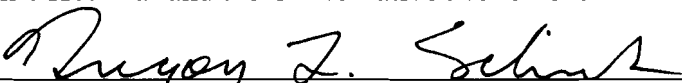


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This thesis examines the post-World War II conservative movement, focusing on anticommunism, a major component of the movement. The main focus of the thesis is an examination of the anticommunist theory of James Burnham. It examines his life as an influential Trotskyist to his days as an important figure in the conservative movement. The thesis examines his Leftist and conservative thought, but primarily focuses on his anticommunist theory, which was developed in his books and *National Review* articles. Burnham's anticommunism was driven by his empirical thought and his interpretation of communism as an ideological threat. His anticommunist theory strengthened this strain in the American social and political tradition, a process that contributed to the downfall of Soviet-led global communism.

JAMES BURNHAM'S HOT WAR AND THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

A Thesis

Presented to

The Department of Social Sciences

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

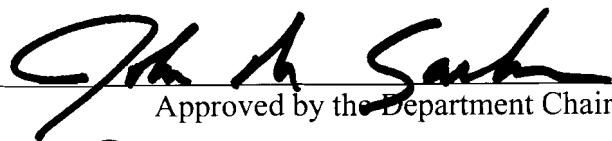
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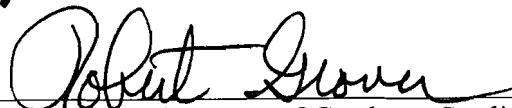
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PREFACE

Real anticommunism-what it had been, what it was, how it had mattered-was long forgotten, a dim relic of an age gone by. Indeed, as communism itself faded into the past, so did the reasons why Americans once fought so savagely among themselves over how they should respond to it, or the reasons why Americans sacrificed so much for so long to confront, contain, and defeat it.

Richard Gid Powers¹

The post-World War II conservative renaissance has been chronicled in many different ways. George H. Nash's, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement In America: Since 1945*, focused on the conservative intellectual revival as a diverse intellectual revival as a comprehensive set of ideas that at best can only be a semi-coherent political philosophy. William A. Rusher's *The Rise of the Right* and Lee Edward's *The Conservative Revolution*, concentrated on the political rise of conservatism, while Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors*, a case study of Orange County, California focused on the social factors involved in the development of the Right.²

Other scholars focused their study on the organizations that transformed the conservatism from an intellectual to a political movement, such as Jonathan M. Schoenwald's *A Time for Choosing*, or Gregory L. Schneider's *Cadres for Conservatism*. Schoenwald contended that the intellectual diffusion that created the conservative movement culture was a process of developing and refining conservative political and social organizations. In a more detailed organizational focus, Schneider examined the student organization Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), and their role in the

¹ Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 425.

² George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945* (Wilmington, Delaware: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1998); William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984); Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (New York: The Free Press, 1999); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8, 19.

conservative movement. He focused on how YAF developed political action campaigns that promoted anticommunism, fought for Barry Goldwater, and combated the New Left.³

What is consistent with these scholars of the conservative movement is recognition that the conservative revival was contingent upon three main currents of ideas flowing through American social and political thought. These ideas are categorized as libertarianism, traditionalism, and anticommunism, and while all three have been attacked by the political Left, anticommunism has historically been their favorite enemy. One Leftist historian broadly labeled anticommunism as a “hysterical fear.” This attack from the Left, which started in the 1950s, has fostered a negative perception of anticommunism.⁴

Some discretion is needed, because anticommunism has indeed been associated with irresponsible elements and moments in American history, such as Joseph McCarthy, Robert Welch, and his anticommunist organization, the John Birch Society (JBS). However, it should be noted that while Welch and the JBS supported a hyper-conspiratorial anticommunism, which led to irresponsible accusations, the organization engaged in law-abiding anticommunist education and political activism.

The hostility of the Left towards anticommunism is based upon the Left’s and Right’s different interpretations of the threat of communism that began with Russia’s communist revolution in 1917 and came to a boil during the Cold War. Conservatives saw communism not primarily as an attack on liberal values, such as academic freedom

³ Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Contemporary Rise of the Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

⁴ It was Howard Zinn who labeled anticommunism a “hysterical fear” in, *Declarations of Independence: Cross Examining American Ideology* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 260.

or free speech, but as an attack on religion, the family, and the other main political, economic, and cultural values that are derived from the American and Western tradition. Liberals and Leftists believed anticommunists, in their zealous effort to stamp out communists, were infringing on their values of democratic rights, and the right to dissent.⁵ In addition, while the Right stood diametrically opposed to communism, the Left had certain elements that inadvertently hindered their anticommunist campaigns, such as ideals and programs that sought to limit the free-market, increase state power, and attack traditional institutions. In some cases, these elements, such as attacks on traditional institutions could aid communist causes. Conservative anticommunism burned with a white heat stressing confrontation with, and defeat of, communism. Such a view became a predominant part of the conservative political and social movement in the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶

Anticommunism served to unite the diverse currents of the conservative movement, which provided it with the cohesion required for the development of political power. The conservative rise in politics increased and strengthened the anticommunist

⁵ Liberalism, championed by liberals, referred to often in this thesis, can generally be defined as a political philosophy that sought to maximize the rights of the individual through democratic government. However, liberalism, while maintaining its central tenet of maximizing the rights of the individual, went through a metamorphous in the 1930s. Liberalism prior to the 1930s championed small government and the free-market to maximize the rights of the individual, now referred to as classical liberalism, but liberalism in the 1930s and through the Cold War championed bigger government and sought to regulate the economy. These means were believed by liberals to be a better route to maximize the rights of the individual. For example, liberals argued that bigger government was needed to maximize the rights of African Americans in the South and throughout the country (i.e. Civil Rights). Liberals also believed that government should interfere in the free market to lessen its hardships, commonly referred to as Keynesian economics, which liberals believed would provide people with more social justice, therefore maximizing their rights as individuals.

⁶ Robert Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Robert Welch, 1961), 71-112; McGirr, 9-10; Powers, 254; Nash, 92-94.

strain in America, a condition that contributed to the defeat of communism in its most formidable embodiment, the Soviet Union.⁷

This study will examine this important strain of conservative thought through James Burnham, one of America's most important twentieth century thinkers.

Burnham's importance to conservative anticommunism was profound. As Jerome L. Himmelstein noted, Burnham was, "...the most able and influential interventionist conservative."⁸ Kevin J. Smant, a biographer of Burnham, wrote:

Burnham's importance lies in two areas. First, and most obvious, was his role in formulating and popularizing an anti-Communist strategy for American foreign policy. His interpretations gave the most effective voice to, and supplied the theoretical grounding for, conservative anti-Communism with respect to foreign policy.⁹

These acclamations were derived from a span of over thirty years that Burnham spent working for the conservative and anticommunist cause. He wrote three books that were integral to the varied development of conservative thought, and penned five books that supplied a confrontational and victory oriented anticommunist theory. In addition, Burnham was a senior editor and wrote a regular column for over twenty years at *National Review*, the masthead of the conservative movement. *National Review* founder, William F. Buckley, Jr., has written that Burnham was, "...the dominant intellectual influence in the development of this journal [*National Review*]."¹⁰ Buckley's compliment demonstrated the influence of Burnham, not just at *National Review*, but also to anticommunism and the conservative movement.

⁷ Nash, 116-117; and Powers, 191-420.

⁸ Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 38.

⁹ Kevin J. Smant, *How Great the Triumph: James Burnham, Anti-Communism and the Conservative Movement* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992), 163.

¹⁰ William F. Buckley, Jr., "James Burnham 1905-1987" *National Review* (September 11, 1987):

This study begins with a short history of the post-World War II conservative movement, with an emphasis on conservative anticommunism, a necessary context for understanding Burnham's political thought. A biographical sketch of Burnham follows, but the primary focus is on Burnham's anticommunist theory, his political thought in general, and its relation to conservatism. The thesis will show that Burnham's political theory, in which anticommunism was the dominant strain, was empirically based and prescribed. This gave Burnham's anticommunism a protean character.

In a broader perspective this study is an attempt to resurrect attention to the necessary role anticommunism played in American history. As Richard Gid Powers writes, historical reflection usually focuses on:

...The melodramatic excesses of anticommunism at its worst and most extreme, the stereotype of the anticommunist as McCarthyite, militarist, and bigot. Only the misdeeds of the anticommunists were remembered, not the beliefs distorted by the extremists.¹¹

In truth anticommunism was a vital strain in modern American social and political thought and practice, and deserves more attention for this reason. The negative historical misperception of anticommunism can have vital consequences, because as most social scientists realize, the comprehension of what happened in the past can shape the future. To some, communism remains an ideal and anticommunism increasingly becomes a hysterical fear. This is also why Burnham's anticommunist theory is still relevant today.

Communism still exists. Communism is the governing system of China, the most populated country on earth, which is armed with nuclear weapons, and in North Korea, a rogue nation, currently seeking the development of nuclear weapons. But global

¹¹ Powers, 425.

communism was decimated when the dragon was severed from its head with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

However, communism is still a danger. Specifically, this danger exists in higher learning institutions where communism is concealed in less pejorative terms, such as progressivism, and relativism. These philosophies are prevalent and even dominant on college campuses.¹² Progressivism is based on the optimistic conception that humans are inherently structured for progression, and relativism is based on the conception that truth is subjective. These philosophical strains contain the seeds of communism, because they share continuity with communism, which subscribes to the ability of humans to develop a social utopia, where social distinctions are non-existent or relative. This does not mean that progressivism and relativism are inherently communist. In fact, in their tempered forms they both provide necessary balance to the political spectrum, but if they are unchecked they can lead to the same kind of idealism that attempted to manifest itself in Russia, but resulted in mass terror and deception.

Such dangerous tendencies also exist on the Right, but in other forms.

Nationalism in its extreme was the path to Nazism, which shared a philosophical continuity with the Right. However, the extreme forms on the Right, because of the rise of Hitler, are constantly checked, at least currently, not only by the Left, but by the Right as well, and rightfully so. However, the corresponding event that should serve to check the Left, the rise of communism in Russia, does not serve the same purpose. Therefore,

¹² For evidence of a leftist (i.e. progressive or relativist) ideological predominance in institutions of higher learning among faculty members and curriculum, see Alan Kors and Harvey A. Silvergate, *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses* (New York: The Free Press, 1998); and Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990). It is the contention of these authors that the New Left ideologically controls higher education.

progressivism and relativism are almost unbridled on college campuses.¹³ This condition could lead to the erosion of the American social and political tradition, which currently is antithetical to communist development.

Progressivism and relativism remained unchecked by the Soviet disaster, because a historical misinterpretation has occurred. The interpretation of communism has become rather benign, it is reflected upon as either a good system, but not possible to achieve, or a good system, workable, but corrupted by Joseph Stalin. In historical reality communism was an ideological terror unparalleled in human history, but it seems communism's greatest trick, like the devil, was to convince man that it never existed, and therefore, lives glamorously in the rhetoric of its ideology separate from its real manifestation.

Three examples that occurred recently will serve to highlight this phenomenon. First, in a discussion among intelligent and historically educated people, an argument occurred over the greatest developments or events of the twentieth century in the U.S. Among the most recurrent answers were World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, immigration, and technological advances, such as nuclear fission and fusion, automobiles, airplanes, and the computer chip. Of notable absence was the mention of the Cold War. The second example was a radio program in which the host discussed Islamic fundamentalism as a dangerous development, and equal to other dangerous ideological developments in the twentieth century, such as imperialism, fascism, and Stalinist communism. Of noting interest was the adjective of "Stalinist," which has the intended purpose of dividing the definition of communism into a dangerous and non-dangerous system. Stalinism indicates the dangerous form of communism. The last

¹³ Kimball, xi-xviii, and Kors and Silvergate, 1-6.

example was a panel led discussion at a university on the topic of China in current affairs. Communism, as in Communist China, was omitted from the discussions title, apparently a characteristic that is minor significance. However, it did foreshadow the direction of the discussion, which was not to include any attacks or inquiries into China's communism. Any deviation was met, from the panel, mostly composed of American professors, with harsh and emotionally laced ridicule, which would only tolerate an environment of subjective analysis.

In each example you can see the relatively benign or indifferent consideration of communism. In one instance it is not even registered on the scales of important historical developments, in another instance it was seen as an evil only in its relation to Stalin, and lastly, it is dismissed easily enough to not even be discussed in a current discussion of communist China. Where along the line did communism become so docile, imagine if fascism was considered in such a way, to be either a good system if workable, or bad only in that Adolf Hitler corrupted it. The idea is unfathomable.

The misinterpretation of communism developed from historians committed to their ideological training (i.e. progressivism, and relativism). In some cases the misinterpretation is derived from a conscious "denial" of some historians to admit the atrocities of the Soviet Union, a phenomenon that John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr examined in their book, *In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage*. The authors provided many examples of historians whitewashing the crimes of Stalin and Lenin to advance their own anti-capitalist ideological goals. Haynes and Klehr argued that this historical misinterpretation was serving to revive communism. They wrote:

...Communism as a pleasant figment of the "progressive" worldview lives on, giving a phantom life to the illusions and historical distortions that sustained the

murderous and oppressive ideology. The intellectual Cold War, alas, is not over. Academic revisionists who color the history of American communism in benign hues see their teaching and writing as the preparation of a new crop of radicals for the task of overthrowing American capitalism and its democratic constitutional order in the name of social justice and peace. Continuing to fight the Cold War in history, they intend to reverse the victory of the West and convince the next generation that the wrong side won, and to prepare the way for a new struggle.¹⁴

But the danger can be more concealed than the omission of facts. Some Leftist ideological interpretations of Soviet communism fully admit the atrocities of the Soviet Union, but still contribute to the rebirth of the idea of communism as a desirable achievement. Such a misinterpretation can be examined in the work of Howard Zinn, a history professor and author of numerous books on history and political theory. Zinn is relatively popular at the college student level, and has written over fifteen books. As one American history professor remarked, “If you are going to teach American history you better become familiar with Howard Zinn.”¹⁵

Zinn concludes that the regime that governed in the Soviet Union was not communist, but a totalitarian rule of terror and deception created by Stalin who deformed the true communist revolution.¹⁶ Zinn believes that the course of history has been controlled and directed by elites, this is not a new idea, Burnham also subscribed to an elitist theory of control; however, unlike Burnham, Zinn believes that elites unnaturally usurped the natural rights of the people to control their own destiny. One example is his theory on violence, which he contends cannot be found in biology, anthropology,

¹⁴ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003), 8-9.

¹⁵ The professor who said this was Dr. Melodie Andrews during a class on American colonial history at Minnesota State University, Mankato in the fall semester of 2001. I was in the class, but I do not remember the exact date. I do remember the remark alerted by attention to investigate some of Zinn's books. She was specifically referring to his general history of the U.S. Howard Zinn, *A Peoples History of the United States: 1492-Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999). Dr. Andrews was not an extreme Leftist by any means, but was representative of Leftist ideological teaching currents in history.

¹⁶ Howard Zinn, *Declaration of Independence: Cross-Examining American Ideology* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 278, 268.

psychology, and zoology, it can; however, be found in history. But this does not prove violence is innate to human beings, violence is actually the result of a command and obey structure created by the elites. Thus, violence was an unnatural conditioned reflex. One wonders how any organized civilization is to be developed without a command and obey structure? This being the case, simplified, all nation states and their correlating ideologies are illegitimate, because they are unnatural control structures for the exploitation of the masses by the elites. Thus, Zinn can conclude that World War II was an unjust war, because capitalism and its democratic system was an evil just like Nazism, but to a lesser extent.¹⁷

Zinn's alternative to elite control, the command and obey structure, is a new world order of peace fostered from, "...an egalitarian society, a cooperative commonwealth...a world without national boundaries," which is fostered from his political ideology of progressivism and relativism. Now one can begin to understand Zinn's interpretation of communism.¹⁸

Zinn contends the current course of history is illegitimate and therefore, he must also develop what is legitimate. Illegitimacy can only be established if there is legitimacy. What is legitimate is essentially communism. If communism is Zinn's ideal, the legitimate course, then it could not have manifested itself in Russia, which turned into anything but Zinn's ideal. If communism in Russia was Zinn's ideal then his entire political and historical ideology implodes. Zinn wrote:

The ideas of Marx and Engels are profound in their analysis of modern society, inspiring in their vision of a future, truly human way to live. The Soviet Union,

¹⁷ Zinn, *Declarations of Independence*, 32-105.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50. For another idealist vision of Zinn's, see Zinn, *A People's History*, 652-655.

the first revolution to claim a Marxist heritage, has violated that vision, has given socialism a bad name, which it does not deserve.¹⁹

Confusion must be cleared up; indeed, the communist revolution in Russia did not live up to Zinn's idealism. Therefore, Zinn can justify his interpretation that the communist ideal was betrayed by the Soviet Union.

Enter Burnham. Burnham's break with the Left and his anticommunism was based on the incarnation of communism in the Soviet Union, which monopolized power, and created a totalitarian enslavement based on terror and deception. Burnham believed, unlike Zinn, that communism could only be measured by what it actually developed into, apart from its ideal rhetoric. Burnham wrote:

We cannot understand the nature of revolutionary or any social movements by their "principles" by their avowed and verbalized program, but only by what they disclose themselves to be in action. Revolutionary movements are defined not by what they say but what they do."²⁰

Therefore, communism could not be separated from Stalinism or the Soviet Union, because communism was Stalin and the Soviet Union. Burnham believed the greatest trick that communism played was to convince the world that it was not Stalinism, through the rhetoric of de-Stalinization, and simultaneously this was non-communist world's greatest error, which fell for the trick. The path to some utopian development would inherently have a transitional phase.

In returning to Zinn's ideal course of history, one must ask exactly how does this universal brotherhood of pacifism, cooperative commonwealth, and economic and social leveling develop, does society just eventually wake up, and tune themselves into Zinn's ideology? What if people do not share the same views as Zinn, then does it need to be

¹⁹ Zinn, *Declarations of Independence*, 271.

²⁰ James Burnham, "Lenin's Heir," *Partisan Review* vol. 12 (1945): 71.

implemented through force, and if so by whom, or does his idealism roar its ugly, inherently attached side the transitional dictatorship, the Left's old friend uncle Joe.

Zinn elaborating on one of his ideal prescriptions for the world wrote, "There are teachers in classrooms all over the world who long to talk to their pupils about peace and solidarity among people of all nations and races."²¹ And that, professor Zinn, as Burnham would have concluded, is the problem. Historians should reexamine the sober and realist thought of individuals like James Burnham, in order to fully appreciate the history of anticommunism in America and its necessary role even today.

²¹ Zinn, *Declarations of Independence*, 300.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PREFACE.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xviii
<u>CHAPTER</u>	
1. The Conservative Movement.....	1
An Intellectual Dissent.....	1
Anticommunism.....	10
Cold War Anticommunism.....	12
Makeshift Cohesion: The Development of the Conservative Movement.....	25
More Conservatives and Mainstream Acceptance.....	34
2. A LOUD LIFE.....	40
To the Left.....	40
Trotsky's Ideological Confinement.....	44
To the Right.....	49
3. ANTICOMMUNIST THEORY.....	66
Machiavellian Anticommunism.....	66
The Nature of Communism.....	69
The Seventh Period.....	72
Obstacles.....	76
The Liberals.....	82
Containment or Liberation.....	86

Burnham's <i>National Review</i> Anticommunism: 1955-1978.....	101
The Decline of the West.....	110
Major Events in the Struggle for the World.....	113
Conclusions.....	119
The Political Practicality and Inconsistencies in James Burnham's Anticommunism.....	123
4. James Burnham's Political Thought.....	126
A Machiavellian Framework.....	126
Anti-Ideologist.....	127
The Conservative.....	132
A Neoconservative?.....	140
In Conclusion.....	141
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	148
APPENDIX.....	153

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCF	American Committee for Cultural Freedom
AWP	American Workers Party
CCF	Congress for Cultural Freedom
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FGC	Free German Committee
JBS	John Birch Society
<i>NR</i>	<i>National Review</i>
NYU	New York University
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination
TCLA	Trotskyist Communist League of America
TPC	The Protracted Conflict
TWW	Third World War
YAF	Young Americans for Freedom
WP	Workers Party
WPUS	Workers Party of the United States

CHAPTER I THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

1. An Intellectual Dissent.

The history of post-World War II American conservatism begins with the development of the three main intellectual currents that fostered the conservative movement. Libertarianism, traditionalism, and anticommunism were not directly born out of the great social upheavals at mid-twentieth century. While World War II, with its mass destruction, organized genocide, the atomic bomb, and the drift towards statism all helped to foster a climate that was fertile ground for conservative intellectual development, libertarianism, traditionalism, and anticommunism had long roots existing in America's social and political tradition. Libertarianism, a strain that promoted individual rights and was hostile to large government, developed out of an American tradition of anti-statism since the founding of the United States, to the classical liberals of the nineteenth century, and to recent pre-World War II thinkers, such as Albert Jay Nock. Traditionalism, always a part of the South and intellectually expressed by the Southern Agrarians in the 1930s, has also been located by such scholars as James Burnham and Russell Kirk as a current in the political theory of the founding fathers. Anticommunism had a long history and had already become an American past time, though slightly ebbing in the 1930s and during World War II.¹

¹ For the most seminal investigation on the three main intellectual currents of conservative thought see George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1998), 1-117; for more concise examinations of the three currents see also Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 75-100; Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up: The History of the Conservative Ascendancy in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 1-45; Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 13-53; William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right* (New York: William and Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), 15-53; Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University, 1999), 7-30; Gregory L. Schneider, ed.,

The catastrophic events of the World War II era served to bolster conservative ideas, by demonstrating to intellectuals that progressive ideologies were, in fact, not progressively marching society forward, but tearing apart the heritage of Western freedom. The three intellectual currents were never unified on the remedies to the challenges of the mid-twentieth century, but usually were united in locating the causes, which were found in progressive ideologies, such as statism, communism, liberalism, and philosophies like relativism.

The libertarian strain of American conservatism located regression in the twentieth century in the acceptance of statism as a solution to social problems.² Libertarians argued that true freedom only existed when the individual was free, which meant that values and rights could only originate from the individual. Such freedom was only provided through the free-market, which was the most central component of human existence. The famed Austrian libertarian economist Friedrich A. Hayek wrote, “Economic control is not merely control of a sector of human life, which can be separated from the rest it is the control of the means for all our ends.”³ Furthermore, the only economic system that could ensure individual freedom was the free-market, because the

Conservatism in America Since 1930: A Reader (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 53-168; and Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001), 14-34; For an examination of Nockian libertarianism see Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy the State* (San Francisco: Fox and Wilkes, 1994); For a study on pre-World War II traditionalism or agrarianism see Paul V. Murphy, *The Rebuke of History: The Southern Agrarians and American Conservative Thought* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America*, 5-15; For James Burnham’s and Russell Kirk’s examination of traditionalism as a current in the American political tradition see James Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959); and Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953); For an examination of American anticommunism pre-World War II see Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 1-154.

² For a more in depth examination of libertarianism see Nash, 1-29; and John L. Kelly, *Bringing the Market Back In: The Political Revitalization of Market Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 1-80.

free-market was based on voluntary transactions, not coercion, which was at the base of any state planned economy. Milton Friedman, a member of the Chicago school of economics, wrote:

Fundamentally, there are only two ways of co-ordinating the economic activities of millions. One is central direction involving the use of coercion-the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state. The other is voluntary co-operation of individuals-the technique of the market place. The possibility of co-ordination through voluntary co-operation rests on the elementary-yet frequently denied-proposition that both parties to an economic transaction benefit from it, *provided the transaction is bi-laterally voluntary and informed*. Exchange can therefore bring about co-ordination without coercion.⁴

Ludwig von Mises, another famed Austrian economist, also wrote of the importance of the free-market to ensure individual freedom:

Laissez faire does not mean soulless mechanical forces operate. It means: let each Individual choose how he wants to cooperate in the social division of labor; let the consumers determine what the entrepreneurs should produce. Planning means: Let the government alone choose and enforce its rulings by the apparatus of coercion and compulsion.⁵

While Mises, Hayek, and Friedman all greatly influenced the libertarian challenge to statism, it was Hayek's famous polemic, *The Road to Serfdom*, which shook the growing statist establishment to the core. In his book, dedicated to the socialists of all parties, Hayek argued that state planning led to serfdom, while the free-market led to freedom. The shocking side of his book was not that communism and fascism led to enslavement, such a fact was obvious, but that the growth of state influence on the free-market was the path to totalitarianism. The argument was stunning, because the contemporary prevailing idea of economics was based on the Keynesian concept of a

³ Friedrich von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 101.

⁴ Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 13; the italics are Friedman's.

⁵ Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 726.

welfare state, which consisted of heavy government spending, borrowing, and taxing to direct the economy. The assumption was that the welfare state was the best defense against the rise of totalitarianism, because it softened the harsh cycles of the free-market.⁶

Hayek was not arguing that the free-market was perfect, but that it provided the most individual freedom. However, people believed they needed security from the free-market by government intervention, such as welfare, or wage and price fixing; furthermore, they believed that government interference in the market would not lead to interference in other aspects of their lives. To Hayek, no idea could be more erroneous. Once government started to plan the economy it would have to control both production and consumption, which would entail the government dictating how and where you work, how much you got paid, and what you could buy with your wages. In short, state planning would lead to endless government coercion.⁷

To achieve a planned society the state would have to plan in terms of a majority, and would, for rhetorical sake, label planning as serving the interests of the collective good. Therefore, government would claim taxes, confiscate property, fix incomes and prices for the collective good of society, and anyone who argued against such actions would be seen as an enemy of society. Once society trumped the primacy of the individual, the values and rights of the individual became obsolete. The only rights and values that existed were the ones that benefited the collective good of society. But here was the frightening consequence. Society could not express an all inclusive value system, so who or whom would determine what the values and rights of society were? Hayek argued that a planned economy would involve totalitarian control by either an

⁶ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 167-180.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 119-133.

individual or a group, which would be much more efficient in the planning process than a representative government, because it would not have to mediate between different value systems. Values would be expressed through the mystical justification of the collective good, a value system intertwined with the state; those who dissented from the actions of the state were enemies of society.⁸

The monopoly the state sought over the economy would become a monopoly of every facet of life. The individual, with no recourse against the state, would be subject to the rule of the state. For example, the state may decide that the plurality of religion is an unstable factor in planning society, and for the good of society it decides to create one state religion or eliminate religion altogether. Or, the state may decide that people in wheelchairs are a hindrance to the majority of society, so it decides to liquidate those who use wheelchairs, and justifies the action by saying that those in wheelchairs were not benefiting the collective good of society.⁹

The planned society, far from meeting its goals of progressive development, would stagnate and regress, because a collective society must seek the conformity of thought for the sake of cooperative planning. However, knowledge and progress were the outgrowth of the interaction of conflicting ideas. Hayek wrote:

Interaction of individuals, possessing different knowledge and different views is what constitutes the life of thought. The growth of reason is a social process based on the existence of such differences.¹⁰

The totalitarian outcome of the planned society was started by a shift to the welfare state in the name of security. Hayek used a quote from Benjamin Franklin in his book that summarizes the situation. “Those who would give up essential liberty to

⁸ Hayek, (1956), 32-118.

⁹ Ibid., 134-201.

purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”¹¹ Despite his fear of growing statism, Hayek still believed in government and saw it as a necessary evil. The role of government was to be minimized, serving only to protect voluntary, bilateral, and informed transactions by the rule of law. The rule of law was the antithesis to arbitrary rule, which by whimsical decree could alter the foundation of a free voluntary society and the informed transactions of the free-market.¹²

Traditionalists, contrary to libertarians, saw the crisis of the West not as the result of a decline in individual freedom but as a result of too much individual freedom. The individual had been uprooted from traditional values, values that provided man with transcendental and earthly guides to live a moral life beneficial to himself and his community. Without these traditional guides, the uprooted individual was left blowing in the relativist winds of the twentieth century. The horrors of fascism and communism were the result, leading to man becoming what Richard M. Weaver labeled a “moral idiot.”¹³

Weaver, in his profoundly iconoclastic book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, traced the moral decay of the twentieth century back to the fourteenth century and to William of Occam’s heresy of nominalism. Nominalism was the idea that served, “...to banish the reality which is perceived by the intellect and to posit as reality that which perceived by the senses.”¹⁴ Thus, reality became only what could be rationalized through our senses. If a transcendental order of truth could not empirically be proven to exist, and man could only rationalize what could be physically proven, humans were now the founders of their

¹⁰ Hayek,(1994), 181; and Hayek, (1956), 153-166.

¹¹ Benjamin Franklin, in Hayek (1994), 147.

¹² Friedman, 25.

own truth, and a transcendental order had no hold on man or women. Truth and universal values built into culture and society by traditional experience, were brushed aside as irrational, because truth, through rationalization based on the senses, could only be found within each individual. Thus, all things must become relative. This relativism destroyed a consistent moral framework and, Weaver, concluded, ushered in the chaos of the twentieth century.¹⁵

A simple allegory will serve to clarify and highlight the importance of Weaver's concept. Let us suppose a blind man is walking on a path towards a large open gorge, and let us further suppose that there are observers of the situation. The observers can see the danger that lies ahead for the blind man. The truth that exists for the observers is that the gorge exists, but for the blind man the gorge does not exist, because he cannot physically see it, and therefore cannot rationalize its existence. Thus, the blind man unwittingly walks into the gorge and plummets to his death.

The blind man's death represents the folly of nominalism, that indeed truths exist that cannot be rationalized through man's own senses. His death also represents the self-destructive path man is taking by rejecting traditional wisdom that would have served the blind man by humbling him to the concept that truths may exist beyond one man's own rational comprehension, in this case the gorge. In addition, the observers also represent the decay of culture and the triumph of uprooted or radical individualism. They let the blind man fall to his death, because in a relative world each man is his own measure of what is true. The gorge may exist for them, but who are they to say the gorge exists for

¹³ Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 1; and for a more in depth examination of traditionalism, see Nash, 30-73.

¹⁴ Weaver, 3.

the blind man. The observers, immersed in relativism, could not serve as the cultural net, a net woven together by traditional experience rooted in a transcendental order, which would have served to protect the blind man.

