

THE OLD RIGHT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN AMERICAN
CONSERVATISM

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Abstract: In November of 1955, William F. Buckley published the first issue of National Review. His journal defined modern American conservatism as a mix of anti-Marxism, tradition, and a belief in limited government. These three interconnected ideas formed the foundation of modern American conservatism. In the first issue of National Review, Buckley wrote that the intent of his journal was to “stand athwart history, yelling stop!” Buckley hoped that National Review would halt the growth of atheism and collectivism in the United States. The journal would work to protect American traditions, argue for limited government, and attack all forms of Marxism. In addition the name National Review reflected the journal’s goal of bringing all conservatives together in one national movement. However, the basic ideas of modern American conservatism already existed in scholarly journals of the 1930s and 1940s. Publications like American Review and Human Events had discussed and debated the nature of conservatism and had agreed that it consisted of a mix of three elements: tradition, limited government, and anti-Marxism. The real accomplishment of William F. Buckley was in repackaging these ideas and changing the tone of conservatism. This dissertation will focus on three journals to show a continuity of ideology from the 1930s to the 1950s. These journals will be American Review, Human Events, and finally National Review. However, most of this dissertation will cover American Review as it was the only truly conservative journal in publication in the 1930s.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

In November of 1955, William F. Buckley published the first issue of National Review.¹ His journal defined modern American conservatism as a mix of anti-Marxism, tradition, and a belief in limited government. These three interconnected ideas formed the foundation of modern American conservatism. In the first issue of National Review, Buckley wrote that the intent of his journal was to “stand athwart history, yelling stop!” National Review would work to halt the growth of atheism and collectivism in the United States. The journal sought to protect American traditions, argue for limited government, and attack all forms of Marxism. In addition, the name National Review reflected the journal’s goal of bringing all conservatives together in one national movement.²

¹ Priscilla L. Buckley, *Living It Up at National Review: A Memoir* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing Company, 2005): 11.

² John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004): 50. The original name of National Review was National Weekly. However, after a year of trying to produce a weekly journal, Buckley changed the name to National Review and the magazine began producing only one issue a month.

By the 1960s, conservatism found a home in Orange County, California.³ From there, it spread across the Western states and into the South.⁴ The first wave of conservative political activism culminated in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan. However, as early as the 1970s, Buckley argued that his publication created and molded modern conservatism. He wrote that it was in the pages of National Review that the three legs of conservatism were first agreed upon. National Review defined conservatism as a combination of anti-Marxism, limited government, and tradition. Scholars, like Gregory L. Schneider, have largely accepted Buckley's thesis. In his work *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, Schneider wrote that "conservatism developed as an intellectual and political movement during the heyday of post war liberalism." Therefore, Buckley has been allowed to write his own version of history and that of National Review.⁵

However, the basic ideas of modern American conservatism already existed in scholarly journals of the 1930s and 1940s. Publications like American Review and Human Events discussed and debated the nature of conservatism and agreed that it consisted of a mix of three elements: tradition, limited government, and anti-Marxism. The real accomplishment of William F. Buckley was in repackaging these ideas and changing the tone of conservatism.⁶

³ John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988): 14.

⁴ Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 40, 47.

⁵ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 3.

⁶ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr*, 119.

This dissertation focuses on three journals to show a continuity of ideology from the 1930s to the 1950s. These journals are American Review, Human Events, and National Review. Most of this dissertation focuses on American Review as it was the only truly conservative journal in publication in the 1930s.⁷ In addition, when needed for context, other journals will make appearances.⁸

The first chapter covers the historiography of conservatism. It discusses how historians and scholars have analyzed conservatism from the early twentieth century to the early twenty-first century. The second chapter examines how conservatives of the 1930s defined and defended private property. The third chapter discusses at length how these early conservatives championed a return to farming and the creation of an agrarian republic. Chapter four covers the topics of limited government and anti-Marxism. Chapter five examines how conservatives viewed Fascism and their fear of revolution. In chapter six, the conservative writers of the 1930s discuss their views on liberty, monarchy, and conservatism. Chapter seven is devoted to the idea of tradition. Chapter eight examines race relations and immigration. Chapter nine covers conservatism in the closing days of World War II and the post war years. Finally, chapter ten is devoted to political conservatism in the 1950s.

From the 1950s through the 1990s, when scholars delved into the history of conservatism it was to declare it out of the mainstream and inconsistent with American

⁷ American Mercury was in publication during the 1930s. However, American Mercury never tried to define American conservatism and spent most of its time criticizing the New Deal without offering an intellectual alternative.

⁸ The other journals will be The Bookman, The Freedman, and American Mercury.

political traditions. Scholars wrote that conservatism was a marginal force in the politics of the United States and that it was fighting a battle against modernity and progress. These scholars believed that conservative ideas ran against the tide of history and that ultimately conservatives would lose. This attitude allowed historians to dismiss the origins of conservatism, the coalescing of the movement in the mid 1950s, the grass root activism in the 1960s and 1970s, and the capture of the Republican party. In short, historians distorted our understanding of this movement in an effort to declare it either dead, dying, or irrelevant.⁹ However, from the 2000s forward scholars have begun to give conservatism a second look. Historians like Lisa McGirr, Donald T. Critchlow, Gregory Schneider, and others have finally begun to take conservatism seriously. Most of these new works focused on conservatism at the grassroots level and examined the ideas and motivations of local activists. However, the new scholarship has accepted the Buckley thesis that modern conservatism developed in the 1950s.

While taking conservatism seriously, this dissertation will focus on the ideas of conservative writers of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. This is a departure from modern histories that examine grassroots activism.¹⁰ In addition, this dissertation argues that the roots of modern conservatism began in the 1930s. The true achievement of William F. Buckley, Jr. was in repackaging older ideas, changing the tone of conservatism, and transmitting conservatism to the public.

⁹ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 7.

¹⁰ The exception to this is Gregory Schneider who examines conservatism from the point of view of conservative writers and academics.

The progressive scholars 1910-1945 were the first to give considerable time to the idea of conservatism. Progressives wrote extensively on conservatism placing it at the heart of their political understanding. They believed that history consisted of a struggle between pro-democracy populism on one side squared off against anti-populist and anti-democratic conservatives on the other. However, they did not view conservatism as an ideology or a movement. Instead, they viewed it as a defense of wealth, power, and privilege. Within this framework, conservatism was simply a resistance to change, nothing more.¹¹ The progressive attitude was summed up nicely by Charles A. Beard. In his influential work *The Rise of American Civilization*, Beard wrote “Though conservative Republicans appeared scatheless in their unchanging world with the banner of prosperity floating proudly above their heads and the symbol of the full dinner pail held in their hands, the very fates were against them.”¹² Beard often used the idea of conservatism in this way. Not shown as a political ideology but more as an attitude or way of seeing the world.

After the Second World War, Consensus historians wrote about one branch of the emerging conservative movement. Calling it the “Radical Right” the books and articles from this era stressed that conservatives were out of the mainstream and unlikely to have any role in the future. These scholars could not imagine a movement that rejected the post war order. In the opinion of Consensus historians, conservatism could never gain traction with the American public. Consensus historians believed that a mixed economy,

¹¹ Brinkley, “The Problem of American Conservatism,” 410.

¹² Beard, Charles A. and Mary R. Beard. *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 593.

welfare programs, and the New Deal were such a part of the public fabric that no reasonable person could object.¹³

Consensus thinkers such as Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, and Seymour Martin Lipset wrote that liberalism shaped the history of the United States in the twentieth Century. Liberalism was so dominant that conservative ideas were of no consequence. For these scholars conservatism was more mental illness than ideology, an illness brought on by psychological distress, status anxiety, paranoia, or all three.¹⁴ In the early 1950s, these writers focused their criticism on Senator Joe McCarthy and his anti-Communist crusade. However, by the early 1960s, they shifted their attention to what they named the new radical right. According to Bell, this new group “fears not only Communism but modernity, and that, in its equation of liberalism with Communism, represents a different challenge to the American democratic consensus.”¹⁵ Because conservatives were irrational, emotional, dangerous, fanatical, and extreme these scholars claimed they should not be taken seriously. Orange County, California, the origin of the populist phase of conservatism, became “nut country.”¹⁶ With this approach, an opportunity was lost to understand the conservative movement. Instead historians worked to ignore or marginalize what they called the “New Right,” the “Radical Right,” or a “pseudo conservative revolt.” Lionel Trilling in his work *The Liberal Imagination* summed up the

¹³ Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1.

¹⁴ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 7. It should be noted that Consensus Scholars applied psychological analysis to many topics, including Progressivism.

¹⁵ Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, 1964): x.

¹⁶ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 6.

Consensus school opinion. Trilling wrote that liberalism was America's only intellectual tradition. He wrote that no conservative ideas were widely held by the public and that conservatism itself was not an ideology but a reaction or impulse that he famously called "irritable mental gestures which seem to resemble ideas." According to Trilling, the conservative impulse was strong in the United States but that impulse was sporadic, unorganized, and ultimately no threat to the liberal post war consensus. In the introduction to *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling wrote:

In the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition. For it is the plain fact that nowadays there are no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation. This does not mean, of course, that there is no impulse to conservatism or to reaction. Such impulses are certainly very strong, perhaps even stronger than most of us know. But the conservative impulse and the reactionary impulse do not...express themselves in ideas but only in action or in irritable mental gestures which seem to resemble ideas.¹⁷

For these scholars, history, properly understood, was devoid of any serious intellectual challenges to the liberal consensus.¹⁸ Conservatism, while obviously present, was temporary and ultimately futile. It was a reaction to the changes in the modern world held by marginal and providential people. However, Consensus historians rejected the progressive school theory that conservatism was a creation of the wealthy or something used to protect the status quo.¹⁹

¹⁷ Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1950), ix.

¹⁸ Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," 413.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 411-13

The New Left spent less time than the Consensus school discussing conservatism. For these scholars, populist movements by their very nature were progressive. The idea of grass roots conservatism was simply impossible. The New Left was much more concerned with attacking “corporate liberalism” and the Cold War to concern themselves with conservatism.²⁰ So New Left scholars ignored groups like the Young Americans for Freedom which added more members annually than the Students for a Democratic Society had total. It simply did not fit that conservatism could be a populist movement.²¹

More recently, from the 2000s to the present, a new group of historians have reexamined conservatism. In 2001, Lisa McGirr’s *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right*, focused on grassroots conservative activism in Orange County, California. McGirr argued that it was conservative activists who transformed conservatism from a small movement opposed to Marxism to a real political movement capable of winning elections. From Orange County, conservatism spread through the American West.²² McGirr wrote that conservatism transformed the relationship between the federal government and the state, restricted New Deal liberalism, and benefited from perceived failures of activist government.²³ McGirr rejected the thesis of scholars like Bell, Lipset, and Hofstadter that conservatives were a marginalized minority reacting to status anxiety. Instead, she wrote that these new conservatives were successful, educated,

²⁰ Ibid., 412.

²¹ Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, 208.

²² McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 4.

²³ Ibid., 5.

and throughly modern people.²⁴ They believed strongly in anti-Marxist, limited government, nationalism, and the rule of law.²⁵ This list of beliefs fits closely with what this dissertation will argue. However, unlike McGirr, this dissertation looks deeper into journals to examine the ideas of conservatism not the activists.

In 2003, Gregory Schneider wrote *Conservatism in America Since 1930*. This work focused on the conservative “quest for identity” as self-styled conservatives argued over what was, and what was not, conservatism. His work was unique in modern scholarship as it began in the 1930s instead of the 1950s.²⁶ Schneider wrote that American Review, a journal that will dominate most of this dissertation, was the most important conservative journal of the 1930s.²⁷ In addition, Schneider wrote that the work of the old right contributed to the development of post war conservatism.²⁸ However, Schneider stopped short of declaring that conservative ideas had largely been developed in the 1930s. Instead, he wrote that “no self described conservative movement” existed before the end of the war.²⁹ This dissertation will argue that most of the elements that define post war conservatism had already been developed in the pages of American Review. Also, that the writers of American Review declared themselves to be political conservatives and saw their actions as an attempt to create a movement.

