association.⁵³ Still lacking a critical mass of experienced activists, postwar conservative organizations in the 1950s and 1960s often followed a distinct personnel pattern: An ex military officer would serve as the face of the group, and a former staffer from the House Un-American Activities Committee or the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee would run it.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Group Research Report*, October 19, 1962, 3.

⁵² *Group Research Report*, June 12, 1963, 52.

⁵³ *Group Research Report*, August 26, 1963, 62; *Group Research Report*, February 26, 1966, 15; and *Group Research Report*, December 19, 1966, 89. See also Marvin Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative: An Autobiography* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992).

⁵⁴ Daniel Bell took note of this pattern in “The Dispossessed,” *The Radical Right*, 5-6.

The “Americanism” espoused by the hard right groups hardly contrasted starkly with the militantly anticommunist conservatism and cheerfully combative intra-Republican critique emerging from the self-conscious movement ideologists of *National Review*.⁵⁵ And activists and organizations regularly intermingled in person. William F. Buckley appeared at a 1959 panel in Chicago organized by the editors of the ultraright *Independent American* and featuring Welch and other Birchers.⁵⁶ Roger Milliken, textile magnate, “Daddy Warbucks”⁵⁷ to Republican politicians, and *National Review*’s major financial backer, was also a Bircher.⁵⁸ Annual events like Hargis’s We, the People! meetings, the Birchite New England Rally for God, Family and Country, and *Human Events*’ annual Political Action Conference in Washington drew participants that regularly ran the gamut of mainstream and “ultra” types.

Buckley and his allies eventually pursued efforts (over the objections of *National Review*’s publisher William Rusher)⁵⁹ to draw lines of respectability between their brand of conservatism and JBS. A series of *National Review* pieces in 1962 singled out Welch for personal condemnation while sparing the JBS. A more full-throated attack on the Society followed in 1965.⁶⁰ However mythologized by movement conservatives since, Buckley’s halting

⁵⁵ Samuel Brenner, “Fellow Travelers: Overlap Between ‘Mainstream’ and ‘Extremist’ Conservatives in the Early 1960s,” in *The Right Side of the Sixties: Reexamining Conservatism’s Decade of Transformation*, eds. Laura Jane Gifford and Daniel K. Williams (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 83-100; Mulloy, *World of the John Birch Society*, 172-182.

⁵⁶ Brenner, “Fellow Travelers,” 92.

⁵⁷ Joseph Crespino, “Goldwater in Dixie: Race, Region, and the Rise of the Right,” in *Barry Goldwater and the Remaking of the American Political Landscape*, ed. Elizabeth Tandy Shermer (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 147.

⁵⁸ John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 194.

⁵⁹ Judis, *William F. Buckley*, 247.

⁶⁰ William F. Buckley Jr., “The Uproar,” *National Review*, April 22, 1961, 241-243; William F. Buckley Jr., “The Question of Robert Welch,” *National Review*, February 13, 1962, 83– 88; The Editors, “The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement: The Background,” *National Review*, October 19, 1965, 914-915; Frank S. Meyer, “The Birch Malady,” *National Review*, October 19, 1965, 919-924; James Burnham, “The Third World War: Get US Out!,” *National Review*, October 19, 1965, 925-926.

project of excommunication was more notable for its ineffectuality and tardiness than its impact in drawing a cordon sanitaire.⁶¹

The *National Review* crowd was itself central to a fateful organizational seeding in 1960 that was instrumental in developing the Long New Right style—the establishment of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) at Buckley’s Connecticut estate. Built around a core of young veterans of 1960’s Draft Goldwater effort, YAF had injected itself into the very center of Republican Party politics by the time of Goldwater’s capture of the GOP nomination four years later.⁶² More than any other postwar outfit, YAF provided the formative stomping grounds for an entire generation of activists. As chairman James Lacy observed at the 1980 GOP convention, “the Republican platform reads like a YAF tract from around 1963.”⁶³

YAF nourished the puckish and aggressive impulses of the postwar right. “Perhaps,” YAF archly advised its college chapters, “you should stop having intellectual discussions of the merits of objectivism as opposed to fusionism”⁶⁴ or of “Libertarian Proposals for Free-Enterprise Lighthouses,” and opt instead for programming that “create[s] controversy and the element of conflict and drama ... the bigger the controversy, the bigger the crowd.”⁶⁵ YAF’s songbook featured lyrics such as “Deck the halls with Commie corpses,” “Adlai the bald-headed Com-Symp,” and, with a 1971 headnote explaining its inclusion “for historical interest,” “We’ll follow

⁶¹ For recent assessments, see Brenner, “Fellow Travelers”; Alvin Felzenberg, “The Inside Story of William F. Buckley’s Crusade Against the John Birch Society,” *National Review*, June 20, 2017, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/06/william-f-buckley-john-birch-society-history-conflict-robert-welch/>; and, from a prominent paleoconservative, Paul Gottfried, “The Logic of Conservative Purges,” *Radix*, September 9, 2015, <https://radixjournal.com/2015/09/2015-9-9-the-logic-of-the-conservative-purges/>.

⁶² See John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (Rutgers University Press, 1997); 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 Wayne Thorburn, *A Generation Awakes: Young Americans for Freedom and the Creation of the Conservative Movement* (Ottawa, Ill.: Jameson Books, 2010).

⁶³ *Group Research Report*, July/August 1980, 26.

⁶⁴ Jerry Norton memo to College Chairmen, September 19, 1968, Box 25, Folder 5, Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Papers, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford, Ca.

⁶⁵ Jerry Norton memo to College Chairmen, November 20, 1968, Box 25, Folder 5, YAF Papers.

Bob Welch through thick and thin,/ And thank God we have such a captain!!!”⁶⁶ Prophets of the Long New Right saw in such exploits a welcome marriage of fervor with effectiveness. The “new maturity of the young Right,” Pat Buchanan would write in 1966, was evident in the way that YAF eschewed arid “philosophical purity” to pursue “the molding of a political coalition to gain the support of the majority and the levers of democratic power.”⁶⁷

Republican Insurgents

No figure did more to put the right at the forefront of popular discussion and anxiety than Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. He rose to national conservative prominence in the 1950s thanks to hearty antagonism of organized labor⁶⁸ and staunch advocacy of partisanship grounded in principle. “The trouble is not that we are Republican,” he told a GOP audience reeling from the 1958 midterm losses. “The trouble may be that we are not Republican enough.”⁶⁹ Briefly, in a draft presidential effort in 1960 and again, explosively, in 1964, the burgeoning extraparty networks of the American right used Goldwater as a vessel for power. During the campaign that followed his shocking nomination, and through the aftermath of his overwhelming electoral defeat, Goldwater himself remained a rather starchy and unyielding proponent of down-the-line conservative doctrine.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, he bequeathed to the Long New Right not only legions of activists who would power conservatism for decades but a principled rejection of policing

⁶⁶ “Glory Be, There Goes Another!: Songs of the Militant Extreme,” Weyrich papers, unprocessed accretion of April 1988. The song can also be found in Box 27, Folder 20, JBS Papers.

⁶⁷ Patrick Buchanan, “What Happened to the Student Right?,” *Washington World*, January 1966, p. 24, Box 5, Folder, 10, YAF Papers.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, “Origins of the Conservative Ascendancy: Barry Goldwater’s Early Senate Career and the De-Legitimization of Organized Labor,” *Journal of American History* 95 (2008): 678-709.

⁶⁹ Session transcript of the Republican Committee for Program and Progress, March 13, 1959, Series 1A, Reel 17, *Papers of the Republican Party*, Paul L. Kesaris, ed., microfilm (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1987). See more generally Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (Shepherdsville, Ky.: Victor, 1960).

⁷⁰ Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

extremism (no virtue in that, he proclaimed) and early forays into more populist political registers that would pave the way for a new generation of coalition-builders.

As Goldwater gathered steam in 1963 and early 1964, debates over boundary-policing intensified. The general pattern, of failure to build cordons sanitaires, presaged a half century of Republican politics to come. Goldwater, no fanatic himself, had never blanched at engaging with the networks of the postwar hard right; he spoke at a *We, The People!* event in 1959.⁷¹ Echoing those in the orbit of *National Review*-style respectable conservatism, he went as far as to criticize Robert Welch personally—but no further. His campaign was powered by runaway best-selling tracts like Phyllis Schlafly's *A Choice, Not an Echo*, steeped in the baroquely paranoid style of JBS and its ilk.⁷² A who's who of hard right organizations and leaders—Billy James Hargis, Fred Schwarz, Carl McIntire, General A.C. Wedemeyer, Clarence Manion, the Minutemen, the virulent anti-Semite Gerald L.K. Smith—enthusiastically supported his candidacy, and the campaign did little to disavow any of them.⁷³ Welch deemed Goldwater “a very patriotic American and a very able politician.”⁷⁴ When Ku Klux Klan chapters in Georgia and Alabama announced their endorsement, Goldwater's ex-Senate aide turned RNC chair Dean Burch told reporters that as long as the KKK is “not in the business of overthrowing the government, we're not in the business of discouraging votes.”⁷⁵ Even the party establishment that resisted

⁷¹ *Group Research Report*, October 15, 1964, 73.

⁷² Schlafly long denied membership in the John Birch Society. The JBS however, reprinted a letter to *National Review*, in which Schlafly spoke up for loyalty oaths against Communists, with the note that “We think this a superb presentation of the case (by a very loyal member of the John Birch Society).” Phyllis and Fred Schlafly appeared prominently on the program for the 1973 New England Rally for God, Family, and Country. See *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1960* (Belmont, Mass.: John Birch Society, 1960), 13; “11th New England Rally for God, Family, and Country,” Box 26, Folder 12, JBS Papers; *Group Research Report*, February 28, 1977, 7.

⁷³ *Group Research Report*, June 12, 1964, 41-42; *Group Research Report*, August 15, 1964, 58-59. See also Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 427-428.

⁷⁴ Robert Welch, “About Senator Barry Goldwater,” July 10, 1963; Box 24, Folder 3, JBS Papers. In October 1963, the JBS explained that it had “both segregated and integrated chapters, in accordance with the wishes of our members in their respective communities.” Box 24, Folder 30, JBS Papers.

⁷⁵ Associated Press, “G.O.P. Welcomes Votes of Ku Klux Klan Members,” *Bakersfield Californian*, August 4, 1964. Goldwater did, in fact, walk that one back days later, denouncing the KKK and its support.

Goldwater's nomination blanched in the last minute at condemning extremists by name. William Scranton's proposed platform plank at the convention denouncing extremism on the left and the right and naming JBS explicitly ran into opposition not only from Goldwaterites, but also Dwight Eisenhower and George Romney.⁷⁶

The KKK incident spoke to another, incipient element in Goldwater's campaign, beyond its dance with extremism, that reflected a core theme of the Long New Right: mobilizing cultural and social conflict as a means to majority. Though Goldwater's constitutionalist objection to the 1964 Civil Rights Act was, by all accounts, sincerely arrived at, the nearly full absorption of anti-civil rights politics by the conservative movement powering his candidacy, and the deep southern inroads that his campaign forged, were hardly lost on anyone. This included the senator himself, who had told an Atlanta audience in 1961 that Republicans were "not going to get the Negro vote as a bloc, so we ought to go hunting where the ducks are."⁷⁷ Three years later, racial appeals came couched in a broadening array of social and moral critiques touted by the campaign. The announcer in one television spot intoned, "Graft! Swindle! Juvenile delinquency! Crime! Riots!," before Goldwater appeared to call for a new "standard of responsibility."⁷⁸ The 1964 party platform called for a constitutional amendment to protect school prayer as well as legislation to "curb the flow through the mails of obscene materials."⁷⁹ Late in the election, motivated by Goldwater's conviction that "the morality issue" was "the most effective we have come up with," the campaign came close to making a far more potent injection of culture-war politics in the form of the television program "Choice," which wallowed in lurid footage of wild

⁷⁶ Tom Wicker, "Goldwater Backers Vote Down Scranton's Anti-Bircher Plank and His Rights and A-Bomb Plans," *New York Times*, July 16, 1964.

⁷⁷ Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 26.

⁷⁸ Andrew E. Busch, "The Goldwater Myth," *Claremont Review of Books* 6.1 (Winter 2005/6), accessed at: <https://www.claremont.org/crb/article/the-goldwater-myth/>.

⁷⁹ Republican Party Platform of 1964, July 13, 1964, accessed online at Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25840>.

beatnik parties, topless bars, and violent civil rights demonstrations.⁸⁰ (Goldwater pulled the program at the last minute.) A minor note in Goldwater's doctrinaire small-government hymnal in 1964, such cultural appeals would grow to a roar over the next decade.

As Goldwater activists moved to sustain their energy in the wake of the November debacle, they forced a reckoning over the relationship between ideological politics and party prerogatives. The *National Review* circle, along with YAF co-founder Robert Bauman and hard-right congressmen John Ashbrook and Donald Bruce, established the American Conservative Union (ACU) in explicit emulation of Americans for Democratic Action.⁸¹ ACU declared its intention to "work actively within the Republican Party" as a factional brawler.⁸² Ohio's Ray Bliss, entering the RNC chairmanship following Dean Burch's bitterly contested ouster in 1965, cast a cold eye. "Whenever you have splinter groups, they do not assist in uniting us," he told reporters. "We should present a united front to the opposition. If you believe in a free society, what better way to maintain it than through a strong, two-party system?"⁸³ Columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak concurred in their depiction of a different, shorter-lived outfit, the Free Society Association, headed by a Goldwater aide: "Obviously, by lending his name to yet another in the proliferating mass of conservative organizations outside the regular party, Goldwater loses all lingering claim that any one might make for him as the national leader of the Republican Party."⁸⁴ Tellingly, they considered such a causal link "obvious" enough not to explain it.

⁸⁰ Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 494-496. The entire program can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xniUoMiHm8g>.

⁸¹ "Confidential Preliminary Report," undated, Box 131, Folder 8, William Rusher Papers, Library of Congress, Wash, D.C.

⁸² "Confidential Preliminary Report," Rusher Papers.

⁸³ "Goldwater Calls Bliss 'Mistaken,'" *The New York Times*, June 20, 1965.

⁸⁴ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Inside Report: Goldwater in '65," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 28, 1965.

Ultimately, party leaders accommodated. Bliss, ever mindful of party unity and assured by his finance chair that there was “enough money to go around,” declared himself “fed up” with the conflict over outside groups and ready to “live with them and work with them.”⁸⁵ Bliss and Goldwater issued a joint statement affirming their shared commitment to the party’s core goal of winning more elective offices.⁸⁶ Outside groups stepped up their participation in such core party tasks as electioneering.⁸⁷ This debate over “splinter” groups, which had been broached a decade earlier on the Democratic side, signaled a step in the progression of political activism out of formal party organizations and into the satellite groups that comprise today’s party blobs.⁸⁸ But though the fortunes of individual organizations waxed and waned, the groups, as a feature of American politics, weren’t going anywhere. The fight to legitimize a permanent para-party role for the right was won.

The right’s intraparty opponents, meanwhile, continued to be ineffectual factional battlers.⁸⁹ As the young moderates of the Ripon Society explained in a post mortem, “modern Republicans have not been good political strategists... Their portfolios have come only to include stocks that are on the wane, past their peak.”⁹⁰ Champions of liberal and moderate Republicanism remained a motley assortment of ambitious individual politicians—Rockefeller, Percy, Scranton, Romney, Lindsay—with neither an esprit de corps nor organized grassroots. After the 1964 election, liberal Republicans stepped up their denunciations. For California’s Thomas Kuchel, the GOP’s dalliance with the ultraright threatened to render the party “a

⁸⁵ David Broder, “Splinters Vying for G.O.P. Funds,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1965; Robert S. Boyd, “The Republican Family Keeps Growing,” *Chicago Daily News*, September 7, 1965.

⁸⁶ Russell Freeburg, “Bliss, Goldwater Talk of Splinter Groups,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 1, 1965.

⁸⁷ The ACA, best known for its Index measuring the conservatism of congressional members’ voting records, hired veteran GOP staffer Frank Kovak to raise a campaign war chest for the 1966 midterms, which would become a Republican rout. *Group Research Report*, April 14, 1966., 25-26.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the concept, see Schlozman and Rosenfeld, “Party Blobs and Partisan Visions.”

⁸⁹ Rae, *Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans*, 59-121; Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*.

⁹⁰ Ripon Society, *From Disaster to Distinction: A Republican Rebirth* (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), 113.

shriveled, shrunken, impotent political haven for an anachronistic few.”⁹¹ The Stop Goldwater forces had “known for a long time that a hard core of extreme conservatives have been working night and day, year after year, to capture the Grand Old Party,” one journalist wrote during the 1964 campaign. But they “sat around and hemmed and hawed and let Barry’s supporters get the drop on them.”⁹² That charge remained potent in the years, then decades, to come. (Kuchel himself would be felled in the 1968 primary by a right-wing candidate using Richard Viguerie’s direct mail services.) Resistance to the right this contingent on the short-term political incentives of a handful of pols proved barely to be resistance at all.

Nor could formal party leaders chart a direction collectively. Bliss was a highly efficacious nuts-and-bolts party builder—but only that. His refusal to pursue programmatic efforts played indirectly into the right’s hands: at the RNC, Bliss enhanced the formal party machinery that conservative forces could ultimately utilize.⁹³ He worked to rein in the rambunctious national Young Republicans organization, then under the control of the movement-conservative faction known as the Syndicate, led by alumni Clif White, Bill Rusher, and John Ashbrook. (The Young Republicans National Federation came under new scrutiny in 1966 for leaked racist and anti-Semitic song parodies—“*Riding through the Reich/In my Mercedes-Benz/Shooting all the kikes/Saving all my friends*”—written by a radical, Syndicate-aligned faction in the New Jersey chapter known as the “Rat Finks.”)⁹⁴ He also sought to mitigate the fallout from the contentious 1967 election for the National Republican Federation of Women presidency, which the losing candidate, Phyllis Schlafly, charged with being a purge “pursued by

⁹¹ Todd Holmes, “Demise and Ascent: The Career of Thomas Kuchel and the Advent of the Reagan Right,” *Boom: A Journal of California* 1 (2001): 20.