Other traditionalist scholars also argued that at some point Western civilization had broken from a traditional heritage that served to direct man towards a better nature, and away from evil. Leo Strauss charged the seventeenth century Thomas Hobbes with the error of breaking with the classical tradition of natural law, which provided man with an objective order. In the place of natural law, Hobbes supplanted natural rights, which based law in the subjective, and unprecedented whimsical mind of man, who without the guidance of natural law based on tradition, reasoned himself into nihilism.¹⁶ Eric Voegelin found the seeds of decay in Scotus Eriugena, who helped to revive the concept of gnosticism in the ninth century, which was the idea that the knowledge of spiritual truth originated within each person. The consequence here is obvious. Once each man becomes the center of his own perceived spiritual truth and guide no consistent moral framework can exist, and each man and woman, naturally an evil creature, is unleashed upon the earth with no moral restrictions.¹⁷

The most influential traditionalist was Russell Kirk, who provided, in his book *The Conservative Mind*, a traditionalist intellectual heritage for American conservatives. He located a traditionalist conservatism through individuals influential to the Anglo-American political tradition, such as John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and John C. Calhoun. This intellectual genealogy depicted conservative thought as an established

¹⁵ For another examination of Weaver and his book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, see Murphy, 151-178; and Weaver, 1-17.

¹⁶ Nash, 43-45.

¹⁷ Ibid.

strain in the American social and political tradition, and challenged the view that the conservative revival was an un-American and reactionary impulse to liberalism.¹⁸

In addition, the book was an attack on radicalism, the impetus of which Kirk located in five tenets:

1. The perfectibility of man and the illimitable progress of society...
2. Contempt for tradition. Reason, impulse, and materialistic determinism are severally preferred as guides to social welfare, trustier than the wisdom of our ancestors...
3. Political leveling. Order and privilege are condemned; total democracy, as direct as practicable, is the professed radical ideal...
4. Economic leveling...
5. ...Radicals unite in detesting [Edmund] Burke's description of the state as a divinely ordained moral essence, a spiritual union of the dead, the living, and those yet unborn.¹⁹

Of even more importance, Kirk described six canons of traditional conservative thought:

1. Belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an internal chain of right and duty which links great and obscure, living and dead...
2. Affection for the proliferating variety and mystery of traditional life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and equalitarianism and utilitarian aims of most radical systems...
3. Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes. The only true equality is moral equality...
4. Persuasion that property and freedom are inseparably connected, and that economic leveling is not economic progress.
5. Faith in prescription and distrust of 'sophisters and calculators.' Man must put a control upon his will...
6. Recognition that change and reform are not identical, and that innovation is a devouring conflagration more often than it is a torch of progress. Society must alter, for slow change is the means of its conservation...²⁰

¹⁸ Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 62-65, 196-213, 146-160; Nash, 67. Kirk's work was profound, because it countered dominant liberal claims that the U.S. was founded on a liberal political tradition. This meant that the resurgence of conservatism in post-WWII in America was a reactionary movement, because no tradition or precedent for the conservative movement existed, not even in the South. For this view see Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955), especially pages 145-158.

¹⁹ Kirk, 8-9.

2. Anticommunism.

Anticommunism developed into a dominant trait of the American social and political tradition on November seventh of 1917 when Lenin's Bolshevik Party, ideologically driven to overthrow Russian society through a transitional dictatorship and implement a new order of social leveling, seized power.²¹ Prior to the revolution in Russia, communism was an internationalist conspiratorial organization that worked through radicals throughout the world for the overthrow of capitalist society. When the communists came to power in Russia it created a heightened fear of communism in the U.S. in two ways. First, it meant that communism had the power of a state to further its revolutionary goals. Second, it signaled that the communist revolution was a real possibility, which meant radical sentiment could not be dismissed. Therefore, communism after 1917 would be constructed as a double threat, one as embodied in the Soviet Union, and second, as a powerful international conspiracy of fifth column radicals, directed by the Soviet Union, seeking the overthrow capitalist nations.²²

The first U.S. anticommunist foreign policy was Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech in 1918. It was an international program of democratic reform based on the concept of self-determination of nations, which, in theory, would create a new

²⁰ Kirk, 7-8.

²¹ The emergence of a strong anticommunist strain in the American social and political tradition was partly caused by the Bolshevik revolution, but it should be noted that it was not primarily a reactionary movement. Instead, the Bolshevik revolution served to define and bring to the surface America's anti-ideological nature, which has been part of the American social and political tradition since its founding. A tradition that is inherently antithetical to extreme progressive ideologies. For this viewpoint, see Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 3-61; and Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 35. Part of Bailyn's argument is that the American Revolution was primarily influenced by English strains of libertarian-type concepts (i.e. diffusion of government power), instead of radical enlightenment ideologies, such as rationalism. I believe Bailyn uses the term ideology loosely, which means he uses it as a term to represent any group of ideas, whether they are ideologically arranged or not.

²² Powers, 1-15, and John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History* (New York; John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1978), 57-85.

democratic world order of peace, because imperialism would be eliminated. The speech was meant to counter Lenin's international plans for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society through totalitarian means. The first large domestic response to the communist revolution was the Palmer raids in 1919 and 1920, which were ordered by the Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. The raids were an attempt to curb radicalism in the U.S. by arresting thousands of radicals, in many cases without probable cause. The Palmer Raids exemplified the ebb and expansion of the American anticommunist strain. The raids were set off by a fear of radicalism spreading through out the U.S. after radicalism boiled over in Russia, but in the aftermath the raids were seen as a danger to American democracy, which caused a backlash towards anticommunism. This would be the cyclical pattern of anticommunism for the rest of the twentieth century; intense anticommunism triggered by internal or external events, and an anti-anticommunist backlash by political moderates or Leftists.²³

Anticommunism in the U.S. during the 1920s was mostly a white Anglo-Saxon issue tinged with nativism, because the rise of radicalism was associated with the rise of non-Anglo-Saxon immigration. The 1930s, which was the high-water mark of popularity for the American Communist Party, ushered in ethnic anticommunism, such as Irish Catholics or Jews, who were anticommunist by religious affiliation, and for the purpose of countering nativism. This new anticommunism, what Richard Gid Powers termed the

²³ Powers, 1-15, 22-42; and Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, 57-85. For a section of Wilson's Fourteen Points speech, see Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Jon Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in American History Volume II: Since 1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 157-158.

“new bread,” would form the core of American anticommunism for the rest of the twentieth century.²⁴

3. Cold War Anticommunism.

The emergence of the Soviet Union at the conclusion of World War II put it on a collision course with the U.S., also a world power and the natural ideological enemy of the Soviet Union. Historian John Lewis Gaddis traced the origins of the Cold War to four irreconcilable differences between the Soviets and the Americans: history, ideology, technology, and personality. Historically, both powers interpreted security differently. The Soviet Union believed security resulted from space, while the U.S. believed security resulted from democratic institutions. Therefore, the Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe was a security measure for the Soviets, who historically had been devastated by invasions from the West. But to the Americans the extension of Soviet totalitarianism was detrimental to a world democratic order, and therefore, hostile to U.S. security. Ideologically, the Soviet Union and the U.S. were eternally at war with each other; the U.S. ideologically sought the democratization of the world, while the Soviet Union, sought the communization of the world. Technologically, the U.S. industrial base was far superior to Soviet industrialization, which provided the Americans with overconfidence and the Soviets with an inferiority complex that manifested antagonism.²⁵

Lastly, Gaddis points to a personality clash between Joseph Stalin and Harry Truman. Truman, because of his fear of appeasement, a Western heresy after the appeasement of Hitler, rhetorically and in actuality held a hard line policy against the

²⁴ Powers, 1-15, 22-42, 43-189; and Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, 57-85. For an examination of the U.S. Communist Party in the 1930s, see Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1984).

²⁵ Gaddis, *Russia, The Soviet Union, and the United States*, 175-180.

Soviet Union. Stalin's ideological vision of capitalism as an inherent enemy, reinforced by his totalitarian complex to create enemies for the consolidation of his power, determined his aggressive foreign policy.²⁶

The communist threat embodied in the Soviet Union, and its international fifth column at the conclusion of World War II revitalized the anticommunist strain in America. Anticommunism, more so than traditionalism and libertarianism, spanned across the political spectrum and could be found on the Right and Left. For example, anticommunism in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s was part of both the socialist and liberal political programs. Socialists detested communists for their totalitarian methods, which involved violent revolution, and party control of the state. Liberals attacked communism because it threatened the freedom of the individual, democratic values, such as free speech and academic freedom, and constitutionally limited government. Conservative anticommunists also attacked communism for its totalitarianism; however, conservatives also attacked the ends of communist society. Liberals, while detesting communist totalitarian methods, shared some ideological continuity with communism, such as a commitment to the increase of state power to alleviate social problems. Conservatives did not believe in social engineering by the government, and saw both liberals and communists as a threat to constitutional government and the free-market. However, because liberals dominated the government they would formulate anticommunist policy at the mid-point of the twentieth century.²⁷

²⁶ Gaddis, *Russia, The Soviet Union, and the United States*, 175-180. For more on Stalin's personality creating the Cold War, see John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 20-25, 292-294.

²⁷ Powers, 254-255, 296, 192, 199-200.

One of the most prominent liberal anticommunists was Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who helped develop the liberal anticommunist view in his book, *The Vital Center*. Schlesinger argued that liberalism was the safe path between the political Left and Right, which in their extreme forms both led to totalitarianism, either communism or fascism. Liberalism took the good parts of both sides to balance each dangerous tendency; from the Left, mass welfare, and from the Right, law and liberty. Schlesinger believed that communism or any form of totalitarianism was the end result of poverty; therefore, he believed the alleviation of these problems would eliminate totalitarianism. The threat of solving problems by government meant the growth of a powerful centralized state that could also lead to totalitarianism; in such a case constitutional law and liberty, stressed by the Right, could harness the growth of government power.²⁸

Schlesinger also applauded the liberal anticommunist policy of containment, which was developed by the U.S. diplomat George Kennan in a 1947 article printed in the journal of *Foreign Affairs*, titled, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." Containment was a policy that recognized the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state driven by imperial ambitions, which needed to be contained. Generally, the policy subordinated the ideological threat of communist expansion to that of imperialism. A theory that predicated a defensive strategy, because the Soviet Union, as believed by liberals, would be more of a threat as a state entity seeking European or Asian expansion for security measures, rather than an ideological threat that sought world revolution and domination through the means of the Soviet Union and fifth column activity. The policy focused on preventing further Soviet advance from its post World War II borders through military

²⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 50, 249. For another examination of Schlesinger's *Vital Center*, see Powers, 203-207.

force, and simultaneously sought the build up of the non-communist world through economic assistance, in order to combat the communist fifth column.²⁹

Schlesinger believed that the containment of Soviet expansion was a moral necessity. Containment did not threaten the Soviet State by rolling back the Soviets from Eastern Europe, which would lead to war. At the same time it showed strength, because it denied further communist advance. Schlesinger believed that, if enforced strongly, containment would empower internal Soviet elements of non-aggression, which may lead to a thaw in the totalitarian regime and end the Cold War.³⁰

Schlesinger also praised the economic support of the containment policy, which included money for reconstruction, the rebuilding of non-communist countries that were in ill health after World War II. Thus, both external and internal threats of totalitarianism were eliminated; for example, a non-communist country in economic trouble would be protected militarily from an external invasion from the Soviet Union by the containment policy, and internally, economic assistance, such as the Marshall Plan, would prevent communism from establishing itself politically, by eliminating despair.³¹

Liberals in the Truman White House constructed Cold War anticommunism. However, internal and external events would give conservatives the opportunity to seize control of anticommunism. This transition was based on the issue of how competently liberals were dealing with the communist threat. In the wake of such events as China's

²⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 25-88, 102; and Powers, 191-233. The Eisenhower administration, especially Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, initially seemed to subordinate imperialist concerns of the Soviet Union to the ideological threat of communism; however, their later support for national communism seemed to subordinate the ideological threat of communism to nationalism. See Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 140-155.

³⁰ Schlesinger, 222-226.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 226-227.

fall to communism, communist North Korea's invasion of South Korea, and the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb, liberals were put on the defensive.³²

Internal events also exposed liberal incompetence. In 1948 Whittaker Chambers, an ex-Communist and *Time* magazine editor, testified before the House Un-American Activities committee that as a secret communist spy in the 1930s, he received documents from Alger Hiss, a former senior state department official. Hiss denied the charges that he was a spy and denied that he even knew Chambers, but documents supplied by Chambers proved otherwise. Hiss, though not convicted of espionage, was convicted of perjury and sentenced to jail.³³

The trial became what historian George H. Nash labeled, "ideologically decisive," because it formed a definitive line between liberal and conservative anticommunism.³⁴ Hiss was a liberal and was initially defended by establishment figures including prominent liberals such as Dean Acheson, Adlai Stevenson, and Eleanor Roosevelt. This was a problem for conservatives in two regards: first, it displayed the inability of liberals to combat communist subversive activity. Second, because Hiss was a liberal and defended by the liberal establishment, it emphasized that liberal ineptitude was based on a political continuity it shared with communism. They were on the same side of the political spectrum, which made it hard for liberals to detect and eliminate communist subversion. To conservatives, liberals were not only defending a communist, but attacking anticommunism, in effect, forming a political alignment with the communists.³⁵

³² Nash, 79.

³³ *Ibid.*, 88; Powers, 221-225; Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York: Random House, 1952), 529-794; and William F. Buckley, Jr., ed., *Odyssey of a Friend: Whittaker Chambers' Letters to William F. Buckley, Jr., 1954-1961* (New York: Putnam, 1969), 13-44.

³⁴ Nash, 88-89.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; and Powers, 295.

A United States senator from Wisconsin named Joseph McCarthy provided another event that severed liberal and conservative anticommunism. McCarthy claimed that the U.S. State Department was infested with communists, and led numerous investigations to test his charges. Infamously, McCarthy's irresponsible accusations and investigations became known as McCarthyism, a term that refers to an irrational fear of communist infiltration. McCarthy was usually defended by conservatives, and attacked by the liberal establishment. Liberals believed McCarthy was a dangerous demagogue and that McCarthyism had fascist elements; thus, another danger, like communism, to be guarded against. McCarthy put liberals into a backlash mode against anticommunism, and they went through an ideological transformation from anticommunist to anti-McCarthyism, to anti-anticommunism. It was a transformation that solidified the anticommunist cause on the conservative side. Conservatives believed that McCarthy, while occasionally reckless, was a necessary tool to combat communist infiltration into American government and society. William F. Buckley, Jr., and L. Brent Bozell, in their book defending McCarthy, called him an "...effective resistance to communist infiltration."³⁶

Conservatives, unlike liberals, were threatened more by the conspiratorial ideology of communism. Communism was not just an enemy formidably represented by the Soviet Union, but an ideological system that transcended national and cultural boundaries and could reach all sectors of American society. Communists, conservatives believed, wanted to liquidate all vestiges of traditional society, including constitutional government, religion, and the institution of the family. Communism was not a political

³⁶ William F. Buckley, Jr., and L. Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and His Enemies*, 340; For an excerpt of McCarthy's counter-subversive conspiracy charges, see Hoffman and Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in*

party or movement to solve social or political problems, it was a movement that sought class revolution and the overthrow of society. Because communism was predicated on this objective, it was inherently constructed as a conspiracy. Because communism wanted to overthrow society it needed to operate, to a large extent, in a concealed subversive manner. The danger of this subversion was compounded by its ideological appeal; for example, an American scientist working on an atomic bomb may not be a member of the Communist party, but he or she may be swayed by the communist program, which they may decide to help by leaking secret information. Therefore, conservatives were wary of conspiracy and could conclude that McCarthyism, watchdog against conspiracy, was beneficial to the American people. James Burnham, for one, did not praise or condemn McCarthy, but still displayed a conspiracy theory of his own, when he wrote that McCarthyism was actually, "...an invention of the communist tacticians..." who wished to damage the anticommunist cause by propagating it as a danger.³⁷

The conservative movement also underwent internal transformations to adapt and fully embrace the necessary requirements for a serious anticommunism. Strong isolationist strains on the Right prior to the conclusion of World War II still existed in the post-war conservative movement, which survived mainly in the libertarian wing of the movement. Libertarians believed in small government. Building up the military, and increasing the bureaucracy to fight communism, however, increased government power, a condition that libertarians believed could result in totalitarianism in the United States.

American History Volume II, 288-289; Nash, 97-110; and Powers, 272, 282-286;

³⁷ James Burnham, "A Letter of Resignation" *Partisan Review* no. 20 (November-December, 1953): 716

Thus, isolationists argued that a domestic leviathan was a greater danger than the Soviet Union. William F. Buckley, Jr. articulated the isolationist idea:

Our gravest danger, these men say, is that by engaging in wars, by overdoing national defense, by appropriating billions for our summer allies, by debasing our currency through deficit finance and internal socialism, by surrendering our sovereignty, piecemeal, to world organizations, we are debilitating ourselves internally...we shall totalitarianize ourselves to a point where life in the United States would be undistinguishable from life in the Soviet Union..."³⁸

Buckley was in favor of an interventionist anticommunism. He reasoned that while smaller government was the most desirable end, the Soviet threat, if not defeated, would pose a greater danger to freedom than a domestic leviathan. He wrote:

...Our chances of ultimate victory against an indigenous bureaucracy are far greater than they could ever be against one controlled from abroad, one that would be nourished and protected by a world-wide communist monolith.³⁹

For Buckley, it was a choice of a lesser evil. Government could be fought against another day, but communism could not. The mainstream conservative movement would subscribe to the same view; even mainstream libertarians would argue that combating the Soviet Union with large government was a necessary deviation.⁴⁰

Historian George H. Nash noted other factors in the conservative transition from isolationism to interventionism. First, the main proponents of isolationism died out, such as Robert Taft and Frank Chodorov. Second, the base of conservative support switched from the protestant Midwest to the Eastern, urban, and intensely anticommunist

³⁸ William F. Buckley, Jr., "A Dilemma of Conservatives" *The Freeman* vol. 5 (August, 1954): 51-52; William F. Buckley, Jr., "A Young Republicans View" *Commonweal* vol. LV no. 16 (January 25, 1952): 391-393; Himmelstein, 33; and Nash, 113.

³⁹ William F. Buckley, Jr., "The Party and the Deep Blue Sea" *Commonweal* vol. LV no. 16 (January 25, 1952): 392-393; see also William F. Buckley, Jr., "William F. Buckley, Jr. to the Editor" *The Freeman* vol.5 (January 1955): 244.

⁴⁰ Interventionism is the word that describes the international activism of conservatives, not to be confused with liberal internationalism, it meant intervening in the world when U.S. interests were at stake, a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs. Liberal internationalism was an ideological driven indiscriminate world involvement seeking to enact domestic liberal programs throughout world, such as economic or

Catholics. Lastly, conservatives like Buckley, realized that isolationism seemed more fantasy than reality in a world polarized by two superpowers competing for spheres of influence. In addition, sociologist Jerome L. Himmelstein noted that an interventionist anticommunist policy was also very advantageous to conservatives, because it was an opportunity to capitalize on “liberal perfidy,” in other words it was also a political motivation to gain wider support where liberals had failed.⁴¹

Conservative anticommunism can broadly be defined as conspiratorial and confrontational, but it can also be categorized into three more specific channels: hyper-conspiratorial, religious, and liberationist. These three divisions have a specific dynamic, which emphasized a particular theater for anticommunist operations. For example, the hyper-conspiratorial wing emphasized an irrational conspiratorial aspect in fighting communism, religious anticommunism placed emphasis on a metaphysical battle of faith, and liberationists placed emphasis on actual political and military confrontation.

The term hyper-conspiratorial refers to an irresponsible conspiracy theory, which was best exemplified in Robert Welch, a childhood prodigy, successful businessman and founder of the John Birch Society (JBS). The hyper-conspiratorial branch was predominately responsible for the irresponsible aspect of conservative anticommunism. In a long letter, which was privately published as *The Politician*, Welch claimed that Dwight D. Eisenhower, then president of the U.S. was:

...Sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically and even mercilessly willing to help them achieve their goals, knowingly receiving and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the communist conspiracy, for all his adult life.⁴²

democratic reform. Buckley, “The Party and the Deep Blue Sea,” 392-393; Buckley, “William F. Buckley, Jr., to the Editor,” 201-202

⁴¹ Nash, 114; and Himmelstein, 42-43.

⁴² Robert Welch, *The Politician* (Belmont, MA: Belmont Publishing Company, 1963), 278.

It was Eisenhower's election, Welch claimed, that saved communism from extinction. If Eisenhower was a conscious agent of the communists then the conspiratorial corollary is that the U.S. government is under the operational control of the Communist Party.⁴³

This irresponsible conspiratorial conclusion would lead Welch and the JBS into positions that were detrimental to the anticommunist cause. For example, in the Vietnam War the JBS, which regularly claimed the U.S. government was sixty to eighty percent controlled by the communists, would campaign for withdrawal. The conspiracy theory was that the U.S., controlled by communists, was fighting communists in Vietnam to weaken the U.S. In other words, communists were fighting communists to weaken the U.S.⁴⁴

Welch's theory was drawn from the idea that the growth of the state was an unmistakable sign of the decay of civilization, a theory Welch borrowed from Oswald Spengler. Welch witnessed the same statist growth in Western society, and most importantly in the United States. The decay of society meant the decay of Christianity. Without these moral prescriptions man was no longer connected to a "cosmological purpose" and primarily aimed to please himself, a condition that ushered in materialism. The manifestation of a materialist world was communism. Thus, if man is generally becoming a materialist creature, every man is also potentially a communist. This led to the rise of "amoral man." Much like Weaver's moral idiot, the amoral man is not guided by morality or any reason for his existence. In this sense Stalin was worse than Hitler.

⁴³ Edward G. Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch: Founder of the John Birch Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: American Media, 1975), 38, 44; Welch, *The Politician*, 5. For biographical, but subjectively written information on Robert Welch see Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*. For more objective biographical information, see Schoenwald, 62-99.

⁴⁴ James Burnham, "Third World War" (hereafter TWW) *National Review* (hereafter NR) vol. 17 no. 42 (October 19, 1965): 925-926.

Even though they both committed tremendous crimes, Hitler was an immoral man. He was evil, but he is still susceptible to a moral framework, which defined his behavior as evil. Stalin, the amoral man, does not have this moral framework. Welch wrote:

...There is no such thing as either morality or immorality. There is only the pragmatic consideration of the advantages or disadvantages to himself, for his own personal desires or plans, in any action—whether it be the building of a monument or the murder of his wife.⁴⁵

Religious anticommunism can be examined through Whittaker Chambers' book *Witness*, an autobiography and description of the Alger Hiss case. Chambers identifies the battle against communism as something that transcends military engagements, subversion, or economics. Communism is a struggle between man's two faiths, Christianity in one corner and "...man's second oldest faith," in another; the faith that proclaims, "...Ye shall be as gods."⁴⁶ In other words, the second oldest faith, expressed through communism, was the belief that man was the sovereign power in the universe and through his own reason could perfect himself and his natural environment. Because man eliminated a faith in transcendental truth, he was no longer satisfied by values that are separate from physical existence; instead, he was driven by what he needed to survive and became a materialist creature. The Cold War conflict, for Chambers, was a Manichean battle between religious faith and materialism.⁴⁷

This struggle takes place within each person. Either man would choose a faith in himself, and choose a world of, "...abundance, security, [and] peace," or man would choose to carry his cross, realizing that materialism was a false prophet.⁴⁸ Suffering was

⁴⁵ Robert Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Robert Welch, 1961), 65, 136, 44, 53, 57-69.

⁴⁶ Chambers, 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

part of man's existence, because that is the true, humble and disciplined path to God, a path Jesus, himself, revealed. In short, it was a choice between, "...irreconcilable opposites-God or Man, Soul or Mind, Freedom or Communism."⁴⁹

James Burnham was an example of a liberationist, which meant he saw the main arena for the communist versus non-communist struggle as a showdown between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was the center of the worldwide communist conspiracy. The Soviet Union was seeking control over the world, working to transform other nation-states to the new communist world order. The Soviet communist apparatus was bent on world domination and could not be contained or pacified, only defeated. This entailed actual confrontational methods in political and military forms. The destruction of the Soviet Union would debase and decimate communism as a formidable power and lead to the liberation of the world from communism.

While conservatives captured the anticommunist cause, the U.S. anticommunist foreign policy up until 1980 was containment. The form of containment changed throughout the latter of half of the century, at times it was more of an aggressive policy, such as under the Truman administration, which formulated the National Security Council Document 68 (NSC-68), or the Eisenhower Administration, which used covert programs to counter communism. Or, it took the form of a less aggressive policy, such as under the Nixon administration, which primarily sought a policy of *détente* with the Soviet Union. However, with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, conservative anticommunism finally had a dominant influence on U.S. foreign policy.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Chambers, 16, 22.

⁵⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 89-344; Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, 207-276; and Powers, 191-420. Through NSC-68 the Truman administration sought such actions as building a strong military, and developing strong anticommunist alliances.

Containment had been predicated on the belief that communist ideology was secondary to Russian imperialism.⁵¹ Thus, ideological claims of world domination were seen mostly as rhetoric, a viewpoint in which the communist threat was minimized, hence the defensive strategy of containment. George Kennan wrote that ideology, “is a product and not a determinant of social and political reality...”⁵² Conservative anticommunism maintained that ideology superseded Russian imperialism, and literally interpreted communism’s ideological quest for world revolution and totalitarian domination. Thus, Reagan’s policy switched to the offensive, because the Soviet Union, according to ideology, was a greater threat than perceived under its imperialist guise. Reagan remarked in a speech that:

...as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution...Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old, exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.⁵³

Reagan continued stating that, “...the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are.”⁵⁴ Thus, Reagan committed the U.S. to an aggressive policy of

⁵¹ However, it should be noted that the Eisenhower administration, especially Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, at times, predominately interpreted communism as an ideological threat over Soviet imperialist aims. In fact, the Eisenhower administration reflected this in its foreign policy, which was an amalgamation of negotiation, nuclear deterrence, and liberation type policies. The liberation policy sought covert and psychological warfare to internally destabilize the communist empire, a policy similar to James Burnham’s policy of liberation. However, the ideological commitment of the administration’s policy, at times, seemed more for rhetorical sake. For example, the administration supported Tito’s (Yugoslavia) break from the Soviet Empire, which was over a political dispute between Tito and the Kremlin, and not a repudiation of communism. In this case, the administration supported national communism, a power politics play, rather than an attack on the communist ideology. See Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 127-128, 137-146, 150-158, 176-177.

⁵² George Kennan, in Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 34.

⁵³ Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, 358.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 358; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*. 25-53; and Powers, 391-420.

anticommunism, such as an arms race, and the support of anticommunist insurgencies and movements around the world.

4. Makeshift Cohesion: The Development of the Conservative Movement.

As libertarians, traditionalists, and anticommunists each developed their own ideas and organizations, it became evident that divided they would not be able to challenge the liberal status quo. However, if some sort of synthesis could be developed they would be able to form a powerful intellectual challenge to liberalism. On the surface a synthesis seemed quite possible, because they essentially shared the same enemies; communism and its less dangerous version liberalism. However, while libertarianism and traditionalism may have equally detested communism and liberalism, when it came to their specific desired ends for society, they were diametrically opposed.

The crucial difference between the libertarians and traditionalists was their interpretation of the individual and their relationship to society. Libertarians believed in the primacy of the individual. Conversely, traditionalists believed that values and rights were formed out of traditional social authorities that provided the moral and social guidelines necessary to shape society. These guidelines were built on a social and transcendental experience that should be elevated above the individual.

With such different goals, the unification of libertarianism and traditionalism would have to be based primarily on their shared anticommunism. George H. Nash wrote, "Communism was a threat to liberty and tradition. If conservatism in 1955 was an amalgam, anti-Communism was a vital part of its cement."⁵⁵ For Libertarians communism was the triumph of society over the individual, and for traditionalists

⁵⁵ Nash, 116.

communism was the triumph of an atheistic system that created a society divorced from God.

The process of a libertarian and traditionalist synthesis under the banner of anticommunism was workable, but it received a gigantic boost from a bright young conservative, William F. Buckley, Jr. Buckley had already published two scathing attacks on the liberal establishment: *God and Man at Yale*, and *McCarthy and His Enemies*. Buckley, along with William S. Schlam, would start the conservative publication, *National Review*. Buckley was the perfect man to create a conservative journal that sought to fuse the wayward strands of conservative thought. A Catholic, he grew up in an environment that was libertarian, traditionalist, and anticommunist, and he was determined to make *National Review* into the same kind of conservative journal. *National Review* was indeed a composite of all three streams of conservative thought. There were anticommunist contributors, such as James Burnham and Gerhart Niemeyer; traditionalist contributors, such as Richard M. Weaver and Russell Kirk; and libertarian contributors, such as Frank S. Meyer and Frank Chodorov. In addition, the initial issue included a statement of beliefs that represented the three main channels of conservative thought. Anticommunists could be pleased with such lines as, “We consider ‘coexistence’ with communism neither desirable nor possible.” Libertarians could find comfort with lines like, “The competitive price system is indispensable to liberty.” Traditionalists could appreciate such views like, “The profound crisis of our era is, in essence, the conflict between the Social Engineers, who seek to adjust mankind to

conform with scientific utopias, and the disciples of truth, who defend the organic moral order.”⁵⁶

The journal was a conglomeration of conservative thought. The contributors agreed with and sometimes attacked each other, but there was an effort to develop an actual cohesive conservative philosophy. Frank S. Meyer, a former communist and editor of *National Review*, believed that both traditionalism and libertarianism could, “...mutually vindicate the true nature of man, free and responsible...” against the prevailing, “...collectivist denial of man’s nature.”⁵⁷ Fusion was possible between libertarianism and traditionalism, because they shared a common enemy, collectivist ideologies, and they both were rooted in the faith of the great tradition of the West, freedom and virtue. It was in this shared tradition whereby Meyer created his philosophical fusion.⁵⁸

The two streams of thought had been bifurcated in the nineteenth century. The traditionalists saw libertarianism, as marching in the parade of the revolutionary ideologies, attacking the traditional organic moral order. Libertarians identified traditionalists as defenders of an authoritarian society, which was the antithesis of individualism. However, both streams of thought conserved one part of the great tradition of the West. The traditionalists conserved the idea that man is, “...a creature of

⁵⁶ William F. Buckley, Jr., “The Magazines Credenda” *NR* vol. 1 no. 1 (November 19, 1955): 6; For biographical information on Buckley see John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 27, 44-46, 118-119; For a more in depth examination of *National Review*, see Nash, 134-140; Hodgson, 78-84; and Edwards, 77-82; For an examination of the different strands of conservative thought represented in *NR*, see the list of the editors and writers in the first issue *NR* vol. 1 no. 1 (November 19, 1955): 3.

⁵⁷ Frank S. Meyer, ed., *What is Conservatism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 19-20.

