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From the Historians: The Cold War

Eric Foner. *The Story of American Freedom* (256-259)

1. According to Foner, who was the target of Republican anticommunist rhetoric?
2. What happened to the First Amendment during the Cold War? What are some examples of this?
3. How did Cold War hysteria limit economic change after the New Deal?
4. How did the NAACP react to Cold War anticommunism?
5. How did the Cold War play a part in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that led to the end of legalized school segregation?

Robert Remini. *A Short History of the United States* (258-261)

6. How did Eisenhower compromise with Democrats during his presidency?
7. What was the purpose of the Highway Act of 1956? How was it funded?
8. How did Congress respond to the continued "communist threat" from the Soviet Union?
9. What agreement was reached at the conference in Geneva, Switzerland in May of 1954?
10. What was the new form of music that emerged around this time? Who were some of the great performers of this style?

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11. What led to Truman's firing of Douglas MacArthur?

12. How did President Eisenhower attack Democrats?

13. How did Republicans insult the 1952 Democratic candidate for President?

14. How did Truman try to protect himself from being labeled a communist or communist sympathizer? Was he successful? Explain.

15. What was the purpose of the McCarran Act in 1950?

Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States* (438-441)

16. According to Howard Zinn, what were the two motives behind the Marshall Plan?

17. What was the purpose of John F. Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress"?

18. Why did the United States (through the CIA) overthrow the leaders of Iran and Guatemala?

19. Why was the United States unhappy when Fidel Castor overthrew Fulgencio Batista, the American-backed leader of Cuba?

20. What was the Bay of Pigs? How did it turn out?

munities (such as the Irish) where the influence of the Catholic Church was strong. It was also a weapon that individuals and groups wielded in battles unrelated to defending the United States against subversion.

For McCarthy and his Republican followers, the target was often not so much Stalin but Roosevelt, and anticommunism became a potent tool in the long battle to overturn the New Deal. For many Democrats, anticommunism was a form of self-defense against Republican charges of disloyalty and a weapon in a struggle for the party's future, a way of redrawing the boundaries of acceptable liberalism to exclude Communists and all those willing to cooperate with them as in the days of the Popular Front. Indeed, "sympathetic association" with Communists—past or present—was grounds for dismissal under the government's loyalty program. For business, the anti-Communist crusade became part of a campaign to tar government intervention in the economy with the brush of socialism. Anticommunism became a tool wielded by white supremacists against black civil rights, employers against unions, and upholders of sexual morality and traditional gender roles against homosexuality, all allegedly responsible for eroding the country's fighting spirit. (Homosexuals and members of nudist colonies were among those now barred from government service.)¹²

There undoubtedly were Soviet spies in the United States. It is equally certain that the vast majority of those jailed or deprived of their livelihoods during the McCarthy era were guilty of nothing more than holding unpopular beliefs and engaging in totally legitimate political activities. As they had during World War I, the courts acquiesced in the political repression, demonstrating once again Madison's dictum that popular hysteria would override "parchment barriers" to the limitation of freedom. During the 1950s, wrote the civil libertarian John Frank, "the First Amendment . . . went into hibernation." In 1951, the Supreme Court upheld the jailing of eleven Communist Party leaders under the Smith Act. Evidently, wrote Justice Hugo Black in a stinging dissent, only "safe" opinions were protected by the Bill of Rights. Even many liberals retreated from the idea that freedom of expression was a birthright of all Americans. The ACLU refused to defend the indicted Communist leaders, and in an influential 1950 article, "Heresy Yes, Conspiracy, No," the philosopher Sidney Hook, a former Marxist, declared that normal protections of academic freedom did not apply to Communists. Hook was a key figure in the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, which sought to mobilize American intellectuals as foot soldiers in the Cold War even as it denounced the Soviets for subordinating culture and intellectual life to politics. The committee's leadership soon made its peace with McCarthyism. (The group, quipped

Dwight Macdonald, should call itself the American Committee for Cultural Freedom in Russia.)¹³