²⁴ Ibid., 8.

²⁵ Ibid., 11.

²⁶ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003): 1.

²⁷ Ibid., 7

²⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁹ Ibid., 5.

While Schneider declared American Review to be important, he devoted little time to it. This dissertation will be the first time that the writers and ideas of American Review will be fully developed. As for defining conservatism, Schneider wrote that post war conservatives believed in limited government, tradition, religion, anti-Marxism, and free markets.³⁰ This dissertation will show that the conservative writers of the 1930s believed in much the same thing. While there were disagreements on the role of government and free markets, the writers of American Review fully embraced tradition, religion, and anti-Marxism while declaring themselves to be conservatives.

Continuing in the tradition of Lisa McGirr, Donald T. Critchlow examined the role of activists in creating modern conservatism. Critchlow wrote that the foundation of conservatism was anti-Marxism and that activists transformed conservatism into a viable political movement.³¹ While examining the life and activism of Phyllis Schlafly, Critchlow wrote that conservatives believed in small government, tradition, individual responsibility, and religion. While this dissertation will not focus on grassroots conservatism, it will show that anti-Marxism, religion, tradition were critical ideas for conservative writers of the 1930s. Critchlow wrote that status anxiety, gender privilege, and class did not explain the conservative movement. This was especially true for conservative women.³² Critchlow wrote that women played a central role in creating

³⁰ Ibid., 3.

³¹ Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 6.

³² Ibid., 8. While the writers of the 1930s and 1940s were mostly men a surprising number were women. Some of these women include Dorothea Brande, Mona Lare, and Sarah L. Slay.

modern conservatism through organizations like the National Federation of Republican Women and the Daughters of the American Revolution.³³

Departing from McGirr and Critchlow, other recent histories have worked to link conservatism and racism. Kevin M. Kruse's *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* argued that grassroots conservatism did not develop in Orange County, but instead first developed in the American South in the 1950s. Kruse argued that white flight created the suburbs and that it was in these southern suburbs where conservatism first emerged.³⁴ For white southerners, the end of legal segregation appeared as an attack on their liberties. They responded by relocating to the suburbs where they could economically segregate themselves from African Americans.³⁵ This relocation proved a successful response to the Civil Rights movement and preserved segregation for decades.³⁶ In addition, white southerners jettisoned their traditional connection to the Democratic Party and created a new ideology based on rights, freedoms, and individualism. Kruse wrote that this ideological change linked the old racist South to modern conservatism.³⁷ Largely agreeing with Kruse, Joseph Crespino's work *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Cambridge: Princeton University Press, 2005), 11. Another work that examined the interaction of economics, gender, and race in the development of conservatism was Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³⁶ Ibid., 8.

³⁷ Ibid., 10.

argued that Mississippi was at the forefront of modern conservatism.³⁸ Crespino wrote that whites in Mississippi understood segregation as a protection of their rights and freedoms. As segregation crumbled, whites adopted the ideology of conservatism as a way of protecting segregation and white supremacy. The new conservatives adopted colorblind language as a cover and used coded language to appeal to racist whites. For example, an appeal to states rights was understood as a defense of segregation.³⁹ By the 1960s, Kruse wrote that conservatives had taken over the Republican Party in Mississippi and tailored their message to appeal to racist whites. However, their success was limited and the Republican Party failed to gain election victories. It was not until the 1980s that the Republicans began to win elections in the state.⁴⁰ Despite defeat, Crespino argued that conservatives in Mississippi viewed themselves at the forefront of the conservative revolution.⁴¹ While Kruse and Crespino made interesting arguments, conservative journals of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s did not dwell on issues of race or segregation. Even American Review, which was dominated by southern conservatives, spent little time on matters of race or ethnicity.

With this dissertation's focus on ideas and not activists it fits most closely with the work of Gregory Schneider. However, unlike Schneider, this work will delve deeply into the ideas presented in American Review. Within American Review several themes

³⁸ Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1-4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4. A major problem with both Kruse and Crespino's works was that white southerners did not start reliably voting for the GOP until the 1990s.

emerged like the defense of property rights, the role of religion, anti-Marxism, and the importance of tradition. After the end of World War II, these themes were at the heart of post war conservative journals like Human Events and National Review. Therefore, while allowing for some changes, this work will argue for a continuity of conservative thought from the 1930s to the 1950s.

CHAPTER II

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND

The intellectual development of conservatism, in its earliest incarnation, can best be understood by examining the journals. Publications like American Review, American Mercury, The Freeman, Human Events, and National Review set out the basic ideology. While the journals differ in tone and belief a strong thread of anti-Marxism was present in all journals. Before 1945, only three conservative journals existed. The first journal that can be describe as conservative was published Albert Jay Nock. His journal, The Freeman, began publication in 1920 and the ran until 1924. The Freeman's central theme was that the modern nation state was a threat to human liberty and therefore must be limited and controlled, a theme he expanded on in his 1935 work Our Enemy the State.¹ The Freeman stressed the idea of individuality over the idea of collectivization while attacking progressives both individually and as a movement. However, The Freedman ceased publication in 1924. It

¹ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 7.

would not be until 1933, and the launch of American Review, that conservative writers would have a place to discuss and debate ideas.²

According to historian Gregory Schneider, the American Review struggled with defining resistance to the New Deal in a time of mass unemployment and the popularity of Franklin Roosevelt. The journal covered economic issues, foreign affairs, philosophy, and American culture. However, it was not aimed at a general audience. The writing was dull, academic, and plodding. While its impact on the general public is debatable, the journal kept conservatism alive during the depression and would have a major effect on post war conservatism. It firmly established anti-Marxism as a key component in conservative ideology, defined new concepts of property rights, and championed limited and local government. The journal provided a critical bridge between the ideas of The Freeman and post war publications like Human Events and National Review.³

Schneider argued that when the publication of American Review began there was no organized conservative movement, intellectual or otherwise and few individuals called themselves conservative. In addition, Schneider wrote no movement used that title to describe itself, instead they used terms like traditionalist. This dissertation will argue that the writers of American Review did call themselves conservatives and believed that they were creating a conservative movement. Even those early conservatives who described themselves as traditionalists or agrarianists fit the mold of what would be called political

² Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 10.

³ Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, 8. Human Events began as a foreign affairs journal with a strong isolationist theme. However with the breakdown of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, Human Events dropped isolationism soon after the conclusion of the war. While Human Events began publication in 1944, it is better understood as part of post war conservatism.

conservatism by the 1950s. They worried about government power and Marxism while fighting to defend tradition and religion. The early conservatives of the 1930s believed that the government had moved away from the principles of the U.S. Constitution and disagreed philosophically with the New Deal. However, they had difficulty in establishing a common set of political goals. Nevertheless, they generally supported small business, local control of government, and limited national government, and they disapproved of The New Deal, foreign wars and alliances, statism, conscription of citizens, and overseas imperialism. Therefore, a recognizable intellectual conservative movement existed in the 1930s.

From the beginning American Review defined itself as a conservative journal. In the first volume of American Review the editor Seward Collins set out the goals and mission for his new journal.⁴ He wrote that American Review would give voice to those who were skeptical of the modern world and New Deal policies. However, the critique was not to come from the left but “from a traditionalist basis.” He hoped to offer more than just criticism but also to strive to find solutions to the problems of the modern world. Collins wrote that his journal would rely on the tested principles of the past that had been pushed aside since the beginning of the Great Depression.⁵ However, American Review had no official political position or platform beyond providing a platform for writers of the right.⁶

Collins wrote that most of the contributors to the journal would be Americans but

⁴ The journal was published on a monthly basis from April 1933 to October 1937.

⁵ “Editorial Notes,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 122. Seward Collins defined the modern world as Western Civilization in the 1930s. In addition, he viewed the United States as a continuation of Western Civilization.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 123, 126. This citation comes from the first article of the first issue of The American Review. In this article Steward Collins set out the mission and focus of the new journal. Collins wrote that his journal would provide a voice for “radicals of the right” and “revolutionary conservatives.”

they would also include many European intellectuals. However, the journal focused primarily on the problems and needs of the United States.⁷ Collins wrote that his journal would feature the writer Irving Babbitt, essayist and journalist Paul Elmer More, poet T.S. Eliot, writer Albert Jay Nock, and Southern Agrarians John Donald Wade and Donald Davidson. British scholars would include writer, historian, and politician Hilaire Belloc, writer G.K. Chesterton, artist Wyndham Lewis, and cultural historian Christopher Dawson. Collins also hoped to include French intellectuals like historian Ernest Seilliere, monarchists Charles Maurras and Leon Daudet, and historian Henri Massis. The journal also planned to lean heavily on the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas.⁸

With the first edition coming out four years into the Great Depression, American Review spent considerable time discussing industry and the nature of capitalism. While post war conservatives embraced free market capitalism, these early conservatives generally rejected the concept and reflected the disillusionment of the Great Depression.⁹ Allen Tate wrote that capitalism developed in the eighteenth century and rested on people's belief in liberty and the universal rights of man.¹⁰ Tate wrote that capitalism was a response to the limitations of mercantilism which had placed restrictions on the economic fortunes of the new middle class. As the economic fortunes of the new middle class rose, they began to demand a voice in government and freedom to pursue their economic interests. Borrowing

⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁸ Ibid., 123-126.

⁹ Modern conservatism developed in the 1950s and was defined as a combination of limited-government, anti-Marxism, and tradition.

¹⁰ Allen Tate, review of *The People's Choice*, by Herbert Agar, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 231.

heavily from the writings of Karl Marx, Hilaire Belloc wrote that as capitalism developed, a small minority of property owners took control of the means of production. This left the majority dispossessed of property and increasingly despondent and destitute.¹¹ Belloc believed that capitalism destroyed the safeguards of well distributed private property as peasants moved off their small farms and into the early factories of cities like London.¹² Without land, small village life, and agriculture, the peasants were vulnerable to exploitation. Flush with wealth, the new middle class destroyed the remains of feudalism and established an economy that they controlled. In the economy, mercantilism was replaced with free markets and agriculture was changed to produce less food and more wool for the textile factories. Finally, Belloc wrote that the new middle class perverted democracy into a plutocracy of the wealthy.¹³

Seward Collins wrote that “capitalism is a disease which must be cured, and cured quickly.”¹⁴ In American Review's April 1933 edition, Collins described capitalism as inhuman and repulsive. For Collins, and many who wrote for American Review, the cure for capitalism was a wide distribution of land and small scale agriculture. Collins also blamed capitalism for causing World War I. For Collins, democracy, or what he referred to as

¹¹ Hilaire Belloc, “The Restoration of Property,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 4. Belloc does not mention Karl Marx by name but Belloc's method and use of terms like “means of production” were clearly drawn from the ideas of Marx.

¹² Belloc defined “well distributed private property” as an agrarian economy. Is such an economy land is widely held by free independent farming families.

¹³ Hilaire Belloc, “The Restoration of Property II: The Handicap Against Restoration,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1933): 206-207.