⁵⁸ For an extensive examination of the fusion of libertarianism and traditionalism see Frank S. Meyer, ed., *What is Conservatism* (New York: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 7-20; Frank S. Meyer, “The Roots of Libertarian Conservatism” *NR* vol. 2 no. 14 (April 6, 1957): 331-332, 339; Nash, 118-171; and for more concise examinations see Himmelstein, 45-62; and Hodgson, 69-90.

transcendental destiny,” which means man must ultimately subjugate himself to a moral order that preserves man’s virtue.⁵⁹ The libertarians developed and conserved political and economic theories that provided the only true condition of freedom: individualism. For fusion to occur, both traditionalists and libertarians would have to refine their philosophies. First, traditionalists had to realize virtue could only be obtained in a society where man could choose moral goodness, “...otherwise virtue could be no more than a conditioned tropism.”⁶⁰ Traditionalists had to reject their belief that only authoritarian institutions, like government and the established church, could properly create and enforce moral guidelines. Libertarians had to realize that an organic moral society, or virtue, was the only way to preserve a free society. “Free individualism,” Meyer wrote, “uninformed by moral value rots at its core and soon brings about the conditions that pave the way to surrender to tyranny.”⁶¹ Libertarians had to do away with their utilitarian leanings, which developed trends towards utopianism. In short, virtue could only be obtained by a free, individualist society, but it could be preserved if a traditional organic moral order guided man to be virtuous. If this philosophical refinement could occur, Western society could conserve freedom and virtue and create a free and responsible society. Fusionism was by no means perfect; however, it did serve the purpose of tenuously uniting traditionalists and libertarians in what Nash labeled an “...awkward and unwieldy coalition...”⁶²

The fusionist *National Review* developed a large intellectual base for conservative thought. It also served as a bridge between intellectual ideas and cultural and political

⁵⁹ Meyer, *What is Conservatism*, 16-17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶² Nash, 117; Meyer, *What is Conservatism*, 9-18.

diffusion, a process that helped create the conservative movement. Many historians have recognized the importance of *National Review* as a catalyst for the conservative movement. Gregory L. Schneider wrote, “Buckley’s magazine much like the *Freeman*, was a money-losing venture; yet it had a profound impact on the conservative movement.”⁶³ Jerome L. Himmelstein noted that *National Review* was, “...the most influential and symptomatic...” conservative journal, and George H. Nash wrote that *National Review* was:

...Far more indispensable to the Right than any single liberal journal was to the Left...if *National Review* (or something like it) had not been founded, there would probably have been no cohesive intellectual force on the Right in the 1960s and 1970s. To a very substantial degree, the history of reflective conservatism in America after 1955 is the history of the individuals who collaborated in-or were discovered by-the magazine...⁶⁴

National Review, the flagship for the conservative movement, attempted to direct conservatism into mainstream acceptance by giving definition to the movement. This had two effects. First, as already mentioned, self-definition helped give the conservative movement cohesion. Second, it helped streamline the movement by ridding itself of undesirable social bases of support.

One such example was the problem of the John Birch Society, the conservative anticommunist group, which on the one hand had a large base of grassroots support, but on the other hand, subscribed to extreme forms of conspiracy theory. The JBS and the view of Robert Welch allowed the Left to paint the whole mainstream conservative movement as radical. A radical tag could damage the whole conservative movement, much as it would in Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign in 1964. Realizing that the

⁶³ Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 18.

⁶⁴ Nash, 140; and Himmelstein, 28.

radical elements had to be exorcised to allow the mainstream conservative movement to grow, *National Review* editors moved to sever the connection.

The first attack came in 1962, when Buckley wrote an article titled, “The Question of Robert Welch.” Buckley attacked Welch, the leader of the Birch Society, hoping to steer JBS members away from the conspiratorial views of Welch, and bring Birch activism into the conservative movement. Buckley wrote that the Birch Society was full of, “...some of the most morally energetic, self-sacrificing, and dedicated anticommunists in America.”⁶⁵ Buckley argued that Welch was hurting the JBS and the anticommunist cause. The society could still serve to educate people and mobilize them in support of the anticommunist cause, but they had to reject their present leader, who by failing to see the difference between a true pro-communist and an ineffective anticommunist liberal had developed irrational and radical conspiracy theories.⁶⁶

Birchers clung to Welch’s views. When the JBS began to speak against the Vietnam War as a communist conspiracy, Buckley and *National Review* senior editors Frank Meyer and James Burnham dedicated an entire issue to break once and for all *National Review’s* association with the JBS. The society had become expendable. It was damaging conservative political campaigns and anticommunist causes, with its increasingly radical conspiracies, and was draining money, materials, and members from the mainstream movement.⁶⁷

While *National Review* gave the conservative movement intellectual coherence, it was the development of conservative organizations that led to conservative political

⁶⁵ William F. Buckley, Jr., “The Question of Robert Welch,” *NR* vol. 12 no. 6 (February 13, 1962): 87-88.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-88.

ascendancy. Two noted examples of conservative organizations that helped build the conservative culture were the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) and the JBS.⁶⁸

YAF, formed in Sharon, Connecticut on September 10 and 11, in 1960, was a fusionist organization, like *National Review*, and included all three channels of conservative thought in its founding creed, the Sharon Statement. The statement appealed to libertarians by emphasizing the importance of the free-market to provide individual freedom and constitutional government. Traditionalists were content with an emphasis on social order, and anticommunists were happy that the organization stressed victory over communism.⁶⁹ The fusionist organizational development was important, because it was a de facto political and social representation of a united conservative movement. YAF represented a synthesized conservatism that was activist, applying ideas to political issues and propagating them through grassroots activities, such as rallies.⁷⁰ For example, YAF developed grassroots support for Barry Goldwater, combated the New Left, protested against liberalism, and fought for victory in Vietnam. YAF's organizational development has been credited by Schneider as, "...a movement that helped catapult conservatives into political power within two decades."⁷¹

The John Birch Society, founded by Robert Welch in 1958, was named after an American Baptist missionary and soldier who was killed by Chinese Communists after

⁶⁷ William F. Buckley, Jr., Frank S. Meyer, and James Burnham, "The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement" *NR* vol. 17 no. 42 (October 19, 1965): 914-929.

⁶⁸ For the most definitive examination of the Young Americans for Freedom see Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*; for further reference, but not as extensive, see Schoenwald, 243-250; For a more in depth examination of the John Birch Society see Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*; Schoenwald, 62-99; Griffin, 252-318; and for a local study, see McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*.

⁶⁹ Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 32, 183-184.

⁷⁰ However, YAF was not completely without friction between its traditional and libertarian wings, and lost 300 libertarian members in a walkout in 1969. See Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 128-135.

⁷¹ Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 32, 72-89, 93-109, 151, 178.

the conclusion of World War II. The society was first and foremost an anticommunist organization, which believed the greatest threat communism posed was a subversive takeover of American government and cultural institutions. The so-called communist conspiracy could only be combated by an educational war to alert Americans to the conspiracy. Such an effort was fueled by promoting anticommunist books, developing an anticommunist periodical (*American Opinion*), supporting anticommunist media productions, arranging letter writing campaigns to congressman and other government officials, promoting anticommunist speakers, exposing communist infiltration, and influencing politics to reflect the anticommunist positions of the JBS.⁷²

Like YAF, the JBS was instrumental in organizing a grassroots conservative base.

Historian Lisa McGirr wrote:

No one initiative gained such notoriety or was more important in channeling grassroots fears of liberalism than the John Birch Society, whose resources and inspiration were crucial for right-wing mobilization.⁷³

The JBS resources by 1966 have been listed at 4,000 chapters nationwide, 75,000 to 85,000 members, and a budget of around five million dollars per year. YAF peaked at 50,000 members in 1969. The JBS, like YAF, was an extremely successful grassroots organization run by a mixture of central leadership and local chapter action. Such activism could tap into and foment anti-liberal and anticommunist sentiment and channel it into activism.⁷⁴

While the JBS promoted a radical conspiracy theory, mostly along the lines that the government was under the control of the communists, it was not radical in practice;

⁷² Griffin, 192; Welch, *The Blue Book*, 12, 77-112, 158-159; and Schoenwald, 86-89.

⁷³ McGirr, 77.

the society emphasized educational methods. It is more plausible to label the society as part of an irresponsible, rather than a radical right. In addition, while the society was powerful and connected to the conservative movement, it was not the main impetus or embodiment of the movement in total, such an example was the effort by *National Review* conservatives to rid the movement of its Birch appendage.⁷⁵

The first great political manifestation of the conservative renaissance occurred on July 15, 1964, when Barry M. Goldwater, a staunch conservative, won the Republican Party's presidential nomination. Even though Goldwater would be heavily defeated in November by Lyndon B. Johnson, it was the Goldwater campaign that set the political framework for conservative victories in the future. The loss was labeled by Goldwater biographer Rick Perlstein as, "...one time, at least, in which history is written by the losers."⁷⁶ Lee Edwards, a conservative author, wrote that Goldwater "was the most important loser in modern presidential politics."⁷⁷ How was the Goldwater defeat so important to the conservative movement? William A. Rusher, part of the draft Goldwater committee, noted, that it primarily provided an alternative to liberalism; in addition, Rusher noted that the campaign had three important political developments that benefited the conservative movement. First, Goldwater's nomination signaled a conservative takeover of the Republican Party, which meant that liberal Republicans were no longer in control. Second, the Goldwater campaign created a network of conservative activists, whose money, resources, and campaign experience would be tapped by future

⁷⁴ Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *The Radical Right: Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies* (New York: Random House, 1967), 195, 204; Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 151; Schoenwald, 76-77, 84-93; and Welch, *The Blue Book*, 158-174.

⁷⁵ Buckley, "The Question of Robert Welch," 85; McGirr, 9-10, 127; Buckley, Meyer, Burnham, "The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement," 914-929.

⁷⁶ Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), xii.

conservative candidates. Last, the Goldwater campaign brought Ronald Reagan into the national spotlight, whose presidential victory in 1980 was the high-water mark for conservative ascendancy.⁷⁸

There were other smaller, but important conservative political manifestations in the sixties. First, Buckley ran for Mayor of New York city in 1965. While he lost, his defeat served a purpose for the conservative movement. It damaged the rising star of Liberal Republican John Lindsay, and gave more notoriety to the conservative cause in America's largest city, paving the way for Buckley's brother James to capture a United States senate seat from New York in 1970. The second political achievement was Reagan's election as governor of California in 1966. Reagan, another staunch conservative, beat Democrat Edmund Brown by one million votes in the most populous state in the country. The successful run for governor helped groom Reagan for national office.⁷⁹

5. More Conservatives and Mainstream Acceptance.

The election of Republican Richard Nixon as president in 1968 was a victory against Democrats, but because he was a centrist Republican, his victory was not a conservative triumph. Nixon's presidential victory in 1968 signaled the beginnings of political realignment. Nixon's campaign issues focused on a reduction of federal power, and an emphasis on law and order in a tumultuous era, which attracted conservative elements located in the Democratic constituency, the so-called "silent majority". This

⁷⁷ Edwards, 138.

⁷⁸ Rusher, 161-162; for a similar conclusion on the importance of the Goldwater campaign, see Edwards, 138-141; and for examples of the grassroots base that the Goldwater campaign created, see McGirr, 111-146; and Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 72-89.

⁷⁹ The political damage to John Lindsay, even though he was a Republican, was important, because his ascendancy could have led the Republican Party farther to the Left, and closer to the Eastern establishment. Rusher, 186; Edwards, 147-148, 160; Schoenwald, 186-189; and McGirr, 187-216.

contingent would be the decisive factor in electing the conservative Reagan for president in 1980.⁸⁰

The silent majority is examined extensively in Kevin Phillips's book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, which shows that former Democratic or New Deal voters were disillusioned with liberalism, which they perceived ushering in, "...sociological jurisprudence, moral permissiveness, experimental residential, welfare and educational programming and massive federal spending."⁸¹ This social conservative alignment was especially prominent in the South, the West, and among white ethnics, who were shifting from their former Democratic support to the Republican Party, which carried a more socially conservative agenda.⁸²

The other important conservative development of the 1970s, besides the breakup of the old New Deal voting coalition, was the boost the conservative movement received from the development of the religious right, and the movement rightward of former Leftist and liberal intellectuals, the so-called neoconservatives. The neoconservatives were typically New York intellectuals, mostly Jewish, who begin to drift towards the Right in the late 1960s and 1970s in response to renewed Soviet aggression, and anti-American sentiments born out of the radicalization of the New Left. Neoconservative scholar Gary Dorrien has defined neoconservatism as:

...An intellectual movement originated by former leftists that promotes militant anticommunism, capitalist economics, a minimal welfare state, the rule of traditional elites, and a return to traditional cultural values.⁸³

⁸⁰ Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America*, 275-278.

⁸¹ Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969), 471, 42.

⁸² Phillips, 471, 42; Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America*, 275-278.

⁸³ Gary Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 8, 1-18; For a more extensive examination of neoconservatism see Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who are Changing America's Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1979; and Hodgson, 128-157.

Neoconservatives, repulsed by the radicalization of the Left and its anti-Americanism, were driven by an intense American exceptionalism. They were traditional liberal anticommunists, and, as Jews, came to support Israel in its conflicts with Arab states in the Middle East. However, the neoconservatives did not fit comfortably into the conservative movement, because domestically they were more liberal than conservative and in foreign policy (i.e. anticommunism) they tended to be ideologically Wilsonian. However, the addition of the neos was profound in two respects: first, they provided more intellectual firepower to the conservative movement. Second, their defection from liberalism signaled its failure. Author Godfrey Hodgson wrote:

They [neoconservatives] achieved something that neither the motley journalists of the Buckley circle nor the formidable Chicago school could have done: they enabled conservatives to say that liberal ideas were no longer endorsed even by the very people—New York intellectuals, professors, and contributors to the upscale monthlies and quarterlies—who had been assumed, since the New Deal and indeed since the founding of *The New Republic* in 1910, to legitimate liberal orthodoxy.⁸⁴

While the neos provided an intellectual boost to the conservative movement, the Religious Right would provide a grassroots activism that mobilized a large contingent of evangelicals and fundamentalists to support conservative political movements. The Religious Right can be labeled as the activist wing of the larger body of social conservatives that provided the political support conservatives needed for mainstream ascendancy in the 1980s.

The Religious Right was characterized by their ultimate devotion to re-Christianize American politics. Fundamentalism and evangelicalism were the two

⁸⁴ Hodgson, 136; 230-243, 133-136; Steinfels, 51-52; and Dorrien, 1-18.

currents that fueled this Christian crusade. Evangelicals are characterized by a born again experience, which gives them a new devotion to Jesus Christ, a devotion that must be professed to others, a situation that manifested activism. In addition, evangelicals interpreted the Bible literally, which is the dominant characteristic of fundamentalism.⁸⁵

The Religious Right was essentially composed of religious organizations, such as the Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, and the Christian Voice, which sought to mobilize the fundamentalists and evangelicals into political action. Such political action was focused on combating what evangelicals and fundamentalists perceived as the decay of moral America, caused by the liberal permissiveness of the 1960s and 1970s.

Abortion, gay rights, pornography, drug use, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the outlawing of school prayer characterized this permissiveness. Such social issues directly challenged evangelical and fundamentalist faith, forcing them into a movement connected by religious organizations and local churches. Such activism moved Christians into conservative politics. They voted for conservative issues and candidates, and against liberal issues and candidates.⁸⁶

The actual impact of the Religious Right has been debated, but as Godfrey Hodgson wrote, "...the Reagan campaign of 1980 brought twenty million evangelical Christians to the polls who had never voted before."⁸⁷ Jerome L. Himmelstein noted that:

...in the mid-1970s...surveys consistently showed evangelicals to be more politically active and supportive of church involvement in politics than non-evangelicals. They were more likely to be registered and to vote, to write an elected representative, or to work on a political campaign.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Himmelstein, 97-128; and Hodgson, 160.

⁸⁶ Himmelstein, 97-98, 119-120; and Hodgson, 175, 168.

⁸⁷ Hodgson, 169. For an examination of the impact of the Religious Right on conservative politics, see Himmelstein, 115-128.

⁸⁸ Himmelstein, 117.

With the boost of the politically active Religious Right, the intellectual addition of the neoconservatives, and a voting realignment based on social conservative issues, the road was paved for a conservative turn in American politics.

The election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 signaled that the conservative movement had achieved mainstream acceptance. Reagan was the embodiment of the conservative movement's political fusion, representing all three streams of conservative thought. He entered the White House with a conservative agenda to aggressively confront the Soviet Union, to restore economic growth through tax and spending cuts, and to represent the traditionalist stand against liberal permissiveness, which could be expressed in his appointment of federal judges.⁸⁹

The debate has raged about whether or not the end result of Reagan's presidency signified a conservative revolution. However, what is usually a consensus of agreement on the Reagan presidency was that its war-like stance against the Soviet Union was central to communism's collapse in 1991. The Reagan strategy to confront the Soviet Union, the so-called Reagan Doctrine, sought to support anticommunist insurgencies around the world, including within the Soviet's Eastern European empire, and declare economic war, which most profoundly included defense spending on an unprecedented scale, a pace with which the Soviets could not keep up.⁹⁰

The confrontational anticommunism of the Reagan administration was built on and boosted by the conservative strain of anticommunism. Fostered from the early post-war intellectuals, shaped and formed through conservative outlets, such as *National Review* and YAF, anticommunism proved an important part of the conservative move

⁸⁹ Hodgson, 244-276; and Edwards, 225-241.

towards power. James Burnham was a large part of this conservative anticommunist struggle, and was instrumental to anticommunist success.

⁹⁰ Edwards, 242-267; and Hodgson, 244-276. For a more extensive examination of the Reagan Doctrine, see Edwards, 242-267; Hodgson 262-276; and Powers, 391-420.

CHAPTER II A LOUD LIFE

James Burnham was the first of three boys born to Claude George and Mary Mae Burnham on November 22, 1905 in Chicago, Illinois. His other siblings, David and Philip, were born in 1907 and 1910 respectively. Burnham graduated from Canterbury High School in 1923, and then attended Princeton, where he was active in two school publications. He edited the *Princeton Tiger*, and wrote for the *Nassau Literary Magazine*. Burnham majored in English and graduated in 1927 with the distinction of Latin Salutatorian. Afterwards, he attended Oxford at Balliol where he studied English literature and medieval philosophy and received a Bachelor of Arts in 1929.¹

After his schooling, Burnham obtained a philosophy teaching position with the rank of assistant professor at New York University (NYU) through the help of his former philosophy professor at Princeton and friend Philip Wheelwright, who was chair of philosophy at NYU. From 1930 to 1933, Burnham also served as co-editor of a literary review magazine titled the *Symposium*, founded by Wheelwright, and in 1931, also with Wheelwright, he co-wrote his first book, a college philosophy textbook, *Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (1931).²

1. To the Left.

During the 1930s at NYU, Burnham became politically involved, an involvement that would take him into the thick of Marxist politics. Individuals, literature, and the

¹ *The New York Times* (New York), 30 July 1987; John P. Diggins, *Up From Communism: Conservative Intellectual Odysseys In American Intellectual History* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), 163-170; Samuel Francis, *Thinkers of Our Time: James Burnham* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999), 9-10; Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World: A Life* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2002), 1-5, 11-17; and Kevin J. Smant, *How Great the Triumph: James Burnham, Anticommunism and the Conservative Movement* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), 1-4. Smant lists November 23, 1905 as Burnham's birth date.

Great Depression influenced Burnham's Marxist turn. One such individual was Sydney Hook, a philosophy colleague of Burnham's, who bluntly wrote in his autobiography, "Under my influence, he [Burnham] moved toward Marxism."³ A detailed example of such influence was an essay that Hook published in a book *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933), which argued that Marxism was not an "objective science," but a "scientific social philosophy."⁴ This classified Marxism as a mode of historical and sociological analysis rather than a dogma, which helped Burnham, an empiricist, accept Marxism without completely accepting its ideological rigidity. Burnham's thought, even in the early 1930s, was based on empirical deduction. He originally accepted Marxism, because he believed it was the only logical system to replace capitalism, which he believed had failed (i.e. the Great Depression). Burnham wrote, "Politically, Marxian communism is the only tenable position."⁵ However, he always maintained that Marxism was an ideology rather than a pure science. Burnham wrote:

But ethically and spiritually, communism retains some of the shreds of liberalism. For though it asserts a realistic pessimism in estimating the possibilities of the present order, it nevertheless keeps a utopian optimism in believing that perfect justice will be embodied in the coming socialist society.⁶

As early as 1931 he labeled dogmatic materialism, "...the most degrading ideology that has ever been imposed on a large section of mankind."⁷

In addition to Hook's literature, Burnham was also swayed by two other books: Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* (1932) and Adolf A. Berle's and

² Diggins, 163-170; Francis, 9-10; Sidney Hook, *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987), 530-532; Kelly, 20-31; and Smant, 1-4.

³ Hook, 192.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 158-161.

⁵ James Burnham, "Religion and Pessimism: Review of *Reflection on the End of an Era* by Reinhold Niebuhr," *The Nation* vol. 139 (July 11, 1934): 50.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

Gardiner L. Means's *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (1933). Burnham wrote a review of Trotsky's book for the *Symposium*, producing two gravitational effects. First, Burnham admired Trotsky's use of dialectical materialism to analyze the Russian revolution. Like Hook's book, it coated Burnham's Marxist pill with a workable application of Marxism as an analytical social science. Second, the review began a dialogue between Burnham and Trotsky, who was the most famous Marxist revolutionary figure next to Vladimir Lenin. The dialogue helped to foster Burnham's intellectual development towards a Trotskyite framework.⁸

Berle's and Means's *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* demonstrated the great concentration of wealth in America's upper echelon, and the growing subordination of the capitalists to the managerial level. Such a thesis reinforced Burnham's belief in the failure and impending collapse of the capitalist system as a viable social structure. Finally, Burnham was reinforced in his beliefs of capitalist failure by a summer tour in 1933 through the Midwest, where he witnessed firsthand the disastrous unemployment effects of the Great Depression.⁹

Seemingly, Burnham's revolutionary thinking should have aligned him with the regimented American Communist Party, which seemed capable of fulfilling the revolutionary transition away from capitalism. However, Burnham was steered out of Communist Party waters, and docked in the less revolutionary harbor of the American Workers Party (AWP), joining in 1934. Burnham's decision to join the AWP was influenced by Hook who claimed he, "...wrestled for his [Burnham's] soul," and two

⁷ James Burnham, "Comment: The Wondrous Architecture of the World," *The Symposium* vol. 2 (April, 1931): 166; Diggins, 163-170; Francis, 9-10; Kelly, 36-41; and Smant, 1-4.

⁸ Diggins, 163-170; Francis, 9-10; Kelly, 36-41; and Smant, 1-4.

other factors; the Communists Party's call for a self-determined black republic in the Southern United States, which repelled him, and his encounter with Gerry Allard, who was an organizational leader of the AWP.¹⁰ Hook wrote that Allard's "...colorful life as a militant working class leader...fascinated Burnham" who saw him as the "...apotheosis of the class-conscious proletariat."¹¹ Thus, Burnham began a prominent six-year Marxist voyage.¹²

Burnham contributed articles to the AWP's publication *Labor Action*, and shortly after joining was in the middle of negotiations to merge the organization with the Trotskyist Communist League of America (TCLA). The anti-Stalinist TCLA was even more revolutionary than the AWP. While a communist party, they disavowed Stalin and upheld Trotsky as the true revolutionary leader and heir to Lenin. By helping to seal the merger, Burnham was signaling an increase in dedication to revolutionary politics.

Longtime Trotskyite leader Joseph P. Cannon wrote:

Burnham ...wanted unification with the Trotskyists because he was then taking a step forward, getting a little bit more radical; he wanted to put his toe in the icy water of proletarian politics...¹³

The merger created the Workers Party of the United States (WPUS) in December of 1934. As a Trotskyite, Burnham would become one of the movement's central figures, writing for the party's weekly, *The Militant*, and co-editing its monthly the *New International*, under the alias John West or Kelvin. Hook wrote that after the merger,

⁹ Adolf A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* revised edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1967), 18-46, 196-218; Diggins, 163-170; Francis, 9-10; Kelly, 36-41; and Smant, 1-4.

¹⁰ Hook, 192.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Diggins, 170; Francis, 10-11; Hook, 202-204; Kelly, 44-68; Smant, 4-6; and Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 178-179.

“...he [Burnham] became its [the WPUS’s] most distinguished intellectual figure.”¹⁴ In addition, historian Alan M. Wald has listed Burnham’s value as bringing to the movement “...a breadth of cultural knowledge, a writing style free of Marxist clichés, an aura of objectivity and impartiality, and a fresh perspective on indigenous issues.”¹⁵

While helping the Trotskyist movement and teaching philosophy, Burnham also married, wedding Marcia Lightner in 1934. In 1936 their first child Marcie was born. Two brothers followed Marcie: James Bernard in 1939 and John Lightner in 1943. In addition, in 1937 Burnham would start contributing to *Partisan Review*, a literary and political magazine.¹⁶

Nineteen thirty-seven was not a slow year for Burnham’s Trotskyist activities. The WPUS would attempt to bore within the leadership of the Socialist Party, and gain control of, a larger and more powerful party. Labeled the French Turn, if such a move failed, at the very least, the party would recruit more Trotskyist members. The French turn would last for about a year. Burnham edited the *Socialist Appeal* and helped start the *Marxist Quarterly*. In 1937, Trotsky ordered the end of the French turn, and the formulation of a new Trotskyite party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Burnham became one member of its three-person secretariat.¹⁷

2. Trotsky’s Ideological Confinement.

Despite Burnham’s growing notoriety and influence in the Trotskyist movement, events in the late 1930s would weaken his revolutionary convictions. Burnham never did

¹³ Joseph P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism: From its Origins (1928) to the Founding of the Socialist Workers Party (1938)* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), 179.

¹⁴ Hook, 202.

¹⁵ Wald, 178; Diggins, 170; Francis, 10-11; Hook, 202-204; Kelly, 44-68; Smant, 4-6; and Wald, 178-179.

¹⁶ Kelly, 46-49, 60, 81-91, 93; Smant, 6, 8-9; Diggins, 184-189; and Wald, 20, 179-182.

¹⁷ Kelly, 46-49, 60, 81-91, 93; Smant, 6, 8-9; Diggins, 184-189; and Wald, 20, 179-182.

accept the dogma of dialectical materialism, a concept that economic and social changes were driven by materialism. He never accepted the inevitability of the communist revolution over capitalism and the establishment of a new communist world order.

The main issue dividing the SWP was the signing of the non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939. Burnham, and a faction of the SWP, believed that this Soviet expansionary action proved the Soviet Union was not a true proletarian state. Trotsky and the rest of the SWP contended that while Stalin had hindered proletarian development, the Soviet Union was still a proletarian system, and its invasion of Poland and Finland in 1939 brought a more progressive form of development than capitalism. Such reasoning was based on the idea that Poland and Finland were capitalist countries, and therefore, a communist invasion was improving the social conditions of both countries. To Burnham this conclusion represented ideological blindness, and highlighted the dogmatic nature of the SWP and Trotsky. Trapped in ideological blinders, Trotsky and the SWP had to maintain the Soviet Union was a proletarian state, or risk imploding the dogma of inevitability. In a polemical reply to an attack from Trotsky over this issue, Burnham wrote:

...The technical perfection of the verbal structure you have created, the dynamic sweep of your rhetoric, the burning expression of your unconquerable devotion to the socialist ideal, the sudden, witty, flashing metaphors that sparkle through your pages...How unpleasant and thankless a duty to submit that splendid structure to the dissolving acids from those two so pedestrian, so unromantic flasks: logic and science.¹⁸

The factional fight over the true nature of the Soviet Union was brought to a vote by the SWP in 1940. A majority of the party leadership continued to support the Soviet

¹⁸ Leon Trotsky, Joseph Hansen, George Edward Novack, James Burnham, and Max Eastman, *In Defense of Marxism (Against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition)* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965), 187-188, 207-211; Diggins, 184-189; Kelly, 81-91; Smant, 8-9, Wald, 20, 179-182.

Union; those who opposed the party line were no longer members. The opposition faction, including Burnham, formed a new organization called the Workers Party (WP). Shortly after working to start the new party Burnham decided that revolutionary Marxist politics were not for him, and resigned from the WP. Burnham wrote:

Of the most important beliefs, which have been associated with the Marxist movement, whether in its reformist, Leninist, Stalinist or Trotskyist variants, there is virtually none which I accept in its traditional form. I regard these beliefs as either false or obsolete or meaningless; or in few cases, as at best true only in a form so restricted and modified as no longer properly to be called Marxist.¹⁹

In addition in the resignation letter, Burnham reiterated his opposition to dialectical materialism and of inevitable communist revolution. Burnham believed that the proof found in contemporary world developments and in the Stalinist dictatorship in the Soviet Union, that a new type of society was developing, the managerial society, which he thought would take the place of both capitalism and communism as a social system.²⁰

Burnham developed this theory in his second book, *The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World* (1941). In the book Burnham did not totally surrender Marxist theory. In fact, he still maintained that capitalism was in decay, and a revolutionary social struggle between classes existed. The evidence of capitalism's decadence was found in mass unemployment and capitalism's failure to solve such problems. Burnham wrote, "Mass unemployment means that the given type of social organization has broken down, that it cannot any longer provide its members with socially useful functions..."²¹ The problem of mass unemployment was compounded by capitalism's faltering productive capability, unmanageable debt, declining free monetary

¹⁹ Trotsky, Hansen, Novack, Burnham, and Eastman, *In Defense of Marxism*, 207.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution or What is Happening in the World Now* (London: Wyman & Sons Limited, 1942), 30.

exchange, declining agriculture, limited and mismanaged investment, decreased colonial exploitation, and a failure to incorporate technology. In addition, capitalist ideologies, the myths and ideas that held capitalist society together, such as individualism or natural rights, were becoming impotent.²²

To the dismay of Marxists, the new society would not be socialist. A new class, not workers or capitalists, would fill the power vacuum. Marxist theory maintained that the workers would control production. Burnham argued that production had advanced to a level that made worker control dysfunctional. A technical or managerial elite now controlled economic production. The Soviet Union was an example of this. After the revolution, the party ceded control of production to the workers. The workers, however, lacked the technical and managerial training to run factories. Therefore, managers had to be reincorporated into the system, a system that they would have decisive leverage over, because they had become indispensable to production. Burnham wrote:

...Through changes in the technique of production, the functions of management become more distinctive, more complex, more specialized, and more crucial to the whole process of production, thus serving to set off those who perform these functions as a separate group or class in society...²³

This group was the managerial class. Because the managers were indispensable to production they could also controlled and directed the society. As Burnham noted, "The instruments of production are the seat of social domination; who controls them, in fact not in name, controls society, for they are the means whereby society lives."²⁴

²² Burnham, *Managerial Revolution*, 16-17, 30-33, 25-26; For other examinations of Burnham's book, *The Managerial Revolution*, see Diggins, 189-198; Francis, 9-31; Kelly 96-105; and Smant 1-12.