The Cold War could not but affect the domestic political agenda. In 1950, NSC 68 coyly referred to the need to defer "certain desirable programs" in order to finance military preparedness. Although calls for domestic reform hardly disappeared, and could even be justified as a way of strengthening America's hand in the battle for freedom, the range of political debate narrowed considerably. In the early years of the Truman administration, the United States confronted what some scholars have called a "social democratic" moment. As the CIO launched "Operation Dixie" in the hope of bringing unionization to the South and shattering the hold of white supremacists on politics in the region, Truman pressed for the enactment of FDR's Economic Bill of Rights. But with the failure of Operation Dixie, conservative control of Congress remained intact, and Truman's proposals stood little chance of enactment. The president's reelection in 1948 demonstrated that the electorate had no desire to dismantle the New Deal. Indeed, during the 1950s, the number of people covered by Social Security, the emblematic New Deal program, was greatly expanded. Among those included for the first time were domestic and agricultural workers.¹⁴

But the Cold War gave powerful ammunition to opponents of further change. In the largest public relations campaign in American history, the American Medical Association (AMA) successfully invoked the specter of "socialized medicine" to discredit Truman's proposal for national health insurance. The real estate industry likewise mobilized against public housing, terming it "socialized housing," part of a continuum that stretched all the way to Moscow. As the idea of expanding the welfare state faded, private welfare arrangements proliferated. The labor contracts of unionized workers established health insurance plans, automatic cost of living wage increases, paid vacations, and supplemental unemployment payments, benefits not enjoyed by the majority of the population.¹⁵

Every political and social organization had to make its peace with the anti-Communist crusade or face destruction, a wrenching experience for movements, such as labor and civil rights, in which Communists had been some of the most militant organizers. After the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which withdrew bargaining rights and legal protection from unions whose leaders failed to swear under oath that they were not Communists, the CIO expelled numerous left-wing officials and eleven Communist-led unions, representing nearly 1 million workers.¹⁶ The civil rights movement also underwent a metamorphosis. In the early years of the Truman administration, the status of black Americans enjoyed an almost unprecedented salience in national affairs.

Between 1945 and 1951, eleven northern states established fair employment practices commissions and numerous cities legislated against job discrimination and bias in access to public accommodations, measures inspired by a broad civil rights coalition involving labor, church, and black organizations. In October 1947, *To Secure These Rights*, the report of Truman's Commission on Civil Rights, offered a devastating indictment of racial inequality in America and called for government intervention to abolish segregation and ensure equal treatment in housing, employment, education, and the criminal justice system. The report, said Truman, was "an American charter of human freedom." He added that if the United States were to offer the "peoples of the world" a "choice of freedom or enslavement," it must "correct the remaining imperfections in our practice of democracy." In 1948, liberals at the Democratic National Convention placed a strong civil rights plank in the national platform, prompting a walk-out by several southern delegations.¹⁷

At first, mainstream black organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League protested the Truman administration's loyalty program and wondered aloud why congressional committees defined communism but not racism as "un-American." But while a few prominent black leaders, notably Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois, became outspoken critics of the Cold War, most eventually felt they had no choice but to go along. The NAACP launched a purge of Communists from its local branches, and when the government deprived Robeson of his passport and implausibly indicted Du Bois for failing to register as an agent of the Soviet Union, few prominent Americans, white or black, protested. (The charge against Du Bois was so absurd that even at the height of the anti-Communist hysteria, a jury acquitted him.) One result was a subtle shift in thinking and tactics among civil rights groups. Organizations like the National Negro Congress and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, in which Communists and non-Communists had cooperated in linking racial equality with labor organizing and economic reform, had been crucial to the struggles of the 1930s and war years. Their demise left a gaping hole that the NAACP, with its narrowly legalistic strategy, was ill-prepared to fill.¹⁸

Black organizations now embraced the discourse of the Cold War, while using it to advance their own aims, thus complicating the idea of freedom while helping to cement Cold War ideology as the foundation of the political culture. Both civil rights groups and the Truman administration insisted that racial inequality, an aberration in an otherwise free society, damaged the American image abroad and thus played into the Russians' hands. Indeed, in its amicus brief in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the case in which the Supreme Court in 1954 declared school segregation a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, the

administration urged the justices to consider "the problem of racial discrimination . . . in the context of the present world struggle between freedom and tyranny," and spoke of segregation's "adverse effect" on America's standing in the world.¹⁹