⁹² The journalist was Leverett Chapin of the *Denver Post*, quoted in *Group Research Report*, July 15, 1964, 50.

⁹³ Brian Conley, “The Politics of Party Renewal: The ‘Service Party’ and the Origins of the Post-Goldwater Republican Right,” *Studies in American Political Development* 27 (2013): 51-67.

⁹⁴ “Songs of the Rat Finks,” *ADL Bulletin*, May 1966. See also Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, “The Young Bourbons,” *Denver Post*, June 26, 1967.

a working alliance between ideological Republicans liberals” together with “henchmen who are paid or promised favors by the kingmaker clique.”⁹⁵ Both dust-ups put the right-wingers in their preferred role of betrayed warriors and provided them with a new litany of intraparty villains⁹⁶ without actually depleting their factional power.

Toward Right Populism

The tangle of issues that dominated national politics in the later 1960s were better defined by what they weren't—bread and butter fights over political economy and the welfare state—than by what, collectively, they shared. In turn, the tenor of conservative politics shifted from classic doctrinal themes of free markets, limited government, and anticommunism toward a populist opposition to a political and cultural elite and its dependents.⁹⁷ In Kevin Phillips' prediction of the political alignment to come, the populist majority coalition lining up on one side of a deepening divide over culture and identity would compete with a coalition on the other side consisting of “the corporate welfarists, planners, and academicians of the Liberal Establishment” along with their poor and minority clients.⁹⁸ “The Social Issue,” to use the coinage introduced by the traditionalist Democrats Ben Wattenberg and Richard Scammon in their rejoinder to Phillips, came steeped in the symbolic and emotional conflict that was a specialty of the Long New Right.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Phyllis Schlafly, *Safe—Not Sorry* (Alton, Ill.: Pere Marquette Press, 1967), 149. See also Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 137-162.

⁹⁶ See, respectively, William Rusher, “The Plot to Steal the GOP,” *National Review*, July 12, 1966; and Marie Smith, “Mrs. Schlafly Charges GOP Is Purging Her,” *Washington Post*, March 9, 1967.

⁹⁷ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 187-261; Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). On right populism in the American populist tradition, see Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998 [1995]), 245-66.

⁹⁸ Phillips, *Emerging Republican Majority*, 470.

⁹⁹ Richard M. Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, *The Real Majority: An Extraordinary Examination of the American Electorate* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), 35-44. The sociologist Donald Warren later identified the pockets of discontent as Middle American Radicals. Donald L. Warren, *The Radical Center: Middle Americans and the Politics of Alienation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976). See also Samuel T. Francis, “Message from MARs: The Social Politics of the New Right,” in *The New Right Papers*.

Race provided a critical fulcrum. The implementation of new federal civil rights laws, urban riots, a rising black radicalism, and white resistance to integration all deepened fissures within the New Deal order. “The principal force which broke up the Democratic (New Deal) coalition,” wrote Phillips in his bestselling blueprint for *The Emerging Republican Majority*, “is the Negro socioeconomic revolution and the liberal Democratic ideological inability to cope with it.”¹⁰⁰ This conflict set the context for the violence at the Democratic convention in Chicago, Richard Nixon’s campaign appeals to the racial innocence of both suburban moderates¹⁰¹ and white ethnics,¹⁰² and a new politics of law and order.¹⁰³

Arguably the first national avatar of Social Issue politics—that alchemy of racial and cultural resentments mobilized through populist appeals—led the most potent third-party presidential challenge since Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. George Corley Wallace grew up downwardly mobile in Alabama’s Black Belt. A skilled amateur boxer in high school and college, he pursued politics with a pugilistic tenacity in the late 1940s and 1950s. Wallace emulated his liberal-populist mentor Big Jim Folsom and hewed a moderate line in his early years as a state legislator.¹⁰⁴ But in the aftermath of *Brown vs. Board* and southern whites’ radical response, positions hardened. Wallace lost his first bid for governor in the 1958 Democratic primary to an opponent who cast doubt on his segregationist commitment. Wallace then fatefully vowed never to be “outn-----” again.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Arlington House, 1969), 37.

¹⁰¹ Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 225-275.

¹⁰² Thomas J. Sugrue and John D. Skrentny, “The White Ethnic Strategy,” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, eds. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 171-192; Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

¹⁰³ Michael Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 142-178; Vesla Weaver, “Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy,” *Studies in American Political Development* 21 (2007) 230-265.

¹⁰⁴ 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), 84-86.

¹⁰⁵ The infamous line appeared first in Marshall Frady, *Wallace* (New York: Dutton, 1968), 127. Its veracity has long been a subject of controversy, though Carter offers additional supporting interviews in *Politics of Rage*, 96.

By the time he captured the governorship four years later, Wallace had become the South's most compelling and provocative spokesman for massive resistance, building his persona around a series of set-piece confrontations—with the Kennedy administration over desegregating the University of Alabama, with Martin Luther King, Jr., and his civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, and with the white “sissy britches in Alabama who say we’ve got to conform ... to mixing the races in the schools.”¹⁰⁶ His most potent lines, like his inaugural vow of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever,” came courtesy of speechwriter Asa Carter, a veteran journalist and Ku Klux Klan organizer. “He breathes rancor,” reported Richard Rovere, “his manner is at once cold and abrasive, and his speech is an assault on the central nervous system.”¹⁰⁷ But King, who knew talent when he saw it, remarked to Dan Rather in 1963 that Wallace “only gives three, maybe four speeches ... but he works on them and hones them, so that they are little minor classics.”¹⁰⁸

In the wake of his star-making “stand at the schoolhouse door” in June 1963, Wallace embarked on several northern speaking tours that showcased white urban workers’ receptivity to his message. Right-wing activists in Wisconsin convinced him that a Democratic presidential nominating challenge, starting with the Badger State’s open primary contest, would amplify that message further. Wallace launched his campaign in Joe McCarthy’s hometown of Appleton, calling the late senator “just a little ahead of his time.”¹⁰⁹ He shocked observers by garnering a

Other versions report Wallace saying “outsegged.” See, e.g., Harold H. Martin, “The Race of a Thousand Clowns,” *Saturday Evening Post*, May 7, 1966, 26. To the end of his life, Wallace vehemently denied using either term. See special section, “George C. Wallace,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, January 11, 1987, 16. Wallace’s authorized biography repeats the denial; see Stephan Leshner, *George Wallace: An American Populist* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 129. On the state’s politics during the period, see Donald S. Strong, “Alabama: Transition and Alienation,” in *The Changing Politics of the South*, ed. William H. Haverd (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972).

¹⁰⁶ Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 106.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Rovere, “Letter from Washington,” *The New Yorker*, May 16, 1964.

¹⁰⁸ Dan Rather with Mickey Herskowitz, *The Camera Never Blinks: Adventures of a TV Journalist* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1977), 100.

¹⁰⁹ Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 204.

third of the vote in Wisconsin and Indiana and nearly half in Maryland, thanks to his strong showing along the state's Eastern Shore.

The ensuing years only expanded the ranks of potential supporters of Wallace's resentment politics. His aides unanimously advised him in early 1967 to commit to a third-party bid for 1968; that strategy would allow him to avoid President Johnson's presumed renomination juggernaut while attracting former Goldwater voters in November.¹¹⁰ Activists across the country worked to get Wallace's American Independence Party vehicle on the ballot in every state in 1968. His eventual candidacy proved no sideshow. In the final stretch of the general election, thanks in part to intensive efforts waged by unions seeking to pull wayward members back from the edge, Wallace's northern support dissipated; in the end he garnered 8 percent of the popular vote outside the South. But Scammon and Wattenberg extrapolated from the 10 million votes he garnered plus the additional numbers who had shown interest in him a portrait of a substantial subset of the electorate—between a fifth and a third of the country, “mostly the unyoung, the unpoor, the unblack”—that was ripe for a right-wing appeal on the Social Issue.¹¹¹ For Phillips, heralding a coming GOP majority through a right-populist coalition, Wallace served as a “way station” for voters on the path to Republicanism.¹¹²

Wallace's ties to national hard-right networks were extensive. These included the racist and anti-Semitic fringe—the White Citizens' Council, the Liberty Lobby, the neo-Nazi National States' Rights Party—but were hardly limited to them. Americans for Constitutional Action cofounder John Synon and Bircher and Christian Crusade activist Tom Anderson both pushed for Wallace to launch his 1964 presidential bid.¹¹³ The Bircher oil scion Bunker Hunt bankrolled a portion of his 1968 campaign, while the JBS-organized New England Rally for God, Family

¹¹⁰ Leshner, *George Wallace*, 387-388.

¹¹¹ Scammon and Wattenberg, *The Real Majority*, 197.

¹¹² Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, 463.

¹¹³ Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 204; *Group Research Report*, June 21, 1963, 45-46.

and Country that year, which Wallace attended, turned into an unofficial rally for his candidacy.¹¹⁴ When asked about the numerous Birchers serving as campaign activists across the country, Wallace showed none of the GOP's defensiveness: "I have no quarrel with the John Birch Society."¹¹⁵

At the same time, by 1968 Wallace was offering in more explicit terms than others had dared an approach that amplified red-meat appeals on identity and culture while outright rejecting conservative anti-statist orthodoxies. In a raucous debate on his television program *Firing Line*, William F. Buckley attacked Wallace from the right, emphasizing his background as "a New Dealer, a person who is intensely concerned to multiply the functions of the state." To which Wallace replied, "Are you against caring for the poor and old? ... [N]o conservative in this country, who comes out against looking after destitute elderly people, ought to be elected to anything."¹¹⁶ Survey researchers would eventually confirm that Wallace voters in 1968 were considerably more liberal on economic and role-of-government issues than Nixon voters.¹¹⁷

If such apostasies rankled the likes of Buckley, the nascent second generation of the Long New Right would distinguish itself by a different outlook. The Wallace constituency became a core building block of the New Right's majority coalition, and figures ranging from Pat Buchanan to William Rusher to Paul Weyrich would reach out after 1968 to forge ties.¹¹⁸ Richard Viguerie the direct-mail impresario went further, taking Wallace on as a client in 1973, and raising more than \$7 million for him over the next three years. Viguerie knew that Wallace

¹¹⁴ Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 335-337; *Group Research Report*, July 15, 1968, 49.

¹¹⁵ *Group Research Report*, September 17, 1968, 70; see also Harry S. Dent, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), 160. In 1971, a long article under Wallace's byline appeared in *American Opinion*, the JBS flagship, calling Nixon "an agent for the collectivists" who had heralded America's "retreat from greatness." George C. Wallace, "We Can Stop America's Retreat from Greatness." Tabloid reprint from *American Opinion*. Box 21, Folder 33, JBS papers.

¹¹⁶ Transcript to *Firing Line*, January 4, 1968, *Firing Line Broadcast Records*, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, accessed at: https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/images/Collections/80040/80040_088_trans.pdf.

¹¹⁷ Scammon and Wattenberg, *The Real Majority*, 194-195.

¹¹⁸ Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 396; Patrick Buchanan, "Wallace, One of a Kind in a Full House," *New York Daily News*, February 26, 1976; Viguerie, *The New Right*, 33.

had a number of “populist, non-conservative ideas. But he and I agreed on about 80% of the important issues, social issues like busing and law and order, and the need for a strong national defense. So we struck a bargain.” For the Long New Right, then, Wallace proved to be a “way station” in more than just the sense of a transitional phase for soon-to-be Republican voters. “My working for Wallace,” Viguerie reflected, “although I don’t think I realized it at the time, was the beginning of my thinking in terms of coalition politics.”¹¹⁹

Origins of the Second Generation

Richard Nixon’s contradictory presidency helped to incubate the core second generation of the Long New Right—mainly, though not entirely, by provoking opposition among its ranks. At a purely personal level, Nixon embodied the politics of resentment so central to the Long New Right’s approach.¹²⁰ His staff, moreover, included Kevin Phillips, laying out the demographic blueprint for a new American majority even if he neglected to articulate a vision of how power should be wielded to build it, and speechwriter Patrick Buchanan, the mischievous spokesman for the new populist right. Vice President Spiro Agnew served as the administration’s chief dispenser of red-meat attacks on the counterculture, the new lawlessness, and their New Class justifiers in the media and politics.¹²¹ But, notwithstanding such impulses and influence, Nixon was comfortable operating firmly within the confines of the very political order that the Long New Right intended to smash. He kept most movement conservatives at arm’s length,¹²² signed a vast array of activist legislation sent to him by Democratic congresses, and proved willing to pursue major new welfare-state ventures himself.

¹¹⁹ Viguerie, *The New Right*, 33.

¹²⁰ This is the master theme of Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), esp. 20-43.

¹²¹ “Spiro and the Right-Wingers: A Background Report,” *Group Research Report*, September 18, 1972, 50-52.

¹²² Sarah Katherine Mergel, *Conservative Intellectuals and Richard Nixon: Rethinking the Rise of the Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

By the second half of Nixon's first term, much of organized conservatism was in open revolt. Eleven leaders including Buckley, Rusher, ACU and YAF officials, and *Human Events'* Tom Winter signed onto a public declaration of withdrawal of support in July 1971.¹²³ Movement officialdom's pronunciamientos proved less than devastating to the administration's fortunes, however, as did the eventual presidential nomination challenge of John Ashbrook that they all endorsed. A retreat of Goldwater's doctrinal campaign, the underfunded Ashbrook effort garnered about a tenth of the vote in three primaries before closing down.

Opposition to Nixon's leftward genuflections stirred conservatives to a new cycle of organizing. Détente and the opening to China provided one spark,¹²⁴ the politics of the family, another. Nixon's guaranteed-income Family Assistance Plan prompted an early break. As ACU's executive director reported to his board, "ACU became a serious political organization when the Board of Directors committed itself to fighting" the plan.¹²⁵ A mass mailing campaign generated tens of thousands of letters to Congress,¹²⁶ and the bill died in the Senate. A year later, an ambitious congressional proposal for a federal childcare system, supported tentatively by some in the administration, coalesced a network of conservative congressional aides and outside organs in a revolt that startled the plan's supporters.¹²⁷ With the encouragement of administration aides like Buchanan and David Keene, *Human Events* initiated a drumbeat of coverage of Congress's plan to "Sovietize" America's youth, while the ACU and YAF launched an

¹²³ Tad Szulc, "11 Conservatives Criticize Nixon," *New York Times*, July 29, 1971.

¹²⁴ Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 191-211; Jeremi Suri, "Détente and Its Discontents," in *Rightward Bound*, 227-245.

¹²⁵ John L. Jones report to Board of Directors, December 6, 1970, Box 22, Folder 39, American Conservative Union (ACU) Papers, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹²⁶ Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 241.

¹²⁷ Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 117-154; Kimberly J. Morgan, "A Child of the Sixties: The Great Society, the New Right, and the Politics of Federal Child Care," *Journal of Policy History* 13 (2001): 215-250.

Emergency Committee for Children to mobilize pressure.¹²⁸ The president ultimately vetoed the bill in aggressive, categorical terms. A HEW official who resigned from his post the following year told the *Washington Post* that “advocates of the day care programs, including himself, vastly underrated the opposition of conservative opponents who branded a federal day care proposal a Communist scheme to take children away from their parents.”¹²⁹

In the early 1970s, key institution-builders of the Second Generation were sprinkled across the offices of conservative Republican members of Congress. Almost to a one, they had gotten their start as youngsters in YAF and the College Republicans, and had honed early a distinctive combination of right-wing politics, performative style, and indefatigable commitment. Edwin Feulner in Philip Crane’s House office and Paul Weyrich, first in Senator Gordon Allott’s then Carl Curtis’s, led the way. House members formalized the Republican Steering Committee in 1973 (renamed the Republican Study Committee the following year) as a whip system akin to that devised by the liberal Democratic Study Group.¹³⁰ During the same period, Weyrich used funds from the Colorado beer magnate Joseph Coors, whom he had met via Allott, to organize a conservative research organization that would counter the Brookings Institution’s liberal line but more nimbly and more aggressively than the American Enterprise Institute. After two organizational false starts, the Heritage Foundation was incorporated in 1973.¹³¹

The following year, when newly elected Senator Jesse Helms formed an emergency political action committee to protect conservative incumbents from the looming Watergate-induced Democratic midterm wave, Weyrich became the group’s director and brought Coors’s

¹²⁸ “Big Brother Wants Your Children,” *Human Events*, September 18, 1971; “Nixon Must Veto Child Control Law,” *Human Events*, October 9, 1971; James J. Kilpatrick, “‘Child Development Act’ Called Scheme to Sovietize America’s Your,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, October 25, 1971; *Group Research Report*, December 21, 1971, 57.

¹²⁹ Nick Kotz, “Nixon’s Child Care Expert Resigns,” *Washington Post*, July 15, 1972, A2.

¹³⁰ Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., *Conservatives Stalk the House: The Republican Study Committee, 1970-1982* (Ottawa, Ill.: Green Hill Publishers, 1983).