²³ Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, 77-78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 97; 49, 202-205.

Managers, lacking the means of the capitalist class, would seek the control and the exploitation of, society through a “fused political-economic apparatus.”²⁵

Government sovereignty was already shifting to growing bureaucracies, also controlled by a managerial elite. These two sets of managers would join together to ensure their domination of society. For example, corporate managers would ensure material advantage to the government managers in exchange for governmental benefits that allowed the corporations political preeminence and social domination.²⁶

Managerial power secured by the state would become totalitarian, which meant control over every aspect of life. Managers would have to resort to a dictatorship to liquidate dissenting capitalists and curb the masses into acceptance. The new world managerial order based on the monopoly of resources and production would develop into a super-state system to ensure power throughout the world. Super-states would form and be located in North America, centered around the United States; Europe, centered around Germany; and Asia, centered around Japan.²⁷

Managerial world order was in evidence during World War II with fascism, communism, and the New Deal, justifying Burnham’s argument about a fused political and economic control. Nazi Germany, a powerful managerial state, was superior in political and social organization to capitalist states, and stood ready to conquer Europe unless the capitalist states, forced by necessity, transformed themselves into more productive and competitive managerial states.²⁸

²⁵ Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, 117.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 103, 117.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-161, 167-169.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 243, 235-236.

Burnham's managerial theory was a definitive break from the Marxist paradigm. Burnham believed capitalism, while still on its way out, would be replaced by a managerial society. While the managerial society was a refutation of Burnham's earlier Marxism it was his third book, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (1943), that formulated his anticommunist and conservative social and political paradigm.

3. To the Right.

In *The Machiavellians*, Burnham examined the political and social influence of Nicolo Machiavelli, and modern Machiavellians, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, and Vilfredo Pareto. His purpose was to extract and develop a more modern Machiavellian method to analyze social and political developments. The Machiavellian method was a scientific approach to understanding past and present social and political conditions, from which to develop more accurate hypotheses of future political development.²⁹

Burnham began his exploration of Machiavellian thought by establishing the difference between the "formal" and "real" meaning of political thought and action. The formal meanings were used to disguise the real meanings of political thought and action. The problem was that political thought and action were evaluated in a context that included the formal meaning. Thus, the formal meaning served "...only to arouse passion and prejudice and sentimentality in favor of the disguised real aims," a condition that "...can teach us nothing of the truth, can in no way help us to solve the problems of our political life."³⁰ Formal meanings connected to ideological abstractions clouded a scientific understanding of politics. It was Machiavelli who first studied politics without

²⁹ For other examinations of James Burnham, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1943), see Diggins, 306-315; Francis, 37-69; Kelly, 106-115; and Smant, 12-14.

³⁰ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 23.

illusions. Machiavelli provided a scientific approach to understand and hypothesize on political thought and practice.³¹

In order to develop a science of politics, a set of principles had to be established in order to evaluate humans and their social environment. Burnham started developing this method, borrowing from Machiavelli, who determined the base of all political study must be understood as the struggle for power. Man and woman, as social creatures, naturally sought power over others, but each person used different methods for this quest for power. The methods could be broadly categorized into two divisions: the lion who used force, and the fox who used fraud. While all people struggled for power, not all were rulers; rulers were still classified in a lion or fox context. Rulers possessed some higher ambition, training, or material advantage over non-rulers. The social struggle for power created a continuous cyclical pattern of political change. Laws were established by current leaders, such laws created virtue, followed by a peace that ushered in idleness, that bred mutiny and destruction, until new political rulers emerged.³²

Burnham then examined Gaetano Mosca who discussed the ruling class, which existed in any form of government, democratic or totalitarian. The ruling class obtained their position by birth, ambition, hard work, or some skill that allowed advantage. The ruling class maintained its hold on power by force and fraud, or by a myth, such as the divine right of kings to rule over people. There were two types of ruling class, aristocratic or liberal. The aristocratic ruling class was closed to new members, since it was a class decided by birthright. The liberal ruling class was open to new members. It was a meritocracy where a certain level of money or education presented an opportunity

³¹ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 7-25, 41-43.

³² *Ibid.*, 41, 51-60, 63.

to enter the ruling class. The best ruling class developed a healthy balance between the liberal and aristocratic tendencies. If the ruling power was not balanced, and tipped either too far to the liberal or aristocratic tendency, the result was social and political upheaval.³³

Robert Michels elaborated on the ruling dynamics of society. Every ruling class, open or closed, developed into an oligarchy, which was an indispensable fact of social organization in any form of government. Even a democratic government was controlled by an oligarchy, because representation, which was a necessary condition of democracy, created a professional political class to which the people gave power. This removed sovereignty from the people and placed it in the hands of an oligarchy.³⁴

Vilfredo Pareto developed the concept that man and woman acted illogically. Pareto determined that this behavior could be charted and understood in a framework of what he termed residues and derivations. Residues were sentiments that were constant through time and among different cultures. Derivations were the attributes of cultures that changed from age to age and from culture to culture. For example, different cultures over time have attempted to manipulate nature. This sentiment is a residue. But different cultures in different ages have used other forms of means to manipulate the weather, such as prayer or sacrificial practices. These practices were the derivations. Residues, the consistent and unchanging sentiments in human behavior, were the most important factor in understanding human action.³⁵

Burnham developed thirteen Machiavellian principles, which he used to scientifically evaluate politics, and make hypotheses about current or future political developments:

³³ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 97, 100, 102-105, 109-111.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 140, 142-151.

1. An objective science of politics, and of society, comparable in its methods to the other empirical sciences, is possible.
2. The primary subject matter of political science is the struggle for social power in its diverse open and concealed forms.
3. The laws of political life cannot be discovered by an analysis which takes men's words and beliefs, spoken, or written, at their face value.
4. Logical or rational action plays a relatively minor part in political and social change...Non-logical action, spurred by environmental changes, instinct, impulse, interest, is the usual social rule.
5. For an understanding of the social process, the most significant social division to be recognized is that between the ruling class and the ruled, between the elite and the non-elite.
6. Historical and political science is above all the study of the elite, its composition, its structure, and the mode of its relation to the non-elite.
7. The primary objective of every elite or ruling class was to maintain its own power and privilege.
8. The rule of the elite is based upon force and fraud.
9. The social structure as a whole is integrated and sustained by a political formula, which is usually correlated with a generally accepted religion, ideology, or myth.
10. The rule of the elite will coincide now more, now less with the interests of the non-elite.
11. Two opposing tendencies always operate in the case of every elite...an aristocratic tendency...[and]...a democratic tendency...
12. In the long run, the second of these tendencies [democratic tendency] always prevails. From this it follows that no social structure is permanent and not static utopia is possible.
13. There occur periodically very rapid shifts in the composition and structure of elites: that is, social revolutions.³⁶

These Machiavellian principles formed the basis of Burnham's political thought, which can be found in his next seven books, and throughout his twenty-two years of writing for *National Review*. It was Burnham's Machiavellian thought that eventually classified him as a conservative in the mid-1950s, because it stressed the importance of social experience as a guide for political action over the ideological prescriptions of communism and liberalism. For example, ideologies were a fixed set of ideas that could not change according to experience, while Machiavellian thought was derived from historical experience and could change according to new observations.

³⁵ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 183-186, 191.

After World War II Burnham saw a new crisis on the horizon, the growing power of the Soviet Union. Burnham feared both the military and ideological appeal of the Soviet Union. While Soviet armies occupying Eastern and Central Europe worried the Truman administration, Burnham was more concerned about communism's ideology concealing a conspiratorial quest for the overthrow of capitalist society.

In the mid-1940s, Burnham developed and expressed such concerns in a number of writings. In a 1944 article titled, "Stalin and the Junkers," Burnham recognized a conspiratorial connection between Stalin and the Junkers to control postwar Germany. The Junkers were an upper echelon military class that provided the bulk of the German officers in World War II. After the Nazi defeat at Stalingrad they helped form the Free Germany Committee (FGC). The committee promoted the idea that if the Junkers surrendered and aided the communists in defeating Nazi-Germany, the German state would be spared. Theoretically, the Junkers rationalized that they would form the leadership infrastructure of a de-Nazified post-war Germany; however, Burnham reasoned that the FGC was not ultimately controlled by the Junkers, but by:

...Small group of men – colder, more brilliant, more objective, more carefully trained than even the first of the Junkers – which constitutes the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.³⁷

The FGC was a subversive plan for Soviet domination of Germany, which correlated into control of Europe, which meant the domination of the world. The conclusion was that communism was a subversive force seeking world domination.³⁸

³⁶ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 223-227.

³⁷ James Burnham, "Stalin and the Junkers" *Commonweal* vol. XL no. 22 (September 15, 1944): 512.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 516.

In 1945, Burnham published an article titled “Lenin’s Heir,” a review of Leon Trotsky’s biography of Stalin. Trotsky charged Stalin with illegitimately seizing power and hindering the communist revolution. Burnham, contrary to his earlier Trotskyism, lavished praise on Stalin for his amazing political ability to seize and maintain power. The most striking aspect of his political abilities was his, “unexampled propagandistic wizardry...,” which “...led the bulk of world opinion into the acceptance of a double standard of political morality.”³⁹ Burnham wrote:

Without a stutter, the Kremlin thunders against the anti-democratic acts of Hitler, Franco, Chiang Kai-shek – and Pierlot, Hoover, yes, and Switzerland, while it maintains at home the most anti-democratic regime in world history... The most totalitarian state that exists and that has ever existed not only claims to be, but is everywhere accepted as – the world leader in the struggle against totalitarianism.⁴⁰

In one sense, the praise was literal. Stalin had engaged in political manipulation to consolidate and expand Soviet power. However, Burnham’s purpose was to prove that Stalin was not a great leader, but the legitimate heir to the communist revolution. Burnham contended that the separation of communism from Stalin was an ideological error. Communism could only be defined by what it manifested itself to be in reality, not in its ideological rhetoric. Burnham wrote:

We cannot understand the nature of revolutionary or any other social movements by their ‘principles,’ by their verbalized program, but only by what they disclose themselves to be in action. Revolutionary movements are defined not by what they say but by what they do.⁴¹

Communism was a “conspiratorial movement for the conquest of a monopoly of power...” and all the terror and deception that developed from this monopoly were the

³⁹ James Burnham, “Lenin’s Heir,” *Partisan Review* vol. 12 (1945): 63-64.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

real goals of communism.⁴² Stalin did not betray the revolution, he was the revolution fulfilled. Again, Trotsky's interpretation of revolutionary communism was caught in a rhetorical prison.⁴³

In 1947 Burnham announced his dedication to anticommunism, when he published his fourth book, *The Struggle for the World*. Burnham contended that a third world war had already started, launched by the communist worldwide revolutionary apparatus, headquartered in the Soviet Union. The communist war plan was the launching of a full-scale political warfare, which included all methods of struggle except formal military means. Its purpose was to take over weak non-communist countries, and, through subversion, weaken strong non-communist states in preparation for open war on the world. Burnham believed that the U.S. needed to confront and defeat the Soviets in a full-scale political warfare campaign, because Soviet ideology, predicated on the inevitability of communist victory, would not stop unless it achieved world domination, or was terminated.⁴⁴ This was contrary to the prevailing U.S. anticommunist policy of containment, which was predicated on a defensive strategy.

In 1949, Burnham retired from teaching at NYU to join the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In the CIA Burnham served as a secret consultant to the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), a covert section that dealt in political and psychological warfare. Burnham's work for the CIA centered on developing political warfare methods to combat communism, which included such activities as financing anticommunist publications around the world, including his own book, *The Coming Defeat of Communism* (1950). Burnham argued that the U.S. needed to engage the Soviet revolutionary communist

⁴² Burnham, "Lenin's Heir," 72.

⁴³ Ibid.

apparatus in political warfare, a campaign, which if carried out effectively, could defeat communism and the Soviet Union without large-scale conventional war.⁴⁵

Burnham also sought to finance anticommunist organizations. The most noted organization that Burnham and the OPC helped to finance was the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). The CCF was an intellectual organization composed of authors, scientists, and artists that sought to win over the minds of intellectuals and battle against Marxist ideas. Some notables included Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Sydney Hook, Tennessee Williams, and George Schuyler. The CCF published books, magazines, such as *Encounter*, and conducted conferences, creating national affiliates designed to counter communist propaganda. On June twenty-fifth, 1950, only five days after North Korean tanks invaded the South, the CCF held its inaugural meeting in West Berlin.⁴⁶

At the West Berlin conference, Burnham presented a paper that aimed to make liberals and leftists less squeamish about anticommunism, and to convince the assemblage of the erroneous position of neutralism. Burnham warned that peace movements fostering disarmament and neutralism were employing communist tactics to disarm the West. For Burnham, a constant struggle for political and social domination always existed. The question was: which system would win, the U.S. or the Soviet system? In the early years of the Cold War, Burnham noted, the U.S. held a superior arms advantage (hence the communist tactic for peace and disarmament.) Burnham argued that he was not against atomic bombs. Instead, he was only against those atomic bombs:

⁴⁴ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1947).

⁴⁵ Hook, 532; Kelly, 150-158; and Smant, 29.

...Now stored or to be stored in Siberia or the Caucasus, which are designed for the destruction of Paris, London, Rome, Brussels, Stockholm, New York, Chicago, ...Berlin, and of Western Civilization generally.⁴⁷

He professed his support for United States atomic strategy, which “For five years...have defended – have been the sole defense of – those liberties of Western Europe.”⁴⁸ The point was explicit: either accept the necessary need for nuclear armament, which protected a liberal democratic way of life, or succumb to the Soviet Union, which meant “...the reduction of mankind to a monolithic totalitarian enslavement.”⁴⁹

Burnham emphasized that neutralism in the Cold War was impossible. The Soviet Union was driven by world domination. European neutralism meant the fall of Europe to communism, and thus, the fall of the world. A united front between Western Europe and the U.S. would be the greatest obstacle to Soviet domination. Burnham did not try to hide the fact that turning towards the U.S. sphere of influence would Americanize parts of Europe (a concern of many European intellectuals), but he logically framed the choice between choosing the U.S. or remaining neutral:

Coca-cola may be a dreadful drink, but it is not quite in the same class with Koyma. I will grant the horror of American comics and radio programs, but I will still choose them as against the MVD. The American Negroes rightly demand from Washington a far fuller measure of justice, but they are not sent to slave labor camps for stating their demands, nor have they reason to exchange their lot for that of the Chechen-Ingush of the Crimean tartars. No doubt the Marshall Plan is a plot of American imperialism. An imperialism which ships into Western Europe 15 billion dollars worth of goods seems in some respects preferable to a liberation which drains a like amount out of Europe’s East. The United States has perhaps not done all that it should for Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Should that motivate these islands to seek the treatment of Latvia or Lithuania?⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Kelly, 157-171; Hook, 432-460; Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), xi; Smant, 31-32.

⁴⁷ James Burnham, “Rhetoric and Peace,” *Partisan Review* no. 17 (December, 1950): 866.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 870; 861-864.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 868-869.

Burnham was also a founding member of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF), an independent affiliate of the CCF, organized in 1951. The ACCF, like the CCF, was an intellectual organization designed to promote a liberal democratic culture, and to combat totalitarian systems. Like the CCF the ACCF was secretly financed by the CIA.⁵¹

Burnham, was at the center of the intellectual wars against communism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He found himself combating the liberal establishment, as much as communism. Burnham focused many of his attacks on liberals, the most influential intellectuals in postwar America. Liberals, to Burnham, were ideologues who were too impotent to deal with the danger of communism, a theory he expressed in a 1952 article "The Case Against Adlai Stevenson." The intermediate range of the article was an attack on Stevenson as a possible president. Burnham charged him as being too naive to deal with the communist threat. But the long-range purpose of the article was an attack on the liberal establishment, of which Stevenson was a byproduct.⁵²

It was the liberal establishment that, "...provided the ideological culture material in which pro-Communist points of view and individual Communist agents have flourished."⁵³ It was the liberals "drunk from anti-Nazi Popular Front highballs spiked by the G.P.U...." that created the, "...Washington atmosphere in which communist cells grew in the bureaus."⁵⁴ Burnham believed that liberalism's propensity towards relativism had weakened the structure of society, which allowed communism to thrive.

⁵¹ Hook, 420-421, 426; Kelly, 171-172; Diggins, 326-327; and Smant, 31.

⁵² James Burnham, "The Case Against Adlai Stevenson," *American Mercury* no. 75 (October, 1952): 11-19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Burnham's 1952 book, *Containment and Liberation: An Inquiry into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy*, criticized the liberal anticommunist containment policy. Liberals did not comprehend the true nature of communism. Instead, they thought alleviating economic and political turmoil through foreign aid, and a stationary, non-aggressive, military stance could defeat communism. However, Burnham contended that communism was not directly the byproduct of economic and social turmoil. It was a deliberately organized body made up of revolutionary cadres who caused economic and social turmoil. Therefore, the communists would sabotage economic and political aid by legal and illegal methods. In addition, a military line in the sand could not hinder communism, which was fighting a non-conventional political warfare campaign that involved the use of a fifth column. Communism in its present stage was gaining ground, not primarily by conventional military means, but through fifth column subversion.⁵⁵

Burnham's criticism of liberalism was pushing him away from the Left, it was McCarthyism, an event that solidified the divide between liberal and conservative anticommunism that officially made Burnham a man of the Right. The Left saw McCarthyism as a threat to civil liberties and freedom of speech leading to irrational conspiracy theories and accusations that were as potentially dangerous as communism. The Right, in general, believed McCarthyism could serve as an effective tool in combating communism, which was conspiratorial in nature. Burnham neither defended Joseph McCarthy nor attacked him, but believed " 'McCarthyism' to be an invention of the communist tacticians, who launched it and are exploiting it..." for the purpose of

⁵⁵ James Burnham, *Containment or Liberation: An Inquiry into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy* (New York: The John Day Company, 1952).

damaging the anticommunist cause.⁵⁶ Indeed, Burnham was correct about McCarthyism damaging anticommunism. The Left and Liberal establishment went through an ideological metamorphosis from support for anticommunism to anti-anticommunism.

Burnham added fuel to his already burning bridge by writing an introduction to Medford Evans' conspiratorial book, *The Secret War for the A-Bomb* (1953). In the introduction Burnham located the communist conspiracy in the Manhattan Project, not predominately in trained Soviet spies, which did exist and were dangerous, but in the ability of the communist ideology to control "...the minds of the men who produced the formulas and the instruments – the scientists and technicians."⁵⁷ Communism was a highly developed and planned conspiracy, which used propaganda to sway the minds of people to further the communist cause, people who did not necessarily have to be card carrying communist members.

Burnham showcased the communist conspiracy theory in *The Web of Subversion: Underground Networks in the U.S. Government* (1954). Burnham sought to prove the existence of communist cells inside the U.S. government, to document the reach and proficiency of communist subversion. In addition, he found a pattern of communist infiltration. Communists were aided, and sustained by liberals who acted either consciously or unconsciously for the communist cause. Burnham's analysis burned his few remaining bridges to the liberal establishment. He was kicked out of the CIA, banned from *Partisan Review*, and jettisoned from the ACCF in the early to mid-1950s.

⁵⁶ James Burnham, "A Letter of Resignation," *Partisan Review* no. 20 (November-December, 1953): 716.

⁵⁷ Medford Evans, *The Secret War for the A-Bomb*, with an introductory chapter by James Burnham (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), viii.

These organizations were aligned with the Left, a position to which Burnham no longer belonged.⁵⁸

Burnham would not remain on the intellectual sidelines for long. While Burnham's anticommunism had alienated him from the Left, he found a home on the intellectual Right. In 1954, the young and rising conservative intellectual star, William F. Buckley, Jr. recruited Burnham to become a senior editor for a new conservative journal *National Review*, where Burnham worked and wrote for over twenty-two years. Burnham had a significant impact at *National Review*. John B. Judis noted that Burnham "...was Buckley's first and would become his most important recruit."⁵⁹ Buckley acknowledged such a debt, labeling Burnham, "...the dominant intellectual influence in the development of this journal [*National Review*]."⁶⁰

The journal was the intellectual flagship of the post-WWII conservative renaissance. Burnham did not always fit easily into the intellectual conservative movement. While his Machiavellian emphasis on historical experience as a guide to knowledge and human behavior placed him in traditionalist circles, it was still an awkward fit, because Burnham's traditionalism was not based on an adherence to a transcendental moral order, but through empirical reasoning.

Burnham's relationship to libertarian thought was even more complex. While he believed private initiative was better than government planning, he thought that libertarianism was too ideological. For example, the libertarian attack on government

⁵⁸ James Burnham, *The Web of Subversion: Underground Networks in the U.S. Government* (New York: The John Day Company, 1954); Coleman, 245; Burnham, "Letter of Resignation," 716-717; Diggins, 328-329; Kelly, 192-201; Hook, 421-422; John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 123; and Smart, 44-45.

⁵⁹ Judis, 100.

⁶⁰ William F. Buckley, Jr., "James Burnham 1905-1987" *National Review* (hereafter *NR*) vol. 39 no. 17 (September 11, 1987): 31; Judis, 122.

welfare and healthcare was ideological, because Burnham believed welfare and healthcare were unavoidable byproducts of twentieth century developments. Conservatives needed to accept this fact and focus on improving, instead of ranting, against their existence. More importantly, libertarians tended to be isolationist, and did not take into account the necessity of an aggressive interventionist policy to combat communism.⁶¹

It was Burnham's confrontational, and conspiratorial, anticommunist theory that provided for his most comfortable home on the Right. Historian Kevin J. Smant noted that Burnham was instrumental in:

...Formulating and popularizing an anti-Communist strategy for American foreign policy. His interpretations gave the most effective voice to, and supplied the theoretical grounding for, conservative anti-Communism with respect to foreign policy.⁶²

Burnham's column, "The Third World War," served as a form of political warfare against communism, educating people against the communist threat and providing the theoretical means with which to confront and defeat communism. His main theory in his twenty-two year column was that communism was engaged in a political war with the U.S. and the West. The U.S. needed to respond in kind, or face totalitarian enslavement.

Burnham's anticommunism could draw criticism from the Right, because it was tempered by his Machiavellian foundation relying on an empirical approach to analyzing political and social conditions. Therefore, Burnham was not an ideologically driven anticommunist. For example, in a *National Review* article titled, "Liberation What Next," Burnham argued that if Central and Eastern Europe were demilitarized by a joint

⁶¹ James Burnham, "More Notes from the Road" *NR* vol. 21 no. 49 (December 16, 1969): 1269; James Burnham, "Third World War," (hereafter TWW) *NR* vol. 19 no. 23 (June 13, 1967): 629; James Burnham, "Points South and East," *NR* vol. 23 no. 7 (February 23, 1971): 191.

agreement between the Soviet Union and the Western nations led by the U.S. it would lead to the liberation of Eastern Europe from Soviet control. Burnham believed the Soviets would agree to such a plan, because they were drastically overextended. Burnham reasoned that Soviet control of Eastern Europe was maintained only by the presence of the Red Army, and if it were removed, Eastern European states would break away from the Soviet Union. This would be the first step in liberating them from communism and pulling them closer to Western Europe. Burnham also implied that the retreat of the Red Army would probably be a decisive blow to the Soviet Union, because the communist ideological conception of inevitable communist advance, and capitalist decline, would be shattered.⁶³

Burnham's empirical approach was also expressed in his general political ideas. Burnham's empiricism led him to conclude that the conservative movement would only be effective if it avoided sectarianism. He often coached the conservatives to lean to a practical application of conservative principles and programs. For example, Burnham advocated that conservatives should vote for Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower, instead of forming a third party, which Burnham believed would doom the conservative movement. Burnham also displayed this practical political consideration when he changed the title of his "Third World War" column to "The Protracted Conflict," a move predicated on the desire to be more effective by reaching a wider audience. Burnham wrote that, "...many dismiss anything written under such a heading as obsolescent cold war stuff that went out with Stalin."⁶⁴ The new logo had become more acceptable, and

⁶² Smant, 163.

⁶³ James Burnham, "Liberation What Next?" *NR* vol. 3 no. 3 (January 19, 1957): 59-62.

⁶⁴ James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict" (hereafter TPC) *NR* vol. 22 no. 15 (April 21, 1970):

therefore more effective to promoting his anticommunist theory. This conservative pragmatism, like his anticommunist theory, would be one of his most influential attributes to the conservative movement.⁶⁵

Anticommunism was Burnham's main contribution to conservative thought and the conservative movement. He also wrote two books that developed an anti-liberal theory for the conservative movement as well. In *Congress and the American Tradition* (1959), Burnham contended that the predominance of liberal ideology was breaking down the institution of Congress, the last great social power that preserved representative government. Liberals embraced mass democracy, which would usher in Caesarism, a condition akin to totalitarianism. In *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (1964), which conservative scholar Jeffrey Hart labeled, "...one of the central works of political and cultural reflections of our time," Burnham argued that liberalism was not causing the decay of Western Civilization, but was reconciling us to its dissolution with its ideological abstractions.⁶⁶

For twenty-two years Burnham wrote a regular column for *National Review*, but in 1978 Burnham's health took a turn for the worse. He lost much of his eyesight to macular degeneration in January, and in November was forced to retire due to a stroke, which strangely stopped his eyes from further degeneration, but sapped him of his short-term memory. Four years later tragedy would strike again. Burnham suffered a heart

⁶⁵ James Burnham, "Should Conservatives Vote for Eisenhower-Nixon?: Yes" *NR* vol. 2 no. 22 (October 20, 1956): 12, 14; Burnham, "TPC" *NR* vol. 22 no. 15 (April 21, 1970): 400; Kelly, 274-275; Smart, 70, 72-73, 77, 117-132; For examples of Burnham's influence on Buckley, the executive of *NR*, see John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 146, 204, 214, 227, 324, 329, 341, 440.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Hart, "IV. Editor, Thinker, Colleague," *NR* vol. 39 no. 17 (September 11, 1987): 44; James Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959); *Ibid.*, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (New York: The John Day Company, 1964).

attack, from which he recovered, but that same year he lost his wife, Marcia, to a viral infection. In 1983, Burnham was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Richard M. Weaver Award, both tributes to a life of profound intellectual influence for the benefit of American society. Shortly before his death, Burnham would rejoin the Catholic Church, which he had left as a student at Oxford. On the twenty-eighth of July, 1987 he succumbed to cancer at his home in Kent, Connecticut, preceded in death by his wife and daughter Marcie. He was survived by his two sons and seven grandchildren.

Upon notification of his death President Ronald Reagan stated that Burnham was:

...One of those principally responsible for the great intellectual odyssey of our century – the journey away from totalitarian statism and toward the uplifting doctrines of freedom.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *The New York Times* (New York), 30 July 1987; Francis, 131-132; Kelly, 357-366; and Smart, 151-152.

CHAPTER III ANTICOMMUNIST THEORY

If to some, and I think there are some, it will appear better that mankind should altogether perish than that communism should thus conquer...

James Burnham¹

The communist stand forces us to decide, painful as is the process to liberal sensibilities, whether we really believe that our way is better than theirs. Are we ready to declare that Western civilization is superior-objectively superior-to Soviet totalitarianism?

James Burnham²

1. Machiavellian Anticommunism.

Burnham's anticommunism was based on the Machiavellian framework of his political thought. Burnham's Machiavellian foundation helped form his anticommunist paradigm in two ways. First, it made him an anticommunist, and second, it shaped his particular brand of pragmatic anticommunism.

In Machiavellian thought social forces must be balanced for a healthy society. Communism was a dangerous ideology, because it encouraged the complete overthrow of society and sought to insert a utopian one in its place. To install a communist utopia, the communists must have a monopoly of power. A monopoly of power meant that no other social forces existed to check its power, a condition that resulted in an arbitrary rule based on terror and deception. The terror and deception were inherent in the arbitrary communist rule as well, because the mass of society would not easily convert to a completely new system.³ A society that was governed by the rule of law could only be achieved if there were balancing social forces. Power was required to check power.

Burnham wrote:

¹ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1947), 129.

² James Burnham, *Containment or Liberation: An Inquiry into the Foreign Aims of United States Foreign Policy* (New York: The John Day Company, 1952), 248.

...There must be an approximate balance among the major social forces, or at the least a shifting equilibrium in which no one of these forces can overpower all the rest.⁴

In a communist system no balance of power occurred. Power was monopolized, and an arbitrary rule of terror and deception followed.⁵

Burnham's Machiavellian empiricism also fostered the concept that an adherence to traditional systems and principles was better, and therefore, more competent than ideologies in deciding social and political actions. Traditional principles and institutions were formed from social experience, or an empirical process of observation and change. Communism was unscientific even it claimed to be scientific, because it was formed from abstract principles, which did not correspond to historical experience. The communist ideology presupposed, without historical experience, that the transitional dictatorship was the path to social utopia. However, historical experience had shown that the social utopia had never occurred and that the transitional dictatorship was the path to mass terror and deception in Russia. Whereas the American political tradition of congressional government proved, according to Burnham, to be a system that prevented a monopoly of power, and therefore, provided the balance of social forces necessary to create the rule of

³ Communists advocated the complete overthrow of the "old" society, even religion, which they believed was a cultural byproduct of capitalist society.

⁴ James Burnham, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1943), 111.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 109-115. It should be noted that Burnham would support dictatorial regimes in the battle against communism as long as they were identified with the political Right. Burnham reasoned that while Rightist dictatorships monopolized power, they tended to keep the traditional hierarchical institutions of society, such as the Catholic Church and the military intact. In this case social forces still existed to counter complete monolithic control. Dictatorships to the Left, however, tended to usurp the power of all traditional institutions, which led to what Burnham termed "totalist" regimes, which meant a complete monolithic system, because no social forces were left over to counter the dictators power. See James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict," (hereafter TPC") *National Review* (hereafter NR) vol. 26 no. 43 (October 25, 1974): 1223; Burnham, "TPC," NR vol. 27 no. 1 (January 17, 1975):27.

law.⁶ In addition, the communist ideology believed that man could be logically or scientifically organized and ruled. This was a definite break from science, because Burnham believed that one of the proven characteristics of social and political action was its consistent non-logical or unscientific behavior. Burnham wrote:

Logical or rational action plays a relatively minor part in political and social change. For the most part it is a delusion to believe that in social life men take deliberate steps to achieve consciously held goals. Non-logical action, spurred, by environmental changes, instinct, impulse, interest, is the usual social rule.⁷

Lastly, Machiavellian thought fostered in Burnham the concept of a scientific application to political action, a method which required an experience in history in order to evaluate current and future political action. Burnham wrote:

An objective science of politics, and of society, comparable in its methods to the other empirical sciences, is possible. Such a science will describe and correlate observable social facts, and, on the basis of facts of the past, will state more or less probable hypotheses about the future...and will in no way be dependent upon the acceptance of some particular ethical aim or ideal.⁸

Therefore, Burnham's anticommunist theory exhibited a protean character based on this empirical application. His goal was to decimate communist power, and he used methods, which he deemed scientifically adequate to achieve that goal. He did not primarily subordinate his objective to ideals, or to ideological confinements, an application that is more noticeable in his post-1955 anticommunist theory.⁹

⁶ James Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959), 3-123, 25-33, 281-310; For a similar view of Burnham's traditionalist conservative thought see Samuel Francis, *Thinkers of Our Time: James Burnham* (London, The Claridge Press, 1999): 134-136.