Even so, the height of the Cold War was an inauspicious time to raise questions about the imperfections of American freedom. It is revealing that two months after the Truman Doctrine speech, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson chose a meeting of the Delta Council, an organization of Mississippi planters, bankers, and merchants, to deliver a major address defending the president's pledge to aid "free peoples" seeking to preserve their "democratic institutions." Acheson seemed unaware that he had ventured into what the historian David Oshinsky would later call the "American Siberia" to make the case for the Cold War. Had he glanced outside the meeting place, he would have discovered large numbers of citizens deprived of the very liberties supposedly endangered by communism. The black 70 percent of the delta's population not only had no voice in choosing their government, but lived in wretched poverty and faced the persistent threat of legal and extralegal violence. "I call it slavery," one sharecropper later observed of conditions on the region's plantations. In his memoirs, published in 1969, Acheson recalled the day's activities as "thoroughly American" and the delta as a "lush and prosperous agricultural area." After all, the Mississippi delta was part of the Free World.²⁰

Aside from the integration of the armed forces, ordered by the president in 1948, little came of the Truman administration's civil rights flurry. The new state and local laws banning discrimination in employment and housing remained largely unenforced. In 1952, the Democrats' nomination of Adlai Stevenson, a candidate with little interest in civil rights, who chose a southern segregationist, John Sparkman, as his running mate, revealed how quickly the issue had faded. Even liberals, the historian Richard Hofstadter noted, were becoming "far more conscious of those things they would like to preserve than they are of those things they would like to change." In 1953, Hortense Gabel, director of the "eminently respectable" New York State Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, reported that the shadow of "fear" hung over the movement, with the result that "a great many people are shying away from all activity in the civil liberties and civil rights fronts." Time would reveal that the waning of the civil rights impulse was only temporary. But it came at a crucial historical juncture, just as the greatest housing and employment boom in American history was reconfiguring the society, opening vast new opportunities for whites while leaving blacks locked in the rural South or the decaying urban ghettos of the North.²¹

high command during World War II. Perhaps Eisenhower's most brilliant stroke was in making a promise in Detroit on October 24 that if elected he would go to Korea and attempt "an early and honorable end" to the Korean War. As a result, he won an overwhelming victory, carrying 39 states for 442 electoral and 33,824,000 popular votes, to 89 electoral votes and 26,584,000 popular votes for Stevenson. He even carried four southern states: Tennessee, Virginia, Florida, and Texas. And the Republicans captured both houses of Congress, though by very narrow margins. The twenty-year control of at least one or more of the executive and legislative branches of the government by the Democrats had come to an end.

There was hope that with such a popular and commanding general in the White House and with Congress in Republican control an energetic, effective, dynamic leadership in national and international affairs would result. No such luck. Eisenhower believed that his predecessors had exercised too much control and therefore he did not attempt to direct Congress in enacting a program that reflected his vision of where the country needed to go. He believed that true leadership consisted of reconciling different opinions on important issues, not constructing programs and guiding the legislature toward their enactment. He much preferred to play golf with successful businessmen. Not surprisingly, therefore, between 1953, when the Republicans gained control of the government, and 1955, when they lost it, the party never established true direction or achieved important accomplishments. And after 1955 the Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress and maintained it for the next forty years, winning increasing majorities with each election.

If the President did little to provide exciting ideas for new programs of reform or improvement, he did exactly what the electorate wanted and needed. They preferred rest and quietude after the long, turbulent years of depression and war. Enough, they seemed to say. Let us rest. And this is precisely what the Eisenhower administration gave them. He steered the government through a series of crises without resorting to war. And he committed himself and his party to many of the social and economic reforms already established during the years of the New Deal and Fair Deal, such as the extension of Social Security, public housing, and aid to education. He followed a policy of economic

conservatism and social liberalism. He characterized himself as "liberal on human issues, and conservative on economic ones." He especially opposed governmental intrusion into areas that private utilities could handle, not excluding atomic and power facilities.

As a political realist, Eisenhower understood the importance and value of compromise, and so he cooperated with the Democratic leadership to win passage of more moderate proposals. For example, the Social Security Act of January 14, 1954, added 10.5 million workers to the rolls and increased monthly benefits to all the participants in the program. The Wiley-Dondero bill of May 3, 1954, authorized the construction with Canada of a channel twenty-seven feet deep between Montreal and Lake Erie and established the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation to finance the operation. The seaway was completed in June 1959 and made possible the navigation of ships from Montreal to Lake Superior, except during the winter.