¹³¹ Lee Edwards, *The Power of Ideas: The Heritage Foundation at 25 Years* (Ottawa, Ill.: Jameson Books, Inc., 1997) 6-11.

funding with him. Under Weyrich's direction, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (CSFC) expanded after the midterms into a full-blown conservative answer to the liberal National Committee for an Effective Congress, pursuing not only fundraising but also recruitment and campaign support.¹³² Helms was also instrumental in the birth of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) in 1975, prodding YAF and Young Republican alums led by Charlie Black and Terry Dolan to bring the hard-edged style of those outfits to congressional electioneering.¹³³ Utilizing Viguerie's direct mail operations, Dolan put NCPAC's modus operandi in blunt terms: "The shriller you are, the better it is to raise money."¹³⁴

The interlocking entities of the New Right that emerged by the mid-1970s conveyed a sense of momentum and scope above and beyond the relatively small, tight-knit collection of activists at their helm. The funding from magnates and foundations alike flowed more freely in the wake of ideological calls to arms such as Lewis Powell's famous Chamber of Commerce memo.¹³⁵ Conservatives' efforts helped to bring about a marked rightward shift in the behavior of Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, over the course of his short time in office.¹³⁶ And for all the elite trappings of these DC-based organizations peddling research, policy work, and political services, they also continually showed an eagerness to plunge headlong into cultural battle.

The 1974 textbook controversy in Kanawha County, West Virginia, offered a case in point, a kind of petri dish for the politics of resentment that combined race, class, region, values,

¹³² Jake Garn undated report to W.D. Coyne, "Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress," Box 16, Folder 3, Weyrich Papers; Stephen Isaacs, "Coors Beer—and Politics—Move East," *Washington Post*, May 5 1975, A1; Stephen Isaacs, "Coors' Capital Connection," *Washington Post*, May 7, 1975, A1.

¹³³ *Group Research Report*, April 28, 1975, 15.

¹³⁴ Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 456.

¹³⁵ Alice O'Connor, "Financing the Counterrevolution," in *Rightward Bound*, 148-168. Coors claimed to Lee Edwards that Powell's memo personally inspired him to step up his own political engagement. Edwards, *The Power of Ideas*, 9.

¹³⁶ Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers*, 190-195.

education, family, and religion. A local school-board member objected to readings in newly approved schoolbooks that contained non-standard English, condoned overt sexuality, and appeared anti-Christian and unpatriotic. The New Right—and notably the Heritage Foundation—saw the protests, which escalated to a sometimes violent weeklong school boycott, as a laboratory for exploring ways to harness grassroots protest. Ultimately, the board reached a compromise, and most of the major players soon left town. For the New Right, however, it demonstrated just how potent was the new symbolic politics.¹³⁷

One New Right pol embodied the bridging of organizational and symbolic politics—and of populist and plutocratic commitments—with special, southern-accented fervor.¹³⁸ Jesse Helms was a Raleigh-based Democratic broadcaster who dominated North Carolina conservatism during the 1960s before switching parties in 1970 and winning a Senate seat two years later. Helms presciently married an unapologetic pugnacity on racial issues (setting him apart from the civility politics espoused by so many North Carolina leaders) with a savvy framing around broader themes of social resentment and anti-liberalism (setting him apart from the parochialism that George Wallace could never fully shed).

By the time he had entered electoral politics, Helms was already a fully-formed manifestation of the entire modern conservative package, in both substance and tactics. Helms and his closest political ally, Thomas H. Ellis, both cut their political teeth on Willis Smith's racist and red-baiting campaign for the Democratic senatorial nomination in 1950. After a stint in

¹³⁷ William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Broadway Books, 2005), 117-43. See also Curtis Seltzer, "A Confusion of Goals," *The Nation*, November 2, 1974, 430-35; Elmer Rumminger, "'You Shall Not Do This to My Child': An Investigative Report and Analysis," *Faith for the Family*, January 1975, 6-10; Austin Scott, "Rightists Hit on Textbook Role," *Washington Post*, February 7, 1975, A8; Connaught Coyne Marshner, *Blackboard Tyranny* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House Publishers, 1978).

¹³⁸ William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2008); William A. Link, "Time Is an Elusive Companion: Jesse Helms, Barry Goldwater, and the Dynamic of Modern Conservatism," in *Barry Goldwater and the Remaking of the American Political Landscape*.

the 1950s as a bank lobbyist, Helms turned to broadcasting.¹³⁹ In daily five-minute “*Viewpoints*” aired on the WRAL television station starting in 1960, Helms’s commentary ran the gamut of proto-culture-war crusades—school prayer, law and order, cultural indecency—all while hewing consistently, much more than Wallace, to staunchly right-wing positions on economic and social policy. His opposition to civil rights, conflation of anti-Jim Crow activism with communist subversion, and relentlessly racialized treatment of “law and order” and social welfare hardly distinguished him in the South, or in much of the American right writ large.¹⁴⁰

Rather, Helms in his pre-Senate years was most prophetic in channeling political fights into theatrical clashes with targeted individuals used as stand-ins for resented social groups—a politics of *antics* that would become a New Right calling card. The University of North Carolina was a favorite whipping boy in the 1960s. Helms led the legislative push for a Speaker Ban law preventing North Carolina’s public universities from allowing communists or Fifth-Amendment pleaders to speak.¹⁴¹ The law’s eventual invalidation by a federal court usefully expanded the roster of bogeymen Helms’s efforts had conjured. He followed it up with a crusade against a 24-year-old English graduate student on trumped up charges of teaching obscenity.¹⁴²

His politics met the moment in 1972. Run by Ellis and staffed by YAF and College Republican vets, Helms’s brutal campaign against the liberal congressman Nicholas Galifinakis (who had knocked out the Old Guard incumbent Everett Jordan in the Democratic primary) launched ad blitzes on topics like Galifinakis’s absences from votes on drug enforcement legislation and Helms’s anti-busing bona fides.¹⁴³ Helms’s rapid rise to national conservative

¹³⁹ See Bryan Hardin Thrift, *Conservative Bias: How Jesse Helms Pioneered the Rise of Right-Wing Media and Realigned the Republican Party* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014).

¹⁴⁰ His research files for *Viewpoint* editorials on subjects like civil rights, Martin Luther King, and busing offer a cross-section of such positions and their evolution from the 1960s to the 1970s. See, e.g., Box RG-1 5, Folders 97, 101, 113, Jesse Helms Papers, Jesse Helms Center, Wingate, N.C.

¹⁴¹ Jesse Helms, “Communists DO Try to Indoctrinate at Colleges,” *Human Events*, May 4, 1963; Jesse Helms, *Viewpoint* editorial, WRAL-TV, May 11, 1965, Box RG-1 8, Folder 142, Helms Papers.

¹⁴² Link, *Righteous Warrior*, 89-98.

¹⁴³ Link, *Righteous Warrior*, 128.

leadership in the next few years highlighted the South's special receptivity to the full congeries of New Right issue emphases, activism, and style.

Helms had a highly New Right knack for brokering ties among activists to pursue organizational innovations that supplanted traditional party functions. While helping to kickstart the development of CSFC and NCPAC, he also worked with Tom Ellis to grow a post-election fundraising vehicle established to pay down his campaign debt into a national membership-based club powered by Viguerie's direct-mail efforts. By the late 1970s, Helms and Ellis's National Congressional Club had grown into one of the most powerful right-wing PACs in the country.¹⁴⁴

Another Helms-inspired initiative challenged the GOP more directly, by drawing on the declinist analysis of the party system so many in the New Right shared. Speaking at a dinner honoring Clarence Manion in 1974, Helms asked whether it might be time “to forge new political parties, fashioned along the lines that the people are thinking, not along the existing lines of political power-seeking.”¹⁴⁵ Over the next year, Helms discussed the notion of a new party venture with William Rusher, who in turn stirred interest among ACU and YAF officials.¹⁴⁶ Rusher, long the most willing in his *National Review* circle to break with the GOP—and to work in coalition with right-wing populists—laid out a case for a new major party at book length in *The Making of the New Majority Party*.¹⁴⁷ Realignment around the Social Issue was producing a coalition of traditional Republicans and Wallacite populists, he argued. All that was missing was a partisan vehicle that could organize them free from the incessant interference waged by GOP moderates.

¹⁴⁴ Larry Sabato, *PAC Power: Inside the World of Political Action Committees* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984), 16, 104. On the legal structures, see Irwin B. Arief, Nadine Cohodas, and Richard Whittle, “Sen. Helms Builds a Machine of Interlinked Organizations To Shape Both Politics, Policy,” *CQ Weekly Report*, March 6, 1982, 499-505.

¹⁴⁵ Jesse Helms, “American Parties: A Time for Choosing,” *The New Guard*, December 1974, 6-9. Speech originally delivered May 15, 1974.

¹⁴⁶ Jesse Helms letter to William Rusher, May 28, 1974, Box 39, Folder 1, Rusher Papers; ACU Board Meeting minutes, Sept. 22, 1974, Box 21, Folder 10, and December 15, 1974, Box 21, Folder 11, both in ACU Papers.

¹⁴⁷ William Rusher, *The Making of the New Majority Party* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1975).

The second Conservative Political Action Conference, in 1975, featured an array of speakers expressing support for the new-party initiative, along with a resolution declaring that “the question of our allegiance to...political parties is a matter of increasing doubt to conservatives.”¹⁴⁸ Nobody captured the Long New Right’s ruthlessly instrumental outlook on parties more clearly than Robert Bauman, by then in Congress from Maryland:

Sometimes serving the popular ill, sometimes thwarting it, they are no more than instruments, temporary and disposable, by which like-minded citizens can express their views. Whenever in our past the electorate has been fragmented, a multiplicity of parties has guaranteed the expression of a broad range of opinion, thereby including in the political process those who might otherwise renounce it. And when long-established parties have neglected to represent the voters' interest, others soon sprang up to replace them. The process is both historically normal and politically healthy.¹⁴⁹

Ultimately, however, the new-party venture ended up on the ex-Wallace extreme. The proximate cause was decisions made by Ronald Reagan. Most advocates perceived Reagan to be the only plausible nominee in 1976. When a meeting with New Right leaders failed to persuade Reagan to go the third-party route rather than pursue an intraparty primary challenge to Ford, support for the venture melted away.¹⁵⁰ Rusher and Viguerie remained true believers. They established the Committee for the New Majority (CNM) to pursue third party lines on state ballots that Reagan might utilize if he lost the GOP primary.¹⁵¹ The need to achieve ballot access, though, compelled CNM to seek merger with the fringe entities left over from George Wallace’s 1968 campaign.¹⁵² Viguerie himself, along with an ex-congressional aide, stepped into the breach as a ticket at the American Independent Party convention in Chicago. The delegates opted instead for the racist ex-governor of Georgia, Lester Maddox; the keynote speaker offered some

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in *BattleLine*, March 1975, 2.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Bauman, CPAC speech, February 17, 1975, Box 3, Folder 27, ACU Papers.

¹⁵⁰ The ACU board, for example, resolved to refrain from public participation in the effort until after Reagan made formal plans. Minutes to ACU board meeting, September 27, 1975, Box 21, Folder 14, ACU Papers.

¹⁵¹ Alan Crawford, “A New Option for Conservatives in 1976,” *Conservative Digest*, December 1975.

¹⁵² Christopher Lydon, “Conservatives Deny Plan to Walk Out of Sessions or Work for Third Party,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1976.

thoughts on “Atheistic political Zionism.”¹⁵³ Maddox garnered 170,000 votes that November, and Rusher shuttered CNM soon thereafter.¹⁵⁴

The Long New Right never again pursued a third party. It had hardly fallen back in love with the Grand Old Party. Rather, it took from 1976 the lesson that the Republican Party was more permeable to the Long New Right’s tactics and personnel than ever before. Ronald Reagan came within 117 delegates of knocking out a sitting president at the GOP convention. Helms and Ellis, who earlier had helped to turn Reagan’s campaign fortunes around by engineering his victory in the North Carolina primary, now muscled through foreign-policy platform planks with barely veiled criticism of the Nixon-Ford administration on everything from détente to Taiwan.¹⁵⁵ Bob Bauman may have been right to call parties “no more than instruments”—but that applied to existing major parties as much as potential new ones.

For the New Right, the Nixon and Ford years were a transitional period, a bridge carrying activists from the emphasis on doctrinaire party politics—the demand for a choice rather than an echo that defined the Goldwater insurgency—toward a nascent set of extrapartisan tactics and organizational approaches. In early 1977, it was plausible for the neoconservative political scientist Jeane Kirkpatrick, still a Democrat loyal to the party of Hubert Humphrey, to offer an assessment of the New Right that closed the book on the project as a failure. Kirkpatrick, in an echo of older critiques of responsible party doctrine, identified New Right activists’ lack of realism about pluralist politics and party pragmatism in the U.S.—their lack of a sense of party—as a reason for their undoing. She was, as subsequent developments would bear out, both right

¹⁵³ Karen Elliott House, “American Independents Select Maddox, Reducing Right-Wing Challenge to Ford,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 30, 1976.

¹⁵⁴ Lester Logue letter to Ken Rast, October 18, 1976, Box 141, Folder 10, Rusher Papers.

¹⁵⁵ Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers*, 197-198. Platform text in “Republican Party Platform of 1976,” <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25843>

and wrong to claim that “their inclination and habits are the opposite of those required to maintain large, inclusive democratic political organizations.”¹⁵⁶

The Second Generation and Coalitionism

In the late 1970s, the tacticians of the Second Generation set to work. By mobilizing the resentments of particular voter blocs, they aimed to build a conservative majority that would supplant the teetering New Deal coalition. The goal to catalyze new electorates dovetailed with a rock 'em-sock 'em approach to politics. Where their dogmatic elders had once held back, the Second Generation eagerly plunged ahead with a politics more performative and combative, and less concerned with doctrinaire “small-government” purity, than its ancestors.’ Paul Weyrich liked to tell the story of two conservatives having a drink in Great Society-era Washington. “After listing the sins of every voting leader in both the House and Senate, the older of the two gentlemen said to his younger colleague: ‘You know, there are only two true conservatives left in Washington, and that’s me and you.’ Pausing for effect, he stares at his friend, and adds, half-joking: ‘And, I’m not so sure about you.’”¹⁵⁷ Weyrich’s generation sought to replace such purity politics with a feisty aggression. At ALEC’s 1980 meeting, a newspaper reported, candidates got the advice to “pick an issue and beat it to death, persuade ministers to help you get out the vote, and aim your publicity campaign at your opponent’s groin.”¹⁵⁸

Weyrich, ubiquitous and indefatigable, preeminently focused the Second Generation on building a majority. He hewed close to his white ethnic boyhood in Racine, Wisconsin, in the 1940s and '50s. “The people in our neighborhood,” he recalled, “were the real conservatives because they worked hard, brought up their kids right.” But “most of the Republicans could have

¹⁵⁶ Jeane Kirkpatrick, “Why the New Right Lost,” *Commentary*, February 1977, 39. Robert Novak made a similar argument in his review of Rusher’s book. See Robert D. Novak, “Producer’s Party,” *National Review*, June 6, 1975.

¹⁵⁷ Patrick B. McGuigan, “Sparks Flying: Party purity and discretionary wisdom,” *City Sentinel*, May 29, 2014, <http://city-sentinel.com/2014/05/sparks-flying-party-purity-and-discretionary-wisdom/>.

¹⁵⁸ *Group Research Report*, July/August 1980, 28.

cared less about the so-called wrong side of the tracks.”¹⁵⁹ He advocated for policies, supported and mentored candidates, and breathed fire on anyone he deemed a wimp or a sellout. As he explained in an oft-quoted 1978 interview, “We are different from previous generations of conservatives. We are radicals, working to overturn the present power structure.”¹⁶⁰

Coalition politics, in Weyrich’s central insight, need not mean either compromise politics or party politics. Different groups, working together, would mobilize diffuse voter blocs on the single issues that most mattered to them.¹⁶¹ A deacon in the Eastern Rite Melkite Church, he attached deep importance to abortion and homosexuality—and saw early on how they could bring together Catholics and (white) evangelicals. Weyrich had an uncanny ability to see around ideological corners. In 1990, he urged American conservatives to build bridges with Russia, and to import “those elements of Western culture that have survived better there than here.”¹⁶²

Starting in 1972, Weyrich convened the Kingston Group, whose members met weekly to strategize. Its members included the Republican Study Group, NCPAC, Citizens for the Republic, formed after Reagan’s 1976 run, the ACU, ALEC, Christian Voice (linked to the Unification Church), staffers for Orrin Hatch and the Bircher Georgia Democrat, Larry McDonald, and the National Association of Manufacturers.¹⁶³ Where conservatives had once eyed each other with suspicion, they now had a template for cooperation. The model has endured

¹⁵⁹ Frederick K. Berns, “State man leads with his right,” *Kenosha News*, October 28, 1980, 4.

¹⁶⁰ William J. Lanouette, “The New Right—‘Revolutionaries’ Out after the ‘Lunch-Pail’ Vote,” *National Journal*, 21 January 1978, 89. See also Paul M. Weyrich, “Blue Collar or Blue Blood: The New Right Compared with the Old Right,” in *The New Right Papers*.

¹⁶¹ Paul M. Weyrich, “Coalition-Building and the Pro-Life Movement,” in *To Rescue the Future: the Pro-Life Movement in the 1980s*, ed. Dave Andrusko (Toronto: Life Cycle Books, 1983). Weyrich, Morton Blackwell, Woody Jenkins, and Buz Lukens all traveled to Chicago for a 1979 Pro-Life Political Action Conference; *Group Research Report*, June 27, 1979, 24. See also *Group Research Report*, July-August, 1979, 25.

¹⁶² “The Vision Thing: Conservatives Take Aim at the ‘90s,” *Policy Review*, Spring 1990, 36.