⁷ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 224.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 223-227. Generally, his pre-1955 anticommunist theory tends to be interpreted as being somewhat ideologically driven. For example, the title of Burnham's fifth book, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, implies an inevitability and rigid structure to his anticommunist theory. However, one could argue that Burnham may have believed according to his observations that pre-1955 communism required a more aggressive policy to counteract its advances. Or, that Burnham believed the domestic climate following World War II and up to 1955 was more receptive to an aggressive policy against communism. Therefore, he reasoned that a more aggressive policy was required or possible. However, his

2. The Nature of Communism.

Burnham defined communism as:

...A world-wide, conspiratorial movement for the conquest of a monopoly of power in the era of capitalist decline. Politically it is based upon terror and mass deception; economically it is, or least tends to be, collectivist; socially it is totalitarian¹⁰

Initially, communism, since its Leninist beginning in 1903, was an internationalist movement controlled by a party hierarchy. It rejected the concept of political, geographical or cultural boundaries, because communist society was meant to establish a new world order. It was an ideological movement based on the universal concept of a proletariat seeking a revolution against the bourgeoisie. Lenin believed the proletariat needed the party to consciously direct the overthrow of capitalism. The Communist Party was a rigid ideologically trained cadre of revolutionaries who sought to infiltrate all sectors of the old capitalist society and work for its destruction. Burnham wrote:

The true communist...is a "dedicated man." He has no life apart from his organization and his rigidly systematic set of ideas. Everything that he does, everything that he has, family, job, money, belief, friends, talents, life everything is subordinated to his communism...He eats, reads, makes love, thinks, goes to parties, changes residence, laughs, insults always as a communist.¹¹

This definitive distinction between a communist, who subordinated everything to his ideology, created two types of people, the communist and everyone else. Ominously, it was everyone else who was an enemy, and expendable for the cause of the revolution.¹²

Communist infiltration of capitalist society was through subversion. Communism was inseparable from conspiracy, because the overthrow of capitalism could only be

anticommunist theory during his *National Review* tenure (1955-1978) displayed a protean character, which was based on Burnham's new observations and experiences in the struggle against communism.

¹⁰ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 59.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 59-69.

accomplished illegally. To achieve this goal the communist party operated in two modes: first, a legal mode, which still worked to sabotage society, but through legal methods, such as voting for a communist political candidate, or disseminating communist propaganda. The main importance of the legal mode was to cover up the second mode, which was illegal action, entailing any kind of direct sabotage. Burnham put the process in to what he termed the thesis (legal mode) and the antithesis (illegal mode) of the communist dialectic:

The militant antithesis smiles the enemy of the revolution with riots, arson, terror, bombs and bullets while the peaceful thesis seduces him with negotiations, electoral processes, conferences, agreements, hopes of disarmament, trade and peace. The two opposite modes synthesize into a united front carrying the revolution forward.¹³

In 1917, when the Bolsheviks triumphed in Russia, communists had a central headquarters in the form of a state, a “Fortress of the World Revolution,” which would be used as a means to bring about “revolutionary emancipation.”¹⁴ Essentially, this meant, Burnham believed, that the Soviet Union would act as a proletarian dictatorship of the world, seeking to transform the rest of the world to Communism. The Bolsheviks established the Communist International (Comintern) to form communist parties throughout the world and bring about communist revolution. The Communist threat was now twofold. First, it still subversively sought the overthrow of society through its international apparatus now directed from the Soviet Union. Second, communism now had the power of a state, which could bolster its international apparatus and overthrow society through conventional military means.¹⁵

¹³ James Burnham, “Third World War,” (hereafter TWW) *NR* vol. 17 no. 14 (April 6, 1965): 274.

¹⁴ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 76, 78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-85.

The Soviet leaders ruled by terror and deception. The terror was especially brutal, because the proletarian dictator had to liquidate all vestiges of the old society and maintain a complete monopoly of power to ensure the transition to communism. This monopoly of power created arbitrary rule, because no other social force existed to check communist power. Arbitrary rule was only guided by what served the communist cause.¹⁶

Deception was also necessary to curb the masses. With millions starved and murdered, the communist regime had to alter the framework of reality or objective truth. Lies, serving the communist cause were necessary, Burnham wrote, "...whatever serves the interest of the communist power is true."¹⁷ Deception took two forms. A direct lie, which was the process of simply denying millions were starving, or the, "...manufacture of abstract formulas which distort the comprehension of reality."¹⁸ In this method, Burnham wrote:

...The terrorist dictatorship of the Communist Party becomes "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat"; the expropriation of lands, livestock and tools of the peasantry by terror and mass starvation becomes "voluntary collectivization..."¹⁹

Communists and fellow travelers conceived the un-pleasantries of the proletarian dictatorship as a transitory phase. Burnham believed this was an ideological delusion.

Communist rule by terror and deception was:

...Proved by historical experience to be integral to communism, to be, in fact, the main instrument by which its power is increased and sustained. From the

¹⁶ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 128-129, 63, 66-67. For one historical example of the Soviet rule of terror, see Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 578-586. Applebaum examines the Soviet Gulag, which was a prison system for "enemies of the revolution" where over eighteen million people were imprisoned and over millions murdered.

¹⁷ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 128-129.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67, 128-129, 63-69.

beginning of the communist regime in Russia, every major political and economic turn has been carried through in terror.²⁰

Burnham believed that revolutionary movements could not be defined by their ideological rhetoric, but only by their actual historical actions. He wrote:

We cannot understand the nature of revolutionary or any other social movements by their 'principles,' by their verbalized program, but only by what they disclose themselves to be in action.²¹

3. The Seventh Period.

Communism, as an international movement directed by the Soviet Union, had six major changes in its party line, each signaling a policy to consolidate or expand its power base. From 1935 to 1939 the communist policy was contraction. Stalin sought a popular or united front strategy with anti-fascist groups to ensure the survival of the Soviet Union, which was threatened by Nazi Germany. In this instance expansionary goals had become subordinate to survival. The non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939 was a move of expansion, because it meant Soviet invasion of the Baltic States, Poland, and Finland. Whatever policy line the Soviet Union directed, the international communist apparatus followed suit. For example, in the contraction phase of 1935-1939 the communist parties sought united fronts with anti-fascist groups to propagate a popular anti-fascist sentiment in the hope of saving the base of world communism. However, their goal of capitalist overthrow was still in action, and the illegal mode of the party used the legal united front policy as a cover to penetrate New Deal agencies.²²

²⁰ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 65.

²¹ James Burnham, "Lenin's Heir" *Partisan Review* vol. 12 (1945): 71.

²² Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 78-83.

Burnham believed that in 1945 the Soviet Union and its corresponding international apparatus were attempting another turn, an expansionary one, which Burnham termed, “The Seventh Period.”²³ The expansionary phase had two objectives:

1. The attempt to consolidate effective domination of the Eurasian continent.
2. The simultaneous attempt to weaken and undermine all governments and nations not under communist control.²⁴

Burnham believed that the communists were launching the expansionary phase in 1945, not only because it was their ideological goal, but also because World War II had provided the means and power to support such a move. The crisis of war gave the communists the confidence that they could build a world system. In addition, the Soviet Union was suffering from economic turmoil. Expansion could solve these problems. It would divert domestic attention away from internal problems, while providing additional conquered resources to shore up economic problems.²⁵

The Soviets would wage a full-scale political warfare campaign to reach both expansionary objectives. The Soviet directed international apparatus was an unparalleled intelligence bureau, propaganda device, sabotage machine, and possible military auxiliary force. In intelligence, which Burnham labeled as one of the “decisive” elements in modern war, the communist apparatus, “...by virtue of their methods of infiltration into any sector of enemy [non-communist] society...” were plugged into all channels of information. The communists especially concentrated on propaganda, which they used to influence the minds of non-communists. Burnham wrote:

The Funds, the personnel, and the ingenuity which they devote to it are almost beyond calculation. Every medium of communication in every language is used, and used massively: personal conversation, radio, newspapers, leaflets, books,

²³ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 79.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 90-113.

pamphlets, magazines, speeches and lectures, classroom and kindergarten, comics, movies, theater and all the other arts, posters, and slogans painted on walls.²⁶

The communist apparatus embedded into enemy society as a fifth column, aside from intelligence and propaganda, also participated in such activities as sabotage, revolts, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, civil disobedience, strikes, and other techniques. In addition, if open war did break out between the Soviet Union and the U.S. the fifth column would act as an internal auxiliary force.²⁷

The highly trained and subversive communist cadres would apply “permanent pressure” on the non-communist world, waging a full-scale political warfare to pull weak countries into de facto Soviet control through what Burnham termed the disintegration tactic. The tactic was to infiltrate, control, and destroy, through political warfare, the most powerful institutions of society such as the government, the church, the military, and unions. Once society fell and chaos set in, the trained communist cadres, backed by the social forces they co-opted, would seize power. If the country was too strong to be overrun directly, the tactic was used to weaken it, such as in the case of the United States. Communist political warfare would serve to decimate the stability of U.S. society in order to ensure victory for the Soviet Union in the open or formal military phase of world war three. For example, the communists would penetrate all sectors of society, and operate by gathering intelligence, using pro-communist propaganda, or direct sabotage.²⁸

Burnham labeled this infiltration, which he believed had penetrated much of U.S. society, the “web of subversion.” Burnham wrote:

²⁶ James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1950), 84.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 79-85.

Thickly or tenuously the web has extended into most social institutions: trade unions, churches, the educational system, the press, the movies, the theater, radio and TV, foundations, book publishing, pacifist organizations civil rights and other reform groups.²⁹

Most importantly, Burnham contended that the web had penetrated the U.S. government, the most important institution if the West were to defeat communism. The web had reached into the State and Treasury Departments, the White House, the Pentagon, the Capitol, and the atomic projects. The communist cells sabotaged the government in three vital ways:

1. Intelligence or espionage – supplying significant information, including confidential information, to the Soviet intelligence services.
2. Influencing government policies and activities in favor of communist and Soviet interests.
3. Undermining the administrative, physical and moral framework of the government, and acquiring “reserve” positions where this can be done on a large scale in time of emergency – war or revolution. The “undermining” activities vary from outright military sabotage to what might be called “administrative sabotage: in such documented instances as the lifting of papers from security files.³⁰

However, the disciplined operation of the communist cells were very difficult to detect, because they were decentralized, and disguised by legal names, jobs, and actions.³¹

In summary, Burnham contended that communism was a conspiratorial movement that sought the destruction of capitalist society, and a monopoly of power. This led to totalitarian enslavement characterized by terror and deception. In addition, the international communist apparatus, directed by the Soviet Union, had already declared war, “the third world war”, on the non-communist world. Initially, this was a

²⁸ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 96-98, 121, 105-110; James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 1 no. 18 (March 21, 1956): 19; and James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 5 no. 8 (February 22, 1958): 180.

²⁹ James Burnham, *The Web of Subversion: Underground Networks in the U.S. Government* (New York: The John Day Company, 1954), 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16-71, 139, 159, 179, 188, 203-204, 208.

full-scale subversive political warfare campaign to strengthen the Soviet Union, and simultaneously weaken the U.S. in preparation for the military phase of world war three.

4. Obstacles.

Burnham believed the U.S. could defeat the Soviet Union and communism by both political and military warfare. This confidence was based in America's technological and industrial capability. However, such a victory would not come easily. The Soviets had three advantages: a geopolitical advantage, because they controlled the Eurasian heartland, from which they could dominate Western Europe, Asia, and Africa. Second, the Soviet Union had an advantage in natural resources, which included a large population and vast material resources. The population and material resources could provide the Soviets with an incredible industrial development and a gigantic land army. Third, they possessed a determined political will, the gusto to fight and win the struggle. The will was derived from the communist ideology, which armed the communists with the concepts of inevitability and utopian faith. Communists believed the struggle between communism and capitalism was inevitable and that communist victory and utopian development were inevitable. Burnham wrote, "The doctrine of inevitability is a powerful psychological boost...In general, it paralyzes an opponent's will to resist if you can persuade him that he is sure to lose whatever he does."³²

The will of the communists was its greatest asset, and therefore, the greatest danger to the U.S. The Soviet Union after World War II, and at least to 1949, was inadequately armed for a military engagement with the U.S., but Burnham believed the true decisive factor in the struggle would boil down to a contest of wills. Burnham often

³² James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 3 (December 7, 1955): 16; Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 96-98, 114-121; and Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 274-275.

mentioned the meager beginnings of Bolshevism in 1903. He wrote, “We can never to often remind ourselves that when Lenin, in 1903, founded the Bolshevik enterprise, it possessed a half dozen revolvers for arms and only debts for its economic foundation.”³³ By 1959, communists found themselves, “...masters of a vast and rapidly expanding empire, already larger in area and population than any that has heretofore existed.”³⁴

Burnham believed the U.S. lacked the will to win, which he believed was proven by such things as the absence of an anticommunist party, and the reluctance to use nuclear weapons.³⁵ The existence of the Communist Party was a sign of the communist will to obtain victory, but where was the corresponding will of the West to survive and defeat communism? Its non-existence was, “...the sign of our lack of will...”³⁶ During the long span of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Burnham criticized the U.S. for failing to use nuclear weapons. The U.S. fought on the enemy’s terms, using technology only sparingly instead of employing America’s, “...unparalleled industrial plant and administrative flair.” The U.S. was afraid of, “...exploit [ing] the most advanced equipment our technology can turn out, and to bring to bear massive, crushing concentrations of power.”³⁷ Burnham believed the failure to use nuclear weapons was the outward sign of America’s lack of will. Burnham quoted a pro-Soviet Indian contact that said:

I much prefer Western Civilization to Communism. But I believe the West is on the way out, and what has convinced me of this is the Western attitude toward the atom bomb. Atom bombs are a logical, inevitable product of the inner history of

³³ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 5 no. 4 (January 25, 1958.): 80.

³⁴ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 76, 107-134; and Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 93-94, 121.

³⁵ In the late 1940s, the Republican Party became the anticommunist party in the U.S., but Burnham was referring to a type of party, which would be similar to the communist party, seeking communist destruction through a highly organized international body.

³⁶ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 12 no. 24 (June 19, 1962): 437.

³⁷ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 17 no. 36 (September 7, 1965): 762.

Western Civilization. Instead of accepting its nuclear achievement with rejoicing and pride, the West has shrunk away from it in guilt and fear. In this response the West is repudiating itself.³⁸

Burnham believed that a weaker will was predicated on the fact that the U.S. did not understand the true nature of communism. First, the Americans did not understand that communism was an ideological conspiracy inevitably seeking world domination and capitalist destruction. They also did not understand that communism was a subversive conspiracy, which was waging political warfare against the U.S., a method that was harder to detect than the Red Army entering Alaska or Cuba.³⁹

America's failure to understand the true nature of communism translated into inadequate policies to combat the communist conspiracy. First, the U.S. did not actively seek to create an empire, an erroneous position when the communists were seeking world domination. The Cold War, for Burnham, was a struggle for domination; therefore, the U.S. needed to prevent or de-communize the world. Originally, when Burnham published *The Struggle for the World* in 1947, his justification for an empire was based on the need to monopolize nuclear weapons, which the Soviets did not yet possess. Burnham reasoned that whoever had a nuclear advantage would control the world. When the Soviet Union became an atomic power in 1949, Burnham still believed in the necessity of an empire to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons from falling into more enemy hands, and to combat Soviet expansion.⁴⁰

Americans were against the development of an empire. Liberals supported both a concept of self-determination for countries, and an internationalist approach, which

³⁸ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 36 (September 7, 1965): 762.

³⁹ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 1-13; and Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 13-34, 76-91.

⁴⁰ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 45, 26-41, 181-199.

stressed the subordination of U.S. interests, such as the need for an empire, to the interests of the world community (i.e. United Nations), which was against such a development. Even in certain wings of conservative thought the concept of isolationism still survived, which stressed a disengagement from active international intervention.⁴¹

In addition to the U.S. failure to develop an empire, it did not have an adequate policy to deal with communist subversion. Communist political warfare attacked on all fronts, including political, economic, propaganda, intelligence, and military campaigns. Political warfare included all forms of struggle outside of formal military action. However, a strong political warfare campaign could only be legitimate if it had a strong military, which would be necessary to back the actions of political warfare that could lead to conventional war. Burnham believed that political warfare should only attempt objectives that would be backed up by the military. In addition, defense build-ups or the development of advanced military technology, without being used were strong forms of political warfare, such as a government bill to increase military spending, or publicly testing military weapons to display military might.

Burnham believed that the U.S. did not engage in the full spectrum of political warfare and primarily relied on economic aid and a military build-up to combat communism. This narrow focus limited the effectiveness of America's strategy. Under the Truman administration, the U.S. anticommunist policy primarily relied on an economic and military focus. In outlining the Truman Doctrine in 1947 to combat communism, President Harry Truman stated, "I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly

⁴¹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 99-116. Conservatives prior to the 1950s carried the majority of the isolationist sentiments, but Burnham was referring to the general U.S. apathy towards

political processes...”⁴² Burnham believed that economic aid was advantageous to the anticommunist cause, but not if it was blanketed in a communist propaganda campaign that depicted it as imperialism. The Truman administration did use psychological or propaganda operations, such as anticommunist books, posters, movies, and radio programs, which were broadcasted into the Soviet empire. However, Burnham believed that U.S. efforts were meager in comparison to communist propaganda. In addition, he believed that U.S. propaganda was flawed, because it was based on the concept of gaining “love,” which resulted to explanations and a defensive position in countering Soviet propaganda. On the other hand, Burnham argued that communist propaganda was massive and always on the offensive, which was decisive in a propaganda war.⁴³ In addition, economic aide would be ineffective if it was not accompanied with measures to combat communist sabotage, such as giving the aid to anticommunist social forces, or attaching it to anticommunist guarantees, which would be contingent on an adequate intelligence operation.

Another document outlining the Truman Administration’s anticommunist policy, the National Security Council Paper number sixty-eight, stated:

One of the most important ingredients of power is military strength. In the concept of “containment,” the maintenance of a strong military posture is deemed to be essential for two reasons: (1) as an ultimate guarantee of our national security and (2) as an indispensable backdrop to the conduct of the policy of “containment.”⁴⁴

building an empire.

⁴² Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Jon Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in American History Volume II: Since 1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 285-286.

⁴³ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 189.

⁴⁴ Hoffman and Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in American History Volume II*, 288. For more on the Truman’s focus on the military, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 98-106.

Burnham believed a military build up was vital, but he believed that an over reliance on a military build-up caused two major problems. First, it fostered the mindset that the struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union would be settled by military means. Second, it created the mindset that the struggle for the world had not yet begun, but was contingent upon some formal declaration of war. Burnham wrote, “If the communists can win their objective of world domination without conventional war, why should they start it?”⁴⁵

In 1956, Burnham would attack the Eisenhower administration for engaging in a limited political warfare campaign. The Eisenhower administration developed a liberation phase in their foreign policy, meant to roll back the Soviet empire. It sought to do this through psychological warfare and covert CIA operations. However, Burnham charged that even these operations were insufficient, because their success would be countered by contradictory official U.S. policy. For example, during Christmas in 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke on Radio Free Europe, an anticommunist propaganda program, which was broadcast into Eastern Europe. He addressed the people under Communist rule, “I join you in your concern for the restoration of individual freedoms and political liberty and share your faith that right in the end will prevail to bring you once again among the free nations of the world.”⁴⁶ However, Burnham believed such effective propaganda was canceled out by incongruent action by the Eisenhower administration at the official level. Burnham wrote:

... We [the U.S.] accept four Communist governments into a United Nations of which we are a principal supporter, our action speaks far more eloquently than the President’s Christmas words-proclaims that these governments are righteous,

⁴⁵ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 104, 13-34, 21-27, 96, 102-104, 189-191; and Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 158.

⁴⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower in, James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 1 no. 9 (January 18, 1956): 13.

legitimate, and (as the U.N. Charter puts it) “peace loving.” ... We are saying to the Soviet peoples in a voice much louder than Radio Free Europe’s: These rulers or yours are in our eyes not usurpers, tyrants, aggressors and assassins, but legitimate governors and decent human beings. When we offer Moscow and its satellites treaties, disarmament pacts, trade agreements, we imply that the Communist regimes are here to stay, that their word can be trusted.”⁴⁷

A successful political warfare campaign required one unified objective, the defeat of Soviet led global communism, which needed to be reflected by all U.S. official and unofficial political and military action. Burnham labeled such action by the administration as, “irresponsible adventurism and demagogy,” because it could cause an uprising that the U.S. would not or could not support.⁴⁸

Such an example was the Hungarian revolt in 1956. The Eisenhower administration committed itself to aggressive anticommunist rhetoric, official and unofficial, stressing U.S. sympathy for Eastern European countries imprisoned by the Soviet Union. However, when the Red Army crushed the Hungarian revolt, the administration did nothing more than publicly deplore the Soviet action. The Eisenhower administration was partly responsible, for helping to encourage such behavior and failing to back it up. The administration was not prepared to reinforce its political warfare campaign with military action. Its inconsistencies hurt the political warfare effort.⁴⁹

5. The Liberals.

Burnham always believed that the liberal establishment was at the center of the problem in developing an effective anticommunist policy. Burnham believed that liberalism was inherently inadequate for dealing with communism in two ways. First, liberalism shared an ideological affinity with communism. Burnham wrote, “The secular,

⁴⁷ Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 1 no. 9 (January 18, 1956): 13.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* 156-161; Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 58-59.

historically optimistic, reformist, welfare-statism, even the plebiscitary aspects of liberalism are all present in communism.”⁵⁰ Burnham believed that this continuity was manipulated by the communist anti-fascist united front campaign in the 1930s, which through propaganda, conditioned liberals to see communism in the beneficial light of an ally. This allowed the true nature of communism to escape detection by the liberals. The result was a liberal establishment that lacked the fire, which Burnham believed was necessary to fight communism. If liberals did not understand the true nature of communism, they could hardly be expected to develop the commitment for confrontation. Burnham wrote:

The essential lack in Washington has been of knowledge and passion: lack of a thorough understanding of communism and of an unwavering commitment to fight against it; lack even of a realization that such understanding and commitment are necessary.”⁵¹

Second, liberalism’s ideological agenda was driving U.S. anticommunist policy. For example, Burnham believed a necessary measure in combating communism was to establish an anticommunist empire. However, liberals professed an ideological dedication to self-determination, and emphasized world interests, expressed through the United Nations, over the necessary anticommunist interests and measures the U.S. needed.

Foreign aid, was another example, liberals adhered to an optimistic interpretation of humans, and believed that faults in society were the result of failed institutions, such as a lack of education, a democratic government, or poverty. Liberals believed that the

⁴⁹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 127-198; and Kenneth L. Hill, *Cold War Chronology Soviet-American Relations: 1945-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1993): 88-89.

⁵⁰ James Burnham, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Destiny and Meaning of Liberalism* (New York: The John Day Company, 1964), 289.

⁵¹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 202; and Burnham, *The Web of Subversion*, 202, 201-204, 189-191, 213.

problem of communism was a byproduct of economic poverty and political chaos.

Burnham believed that economic and political chaos, were, in part, responsible for communism, but it was mainly caused by deliberate actions of the communist conspiracy.

The development of the Communist Party or its seizure of power was not directly a manifestation of poverty or chaos, but dependent upon a systematic body of trained communist revolutionaries spreading an ideological faith. Burnham wrote:

Communism is not just a loose wave of discontent. It is a specific movement of our time, highly and intricately organized both in its theories and in its activities. It does not “arise spontaneously”⁵²

Liberals did not comprehend the nature of communism and used foreign aid without attaching a plan to combat communist subversion. Burnham wrote, this only served, “...to fatten the victims for the slaughter.”⁵³ Burnham did not believe that foreign aid was a completely terrible idea, but its application needed to be revised. It should be intertwined with a plan to confront communism, and it also needed to be based on adequate political intelligence. Foreign aid should be primarily military aide. Burnham believed that aid in the form of non-military measures could still be beneficial. It only had to correlate with military needs. Foreign aid needed to be guided by good political intelligence, which provided the U.S. with some sort of return on its investment.⁵⁴

The ideological agenda of liberals also blindly aligned them with dictators and regimes to the Left, and led them to attack dictators or regimes on the Right.⁵⁵ The

⁵² Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 210; and James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol.15 no. 26 (December 31, 1963): 560.

⁵³ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 5 no. 20 (May 17, 1958): 468.

⁵⁴ Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol.15 no. 26 (December 31, 1963): 560; Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 5 no. 20 (May 17, 1958): 468; Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 1 no. 18 (March 21, 1956): 19.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that for the most part the U.S. government under liberals and conservatives supported dictators on the Right. Burnham was primarily referring to the media establishment, which he charged as having a liberal bias. See James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 4 no. 7 (August 24, 1957): 154. However, he also believed the government was ideologically supporting some dictators to the right, such as

problem was that no anticommunist distinction was made, even if a Right-wing dictator was staunchly anticommunist, liberals would support his enemies to the Left, which was an impractical anticommunist strategy. Burnham argued that liberals aligned themselves with Left-wing regimes, because they possessed more democratic elements, but these regimes more so than Right-wing regimes became what Burnham labeled totalist regimes. The totalist regimes sought a monopoly on power, which could only be achieved through the destruction of all dissent. Such a condition led to a totalitarian rule based on terror and deception, a condition identical to communism. Right-wing dictators also ruled with an authoritarian hand, but usually, a political alignment to the Right meant the preservation of dissenting forces, such as the church or military, a condition that checked the authoritarian power from developing into a totalist or communist regime.⁵⁶

Burnham also believed that the liberal ideology was ineffective against communism, because it was founded on relativism, a concept that truth was subjective. The liberals ran society, but they could not adequately develop an objective order of rule, because an objective truth could not exist according to their doctrine. Burnham believed this was displayed in the inability of liberals to combat urban violence in the U.S. Ideologically, liberals could not adequately combat groups, such as the Black Panthers, and the New Left, because their programs may also contain elements of truth. Thus, liberals helped to usher in a permissive culture that led to the break down of traditional institutions, political and cultural, which based truths in an objective order developed

Tito of Yugoslavia, who was a dictator on the Left. See, James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 13 no. 6 (August 14, 1962): 135.

⁵⁶ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 4 no. 7 (August 24, 1957): 154; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 12 no. 2 (January 6, 1962): 24; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 12 no. 4 (January 30, 1962): 60; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 13 no. 6 (August 14, 1962): 97; James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 26 no. 43 (October 25, 1974): 1223; Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 27 no. 1 (January 17, 1975): 27; James Burnham, "TWW," vol. 19 no. 19 (May 16, 1967): 510.

from social experience. These traditional social institutions, such as government or the church, which had an objective order to condemn such acts of violence, were merely trying to monopolize truth, which to a liberal was impossible and reactionary; therefore, the liberals attacked these institutions. Therefore, liberals aided the communists in their disintegration tactic of society. Liberals, unconsciously, worked with communism to break down the traditional social structure; however, liberalism, unlike communism, did not have a system to institute in the wake of chaos, and would be swallowed by the communist monolith.⁵⁷

6. Containment or Liberation.

The culmination of liberal anticommunism was the policy of containment, which was the official expression of the United States' failure to understand communism. Containment was essentially a defensive measure that was meant to stop the Soviet advance from its 1947 border, with a dual plan of reconstructing or building up non-communist countries on the other side of the line. The objective was to build up the non-communist world, which would lead to an internal thawing of the rigid Soviet system. In time, Soviet leaders would come to realize that aggression was futile, and therefore, move the Soviets to consider options short of conflict.⁵⁸

Burnham attacked containment. First, containment was a contradictory stance, because on the one hand it acknowledged communism and capitalism were mutually antagonistic, but assumed that eventually this antagonism would fade and coexistence

⁵⁷ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 22 no. 47 (December 1, 1970): 1284-1287; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 5 no. 8 (February 22, 1958) 180; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 20 no. 28 (July 16, 1968): 690; James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 22 no. 43 (November 3, 1970): 1153; James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 22 no. 37 (September 22, 1970): 993; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 14 no. 24 (June 18, 1963): 490; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 28 (December 1, 1956): 11.

⁵⁸ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 13-28. The containment policy started under President Truman.

would be possible. Secondly, containment was a defensive strategy, an erroneous position in the face of an antagonist that was seeking and would always seek the destruction of the United States. Burnham wrote, “No lesson from historical experience would seem to be more thoroughly proved than the conclusion that a purely defensive strategy cannot succeed.”⁵⁹ As Burnham noted:

In the most profound sense there is no Soviet border. The Soviet power-that-is, the power of its leaders to move men-extends by means of the world communist apparatus and the communist ideology into every nation and every community.⁶⁰

A communist fifth column was always in operation throughout the world waging a political-subversive campaign. A focus on the Soviet military was only half of the communist problem.

Third, containment was predicated on building up the social, economic, and military condition of the non-communist world. Again, this neglected the conspiratorial nature of communist fifth column operating behind the containment line, which would seek, as always, to undermine the social, economic, and military improvements.

Burnham wrote:

A program for strengthening the non-communist nations cannot be complete, therefore, unless it includes a double counteroffensive, designed to smash the internal communist movements and to set back the Soviet state. Because the Soviet Union is the central focus of the entire infection, the two objectives are necessarily linked.⁶¹

Fourth, containment in its defensive stance, allowed the Soviet Union to consolidate its control over Eastern Europe. The major problem of this concept, aside from the moral implications, was the geopolitical and economic consequences. Burnham believed that if the Soviet Union was allowed to consolidate its rule over Eastern Europe it would have

⁵⁹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 34.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

the most dominant geopolitical position in the world, control of the Eurasian heartland. This allowed the Soviet Union to dominate Western Europe, because Eastern Europe was the economic lifeline of Western Europe. Burnham contended that if the Soviets dominated Europe they would also be able to dominate the world.⁶²

Finally, containment deprived the moral and spiritual convictions that could motivate people to resist communism. Containment was completely inconsistent. On the one hand communism was the enemy, but on the other hand the enemy was not to be confronted, and was even allowed to consolidate its enslavement Eastern Europe. Therefore, Burnham concluded, “Who will willingly suffer, sacrifice and die for containment?”⁶³

Burnham believed the West must liberate the communist world. Instead of containment, Burnham believed the United States should develop a policy that sought, “...the destruction of the power of Soviet-based communism.”⁶⁴ He recommended a policy shift from a defensive policy of containment to an offensive policy of liberation, which had internal and external manifestations.⁶⁵

Internally, the United States needed to fight the communist fifth column with a full-scale propaganda campaign aimed at exposing the subversive nature of communism. Such a campaign would strengthen the American will to combat communism. In addition, the U.S. government needed to outlaw the domestic communist movement. While some liberals found this detestable in a democratic system, and equated it to totalitarianism, Burnham believed that communism intended to sabotage the American

⁶¹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 38.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 37-41.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 41-43.