Of particular importance was passage of the Highway Act of 1956, which authorized construction of a 42,000-mile interstate highway system in which the federal government would contribute 90 percent of construction costs. After all, it was an interstate program. New taxes were levied on gasoline to help finance the operation. This elaborate highway system took nearly twenty-five years to complete, and the cost rose to over \$75 billion. It was the largest public works project ever attempted, and it effectively changed the way Americans lived and traveled. Congress also passed water conservation measures, school and hospital construction projects, and a health bill that supported medical research.

In achieving his goals, Eisenhower proved to be a very skilled political backroom trader. He realized he had to work with the Democratic majorities in Congress, in particular Sam Rayburn of Texas, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, majority leader in the Senate, who also recognized that it was in their interest and the interest of the Democratic Party to adopt a policy of accommodation with the administration. The resulting, if limited, success of the Eisenhower administration was attributed to this understanding by both sides.

In keeping with the promise he made during the campaign, Eisenhower went to Korea six months after taking office to lend his authority

to assist the working out of a truce. On July 27, 1953, the United States, North and South Korea, and the People's Republic of China signed an armistice agreement that drew a line at the 38th parallel, which would thereafter separate North and South Korea.

Still, the communist threat remained. The Soviet Union continued its ruthless suppression of freedom in eastern Europe, crushing rebellions in East Berlin and Hungary. Acting on Eisenhower's recommendation, Congress raised the defense budget to unprecedented heights, from nearly \$13 billion in 1950 to nearly \$40 billion in 1960. The rise of what Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex was expected to prepare the nation for any possible threat to its safety. In what was termed the Eisenhower Doctrine, Congress authorized the President to extend military and economic aid to guard the Middle East from communist expansion. Then, when Fidel Castro led an invasion that turned out to be communist in its intent and purposes and captured Cuba, the threat of possible invasion from this island that was only ninety miles from the United States became a frightening possibility. In addition, the development of the hydrogen bomb by both the United States and the Soviet Union worsened fears that the entire planet could be destroyed at any time by an escalation of the Cold War.

Communists in Indochina had been waging a struggle for independence from French rule since 1946. Now, with the conclusion of the Korean War, the People's Republic of China increased its assistance to the Indochinese nationals. An agreement was reached at a foreign ministers conference in Geneva in May 1954 to divide Indochina into two parts, like Korea. Then, on October 11, 1954, the communist-backed Viet Minh captured control of the northern half of what would now be called Vietnam, and a noncommunist government was established in the southern half. In one of his final actions as President, Eisenhower sent 3,500 troops to bolster the noncommunist southern portion of Vietnam.

ONE OF THE most extraordinary developments that appeared in the 1950s was the emergence of a youth culture that found its best expression in music. The expanded number of teenagers in this period dismissed the "swing bands" and melodic music of their parents as

old-fashioned and rather tame for their tastes and turned to what was called "rock and roll," a blend of rhythm and blues and southern country music. One of the best and most successful exponents of rock and roll was Elvis Presley, whose hip-swinging style of performing alarmed parents, who feared for their children's moral safety. With the arrival of the British rock group the Beatles, the popularity of rock and roll dominated all other forms of music. What soon evolved was an anti-establishment counterculture in which "hippies," as they were known, wore long hair, engaged in communal living, became sexually promiscuous, experimented with marijuana and other drugs, and foreswore political involvement. This hippie phase of the youth movement faded by the early 1970s. But rock and roll remained a symbol of youthful rebellion.