¹⁴ Seward Collins was a New York publisher and self described fascist. However his ideas tend more in the direction of Southern Agrarianism. He was a protégé of Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton and wrote for American Reviews' forerunner The Bookman.

plutocracy, was incapable of solving the economic crisis brought on by the Great Depression. A new approach and even a new style of government was needed. Since the plutocracy would never give up its control of the economy, democracy was doomed. The only solution would be a government free of the capitalists. Such a government would have the power to restore true property via a redistributing of land. Collins believed that this was the only way to restore the agrarian republic.¹⁵

In 1934, William Purrell Witcutt expanded on Seward Collins' theme.¹⁶ Witcutt focused his attention on what he called "the ugly society" of industry and capitalism. He believed capitalism separated production from the intelligence of the craftsmen. This produced an ugly, material society and a coarse unrefined culture. A worker was simply a "cog in the machine" with no ability to craft items using his own intelligence and skill. Witcutt wrote that the craftsmen, being unable to shape what they produced, simply performed task after task, hundreds or thousands of times a day. The craftsmen had no connection to what they produced. This translated into indifference and apathy for the craft of creating. Items became ugly, utilitarian, and industrial in design. The craftsmen became a worker without the ability, or desire, to make function and beauty one and the same.¹⁷ Witcutt then explored the root of the problem which he believed was the drive for profit and mass production. Because of mass production and profits craftsmen were separated from their skills and became workers unable to use their intelligence and skill. Witcutt believed

¹⁵ Steward Collins, *The American Review* (April 1933): 21. Collin's article included many ideas and themes from Vladimir Lenin's "Imperialism the Final Stage of Capitalism."

¹⁶ W. P. Witcutt was a British author and minister. He favored an agrarian economy and land redistribution.

¹⁷ W.P. Witcutt, "William Morris: Distributist," *The American Review* Vol 2 No 3 (January 1934): 312-13.

that the manufacturers actively supported the change. Manufacturers did not care about what they manufactured, only the money they could gain through production. For Witcutt this process of development and industrialization was the root of what he called “the evil.”

W.P. Witcutt then proposed his solution. The method of production must be changed. Workers must be turned back into craftsmen by allowing them to again use their intelligence. Free of the machines, Witcutt believed, workers would craft items and regain the skills they lost. Machines would only be used for the most repetitive operations that required no skill on the part of the worker.¹⁸ Witcutt wrote that the next step would be to abolish large scale production. This would require the abolition of capitalist private property but was not Marxism. Marx envisioned large scale production and huge factories. Witcutt pointed out that he was advocating a return of craftsmen and small scale production. The journeymen and apprentices would receive wages commensurate with their skills. Finally, managing it all will be a new guild system, making sure that mass production industry could not reemerge.¹⁹

As for the drivers of capitalism and industry, Herbert Agar wrote that the “Robber Barons” and other amassers of great wealth were not to be destroyed but instead publicly denounced.²⁰ Agar wrote that the captains of industry were “not glamorous but disgusting.” The amassing of such wealth and power occurred because of a careless society that should have realized the consequences of placing so much economic power in the hand of the few.

¹⁸ Ibid., 313.

¹⁹ Ibid., 314.

²⁰ Herbert Agar was a Pulitzer Prize winning historian who was born in New York but immigrated to Sussex England. He was closely aligned with the Southern Agrarianism and the English Distributist movement.

Agar believed that the Great Depression provided an excellent opportunity to strip the “Robber Barons” of their power and return to widely held property and small scale craft industry. This would turn back the clock and undo the damage done by large industry.²¹

Writing in 1933, Hilaire Belloc attempted to understand the advantages of industry and how to overcome mass production.²² Belloc wrote that mass production had seven main advantages. First, mass production created lower operating costs and overhead than small craft shops. Second, large industrial producers found it easier to borrow money. This led to Belloc’s third point, through borrowing industry could expand and upgrade their machinery. Due to greater efficiency and lower operating costs large-scale industry could also undersell craft-based competitors. The fifth advantage was that large-scale industry could afford a smaller profit margin. Belloc’s final two points were that large scale industry could control and therefore corrupt both government and the justice system.²³ Belloc suggested that by listing the strengths of industry, the reader could begin to understand what elements of industry must be attacked. Belloc suggested that each element could be checked, modified, or prohibited to restore properly balanced property and restore craft industry.²⁴

Next, Belloc turned to the idea of private property and property rights. Belloc wrote that understanding property was key to understanding true liberty. Whoever controlled the economy controlled the flow of wealth. Belloc believed that the goal for each family was to

²¹ Herbert Agar, “Barons or Sneak-Thieves?” *The American Review* Vol 3 No 2 (May 1934): 266.

²² The writers of *American Review* understood that modern mass industry had real advantages over craft industry. They often described the problems that came with mass production and then turned to grappling with how to address or mitigate the advantages its advantages.

²³ Belloc, “The Restoration of Property II,” 209-10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

control enough of its own production to live independent of the wider economy. If a family could achieve self-sufficiency, then, they were truly free. A family, or an individual, who sold their labor for a wage was the slave of the industrialist. The worker could never be truly free until they achieve economic independence.²⁵ Belloc wrote that economically independent families would be far better economically and morally. This in turn would benefit all of society. Instead of an individual dependent on industry, an economically independent family would prosper. As a result all of society would be improved.²⁶ Families would control their own “means of production” and true property would be more fairly distributed.²⁷

Belloc believed that to have a functioning capitalist system, property must be distributed amongst the population. If too much ended up in the hands of a few, then capitalism would fail. Belloc worried that a small elite would control the economy and the vast majority would be unable to spend enough to support the system.²⁸ Unchecked competition among large corporations would inevitably end in monopoly. Belloc wrote that The United States had regulations to prevent such an outcome and that laws were passed to protect small industry and commerce. However, large industry in a partnership with government attached these laws and made them irrelevant. As the checks failed, mass production and corporations displaced small local economies.²⁹

²⁵ Belloc, “The Restoration of Property,” 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷ Belloc, “The Restoration of Property,” 5 Belloc described true prosperity as a combination of land ownership and small local economies. In these local economies wealth would be based on land ownership. There would be industry, but the industry would consist of small shops and local production.

²⁸ Belloc, “The Restoration of Property II,” 205.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 208-09. Belloc did not discuss what regulations or checks the United States imposed in the past to control large industry. He simply mentioned regulations and then moved to a discussion of the advantages of large scale industry.

Belloc published another installment of his analysis in June of 1933. Belloc repeated his argument that the goal of all conservatives should be the restoration of property. He admitted that while the goal of well distributed property was decades away, conservatives needed to start the process of restoring true property.³⁰ Belloc wrote that in industrialized nations like the United States and Great Britain, true property had been destroyed and replaced with “wage slavery.” Belloc proposed that conservatives must seek the origin of the problem. If the origin could be found it could be attacked and hopefully destroyed.³¹ For Belloc, the problem was that people had accepted mass consumerism as the new normal. People had forgotten what property truly was and the benefits of well distributed property. If conservatives could educate the people on property and capitalism then reforms would be possible.³² Belloc wrote that the first thing that must be done was to set out goals for reform. Conservatives must argue for the return of small craftsmen and merchants. Advocates needed to paint a picture of a world of independent farms, small craft shops, and small local merchants. Industry had a place but only if it was kept small and local. If conservative reformers could explain the benefits of such a system over mass production, factories, and mass poverty, then the people would demand reform. Belloc argued that the reforms should be aimed at creating a proper division of property based on land ownership and small scale production. Once the system was in place, it would be

³⁰ Belloc defined true property as land. Another important thing to note was that Belloc began using the word conservative instead of traditionalism or agrarianist.

³¹ Hillaire Belloc, “The Restoration of Property III: Making a Beginning,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 3 (June 1933): 344. Belloc believed that the first step must be a change of philosophy. People must be convinced that property was defined by land. Once this was complete, people will understand that widely held land would benefit everyone. As for what mechanism would be used to reestablishing widely held property. He was open to both a top down government solution or a bottom up populist solution. However, he favored the use of government power and taxation to reestablish widely held property.

³² *Ibid.*, 344-45.

government's role to maintain it and prevent mass industry from reemerging. Next, Belloc turned to how such a world could be created. The answer for Belloc was differential taxation. Belloc pointed out that in the same way that protective tariffs allowed for the development of mass industry, taxes could be used to curtail and ultimately destroy it. Conservatives must argue that the government place punitive taxes on large manufacturers and distributors. This would level the playing field and allow for the redevelopment of craft industry.³³

Getting into specifics, Belloc singled out large distributors to show how his theories could work in practice. Belloc wrote that the first thing to be done was to place a large tax on chain stores. The tax would be progressive depending on how many stores one company owned. While owning two or three stores would still be possible, owning a dozen or more would be financial suicide. At a dozen stores, the tax rate would be so high that a company could not make a profit. As the tax brings large chain stores to heel, another tax would be placed on how many different items a store could sell. A store that sold shoes and shoe-related items would be exempt. However if the store also decided to sell pants, coats, and gloves its taxes would go up. Belloc hoped that this would keep shops small and specialized. Instead of having one shop for all men's wear, a town would have a dozen small shops each supplying a few related items. Once created, the government would have an active role in maintaining the system. The government would license the sale of all items and regulate what a shop could sell and what items naturally go together. For example, a shop could sell wine, beer, and spirits. If they added tobacco they would pay a tax, and they would be prohibited from selling food, clothes, or other items. Belloc wrote that the final element of

³³ Ibid., 348-49.

taxation would be a tax on employee turnover. Replacing a few workers a year would be fine but constant hiring and firing would result in a tax or fine.

Belloc next turned to how to use the taxes generated. He wrote that the money gained from these taxes could be used to subsidize small business startups and to protect existing small business.³⁴ The hardest part, according to Belloc, would be in convincing the public that this amount of regulation and taxation would provide tangible benefits. Belloc argued that the new economy would give people real choice and quality products. It would raise costs but property would be better distributed and the economy would be moral and fair.³⁵ Every item bought and sold would be produced by skilled craftsmen. So instead of mass produced disposable junk, items would be treasured for their form and function. The crassness of industrial society would fade and a new citizenship emerge.³⁶ A society in which the people were free citizens and not slaves to industry. Guilds would return to help regulate production and small craftsmen and local distributors would form the basis of the economy.³⁷ Belloc was careful to note that his plan was neither communism nor capitalism. It was a new look at an older, almost medieval, system that flourished before the development of capitalism. Belloc wrote that pre-capitalistic economies were based not on huge industry but on thousands of small local economies. These small economies were semi-isolated from the whole. However, to bring this about the first step must be for people to understand the nature of property and that society can achieve well distributed property.

³⁴ Ibid., 250-352.

³⁵ Ibid., 353.

³⁶ Ibid., 356.

³⁷ Ibid., 357.

If successful, Belloc believed, this type of economy would create a more moral society and economy.³⁸ Once all of this was achieved the people would enjoy real economic freedom. Belloc believed that a family, or an individual, could not enjoy economic freedom under the current system. For Belloc, only by controlling their own mean of production could someone enjoy economic freedom, and economic freedom can only function with well distributed property.³⁹

American Review published another installment of Belloc's "Restoration of Property" series in September of 1933. Again, the theme was restoring small distributors and restoring the craftsmen. However, Belloc focused this article on how to handle industries, that by their nature, needed to be large.⁴⁰ Industries like railroads, steel production, and mining required large industry, capital investment, and mass production. Belloc asked, how could a nation restructure itself and develop small producers and craft industry when key sectors of the economy must be organized as mass industry? Here Belloc drew a distinction between industries that must be large to function and industries that become large out of a desire to eliminate competition, lower costs, and maximize profits.⁴¹

To find a solution, Belloc wrote that the rules of capitalism encouraged centralization even when it was not required. To fix this problem, the rules needed to be changed so that centralization was not rewarded. Belloc theorized that the government could place penalties on the size of corporations and regulate the rules of competition within the

³⁸ Belloc, "The Restoration of Property," 5.

³⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁰ Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property IV: Attacking the Large Units," *The American Review* Vol 1 No 4 (September 1933): 468.