⁶⁴ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 137.

democratic system. Burnham admitted that a danger existed in the suppression of free political expression; the greater danger was to allow communists such freedom. Since they were proven to represent, "...a clear, and present, and powerful threat."⁶⁶ Burnham wrote:

Communism, in democratic nations, makes use of free speech in order to abolish free speech. More generally, it is an essential part of the goal of communism to destroy democratic government, and to replace democratic government by totalitarianism.⁶⁷

Externally, Burnham believed that the U.S. military needed to make two primary adjustments for a successful liberation policy. First, it needed to more aptly prepare for the conventional phase of world war three. This would have the double effect of maintaining military supremacy over the Soviet Union, while also serving as an element in political warfare. Second, the military needed to develop a strategy to support political-subversive warfare.⁶⁸

The military strategy, according to Burnham, was unprepared for the open phase of world war three, because it did not take into consideration the facts of geography, resources, and technological development, all of which he believed would be decisive in the advent of war. The Soviet Union was an extremely large nation, which was hard to access from the sea, and would require a large army to invade and conquer. In addition to geographical advantages, the Soviet Union had vast amounts of manpower to tap in a land war. Its weakness was a low level of economic and technological development.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 136-137; and James Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 221.

⁶⁶ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 207.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 206, 204-210; and Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 140.

⁶⁸ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 140.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 141-157.

The United States lacked a geographical advantage, because it was readily accessible by sea and air.⁷⁰ America had a smaller population, which could not produce as large an army as the Soviet Union. Burnham noted that America's strength was a combination of scientific technology applied to mass industrial production. Given these facts, Burnham believed that diffusing the military focus somewhat equally between the army, navy and airforce would be playing to the Soviet strengths, which would be difficult to invade and could match and surpass the U.S. in army size. Instead, Burnham believed the U.S. should rely on its strength of technological development, and concluded that the U.S. should, "put its primary reliance on air power plus scientific technology. (I included with 'airpower' guided missiles, rockets, and similar devices.)"⁷¹ If the U.S. concentrated on airpower technology (airforce), something the Soviets were already vastly behind in, the Soviets would be economically buried in any attempt to match the U.S., and because they could not keep up they would be defenseless to an air attack on their army or industrial sector.⁷²

Burnham refuted arguments that airpower was never sufficient to defeat an enemy, and that a bombing attack on the under industrialized Soviet Union would prove ineffective. He argued that a concentration on airpower, which surpassed a concentration on the army and navy, had never occurred.⁷³ Yet, airpower had become indispensable to modern warfare. Therefore, the concentration on airpower over the navy and army would

⁷⁰ Typically the geographical position of the U.S. is seen as a great advantage, because it is surrounded by vast oceans and therefore very difficult to invade. However, Burnham believed that technological development (i.e. nuclear missiles) was making the concept of land armies archaic. He felt that the U.S. was extremely indefensible, because the oceans gave the Russians a better opportunity for a nuclear strike (i.e. the navy and airforce). Even an invasion was more possible because the U.S. was very accessible from the sea, whereas the Soviet Union was protected by its incredible landmass.

⁷¹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 150. The note in parenthesis is Burnham's.

⁷² Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 141-157.

give the U.S. an extreme advantage. Due to the lack of Soviet industrial development, an air attack would have a devastating impact, because the Soviet Union possessed few industrial resources.⁷⁴

The concentration on airpower did not mean the neglect of the other military branches, but their transformation to reinforce the new airpower concentration. The navy would exist to support and provide airbases for launching missiles or landing and launching aircraft. The army would also be transformed to complement airpower. Burnham argued that troops would be used:

...Defensively as guards (in the widest sense) of air installations; offensively as specialized air-borne and parachute units-winged soldiers, air cavalry, able to raid two thousand miles behind the lines tonight and be gone before the defense arrives tomorrow, ready to liberate a Siberian slave labor district this week, spearhead a revolt in the Caucasus the next, and blow up an enemy powerhouse over the weekend.⁷⁵

In addition, Burnham believed such specially trained troops could more aptly support aggressive forms of political-subversive warfare, such as paramilitary, guerilla or infiltration methods.

Writing for *National Review* in the late 1950s and 1960s, Burnham criticized the U.S. military for becoming complacent with its airpower technology, and not developing techniques to conduct small-scale wars. The nuclear build-up between the U.S. and the Soviet Union after 1949, led to a situation called mutually assured destruction (MAD), which became the basis for nuclear strategy. Under this concept nuclear forces were expanded on both sides so that a nuclear conflict would be unthinkable. Thus, the focus of military conflicts shifted to “little wars” or “guerrilla political” wars, which despite

⁷³ There was certainly a concentration on airpower in World War II, but Burnham believed it was still secondary to the concentration on the army or navy.

⁷⁴ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 148-150.

their small-scale nature, were becoming important in the Cold War. The U.S. lacked a military policy to adequately confront this threat. In fact, the U.S. had become over-reliant on its nuclear technology. Because the use of nuclear weapons meant destruction levels that neither side could allow, their use was unlikely. Under the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, the U.S. was relying on its nuclear technology, while the communists were advancing militarily, through small-scale wars. Thus, the U.S. created a type of nuclear Maginot Line, where one, "...marks the limit not of the enemy's but of your own advance; it is you, not him that is sure to stop."⁷⁶

This military emphasis was slightly different from Burnham's military proposals in his book *Containment or Liberation*. New developments in the methods of warfare led Burnham to conclude that the military should concentrate on airpower and tactics to fight small-scale wars. Burnham still believed in the necessity of concentrating on airpower technology, with an emphasis on technology, which could help small-scale warfare measures, with such devices as tactical nuclear weapons, or biological or chemical weapons.⁷⁷ Technology was the linchpin of Burnham's military strategy, he attacked budget cuts to NASA, which was the basis of U.S. technological development, and relentlessly argued for the development of a super sonic transport system, which, like NASA, would help the U.S. maintain its technological advantage.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 151-152, 142-146.

⁷⁶ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 14 no. 6 (February 12, 1963): 107; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 8 (July 11, 1956): 15; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 7 no. 12 (July 4, 1959): 176; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 18 (May 4, 1957): 424; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 16 (April 20, 1957): 375; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 6 (February 9, 1965): 104.

⁷⁷ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 150-151; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 9 no. 10 (September 10, 1960): 140.

⁷⁸ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 28 no. 31 (August 30, 1976): 885; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 24 (June 14, 1966): 567; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 22 no. 7 (February, 1970): 194.

In addition to military reforms, in 1947 Burnham believed the U.S. needed to develop an empire. Isolationism was a fantasy and liberal internationalism was an ideological abstraction, which helped the communists. The purpose of an American empire would be to influence and direct the political leadership of the non-communist world against communism. Therefore, a country would only have to subordinate its own sovereign power when the U.S. determined an anticommunist cause was at stake. The U.S. would grant many concessions to countries within the empire, such as political, economic, and cultural autonomy. However, only force would forge an empire.

Burnham wrote:

Concessions must be understood as one side of the coin whose reverse is pressure, force. The realization that it is good to be a friend of the United States must be inseparably tied to the further realization that it is fearful to be its enemy.⁷⁹

Force could be expressed in economic or military forms. Burnham acknowledged the danger of a U.S. empire becoming tyrannical, but he thought that economic, political, and cultural concessions would serve as forces to counter such a development. Burnham also believed that strong anti-totalitarian currents existing in the U.S., would prevent such a development. Empire was a necessary evil, because Soviet directed communism would seek to dominate the world, and its totalitarian empire was a foregone conclusion.⁸⁰

The U.S. established a Cold War empire after World War II. In reflection it appears that this is one of Burnham's policy that was adopted in full; however, he probably would have subscribed to a more rigidly controlled empire. For example, in 1947, Burnham's imperial plans called for the complete control of the Western hemisphere's resources in the advent of war, the rejection of any communist base in the

⁷⁹ Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 189.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 145-148, 181-199, 212-221.

Americas, and a “full political union” with Great Britain, which entailed common citizenship. However, his predictions were correct on cultural, political, and economic autonomy, and the anti-totalitarian tradition of the U.S., working against imperial totalitarian development. Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote:

The American empire was very different: one would have expected this from a country with no tradition of authoritarian leadership whose constitutional structure had long ago enshrined the practices of negotiation, compromise, and the balancing of interests. What is striking about the sphere of influence the United States established in Europe is that its existence and fundamental design reflected as frequently pressures that came *from those incorporated within it* as from the Americans themselves.⁸¹

The most vital offensive policy against communism was the development of a powerful political warfare campaign to combat the political warfare of the communists. Burnham believed that political warfare could eliminate the threat of an all out formal military war, which could involve nuclear annihilation, an unsuitable outcome for both sides. Burnham believed the Soviet system was vulnerable to a political warfare attack, because it maintained rule only through a complete monopoly of power; therefore, the cultivation of dissent within the Soviet empire through political warfare would have a reverberating and, ultimately exhausting effect on a totalitarian system that had to maintain absolute control for survival. In addition, political warfare was aimed at the destruction of communist ideology. Whereas a nuclear strike may destroy the Soviet Union, it may not destroy communism. In 1950, Burnham believed it was not “expedient” to go to war against the Soviets. Political warfare should be employed to weaken the Soviet empire.⁸²

⁸¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 52, 26-53, the italics are Gaddis’s; and Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 189-190.

⁸² Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 183; Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 145-148.

Burnham's political warfare idea consisted of five key objectives: creating internal Soviet division; propaganda; breaking the communist hold on the labor movement; the cultivation of anticommunist allies; and organizing the potential anticommunist power of communist exiles and refugees. The first part of Burnham's plan, was intended to create internal divisions within the Soviet Union. Burnham believed that the destruction of Soviet power could be accomplished by cultivating internal divisions among the ruling Soviet elite. The cultivation of such divisions required the U.S. government to propose a deal that provided an incentive for rebellion.

Burnham wrote:

An internal change in the Soviet regime depends upon the development of an internal opposition. The development of that opposition depends upon a division in the communist party. That division cannot take place unless those individuals who might bring it about have a positive perspective, have, that is, something to gain...The United States must say, in effect: We are ready to settle without war. Here are our demands. Meet them, and you may live.⁸³

The demands that Burnham devised were:

1. The liquidation *de facto* of the communist fifth column.
2. The cessation of Soviet-directed propaganda in furtherance of communist world domination.
3. The total withdrawal of the personnel of the Red-Army-uniformed or undercover, and all other related Soviet institutions, from all territory outside the pre-1939 borders.
4. A free choice of government, after suitable preparation, by the peoples of all the territories and nations which have been submitted to *de facto* Soviet control since 1939.
5. A sufficient modification of the internal Soviet structure to guard the world against its secret and irresponsible militarization.⁸⁴

⁸³ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 155.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 159-160, 149-164. These goals would have been the same for any U.S. administration, but Burnham was advocating for these goals to be publicly decreed, and maintained consistently as official U.S. policy. For example, Eisenhower, undoubtedly desired similar goals, but to officially and consistently maintain such goals would have come close to political suicide. Burnham had such latitude to be very brazen in his anticommunist theory, because he was a political opinion writer and not a politician.

Burnham made his message clear. If Russia gave up communism, the U.S. would not seek to destroy it. Burnham purposely used the term Russia to make a distinction that the U.S. was not at war with Russians, but the communist overlords who unjustly ruled the Russian people. Such an offer could have a powerful propaganda effect, because it implied that the U.S. was not at war with Russia, but communism. The U.S. was not war mongering, it was only seeking survival in the face of Soviet aggression. The deal, obviously, would not be accepted, but it would still provide the chance to cultivate internal dissension, and it would reinforce the fact that the Soviet Union was the aggressor.⁸⁵

Burnham also argued for an offensive propaganda campaign, including the production of books, cartoons, maps, graffiti, movies, and matchbox covers. Burnham wrote, "...there is hardly any limit to what ingenuity can devise."⁸⁶ In addition, the content of the propaganda had to follow a few simple rules for effectiveness. First, it had to focus on what the U.S. was against, such as totalitarian systems, and stay away from ideal conceptions of what the U.S. was for. For example, propaganda could be focused against the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956. Propaganda that focused on American ideals such as peace and prosperity, were not attached to real situations and could not be as effective at drawing attention.⁸⁷ Second, propaganda should focus on

⁸⁵ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 149-164. Burnham advocated this plan in 1949 when Stalin was still alive, which meant almost no chance of any type of dissent existing. However, Burnham believed that, because Stalin (the Soviet System), was a disaster, the chance to cultivate dissent existed. Burnham believed that Tito's break from the Kremlin was evidence of this, and it is certain that Burnham intended this plan for such an event as the death of Stalin, which would cause a crisis in Soviet leadership. See Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 150-155.

⁸⁶ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 169.

⁸⁷ Burnham believed the failure of U.S. propaganda was that it, "...wished to be loved," while the communist propaganda was the, "expression of *the will to defeat an enemy.*" Thus, the U.S. resulted to explanations and responses to Soviet claims, instead, the U.S. need to worry about attacking the Soviet Union in propaganda attacks. See Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 189.

exposing the deceptions of communism. Communism's powerful ideological appeal was its claim of producing a utopian society. History had proven that communism has meant:

...Less freedom, more and more rigid class differentiation, an increase in income differentials, a continuous increase in the state and police power, a revival of slavery, an increased militarization, a worsening in the material level of life."⁸⁸

Such contradictions should be emphasized. Finally, propaganda should focus on events that capture world headlines. The U.S. should maintain a steady offensive, focus on these issues, "...day after day, month after month."⁸⁹

The third element of the political warfare campaign was to break the communist hold on the world labor movement. Labor unions had developed into a powerful social force in the twentieth century, and Burnham believed that internationally the communists largely directed it.⁹⁰ The communists infiltrated the labor movement as, "the principal *strategic social weapon* to be *used* by the Party in its drive for conquest and consolidation of power."⁹¹ Control of the labor movement had multiple implications for power. On one hand it meant control of a large organized mass of people, which could be used to shut down or sabotage production. On the other hand, it meant control of industries that might serve strategic advantages in the political or military war against the U.S.⁹²

Burnham believed supporting anticommunist elements in the labor movement could break the communist control over labor. The main area of concentration in the battle for labor should be the German labor movement. Since Germany was divided it was a major point of political war for both sides. Whoever captured all of Germany

⁸⁸ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 178-179.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 180, 165-181.

⁹⁰ The communists never had control of the U.S. Labor movement or even significant influence after the 1930s, especially after the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, which prevented communists from heading unions. Burnham was specifically referring to the world labor movement.

⁹¹ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 185, the italics are Burnham's.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 182-188.

would have the upper hand in the struggle for the world. Burnham recommended that the U.S. should make anticommunist control of the German labor movement a priority. In addition, anticommunist labor operations should also work in underdeveloped areas outside of Europe, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The low level of industrialization in these areas predicated a weak labor movement, but still any sort of organized labor was more powerful than none, because in underdeveloped areas small labor organization was still a powerful social force.⁹³

Part four of Burnham's plans involved the cultivation of anticommunist allies. Such allies were not necessarily formal political friends, such as leaders of nations. Instead, they were powerful political and social forces that were more stable than political allies. The Catholic Church was one such example. It was staunchly anticommunist and powerful. Burnham wrote:

...The Church has formidable resources: a faith with which to oppose in the hearts of men the secular religion of communism; a disciplined organization which penetrates society from its upper reaches deep into the masses; two thousand years of historical experience, and the lessons digested from those years.⁹⁴

The last part of Burnham's strategy involved the organization of refugees and exiles from communist countries. Each group of exiles had diverse objectives, but they could be united in a common interest, "...for the overthrow of communist rule, and the liberation both of their own homelands and of all the peoples now subject to the communist tyranny."⁹⁵ Every exile or refugee was advantageous to the anticommunist cause, because of their knowledge regarding all sectors of communist society. In

⁹³ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 187-195.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201, 196-207. Ronald Reagan had such a strategy with his strong ties to Pope John Paul II, in working to combat communism and aid the Polish Solidarity movement.

⁹⁵ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 215.

addition, they would likely have ties to their former country, which could be exploited for propaganda or the development of an internal resistance. Anticommunist propaganda from the exile community would be more effective, as it would be delivered from people who shared the same nationality, culture, experiences, and language as the target audience.⁹⁶

Burnham also advocated for the development of an exile university of Eastern Europe. Such an institution would have numerous advantages. First, it would provide an intellectual outlet and training for exiles and refugees. Second, it would preserve Eastern European heritage, which was being liquidated by communist rule. Third, it would serve as a powerful propaganda tool, coordinating and producing anticommunist propaganda. Finally, the university would train people as administrators or leaders to form the new government infrastructure of a liberated Eastern Europe.⁹⁷

In addition to yoking the strengths of exile and refugee students and intellectuals, an organization could be developed to do the same with those with military training.

Such an organized body could perform such tasks as:

...Conservation and reconstruction projects (in Europe and throughout the world) through constabulary and semi-military assignments to the outright military. The appropriate organization of the exiles would, that is to say, have elements of a Civilian Conservation Corps, a police force, and a Foreign Legion.⁹⁸

Burnham believed the exiled or refugee military organization could be used to help overthrow communism in Eastern Europe, and, like the university-trained administrators, serve as a foundation for stabilizing Eastern Europe after communist rule.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 208-217, 221, 226.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 217-219.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 220,

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 219-221.

The liberation strategy would use all forms of political warfare to cultivate and organize a nationalist, cultural, anti-Soviet, and anticommunist resistance within Eastern Europe, with the desire of collapsing the Soviet empire. Burnham believed that from a military view the liberation policy was also superior. If conventional war did break out, Soviet advance, due to the cultivation of internal resistance, would face an anticommunist fifth column. In addition, political warfare could have won over the minds of Eastern European armies, or even non-Russian Soviet armies. Burnham wrote:

Who has decreed that the Polish army now commanded by Marshal Rokossovski must inevitably fight for the Kremlin? It will, if American policy forces it to. But there is not the slightest doubt that the great majority of Poles, including the Poles in Rokossovski's divisions, are still Poles and want to fight not for an imperial tyrant-foreign in nationality, alien in culture and religion-but for a free Poland. This is what they will do, if they are given any sort of chance. The same rule holds for the majority of Czechs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Rumanians and the others.¹⁰⁰

These anti-, but internal Soviet military forces, cultivated by political warfare, could be organized and supported by a special forces parachute drop behind communist lines. The forces, primarily be composed of native Eastern Europeans, would set up resistance headquarters and recruit anyone who wished to fight their Soviet captors. If the move was successful it would devastate the Soviet capability to make war.¹⁰¹

Burnham believed the liberation policy should focus on Eastern Europe, because it was the key to the struggle for world; all other points of concentration were nominal in comparison. First, Eastern Europe was vital from a geopolitical and economic standpoint; control of it meant control of the Eurasian heartland, which meant control of Europe, which meant domination of the world. Second, Burnham believed that Western civilization shared a cultural heritage with Eastern Europe, and therefore, was part of the

¹⁰⁰ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 133-134.

great Western tradition. It was an unabashed implication that Eastern Europe had a cultural superiority to other areas of the globe. Burnham believed that if the East and West were reunited, their combined cultural superiority could defeat the communist threat, and ensure Western civilization's domination over the world. Third, control of Eastern Europe was a sign of Soviet advance, a beacon to the world of communist inevitability. If the Soviets were forced to retreat from Eastern Europe, the communist ideology would be exposed as a failure.¹⁰²

Fourth, Burnham believed that the Eastern European Strategy had the best chance of success. When Burnham proposed his liberation strategy in 1952 he believed that the Soviet Union was not advancing over the rest of Europe, because it could not consolidate its rule over Eastern Europe. Burnham reasoned that this was evidence that nationalist, cultural, anti-Soviet, and anticommunist sentiment existed in Eastern Europe. Therefore, a political warfare campaign aimed at Eastern Europe could cultivate these strains and prevent Soviet advance and consolidation over Eastern Europe.¹⁰³

7. Burnham's *National Review* Anticommunism: 1955-1978

Burnham's regular column at *National Review* was a bimonthly operation of exposing what he considered to be the true nature of communism. One of the biggest communist frauds he attacked was the anti-Stalinist turn of the Soviet Union. The term Stalinism came to represent a totalitarian rule based on terror and deception. The anti-or de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union, announced by Nikita Khrushchev at a secret speech in 1956 at the twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, had two major propaganda goals. First, de-Stalinization implied that the Soviet Union was loosening or

¹⁰¹ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 132-140.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 117-140, 217-242; and Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 114-115, 96-98.

thawing its rigid totalitarian system. Second, it wanted to separate Stalin from communism. These tactics created the deception that the West, and most importantly, the U.S., could soften up on communism and work for a state of peaceful coexistence. However, Burnham believed de-Stalinization was simply a rhetorical tactic to use Stalin as a scapegoat for all the problems of the Soviet Union. It was meant to deceive the West, and to purify communist ideology. Burnham always maintained, apart from its ideological rhetoric, that communism was still Stalinism; the liquidation of the Hungarian revolt in 1956 was proof. If Stalin was the cause of Soviet terror, and the Soviet Union repudiated Stalin, logically it would not act like Stalin anymore. Burnham wrote:

By trying to repudiate Stalin, Communism was repudiating itself...The issue may be put this way: The Kremlin can convincingly shoot workers and students only in the name of Stalin and the principles which Stalin symbolized. If the Kremlin repudiates Stalin, it no longer has the "right" (revolutionary speaking) to shoot.¹⁰⁴

The suppression of the Hungarian revolt was the proof that terror could not be separated from communism. The Soviets could never repudiate terror, because communism was terror. In addition, if communism was repudiating Stalin and turning back to Leninism this meant more danger for the non-communist world, because as Burnham pointed out, Lenin's doctrine was more revolutionary than Stalin's. Lenin was the apotheosis of the revolutionary struggle, while Stalin was more conservative. Burnham wrote, "...repudiating Stalin in the name of a return to Lenin would be a reaffirmation, not an abandonment, of world revolution."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 117-140.

¹⁰⁴ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 4 (January 26, 1957): 86; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 21 (April 11, 1956): 24; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 30 (December 15, 1956): 10; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 24 no. 28 (July 21, 1972): 788.

¹⁰⁵ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 21 (April 11, 1956): 24; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 4 (January 26, 1957): 86; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 30 (December 15, 1956): 10; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 24 no. 28 (July 21, 1972): 788.

Burnham believed de-Stalinization signaled that communism in the Soviet Union was on the ropes. The internal meaning of de-Stalinization was the expression of a ruling crisis, who assumes power and how? If the U.S. challenged the Soviet System through political warfare it could topple the unstable regime. However, if détente was pursued the regime would eventually solve internal problems and emerge stronger, because communists used any means necessary.¹⁰⁶

The U.S., erroneously accepted de-Stalinization and allowed itself to be lulled into accepting Khrushchev's idea of peaceful coexistence. Such a tactic encouraged disarmament and a relaxing of tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Burnham argued that disarmament or test ban treaties only benefited the Soviets, because the U.S. had a technological advantage.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the Soviets were attempting to level the field of struggle from a military standpoint. Burnham wrote, "We can maintain weapons superiority only by a constant advance in weapons technology; and this can be assured only through tests."¹⁰⁸ In addition, because the U.S. had a superior technological and industrial base, Burnham believed an arms build up, which the Soviet Union could not match was, "...probably the most effective form of political-economic warfare we can conduct against our enemy."¹⁰⁹ Even the reciprocal advantage of disarmament, the destruction of Soviet weapons, was a sham, because lying was "not a sin, but a revolutionary duty..." of communists, any lie that advanced the revolution was a moral obligation. Thus, the Soviets could never be trusted. In addition, Burnham believed that

¹⁰⁶ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 4 (January 26, 1957): 86; and Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 30 (December 15, 1956): 10.

¹⁰⁷ Even when the Soviets launched Sputnik, Burnham believed, and accurately so, that overall the U.S. held a technological advantage over the Soviets. He even hinted that Sputnik was a hoax, see James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 4 no. 17 (November 2, 1957): 401; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 4 no. 21 (November 30, 1957):488.

¹⁰⁸ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 6 no. 10 (October 11, 1958): 236.

disarmament tactics were used by the Soviets to, "...throw the moral onus of war-mongering..." onto their opponent.¹¹⁰ For example, if the Soviets called for disarmament agreements, and the U.S. did not comply, it would make the U.S. look like the aggressor to the people of the Soviet Union and the U.S. Therefore, the tactic weakened the morale of the U.S. population, which perceived that it lived under a war-mongering government, and strengthened the morale of the Soviet population, which rallied behind its government in the face of aggression.¹¹¹

Burnham believed the very concept of a relaxation of tensions, or *détente*, was absurd. The Soviets could talk peacefully, but the subversive fifth column was always working for the destruction of society.

The communist exploitation of nationalism was another deceptive tactic in its political warfare campaign. To aid the communist struggle, communists fused with nationalism. Burnham contended that the communists only used nationalism. They had no intentions for its survival after it had served its purpose. The nationalist tactic tricked liberals into believing that communism was becoming polycentric, which meant China was not driven by loyalty to the Soviet Union or brotherhood with North Korea or Vietnam. Burnham believed this was a false conclusion. Communist countries did act in

¹⁰⁹ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 8 no. 6 (January 30, 1960): 67.

¹¹⁰ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 4 no. 3 (July 13, 1957): 59.

¹¹¹ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 8 no. 6 (January 30, 1960): 67; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 16 (April 20, 1957): 375; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol.15 no. 6 (August 13, 1963): 101; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 6 no. 10 (October 11, 1958): 236. James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 25 no. 47 (November 23, 1973): 1291; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 20 no. 48 (December 3, 1968): 1205; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 4 (June 16, 1956): 11; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 5 no. 12 (March 22, 1958) 274; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 4 no. 13 (October 5, 1957): 300.

their own interests, but at the base level, they were ideologically aligned and aimed at the destruction of the non-communist world.¹¹²

The U.S. needed to attack the communist claim to nationalism by emphasizing the Soviet Union's impeccable record as a totalitarian imperial power, such as its control over Eastern Europe. In addition, the U.S. needed to use nationalism as a main tenet in its political warfare to break the hold of the Soviet Union on Eastern Europe. If the U.S. could evoke and organize nationalism in Eastern Europe the Soviets could not consolidate their rule.¹¹³

One of Burnham's preoccupations was to keep watch on international Communist parties, especially those operating in Western Europe and the U.S. The communist party's favorite tactic was the popular or united front. The popular front served to aid communist causes and to create an anti-anticommunist atmosphere. The popular front was also an attempt to gain legitimacy or the:

...Psychological, moral and legal acceptance of the Communist enterprise as a normal, legitimate political party a like in kind to other political parties, and therefore entitled to the same rights and privileges.¹¹⁴

¹¹² James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 30 (July 27, 1965): 631; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 20 no. 6 (February 13, 1968): 124-125. Another term for this polycentric development was national communism. It is difficult to exactly define what Burnham believed to be the benefits of a political split, if it was canceled out by an ideological alignment. However, he still believed that splits occurred and that they could and should be exploited by political warfare. History seems to prove Burnham wrong. National communism was an important political development (i.e. Tito, Sino-Soviet split), and it seems that nationalism, instead of being exploited by communism, devoured communism. However, Burnham based his whole liberation policy on such thinking, that nationalism would vanquish communism (i.e. Eastern Europe). The only pattern that emerges is that Burnham primarily believed that nationalism in the Third World was weak, because it did not possess the tools to develop states in the Western sense. However, this theory implodes in the case of Tito and Yugoslavia. Another theory was that Burnham believed there were different levels of totalitarian control in communist countries, and that U.S. relations with communist countries that were less totalitarian could help to break down the communist system. Thus, a political split was important, because it could create ties between the U.S. and a communist country, which could lead to the break down of communism in that country. See James Burnham, "Special Report: Communism, Dalmatian Style," *NR* vol. 26 no. 27 (July 5, 1974): 755; and James Burnham, "Special Report: Communism or Communisms," *NR* vol. 26 no. 29 (July 19, 1974): 814.

¹¹³ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 21 no. 13 (April 8, 1969): 323; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 9 no. 22 (December 3, 1960): 340.

¹¹⁴ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 19 (March 28, 1956): 16.

Burnham believed the party sought legal and popular legitimacy only so it could cover for the illegal methods to overthrow democratic political institutions.¹¹⁵

Burnham also monitored the geopolitical moves of the communist advance. In general the primary goal of Soviet-led global communism in the seventh period was the capture of Europe. When the communists seemed to be concentrated on other areas of the globe, Burnham maintained that this was just another route to conquer Europe. Thus, communist infiltration in the Middle East was part of a larger plan to secure a land bridge to Africa. The capture of Africa was part of a larger plan to flank Western Europe. Specific instances of geopolitical ramifications were communist positions in Angola, Cuba, Vietnam, and Eastern Europe. Angola would serve as a communist base to infiltrate all of Africa, Cuba was a beachhead of serious communist infiltration in the Western hemisphere, a U.S. retreat from Vietnam meant a communist advance through the rest of Asia, and communist control of Eastern Europe, if consolidated, meant the domination of Europe, which meant the domination of the rest of the world. Of course, as Burnham maintained, the most important area in the Struggle for the world was Eastern Europe.¹¹⁶

Burnham also used literary devices to emphasize the communist threat. Periodically, his articles started with the heading, "To the Secretariat" and were ended with from the "Intelligence Section."¹¹⁷ These reports reiterated communist motives, such as the penetration of all levels of society, including universities and labor

¹¹⁵ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 4 (February 22, 1968): 124-125; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 2 no. 22 (June 1, 1957): 518; and Burnham, "TWW," vol. 1 no. 19 (March 28, 1956): 16.