AMONG THE most important domestic issues that arose during the 1950s was civil rights, which Truman had tried to win but failed. As a consequence, he was forced to use executive powers to fight Jim Crow laws. Eisenhower continued this policy, if halfheartedly, but it was up to Congress to initiate legislation that would strengthen existing civil rights laws. Then, on May 17, 1954, in the landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which had allowed segregation in schools provided they were separate but equal. Now the Court ruled that compulsory racial segregation in public schools was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal rights to all citizens. The following year the Court went farther and instructed all federal district courts to require local authorities to move with "all deliberate speed" toward the desegregation of all public schools. Also in 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat and move to the back of a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and her action touched off a yearlong bus boycott in that city led by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Although President Eisenhower suffered a serious heart attack on September 24, 1955, he decided to run for a second term. The Democrats again put forward Adlai Stevenson, who was badly beaten. Eisenhower won all but seven southern states, even though the Democrats

a peninsula jutting out of the Chinese land mass, had been occupied by Japan since the end of the nineteenth century. At the end of World War II, it had been divided in two areas, the northern region dominated by Russia, the southern by the United States. But when North Korea attacked South Korea on June 25, 1950, Truman instantly committed the American armed forces stationed in Japan to defend the Republic of South Korea. "I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall," Truman informed Americans, "communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our shores." Congress supported Truman's "police action" by tripling the defense budget and instituting peacetime conscription on a permanent basis, measures which Truman had advocated for several years.

The United States had dominated the United Nations since 1945 because of its influence in Latin America, Western Europe, and the former British Empire. In 1950, the Russian delegates to the Security Council were absent in a protest against American control. The United States therefore managed to get the United Nations to take responsibility for the police action against North Korea. General Douglas MacArthur, who had directed the American occupation of Japan, was placed in command of the United Nations forces. MacArthur still hoped that Chiang Kai-shek's government could be restored in China. When he drove North Korean troops out of South Korea, he continued to move north and approached the Chinese border. The Chinese warned the United States not to advance farther; and when MacArthur continued his northern thrust, the Chinese entered the fighting and pushed American and United Nations troops back to the old border between the two Koreas. MacArthur hoped that Truman would permit him to use atomic weapons against the Chinese Communists and publicly criticized the President when weapons of total war were denied. Truman removed MacArthur from his command, and a military stalemate lasted until General Dwight Eisenhower was elected President in 1952.

It was easier for Eisenhower as a Republican to make a compromise peace with the Communists than it had been for Truman as a Democrat. "Liberal" Republicans, like Wendell Willkie and Thomas E. Dewey, the Republican presidential candidates in 1940, 1944, and 1948, had accepted the welfare provisions of Roosevelt's New Deal and his foreign policy of military internationalism. In 1952, the "liberal" Republicans had again defeated the "conservatives" led by Senator Taft and nominated the war hero Eisenhower. At the

same time as Eisenhower promised to preserve the framework of the New Deal and to continue the foreign policy of "containment," he accused the Democrats of being politically irresponsible. He linked the legislative program of the New Deal with un-American radicalism and spoke of the "creeping socialism" during "the last twenty years," which had corrupted the United States. Eisenhower also blamed the "loss" of China on the Democrats because they had been soft on communism.

In attacking the New Deal, Eisenhower especially criticized the academic intellectuals in government. For Eisenhower, the "long-haired academic men in Washington" were lacking in the masculinity necessary to defend their country. Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman had persuaded blue-collar and lower-middle-class voters that corporate leaders lacked the vitality to save America. In 1952, the Republicans generated the aura of vital executive leadership. They disparaged the Democratic candidate, Adlai Stevenson, as an "egghead" intellectual who could not understand the masses of voters.

Roosevelt had ignored civil liberties during World War II and had placed Americans of Japanese ancestry in concentration camps. Truman had instituted the Federal Employee Loyalty Program because "subversive elements must be removed from the employ of the government." In 1948, when Truman faced the opposition of another Progressive party, headed by Henry A. Wallace, he sought to identify Wallace in the public mind with the Communists. "I do not want and will not accept the support of Henry Wallace and his Communists," stated the President. But the Republicans nevertheless linked Truman and the New Deal with communism. Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin declared that "the issue between Republicans and Democrats is clearly drawn by those that have been in charge of twenty years of treason." And Senator Richard M. Nixon of California announced that the Communists had "infiltrated the very highest councils" of the Truman administration.