⁴¹ Ibid., 469.

economy.⁴² For industries that must be large, Belloc recommended that key parts of production could be outsourced to small producers. Even in mass industry there were parts of production that could be outsourced. For example, railroads needed to be large but they could contract with small producers to make many of the items they needed. Belloc wrote that in no case would the government allow a company, like a railroad, to vertically integrate. Next if a company was large, but size was not required, than the company would face punitive taxation. If you had a department store with hundreds of outlets the government could levy a tax on that company so that small stores would be able to compete. Finally, Belloc argued that the owning of company stock needed reform. Companies would be encouraged, through taxation, to have many small stockholders. Belloc believed that having only a handful of powerful individuals hold stock drove centralization and did not fit with the idea of well distributed property. Instead Belloc argued for hundreds if not thousands of small shareholders holding the majority of a companies stock. These small holders could manage the company in the interest of the overall economy and not just the economic interests of a few men.⁴³

Finally, Belloc argued that central to the issue of property was the issue of land. For Belloc, the restoration of property really meant the restoration of land. Belloc wrote that in the modern wage earning economy people thought of income and money as property. However, Belloc wrote that when someone was truly economically free they think of property as land. When someone owned land they held something tangible and could

⁴² Ibid., 470.

⁴³ Ibid., 471.

economically support a family. Also land ownership was a mark of citizenship. On the other hand, money was just a medium of exchange, for Belloc real wealth came from land.⁴⁴

Belloc's articles dominated the first year of American Review and helped set the tone for future articles. He concluded his multi-part article by writing that the reforms he proposed would not be easy to implement. Reformers would have to challenge powerful economic interests. The owners of industry would fight the breakup of their empires and would use every means at their disposal to maintain the current economic system. However, while the task was large, reformers needed to start the process. Belloc believed that if reformers were unable to restore well distributed property then all citizens would become slaves to industry. According to Belloc, true freedom, economic and otherwise, could not exist without a wide distribution of property. In western nations when land was well distributed, nations flourished. The people, content and prosperous, worked to preserve the status quo. However when the people lost their land, moved to cities, and worked for wages their quality of life suffered. They may have had more money but that money did not produce well being. The wage earners were at the mercy of the employers, worked long hours, and had no sense of community. Finally, Belloc wrote that while stability and conservatism dominated in times of well distributed property, when people confused wages with property, revolution and rebellion were the result.

Another American Review author Richard B. Ransom writing in 1935 attempted to finish the work started by Belloc by putting forth ideas and reforms that he believed would fulfill Belloc's goal of well distributed property. According to Ransom, the first step was to

⁴⁴ Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property VI: The Essential Principles," *American Review* Vol 2 No 1 (November 1933): 46.

separate the concepts of private property and corporate property. He wrote that private property consisted of things like land, small craft shops, and family savings. This type of property must be protected. However, corporate property was not protected by the concept of private property. In this category, Ransom placed corporate holdings, stocks, factories, and the overall wealth of the a company. A companies' property could be limited or confiscated to limit the size and power of industry. Next, Ransom wrote that the state has an interest in limiting and controlling personal wealth gained though corporate property. Again while the wealth generated through farming, craft shops, or small industry was protected, private wealth created by corporations was not. Ransom's third solution was for the public to have control of the banking system and regulation of debt. By nationalizing the banking system, the people would have a way of reigning in low interest loans made to corporations. The nationalized banks could also take steps to limit the debt of farmers, small business owners, and individuals. This would prevent ordinary people from losing their legitimate property while constraining corporations' advantage in borrowing.

Next, Ransom turned to the tax system. To support small business, he proposed a two-tier tax system. Small businesses and farmers would only pay local taxes while national corporations would pay both the local tax and national taxes. The federal government would also aid the economy with Keynesian spending and government services. Finally, Ransom proposed expanding the borders of the United States by acquiring territory, which would serve as the new frontier. The new land would provide a safety valve for those in poverty and provide a common mission of conquering and civilizing a new land.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Richard Ransom, "New American Frontiers," *The American Review* Vol. 5 No. 4 (September 1935): 387. Ransom did not mention a nation or area to conquer. However, his article focused on economic opportunities in South America and Asia.

Also covering the issue of property was Andrew Nelson Lytle.⁴⁶ Lytle examined the ideas of capitalism, property, and modern society by borrowing from the theories of Frederick Jackson Turner. Lytle, writing in 1933, stated that the backwoods settler experience shaped the modern American character. The romance of the frontier settler held meaning for many Americans. The American population respected the ideals of strength, courage, and rugged individualism.⁴⁷ Unlike Turner, Lytle believed that these ideals continued after the closing of the frontier and profoundly affected modern American society. Lytle wrote that the traits of the frontiersmen have given modern American citizen's their relentless drive, their individualism, and their drive for power and profit. While such traits were an advantage on the frontier, Lytle wrote they were unsuitable for a modern nation. The ideas of the frontiersmen prevented modern America from creating a nation that valued economic, political, or social stability.⁴⁸

Lytle then turned to the topic of property. He wrote that the Medieval concept of property focused on things used by the family to survive. A family used land to farm, cows for milk, chicken for eggs. With the Enlightenment the idea of property changed. Property became something sold for profit. Lytle wrote that this change was fundamental to understanding the instability of the modern world. Sticking with the example of a farmer, instead of a farmer and his family living on a small self-sustaining farm the farmer, Lytle wrote that farmers used their land to produce goods for sale. A farm that once was self-

⁴⁶ Lytle was an American professor and writer. He was also a driving force behind the Southern Agrarianist movement.

⁴⁷ Andrew Nelson Lytle, "The Backwoods Progression," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 4 (September 1933): 409.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 409-10.

sustaining became specialized. The farmer sold his pigs and chickens to buy more cows so he could produce as much milk as possible for sale. Lytle then asked what happened if the price of milk collapsed? What did the farmer have to fall back on? The farmer sold his other livestock, plowed under his fields for grazing land betting it all on one commodity.⁴⁹

Lytle wrote that the Founding Fathers like Jefferson understood the idea of an agrarian republic but got one key concept wrong. Jefferson believed that the state was responsible for protecting property, which Lytle agreed with, but Lytle added that it was more important to protect the property of the agrarian family. The state should have worked to maintain the small self-sustaining family farm and protect the true concept of property as land to be used by the family.⁵⁰ As the small farms died a new industrial society emerged. The desire for profit, not property drove industry. Profit then turned into political power and a new industrial class grew. A good economy came to mean an economy that produced profit never considering the quality of life of the citizens. Morals suffered, communities fractured, and the modern world was born, a world that was ugly, cruel, and industrial. The government, once controlled by the middle class, became the protector of the very rich. The middle class who championed capitalism were consumed by it as wealth was concentrated into the hands of a few monopolies.⁵¹

Most of the authors in American Review's first year supported the idea of small scale local economies. To create this, writers like Belloc wrote that large retailers needed to be

⁴⁹ Ibid., 413. Lytle believed that a farmer should diversify their agricultural output. The danger was not selling items at fair market value but relying too heavily on one product.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 415.

⁵¹ Ibid., 433-34.

broken up. Gregory MacDonald, writing in the last issue of 1933, argued that such a solution was foolish. MacDonald started out describing the problem of restoring well distributed property. The authors of American Review believed that restoring property required the breaking up of large retailers. That the United States had too many shops for its population. MacDonald wrote that when you divided the number of people by the number of stores, you had eighty customers for each shop. However, large stores attracted more costumers than smaller family owned stores. This left the small stores with few potential shoppers. MacDonald noted that these large stores operated with fewer employees than small or family owned enterprises. This added to the unemployment problem. If the problem was not addressed, the large shops would continue to grow. Small shops would be forced out and those that worked at the small retailers would become unemployed. Eventually the economy would reach a tipping point where the large retailers, even with their low prices and efficiency, would not have enough consumers to survive due to mass unemployment.⁵²

While identifying large retailers as a problem, MacDonald did not advocate limiting competition. Addressing Belloc's arguments, MacDonald wrote that the government could dramatically cut back on the number of licenses required to open a retail store. This would manage competition and protect small retailers.⁵³ However, MacDonald noted that getting the American population to accept such a radical change would be difficult if not impossible. Naturally, large retailers would fight against the reforms. Even the employees at the large stores, who would lose their jobs, would fight such change. Some of the employees might

⁵² Gregory MacDonald, "Mr. Selfridge's Solution," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 170.

⁵³ Ibid.

accept that small scale retail was better, but would they be willing to lose their jobs on the chance that reforms would improve the overall economy? Next, MacDonald took on the idea that restoring some kind of guild system could restore well distributed property. MacDonald wrote that historically, guilds were used to regulate who could enter into a trade or open stores. Guilds limited competition making sure that each shop would have enough potential customers.

Would a guild system work in the United States? MacDonald's response was no. MacDonald wrote that while the theory might be fun to play with, when you move from theory to implementation the idea fell apart. Guilds were organized by craft. If each stage of production was controlled by a guild, production would grind to a halt. Next, who would be in charge of the guilds? MacDonald wrote that the authors who supported such solutions never got into specifics of who would be in charge, how would they be selected, or any specifics on how the United States could create a guild system overnight. So while the idea of recreating a guild system was an interesting intellectual exercise, that is all it was, guilds were not a practical solution for the United States or any other nation.⁵⁴

Calls for well distributed property were numerous among the writers of American Review. However, the writers did not support socialism. Writing in April of 1934, Allen Tate noted that well distributed property in land was not socialism.⁵⁵ Tate believed that unchecked capitalism drove farmers off their land and into the factories. Once in the factories, the farmers were transformed into wage earners. Tate wrote that socialism would

⁵⁴ Ibid., 171.

⁵⁵ Allen Tate was a poet, writer, and social commentator.

take over where capitalism left off and destroy the last traces of private property.⁵⁶ Also in 1934, G.K. Chesterton took up the concept of property and how, properly understood, property consists of land. Chesterton drew interesting parallels between the idea of property and sex. He wrote that a disconnect existed between the idea of sex and childbirth that mirrored the disconnect between property and land. Chesterton wrote that too many people think of property as simply money, that was to be immediately spent and enjoyed. Therefore money brought immediate gratification but nothing more. Just like if one disconnected sex from family then sex became a simply fleeting amusement, something one did for fun but for no greater reason. Chesterton wrote that the “notion of narrowing property to simply enjoying money, was like narrowing love to merely enjoying sex.” For Chesterton sex and family, money and property, were interconnected ideas. Properly understood, sex was enjoyed but also used to create and strengthen family. In the same way, money could be used to bolster property.⁵⁷

While the authors of American Review defended their definition of property, their reforms called for changes within the existing democratic framework. One author believed that to save the nation, more radical changes were needed. Herbert Agar wrote that self government was only possible in a nation that had widely distributed property. However, the reforms needed to bring this about were politically impossible. Agar believed that the propertyless poor in the cities voted time and again to stop reforms that would allow wider distribution of real property. The politicians bought the votes of the poor by keeping them on the dole. This made the poor think that the politicians were their defenders when in

⁵⁶ Allen Tate, “Spengler’s Tract Against Liberalism,” *The American Review* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1934): 45-46.

⁵⁷ G.K. Chesterton, “Sex and Property,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 278-79.

reality the politicians and their business allies striped the poor of their property and robbed them of their future. According to Agar, the only solution was revolution. He wrote that democracy must be suspended and reforms enforced. Once real property was restored and the poor worked their own plot of land, then democracy could return. The self-sufficient farmers would become the defenders of a real democracy. Only by destroying the alliance between the poor and their oppressors could the United States return to an agrarian republic.⁵⁸

Property and land was a constant, and central, topic of discussion in American Review. The authors developed a consensus that what the United States needed to recover was widely held private property via some form of land redistribution. They defined property not as money (wages) but as land. In the 1934 year in review the Collins wrote that it was the task of the new conservative movement to restore real property to the people. This restoration of property would trigger a restoration of liberty. It would end what Collins called the “plutocratic regime” of President Roosevelt. The United States would be reborn as an agrarian republic. In this new America, self sufficient farmers would work the land, the economy would be local, and property would be understood as land.⁵⁹ With the journal ending in 1935, the writers of American Review never moved beyond Agrarianism or the idea that real property consisted of land. They supported an activist role for government in achieving, or restoring, agrarian life. However, once achieved, they believed agrarian life would be self-sustaining. The role of the government could then be

⁵⁸ Herbert Agar, “A Plea to Mr. Charles A. Beard,” *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 3 (January 1935): 309.