¹¹⁶ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 1 no. 2 (November 26, 1955): 20; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 28 no. 9 (March 19, 1976): 260; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 24 (June 15, 1965): 499; James Burnham, "TWW" *NR* vol. 10 no. 15 (April 22, 1961): 248; and James Burnham, "Liberation What Next?," *NR* vol. 3 no. 3 (January 19, 1957): 59.

movements, or stated Soviet advantages from détente or disarmament. Obviously, the reader knew Burnham composed the reports instead of communists, but they provided a context of how logical, beneficial, and successful such tactics would be to the communist cause, which enhanced their reality. For example, détente written from the communist point of view enables one to see it as a logical move, instead of a theory. Exposing the communists was only half the battle. The second half was arming the U.S. with a proactive anticommunist theory.

Almost equal to the inability of U.S. anticommunist policy to understand the ideological nature of communism was the incompetent handling and gathering of intelligence, which was crucial to sound political warfare. The U.S. relied too heavily on military intelligence, the quantitative information regarding missile capability, armed forces, and resources. They underestimated, or misused, the most important kind on intelligence in political warfare: political intelligence. Burnham defined political intelligence as the ability to "...understand and predict the basic policies of major social entities (nations, classes, churches, races) and of individuals likely to influence political events."¹¹⁸

Political intelligence was faulty when Yugoslavia, under its communist leader Tito, broke from the Soviet Union. When Tito broke from Moscow the U.S. government gave political and material support to Tito. Burnham argued that the U.S. failed to realize that Tito's break was a factional dispute within the world communist party. This meant that Tito was still a communist and U.S. support only served, "...to refasten the loosened

¹¹⁷ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 1 no. 11 (February 1, 1956): 16.

¹¹⁸ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol.6 no. 19 (February 14, 1959): 520.

communist yoke on the nation's neck."¹¹⁹ Instead, the U.S. should have supported anticommunists in Yugoslavia to break down the system of communism. Support for Tito, Burnham argued, helped communism, because Tito was still ideologically aligned with the Soviet Union.¹²⁰

In the wake of Stalin's death in 1953, when Poland started to experience revolutionary stirrings, the U.S. needed to support the people, instead of the communist Polish leader Wladyslaw Gomulka. The unrest in Poland could be used to break Poland away from Soviet and communist control. Burnham wrote that the U.S. should send:

...In implements suited to small individual farms, tools for the reappearing but unequipped artisans, books for the students, food and clothing (through Cardinal Wysinski's relief organization, perhaps) for the exiles returning from Russia; to promote experimentally some private business relations, and some student and cultural exchanges on a non-political basis; to denounce every backward move by Gomulka; to press internationally for an end to the Red Army occupation.¹²¹

If the U.S. attempted to support Gomulka, a staunch communist, in a possible break from the Soviet Union it would only serve to reconsolidate communist control over Poland. Therefore, Poland, like Yugoslavia, would still remain closer to the Soviet sphere and continue to support the communist cause, because ideologically they were still brothers in arms.¹²²

Failed political intelligence also led to the neglect of an exiled Polish intellectual and anticommunist journal titled *Kultura*. The journal employed anticommunist propaganda that infiltrated Poland. Its effectiveness, Burnham argued, stemmed from its control by Polish exiles. Burnham believed this effectiveness was proved when Polish

¹¹⁹ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 24 (June 15, 1957): 567.

¹²⁰ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 5 no. 20 (May 17, 1958): 468; and *Ibid.*, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 24 (June 15, 1957): 567.

¹²¹ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 3 no. 24 (June 15, 1957): 567.

¹²² *Ibid.*

communists attempted to have the French government restrict its publication. Despite its proven effectiveness, *Kultura* was under funded, a grievous error in political warfare.¹²³

The Middle East was another area where political intelligence was faulty. The Middle East was vital, because it was the land bridge to Africa, and was the location of vast amounts of oil, "...strategically necessary to the U.S. itself and also the allies that are indispensable to U.S. security."¹²⁴ The U.S. gave preferential treatment to Israel, which was the decisive power in the Middle East; however, the favoring of Israel pushed parts of the predominately Arab populated Middle East, a powerful social force, into Soviet hands.¹²⁵

Burnham regularly formulated anticommunist policies. One of his most unusual proposals was the policy to neutralize or de-militarize Central and Eastern Europe in 1957. The policy maintained his views on political warfare and Eastern Europe as the, "main axis for the struggle of the world."¹²⁶ The objective was an agreement between the Soviet Union and the West, led by the U.S., to unify Germany. This would involve a permanent negotiation of the Eastern border of Germany to soothe the worries of Eastern European states fearful of German expansion. Burnham believed that Soviet control over Eastern Europe was based entirely on the presence of the Red Army. If removed, Eastern Europe would break from Soviet control. Such a plan would, primarily by uniting Germany, break down the concept of an Eastern and Western bloc, and pull the East closer to the West, the first step in its liberation from communism. In addition, it would prevent the Soviets from consolidating their rule over Eastern Europe, which would have

¹²³ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 11 no. 12 (September 23, 1961): 190; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 22 no. 9 (March, 1970): 248.

¹²⁴ James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict," *NR* vol. 30 no. 30 (January 20, 1978): 81.

been fatal to the West, and it would be a severe blow to the communist doctrine of inevitability. The retreat of the Red Army would symbolize the failure of communism.¹²⁷

Burnham believed the Soviets would consider such a plan, because they were facing urgent problems. Burnham wrote:

...The Soviet Union is in trouble, grave trouble, first of all in Eastern Europe but inside the home boundaries as well. The Kremlin's failure to solve the problems of the succession following Stalin's death has badly cracked its internal structure. The Soviet Union is over-extended, economically, politically and militarily. It needs to shorten its lines, literally as well as figuratively; to draw back in the hope of recuperating for wider thrusts tomorrow.¹²⁸

The Soviets would have assurances of security because Eastern Europe and Germany would be essentially unarmed. The chance of nuclear war would also be lessened. Even if the Soviet Union refused, the policy proposal would be a propaganda success, because it would show communism's disregard for nationalism. If the Soviet Union continued its totalitarian control over the nations of Eastern Europe, it could not claim to champion nationalism in other parts of the world. In addition, it would counter the rhetoric of de-Stalinization, because if the Soviets were truly turning away from Stalin they would concede his Yalta Empire.¹²⁹

8. The Decline of the West.

While Burnham's main objective in his column was the defeat of communism, he also waged another war that was intertwined with the defeat of communism: the war for Western civilization.¹³⁰ Burnham wrote:

¹²⁵ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 30 no. 30 (January 20, 1978): 81; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 19 no. 25 (June 27, 1967): 680.

¹²⁶ James Burnham, "Liberation What Next?," *NR* vol. 3 no. 3 (January 19, 1957): 61.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 59-62.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹³⁰ Burnham's definition of the West was the civilization, "...whose original home was in the European peninsula, whose traditional religion has been Christianity, and whose historical career began at

It is incorrect to believe that Communism is the first and sufficient cause of this unwinding of civilization. In some considerable measure, it is the decay of civilization that has provided the rotted soil for communism's growth. But, once the communist enterprise begins, it exploits and amplifies civilizations weakening, aiming at total destruction.¹³¹

Burnham believed that Western civilization was culturally and technologically superior to other existing civilizations, but it was declining. Like his attempt to resuscitate the will to resist anticommunism, Burnham attempted to revive the will of Western civilization to maintain its dominance in the world.

Africa. In the postwar era, Africa had become a haven for revolution caused by the vacuum of power created by the end of Western colonialism. Here was a perfect example of Burnham's concept. The West was retreating from Africa because it was losing its will. Retreat from imperialism was justified because it allowed self-determination for African nations and symbolized the equality of all peoples and nations. To Burnham this was nothing more than "ideological drivel." Africa, Burnham believed, was not yet capable of producing independent nations. The national boundaries that existed were drawn by the West and did not consider African geographic, ethnic, linguistic, or historical boundaries. Also, the only form of civilization in Africa that could produce the political institutions and high cultural development of a modern nation were the colonial vestiges of the West. Therefore, Burnham concluded that the retreat of the West was bad for Africa. Once the West retreated, chaos would arise, and communism would be the result. The retreat of the West meant the surrender of African resources and territory to the communists. Burnham wrote:

the end of the Dark Ages that followed the collapse of Hellenic Civilization." This definition was taken from Burnham, *The Struggle for the World*, 18.

¹³¹ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 10 no. 9 (March 11, 1961): 142.

What we see, if we are willing to look, is ourselves – us men of the West – fleeing headlong, beaten, panic-struck, fleeing as the defeated fled before Genghis, Alexander, Pompey, Caesar...¹³²

Burnham believed the West needed to maintain influence in Africa for Western survival and for the defeat of communism.¹³³

The United Nations. The United Nations was the institutional sign of the decline of the West. The United Nations was based on the ideological concept of the equality of nations, a concept that sought to bend the political interests of the West to "...fictional sovereignties whose opinions thereon, judged in terms of knowledge, interest or power, are irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial."¹³⁴ Burnham wrote:

In all history there has never been a political institution more absurd than this idiotic assembly where Rwanda and Zanzibar vote in juridicial equality with the United States...As a decision making body it is insane."¹³⁵

The United Nations process was a manipulation of the West by the non-Western world, a form of social struggle, to subordinate the power advantage of the West to ideological conceptions of self-determination and equality of nations. The communists like in Africa, stood atop this view always working to create a chaotic situation to seize power. Burnham urged the U.S. to "depoliticalize" the United Nations, which meant it should not have any power over political or military affairs in either the assembly or the Security Council. However, the United Nations was not completely useless and served as

¹³² James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 10 no. 3 (January 28, 1961): 45.

¹³³ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 9 no. 16 (October 22, 1960): 240; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 8 no. 12 (March 12, 1960): 164; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 10 no. 3 (January 28, 1961): 45; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 5 no. 20 (June 14, 1958): 564; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 7 no. 11 (June 20, 1959): 140.

¹³⁴ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 8 no. 7 (February 13, 1960): 99.

¹³⁵ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 16 no. 6 (February 11, 1964): 106.

necessary body to, "...carry out practical tasks on the international scale..." such as acting as, "...a general communications center for all nations."¹³⁶

9. Major Events in the Struggle for the World.

The Sino-Soviet split. The Sino-Soviet split developed in the wake of Stalin's death in 1954. It was primarily over how to direct the communist revolution. The Soviet Union, under Khrushchev, was pursuing a more conservative policy, while the Chinese communists, under Mao Zedong, were pursuing aggressive methods.

The implications of a split were profound. First, an authentic split could signal that world communism was succumbing to nationalism, which would mean a decimation of the world base of communist power. Second, China was the more revolutionary state, while the Soviet Union was perceived to be relaxing its revolutionary stance. This led U.S. policy makers to conclude that peaceful relations should be sought with the Soviet Union in order to counteract and minimize the power of revolutionary China.¹³⁷

Burnham believed both implications were wrong. The split, Burnham contended, was not primarily a nationalist or cultural issue, but predicated on who should control the worldwide Communist Party, either Khrushchev or Mao. The split was over factional issues in the communist world, to which national or cultural issues were subordinated. Burnham contended that the factional split was only over methods of revolution. At the base level both communist powers were still ideologically aligned against the U.S. In addition, Burnham argued that the U.S. should not seek peaceful relations with the Soviet Union in order to counteract the more revolutionary China. Burnham believed this was a rhetorical and "Trojan Horse" trick to wheel the Soviet Union into a more acceptable and

¹³⁶ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 13 no. 18 (November 6, 1962): 348.

¹³⁷ Burnham, "Operation Will-o-the-Wisp," 57.

favorable position in the eyes of the West, while its fifth column, more powerful and active than China's, worked to destroy the West. Burnham concluded that the Soviet Union was still the world leader in the communist revolution, and vastly more powerful than China, which was too weak economically and militarily to carry forth the world revolution. China did have a large army, but its power was limited to Asia. Therefore, Burnham believed that the U.S. should seek to enhance the split through political warfare, but on the side of the weaker China. As Burnham termed it, prior to the China's obtainment of the nuclear bomb in 1964, "Better a rogue with a pop gun than a charmer with an H-bomb."¹³⁸

Cuba. Burnham, for most of his anticommunist career, advocated the overthrow Fidel Castro in Cuba. Burnham believed that communism in Cuba was a disaster for the U.S. It was important symbolically, showing to the rest of the world that the U.S. could not even stop communism from taking residence ninety miles from its shores. Burnham believed that communism's existence in Cuba bolstered communist propaganda of an inevitable communist advance. In addition, communism in Cuba strengthened the appeals of communism in Vietnam and Latin America. If the U.S. could not prevent its existence in Cuba, how could it elsewhere?¹³⁹

Burnham believed that Cuba posed a real threat to the security of the U.S., because it was a beachhead for communism in the Western hemisphere. A military threat that was compounded by its association with the Soviet Union, which through Cuba, could gain better military intelligence and strategic positioning, with radio, radar,

¹³⁸ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 16 no. 34 (August 25, 1964): 718; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 16 no. 12 (March 24, 1964): 230; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 15 no. 2 (July 16, 1963): 17; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 14 (April 6, 1965): 274; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 14 no. 2 (January 15, 1963): 16.

submarine, aircraft, and nuclear missiles. Burnham put the threat into a clear perspective, “If Cuba is not a threat, then what in God’s name are our soldiers doing in South Vietnam?”¹⁴⁰ If communism was removed from Cuba, the direct communist military threat would be removed and its overthrow would serve as a powerful symbol that the U.S. would not yield to communism. Such an effect would be powerful enough, Burnham believed, to help the U.S. win the Vietnam War. Burnham believed, at least up until 1977, that an invasion was necessary and despite Soviet threats would not trigger a nuclear response from the Soviet Union, which would not risk Moscow for Havana.¹⁴¹

The Bay of Pigs invasion in April of 1961 and Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, which led to the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962, were disastrous events for the U.S. Burnham believed that the failed attempt at the Bay of Pigs to remove Castro enhanced the symbolic meaning of communist Cuba as a sign of strength and American weakness. The discovery of nuclear missiles in Cuba by the U.S. government was a disaster for the obvious military danger they represented, but Burnham used the situation to highlight the inability of the U.S. to understand the threat of communism. The missiles were discovered by spy planes, which according to Burnham, was faulty intelligence, because the Soviet positioning of missiles in Cuba was one step ahead of U.S. detection. Such a situation would have disastrous results in the case of a pre-emptive Soviet strike. Instead, U.S. intelligence needed to be proactive and predict the moves of the enemy. Communism was a movement seeking the destruction of the U.S. It was another case of

¹³⁹ Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 10 no. 15 (April 22, 1961): 248.

¹⁴⁰ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 13 no. 16 (October 28, 1962): 306.

¹⁴¹ James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 17 no. 10 (March 9, 1965): 186; Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 13 no. 16 (October 28, 1962): 306; and James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 14 no. 14 (April 9, 1963): 279. In May of 1977, Burnham changed his policy in regards to Cuba from a military invasion to opening up economic ties with the country, see James Burnham, “TPC,” *NR* vol. 29 no. 20 (May 27, 1977): 600. For a

the U.S. failure to understand this concept. Missiles in Cuba were a logical application of achieving U.S. destruction. Simply put, it was communists acting like communists.¹⁴²

The Vietnam War. If the handling of the Cuban situation was a disaster for the U.S. the Vietnam War was catastrophic. Burnham believed that the U.S., because of its faulty military and political strategy, was fighting to lose the war. The most fatal error of U.S. military strategy was the commitment to fighting a limited war. Fighting a limited war meant using conventional weapons, and avoiding the use of nuclear weapons. Burnham contended that this played to the enemy's strengths. They did not have technologically advanced weapons, and relied on a mixture of guerrilla, paramilitary, and formal military methods. The U.S. strength, as Burnham often pointed out, was technological superiority, which could not be countered by the Vietcong. Burnham argued that it was illogical to send,

...Hundreds of thousands of young citizens into a distant and most alien land, under the conditions that mean death or grievous injury...and at the same time forbid them to use the most effective available weapons and methods against the enemy.¹⁴³

Burnham also suggested unconventional methods, such as devastating the food base of the North Vietnamese, or attacking the Red River irrigation system, which were necessary methods in a Maoist type revolutionary struggle that turned the whole population into a weapon.¹⁴⁴

reference of Soviet support for Cuba in the case of an invasion, see Kenneth L. Hill, *Cold War Chronology*, 134.

¹⁴² James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol.13 no. 12 (September 25, 1962): 226; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 12 no. 20 (November 20, 1962): 386.

¹⁴³ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 26 (June 28, 1966): 612.

¹⁴⁴ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 15 no. 14 (October 8, 1963): 304; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 26 (June 28, 1966): 612-613; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 19 no. 37 (September 19, 1967): 1012;

The U.S. fought a limited war based on the assumptions that it would not risk the entry of the Soviet or Chinese communists, such as in the Korean War, or risk escalation into a possible nuclear war. In addition, it was believed that limited methods and weapons would provide the best chance for negotiation. Burnham believed the assumptions were false. The Soviets would not use nuclear weapons, he contended, because they would not risk Moscow for Southeast Asia. In addition, Burnham contended that the U.S. use of nuclear weapons would prevent Chinese soldiers from entering Vietnam. If the Chinese decided to use their limited nuclear capability, which at best could devastate a U.S. aircraft carrier or base in the area, the U.S., Burnham argued, would have the justification to wipe out all of China's nuclear capabilities and sterilize their threat as a nuclear power. Burnham also believed a limited war would only encourage communist advance and have the exact opposite effect of bringing the communists to the negotiation table; instead it would give them more confidence and the will to fight for a united communist Vietnam.¹⁴⁵

In addition to limited warfare, the U.S. military strategies of escalation, the gradual build up of the military effort, and Vietnamization, the process of handing the majority of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese, were equally inept. Escalation, the Johnson administration's policy, allowed the enemy to prepare and adjust to the military maneuvers of the U.S., as opposed to using overwhelming force that would provide the enemy with no time for adjustment. Vietnamization, sought mostly under the Nixon administration during the last years of the war, signaled the retreat of U.S. power and was a victory for communism. Burnham argued that apart from its rhetorical claims, which

¹⁴⁵ Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 26 (June 28, 1966): 612; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 19 no. 37 (September 19, 1967): 1012.

were to maintain a stand against the North Vietnamese, it was in reality surrendering South Vietnam to the communists, because the U.S. was the backbone of the anticommunist effort. In addition, Vietnamization would be limiting the war to South Vietnam, which strategically could never adequately combat communism in South Vietnam, let alone Southeast Asia.¹⁴⁶

Military problems in Vietnam were only the outcome of a larger problem, the U.S. government's inept political strategy. Burnham argued that the U.S. government never set the war "...within its global frame of reference, our leaders could neither develop a comprehensive strategy to win it nor make it comprehensible to the American people."¹⁴⁷ The U.S. did not wage a successful political warfare campaign. It never sold the war at home. This led to the development of a powerful anti-war movement, which hampered the will to fight. The anti-war movement and communist propaganda termed the Vietnam War a nationalist revolutionary struggle. Such a perspective led many Americans to question our involvement there. Burnham maintained that Vietnam was a revolutionary war, but only within a communist framework. It was a revolution to overthrow the old society.¹⁴⁸

Political leadership in American foreign policy, Burnham argued, was equally inadequate. Lyndon Johnson did not understand the nature of communism. The U.S. was practicing *détente* with the Soviet Union, but was waging a war against communists in Southeast Asia, a policy that did not make sense when communists, whether Vietnamese,

¹⁴⁶ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 25 no. 17 (April 27, 1973): 459; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 8 (February 22, 1966): 151; James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 24 no. 6 (February 18, 1972): 144; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 22 no. 13 (April 17, 1970): 353.

¹⁴⁷ Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 24 no. 6 (February 18, 1972): 144.

¹⁴⁸ Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 24 no. 6 (February 18, 1972): 144; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 18 no. 10 (March 18, 1966): 203; James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 10 no. 12 (March 23, 1965):

Chinese or Russian were all working together in the communist global struggle against the U.S. Before the war officially began Burnham highlighted this inconsistency:

Does anyone imagine that pictures of [Averell] Harriman drinking toasts with Khrushchev, and President Kennedy signing the test-ban treaty, are a stimulating diet for South Vietnamese paratroopers scheduled to drop on a Vietcong concentration?¹⁴⁹

Such an inconsistency made developing a resolute will to fight communism in Vietnam very difficult. Burnham did believe that the Vietnam War could finally teach the U.S. a valuable lesson in the struggle for the world. "Communists are serious."¹⁵⁰

10. Conclusions.

Burnham's anticommunist theory throughout his career was defined by four consistent characteristics. First, Burnham interpreted communism as an ideological threat, seeking world revolution and totalitarian rule. Therefore, the Cold War, according to Burnham, was never really cold. Mass conventional war between the Soviet Union and the U.S. did not officially take place. However, communist political-subversive warfare was always working for U.S. destruction, and Burnham would even argue that military conflicts were occurring between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Burnham believed that communists were always ideologically aligned, and therefore, U.S. wars in Vietnam and Korea were actually fighting Soviet-led global communism. Burnham always argued that the policy of containment was a failure, because it treated the Soviet threat as an expansionary nation-state, rather than a dynamic ideology that transcended borders. In addition, he felt communist ideology always overrode nationalist or political disputes

232; James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 25 no. 17 (April 27, 1973): 459; and James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 21 no. 51 (December 30, 1969): 1310.

¹⁴⁹ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 14 no. 15 (October 8, 1963): 304. In 1963 Averell Harriman was the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

¹⁵⁰ Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 25 no. 17 (April 27, 1973): 459; Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 15 no. 14 (October 8, 1963); 304.

within the communist empire, such as in the case of the Sino-Soviet split, or Tito's break from the Kremlin. Both rifts were important and could be used to weaken global communism, but Burnham contended that at the base level the communist ideology aligned the Chinese and Tito against the U.S.

Second, Burnham always argued that a political warfare campaign was the best way to eliminate the communist threat. Communism was an ideology that claimed a scientific outlook, but Burnham argued that it was anything but a scientific prescription for society. Its ideological prescriptions had misinterpreted empirical evidence so incorrectly that the Soviet Union became the worst political and social experiment known to history. Yet, communism promised social utopia. Therefore, the ideological façade needed to be unmasked and its true nature exposed to the light of day. A political warfare campaign serving this purpose would implode the communist ideology more effectively than mass war.

Third, Burnham believed that Eastern Europe was the main battleground in the struggle for the world. Eastern Europe under Soviet control was the height of the Communist empire, a sign of its inevitable advance. If Eastern Europe was consolidated, which Burnham maintained it was not, even under Stalin, the communists would win. Burnham believed that from this superior position on the Eurasian land mass the Soviets could dominate the world. However, if the Soviet system failed in Eastern Europe and the Red Army had to retreat, then the height of the Soviet empire would recess and so would the ideological doctrine of inevitability. History may have proven Burnham right. Eastern Europe began to fall in 1989, and by 1991 statues of Lenin were toppling in the Soviet Union.

Fourth, Burnham's anticommunist theory displayed an amazing protean character. His theory was guided by the principle that communism was a dangerous ideology, but his theory for combating communism was based on an empirical approach. The nature of an empirical approach is one of change, because it must adapt to new experiences and observations. Burnham wrote, "The primary goals at which I aim in this column ["The Protracted Conflict"], as in most of the books and articles I have written, are fact and analysis. I do not accept any theory of class, national, ethnic, partisan, or sectarian truth."¹⁵¹

Some examples will serve to highlight this empirical approach. As already noted, Burnham consistently argued for some sort of Western or U.S. imperial influence in the world. Africa was such an example. Burnham originally contended that white colonials provided the only civilizing capabilities in Africa, and if they were removed chaos would set in and the communists would seize power. Therefore, Burnham argued that the white colonials should be supported and some sort of colonial control should be maintained. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, Africa had predominately fallen into the control of its Black inhabitants. Therefore, in the late 1970s Burnham attempted to develop a better anticommunist strategy that took this fact into consideration. Burnham wrote:

You've got to look at the big picture, right? Suppose you were President. When you took your first trip to Africa, would you choose to be the guest of 250,000 forlorn and politically doomed white Rhodesians or of 65 million ambitious, upwardly mobile black Nigerians? Would you go along, on the Rhodesian issue, with the four front-line black states, or would you antagonize them into inviting the Cubans and their Soviet directors to help them out?"¹⁵²

The Panama Canal situation was another example. In 1977, Burnham argued that the U.S. should turn the canal over to the Panamanians. This seemed like a retreat, the

¹⁵¹ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 30 no. 37 (September 15, 1978): 1132.

type that Burnham had always argued against. Burnham reasoned that the canal was becoming insignificant in the time of super tankers and aircraft carriers. The U.S. did not need control of the canal, because its strategic importance faded, and its handover would counter anti-American sentiment in the region.¹⁵³

There was also Burnham's policy reversal on the recognition of China. It was one of his standard political warfare measures to deny the official recognition of communist countries. Such a tactic showed the U.S. commitment to anticommunism and communicated to people of communist countries that the U.S. did not accept their communist enslavers as legitimate rulers. In addition, Burnham had stressed the recognition of Taiwan over China, now he seemed to be betraying Taiwan, an anticommunist ally. However, Burnham reasoned that China was vastly more powerful than Taiwan and could possibly be used to counter the power of the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁴

Cuba was another situation where Burnham changed his policy. Initially, he argued for a U.S. military invasion to remove Castro and communism from Cuba, claiming that force was the only way to remove Castro. However, in 1977 he reversed this policy and advocated opening up relations and economic ties to Cuba. Burnham reasoned that since Moscow was six thousand miles away from Cuba and Florida ninety, it would be possible through economic markets to pull Cuba from the Soviet orbit, and dominate it economically. Burnham concluded that Cuba, minus the Soviet Union,

¹⁵² James Burnham, "TPC" *NR* vol. 30 no. 17 (April 28, 1978): 516.

¹⁵³ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 29 no. 36 (September 16, 1977): 1043

¹⁵⁴ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 30 no. 25 (June 23, 1978): 768-769; and James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 30 no. 37 (September 15, 1978): 1132.

would be a marginal threat, and that economic ties would lead to U.S. economic domination Cuba, which would work against the communist system.¹⁵⁵

Burnham even changed the title of his *National Review* column to be more effective. Burnham wrote, "...the old logo ["Third World War"] doesn't seem to be communicating what I intend, and is too narrow..." and, "...many dismiss anything written under such a heading as obsolescent cold war stuff that went out with Stalin."¹⁵⁶ Burnham once wrote, "Times change, and nations that fail to adapt to the changes go under."¹⁵⁷ Burnham applied this same concept to the development of his anticommunist theory; he always developed, modified, and changed it to remain effective, to remain the consummate anticommunist.

11. The Political Practicality and Inconsistencies in Burnham's Anticommunism.

While Burnham labeled his anticommunist theory as pragmatic, it is clear that some of his ideas and policy proposals were politically unattainable. For example, Burnham's call for the U.S. government to publicly decree goals of destroying the Soviet Union would have been suicide for any politician. Many people would have interpreted such actions as war mongering or extremism. Another example was Burnham's idea to use tactical (low yield) nuclear weapons in Vietnam, which he wanted to risk using even if it meant Chinese intervention. Burnham even believed that Chinese intervention would give the U.S. a welcomed opportunity to strike at Chinese nuclear production facilities. From their creation, the use of nuclear weapons became taboo, and Burnham's unabashed

¹⁵⁵ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 14 no. 14 (April 9, 1963): 279; and James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 29 no. 20 (May 27, 1977): 600.

¹⁵⁶ James Burnham, "TPC," *NR* vol. 22 no. 15 (April 21, 1970): 400.

¹⁵⁷ Burnham, "TPC" *NR* vol. 29 no. 36 (September 16, 1977): 1043.

bravado to use them would not have been a practical policy for any politician.¹⁵⁸ The use of nuclear weapons was considered extreme and would have created tremendous backlash towards the Vietnam War effort and vast amounts of anti-Americanism, domestically and internationally. The Barry Goldwater presidential campaign in 1964 is historical proof of the danger of such extremism for any political campaign. Goldwater, while not an extremist, was tagged as such by the Democratic Party, which curtailed his popularity and torpedoed his chances.

In addition, some of Burnham's anticommunist theory was inconsistent. This inconsistency was derived from a mix of his adherence to Machiavellian power politics and his interpretation of communism as an ideological threat. When an inconsistency arose, it could usually be traced to his swaying back and forth between such principles. One example was his policy on nationalist breaks from Soviet-led global communism, such as the Sino-Soviet split or Tito's break from Moscow. In this instance, Burnham applied both his power politics principles and his interpretation of communism as an ideological threat. Burnham was never clear on these splits. On one hand, he maintained that the breaks were mostly insignificant, because these countries were still ideologically aligned, and for Burnham, this was the tie that definitively bound them. Burnham believed that if world war three broke out, the communist countries that had broken from the Soviet monolith would still shoot in the same direction as the Soviet Union. This was Burnham adhering to his interpretation of communism as an ideological threat. On the other hand, he also maintained that the splits were important and that political warfare should be used to enhance them. According to Burnham, the political splits were

¹⁵⁸ Burnham believed that communists had contributed to the taboo stigma of the use of nuclear weapons, because they wanted to curtail the U.S. advantage. He wanted their use to be placed within the

important, because they would help to shift the balance of power in favor of the U.S. over the Soviet Union, especially if the disobedient communist countries were pulled into the U.S. sphere. This was Burnham, the Machiavellian.

Another example of this type of inconsistency was his policy to demilitarize Central and Eastern Europe, which contradicted his policies to establish an anticommunist empire. This policy seemed to tilt more towards his interpretation of communism as an ideological threat. From a real politik stand point, the removal of U.S. force in Central and Eastern Europe would have been disastrous. However, Burnham believed that if the Soviets would agree to demilitarize Central and Eastern Europe, then Eastern Europe, only obedient under the iron fist of the Red Army, would break away from Moscow and the ideological doctrine of inevitable communist advancement would implode. Burnham maintained that this ideological implosion would bring down the Soviet Union. This was Burnham, the anti-ideologist.

CHAPTER IV
JAMES BURNHAM'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Stalinism is communism.

James Burnham¹

1. A Machiavellian Framework.

At the base of Burnham's political thought was a modern Machiavellian framework, which can be broken down into three main tenets. First, Burnham believed in an empirical analysis of politics divorced from transcendental ethics. Burnham wrote:

An objective science of politics, and of society, comparable in its methods to the other empirical sciences, is possible. Such a science will describe and correlate observable social facts, and, on the basis of the facts of the past, will state more or less probable hypotheses about the future.²

Second, Burnham believed that the central component of political analysis was the study of power, which was the base of all social struggles. Burnham wrote, "The primary subject-matter of political science is the struggle for social power in its diverse open and concealed forms."³

Burnham believed that a healthy society could only be achieved when power was diffused among its different social forces; for example, religious institutions, labor organizations, etc. If any one social force monopolized political power, then only the interests of those who controlled the government were represented in society. All other interests would then be subject to the arbitrary power of the government.⁴

¹ James Burnham, "Lenin's Heir," *Partisan Review* vol. 12 (1945): 72.