A prolonged "Red Scare" rolled across America from 1945 to 1955. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce demanded that all "Communists, fellow-travelers and dupes" be barred from jobs in "newspapers, radio, television, book and magazine publishing, and research institutions" as well from schools, libraries, and "large manufacturing plants." The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), supported by many in the Catholic hierarchy, including Cardinal Spellman, came to Hollywood, where its investiga-

tions of Communist influence in the movie industry led to the blacklisting of four hundred actors, writers, and directors. Members of Congress, including John F. Kennedy, Richard M. Nixon, and Lyndon B. Johnson, helped to pass the McCarran Act in 1950, which set up six concentration camps across the country to hold political prisoners. Thirty states established loyalty oaths for teachers.

Despite his military background, President Eisenhower relieved some of the tensions of the cold war. His secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, had called for the building of many long-range rockets armed with atomic warheads to serve as "the deterrent of massive retaliatory power" in a world where "the forces of good and evil are massed and armed and opposed as rarely before in history." But faced with the rapid success of the Soviets in developing atomic warheads and long-range rockets, Eisenhower decided to meet with the Russian leader, Nikita Khrushchev, to negotiate a limit to the arms race.

As the Russians placed Sputnik, an earth satellite, into orbit in 1957, jumping ahead of America in the race to pioneer the exploration of space, it looked as if Lenin's prophecy in 1917 might come true. The United States had not led the world into a new urban-industrial era in 1918 and, in 1941, it had fought against Germany and Japan to restore the status quo of 1939. Herbert Hoover's fears that another civil war among the capitalist nations would allow communism to expand out of Soviet Russia had been fulfilled. Many American cultural leaders were interpreting the experience of World War II as marking the end of the American commitment to the idea of progress, the end of the belief that an environment of rational space and linear time could be achieved.

To justify Roosevelt's permanent intrusion of political power into the domestic marketplace and the permanent intrusion of military power overseas, these men declared that a major revolution had taken place in America's cultural identity. Reinhold Niebuhr, a Protestant theologian, who had been the most important critic of isolation between 1937 and 1941, became the leading interpreter of this cultural revolution. Born in 1892, Niebuhr was a convert to liberal Protestantism and a believer that World War I would usher in the kingdom of God on earth. After 1919, a disillusioned Niebuhr moved to isolation and pacifism. A Detroit minister, Niebuhr shared the views of the "lost generation" novelists that industrialism

was irrational and destructive of human beings. "Here manual labor is a drudgery and toil is slavery; the lowliest peasant of the dark ages had more opportunity for self-expression than the highest paid employee in the Ford factory." Briefly, at the beginning of the 1930s, he turned toward Soviet Russia as he hoped that industrialism under communism could be a rational and constructive force. "The workers control the vast machinery of modern civilization," he said. "The future belongs to the workers." And as the capitalist nations of Europe seemed headed for another civil war, Niebuhr urged, "Let America hold out as an island of sanity in an insane world."

As he lost faith in the rationality of a proletarian revolution in the mid-1930s, Niebuhr began to create a "neo-orthodox" theology that denied the possibility of earthly harmony for mankind. Niebuhr criticized his former faith, liberal Protestantism, for believing that history was progressive. And he criticized communism for holding that same faith. Niebuhr used this Christian "realism" as the basis of his criticism of the isolationists. Arguing the need for the United States to fight the evil represented by Nazi Germany, Niebuhr denied that America was a virtuous New World that needed to be segregated from an evil Old World. "Every nation has its own form of spiritual pride," he wrote. "Our version is that our nation turned its back upon the vices of Europe and made a new beginning."

If Americans were part of the same sinful brotherhood of mankind as Europeans, Niebuhr continued, then "the tragic element in a human situation is the conscious choice of evil for the sake of good." Americans must choose the lesser evil of war to defeat the greater evil of Nazism. For Niebuhr, America had no rational space to preserve from European chaos, and the defeat of Nazism would not lead Europe and the rest of the world out of a perpetually compromised human history. The human choice, Niebuhr insisted, is always that of relative good and relative evil.

Niebuhr was trying, between 1939 and 1941, to influence the majority of Protestant leaders away from pacifism. Polls taken during the depression indicated that a majority of Protestant ministers had lost faith in the capitalist system. And many, as Niebuhr had much earlier, had turned toward pacifism.

Growing throughout the 1920s, the pacifist movement reached its strongest expression between 1933 and 1937. In 1933, 75 percent of Protestant ministers declared themselves opposed to any war, and in 1937, 95 percent of Americans voiced their opposition to participa-

Senate, noted that "six-sevenths of these contracts are not competitive. . . . In the alleged interest of secrecy, the government picks a company and draws up a contract in more or less secret negotiations."