¹⁶³ *Group Research Report*, July/August 1977, 25; *Group Research Report*, February 28, 1979, 6.

for decades; Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, an influential figure from the Third Generation, has run a Wednesday meeting since the mid-1990s.¹⁶⁴

The Panama Canal Treaties showcased the emergent model of single-issue groups. Although Gerald Ford had endorsed the treaties and 16 of 38 Republican senators voted to ratify them, the Republican National Committee sent out a letter under Ronald Reagan's signature, attacking Carter for giving away the canal.¹⁶⁵ The Committee to Save the Canal was formally sponsored by eight organizations, most of them Viguerie-funded, including the ACU, NCPAC, Weyrich's CSFC, Howard Phillips's Conservative Caucus, and, notably, the Young Republicans, during Roger Stone's tenure as president.¹⁶⁶ "Our bag is organization" Weyrich said in 1976.¹⁶⁷

Dense connections bound the New Right together. ALEC, to take one example, emerged from the ACU, and its first board meeting was held alongside the 1975 CPAC.¹⁶⁸ It explicitly took policy direction from the Heritage Foundation, and applied to it the states, where it aimed to serve as a counterweight to public-sector unions, and especially teachers.¹⁶⁹ In 1978, Joe Coors threw a reception and offered a brewery tour. Its executive director, Kathleen Teague, came out of YAF and the Virginia STOP-ERA campaign, and had close ties with Weyrich. He served on the board, along with Bob Bauman, Ed Feulner (by now at Heritage), and Thomas Winter, editor of *Human Events*. Among its board chairs, Donald "Buz" Lukens of Ohio was a former president of the Young Republicans, a Goldwater veteran, and a chair of STOP THE BABY KILLERS,

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Medvetz, "The Strength of Weekly Ties: Relations of Material and Symbolic Exchange in the Conservative Movement," *Politics & Society* 34 (2006): 343-68.

¹⁶⁵ *Group Research Report*, October 31, 1977, 36.

¹⁶⁶ *Group Research Report*, January 31, 1978, 1. See also Adam Clymer, *Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

¹⁶⁷ Alan Ehrenhalt, "'New Right' Plans Move to Change Congress," *CQ Weekly Report*, October 23, 1976, 3027.

¹⁶⁸ In the late 1980s, ALEC shifted strategy away from the New Right and toward closer ties with corporate America. See Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); and, from ALEC's executive director, Samuel Brunelli, "State Legislatures: The Next Conservative Battleground." (Washington: Heritage Foundation, 1990).

¹⁶⁹ Joanne Omang, "'New Right' Figure Sees McCarthyism In NEA's Conference," *Washington Post*, February 24, 1979, A2.

and Louis “Woody” Jenkins of Louisiana subsequently ran the Council for National Policy. The chair of its Committee on Suggested State Legislation, which proposed the model bills that became ALEC’s trademark, was Donna J. Carlson of Arizona, who as part of the John Birch Society’s speaker’s bureau barnstormed to stop ERA.¹⁷⁰ In a fundraising letter, Ronald Reagan appealed for funds for ALEC and reminisced about a pleasant visit with Carlson.¹⁷¹ ALEC and Heritage shared a publicist, Hugh Newton, who formerly worked for the National Right to Work Committee and also represented the governments of South Korea and Taiwan.¹⁷²

The New Right’s most important coalitional move, deeply imbricated with larger stories of race and gender, was to bring white evangelicals, in and out of the South, into the conservative and—as the parties sorted and the movement began to take over large portions of the party apparatus—ultimately the Republican fold.¹⁷³ The fervid language of sexual morality had long colored conservative politics. Now it came tethered to new issues and networks. The pastors of the Christian Right mobilized resentment to build majority in ways very similar to the rest of the Long New Right project. It was a movement whose essence was politics.¹⁷⁴ In a 1977 sermon, Falwell sought to return to the “McCarthy era, where we register all Communists. Not only should we register them, but we should send them back to Russia. This is a free country.”¹⁷⁵ Bob Billings of Moral Majority, a Weyrich ally and a veteran of the movement for Christian schools, explained, in good New Right fashion, that “We need an emotionally charged issue to stir people

¹⁷⁰ *Group Research Report*, March 29, 1978, 11. Lukens’s role in STOP THE BABY KILLERS in *Group Research Report*, September 29, 1980, 29. Lukens later served in Congress until, after conviction for contributing the delinquency of a minor for paying a sixteen-year-old girl for sex, John Boehner defeated him in the 1990 primary.

¹⁷¹ *Group Research Report*, May 29, 1978, 19.

¹⁷² *Group Research Report*, October 31, 1978, 36.

¹⁷³ The best history of the Christian Right is Martin, *With God on Our Side*. See also Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, “Second Coming: The Strategies of the New Christian Right,” *Political Science Quarterly* 111 (1996): 271–94; Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Schlozman, *When Movements Anchor Parties*, 77–107, 198–222.

¹⁷⁴ Devout African-American Protestants and devout white Protestants, after all, have nearly identical theological views and diametrically opposite political views. Andrew M. Greeley and Michael Hout, *The Truth about Conservative Christians: What They Think and What They Believe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹⁷⁵ Roger Piantadosi, “Personalities,” *Washington Post*, September 6, 1977, B3.

up and get them mad enough to get up from watching TV and do something. I believe that the homosexual issue is the issue we should use.”¹⁷⁶

Beginning in the 1970s, as conflict over the family intensified, women’s activism transformed beyond the male-dominated confines of the Old Right.¹⁷⁷ When feminism’s Second Wave pushed women to change politics, conservatism’s Second Generation fired back. As Lottie Beth Hobbs of Texas warned, “a tiny minority of dissatisfied, highly vocal, militant women insist that you are being exploited as a ‘domestic drudge’ and ‘a pretty toy.’ And they are determined to ‘liberate’ you—whether you want it or not!”¹⁷⁸ Phyllis Schlafly, who was Roman Catholic, led the successful multi-faith coalition behind STOP ERA.¹⁷⁹ Through Eagle Forum, Schlafly mobilized a massive 1977 counter-conference in Houston to protest the agenda of the official, feminist-led International Women’s Year conclave, chaired by Bella Abzug, just across town.¹⁸⁰ With a far less imperious style, Beverly LaHaye, whose husband, Tim, was California chair for Moral Majority, in 1979 founded Concerned Women for America, designed to bring evangelical women together in Prayer/Action Chapters.¹⁸¹ And inside Weyrich’s operation, Connie Coyne Marshner, a veteran of YAF, chaired the Library Court Group, at whose weekly meetings the New Right coordinated its pro-family agenda.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ *Group Research Report*, October 30, 1981, 34.

¹⁷⁷ Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in Marjorie J. Spruill, *Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women’s Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 101.

¹⁷⁹ Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 212-69; Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), esp. 90-117.

¹⁸⁰ Spruill, *Divided We Stand*.

¹⁸¹ See Beverly LaHaye, *The New Spirit-Controlled Woman* (Eugene, Ore.: 2005); Ronnee Schreiber, *Righting Feminism: Conservative Women and American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). On the differences between Schlafly and LaHaye, see Hardisty, *Mobilizing Resentment*, 73-84.

¹⁸² Marshner, *Blackboard Tyranny*; Connaught Coyne Marshner, *The New Traditional Woman* (Washington: Free Congress Research & Education Foundation, 1982). See also an interview with Marshner; Robert Walker, “Your Family and the Federal Government,” *Christian Life*, March 1980, 28-30.

More than old-line conservatives or their liberal counterparts, New Right groups focused on training the young, with robust internship programs designed to groom the next generation of conservative shock troops. No figure in that project looms larger than Morton Blackwell. A YAF-er, he was the youngest delegate to the 1964 convention, then served as executive director of the College Republicans off and on from 1965 to 1970 before editing *The Right Report*, a Viguerie newsletter, and running the youth campaigns for Reagan in 1976 and 1980. Starting in 1979, he has trained thousands of young conservatives through the Leadership Institute, with a special talent for placing them in jobs where they might climb the ladder.¹⁸³

For Blackwell, a Republican insider for half a century and an acknowledged expert on the party's rules, the very porousness of American parties that, to theorists of responsible parties, made them hopelessly weak, also gave grassroots activists the opportunity to remake the party in their image down to the precinct level.¹⁸⁴ The political party was, for Blackwell, a supremely useful instrument for conservative ends, not an institution to constrain or shape those ends. Instead, the great actors in American political history—and here he moved beyond Bauman—were enduring coalitions. And it was determined activists who forged those coalitions:

“To the extent it can be said that our country is governed, decisions are made by an enduring coalition of segments of the population which form a governing majority. The formation, growth, and decline of these coalitions is the real drama of governing America. A party is at most the vehicle through which this drama unfolds.”¹⁸⁵

The independent expenditure proved the perfect vehicle for the New Right's style of politics. The 1974 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act, which limited individual

¹⁸³ Morton C. Blackwell, “Staffing the Conservative Movement,” *Conservative Digest*, April 1979, 4.

¹⁸⁴ Activists of all stripe would do well to heed the advice in Morton C. Blackwell, “The Life of the Party: A Speech to the 1993 Conservative Leadership Conference,” November 12, 1993. In box 78, folder 43, People for the American Way (PFAW) papers, Bancroft Library (Berkeley, Calif.). Blackwell rendered essentially the same diagnosis of American parties as Richard S. Katz and Robin Kolodny, “Party Organization as an Empty Vessel: Parties in American Politics,” in *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, eds. Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (London: Sage, 1994).

¹⁸⁵ Morton Blackwell, “Building a Conservative Governing Majority” in *Steering the Elephant: How Washington Works*, ed. Robert Rector and Michael Sanera (New York: Universe, 1987), 29.

contributions to parties and candidates, opened up space for political action committees (PACs). With big donations illegal—the work-arounds, aided by the courts, would come later—came the opening for small-dollar donors from direct mail.¹⁸⁶ The most prominent among the new conservative efforts was NCPAC. The group took up more than organizational slack. Its chairman Terry Dolan prophesied a politics unmoored from the lines of accountability that had long restrained parties and candidates alike. “A group like ours could lie through its teeth,” Dolan said in 1980, “and the candidate it helps stays clean.”¹⁸⁷ And where parties made commitments to small-d democratic and small-r republican visions, whether or not honored in the breach, the New Right hardly bothered. In 1980, Dolan planned ads for ethnics and Southerners—but no blacks. “Let [RNC chair Bill] Brock spend the RNC’s money to try to get that vote.”¹⁸⁸

Reagan and the New Right

Initially, Ronald Reagan was not the New Right’s choice for 1980. That was Phil Crane, a House conservative from suburban Chicago whose campaign crashed and burned after nasty infighting.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, and despite a somewhat cool relationship to follow, Reagan’s New Right ties ran deep. The first YAF fundraising appeal under Reagan’s name went out in 1962. A famous Reagan metaphor had a New Right pedigree: in 1978, Reagan appeared in a 28-minute film narrated by Jesse Helms that would, Richard Viguerie hoped, “make liberals choke on their popcorn.” Its title? “A Shining City on the Hill.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Paul M. Weyrich, “The New Right: PACs and Coalition Politics,” in *Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance Law*, ed. Michael J. Malbin (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1980).

¹⁸⁷ MacPherson, “The New Right Brigade.”

¹⁸⁸ MacPherson, “The New Right Brigade.”

¹⁸⁹ “Chaos in the Crane Campaign,” *Human Events*, May 26, 1979, 10-14; *Group Research Report*, July/August, 1978, 27.

¹⁹⁰ *Group Research Report*, February 28, 1978, 6.

Reagan's first political director in the White House was Lyn Nofziger. He was an aide from Sacramento days who had helped John Dean to compile Nixon's enemies list before serving as a consultant to Weyrich's Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and a contributing editor to Viguier's *Conservative Digest*.¹⁹¹ On the 1980 Reagan campaign, Morton Blackwell ran the youth operation, Buz Lukens served as labor coordinator, Roger Stone took charge of the northeastern states, and Bob Billings led outreach to evangelicals. Former YAF president David Keene, for his part, directed NCPAC's independent expenditures.¹⁹²

In the Reagan years, three different understandings of party and leadership all brushed up against one another. Ronald Reagan's was an intensely personalistic presidency, led by a showman sometimes unsure, or else cagily vague, about exactly where the movie ended and the reality began.¹⁹³ If Reagan, much more than most presidents, defined himself around a set of core commitments,¹⁹⁴ he and his imagemakers wrapped them in a gauzy package. At the same time, the institutional Republican Party, building on its work during the previous decade and a half, impressively increased its capacity to raise funds, deploy new technology, train candidates and activists, and build an apparatus to displace long-entrenched Democrats across the land.¹⁹⁵ Neither Reagan's personalistic leadership nor Republican party-building, however, stood in the way of independent groups on the right as the core New Right diffused. Far from the flash in the pan predicted by skeptics who had rightly noted the flimsiness of New Right empirical claims to

¹⁹¹ *Group Research Report*, March 25, 1981, 11; John M. Broder, "Lyn Nofziger, 81, Irreverent Adviser to Reagan, Is Dead," *New York Times*, March 28, 2006.

¹⁹² *Group Research Report*, September 29, 1980, 29.

¹⁹³ Cf. Michael Rogin, "*Ronald Reagan, the Movie, and Other Episodes in Political Demonology*" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); and Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).

¹⁹⁴ Hugh Heclo, "Ronald Reagan and the American Public Philosophy," in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, eds. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

¹⁹⁵ Daniel J. Galvin, *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 120-142. From the RNC, see, e.g., "Achieving Majority Status," *First Monday*, August 1981, 12-14; and S.J. Masty, "Republican Party Strives for Majority Status—'84 and Beyond," *First Monday*, November 1983, 17-18. On the South, see memo to Elizabeth Dole from Lee Atwater, May 31, 1981, "Dole Memo," Lee Atwater papers, OA2903, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (Simi Valley, Calif.).

have elected Reagan, the independent groups survived even with a conservative president. Their approach spread, and a new generation took up the cudgel.

The episode that opens this essay suggested the inability of formal parties to dislodge the independent groups. Richard “Dick” Richards, a Utah operative picked by Reagan as Republican National Committee chair, resented New Right groups, and particularly NCPAC, for meddling in campaigns with incendiary tactics. Though he claimed no objections to single-issue groups with special sway over their supporters, he opposed multi-issue PACs that arrogated the party’s role. After the tense breakfast with New Right leaders in May 1981, Richards attempted to forge a “non-interference agreement” by which NCPAC and others would pledge to stay out of races where Republican candidates or state chairs asked for them to stand aside. NCPAC rejected the request, saying it would run afoul of Federal Election Commission rules against coordination—and adding that it wouldn’t want such a deal, anyway. And there the matter ended. Richards and his successor, Frank Fahrenkopf, expressed continued irritation with the New Right, but shied away from head-on confrontation.¹⁹⁶ Moderate Republicans carped—Jim Leach of Iowa, chair of the moderate Ripon Society, feared that the GOP had become “lashed to the guillotine of the New Right”—but continued to offer little in the way of an organized counterattack.¹⁹⁷

More than a Washington turf battle, a second-order consequence of campaign-finance law, or a spat inside a party network with everyone on the same team, the meeting marked a clash between different understandings of political action. Though a conservative, Richards

¹⁹⁶ “ATTENDEES AT THE DICK RICHARDS BREAKFAST” and memo from Morton Blackwell to Elizabeth Dole, May 20, 1981, NCPAC folder 1, box 14, Blackwell papers; Adam Clymer, “New G.O.P. Chairman Criticizes Party’s Right Wing,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1981, 18; “GOP National Chairman Angers Conservatives,” *Human Events*, May 9, 1981; Bill Peterson, “GOP ‘Peace Mission’ Becomes Stormy,” *Washington Post*, May 20, 1981, A2; Edward Walsh, “GOP-NCPAC Marriage of Convenience Fails,” *Washington Post*, June 27, 1981, A4; Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr., “Reagan as Political Leader,” in *Leadership in the Reagan Presidency: Seven Intimate Perspectives*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1992). Richards, in his memoir, says that Reagan, using George HW Bush as an emissary, signaled his support. See Richards, *Climbing the Political Ladder One Rung at a Time*, 233.

¹⁹⁷ *Group Research Report*, September 28, 1981, 30.

hewed to the classic organizational model, with its lines of accountability and authority, that had defined the political party since the nineteenth century. “If I’m the chairman of the party and I have responsibility for a campaign in a given area... I don’t want someone else coming in and interfering with my strategy.”¹⁹⁸ New Right conservatives identified as conservatives first and Republicans second. Talk like Richards’s, they thought, was pure establishment claptrap, and they saw straight through it. “Who do you think the Republican Party is accountable to?” asked Dolan in 1982. “Do you think it’s accountable to registered Republicans? Garbage. They don’t give a damn what registered Republicans think. They care about their contributors.”¹⁹⁹

The Long New Right wanted to replace the old party ways with the very freeform chaos—the loose cannonballs on the deck—that so worried the old-style operative. That style determined the form and substance for New Right politics. In this key way they differed from the McGovern-Fraser critique of party after 1968. The reform liberals aimed to tie the partisan ship down with reformist rope, not to let cannonballs loose on the deck. And it was not just multi-issue PACs that could get hold of loose cannonballs.

The formal party began to ape the New Right style. Rich DeVos of Amway, a billionaire close to the Christian Right, served as finance chair under Richards. In his year and a half in the role, he successfully brought his multilevel marketing tactics to the RNC; ten thousand people paid \$10 to watch the speeches and songs at an Annual Shareholders Convention in Long Beach.²⁰⁰ Two former Viguerie vice presidents arrived at RNC headquarters to build the party’s small-dollar program. And the big donors headed to the PACs. After leaving the RNC, DeVos

¹⁹⁸ “GOP National Chairman Angers Conservatives,” 6.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Robert Trimberg, “The political money machines: fat, fancy, free of curbs,” *Baltimore Sun*, July 11, 1982, A10.