² James Burnham, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1943), 223.

³ Burnham, *The Machiavellians*, 224.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 107-113.

2. Anti-ideologist.

Burnham attacked communism and liberalism, because they were ideologies, which attempted to form social and political action through unscientific prescriptions, while claiming to be scientific. Burnham defined an ideology as a:

...Systematic and self-contained set of ideas supposedly dealing with the nature of reality (usually social reality), or some segment of reality, and of man's relation (attitude, conduct) toward it; and calling for a commitment independent of specific experience or events.⁵

The un-scientific nature of ideologies could lead to dangerous results, especially if they were the dominant political currents in society.

Burnham analyzed such a danger in his book, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism*. In the book, Burnham argued that liberalism was “the typical verbal systemization of the process of Western contraction and withdrawal; that liberalism motivates and justifies the contraction and reconciles us to it.”⁶

Liberalism was not the cause of Western civilization's decline, which Burnham thought was more likely attributed to a Western lack of will, but it was an ideological perspective that served to disguise the fall. This was a problem, because liberalism dominated American political thought, Burnham wrote, “The predominant assumptions, ideas and beliefs about politics, economics, and social questions are liberal.”⁷

Burnham contended that the base concepts of liberal ideology were that humans were not evil or good, but had “...an unlimited or at any rate indefinitely large potential for positive (good, favorable, progressive) development.”⁸ It was a corollary that if

⁵ James Burnham, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (New York: The John Day Company, 1964): 104.

⁶ Ibid, 26.

⁷ Ibid., 31, 24-26, 301-305.

⁸ Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 49-50.

humans had an almost unlimited range of potential for progression, then liberals had faith in human intelligence to realize and maximize that potential. Human rationalism was the guiding light to progress. Any defects of society were the result of ignorance, arising out of irrational institutions of society.⁹

The liberal path to a rational progressive society was universal education and the development of a political, economic, and social democratic environment. The educational program of the liberals must be universal to be effective, because anyone not educated would be a remnant of ignorance and cause social problems. Because intelligence is progressive, education cannot be limited to objective truths based in a social or moral order. What is progressive or right today may not be progressive or right tomorrow. Thus, all education or knowledge was relative, because a definitive truth was unobtainable.¹⁰

A universally educated population, in which each member expressed some form of truth, translated into the necessity for equal political representation, because everyone had some aspect of truth to contribute. Equal political representation and a relativist doctrine of truth correlated into a social egalitarian society, because qualitative distinctions implied a line of objectivity. In addition, liberals believed that government was the main institution of progressive development, because it could institute direct democracy and universal education, but it should be internationally constructed to avoid the qualitative distinctions of national boundaries, and discrepancies, which could lead to war, the most irrational of human actions.¹¹

⁹ Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 47-63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64-66, 72-76.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73, 77-91.

Burnham also evaluated the political value structure of liberals derived from their ideological concepts. Burnham wrote that the four main social values of Western society were liberty, freedom, peace, and justice. Liberty was the value of national independence, freedom was individual liberty, peace was the absence of continuous war, and justice was, "...a reasonable amount of material well-being for everyone along with an absence of gross exploitation or discrimination..."¹² Most political philosophies valued all four, but choices typically had to be made to ensure the survival of some or at least one of the values. For example, peace may have to be sacrificed for liberty, or justice for freedom, or peace, justice, and freedom may all have to be sacrificed for liberty. It was important to understand how liberals rated their values, because then it could be determined what they, "...will work and struggle, sacrifice and die for, and in what order."¹³ The liberal generally ranked peace first, followed by justice, freedom, and liberty. Thus, the liberal would sacrifice liberty to save freedom, freedom to save justice, and all would be trumped for the sake of peace. If peace were in danger the liberal would sacrifice all values for its preservation, a frightening value structure, Burnham thought, for combating communism.¹⁴

Burnham also believed that liberals carried around unnecessary and illogical guilt derived from their ideological assumptions. Liberals felt guilty for everyone who did not fare as well as them, because inferior conditions were the product of faulty social institutions, rather than a person's natural disposition. Liberals tried to compensate for such gaps through policies like foreign aid. If everyone had direct democracy and universal education, liberals believed, then humans would progress and social struggles

¹² Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 159.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 179.

would end. In reality, liberal guilt only served to strengthen opponents in the natural struggle for power. The liberal would be trapped in a never-ending cycle of guilt. Social distinctions would always exist.¹⁵

Burnham believed liberalism was an ideology. A liberal ideologue pointed to the fact that education was widespread, but that both war and poverty continued to occur, would advocate that more education was needed. Burnham wrote:

He [the liberal ideologue] can't lose because his answer, his interpretation and his attitude have been determined in advance of the particular experience or observation.¹⁶

The danger of the liberal ideology was compounded by its inability to solve the three major problems that Burnham contended were confronting Western Society.

Burnham listed the problems as the decay of Western cities; the population growth and developing political awareness of the Third World; and, "the drive of the communist enterprise for a monopoly of world power."¹⁷

Liberals could not cure internal turmoil, because they ideologically misinterpreted urban violence and lawlessness as a result of failed political and social institutions. They also believed that criminals or delinquents had a right to express their indignation. Their guilt forced them to make concessions to delinquents. Instead of using force, the concessions only gave strength to internal revolutionary elements and did nothing to stamp them out. The growing power of the third world was interpreted and handled the

¹⁴ Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 159-187.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 188-204.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 103, 100-122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 283.

same way as urban violence, which meant aid and appeasement, only strengthening the Third World in its quest to curb the power of the West.¹⁸

Liberals also could not handle the communist challenge because liberalism had a political continuity with communism. “The secular, historically optimistic, reformist, welfare-statish, even the plebiscitary aspects of liberalism are all present in communism.”¹⁹ Therefore, liberals ignorantly worked with communists towards similar goals: the destruction of social institutions that were not progressive. This meant an attack on institutions such as the Catholic Church, and the military, for example, both of which, according to liberals, worked against the progressive development of man.²⁰

The main failure of liberalism in dealing with these problems was its inability to apply force. Some problems needed to be confronted with power through force, not appeasement. Liberal ideology was not equipped to dole out the necessary amount of force, because force, “...presupposes a pessimistic theory of human nature, or at the very least a rejection of any optimistic view.”²¹ In addition, force is not congruent with relativism. How could liberals use force when force required some line of objectivity to be carried through? If no distinctions existed, then villains could not be distinguished from the good guys. The use of force, and therefore the survival of the West, required qualitative distinctions. Burnham wrote:

Unless Western civilization is superior to other civilizations and societies, it is not worth defending; unless Westerners are willing to use their power, the West cannot be defended. But by its own principles, liberalism is not allowed to entertain that conviction or to make frank, unashamed and therefore effective use of power.²²

¹⁸ Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 286-287.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 289.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 206, 220, 281-289,

²¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

²² *Ibid.*, 288, 283-292.

Burnham reiterated that liberalism was not the cause of the West's lack of will.

However, liberalism was:

...Marvelously and specifically equipped to...comfort us in our afflictions; and then, by a wondrous alchemy, to transmute the dark defeats, withdrawals and catastrophes into their bright opposites: into gains, victories, advances."²³

Liberals reconciled the West to its retreat. Western civilization was not a static boundary, but a continuous "dynamic development," contraction was the sign of its decay.²⁴ The West needed to recapture its will and to reassert its superiority over other civilizations and societies to survive. If the will was recaptured, Burnham believed that liberalism would fade away, because it would no longer have its function of reconciliation to dissolution.²⁵

3. The Conservative.

Burnham's attack on liberalism and communism aligned him with the post-World War II conservative movement. Burnham believed that the counter to liberal and communist trends towards nihilism and totalitarianism was the preservation of a social order embodied in Western civilization. Only that provided, "a discipline and structure embodied in tradition decorum, and continuing institutions."²⁶ The foundation of civilization was social experience. An order based in social experience was superior to ideologies. The preservation of tradition and the structure of social experience was the ultimate counter to communism and liberalism.²⁷

²³ Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 301.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 288, 282-306.

²⁶ James Burnham, "The Third World War" (hereafter TWW) *National Review* (hereafter *NR*) vol. 10 no. 9 (March 11, 1961): 142.

²⁷ James Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959), 25-33; For a similar view of Burnham's traditionalist conservative thought see Samuel Francis, *Thinkers of Our Time: James Burnham* (London, The Claridge Press, 1999): 134-136.

Burnham expressed the importance of a traditional order in his book, *Congress and the American Tradition*. Congress was a traditional institution that prevented the drift towards totalitarianism. In the book, Burnham located Congress as the most powerful and important government branch in the U.S. political tradition. He argued that it was the most vital institution in preserving American democracy, which he defined as:

Constitutional government, the rule of law, the preservation of certain rights, among them the right of legitimate minorities not to be crushed by or dissolved into the plebiscitary majority...²⁸

The central thesis of the book was that Congress was being subordinated to the executive branch, which was a result of current and dominant liberal trends towards democratism, which he defined as a government that should, "...provide institutions and procedures designed to translate as directly, accurately and quickly as possible the opinion of the popular majority."²⁹ Democracy, as conceived by the liberals, was impossible and undesirable, but the attempt to create such a situation led to what Burnham termed Caesarism, or totalitarian rule.

In the first part of the book, Burnham located the American political tradition, developed from the Founding Fathers, within post-World War II traditional conservative thought. He identified the main tenets of continuity between conservatives and the American political tradition in thirteen conservative sentiments:

- C[conservative]-1. Belief that government involves a non-rational factor; distrust of abstract political ideology.
- C-2. Belief that human nature is limited and corrupt; anti-utopianism.
- C-3. Respect for tradition.
- C-4. Belief in the diffusion of sovereignty and power.
- C-5. For representative, mediated government; against plebiscitary democracy.
- C-6. For States' Rights.
- C-7. For the autonomy of the various branches of the central government.

²⁸ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 301.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

- C-8. Greater solicitude for the limits than for the powers of government.
- C-9. Belief that the American constitutional tradition embodies principles that are intelligible, and of permanent value.
- C-10. For decentralization and localization.
- C-11. Presumption in favor of private economic enterprise.
- C-12. Primary philosophic concern with individuals in their private capacity, rather than with nation or other collectivity.
- C-13. Presumption in favor of Congress as against the executive.³⁰

The synthesis of the conservative tendencies, in accord with the American political tradition, was to maintain a balance of power through division. However, outside of this tradition and working to subvert it, were liberal syndromes that attempted to centralize power. Burnham identified these liberal sentiments:

- L[liberal]-1. Confidence in the ability of rational science and democratic ideology to comprehend and solve all problems of government.
- L-2. Belief in the unlimited potentiality of human nature.
- L-3. No presumption in favor of traditional usage.
- L-4. Willingness to waive principle of diffusion of power if thereby progressive forces or goals are furthered.
- L-5. Tendency toward plebiscitary democracy.
- L-6. Minor concern with or even disapproval of State's Rights.
- L-7. Belief that the autonomy of the branches of the central government hinders solution of major contemporary problems.
- L-8. More solicitude for the power of government to accomplish progressive goals than for the limits on government.
- L-9. Interpretation of the American constitutional tradition as instrumental, its meaning wholly dependent on time and circumstance.
- L-10. Belief that decentralization and localization often interfere with solution or modern problems.
- L-11. Critical attitude toward private economic enterprise, and positive belief in government economic control plus some measure of government ownership.
- L-12. Belief that expansion of governmental activity aids the attainment of the good life.
- L-13. Presumption in favor of executive as against Congress.³¹

The synthesis of the liberal tendency was to move towards plebiscitary democracy, or the concentration of power within the majority. The battleground between the conservative and liberal sentiments was the institution of Congress, traditionally the

³⁰ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 121.

most powerful branch of government, and Burnham believed the key institution to representative government. The slide in congressional power definitively occurred in 1933 during Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term in office. Congress was losing control of its lawmaking ability, the bureaucracy, the power of the purse and sword, the treaty power, and its investigatory power.³²

While technical reform of Congress were desirable, such as more control over expenditures and creating more efficiency, the prevailing liberal trends called for reforms towards the development of democratism, which generally entailed the breakdown or decimation of congressional power, because congress was seen as an obstacle to direct representation, a check on the will of the majority. Democratism, pushed by liberals, was the ideological conception, that direct representation was the best means of government, because it would be the expression of the majority, which was the most rational and equalitarian form of government. The path to direct democracy entailed the break down of all intermediary institutions that hindered direct representation, such as state governments and especially congress. The only formal political expression of such a system was the executive branch, or a single leader, that would express the will of the majority with out intermediary institutions. Thus, the leader, unchecked by other power sources, carried out the will of the masses.³³

However, direct democracy was flawed, because a numerical majority was based on the ideological conception of man and woman as a mass creature with no qualitative distinctions. A general will of the masses could never be expressed by the majority, because a general will did not exist. The only way to provide political expression for

³¹ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 122.

³² *Ibid.*, 133.

minority or qualitative differences, which did exist, was through intermediary institutions. Burnham wrote, “Through them [intermediary institutions] are expressed the interests of classes, local regions, industries, churches, races, or other sub-sections of the people as a whole.”³⁴ These were distinctions that could not be made by mass direct democracy; however, the leader of masses would still make decisions based on this ideological perception; however, this representation was arbitrary, because its representation was fictional.³⁵

The danger was apparent, without real representation through intermediary institutions, which provided power checks on authority, man and woman became subject to the arbitrary rule of the leader, and defenseless against the rise totalitarianism, or in specific language the rise of, “Caesar: that is to say, Napoleon, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Peron, Franco, Khrushchev...”³⁶ While Burnham believed that the general historical trend acted against the survival of Congress, the last great intermediary institution, he believed that if Congress improved its technical efficiency and worked to reassert its power in deciding major policy issues, it could survive, but only if it found the will to survive.³⁷

Burnham’s attachment to the traditionalist wing of the conservative movement did not make him a part of the mainstream traditionalism that advocated religious faith to preserve a transcendental moral order. Burnham’s traditionalism was based on his empirical thought. Burnham, while baptized Catholic, did not adhere to the moral dogmas of the Catholic Church. But he believed the existence of the Church was

³³ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 271-272, 294-296.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 290-316, 317-332

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 298.

necessary. Social experience had developed such an institution to provide a prescription for life and society that was fundamentally conservative. Sydney Hook once remarked that though Burnham left the Catholic Church and did not subscribe to its dogmas, he, "...always expressed admiration for the Catholic Church and its civilizing role in Europe and elsewhere."³⁸ The difference, for Burnham, between ideology and religion was that a traditional religious institution, like the Catholic Church, based its religious prescriptions on a realistic interpretation of man based on many years of experience. Therefore the Church's prescriptions for man were beneficial. Tradition was the most trustworthy guide to knowledgeable development, because it was formed in relation to real experience.³⁹

As a conservative, Burnham was located furthest from libertarianism, especially the anarchic extreme wing of that movement. He did not object to the free-market and thought private initiative was proven to be better than any socialist system. However, he felt that libertarianism was ideologically driven. It was obsessed with the free-market, negating an adequate response to real contemporary problems. Libertarianism was also isolationist, which coincided with its desire for small government, a position that aligned elements of the libertarian Right with the Left in opposing the draft during the Vietnam War. This was an ideological fallacy for Burnham, because the survival of the U.S. required an active interventionist policy to combat the real expansionary nature of communism. Second, libertarian ideology tended to rant against the development of

³⁷ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 290-299, 319-326, 338-350.

³⁸ Sydney Hook, "James Burnham 1905-1987: Radical, Teacher, Technician" *NR* vol. 39 no. 17 (September 11, 1987): 32.

³⁹ Burnham, *Congress and the American Tradition*, 25-33; and Francis, 134-136.

government welfare and healthcare, negating their effectiveness. Burnham believed that government healthcare was a natural byproduct that:

...Arose out of 1) the conditions of industrialized, mobile mass society, 2) the population explosion, 3) the progress of medical science in prolonging human life, thus creating a sharply higher proportion of elderly persons, and 4) the high cost of prolonged medical care.”⁴⁰

Therefore, the clock could not be turned back, and libertarian conservatives should work on ways to improve healthcare, such as practical downsizing or creating plans more efficiently. In one instance Burnham even suggested a welfare resettlement program that would cheapen the cost of welfare by relocating recipients from an area with a high cost of living to one with a lower cost. He also praised the federal government’s interstate highway system, which he described as, “...the greatest architectural engineering achievement in history.”⁴¹

Burnham’s attacks on the libertarian wing highlight another aspect of his conservative thought. Burnham was a pragmatic conservative. This same empirical grounding fostered a strain of a practical political application in his conservative and anticommunist thought. A conservative direction was the best policy for the U.S., but in order to obtain that direction the conservative movement needed to become more mainstream and avoid sectarianism, in order to make the conservative movement

⁴⁰ James Burnham, “Rhetoric and Medicare” *NR* vol. 17 no. 34 (August 24, 1965): 720.

⁴¹ James Burnham, “More Notes from the Road” *NR* vol. 21 no. 49 (December 16, 1969): 1269; James Burnham, “TWW,” *NR* vol. 19 no. 23 (June 13, 1967): 629; James Burnham, “Points South and East,” *NR* vol. 23 no. 7 (February 23, 1971): 191. For more examinations of Burnham’s awkward fit into the conservative movement see Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World: A Life* (Wilmington DE: ISI Books, 2002), 367-371; and Francis, 114-116.

influential. Burnham was not a disengaged intellectual hiding in the ivory tower, but an intellectual who was a realistic political writer, who sought actuality not idealism.⁴²

His articles in *National Review* dealing with anticommunism and conservative politics in general exhibited this empirical and practical application. Burnham urged Barry Goldwater to develop a more mainstream campaign that did not just speak to conservatives or a certain geographical location, but to the whole nation. He urged conservatives to support the Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard Nixon presidential ticket even though it did not hold much promise for introducing conservative ideas into the government. Conservative forces would be served indirectly by voting for Eisenhower and Nixon, because victory over the Democratic ticket meant victory over anti-conservative forces that were part of the Democratic constituency. In addition, he argued against splintering conservatives into a third party, which would condemn it to sectarianism by attracting all of the extremist elements of the Right.⁴³

Probably the best example of Burnham's desire for practical effectiveness was his attack on the John Birch Society (JBS) in 1965. Burnham, at first guess, would most likely have been a staunch advocate of the anticommunist organization. The Birchers recognized communism's conspiratorial nature. However, in the mid-1960s the JBS was professing irresponsible and hyper-conspiratorial theories. Robert Welch, the founder of the JBS, argued that the U.S. government was sixty to eighty percent communist controlled. As such, the government, controlled by communists, was fighting communists in Vietnam to weaken the U.S. The illogical JBS conspiracy theory led the

⁴² For more examinations on Burnham's pragmatic conservatism see Kevin J. Smant, *How Great the Triumph: James Burnham, Anti-Communism and the Conservative Movement* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992), 73, 118, 162.

organization to campaign for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Vietnam. Burnham concluded that the JBS was damaging to the anticommunist and conservative movement, and wrote that, "...any American who seriously wants to contribute to his country's security and well-being and to oppose communism will have to stay clear of the JBS."⁴⁴ In addition, Birch Society conspiracy theories publicly linked to the conservative movement, allowed the opponents of the conservative movement to condemn the whole movement as extremist.

4. A Neoconservative?

While Burnham did not fit perfectly into the original intellectual developments of the conservative movement, except anticommunism, some historians have attempted to view his conservative thought as the precursor to the neoconservative ideas. Historian Garry Dorrien wrote, "...a defining feature of what became the neoconservative movement was first or most importantly formulated by Burnham."⁴⁵ The comparisons are undeniable. Burnham was a former Leftist, a confrontational anticommunist, and anti-liberal, all characteristics neoconservatives shared with Burnham.⁴⁶

The comparison does not take into consideration Burnham's anti-ideological approach, which separates him from the neoconservative movement. Neoconservative foreign policy, for example, is driven to democratize the world or at least, support democratic countries, an optimism that takes ideological form akin to Wilsonian liberalism. This ideologically formatted foreign policy, especially one that has a liberal

⁴³ James Burnham, "A Landslide View" *NR* vol. 16 no. 16 (April 21, 1964): 318; James Burnham, "Should Conservatives Vote for Eisenhower-Nixon?: Yes" *NR* vol. 2 no. 22 October 20, 1956): 12, 14.

⁴⁴ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 17 no. 42 (October 19, 1965): 927, 926.

⁴⁵ Gary Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 8, 19-63. 62-63.

⁴⁶ For comparisons of Burnham with neoconservatives see Kelly, *James Burnham*, 370; Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind*, 8, 19-63.

heritage, would earn sizable criticism from Burnham. It is this anti-ideological tenet of Burnham's political thought that is voiced today by the Old Right or paleoconservative wing of conservatism. Paleoconservatives argue that the conservative movement was hijacked by neoconservatives, who liberalized conservatism by actions such as adopting tenets of liberalism in foreign policy.⁴⁷ Burnham believed that U.S. foreign policy should be formed from an empirical analysis to determine the best possible course to secure U.S. interests. Foreign policy had to be empirically based to respond to change. If foreign policy was static, and therefore did not appreciate new developments, it was doomed to fail. This was one of the problems of an ideological foreign policy.

Neoconservative policy favored Israel in the Middle East, because Israel was a democratic state. This would be an ideologically driven policy. Burnham would have attested to the dangerous tendencies in such a policy. A better policy would be to support the Arab Middle East, which controls most of the world's oil and was therefore a lifeline to U.S. society. The idea of favoring democracy would actually hurt U.S. interests.

5. In Conclusion.

A historical study of James Burnham is by itself very significant. He was a profound thinker who had considerable value and influence in the conservative movement. Burnham was at the center of this movement, theoretically combating liberalism, and fighting, like a pit bull in the struggle against communism. Burnham developed and promoted a responsible, empirical, and potent anticommunist theory, which undoubtedly strengthened the anticommunist strain in American political thought.

⁴⁷ For an example of this paleoconservative viewpoint, see Gregory L. Schneider, ed., *Conservatism in America Since 1930: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 420-421. Paleoconservatives also believe that neoconservatives have liberalized domestic policies.

Burnham's conservative anticommunist theory did not become, or heavily influence, official U.S. policy in the 1940s, thru the 1970s. Brian Crozier, a conservative writer, wrote that, "It is America's tragedy that Harry Truman listened to Kennan instead of to Burnham."⁴⁸ It could be argued that Burnham's anticommunist theory was influential to the Eisenhower administration, which included a liberation type policy as one side of its anticommunist strategy. It was a policy that included psychological warfare and covert operations to internally destabilize the Soviet Empire, such as in Eastern Europe by playing on nationalist sentiments, which was akin to Burnham's Eastern European liberation policy. However, historian John Lewis Gaddis has written that, "...the Eisenhower administration never seriously considered actively trying to 'roll back' Soviet influence in that part of the World [Eastern Europe]."⁴⁹ In addition, the Eisenhower administration, especially John Foster Dulles, interpreted communism in an ideological manner. However, this did not mean a policy committed to understanding the ideological nature of communism. For example, the administration supported Tito's break from the Soviet Union, which was over a political dispute, rather than a repudiation of communism. In this case, the administration supported national communism, which was a power politics play, rather than an attack on the communist ideology, which Tito still supported.⁵⁰

Despite the official neglect of Burnham, his theory undoubtedly contributed to the conservative anticommunist policy of the Reagan administration in the 1980s, which

⁴⁸ Brian Crozier, "James Burnham 1905-1987" *NR* vol. 39 no. 17 (September 11, 1987): 36.

⁴⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 155.

⁵⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 127-128, 137-146, 150-158, 176-177.

helped topple the Soviet Union. Reagan acknowledged such a connection when his administration awarded Burnham the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The citation read:

As a scholar, writer, historian, and philosopher, James Burnham has profoundly affected the way America views itself and the world. Since the 1930s, Mr. Burnham has shaped the thinking of world leaders. His observations have changed society and his writings have become guiding lights in mankind's quest for truth. Freedom, reason, and decency have had few greater champions in this century than James Burnham.⁵¹

Reagan was one of those world leaders whom Burnham influenced. During the presentation of the medal Reagan remarked that he owed Burnham a personal debt, because, "...throughout the years traveling the mashed-potato circuit I have quoted you [Burnham] widely."⁵² And on the news of Burnham's death, Reagan issued a statement that labeled Burnham as, "...One of those principally responsible for the great intellectual odyssey of our century – the journey away from totalitarian statism and toward the uplifting doctrines of freedom."⁵³

Reagan's anticommunist policy was similar to Burnham's theory in three major ways. (1) Reagan believed that the greatest threat of Soviet led global communism was its ideological nature, which was bent on world domination through totalitarian control. In a speech, Reagan remarked that, "...as good Marxists-Leninists, the Soviet Leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution."⁵⁴ Therefore, Reagan switched the U.S. from a defensive containment policy to an offensive policy. This was a recognition that a de facto war existed between communism and the United States, a theory Burnham had

⁵¹ Priscilla L. Buckley, "Medal of Freedom," *NR* vol. 35 (April 1, 1983): 378.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 379.

⁵³ *The New York Times* (New York), 30 July 1987; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 391-420; and Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 89-357.

⁵⁴ Gregory L. Schneider, ed., 358.

argued as far back as the 1940s in *The Struggle for the World*. Burnham defined communism as, "...a worldwide, conspiratorial movement for the conquest of a monopoly of power in the era of capitalist decline."⁵⁵ Given the nature of communism, Burnham also believed the U.S. should abandon the defensive strategy of containment and seek an offensive policy in the war against communism. (2) Reagan's policy also engaged the U.S. in full-scale political warfare with the Soviet Union. For example, Reagan committed the U.S. to an arms race, support for anticommunist insurgencies around the world, the cultivation of anticommunist allies, and rhetoric that proclaimed U.S. hostility towards totalitarianism.

Reagan believed that an arms race would be disastrous to the Soviets, because they could not keep up with the United States. Reagan's primary attempt to out race the Soviets was the Strategic Defense Initiative, dubbed Star Wars, which was a space based antimissile system. Burnham countlessly argued for such a tactic (a technological arms race), because it played to the U.S. advantage of industrial and technological power. More than twenty-years earlier, Burnham labeled an arms build up as, "...probably the most effective form of political-economic warfare we can conduct against our enemy."⁵⁶ Even Reagan's commitment to the arms race, while under pressure from nuclear disarmament and freeze movements, was vintage Burnham. Reagan's response to such movements was, "The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1947), 59.

⁵⁶ James Burnham, "TWW," *NR* vol. 8 no. 6 (January 30, 1960): 67.

⁵⁷ Schneider, ed., 359; Powers, 391-420; For a comparison with Burnham's ideas, see James Burnham, *The Struggle for the World* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1947), 1-13, 181-199; and James Burnham, *Containment or Liberation?: An Inquiry into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy* (New York: The John Day Company, 1952), 141-157.

It was reminiscent of Burnham's "Rhetoric and Peace" lecture at West Berlin in 1950. During his lecture Burnham, responding to the Stockholm petition, an anti-nuclear weapons movement, remarked, "Pacifism marks a decline in the group's self confidence, and in its willingness to use means which are required in order to maintain its competitive position," and stated that, "...pacifism in our time is an illusion or a counterfeit."⁵⁸

Reagan's political warfare campaign also supported anticommunist insurgencies around the world to exhaust what he believed to be an overextended Soviet Empire, such as in Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Grenada. Reagan also aided the Lech Walesa-led anti-Soviet Solidarity movement in Poland. Burnham advocated supporting anticommunist insurgencies and movements throughout his career. In addition, Reagan worked to cultivate a very important anticommunist ally, Pope John Paul II, who had considerable influence over his native Catholic Poland and throughout the world. In 1949, Burnham noted the importance of such an ally in *The Coming Defeat of Communism*. He wrote:

Throughout Continental Europe (including of course, Eastern Europe) and Latin America, the Catholic Church is probably the strongest present anticommunist force...the Church has formidable resources: a faith with which to oppose in the hearts of men the secular religion of communism; a disciplined organization which penetrates society from its upper reaches deep into the masses; two thousand years of historical experience, and the lessons digested from those years.⁵⁹

Lastly, Reagan's anticommunist rhetoric established a clear line of U.S. antipathy towards totalitarianism, which sent a message to U.S. citizens and the people of the world, including those under Soviet control, that the U.S. regarded the Soviet regime as

⁵⁸ James Burnham, "Rhetoric and Peace," *Partisan Review* no. 17 (December, 1950): 864, 867.

⁵⁹ Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1949), 201.

illegitimate and communism unacceptable. Reagan urged the U.S. to confront the “evil empire,” and called communism, “...another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written.”⁶⁰ Burnham always urged U.S. leaders to voice the U.S. expression of Soviet illegitimacy and hostility towards communism.⁶¹

(3) In addition, Reagan felt that Eastern Europe was the axis of the struggle, a theory that Burnham maintained throughout his anticommunist career and specifically developed in *Containment or Liberation*.⁶² Burnham wrote that Eastern Europe was the, “...main axis for the struggle of the world.”⁶³ Faced with the possibility of breaking Poland from Soviet bloc during the eighties, Reagan remarked, “This was what we had been waiting for since World War II. What was happening in Poland might spread like a contagion throughout Eastern Europe.”⁶⁴ The Reagan administration, believed that if Poland was liberated, then the Soviet empire would collapse in domino like form, because Soviet withdrawal from Poland would give other nations the confidence to defy the Red Army. Reagan, like Burnham, believed that nationalist sentiments in Eastern Europe could serve to overthrow the Soviets, and the region’s break from the Soviet Empire would precipitate a reverberating challenge to the communist ideology of inevitability and implode the Soviet system.⁶⁵

Burnham was an important intellectual in the twentieth century, especially as an influential voice for anticommunism. This contributed to the strengthening of American anticommunism, which in turn led to the defeat of Soviet-led global communism. His

⁶⁰ Schneider, ed., 360-361.

⁶¹ Powers 391-420; and Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, 149-164, 196-247; and Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 158-254.

⁶² Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 117-140.

⁶³ James Burnham, “Liberation What Next?,” *NR* vol. 3 no. 3 (January 19, 1957): 61.

⁶⁴ Ronald Reagan, in Powers, 401.

⁶⁵ Burnham, *Containment or Liberation*, 117-140, 217-242; and Powers, 391-420.

theory was instrumental during the Cold War and a major tenet of his theory that Stalinism was communism is still relevant today in combating the communist challenge to America, whether embodied by university professors or nation-states.

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APPENDIX
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¹ James Burnham, *The War We are In: The Last Decade and the Next*. (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1967). This is a collection of Burnham's *National Review* columns the *Third World War* edited by Burnham.

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