⁵⁹ C.S. Editorial Notes, “The American Review’s First Year,” *The American Review* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1934): 119.

greatly reduced. Therefore, they favored an activist government to achieve a conservative outcome. While the goals were different, post war conservatism also embraced the idea of using government to achieve conservative goals. This applied also to post war conservatives that generally accept the idea of limited-government while using the power of government to achieve desired outcomes. This concept will be covered at greater length in the chapters on post war conservatism.

Chapter III

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOUTHERN AGRARIAN CONSERVATISM

American Review supported the creation of an agricultural economy over industrial development. The editors and writers of pre-war conservatism distrusted industry. They believed that an industrial economy created an ugly, brutal, and soulless civilization. Also, ultimately, they believed that an industrial society would collapse as industry saturated the markets with cheap and ugly mass produced goods. As resources became harder to find, wars between industrial nations would increase. The writers of American Review saw the Great War and the Great Depression as irrefutable evidence that the industrial revolution was nearing its end. However, unlike Marxists who believed that this collapse would result in society moving from the capitalist state to the socialist stage, these conservatives fought to create an agrarian civilization.

Seward Collins, writing in the first issue of American Review predicted that the industrial North will soon run out of available resources. When this happened, what was left of the economy would collapse. Soon after the industrialized European economies would

follow resulting in a worldwide economic meltdown far greater than the Great Depression.¹ For Collins, the only available solution was to abandon mass production and return to a simpler and healthier economy.

In the pages of American Review, the authors spent considerable time diagnosing the problems they saw with a modern industrialized economy. Andrew Nelson Lytle wrote that the industry of the North developed at the expense of the Southern agricultural economy. The North, in control of the government, placed tariffs to support its own industrial development. These tariffs protected the early merchants and manufacturers from British industrial competition. While the tariffs succeeded in creating industry, economic power became concentrated into the hands of a few. These industrialists used their wealth to develop political power, first locally and then nationally. The concentration of political and economic power created a plutocracy. According to Lytle, this plutocracy now ruled the United States. Instead of a government controlled by millions of American citizens, a few hundred men controlled the government. To hide their deeds, Lytle wrote that the plutocrats set the North and South against each other. They divided workers and farmers into two warring camps. The distraction allowed the plutocrats to destroy agriculture. The displaced farmers moved to the cities where the only work was grinding factory labor. In this way, the plutocrats turned both the immigrant and the farmer into wage slaves. While the plight of the immigrant was always difficult, it was the farmer who lost the most. Small agricultural life, while difficult, provided a stable rewarding existence.²

¹ Steward Collins, "Editorial Notes," *The American Review* (April 1933): 124-25.

² Andrew Nelson Lytle, "John Taylor and the Political Economy of Agriculture pt II," *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 1 (November 1934): 85-86.

Richard Ransom attempted to provide some solutions to the industrial economy while staying within the confines of the U.S. Constitution. Ransom wrote that the Constitution did not mention corporations. Ransom argued that therefore, under Amendment X of the Bill of Rights the states were allowed to regulate corporations.³ The Constitution strictly limited the powers of the federal government but allowed the States a great degree of flexibility in dealing with economic problems. Ransom wrote that the right to regulate a corporation did not fall to the federal government but instead to the States. However, regulating corporations at the State level was not as easy as passing a few laws. Many states and federal judges had given corporations constitutional rights that protect them from regulation. Many of the laws and decisions applied individual constitutional rights to corporations.⁴ Ransom wrote that the courts gave corporations property rights as if a corporation were individuals. Also, federal judges gave corporations legal protections that made it difficult to regulate them at either the State or national level.⁵ To solve all of this, Ransom proposed a new constitutional amendment. The new amendment would give the U.S. Congress authority over a corporation's conduct, incorporation, legal liabilities, legal privileges, and taxation. The amendment would also allow states and localities to regulate corporations in their territory.

Writing along the same lines, John C. Rawe challenged the idea that corporations hold rights in the same way that individuals do. Rawe wrote that corporations, but especially monopolies, were incompatible with constitutional liberties. Rawe believed that monopolies

³ Article X reads: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

⁴ It is interesting to note the parallels between this argument by Ransom and recent court decisions like *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

⁵ Richard Ransom, "The Private and Corporate Economies: Proposal for a Constitutional Amendment," *The American Review* Vol. 6 No. 4 (February 1936): 385.

harm the protection of property and distorted the idea of private ownership. When a corporation claimed the rights of private property, they had the power to easily strip those rights from the individual. How did corporations gain these rights? Rawe wrote that corporations used their power and influence to convince judges that the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution granted individual rights to corporations. In an ironic twist, the judges created a “new slave master” out of a law designed to protect the Freedmen. Rawe wrote “...this type of artificial person which is beginning to make America conscious of the fact that a new slave master is rising out of the very amendment which was intended to exterminate slave masters.” To drive his point home Rawe wrote that from 1890 to 1910 the courts used the Fourteenth Amendment nineteen times to protect the Freedmen while the courts used it two hundred and eighty-nine times to bestow rights onto corporations.⁶

Rawe argued that to protect an individual’s right to true property, the Congress needed to pass laws that stripped corporations of their special privileges and break up monopolies into smaller companies. For Rawe, the current anti-trust laws were not enough, more powerful legislation was needed to rein in large and dangerous companies.⁷ Under the current laws and protections, companies reduced the individual to a wage slave. Rawe argued that Congress must change the laws and strip corporations of their false constitutional protections so that they could be broken up. With the large companies gone, liberty for the individual, could return.⁸

⁶ John C. Rawe, “Corporations and Human Liberty: A Study in Exploitation pt I, Real and Artificial,” *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 3 (January 1935): 258-61.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

In the second installment of his article, Rawe attempted to set out solutions to the problem of large companies and outright monopolies. The first step was for people to have a correct interpretation of the U.S. Constitution. People must understand that the Constitution did not mention the rights of business. Rawe argued that rights were held by individuals not by a group of individuals, corporate or otherwise. To convince the population, Rawe believed that conservatives should stress that the Constitution guaranteed human rights not corporate rights.⁹ After the people understood the nature of Constitutional rights, the next step was to amend the Constitution so there could be no disagreement on meaning. Rawe proposed that the amendment might be as simple as a statement that companies did not share the rights guaranteed to individual citizens.¹⁰ The final step was to regulate industry. Here, Rawe agreed with many of the things being done by the New Deal to rein in business excesses. However, Rawe believed that the government needed to power to abolish companies that it deemed dangerous to individual liberty. He wrote that it should not matter if the company was a monopoly, holding company, or joint stock company, if the existence of a corporation harmed liberty then the national government should have the power to abolish it.¹¹

In addition to harming individuals, American Review writer Geoffrey Stone argued that industrialization exploited the young. Stone wrote that industrialization and mass production favored hiring young and relatively unskilled workers over age and skill. This

⁹ John C. Rawe, "Corporation and Human Liberty: A Study in Exploitation pt II, Regaining the Rights of the Individual," *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 4 (February 1935): 475.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 480.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 473-74.

was possible because mass production did not require a skilled craftsmen with years of experience. A young person was cheap to employ, which helped keep costs down. If a young person was hurt in the factories, the employers could simply replace them with another young person. This was not possible in an economy that relied on skilled labor. The owners of industry could also discard a worker for any reason and know that there was an endless supply of unemployed young people ready to take their place. Stone believed that if left unchecked, industry would destroy the very idea of childhood as children became fuel for the factories.¹²

Many of the writers of American Review compared industrialization to a simpler agrarian way of life. They worried that the American population had simply accepted that industrialization was part of the modern world and that nothing could be done to reverse it. Particularly troubling was that the young seemed to even embrace industrialization. The authors wanted to defend an agrarian way of life and believed that the march of industry was not inevitable or reversible. In fact, the writers of American Review believed that industry and the industrial way of life was collapsing.¹³ In the end, the writers of American Review believed that industrialization and mechanization sowed the seeds of its own destruction. They believed that the modern economy of machines and factories created overproduction, mass unemployment, and mass poverty. Industrialization produced an ugly society where people lost their faith in religion, morality declined, and creativity was sacrificed for

¹² Geoffrey Stone, "The Idea of Wyndham Lewis pt II," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 89.

¹³ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003) 9.

efficiency. Industry destroyed everything that was good and wholesome about agricultural and small town life.¹⁴

To move the United States back to the agrarian republic, the authors of American Review sought to understand how the economy changed from an economy based on small farms to an economy based on large-scale industry. For the writers of American Review, the turning point was the United States Civil War. Before the war, the American South and much of the North was based on agriculture. Industry existed but it did not generate a fraction of the wealth that agriculture produced. To discover what happened, Allan Tate examined the history of the United States from President Martin Van Buren to President Warren Harding. The Tate theorized that the Republican Party, by demonizing slavery and the South, was able to give a moral justification to capitalism. This allowed the Republican Party to launch a war. For Tate, the purpose of the war had nothing to do with freeing the slaves. The real purpose was the crush the Southern economy. The devastation of the war destroyed the Southern economy and ensured that the United States had to depend on industrialization for economic growth.¹⁵ Tate wrote that the idea of freedom versus slavery was a false justification. The true moral issue was unchecked capitalism versus agriculture. For Tate, the South was not fighting for the preservation of slavery. It fought to maintain its way of life and to keep industrialization out of the South. In the end, capitalism overwhelmed the

¹⁴ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁵ Allen Tate, review of *The People's Choice*, by Herbert Agar, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 235.

agrarian society. Reconstruction cemented the victory. The war was an economic conflict and the South was destroyed to make way for industrialization.¹⁶

The fact that many of the early U.S. presidents, and many of the men who wrote The United States' founding documents, were also farmers factored in the thinking of the authors of American Review. Harry Lorin Binsse examined the life and times of the first president George Washington. The author stated that President Washington analyzed the world from an agrarian point of view. Washington was a product of his times and his surroundings. He owned a large estate, he owned slaves, and he used his property to maintain his social and financial standing. Washington understood that with land and property came an obligation to pass on what you have inherited to the next generation. For Washington, it was not about amassing a fortune or profit but about being a caretaker for the next generation. To pass on his property in as good or better shape than he found it. Harry Binsse concluded that with the death of the agrarian way of life, the United States became incapable of producing leaders of the same caliber of George Washington. Binsse wrote that modern leaders came from a different economy which stressed profit above property. A modern industrial economy consumed resources, used resources, and then discarded them. This included natural resources as well of human resources. For Binsse, an economy like this produced poor leaders. Such leaders were more interested in the short term and failed to think of the long term implications of their policies.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., 237.

¹⁷ Harry Lorin Binsse, review of *George Washington Himself*, by John C. Fitzpatrick, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 382-83

Binsse wrote that farming produced leaders who thought and saw the world differently. Binsse theorized that having a farm, large or small, forced one to plan for the long term and to think about what kind of world they left to the next generation. Farmers must be good stewards of the land if they hoped to pass it on. Farming had little to do with profit or even having a large surplus to sell on the open market. Farming was about making sure that the farmer and his family had enough to live, prosper, and live independently. Binsse wrote that in the same way that creating children and a family was not simply about sex or fleeting pleasures, farming was about creating something that lasted not something that simply turned a profit.¹⁸

For many, if not most, of the writers of American Review, the only way to save the United States was to save or restore the agricultural republic. Agriculture would not only fix the economy it would restore the American character and restore the proper definition of property. If the United States was to save private property then people must have a proper understanding that property was not money, stock, or borrowing power but that true property was land. The authors of American Review believed that before the United States Civil War, this idea was well understood. The farmers were respected and cherished as the stout Yeomen of American civilization. Farmers formed the backbone of the militia as well as the economy.¹⁹ However, for the writers of American Review the problem remained: how can the farmers be saved?