²⁰⁰ Lou Cannon, “Mike Curb Will Replace Richard DeVos at RNC,” *Washington Post*, August 14, 1982, A4; Bill Peterson, “Reagan Aide Warns GOP on Economy,” *Washington Post*, June 9, 1982, A3; Adam Clymer, “G.O.P. Money Doesn’t Buy Harmony,” *New York Times*, October 9, 1981, A24.

joined the NCPAC policy advisory council.²⁰¹ The loser in the new money chase was the old direct-mail king. Richard Viguerie was saved from bankruptcy only by a bailout from an arm of the Unification Church, and had to sell off *Conservative Digest*.²⁰²

The New Right also aided the para-party blob. The story of one particularly influential consultancy, Atwater, Black, Manafort and Stone, helps to tell the tale. The men were contemporaries. Lee Atwater managed Karl Rove's successful 1973 campaign for presidency of the College Republicans. Charlie Black, Paul Manafort, and Roger Stone all backed the loser, Terry Dolan. They emerged from just the voter blocs that would power conservative ascendance. Atwater and Black grew up in the middle-class white South, and Manafort and Stone amid Catholic suburbia in the North. Before becoming president of the Young Republicans in 1977, in a campaign managed by Manafort, Stone had worked as a Nixon Dirty Trickster, run Reagan's 1976 youth campaign, and served as treasurer of NCPAC. He won his Young Republicans' election "after it was pointed out publicly and on the floor that he had been deeply involved in the dirty tricks."²⁰³ Theirs was the win-at-any-price rather than the doctrinally pure side of the Long New Right. With their free-flowing mixture of political and lobbying business—Rupert

²⁰¹ Thomas B. Edsall, "Money, Technology Revive GOP Force," *Washington Post*, June 17, 1984, A1.

²⁰² Molly Moore and Tom Sherwood, "PACs Balk at Viguerie Mailing Fees," *Washington Post*, March 22, 1985, A1; David Brooks, "Please, Mr. Postman: The Travails of Richard Viguerie," *National Review*, June 20, 1986, 28–32; Lloyd Grove, "The Graying of Richard Viguerie," *Washington Post* June 29, 1989, D1. Viguerie had worked with affiliates of the Unification Church since 1975. See "Theocracy from the Right," *Ripon Forum*, January 1983, 9. Terry Dolan at NCPAC also played ball, while Paul Weyrich, for theological reasons, kept his distance. See Michael Isikoff, "Moon Group Financing Anti-Communist Lobby," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1984, A1; and also Dolan's testy interview with CBS, transcribed in National Conservative Political Action Committee papers, box 52, Hoover Institution Library and Archives (Stanford, Calif.).

Investigating the extensive ties between the Unification Church and the American right was a full-employment industry for journalists in the 1980s. See, among many, Karen Rothmyer, "Mapping out Moon's media empire," *Columbia Journalism Review*, November 1984, 23-31; Fred Clarkson, "'God Is Phasing Out Democracy,'" *CovertAction*, Spring 1987; Andrew Ferguson, "Can Buy Me Love: The Mooning of Conservative Washington," *American Spectator*, September 1987, 20-23; Walter Hatch, "Mainstream Moon," *Seattle Times*, February 12, 1989, 1; John B. Judis, "Rev. Moon's rising political influence," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 27, 1989, 27; transcript of Frontline, "The Resurrection of Reverend Moon," aired January 21, 1992, in "Unification Church folder," series 3, box 70, Political Research Associates (PRA) papers, Tufts University (Medford, Mass.). See also Dinesh D'Souza, "Moon's Planet," *Policy Review*, Spring 1985, 28-34. On the Unification Church's travails, see Mariah Blake, "The Fall of the House of Moon," *New Republic*, November 25, 2013, 28-37.

²⁰³ Thomas B. Edsall, "Partners in Political PR Firm Typify Republican New Breed," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1985; *Group Research Report* June 29, 1977, 23.

Murdoch of News Corporation was a notable early client²⁰⁴—and devotion to attack politics designed to raise opponents’ negatives, the firm took the political style practiced in those early contests and brought it to the center of the resurgent Republican Party.

Weyrich and Stone embodied distinct facets of the politics of resentment. The strait-laced Weyrich, who embraced alliance with evangelicals to battle against abortion and homosexuality, observed at the 1982 CPAC that “the social issues aren’t big in the Country Clubs.”²⁰⁵ Stone, for his part, combined brass-knuckled politics with issue stances that fit with his very public persona as a libertine. (In this combination, he found a kindred spirit in his mentor, Roy Cohn.) Stone, too, sought a Republican Party that reached beyond the country club—but, to understand the mindset of swing voters, every week plowed his way through the *National Enquirer*.²⁰⁶ “It wasn’t the evangelical Christian voters that made the difference for Reagan in New York or New Jersey,” he insisted.²⁰⁷ Not surprisingly, there was no love lost between the men. “Every meeting I’ve had with the guy,” Weyrich said of Stone, “I wanted to wash my hands three times afterwards.”²⁰⁸

Though white northern resentment was often ignored in the decades between the 1970s ethnic backlash and the pivotal Trump vote in declining industrial cities across the Upper Midwest, the New Right kept its eye on such sentiments and the politicians who aimed to harness them.²⁰⁹ A notable example from the Council for National Policy’s summer 1988

²⁰⁴ See Roger Stone to RR, September 8, 1980. Box 249, Ronald Reagan 1980 Presidential Campaign Papers, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (Simi Valley, Calif.).

²⁰⁵ John Judis, “Will real conservatives step forward?” *In These Times*, March 10, 1982, 3.

²⁰⁶ Jacob Weisberg, “State-of-the-Art Sleazeball,” *New Republic*, December 5, 1985, 21.

²⁰⁷ Judis, “Will real conservatives step forward?” In 1990, Stone’s then-wife, Ann, who spent a half-dozen years working for the Viguerie Company, founded Republican for Choice, with Roger as an advisor. See Jeffrey Toobin, “The Dirty Trickster,” *New Yorker*, June 2, 2008, 54–63; and Robin Toner, “G.O.P. Group Formed to Support Abortion Rights,” *New York Times*, April 24, 1990, A21

²⁰⁸ Stephanie Mansfield, “The Rise and Fall of Roger Stone,” *Washington Post*, June 16, 1986.

²⁰⁹ See, on these themes, Timothy J. Lombardo, *Blue-Collar Conservatism: Frank Rizzo's Philadelphia and Populist Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). For an early New Right presentation, see Daniel J. Rea, Jr., “Democratic Support for a New Party,” in *Which Way for Conservatives?*, ed. Wayne J. Thorburn (Baltimore: Publications Press, 1975).

meeting: after an introduction from Viguerie, Ed Vrdolyak and Ed King spoke about “Building a New American Majority.”²¹⁰ Both were old-school urban Democrats, their principles formed in Catholic schools. Both cannily practiced the group-oriented politics of mobilizing resentment; a King aide said that “We created a hate campaign. We put all the hate groups into one big pot and let it boil.”²¹¹ Both were known more for scorched-earth battles with leading liberal Democrats than for policy achievements of their own. And both conducted their political careers as Democrats and, in defeat, became Republicans. Vrdolyak, an old ward boss in command of the rump Chicago organization, led the opposition to Harold Washington, Chicago’s first African-American mayor, after his election in 1983. Vrdolyak ran for mayor as nominee of the Solidarity Party in 1987, and lost. He ran for Clerk of Courts, a sinecure, in 1988, as a Republican—and lost, again.²¹² In 1978, riding the tax revolt and the continued backlash to busing, King upset the progressive technocrat Michael Dukakis and then bested, in perfect New Right fashion, a Brahmin liberal Republican, to win the Massachusetts governorship. After a single term marred by allegations of nepotism and patronage, Dukakis won a rematch in 1982, and King joined the GOP in 1985.²¹³ “Building a New American Majority,” in the old ethnic neighborhoods, as elsewhere, meant taking the battle to the liberals.

Extremism Redux

The New Right extended its central problematic—how to beat back the ideological and even civilizational enemy by whatever means necessary—abroad. An acute awareness of questions of race, Communism, and the problem of holding onto power underlay their

²¹⁰ “Council for National Policy; August 12 & 13 1988,” In “Council for National Policy” folder, series 3, box 19, PRA papers. King also spoke, during his term as governor, to the 1981 YAF convention in Boston. “YAF,” Atwater papers, OA2906.

²¹¹ Nick King, “King—simple, direct campaign issues,” *Boston Evening Globe*, September 20, 1978, 13.

²¹² Gary Rivlin, *Fire on the Prairie: Harold Washington, Chicago Politics, and the Roots of the Obama Presidency*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

²¹³ Mark Feeney and Brian MacQuarrie, “Edward King, Hard-Charging Governor, Dies,” *Boston Globe*, September 19, 2006, A1.

engagement with developments in Rhodesia and, especially, South Africa. Far from crank obsessions, these were defining, and enduring, New Right causes.

Ed Feulner arranged travel to South Africa, paid for by the apartheid government, for New Right loyalists in Congress, including Philip Crane and Robert Bauman, as well as William Rusher of *National Review*.²¹⁴ The ACU helped to promote the white Rhodesian premier, Ian Smith, during his visit to Washington in 1978.²¹⁵ Peter Brimelow, later founder of the militantly anti-immigrant website VDARE, reminisced that white Rhodesians were “discovered, in the days when psychologists dared measure such things, to have the highest mean IQ of any group on earth.”²¹⁶ Two Helms aides, both of whom had previously worked for Strom Thurmond, traveled to London in 1979 under the aegis of the Institute of American Relations to work alongside Ian Smith at talks on transition to multiracial rule. The group had previously paid for Helms staffers’ travels to South America, Central America, West Germany, and South Africa and Rhodesia.²¹⁷ M. Stanton Evans, a writer who in 1960 drafted YAF’s Sharon Statement and later chaired the ACU (and, at the National Journalism Center in Washington, trained journalists including John Fund and Ann Coulter), traveled to Rhodesia in 1979 for elections boycotted by most blacks in the country, deemed them fair, and urged the U.S. to drop sanctions.²¹⁸ Jesse Helms’s close ally Tom Ellis served on the board of the Pioneer Fund, which funded research into the genetics of racial inferiority, including the infamous work of Stanford’s William

²¹⁴ *Group Research Report*, February 28, 1977, 7.

²¹⁵ *Group Research Report*, October 31, 1978, 33.

²¹⁶ Peter Brimelow, “Ian Smith’s Rhodesia Is Worth Remembering,” *Human Events*, May 26, 1979, 432.

²¹⁷ Don Oberdorfer, “British Say Helms Aides Hurt Talks,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1979, A1; Richard Whittle, “Helms Aides Run 4 Tax-Exempt Groups,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1979, A9. One of those two Helms aides, Jim Lucier, had written regularly for JBS’s *American Opinion* in the 1960s, including a 1963 piece warning of socialism’s spread among the “cannibals and savages” of newly independent African nations. Link, *Righteous Warrior*, 205.

²¹⁸ *Group Research Report*, May 22, 1979, 17; Adam Clymer, “M. Stanton Evans, Who Helped Shape Conservative Movement, Is Dead at 80,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2015, A20.

Shockley; the controversy cost Ellis his nomination to a seat on the Board of International Broadcasting, overseeing Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe.²¹⁹

Such entanglements raise the question anew: how did conservative activists relate to the fever swamps of extremism in their midst? It was a central question since the 1950s—and it hardly went away once the Long New Right began to achieve power. An extraordinary set of interviews in *The Review of the News*, a weekly John Birch Society front publication, sheds light. Most weeks, John Rees, a British-born journalist who also ran an extensive private spying operation on the campus left, conducted an interview with a prominent personality somewhere between the far right and the Reaganite right. Even as the influence of the Society, rent by infighting and gripped with paranoia, had waned, a who's who of the right in the late 1970s and early 1980s sat down for what the subhead week after week termed “An Exclusive Interview.”

From the Reagan camp came campaign aides Richard V. Allen (later the National Security Advisor)²²⁰ and Richard Wirthlin,²²¹ and, inside the administration, Jeane Kirkpatrick,²²² Lyn Nofziger,²²³ Morton Blackwell,²²⁴ and Environmental Protection Administrator Anne Gorsuch.²²⁵ From Congress came right-wing stalwarts like Larry McDonald of Georgia (a member of the JBS National Council),²²⁶ Jesse Helms of North Carolina,²²⁷ and

²¹⁹ Grace Lichtenstein, “Fund Backs Controversial Study of ‘Racial Betterment,’” *New York Times*, December 11, 1977, 76; Rob Christensen and Jim Morrill, “Political kingmaker Tom Ellis dies,” *Raleigh News & Observer*, July 13, 2018, <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article214828670.html>

²²⁰ John Rees, “Foreign Policy Analyst Richard V. Allen,” *The Review of the News*, May 21, 1980, 39-52.

²²¹ John Rees, “The 1980 Presidential Campaign As Seen By Richard Wirthlin,” *The Review of the News*, September 10, 1980, 39-52.

²²² John Rees, “Ronald Reagan Chooses Conservative Democrat, Georgetown Professor Dr. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick,” *The Review of the News*, January 14, 1981, 31-42.

²²³ John Rees, “Lyn Nofziger,” *The Review of the News*, March 10, 1982, 39-48.

²²⁴ John Rees, “Conservative Advocate Morton C. Blackwell,” *The Review of the News*, April 28, 1982, 39-54.

²²⁵ John Rees, “The Amazing Anne M. Gorsuch,” *The Review of the News*, June 16, 1982, 39-50.

²²⁶ John Rees, “Congressman Lawrence Patton McDonald,” *The Review of the News*, November 11, 1981, 47-58.

²²⁷ John Rees, “U.S. Senator Jesse Helms,” *The Review of the News*, November 30, 1983, 39-50. Helms also spoke before the Birch-interlocked American Association of Physicians and Surgeons; *Group Research Report*, April 20, 1979, 16.

George Hansen of Idaho,²²⁸ along with a passel of conservatives, including Alan Simpson²²⁹ and Dick Cheney,²³⁰ both of Wyoming, Don Nickles of Oklahoma,²³¹ Chuck Grassley of Iowa,²³² William Armstrong of Colorado,²³³ and, from Texas, Phil Gramm, still a Boll Weevil Democrat,²³⁴ and William Archer, a tax-cutting Republican.²³⁵ Economic questions rose to the fore for Stuart Butler of the Heritage Foundation,²³⁶ Art Laffer,²³⁷ Jude Wanniski,²³⁸ Howard Jarvis,²³⁹ and, further right, Hans Sennholz²⁴⁰ and Murray Rothbard.²⁴¹ Long New Right figures spanning the generations gave interviews, including M. Stanton Evans,²⁴² James Robison, the anti-gay Dallas minister,²⁴³ Jerry Falwell,²⁴⁴ and Terry Dolan.²⁴⁵

It is impossible to know exactly what all the interviewees (or the flaks that arranged them) knew about *The Review of the News*. Though it never identified itself as a Bircher operation, the signs were easy to spot. *The Review of the News* shared an address in Belmont, Mass., with the JBS, and Robert Welch's wife, Marian Probert Welch, appeared on the masthead as Assistant Editor.²⁴⁶ Ads regularly promoted JBS speaker series and JBS summer camps.²⁴⁷

²²⁸ John Rees, "Conservative Congressman George Hansen," *The Review of the News*, January 7, 1981, 39-52.

²²⁹ John Rees, "U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson," *The Review of the News*, April 30, 1980, 39-48.

²³⁰ John Rees, "Conservative Congressman Dick Cheney," *The Review of the News*, December 14, 1983, 31-38.

²³¹ John Rees, "U.S. Senator Donald Nickles," *The Review of the News*, February 4, 1981, 39-48.

²³² John Rees, "U.S. Senator Charles Grassley," *The Review of the News*, March 18, 1981, 39-48. Grassley addressed a meeting of the Liberty Lobby in 1979, for which he received a \$1,000 honorarium; *Group Research Report*, May 22, 1979, 19.

²³³ John Rees, "U.S. Senator William L. Armstrong," *The Review of the News*, December 15, 1982, 31-40.

²³⁴ John Rees, "Phil Gramm," *The Review of the News*, March 25, 1981, 39-52.

²³⁵ John Rees, "Conservative Congressman William Archer," *The Review of the News*, February 11, 1981, 39-50.

²³⁶ John Rees, "Heritage Foundation's Stuart Butler," *The Review of the News*, March 4, 1981, 39-50.

²³⁷ John Rees, "Supply-Side Economist Arthur Laffer," *The Review of the News*, June 11, 1980, 39-54.

²³⁸ John Rees, "Supply-Side Economist Jude Wanniski," *The Review of the News*, May 12, 1982, 39-50.

²³⁹ "Howard Jarvis and Gary Allen Discuss Your Taxes," *The Review of the News*, April 11, 1979, 31-46.

²⁴⁰ John Rees, "Economist Hans F. Sennholz," *The Review of the News*, January 9, 1980, 39-50.

²⁴¹ John Rees, "Economist for the Free Market Murray N. Rothbard," *The Review of the News*, February 2, 1983, 39-50.

²⁴² John Rees, "Author and Columnist Stanton Evans," *The Review of the News*, April 23, 1980, 39-52.

²⁴³ John Rees, "Conservative Evangelist James Robison," *The Review of the News*, July 1, 1981, 39-48.

²⁴⁴ John Rees, "Moral Majority Conservative Jerry Falwell," *The Review of the News*, May 6, 1981, 39-52.

²⁴⁵ John Rees, "Leader Of The National Conservative Political Action Committee Is Terry Dolan," *The Review of the News*, September 22, 1982, 31-38.

²⁴⁶ *The Review of the News*, January 2, 1980, 1.

²⁴⁷ See respectively *The Review of the News*, May 11, 1983, 0 (inside front cover); *The Review of the News*, July 13, 1983, 56.