C. Wright Mills, in his book of the fifties, *The Power Elite*, counted the military as part of the top elite, along with politicians and corporations. These elements were more and more intertwined. A Senate report showed that the one hundred largest defense contractors, who held 67.4 percent of the military contracts, employed more than two thousand former high-ranking officers of the military.

Meanwhile, the United States, giving economic aid to certain countries, was creating a network of American corporate control over the globe, and building its political influence over the countries it aided. The Marshall Plan of 1948, which gave \$16 billion in economic aid to Western European countries in four years, had an economic aim: to build up markets for American exports. George Marshall (a general, then Secretary of State) was quoted in an early 1948 State Department bulletin: "It is idle to think that a Europe left to its own efforts . . . would remain open to American business in the same way that we have known it in the past."

The Marshall Plan also had a political motive. The Communist parties of Italy and France were strong, and the United States decided to use pressure and money to keep Communists out of the cabinets of those countries. When the Plan was beginning, Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson said: "These measures of relief and reconstruction have been only in part suggested by humanitarianism. Your Congress has authorized and your Government is carrying out, a policy of relief and reconstruction today chiefly as a matter of national self-interest."

From 1952 on, foreign aid was more and more obviously designed to build up military power in non-Communist countries. In the next ten years, of the \$50 billion in aid granted by the United States to ninety countries, only \$5 billion was for nonmilitary economic development.

When John F. Kennedy took office, he launched the Alliance for Progress, a program of help for Latin America, emphasizing social reform to better the lives of people. But it turned out to be mostly military aid to keep in power right-wing dictatorships and enable them to stave off revolutions.

From military aid, it was a short step to military intervention. What Truman had said at the start of the Korean war about "the rule of force" and the "rule of law" was again and again, under Truman and his successors, contradicted by American action. In Iran, in 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency succeeded in overthrowing a government which

nationalized the oil industry. In Guatemala, in 1954, a legally elected government was overthrown by an invasion force of mercenaries trained by the CIA at military bases in Honduras and Nicaragua and supported by four American fighter planes flown by American pilots. The invasion put into power Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, who had at one time received military training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The government that the United States overthrew was the most democratic Guatemala had ever had. The President, Jacobo Arbenz, was a left-of-center Socialist; four of the fifty-six seats in the Congress were held by Communists. What was most unsettling to American business interests was that Arbenz had expropriated 234,000 acres of land owned by United Fruit, offering compensation that United Fruit called "unacceptable." Armas, in power, gave the land back to United Fruit, abolished the tax on interest and dividends to foreign investors, eliminated the secret ballot, and jailed thousands of political critics.

In 1958, the Eisenhower government sent thousands of marines to Lebanon to make sure the pro-American government there was not toppled by a revolution, and to keep an armed presence in that oil-rich area.

The Democrat-Republican, liberal-conservative agreement to prevent or overthrow revolutionary governments whenever possible—whether Communist, Socialist, or anti-United Fruit—became most evident in 1961 in Cuba. That little island 90 miles from Florida had gone through a revolution in 1959 by a rebel force led by Fidel Castro, in which the American-backed dictator, Fulgencio Batista, was overthrown. The revolution was a direct threat to American business interests. Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy had repealed the Platt Amendment (which permitted American intervention in Cuba), but the United States still kept a naval base in Cuba at Guantanamo, and U.S. business interests still dominated the Cuban economy. American companies controlled 80 to 100 percent of Cuba's utilities, mines, cattle ranches, and oil refineries, 40 percent of the sugar industry, and 50 percent of the public railways.

Fidel Castro had spent time in prison after he led an unsuccessful attack in 1953 on an army barracks in Santiago. Out of prison, he went to Mexico, met Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara, and returned in 1956 to Cuba. His tiny force fought guerrilla warfare from the jungles and mountains against Batista's army, drawing more and more popular support, then came out of the mountains and marched across the country to Havana. The Batista government fell apart on New Year's Day 1959.

In power, Castro moved to set up a nationwide system of education, of housing, of land distribution to landless peasants. The government

confiscated over a million acres of land from three American companies, including United Fruit.