¹⁸ G.K. Chesterton, "Sex and Property," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 280-81.

¹⁹ Donald Davidson, "The Restoration of the Farmer," *The American Review* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1934): 96.

Author Donald Davidson started off by examining what he believed would not work. First he noted that cooperatives had largely failed the farmer. Banding together to collectively bargain for prices or buying in bulk had only slowed the decline of the farmer. Davidson wrote that having the government fix prices for agricultural goods would not work either. Neither would crop reduction, price fixing, or reducing yields. Davidson wrote that these solutions had been tried and while they might serve a purpose in emergency situations, these ideas cannot restore the agrarian republic. Next, Davidson examined the idea of a planned economy. Davidson wrote that planned economies were a socialist idea. Anyone who argued for a planned economy in agriculture was ignorant of how an agricultural civilization functioned.²⁰

Turning to solutions, Davidson wrote that the root of the problem was the government. He wrote that since the 1850s the government promoted industrialization at the expense of agriculture, giving industry an unfair advantage. Davidson speculated that, given the choice, northern factory workers would much rather live independently as a small or medium farmer. He argued that government policies and the Civil War destroyed American farming. Like in England before, the ex-farmers and Freedmen flooded into the city where they were herded into the factories. Therefore, the government created a pool of cheap exploitable labor to fuel industrialization. Those farmers who tried to hold on were hit with punitive taxation. Paying a tax on the value of land, regardless of that year's output, had further destroyed farming in the United States. Unlike industry, farmers cannot pass on a property tax to the consumers. In fact, Davidson wrote, industry paid no tax at all. Any tax

²⁰ While Davidson does not mention the Agricultural Adjustment Act in his article it seems clear that he is referencing elements of the law. On page 98, Davidson dismisses both crop destruction and price fixings as temporary, and inadequate, solutions.

levied on industry was passed to the consumer. Therefore, in the end it was the common people, both farmers and factory workers, who pay all the taxes. Preferential treatment of railroads also hurt the farmers. Davidson wrote, that the government was active in creating the railroad network and then sat idly aside while the railroads charged exorbitant rates to move farm produce. The government helped industry and railroads through subsidies, preferential rates on borrowing, and tariff policy. All of these subsidies and low interest rates had to be paid by someone and since industry, in Davidson's view, did not really pay taxes the farmers and consumers ended up paying for companies that used their power to exploit the people.²¹

Davidson wrote that the solution to all this was simple. End all preferential treatment of industry. No more subsidies to any industry. Davidson believed that it was fundamentally immoral to take taxpayer money and give it to industry. Next, end low-interest loans to businesses. Davidson asked, why should the government give money at cheap rates to industry but not to everyone? No group should receive preferential rates when borrowing. Davidson's final solution was the end the tariff. The tariffs on foreign-produced goods protected industry at the expense of the consumer. When the United States created tariffs to protect one sector of the economy, foreign nations placed tariffs on our agricultural exports. So in the end, the United States government placed insurmountable obstacles in the way of the farmers. The solution, in Davidson's view, was to level the playing field. If this was done, Davidson believed that farmers would have no problem prospering. If the government stopped favoring one sector of the economy over another, then balance would be restored.²²

²¹Donald Davidson, "The Restoration of the Farmer," 98.

²² Ibid.

Writing similarly Frank Owsley discussed how to rehabilitate and restore American agriculture. The first order of business was to rehabilitate those currently working the land. To do this, the government must immediately end all tariffs. According to the author, the tariffs in place since the Civil War crushed the American farmer. The tariffs forced the farmers to buy their farm equipment in a protected market where prices were high. Then the farmers had to sell their goods either domestically or overseas where they faced retaliatory tariffs. If all tariffs were removed then the farmers would be able to buy and sell on the free market both at home and abroad.²³ Owsley wrote that the next step was to save the children of poor farmers. The author wrote that the best way to do this was to educate the children in rural areas and to provide health care programs to make sure that they grow up both healthy and educated.²⁴ Once this was achieved, land would be redistributed to the white and black tenant farmers. If a tenant farmer had proven that they could take care of the land, then the government would grant them title to the land they worked.²⁵

Once the poor farmers were back on their feet, the author turned to the problem of unemployment in the cities. Owsley wrote that the urban unemployed should be given the choice of returning to the land. They could leave the squalor of the cities and begin anew in the countryside. The urban unemployed could start as tenant farmers but once they proved they can make a living farming the government would grant them title to their land. The government would also grant them stock animals and starter seed to ensure their success.

²³ Frank L. Owsley, "The Pillars of Agrarianism," *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 5 (March 1935): 533.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 535-6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 536 Owsley did not mention if the landowners would be compensated for their loss of land or how exactly the process would work.

However, this aid will not last forever. Owsley wrote that after a year, the farmers would be expected to succeed or fail on their own.²⁶

Next, Owsley proposed reforming and reorganizing the government. Instead of states with arbitrary borders the author proposed six new regional governments. There would be one state of New England, a state for the Middle States, one for the Mid-West, one for the Rocky Mountain States, one for the Pacific States of California, Oregon, and Washington, finally the South would form one state. By dividing the nation by geographic districts, each state would be large and powerful enough to protect its economic interests against the federal government. Also each new state, because they were divided geographically, would better understand if they should focus on industry, trade, or farming.²⁷

Finally, Owsley set up six basic principles on which the new society would be organized. The first principle and the first step was to restore the people to the land. This would involve restoring those currently on the land and giving the poor in the cities an opportunity to return to farming. Owsley believed that this would have the added benefit of drying up industry's endless supply of cheap labor. Owsley hoped that many unemployed people in the cities would choose to farm. The size of cities would drop and those who choose to stay would also see benefits. The cities would be less crowded, health would improve, and industry would be forced by necessity to pay and treat industrial workers better. The second principle would be to restore and preserve the land for future generations. Farmers understood that they passed their land down to the next generation. Farmers protect the land and know that their future and the future of their descendants depended on the health

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 537

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 543

of the land. The third principle related to the operation of the farms. The new farmers would strive to make their farms self-sufficient. Owsley believed that a self-sufficient farm would create men and women who understood rugged individualism. The farmers would need no one else to survive; they had or produced everything they needed to grow and prosper. Once a farm was self-sufficient, it could devote some of its fields to producing crops for sale. However, selling crops on the open market would be secondary to self sufficiency. The fifth principle would be to create a “just economy.” In the new economy the federal government would not favor one sector of the economy over another. Owsley wrote that since the time of the Civil War the government had aided industry at the expense of agriculture. The author did not want to see the government favor agriculture over industry, only to treat each fairly and not to pick winner and losers. The final component of the new civilization would be new regional governments. For Owsley, this was the key component that backed up his entire system. These new states would be large and powerful enough to check the federal government. Even if the national government tired to favor industry the states would block or nullify any such actions.²⁸

American Review author Allen Tate theorized on how best to restore the American South and agriculture. Tate wrote that there was no reason that the South could not be restored into a stable, secure, and prosperous economic system.²⁹ To do this, the American farmer must be freed from the commercial restraints of the federal government. In addition, Tate wrote that the farmers must find a way to decouple themselves from predatory

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 546.

²⁹ The authors of American Review focused almost exclusively on agriculture in the South. They seldom mentioned farmers in any other region of the United States.

merchants and banks.³⁰ While the federal government was a hinderance to agriculture since the Civil War, Tate wrote that sixty percent of the population worked in agriculture or agriculture related industries. Therefore, The future of the United States was dependent on making this section of the economy as prosperous and stable as possible. In fact, Tate believed that a stable and prosperous agricultural sector would help counterbalance the ups and downs of an industrial economy. To create an agricultural counterbalance to industry, the government needed to devote the majority of its time and effort into recreating a prosperous agricultural sector. However, Tate wrote that care must be taken, and the government must understand, that the goal was to restore agriculture not to create an industrialized South. This was critical for Tate because he believed that Northern industry was at the end of its long run. Tate wrote that the industrial North would collapse as a viable economic system. The South should not emulate a failed model but instead create something more stable, just, and ultimately a healthier civilization.³¹

Tate wrote that the first goal of any farmer was to produce enough to feed himself. Once that goal was achieved the second goal was to produce a farm that was as self sufficient as possible. Tate wrote that many farmers can and do achieve this. Where the system failed was that the farmers did not control the government. If the farmers could engage politically, then they could wrestle the levers of government from the merchants, bankers, and industrialists. If the farmers controlled enough of the government, then they could protect themselves and their way of life. Tate wrote that the industrialists and their allies did not want self-sufficient, politically active farmers. They wanted farmers to be consumers of

³⁰ Allen Tate, "A View of the Whole South," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 413.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 428-29.

goods. Industry produced more goods than were needed. To maintain industrialization the farmers must be made into consumers of cheap, disposable junk. Self sufficiency was a direct threat as self sufficient farmers did not need much or any of the products industry provided. Farmers may have to occasionally buy a tractor or a plow. However if equipment was maintained property, it would last a lifetime. Tate believed that if the nation could find a way to pass power from the industrialists to the farmers, then the nation as a whole would be healthier and more prosperous. However, the Tate noted that industrialists would fight this every inch of the way. The farmer must be prepared to fight politically, in the courts, and even physically if needed.³²

Differing from authors like Belloc, Tate stressed that while farmers should take political power away from industrialists, they should not seek to destroy industrialization. For Tate, the end goal was to create a just balance of power so that the government respected the interests of all the citizens both industrialists and agriculturalists. Tate hoped that as political power shifted, factory workers would leave their assembly lines and take up farming. Tate believed that industrial workers would chose the life of an independent dignified farmer over factory life. In farming, life moved depending on the seasons not the clocks and whistles of the factory. As the factories become depleted of cheap, easily replaceable labor, factory owners would be forced by market conditions to pay workers more and treat them better. Tate hoped that wages would go up and working hours would go down. Even the safety of the factory would improve. The profits of the owners might go down but our overall society would be healthier and wealthier.³³

³² *Ibid.*, 430.

³³ *Ibid.*, 431.

In the June 1934 edition of American Review, W.T. Couch examined why government had proposed so few practical reforms to restore Southern agriculture. Couch wrote that to put forward real reforms would be political suicide for politicians. If farmers were made politically independent and prosperous, it would be at the expense of labor unions and industrialists. Couch believed that those powerful lobbies would never allow real reforms to pass. Independent farmers needed little from industry or banking interests. Farmers were economically independent from the broader economy and could not be preyed upon by the vultures of industry.³⁴

However, the difficulty in implementing reforms was not an excuse to do nothing. Couch wrote that the first step was to exam farming in the South as a whole and determine the chief crop produced by the farmers. From the Civil War to the 1930s, the main crop produced for sale by farmers was cotton. So cotton, Couch reasoned, must be at the center of any plan to rejuvenate agriculture. As Couch saw it, the problem for the South was that cotton production was so high that prices had dropped to the point that no matter how much a farmer produced he could not make a viable living. So, according to Couch, the first step must involve raising the cost of cotton. The only viable way to do this was for the federal government to fix the price of cotton so that farmers will be free of the ups and downs of the market. If a farmer could grow a good crop they should be assured a good price. However, there was a problem with this approach. Couch noted that while the federal government could fix domestic cotton prices, it was impossible to set international prices. India, Egypt and other cotton producing territories could flood the international market with cheap cotton

³⁴ W.T. Couch, "An Agrarian Program for the South," *The American Review* Vol. 3 No. 3 (June 1934): 313.

and there was no way to stop them. Therefore, price fixing alone would not work.³⁵ Other measures would be needed to restore Southern agriculture. Couch wrote that the next step was to place a prohibitive tax on large scale cotton production. A tax would make it economically impossible to operate huge farms. With the large farms destroyed, each small farm would be given a quota for production. A small farmer could only produce so much cotton each season. Couch reasoned that while the yield would be smaller, the price a farmer got will be greater than before the reforms.³⁶

Couch then turned to the problem of tenant farming. Here, for Couch, the problem was freeing the tenant farms of debt. Creditors, county stores, the landlords forced the tenant farmers to grow only cotton. When the crop came in, the lion share of the profit went to the creditors. Often the landlord took the rest. This left the tenant farmer in worst shape each year despite his labor. To break this cycle, Couch proposed that the government must provide the tenant farmers with the seed and the support to grow food. The tenants would be assisted in creating self sufficient farms. This would break the cycle of cotton and debt. At the same time, the tenant farmers should be encouraged to re-establish farming villages. Instead of living on scattered isolated farms, the tenants would live in little villages. Village life would help create economic independence. Couch stated that a division of labor would exist in the small villages. Instead of the farmer and his family doing all the work themselves, the village will have a blacksmith, a baker, a cobbler, a cooper, and hopefully even a local doctor. The villagers would economically reinforce each other. If one farming family specialized in raising chickens and growing wheat, then they could trade their

³⁵ Ibid., 318.