And alongside the usual conservative fare, the articles featured classic Bircher tropes such as American withdrawal from the United Nations.²⁴⁸ *The Review of the News* was, a JBS official said in 1978, “the most effective door-opener we ever had.”²⁴⁹

The interviews ranged in tone from love-fest to softball. The closer the interviewee to the JBS orbit, the more suggestive the questions and the more expansive the answers. Jerry Falwell saw his adversaries as “the same people who attacked Robert Welch and tried to destroy him 20 years ago.”²⁵⁰ The interview with Jesse Helms began with a line of questions about his “courageous” battle against the King Day holiday, and continued to a long discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s ties with Communists, a Bircher theme for decades.²⁵¹ James Robison, in perfect Bircher form, described the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations as “transmission belts for a very dangerous elite.”²⁵² Larry McDonald emphasized the continuing dangers from the Weather Underground.²⁵³ Roy Cohn gave a passionate defense of his mentor, Joe McCarthy.²⁵⁴ Connie Marshner, Paul Weyrich’s close associate, was familiar enough with *The Review of the News* to reference a past interview.²⁵⁵ Weyrich, who spoke at JBS meetings in 1978 and in 1980,²⁵⁶ contributed columns not only to *The Review of the News* but also to the flagship JBS periodical, *American Opinion*.²⁵⁷

Other interviews made clear their bona fides without veering into the best-known Bircher tropes. Bob Bauman, a few years before departing Congress in the wake of a gay sex scandal,

²⁴⁸ John Rees, “Dramatic New Developments at the U.N.,” *The Review of the News*, October 21, 1981, 39-52.

²⁴⁹ JBS Council minutes, June 15, 1978; Box 9, Folder 19, JBS papers.

²⁵⁰ Rees, “Moral Majority Conservative Jerry Falwell,” 45.

²⁵¹ Rees, “U.S. Senator Jesse Helms”; cf. Stang, *It’s Very Simple*, 118-128, 157-159.

²⁵² John Rees, “Conservative Evangelist James Robison,” 47. On Trilateral influence, see also John Rees, “Popular Historian Gary Allen,” *The Review of the News*, February 27, 1980, 39-54; and Rees, “Conservative Congressman George Hansen.”

²⁵³ Rees, “Congressman Lawrence Patton McDonald.”

²⁵⁴ John Rees, “Conservative Champion Roy Cohn,” *The Review of the News*, September 16, 1981, 39-54.

²⁵⁵ John Rees, “Pro-Family Leader Connie Marshner,” *The Review of the News*, January 21, 1981, 45.

²⁵⁶ Minutes of JBS Council meetings, June 10, 1978, and June 9, 1980. Box 9, Folder 19, JBS papers.

²⁵⁷ See., e.g., Paul M. Weyrich, “The White House, the 1982 Elections, and the Right,” *American Opinion*, April 1982, 7-10, 67-76; Paul M. Weyrich, “Congress Vs. the Courts,” *American Opinion*, May 1982, 43-54.

concluded his interview stating that “You’re either for the Right or against it. I’m for it.”²⁵⁸ Jack Abramoff attacked the “cadre of 12,000 Marxist professors” spouting “the old Big Lie told over and over again.”²⁵⁹ Tom Ellis explained that “in 1982, we saw some good campaigns... go down the tubes because the blacks thought Reagan was going to take away all their Welfare programs.”²⁶⁰ With figures known as staunch conservatives but not extreme right-wingers, the questions usually aimed more at programs and priorities, and the answers hardly made news. Still, even there, it is notable just how chummy were the Birchers and mainstream conservatives. Dick Cheney forthrightly defended U.S. covert action to destabilize Communist governments, and added that “Frankly, I would support similar types of activities in Cuba, as well.”²⁶¹

With the borders so porous, who was in or out? An inductive definition of the Long New Right could start with a leaked directory listing members of the Council for National Policy, formed as an explicit counter to the elite networks centered around the Rockefellers.²⁶² Since 1981, the CNP has held exclusive, off-the-record meetings three times a year for members to strategize, forge connections, and give candidates and causes the once-over.²⁶³ As the initial solicitation letter explained, “our goal is to bring together the conservative leaders so they can know one another on a personal level, exchange ideas, goals and dreams and plan together the future of our country.”²⁶⁴ The Council for National Policy brought together, in the same resort-hotel ballrooms, all the leading elements in the right-wing firmament. The Long New Right, the

²⁵⁸ John Rees, “Robert Bauman, Bulldog of the House,” *The Review of the News*, April 12, 1978, 40.

²⁵⁹ John Rees, “Collegiate Conservative Jack A. Abramoff,” *The Review of the News*, September 8, 1982, 50.

²⁶⁰ John Rees, “North Carolina Conservative Tom Ellis,” *The Review of the News*, January 5, 1983, 33.

²⁶¹ Rees, “Conservative Congressman Dick Cheney,” 38.

²⁶² See the membership lists and conference programs in “Council for National Policy,” box 6, Blackwell papers; “Council for National Policy,” series 3, box 19, PRA papers; and “Council for National Policy,” unprocessed accretion of April 1988, Weyrich papers. All references from PRA papers unless otherwise noted.

²⁶³ “The media,” Morton Blackwell, then the group’s executive director, warned members in 1993, “should not know when or where we meet or who takes part in our programs.” Chip Berlet, “Festive CNP Conclave in St Louis,” *CovertAction*, Spring 1994, 50. A barebones website now includes audio recordings from some speakers: cfnp.org.

²⁶⁴ Louis (Woody) Jenkins to Morton Blackwell, May 1, 1981. In “Council for National Policy,” box 6, Blackwell papers. The Koch network has incorporated this social time for supporters. See Theda Skocpol and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, “The Koch Network and Republican Party Extremism,” *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (2016), 686.

gatherings suggest, is no abstract notion, but a label for a political tendency defined by the players themselves. When the CNP voted on whether to admit new members, in a very real sense it defined the contours of the Long New Right.²⁶⁵

The idea for the Council for National Policy reportedly originated with Tim LaHaye, who called T. Cullen Davis, a Texas oilman (who had been acquitted in separate trials on charges of murder and solicitation of murder) close to James Robison, who then called Nelson Bunker Hunt, the Bircher oilman.²⁶⁶ The initial 34-member Board of Governors offers an excellent snapshot of the New Right in the early months of the Reagan era. At its core were the indefatigable institution-builders such as Dolan, Phillips, Viguerie, and Weyrich. From the Christian Right came Tim LaHaye and his wife, Beverly, who had founded Concerned Women for America as an explicit counter to the National Organization for Women, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Robison, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson, a televangelist (and Falwell rival) just dipping his toes into politics. Other notable names included Joe and Holly Coors, Phyllis Schlafly, Tom Ellis, Reed Larson of the National Right to Work Committee, and Ed Feulner of the Heritage Foundation. Far from facing a cordon sanitaire drawn against them, the Bircher element was represented by Hunt, the Mormon propagandist Cleon Skousen, and Larry McDonald.²⁶⁷ And then came the parade of rich conservatives, most from the Sun Belt and disproportionately from extractive industries, who made up the bulk of the CNP membership and whose checkbooks speakers hoped to open. A page from a 1993 program, for instance, lists the head of a waste disposal firm who was involved with Northern Colorado for Christ, the president

²⁶⁵ See the membership votes in CNP Executive Committee minutes, April 5, 1989, in PRA papers.

²⁶⁶ *Group Research Report*, June 26, 1981, 21; Gary Cartwright, "How Cullen Davis Beat the Rap," *Texas Monthly*, May 1979, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/how-cullen-davis-beat-the-rap-2/>. On their milieu, see Bryan Burrough, *The Big Rich: The Rise and Fall of the Greatest Texas Oil Fortunes* (New York: Penguin, 2009). LaHaye spoke to the JBS Council, along with Hunt, in 1982. JBS Council minutes, March 13, 1982; Box 9, Folder 19, JBS papers.

²⁶⁷ List in Weyrich papers.

of a nationwide Christian radio network, a McDonald's franchisee from Arizona, a homebuilder and "government fee and regulation consultant," a Bible publisher, and an oil distributor.²⁶⁸

The same names reappear. LaHaye, Ellis, Hunt, Robertson, Paul Pressler, mastermind of the conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention, and DeVos all served as presidents. After the initial round, the legal conservatives arrived. William Bradford Reynolds, architect of Reagan's civil rights strategy, joined in 1982. John Bolton, a protégé of Jesse Helms who helped to design the elaborate legal structures that sustained the Helms network,²⁶⁹ was a member in 1987. Edwin Meese, the former attorney general, took the helm of the CNP in 1993. And though the names of Art Laffer and Jude Wanniski do not appear in the archives, George Gilder and Paul Craig Roberts represented supply-side economics, while Gary North and Hans Sennholz came from the Birch-linked world of Austrian economists. Through the mid-1990s, neoconservatives, notably, never joined the CNP, although Jeane Kirkpatrick (in 1982) and Midge Decter (in 1984) both spoke at its meetings. And though less central to the group itself, other leading figures in the Long New Right made their way through the CNP orbit. Pat Buchanan was elected to the Board of Governors in October 1982; Newt Gingrich spoke at the August 1984 and November 1988 meetings.²⁷⁰

Another CNP regular in the 1980s was Oliver North, an army colonel detailed to the White House. Iran Contra epitomized the Long New Right's institution-spanning, style-over-substance gonzo politics. North traded on his vast connections across the right wing to build a network of conservatives who would send money to and advocate for the Contras in Nicaragua. His allies included the Western Goals Foundation, a project of the Bircher Congressman Larry

²⁶⁸ Also at the 1993 meeting was Edgar Prince, an auto-parts supplier from Michigan, whose daughter, Betsy, married Rich DeVos's son, and is now serving in the Trump cabinet. From October 1993 meeting in St. Louis, in Political Research Associates papers.

²⁶⁹ See Sidney Blumenthal, "The Enemy Within," *The Guardian*, March 9, 2005.

²⁷⁰ See Weyrich papers.

McDonald, the Unification Church-linked CAUSA, and the World Anti-Communist League, led by the far-right general, John Singlaub.²⁷¹ Starting in 1983, North gave weekly briefings on Central America at the Executive Office Building. Morton Blackwell, who served as Reagan's liaison to conservative groups, described North as "our briefer of choice."²⁷² Dana Rohrabacher, a White House speechwriter and later a longtime member of Congress from California known for cozying up to Vladimir Putin, introduced North to his friend, Jack Wheeler, a self-described professional adventurer who made many of the arrangements with the Contras.²⁷³ While at the White House, North twice addressed Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America.²⁷⁴ And as Congressional investigators and the special prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, closed in, North and his allies repeated—with great effectiveness—a narrative honed since "Who Lost China?" that he had been stabbed in the back.²⁷⁵

North's antics offered a glimpse into the hucksterish inner motor powering so much of the Long New Right's endeavors. There is more than a germ of insight in tracing what super-rich donors like Joe and Holly Coors, Bunker Hunt, Richard Mellon Scaife, Rich DeVos, and various right-wing foundations have wrought. But large portions of the right have run not off their largesse but rather the advertising from gold coins and real-estate schemes and the alchemy of

²⁷¹ Louis Trager, "Evidence points toward North tie to Rev. Moon," *San Francisco Examiner*, July 20, 1987, A-4; Jack Colhoun, "A Cut-off by Congress won't stop contra funding," *Guardian*, March 13, 1985, in "Unification Church" folder, series 3, box 70, PRA papers; Robert Reinhold, "Former General Hints at Wider Role as U.S. Champion of Contras," *New York Times*, October 14, 1986; "Singlaub, John" and "Singlaub Freedom Foundation" folders in series 3, box 67, PRA papers; Frontline, "The Resurrection of Reverend Moon" transcript, 9.

²⁷² *Group Research Report*, December 1986, 37.

²⁷³ Rohrabacher got his start in YAF, where in emulation of New Leftists burning their draft cards, he set his Social Security card alight. Thorburn, *A Generation Awakes*, 252.

²⁷⁴ *Group Research Report*, December, 1986, 38; Kyle Burke, *Revolutionaries for the Right: Anticommunist Internationalism and Paramilitary Warfare in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 118-154.

²⁷⁵ Sidney Blumenthal, "North the Charge of the Right Brigade," *Washington Post*, August 5, 1987. The Unification Church-linked American Freedom Coalition fundraised extensively for North ("sign the enclosed Letter of Support for Colonel North during his dark hour"); "American Freedom Coalition" folder, series 3, box 4, PRA papers. The hard-on-its-luck YAF offered a \$50 "Ollie North Truth Packet" that could, "besides aiding the cause of freedom in Central America ... be capitalized upon to salvage the nation's oldest and largest conservative youth group from financial ruin." Memo From Chris Long to Servio Picchio, Steve Baldwin, and Richard Delgaudio, September 7, 1987, Box 25, Folder 7, YAF Papers.

direct mail. “For many years,” *Group Research Report* explained in 1979, in an observation that would still hold for many years longer, “there has been an affinity between some right-wingers and various financial experts or enterprisers who deal in gold, investment advice, countering inflation, beating government policies, and surviving financial disaster.” Liberty Lobby convened a series of “financial survival meetings.” Phil Crane, Hans Sennholz, Orrin Hatch, and the far-right Mormon (and Hatch patron) Cleon Skousen spoke at an investment conference in Anaheim whose theme was “A world turned upside down.”²⁷⁶ William Kennedy, Jr., “Mr. Platinum,” an affiliate of the Birchers and the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress who bought *Conservative Digest* from Viguerie, was convicted in 1993 of money laundering for running a Ponzi scheme through which he diverted money from Kuwait to buy the *Digest* and to purchase helicopters for the Contras. Kennedy ran seminars he termed “US Monetary War Colleges” where right-wing speakers told attendees to buy precious metals as a store of value against Communist takeover. However, when metals prices crashed, the game was up, and he served a decade behind bars.²⁷⁷

Direct mail, meanwhile, was not just a fundraising tactic, but part and parcel of the whole style-is-substance, resentment-weaponizing register of the Long New Right over the decades. The Moonie-linked Christian Voice, in a fundraising letter with appeals from New Right-linked senator Roger Jepsen of Iowa and Rhodesia’s foreign minister, urged support for missionaries and children “slaughtered like helpless sheep by Cuban-trained terrorists.” A letter for YAF from retired general A.C. Wedemeyer listed liberals’ goals: “The destruction of Ronald Reagan. The destruction of Capitalism. The destruction of America as we know it.” In a 1982 mailing, Jerry Falwell disclosed that “I have been advised to disband the Moral Majority.” The group’s vice

²⁷⁶ *Group Research Report*, March 23, 1979, 11; see also *Group Research Report*, May 18, 1973, 23.

²⁷⁷ *Group Research Report*, July/August 1985, 25; Greg Johnson and James Bornemeier, “The Downfall of Conservative ‘Mover and Shaker,’” *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1992; “Investor Fraud Conviction,” *New York Times*, September 22, 1993, D13.

president, Ron Godwin, waved it off. “Don’t hold your breath. It is our standard next fundraising letter. That’s a letter to get our people’s attention.”²⁷⁸ Even Heritage took to direct mail. A 1989 letter from Newt Gingrich included an eight-item questionnaire (“Do you believe the President should act forcefully to prevent Congress from undercutting his authority to conduct America’s foreign policy?”) designed to tout its conclusions.²⁷⁹

Newt Gingrich and the March Through Congress

The profound importance to the Long New Right of that 1989 letter-writer stemmed—to repeat a theme—less from biography or doctrine than from his political approach. Gingrich backed Nelson Rockefeller, never joined YAF, and espoused themes about the “opportunity society” that echoed the Ripon Society. Bits of that early heritage hung on, often melded with his trademark futurism.²⁸⁰ Don Young of Alaska, in 1996, went so far as to say that “The moderates like Newt because Newt has always been a moderate.”²⁸¹

But Gingrich saw the error of his Rockefeller-supporting ways early, and tacked rightwards. He met Weyrich at a campaign school in Wisconsin in 1975. Theirs was, as a 1995 profile said, “from the start, a relationship without illusion: a marriage of opportunism.”²⁸² Weyrich immediately spotted talent. The mentor later declared his pupil “the first conservative I have ever known who knows how to use power.”²⁸³ In a June 1978 speech to the College

²⁷⁸ *Group Research Report*, May 22, 1979, 17; *Group Research Report*, November 1982, 39; *Group Research Report*, March 25, 1981, 10; *Group Research Report*, July/August, 1982, 28.

²⁷⁹ In “Gingrich, Newt” folder, series 3, box 28, PRA papers.

²⁸⁰ John R. Pitney, Jr., “Understanding Newt Gingrich,” paper prepared for delivery at the 1996 meetings of the American Political Science Association. See also the rather testy exchanges with the paleoconservative John Lofton in “A Philosophical Exchange with Newt Gingrich,” *Human Events*, December 30, 1989, 1064-65.

²⁸¹ David Grann, “The New Newt,” *New Republic*, May 6, 1996, 10. See also Bill McKenzie, “An Interview with Newt Gingrich,” *Ripon Forum*, May 1989, 3-7.

²⁸² Connie Bruck, “The Politics of Perception,” *New Yorker*, October 9, 1995, 55.

²⁸³ Bruck, “The Politics of Perception,” 70. See also (in the official Bircher journal) Paul M. Weyrich, “The White House, the 1982 Elections, and the Right,” 75-76; and an interview with Weyrich for a 1996 *Frontline* documentary: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/newt/newtintwshhtml/weyrich.html>.