Cuba needed money to finance its programs, and the United States was not eager to lend it. The International Monetary Fund, dominated by the United States, would not loan money to Cuba because Cuba would not accept its "stabilization" conditions, which seemed to undermine the revolutionary program that had begun. When Cuba now signed a trade agreement with the Soviet Union, American-owned oil companies in Cuba refused to refine crude oil that came from the Soviet Union. Castro seized these companies. The United States cut down on its sugar buying from Cuba, on which Cuba's economy depended, and the Soviet Union immediately agreed to buy all the 700,000 tons of sugar that the United States would not buy.

Cuba had changed. The Good Neighbor Policy did not apply. In the spring of 1960, President Eisenhower secretly authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to arm and train anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Guatemala for a future invasion of Cuba. When Kennedy took office in the spring of 1961 the CIA had 1,400 exiles, armed and trained. He moved ahead with the plans, and on April 17, 1961, the CIA-trained force, with some Americans participating, landed at the Bay of Pigs on the south shore of Cuba, 90 miles from Havana. They expected to stimulate a general rising against Castro. But it was a popular regime. There was no rising. In three days, the CIA forces were crushed by Castro's army.

The whole Bay of Pigs affair was accompanied by hypocrisy and lying. The invasion was a violation—recalling Truman's "rule of law"—of a treaty the U.S. had signed, the Charter of the Organization of American States, which reads: "No state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state."

Four days before the invasion—because there had been press reports of secret bases and CIA training for invaders—President Kennedy told a press conference: "... there will not be, under any conditions, any intervention in Cuba by United States armed forces." True, the landing force was Cuban, but it was all organized by the United States, and American war planes, including American pilots, were involved; Kennedy had approved the use of unmarked navy jets in the invasion. Four American pilots of those planes were killed, and their families were not told the truth about how those men died.

The success of the liberal-conservative coalition in creating a national anti-Communist consensus was shown by how certain impor-

tant news publications cooperated with the Kennedy administration in deceiving the American public on the Cuban invasion. *The New Republic* was about to print an article on the CIA training of Cuban exiles, a few weeks before the invasion. Historian Arthur Schlesinger was given copies of the article in advance. He showed them to Kennedy, who asked that the article not be printed, and *The New Republic* went along.

James Reston and Turner Catledge of the *New York Times*, on the government's request, did not run a story about the imminent invasion. Arthur Schlesinger said of the *New York Times* action: "This was another patriotic act, but in retrospect I have wondered whether, if the press had behaved irresponsibly, it would not have spared the country a disaster." What seemed to bother him, and other liberals in the cold war consensus, was not that the United States was interfering in revolutionary movements in other countries, but that it was doing so unsuccessfully.

Around 1960, the fifteen-year effort since the end of World War II to break up the Communist-radical upsurge of the New Deal and wartime years seemed successful. The Communist party was in disarray—its leaders in jail, its membership shrunken, its influence in the trade union movement very small. The trade union movement itself had become more controlled, more conservative. The military budget was taking half of the national budget, but the public was accepting this.

The radiation from the testing of nuclear weapons had dangerous possibilities for human health, but the public was not aware of that. The Atomic Energy Commission insisted that the deadly effects of atomic tests were exaggerated, and an article in 1955 in the *Reader's Digest* (the largest-circulation magazine in the United States) said: "The scare stories about this country's atomic tests are simply not justified."

In the mid-fifties, there was a flurry of enthusiasm for air-raid shelters; the public was being told these would keep them safe from atomic blasts. A government consultant and scientist, Herman Kahn, wrote a book, *On Thermonuclear War*, in which he explained that it was possible to have a nuclear war without total destruction of the world, that people should not be so frightened of it. A political scientist named Henry Kissinger wrote a book published in 1957 in which he said: "With proper tactics, nuclear war need not be as destructive as it appears..."

The country was on a permanent war economy which had big pockets of poverty, but there were enough people at work, making enough money, to keep things quiet. The distribution of wealth was still unequal. From 1944 to 1961, it had not changed much: the lowest fifth of the families received 5 percent of all the income; the highest fifth received 45 percent of all the income. In 1953, 1.6 percent of the adult