Republicans, Gingrich made his purpose clear. He had no use for Republican leadership—and skipped entirely past Republican philosophy. Politics was a fight for majority. Party mattered only if it would aid in that essential task:

“You’re fighting a war. It is a war for power... But what’s the primary purpose of a political leader, above anything else? In this system, it is to build a majority capable of sustaining itself, because if we don’t do that, we don’t make the laws, we don’t write the taxes, we don’t decide how to start a war, we don’t keep the country strong, we don’t do nothing except carve from these people’s ability. And in my lifetime, we have not had a single Republican leader capable of doing that.”²⁸⁴

The New Right groomed Gingrich and his coterie. An orientation for new House members put together by eight New Right groups in 1978 included dinner *chez* Viguerie, while newly hired staffers could spend three days at a Heritage Foundation boot camp.²⁸⁵ Gingrich spoke at a Free Congress Foundation gathering the next year, and first formulated his notion of a Conservative Opportunity Society at a strategy session with Weyrich.²⁸⁶

Gingrich took the strategy of single-issue groups further than his mentors, hoping to mobilize the constituents in his Conservative Opportunity Society. As he told *Conservative Digest* in 1982, if “all the forces of the future keep their mouths shut and if all the forces of transfer payments talk very loudly, it shouldn’t surprise you that the forces of the liberal welfare state get all the money.” His campaign school included 35 model bills, each targeted to a particular audience. Weyrich succinctly captured how the prophecy of the Long New Right upended Congress when he noted that Gingrich “is more concerned with achieving certain objectives than in working within the system.”²⁸⁷ In a line that said much about changing

²⁸⁴ “1978 speech by Gingrich,” <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/newt/newt78speech.html>.

²⁸⁵ *Group Research Report*, January 29, 1979, 1.

²⁸⁶ *Group Research Report*, January 21, 1980, 4; *Group Research Report*, November 1994, 19.

²⁸⁷ Steven K. Beckner, “Rep. Newt Gingrich: A New Conservative Leader for the ‘80s,” *Conservative Digest*, May 1982, 11. See also Paul M. Weyrich, “Conservatives Must Prepare to Govern,” *Conservative Digest*, April 1980, 4.

conceptions of party, Gingrich reminisced in 2005 that “All of our work was done against the active, continuing opposition of the traditional party.”²⁸⁸

The modern congressional GOP’s procedural ruthlessness had lineages outside of Gingrich and even the House, to be sure. In the post-civil rights era, use of the filibuster, long the provenance of Southerners determined to protect Jim Crow, expanded. Conservatives—joined, to be fair, by liberals such as Ohio’s Howard Metzenbaum—took advantage of the rules to slow down action on the Senate floor. James Allen, an archconservative Alabama Democrat, proved a particularly adroit parliamentarian.²⁸⁹ Even before Gingrich arrived in Washington, senators in the New Right ambit had started to play hardball. The long 1978 filibuster, led by Orrin Hatch and Richard Lugar, that stopped labor law reform marked a decisive moment. As Jake Garn of Utah explained weeks after labor law reform went down, “My attitude is, anything within the rules is fair game.”²⁹⁰

The Third Generation

The Third Generation of conservatives who came of age in the 1980s took media-savvy rancor to new heights (or depths). The name came from a regular speaker series at the Heritage Foundation, which began with a talk by Dinesh D’Souza. “I see my role in the movement as helping push intellectual debate farther and farther right,” he told the attendees, before they broke to mingle over Coors beer.²⁹¹ The First Generation had been the intellectual pioneers and the forces behind the Goldwater campaign. The Second Generation had been the nuts-and-bolts

²⁸⁸ Newt Gingrich, “The GOP Revolution Holds Powerful Lessons for Changing Washington,” in *The Republican Revolution Ten Years Later: Smaller Government or Business as Usual?*, eds. Chris Edwards and John Samples (Washington: Cato Institute, 2005), 2.

²⁸⁹ Neil MacNeil and Richard A. Baker, *The American Senate: An Insider’s History* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 339-46. For a remembrance of Allen’s tireless use of the filibuster, see Walter Mondale, *The Good Fight: A Life in Liberal Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 114-120.

²⁹⁰ “Dusting Off the Filibuster,” *CQ Weekly Report*, August 5, 1978, 2023.

²⁹¹ *The Third Generation*, 12.

institution-builders for conservative majority.²⁹² The rising Third Generation aimed for the jugular. Liberalism, wrote Benjamin Hart, who convened the series at Heritage, was “on the moral defensive,” and so “The new conservatives appear confident, almost cocky at times.”²⁹³ Hart, D’Souza, and Laura Ingraham all cut their teeth at *The Dartmouth Review*, which controversially “outed” students on campus.²⁹⁴

The Third Generation both responded to and helped to create a media landscape that encouraged this performative combativeness and extremism.²⁹⁵ If the First Generation wielded its pen, and the Second Generation organized, for the Third Generation, media was king—and venality its besetting sin. Ratings and profits in entities like talk radio and Fox provided increasingly central and competing principals, and so the Third Generation arguably had more distance from a purely electoral or majority-building project than their predecessors. Indeed, their aim, one might say, degraded over time from destroying liberalism to owning the libs. Though Roger Ailes, who set up Fox News, traced his time in conservative politics back to the Nixon years, and most of its viewers were socialized long before Ronald Reagan, when the channel started operations in 1996, it beamed out Third Generation personalities and sensibilities already on vivid display in the 1980s.

The over-the-top style had deep roots in the Long New Right; it would be familiar to anyone who had spent time with Billy James Hargis and not just Russell Kirk. Its antics, often honed on campus, also borrowed from the attention-grabbing, anti-Establishment style associated with the wilder portions of the New Left. Gone were the notions of restraint and prudence that had tethered conservatives—and, said the Third Generation, kept them happy to lose. Instead, as

²⁹² Hart’s list included the neoconservatives Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, and Irving Kristol along with Weyrich, Feulner, Viguerie, and Falwell. *The Third Generation*, 19.

²⁹³ *The Third Generation*, 21-22.

²⁹⁴ Dudley Clendinen, “Conservative Paper Stirs Dartmouth,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1981, A18.

²⁹⁵ Jeffrey M. Berry and Sarah Sobieraj, *The Outrage Industry: Political Opinion Media and the New Incivility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Laura Ingraham argued in an apologia for Joe McCarthy, “conservatism errs in failing to go in for the kill. We do not do nearly enough in terms of using the moral and rhetorical weapons available.”²⁹⁶

The First and Second Generations seeded the Third. The Institute for Educational Affairs, later known as the Madison Center for Educational Affairs, generously funded and supported the student press as part of its effort to shape “the moral character of the young.” Irving Kristol and William E. Simon, Nixon’s Treasury Secretary, president of the John M. Olin Foundation, and a fixture of the rightist economic establishment, co-chaired the founding board, which also at times included Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia. William F. Buckley presided over an annual dinner with student journalists. The highbrow names and corporate money funded a scabrous style that would come to dominate the discourse on the right.²⁹⁷

Though somewhat older than the paradigmatic Third Generation figures, Rush Limbaugh embraced the same milieu and the same style. Early in his rise as a master of infotainment, he served as master of ceremonies at “roasts” for prominent conservative personalities, including a dinner for Oliver North by Brent Bozell’s Media Research Center, a tribute to Weyrich, and a National Conservative Forum featuring Bozell, Bork, Robert Dornan, the far-right California congressman who rose to prominence at Kanawha, and William Bennett.²⁹⁸ A profile published just as Limbaugh went national noted that he used special musical introductions for his regular villains—though he had retired his “caller abortion machine.”²⁹⁹

The administration of George HW Bush faced rebellion from the right—and though Newt Gingrich and Pat Buchanan pointed in different directions in policy and ideological terms, they

²⁹⁶ *The Third Generation*, 75.

²⁹⁷ *Group Research Report*, April 20, 1979, 13; *Group Research Report*, Spring 1991, 3.

²⁹⁸ “Conservative Forum,” *Human Events*, April 7, 1990, 19; “Conservative Forum,” *Human Events*, March 23, 1991, 18; “Conservative Forum,” *Human Events*, June 29, 1991, 18.

²⁹⁹ Elaine Donnelly, “Rush Limbaugh: Radio’s Mirthful Conservative Voice,” *Human Events*, July 16, 1990, 16.

played two sides of the same revolt. After Bush, in 1990, made a deal with Democratic leaders in Congress to reduce the deficit by raising taxes and cutting spending, Gingrich led the Republican opposition. He made clear his disagreement not just with the substance but with the president's posture as a statesman above party: "He's head of one of the two teams in the Super Bowl, not commissioner of the National Football League."³⁰⁰ The following winter, Ed Feulner warned that "If Pat Buchanan's challenge tells the American political establishment anything, it's that conservatives will never again allow themselves to be dragged under by a Republican administration pretending to be conservative."³⁰¹

Pitchfork Prophet

More than any figure in the New Right orbit, Pat Buchanan yoked procedural and substantive maximalism. His problematic was never specifically a partisan one. He even ran, quixotically, for president on the Reform Party line in 2000. Instead, Buchanan was an ideologist and a coalition merchant³⁰² determined to seize the commanding heights of power for blood-and-soil nationalism. Republicans, for Buchanan, were patsies and wimps afraid to grasp their opportunities because they feared being tarred with racism or extremism. Asked in a 1988 interview to draw the line between the right and the extreme right, Buchanan quipped that "It's about two inches off my right shoulder."³⁰³

Buchanan melded the right-wing Catholic and the neo-Confederate strands in the Long New Right.³⁰⁴ Growing up, his family revered Joe McCarthy and Francisco Franco. One of his

³⁰⁰ Adam Meyerson, "Miracle Whip," *Policy Review*, Winter 1991, 16.

³⁰¹ *Group Research Report*, Spring 1992, 5.

³⁰² Hans Noel, *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³⁰³ D.C. Denison, "Patrick Buchanan: The Interview," *Boston Globe Magazine*, June 12, 1988. In "Buchanan, Patrick" folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers.

³⁰⁴ The one full-length biography is Timothy Stanley, *The Crusader: The Life and Tumultuous Times of Pat Buchanan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012). For an excellent discussion on Buchanan and the right, see Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right, and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 147-67.

great-grandfathers died for the Confederacy at Vicksburg; another was captured at the Battle of Jonesboro. As he said in a 1992 campaign stop in Tennessee, “This time we’re going to settle accounts for our ancestors in dealing with the Yankees in Washington, D.C.”³⁰⁵ After Georgetown and a stint as a journalist, Buchanan served in the Nixon administration, where he honed Spiro Agnew’s attacks on liberal elites into barbed language, and worked to translate them into policy. A 1970 memo argued that “We have done enough for the poor blacks; right now we want to give some relief for working-class ethnics and Catholics... If we can give 50 Phantoms for the Jews, and a multibillion dollar welfare for the blacks—neither of whom is going to thank this president—why not help the Catholics save their collapsing school system?”³⁰⁶

One critical dimension made Buchanan anathema, and set him apart from many of his Trump-era successors. Buchanan was a skeptic of Israel and warned the US to keep its distance from the Jewish state. An infamous comment in 1990 referenced “the Israel Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States.” He was also close with various Cold War-era circles where right-wing emigres and coethnics from nations behind the Iron Curtain plotted to free their homelands.³⁰⁷ He protested bitterly against the US government’s long struggle to revoke the citizenship of John Demjanjuk, accused of being “Ivan the Terrible” at Treblinka, and even expressed skepticism about the mechanics of how many people could have been killed at the camp.³⁰⁸ Buchanan’s bitterest enemies, and not just on Israel, were the once-liberal

³⁰⁵ Ben Smith III, “Buchanan invokes Confederate forebears in bid for South’s votes,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 26, 1992, A5.

³⁰⁶ John Aloysius Farrell, “Files reveal Buchanan views in ‘70s,” *Boston Globe*, January 4, 1992, A1. In “Buchanan, Patrick” folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers. Buchanan referred to the 1968 sale of fifty F-4 Phantom aircraft to Israel; see David Rodman, “Phantom Fracas: The 1968 American Sale of F-4 Aircraft to Israel,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2004): 131-44.

³⁰⁷ Russ Bellant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and the Republican Party* (Boston: South End Press, 1991); Mitchell Losin, “Buchanan strikes ethnic chord,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 15, 1992, 15.

³⁰⁸ *From Columnist to Candidate: Pat Buchanan’s Religious War* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1992), 17. In “Buchanan, Patrick” folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers.

neoconservatives. He deemed them “ideological vagrants.”³⁰⁹ The neoconservatives, for their part, treated Buchanan as beyond the pale.³¹⁰

Except for a two-year stint as Ronald Reagan’s chief speechwriter from 1985 to 1987, Buchanan spent the following decades as a pundit in print and on television, saying out loud what respectable conservatism would not—and attacking those who blanched at following his lead. A 1988 column left little to the imagination on his core theme: “nothing so terrifies a moderate Republican as the charge that he is insufficiently progressive on civil rights.”³¹¹

In his columns, the happy culture warrior applied these themes broadly. In a characteristic paradox visible across the right, even as his red-meat issues—taxes, welfare, immigration, crime, affirmative action—encompassed central political concerns, he often chose to highlight controversies geared to grab attention more than to change the nuts and bolts of policy. A sample of column titles:

- “Racial Politics Come to Roost on the Demos”
- “Fear of AIDS Bigotry Makes Problem Worse”
- “Gays are aggressors in culture war”
- “Stars, bars, and anathema”
- “Yes, Mario, There Is a Culture War”³¹²

In his presidential runs in 1992 and, much more sharply, 1996, Buchanan married that mobilization of grievance, with race at its core, to an economic nationalism hostile to the diktats of globalist orthodoxy. If it was an unapologetically right-wing vision, it was also one willing to part with conservative pieties.³¹³ In contrast to Bob Dole, “bellhop to the Business Roundtable,”

³⁰⁹ Quoted in *Group Research Report*, May/June 1991, 10.

³¹⁰ See Joshua Muravchik, “Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews,” *Commentary*, January 1991; David Frum, “The Conservative Bully Boy,” *American Spectator*, July 1991.

³¹¹ Patrick J. Buchanan, “Ambush lurking in new rights act?” *Washington Times*, March 9, 1988. In box 79, folder 5, PFAW papers.

³¹² Respectively, *Washington Inquirer*, n.d., in “Buchanan, Patrick” folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers; *Washington Inquirer*, June 24, 1988, in “Buchanan, Patrick” folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers; *Boston Herald*, September 14, 1994, in “Buchanan, Patrick” folder, series 3, box 9, PRA papers; *Washington Times*, February 15, 1988, in PFAW papers, box 79, folder 5; *Southern Partisan*, 2nd quarter 1992, 11, in PFAW papers box 79, folder 6.

³¹³ David Frum, “Patrick J. Buchanan, Left-Winger,” *Weekly Standard*, November 27, 1995.

Buchanan urged conservatives to worship “at a higher altar than the bottom line.”³¹⁴ He promised to stop bad trade deals, restore manufacturing, and rein in the bankers, the Trilateral Commission, the United Nations, and the “New World Order.”

Though Buchanan gave George HW Bush a scare in New Hampshire in 1992 and won the state four years later, he never consolidated his appeal. Still, he drew crowds—“peasants with pitchforks”—that flocked to his distinctive appeal.³¹⁵ If Buchanan was too raw a figure, and the Republican electorate not yet disillusioned enough with mainstream conservatism, for him to prevail at the ballot box, he looms large in the prophecy of right-wing politics. In the spring of 1996, a British magazine that monitored the right predicted “a fight to the finish for control of the conservative movement and the Republican Party: Pat Buchanan’s neo-confederates versus William Bennett and Bill Kristol’s neo-conservatives. The smart money is on the cavemen.”³¹⁶

The Political Economy of the Long New Right

Beginning in the late 1970s, factors both internal and external to the New Right opened new opportunities to reorder the political economy, and made the marriage of cultural populism and business-friendly conservatism sustainable and increasingly electorally palatable. And as the mutual accommodation of the Long New Right and orthodox conservatism deepened, any possibility of exit diminished, whether to an economic policy more focused on jobs than on cutting taxes and rolling back the administrative state, or alternatively to an inclusive conservatism that rejected distinctions based on ascriptive characteristics and put some distance

³¹⁴ Quotes from respectively James Bennet, “Buchanan Attacking on All Fronts,” *New York Times*, February 29, 1996, B8; and James Bennet, “Buchanan, in Unfamiliar Role, Is Under Fire as a Left-Winger,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1995, 1.

³¹⁵ See, e.g., Thomas B. Edsall and Richard Morin, “Angry, White, Working Class Voters Come to the Fore,” *Washington Post*, February 21, 1996, A14; Thomas B. Edsall, “After Luring Disaffected, GOP Elite Is Uneasy,” *Washington Post*, February 22, 1996, A12; Adam Nagourney, “At Rallies for Buchanan, Fervent Supporters Are Part of the Show, Too,” *New York Times*, February 26, 1996, B6.

³¹⁶ “Pat Buchanan’s real agenda,” *Searchlight*, April 1996, 22.

between itself and the fever swamps. Instead, the story has been the joint mobilization of working- and middle-class and upper-class grievance across both economic *and* social issues.

To repeat the central argument, neither buttoned-up, corporate-backed, tax-cutting conservatism nor the parts of the Long New Right most publicly dissatisfied with the weaklings of the Republican Party had any deep opposition to the core commitments that the other espoused. Activists and the resurgent interests of capital together chipped away at the parts of the welfare state most vulnerable to attack from nativist populism, and then used nativist populism and stealth tactics to chip away at much of the rest. And supply-side economics offered a programmatic answer to the dilemma by denying the premise of necessary sacrifice altogether.

Analysts of right-wing populism across the ideological spectrum and across the decades, from Walter Dean Burnham³¹⁷ to Kevin Phillips³¹⁸ to the paleoconservative Sam Francis,³¹⁹ all confidently predicted that its mobilization of perceived grievance and status decline would come yoked to an economic nationalism that would go after the much-criticized Rockefellers and their ilk.³²⁰ They understood the roots of many white voters' rage and in turn the intellectual thinness of movement conservatism. But they underestimated the powerful restraints, centrally the commitments to tax cuts and union-busting with deep roots in the New Right itself, that protected the very economic orthodoxy that, in 2016, held so little appeal to Republican primary voters when presented with a populist alternative on the right.

Scholars have emphasized the ways that American business—and the rich whose fortunes came from and depended on it—organized and mobilized starting in the 1970s to redraw the map

³¹⁷ Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York, Norton, 1970), 188-193; Walter Dean Burnham, "The Reagan Heritage," in *The Election of 1988: Reports and Interpretations*, ed. Gerald M. Pomper (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1989), 29; and Walter Dean Burnham, "Voter Turnout and the Path to Plutocracy," in *Polarized Politics: The Impact of Divisiveness in the US Political System*, ed. William J. Crotty (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015), esp. 58-59.

³¹⁸ Kevin Phillips, "Post-Conservative America."

³¹⁹ Samuel Francis, "Buchanan II," *Chronicles*, August 1992, 10-11.

³²⁰ The same lines of thinking reappear in Publius Decius Mus [Michael Anton], "The Flight 93 Election," *Claremont Review of Books*, September 5, 2016, <http://www.claremont.org/crb/basicpage/the-flight-93-election/>.

of the New Deal-Keynesian state by deregulating, cutting taxes, and busting unions.³²¹ Their story is a powerful and important one. Yet it says rather less about the substantive success of an agenda manifestly so unpopular. The general fact that a two-party system forces intraparty factions to reach a modus vivendi hardly explains exactly how the GOP embraced what Paul Pierson felicitously terms plutopopulism.³²²

We emphasize a dual disciplining: the Long New Right kept business and the rich from backsliding to the accommodationist Fordist-Keynesian settlement, while business conservatives kept the revanchist grassroots tethered to tax cuts and regulatory rollbacks unlikely to line their own pockets. The commanding heights of American capitalism have been reshaped in the last generation as neoliberal ideas gained currency, the economy financialized, CEO pay skyrocketed, and the corporate elite fractured.³²³ The rich backers of the Long New Right, in national politics and in the states, however, came from far outside the old Establishment, or its newer variation. This “Little Big Business,” to use Godfrey Hodgson’s phrase, tending to the Sun Belt and heavy on manufacturing and extractive industries, straddled the worlds of

³²¹ David Vogel, *Fluctuating Fortunes: The Political Power of Business in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1989); Benjamin C. Waterhouse, *Lobbying America: The Politics of Business from Nixon to NAFTA* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010); Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *American Amnesia: How the War on Government Led Us to Forget What Made America Prosper* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016); focusing on the recent period, Skocpol and Hertel-Fernandez, “The Koch Network and Republican Party Extremism.”

³²² Pierson, “American hybrid.”

³²³ See, among many, Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 152-201; Greta Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Colin Gordon, *Growing Apart: A Political History of American Inequality* (Washington: Institute for Policy Studies, 2013); Robin Greenwood and David Scharfstein, “The Growth of Finance,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27 (2013): 3-28; Raghuram G. Rajan and Luigi Zingales, “The Great Reversals: the Politics of Financial Development in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Financial Economics* 69 (2003): 5-50; and Mark S. Mizruchi, *The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

grassroots reaction and pro-business policymaking.³²⁴ A New Right petit bourgeois populism married easily to a radically deregulatory, tax-cutting agenda.³²⁵

The Long New Right stood implacably opposed to unions, the AFL-CIO and its leadership, and union power. The sentiment has been shared consistently across milieux and historical eras in New Right politics. To be sure, elements have occasionally nodded to the role of unions in a free society, and some of its loyalists in Congress, especially before partisan lines hardened, paid heed to the close-to-the-ground priorities of the building trades. Nevertheless, its gestures to blue-collar workers served far more as demonstrations of the virtues of the hard-hat—paean to white male work in an attempt to find hidden conservatives in the electorate—than as genuine moves toward any kind of right corporatism or cross-class accommodation.

The National Right to Work Committee was a central part of the New Right from the Goldwater era onwards, waving its message of “militant patriotism.”³²⁶ Seemingly every coalition or delegation of New Right emissaries included Reed Larson, its president. Its base came in mid-sized businesses worried that “compulsory unionism” would destroy their cost advantage. The group played a pivotal role in the epochal defeat of labor law reform in 1978.³²⁷ Two NRWC officers had previously worked with Billy James Hargis when he made a brief foray to establish a presence in Washington, DC, and the John Birch Society regularly received its “Memo to Key Men.” The NRWC increased its newsletter circulation from 49,000 in 1975 to 264,503 in 1976 as the Viguerie operation ramped up. Stuart Butler of the Heritage Foundation

³²⁴ Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 210.

³²⁵ On these themes in the postwar decades, see Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal* (New York: Norton, 2010).

³²⁶ Roscoe Born, “Right-to-Work Drive, Left for Dead in ‘58, Aims for a Comeback,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 19, 1961, 1.

³²⁷ Jerry Flint, “Reed Larson vs. the Union Shop,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1977; Juan Cameron, “Small Business Trips Big Labor,” *Fortune*, July 31, 1978, 80–82; Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, “Labor Law Reform and Its Enemies,” *The Nation*, January 6, 1979, 1, 17–20.

served on the group's board.³²⁸ As public workers sought to unionize in the 1970s, the NRWC responded in kind, in the courts and at the ballot box.³²⁹ The leading academic authority against public-sector unionization, Sylvester Petro, in 1972 left New York University for Wake Forest University, where he established close ties with Jesse Helms and his network.³³⁰

As for tax cuts, conservatism's binding glue, the 1970s tax revolt had a deep New Right pedigree. Its emphasis on overtaxed ordinary Americans letting bureaucrats run rampant and welfare programs go unchecked provided a powerful frame for supply-siders, along with business and the super-wealthy, to advocate for tax cuts whose direct benefits even the master plumber and the shopkeeper, let alone those below them on the ladder, would barely notice.

No intellectual, Jack Kemp, a former football star, was an enthusiast more attuned than most others in the New Right to broadening conservatism's appeal.³³¹ He got his start on the right-wing speaking circuit in 1965, under the patronage of the Bircher oilman, HL Hunt.³³² Kemp initially proposed tax cuts on corporations. He hoped his 1974 Jobs Creation Act would serve as an alternative to the labor-backed Humphrey-Hawkins plan for full employment. The gurus of supply-side economics, Arthur Laffer, an economist at the University of Southern California, and Jude Wanniski, a journalist at the *Wall Street Journal*, then converted the voluble

³²⁸ Box 26, Folder 5, JBS Papers; *Group Research Report*, January 20, 1977, 2; *Group Research Report*, July/August, 1981, 27.

³²⁹ Joseph A. McCartin, "'A Wagner Act for Public Employees': Labor's Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism, 1970–1976," *Journal of American History* 95 (2005): 123–48; Sophia Z. Lee, "Whose Rights? Litigating the Right to Work, 1940-1980," in *The Right and Labor in America: Politics, Ideology, and Imagination*, eds. Nelson Lichtenstein and Elizabeth Tandy Shermer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 161-80.

³³⁰ Sylvester Petro, "Sovereignty and Compulsory Public-Sector Bargaining," *Wake Forest Law Review* 25 (1974): 25–165; Jesse Helms, "Foreword," in Ralph de Toledano, *Let Our Cities Burn* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1975). The classic account, from an Austrian perspective, is Sylvester Petro, *The Labor Policy of the Free Society* (New York: Ronald Press, 1957). Both Petro and de Toledano had books republished by the JBS's Americanist Library. See Ralph de Toledano, *Seeds of Treason: The True Story of the Hiss-Chambers Tragedy* (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1965 [1950]); Sylvester Petro, *The Kohler Strike: Union Violence and Administrative Law* (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1965 [1961]).

³³¹ See Irwin Ross, "Jack Kemp Wants to Cut Your Taxes—A Lot," *Fortune*, April 10, 1978, 36-40; and Adam Clymer, "Quarterbacking for the GOP," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1978, 14-21.

³³² *Group Research Report*, February 28, 1978, 6.

Kemp. Fortified by rosy econometric models, the Kemp-Roth bill instead slashed income taxes. The shattering of the Keynesian paradigm had met practical politics.³³³ In place of conservatives' old deficit-mongering, and in marked contrast to Jimmy Carter's gloom, came a sunny politics of growth. At the 1976 Republican convention, Kemp offered up his new formula: "When the Democrats propose spending money, we should propose giving it back to the taxpayer."³³⁴ The Republican National Committee under Bill Brock enthusiastically signed on board in the summer of 1977.³³⁵ As the price for Kemp's endorsement, Ronald Reagan made Kemp-Roth the centerpiece of his economic plan starting in the fall of 1979.³³⁶ Just as the swashbuckling Second Generation supplanted their dour forebears, a Republican Party that long fretted about deficits enthusiastically embraced tax cuts.

Another critical link came with California's Proposition 13 in June 1978.³³⁷ After its passage, lingering Republican qualms about Kemp-Roth quickly melted away.³³⁸ Howard Jarvis, its leader, had joined tax protests sponsored by the Liberty Lobby.³³⁹ He described his quest in classic New Right idiom. "The Conservatives and the Republicans have been trying to reach the other side with reason for 50 years... Finally, we found that Prop 13 will reach the other side

³³³ Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 174-79, offers an incisive guide to the currents swirling around Kemp-Roth. See also Iwan Morgan, "Taxation as a Republican Issue in an Era of Stagflation," in *Seeking a New Majority: The Republican Party and American Politics, 1960-1980*, eds. Robert Mason and Iwan Morgan (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2013); Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, 166-209; Hodgson, *World Turned Right Side Up*, 186-216; and John Brooks, "Annals of Finance: The Supply Side," *New Yorker*, April 19, 1982, 97-150.

³³⁴ Speech text in Bruce R. Bartlett, *Reaganomics: Supply Side Economics in Action* (Westport, Conn.: Arlington House, 1981), 220. See also Jude Wanniski, "Looking for the Right Broom," *Wall Street Journal*, August 17, 1976, 18.

³³⁵ Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers*, 206.

³³⁶ Martin Anderson, *Revolution: The Reagan Legacy* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press 1990 [1988]), 161-63.

³³⁷ David O. Sears and Jack Citrin, *Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Clarence Y.H. Lo, *Small Property Versus Big Government: Social Origins of the Property Tax Revolt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Isaac William Martin, *The Permanent Tax Revolt: How the Property Tax Transformed American Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 98-125. Though Kemp cheered Prop 13's passage, he made clear his preference for slashing income taxes ahead of property taxes. Jack Kemp, "Prop 13 fever," *New York Daily News*, July 23, 1978, 40.

³³⁸ Bruce Bartlett, "The Revolution of 1978," *National Review*, October 27, 1978, 1333-36; Robert Kuttner, *Revolt of the Haves: Tax Rebellions and Hard Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980). For a synoptic view, see Alan Brinkley, "Reagan's Revenge: As Invented by Howard Jarvis," *New York Times Magazine*, June 19, 1994, 36-37.

³³⁹ *Group Research Report*, May 30, 1978, 18.

because it concerns a very important word to people: M-O-N-E-Y.”³⁴⁰ ALEC supported state anti-tax bills, and Milton Friedman even spoke at a gathering of state advocates.³⁴¹ The John Birch Society, for its part, sponsored TRIM (Tax Reform IMmediately) committees in more than 300 Congressional districts.³⁴² YAF’s national director, Randy Goodwin served, the group said, as Jarvis’s “right-hand man.” His successor, James Lacy, helped to draft Kemp-Roth.³⁴³ Though Jarvis and his associates had national ambitions, their ineffectual schemes such as a constitutional amendment amounted to little. Instead, Prop 13 gave the imprimatur of popular support for tax reduction.

Kemp-Roth, for its part, set the pattern for broad-based tax cuts as the policy glue for Republicans of all stripes. The prophecy had been yoked to the policy instrument. Even when it grumbled about sellouts to insiders and fat cats and capitulations to milquetoast moderates, the grassroots right never flinched at tax cuts that preeminently benefited the rich and super-rich. In the coming decade, Grover Norquist, a joined-up member of the Third Generation—via YAF, the College Republicans, the National Taxpayers Union, and adventures in the bush to fight Communism—would use his anti-tax pledge, at once gimmicky and powerful, to enforce the tax-cutting orthodoxy.³⁴⁴

Making Sense of the Long New Right

The Long New Right could encompass both the sunny tax-cutter Kemp—in a perceptive essay in 2018, the distinguished conservative intellectual historian George Nash labeled the long-

³⁴⁰ “Howard Jarvis and Gary Allen Discuss Your Taxes,” 41.

³⁴¹ William F. Rickenbacker, “Tax Rebellion,” *National Review*, June 23, 1978, 781.

³⁴² Hodgson, *World Turned Right Side Up*, 209; Box 22, Folder 31, and Box 27, Folder 60, JBS Papers.

³⁴³ *Group Research Report*, October 31, 1978, 34.

³⁴⁴ *Group Research Report*, September 30, 1982, 31; Nina Easton, *Gang of Five: Leaders at the Center of the Conservative Ascendancy* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 278; Martin, *The Permanent Tax Revolt*, 126-145.

dominant strand Kempism³⁴⁵—and paleoconservatives who emphasized the dangers of liberalism not just as an ideology but as civilizational threat to blood and soil. By the mid-1990s, with Gingrich in the speaker’s chair, Fox News blaring out the Third Generation, Buchanan articulating his full-throated vision, and the Oklahoma City bombing auguring a darker vision, its dynamics and inner tensions were on full display. The presidency of George W. Bush, arranged on rather different conservative lines, would intervene, but the direction was clear.

Two prescient students of conservatism prove excellent guides. In May 1995, Kevin Phillips, utterly disillusioned with the grassroots right in which he once saw such promise, looked out over “the map of an ideological fever swamp” and stated the essential problem of boundary maintenance. “The GOP is failing an old but critical test of U.S. politics: the need for a would-be majority to keep firm control of its fringe groups and radicals... The thrust of the right over the last decade—and especially in the last year—has been to heat up the climate in which these flames have burst forth.” Phillips framed his arguments in terms of electoral overreach, but the consequences for democracy were plain to see.³⁴⁶ That the electoral challenge has proven less daunting than the normative one leads directly to our present discontents.

The other figure was Sam Francis, a neo-Confederate former Heritage Foundation analyst and, until his firing, *National Review* writer who was close to Buchanan.³⁴⁷ If paleoconservatives sometimes resembled their neoconservative foes in expecting that erudite essays would somehow a political movement make, they never fell for the platitudes regularly emanating from conservatives who had ascended to the halls of power. In 1992, Francis laid out the core issue:

³⁴⁵ George H. Nash, “How should conservatives respond to the populist challenge?” *The New Criterion*, January 2018, 8. Though New Right figures at times eyed him warily, Richard Viguerie was an early backer of Kemp’s 1988 presidential run. See Maureen Dowd, “Is Jack Kemp Mr. Right?” *New York Times Magazine*, June 28, 1987.

³⁴⁶ Kevin Phillips, “Friendly Fire,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1995.

³⁴⁷ See Timothy Shenk, “The dark history of Donald Trump’s rightwing revolt,” *The Guardian*, August 16, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/aug/16/secret-history-trumpism-donald-trump>; and John Ganz, “The Year the Clock Broke,” *The Baffler*, November 7, 2018, <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-year-the-clock-broke-ganz>.

“Reagan conservatism, in its innermost meaning, had little to do with supply-side economics and spreading democracy. It had to do with the awakening of a people who face political, cultural, and economic dispossession, who are slowly beginning to glimpse the fact of dispossession and what dispossession will mean for them and their descendants, and who also are trying to think about the processes and powers responsible for their dispossession.”³⁴⁸

The threat, he clarified minimally, “is only in part ethnic, but also cultural, economic, and political.” Four years later, in appraising his friend, Francis emphasized the militant Catholic and neo-Confederate lineages in right-wing politics so often left out of the dominant narrative. Though Buchanan’s backers included “remnants of the ‘Old Right,’” he wrote, it was not just a replay of Barry Goldwater, John Ashbrook or Phil Crane inside “an orthodox conservative pigeonhole.” He praised Buchanan for his caustic style and for deemphasizing the substance of movement conservatism.³⁴⁹ For Francis, the Buchanan candidacy demonstrated that “a ‘Hard Right’ remains politically possible,” and that it could overthrow the “Court Conservatives”: “the policy eggheads, direct mail tycoons, 50-year-old youth leaders, and hack journalists who had passed themselves off as the Mainstream Right for the last generation.”³⁵⁰

Seen from the present vantage point, Francis was both right and wrong. Donald Trump won by soft-pedaling traditional small-government nostrums while pushing rightwards on just the fear of racial and cultural dispossession that Francis identified. Yet apart from a few Never Trumpers, Court Conservatives hardly found themselves the losers. They regrouped and reached an easy accommodation with the candidate of the populist right. Precisely the desire for power that so motivated the Court Conservatives and that lay at the heart of the Long New Right’s prophecy brought them there. And that desire for power was not a deviation from true principles, but the application of a swashbuckling political style to the problematic of partisan majority.

³⁴⁸ Samuel Francis, “The Education of David Duke,” *Chronicles*, February 1992, 7-9.

³⁴⁹ Samuel Francis, “From Household to Nation: The Middle American Populism of Pat Buchanan,” *Chronicles*, March 1996, 13.

³⁵⁰ Francis, “Buchanan II.” Buchanan eulogized Francis in 2005; see Patrick J. Buchanan, “Sam Francis: Obdurate for Truth,” *WorldNetDaily*, March 7, 2005, <https://www.wnd.com/2005/03/29236/>.

This developmental account helps to make sense of that tangled story. The Court Conservatives and what Francis called the Hard Right shared a common ancestor in root-and-branch attack on liberals and liberalism emerging in the 1950s and 1960s. As the Court Conservatives gained power, the Republican Party that became their vehicle, though organizationally strengthened, lost its capacities to think *as a party*—and so rendered itself particularly vulnerable to a kind of family reunion with the Hard Right. And so when the Republican Party, as a party, had to decide what to do with the unwanted intruder, Trump, the riddle of a party that decided not to decide seems altogether less puzzling: the Long New Right hollowed out the Republican Party.