³⁶ Ibid., 320.

chickens and wheat for products they need. So no single farming family will be truly independent but the village as a whole will achieve self sufficiency.³⁷

The size of the villages should be small enough not to be towns but large enough to provide all the goods and services required for agriculture. Couch wrote that the villages could contain between one hundred to three hundred families. This would equal around four hundred to twelve hundred people per village. The government would help in the construction of the villages. The state or federal government would build homes for the farmers. The famers would pay rent to live in the villages but the rent would be controlled. Couch wrote that each home would have indoor plumbing, running water, electricity, and even a radio. The rent collected from the farmers will be used to create schools for the education of the children. Libraries will be constructed to help educate and inform the adults. A movie theater and community center would bring entertainment to the village. Even tennis courts, baseball fields, basketball courts, and swimming pools were possible depending on the needs or desires of the villagers.³⁸ The newly constructed villages would be open to both white and black famers but the villages will be segregated by race. Each group would receive the same benefits and opportunities but the program will create separate black and white villages.³⁹

Finally, Couch explored how to pay the cost of such an ambitious program. Couch wrote that village rent would offset most of the cost of maintaining and expanding the villages and their services. Taxes on banks and anyone who held an others debt would pay

³⁷ Ibid., 321.

³⁸ Ibid., 322-23.

³⁹ Ibid., 325.

for the initial construction. The village program will even help with unemployment. The massive job of constructing thousands of little villages would require construction workers, carpenters, electricians, architects, and brick layers. Once the villages were established, they would need teachers, ministers, small merchants and craftsmen. In this way it would not just be the poor tenant farmers that benefit, the whole society will benefit as well.⁴⁰

Poet, professor, and contributor to *I'll Take My Stand* John Crowe Ransom spent considerable time discussing the future of agriculture in the pages of American Review.⁴¹ Ransom wrote that the agricultural programs of President Roosevelt had largely failed. The condition of the American farmer had reached a tipping point. If the farmer slid any further down the economic scale he would soon be “a peasant bound to the soil because he can go nowhere else.” As the farmers produced more and more crops each year the surplus made it impossible for them to turn a profit. Ransom wrote that without a way to gain fair prices, the farmer was doomed.⁴²

According to Ransom, the central problem was that banks and creditors had pushed the farmers to create a “scale of production” that was ultimately self-defeating. The farmers produced much more than the United States needed. This was fine during World War I, as the foreign market bought all the overproduction. However, as overseas farming recovered after the war the international market for American farmers collapsed. Ransom wrote that it

⁴⁰ Ibid., 326.

⁴¹ *I'll Take My Stand* was first published in 1930. The work defended a traditional southern way of life and argued against industrialization.

⁴² John Crowe Ransom, review of *The Farmer is Doomed* by Louis M. Hacker, *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 513.

was foolhardy to rely on Europe blowing itself apart for American farmers to prosper.

Therefore it was unlikely that the international market was a solution to the farming crisis.⁴³

Ransom wrote that deprived of an international market the American farmer depended on domestic consumption to prosper. However, there was a problem here also. Industrialists demanded that the government keep food prices low. Factory owners could reduce worker pay and working conditions but workers must have enough money to buy food. Without the ability to purchase food workers cannot and will not slave away in the factories. Cheap food prices allowed the industrialists to pay their workers less and expand their own profits. If American farmers tried to control production and raise prices, the industrial North would import cheap food from overseas. Ransom believed that the American farmers were caught in a trap. To maintain the domestic market farmers must overproduce. This resulted in cheap food to fuel industrialization. If the farmers tried to raise prices they would lose what little they have left.⁴⁴

Ransom wrote that the only way out of the trap set by the industrial concerns was a return to small self-sufficient farms. Ransom then set out a plan that he hoped would achieve the goal of a return to small farming. The first step on the plan was to use the tax code to manipulate behavior. The federal government, or the states, could place a punitive tax on industrial farming. For example, Ransom envisioned a tax placed on large and expensive farming machinery. Large tractors and combines were only affordable to large commercial farms. These commercial farms overproduced and drove down prices. Ransom believed that a tax would help level the playing field and make it cost prohibitive to operate industrial

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 516.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 516-17.

farms. Another tax could be placed on chemical fertilizers. Fertilizers allowed for overproduction, and like expensive machinery, disproportionately benefit large producers.⁴⁵

Ransom wrote that the next step was to remove all land taxes. Ransom believed that land taxes hurt small farmers as they were required to pay the tax no matter what. If they had a bad year, if it rained too much or too little, they still had to pay. Ransom proposed replacing all land taxes with income taxes. That way, if a farmer's crops failed, the tax would be proportional to the farmer's profit. No profit or little profit would translate into no or little taxation.⁴⁶

Ransom then turned to agricultural education. He wrote that the current focus of agricultural schools was to emphasize production at the expense of everything else. This helped drive industrial farming and overproduction. Instead, agricultural schools needed to focus on subsistence, sustainable, and self-sufficient farming techniques. Like the previous authors, Ransom believed that the only way to save the farmer was to create small self-sustaining farms.

The final aspect of Ransom's plan was to use farming to solve the unemployment problem. If Ransom's plan was enacted he believed that large scale farming would be taxed out of existence. That would result in a lot of good farm land available for small scale farming. Ransom proposed homesteading the unemployed on this land. Through education and government support, the urban unemployed would create small self sufficient farms.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., 533.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Hilaire Belloc, while mostly focusing on the concept of property, wrote extensively on the connection between property and agriculture. In fact for Belloc the true definition of private property was land, not money. Writing for American Review in 1933, Belloc wrote that the current state of agriculture was broken. Belloc believed that while it might look like a farmer owned his own land in fact he did not. In reality the banks owned the majority of the farm land in the United States. For Belloc, a farmer in debt to a bank was, in reality, just a tenant. His profits payed the interest on the debt he owed. The farmer might not hand over a portion of his crop to the local lord but in every way that mattered the small farmer was a peasant to the banks. Belloc wrote that this must be changed if farming was to be saved. The farmers must again be the true owners of their land.⁴⁸ For Belloc, the solution was simple. The government could pass laws and reforms that made it easy for small land holders to buy land while making it difficult for a farmer to lose his land. Also, Belloc proposed punitive taxation against large land holdings and additional taxation, if not a simple ban, on large farms buying up smaller farms.⁴⁹ Next, local, state, and federal taxes on small farmers would be kept very low. The farmer would pay taxes but the taxes would recognize the small farmers special position in society. In fact, Belloc wrote that like the Yeomen of old, small farmers should enjoy a special privileged place in modern society. They should be protected and cultivated. Belloc believed that only with a return to small farming would economic prosperity be assured.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property VI: The Essential Principles," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 54-55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

Finally, many of the authors of American Review worried that the American people would not accept the benefits of agricultural life. In *I'll Take My Stand* the authors worried that they had lost the youth.⁵¹ Young people seemed to embrace the idea of urban living and industrialization. For many young people, the industrial world was all they had ever known. Factories, smokestacks, and unemployment had become the new normal. Young people had never known the slow, relaxed, agrarian life. A life that moved according to seasons, and revolved around family, faith, and love of nature. All the young knew was the “ugly” world of industrialization. The young viewed returning to the land as a step backward. They did not understand the benefits and simple joys of small village life. However, for the writers of *I'll Take My Stand* and American Review the collapse of the industrial model would soon change the minds of the young. As cities became ever more unlivable, as unemployment increased, the young would be forced by economic necessity to seek employment on the land. The young would realize that moving from the cities to the land offers unique economic advantages.

In conclusion, the writers of American Review searched for a way to restore agrarianism as the central focus of American economy. However, they did not support large scale “industrial” agriculture. This put them in opposition to the Marxist idea of large scale collectivized agriculture. The writers of American Review envisioned a world in which small economically independent farms and villages thrived. These villages would be either completely, or mostly, isolated from the industrial economy. Not only would agriculture balance industry, but it would also help reform some of the worst practices of industry. The

⁵¹ *I'll Take My Stand* was first published in 1930 and formed the intellectual foundation of *American Review*.

writers of American Review believed that if industrial workers had a choice between factory work and agriculture, many would choose the slower, more relaxed, life of farming. This would end industries' monopoly on cheap labor. Industry would be forced to reform by paying workers more, cutting back on hours, and improving factory safety.

For the writers of American Review, government action was required in restoring agriculture. Unlike the ideology of post war conservatism, they had no issue with using the power of government to achieve their goals and outcomes. However, once agriculture was re-established, they believed that government's role could be dramatically reduced. While using government power to radically reshape society does not fit with the limited government ideology of post war conservatism, the agrarians of the 1930s believed that the problems of agriculture could be traced back to government favoring one sector of the economy over another. Therefore, it would be acceptable to use government to fix a problem caused by government.

The writers of American Review seemed to understand that it would be very difficult to enact any aspect of their plans. It would require a massive change to all elements of American society. Some of the ideas had merit. Ransom's idea of taxing farmers based on income instead of property could have had a positive affect for farmers. However, completely upending industrialization and returning to an almost medieval economic system was not likely. The writers of American Review understood this but they believed that the Great Depression would continue indefinitely. They believed that the industrial economy had failed and that only a return to small scale farming could save the economy and society. The writers of American Review did not envision World War II or a post war economic recovery.

However, trying to analyze the feasibility of their ideas is difficult as they were never enacted on any level. Had the writers of American Review tried to create a small farming village in the midst of the Great Depression, called on farmers and factory workers to settle there, then scholars would have something to examine.

CHAPTER IV

LIMITED GOVERNMENT AND ANTI-MARXISM

The writers of American Review proposed many solutions for dealing with the economic crisis in the United States. Many of these reforms required government becoming heavily involved in implementing changes. However, these early conservatives still held fast the idea that the people were a check to the power of the government. The writers of American Review believed that when government power was used it should be within the confines of the constitution. When a writer proposed a solution that fell outside of current government power they advocated for a constitutional amendment to address the discrepancy. The changes they sought were backward looking and within the confines of the existing powers of the state. Connected into their ideas of limited government, all the writers of American Review were anti-Marxist. While they often relied on Marxist constructs to analyze society, they rejected Marxist conclusions. In fact, anti-Marxism was the most consistent theme of early conservatives. This consistency was present in both American Review and The American Mercury. These two journals were the only two conservative

journals published in the 1930s. They established anti-communism and limited government as bedrock conservative principles. However, while many worried about communism abroad, early conservatives worried more about domestic communist influence.¹

In 1935, Albert Jay Nock published *Our Enemy The State*. This work was favorably reviewed in American Review in November of 1935 and widely discussed in many issues. In the same way that *I'll Take My Stand* set out the idea of a return to the land, *Our Enemy the State* established the anti-government principles of American Review. For Nock and American Review, the ideologies of fascism and Marxism were very similar.² The ideological differences were irrelevant, as both ideologies produced the same result: an ever-growing and all-powerful state. According to Nock, the best way to view any ideology was to not look at its particulars but instead to examine whether the ideology gives power to the citizens or to the government. Nock believed that as the power of the state grew, it either absorbed or destroyed civil society. Nock wrote that this should be the primary concern of all who considered themselves free citizens. According to Nock, you could not have a powerful government and a free citizenry; they were mutually exclusive concepts.³

Nock wrote that this was a fascinating problem because the government cannot exist without the support of the people and the people cannot be free with an overreaching

¹ The American Mercury was published for 37 years starting in 1924. The journal was first published in January of 1924 and ran all the way to December of 1960. During the 1930s The American Mercury spent most of its time printing articles on art, science, and book reviews. They did discuss politics but not from the perspective of broad conservative ideas. While The American Mercury will be discussed in this dissertation it will not be discussed at the same length as American Review.

² Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy the State* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1935): 4.

³ *Ibid.*, 1. Albert Jay Nock was a personal friend of William F. Buckley, Sr. He was also the favorite author of William F. Buckley, Jr. Nock was a frequent dinner guest at the Buckley home and shaped William F. Buckley, Jr. beliefs on government.

government. Nock believed that even a limited government would not stay limited without the constant vigilance. For Nock, the nature of government was to expand. If free citizens were to stay free they must accept that the government was the enemy of liberty. In addition, Nock wrote that the government had no money of its own. Every dollar the government spent must first be taken in taxation from the citizens. So for Nock, all of the power and money used by the state to undermine liberty came directly from the free citizens. In this way citizens funded their own enslavement.⁴

Nock wrote that too many citizens did not understand this relationship. Nock believed that the state had played a Machiavellian trick and cloaked itself in altruistic motives. This had allowed proponents of the state to argue that the purpose of a government was to guarantee the financial well-being of each citizen. However, Nock believed that by arguing that the state had a duty to provide for the citizens, the proponents of government power had muddled the idea of liberty with security. The citizens who accepted goods from the government became state dependents.⁵ Too many citizens believed that they could not live without assistance from the state, but the state did not have any money of its own. So, in reality, one group of citizens believed that it was their right to take from their fellow countrymen. Nock wrote that as the number of dependents grew, they would come to outnumber those from whom they take. For Nock, this was the tipping point. Once the

⁴ Ibid., 1. and Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003): 29.

⁵ Nock made no distinction between taking aid or goods from local, state, or federal government.

dependents realize they could vote themselves ever more money, they would economically crush those who drive economic growth.⁶

Nock wrote that, understood in this context, elections were simply contests over who would control the spending. When one group won, it rewarded their supporters. If these politicians were thrown out in the next election, whoever took over would use the power of the purse to reward their voters. All the while, government power continued to centralize at the expense of civil society. Nock believed that it did not matter which party a citizen voted for because there was no ideological difference between the parties.⁷ Voters were simply changing who managed and directed the transfers of wealth.⁸ Nock wrote that in the United States, the political parties usually ally with one of two groups. The first group was the speculators, creditors, and industrialists who used the government to prey on their fellow citizens. The second group was the debtor class of farmers and artisans. Nock believed that both groups would use the power of the state to take from their fellow citizens if given the opportunity.⁹

Finally, Nock came to the issue of the Great Depression. He noted that the political response to Great Depression was different from previous depressions and crashes. He wrote that in previous times of economic trouble, the government understood that its job was not to

⁶ Nock, *Our Enemy the State*, 5-6. and Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, 33. This is a central, but often not publicly stated, modern conservative principle. A version of this was seen in the 2014 election when Mitt Romney famously made his 47% comment.

⁷ Ironically, this is the same argument Nock made about Fascism and communism. For Nock, the important thing was growth of government power not ideology or political party identification.

⁸ Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930*, 35.

⁹ Nock, *Our Enemy the State*, 30.

actively manage the economy. The government would allow the economy to right itself. It could be painful but deep depressions were followed by booming recoveries. Nock also believed that civil society was strong enough that individuals, charities, and churches could provide the economic relief needed by desperate individuals. However due to the Great Depression the government took over this role. According to Nock this had disastrous implications. Nock speculated that if an individual saw a man in need the response was not to help, but to assume that poor relief was the government's job. What President Roosevelt had done was to give the federal government a new role in society. People looked to the federal government, and to President Roosevelt, to fix the economy and in the meantime provide support to out-of-work individuals. In addition, Nock wrote that people came to expect that the government owed each citizen a living and that civil society had no further role in providing relief to the poor. Nock wrote that Roosevelt actively encouraged this view as a way to increase his own power and to make millions of Americans dependent on the government for survival.¹⁰ Nock wrote that "the sole invariable characteristic of the State is the economic exploitation of one class by another."¹¹

Nock wrote that for Americans living during the Great Depression this situation seemed normal. They did not question it. Nock wrote that the citizens' opinion of the modern state was similar to how peasants of the sixteenth century viewed the Catholic Church. Continuing his analogy, Nock wrote that in the year 1500, the various states of Europe were weak and the Catholic Church was strong. A peasant was born into the Church.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

If you were to ask him to identify himself he would not say he was French, or English, or German, the peasant would say that he was a Christian and member of the Universal Church. It was how people identified themselves above anything else. A peasant in the year 1500 paid taxes for the Church's upkeep, was expected to accept the Church's doctrine, and could be punished for refusing either. Nock wrote in the 1930s this situation existed in states like Germany, Italy, and Russia. The United States was not there yet, but Nock believed that the nation was headed in that direction.¹²

American Review author John Crowe Ransom, writing in December of 1933, proposed an interesting solution to dealing with the Great Depression. Ransom wrote that history showed that as long as the economic fundamentals were sound, the economy would naturally correct itself. In any downturn or depression poorly run companies fail and solid companies succeed. Ransom wrote that depressions could be painful but they were inevitable and could even be beneficial.¹³ As the economy contracted, demand for products dropped and unemployment soared. However, this was temporary. An economy would always stabilize and then begin to grow again. Ransom wrote that it was natural that economies expand and contract. As long as the government stayed out of it, the steeper the decline, the more robust the recovery. The problem, as Ransom saw it, was that the American public was unwilling to allow the economy to re-correct on its own. The people demanded government action to address the Great Depression. They wanted to see the government try something. It did not even matter what the something was or if it worked.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ John Crowe Ransom, "A Capital for the New Deal," *American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 129.

Ransom wrote that President Herbert Hoover understood this. Hoover understood that the complexities of the economy were so great that no man, no group of men, could possibly understand it. How could a bureaucrat or an academic sitting in Washington, D.C. understand the economic needs of millions of individual American citizens? Ransom continued his line of thinking by arguing that a bureaucrat who had never turned a wrench or plowed a field could not understand the economic needs of the farmer or mechanic. For Ransom, an economy was not a single unit. The economy was made up of individuals who follow their economic interest. It was the height of foolishness and arrogance to think that anyone could understand it at the macro level.¹⁴

Ransom wrote that President Roosevelt believed that he did know better. Having never farmed, Roosevelt knew what was best for the farmer. Having never owned a store, he knew better than the shopkeeper. Having been born of privilege and wealth, he knew how to alleviate poverty. Together with his “brain trust” of academics and experts they believed they could approach the economy like a broken watch. They would analyze the problem, replace the broken parts, tighten the screws, and wind it up. In the same way that a watch cannot fix itself the economy was incapable of recovery without government intervention. Ransom wrote that the fact that economies could and did self correct seemed completely lost to FDR. How did the president think the United States recovered from depressions and panics before he came along? Ransom wrote that the president must have never asked himself that question.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Ransom then turned to things a government could do to alleviate the economic pain or at least convince the public that they were trying to solve the problem. Ransom wrote that, historically, some government activities could work. First, war was a proven boost to an economy and could promote economic activity. War could spur production as the government bought up arms and armament. However, wars take a lot more than just rifles and ammunition. Troops also need uniforms, boots, canned food, reading material, mail service, ships, tanks, trucks, and fuel. Ransom wrote that modern conflicts consumed every ounce of industrial production. War could also help unemployment. It was a simple thing to get to full employment when you had a war and a draft. The government drafts the unemployed into the army and they draw a paycheck for their service. Yes, Ransom continued, the pay would be small, but soldiers did not have to worry about housing or food. As the war ended there was always the need to rebuild what was destroyed. The soldiers transition home and go to work again clearing and rebuilding the destruction left by the conflict. However, Ransom concluded, this was not a practical or moral solution to the Great Depression.¹⁶

Ransom wrote, that another possible solution was to expand the territory of the nation. Like in the nineteenth century, with a new frontier, the unemployed could relocate and try to seek their fortune from the new land. Ransom hoped that the new land might contain natural resources that could draw settlers. The resources could be mining, forestry, or even simple farming. As the new territory was settled, industry would move in to continue

¹⁶ Ibid., 131-33. In an interesting irony World War II did much to get the United States out of the Great Depression. It was unfortunate that American Review ended in 1937. Had the journal continued into the late 1930s or early 1940s articles like this could have been revisited.

the economic boom. However, Ransom concluded, this was not a practical solution.

Ransom asked, if the United States were to expand where exactly would it go? There were no unsettled frontiers left. Taking new territory would mean taking territory that was already well populated and settled by another nation. War would be the inevitable outcome and while war would also help in the recovery, starting a war and seizing territory was not a morally acceptable way to end an economic slump.¹⁷

Ransom wrote that the best solution might be one that appeared to do something but in reality did nothing. Ransom argued that a plan that did no harm might convince the people that the government was addressing the situation. Ransom wrote that a plan like this would allow the economy to recover on its own while placating the population's demand for action. Ransom theorized that the construction of a new national capital fulfilled these criteria. Ransom believed that it would be a big, bold project that the people could get behind. It would receive constant media coverage so the people could see the progress and know that the government was taking fearless steps. It would also buy time for the economy to recover naturally. Additionally, such a plan will not add new powers to the state.¹⁸

Ransom's first problem was where to place the new capital. Washington, D.C., was placed politically. Ransom wrote that after the American Revolution, Philadelphia was the most logical spot place for the capital. The founders wanted a capital located between the North and South. This way, neither could claim that the capital was in their territory.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 136. What Ransom was proposing was a distraction.

¹⁹ Ibid.

However, Ransom believed that there were real problems with the placement of the capital. First, it was located in what was naturally a swamp. Next, it was militarily vulnerable. The District of Columbia was too close to the Atlantic Ocean and accessible by way of the Potomac River. Any power with a decent navy could raid or capture the city. Famously this happened in the War of 1812. In a time of war, having one's capital burned by a raiding force was never good for morale. Ransom continued writing that with the invention of the airplane, The District of Columbia was more vulnerable than ever before. Long range bombers or carrier based aircraft might strike the city. If war came, and the United States lost control of the seas, an enemy could easily capture the capital.²⁰

Therefore Ransom proposed moving the capital fifteen hundred miles inland. Being located in the interior of the nation, the new capital would be safe from land, sea, and air attack. Any invading army would have to march a thousand miles before they could even threaten the government.²¹ Taking a cue from the founders' decision, Ransom wrote that the United States should place the new capital between the North and South but also between the East and West. Ransom believed that a good spot would be along the Mississippi River.²² The new model city would straddle the river in the same way that Budapest straddles the Danube.²³ The Mississippi River was an ideal location as it was one of the most distinct

²⁰ Ibid., 137.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ransom was a native of Tennessee and taught at Vanderbilt University. His plan would move the national capital from the east coast to a location close to Memphis, Tennessee. Such a project would have obvious economic advantages for his state.

²³ Budapest is two cities. On the west side of the river is Buda. This is where all the government buildings are located. Pest is on the east side of the river. Pest contains the shops, stores, and residential areas. Ransom seemed to be proposing a similar arrangement.

geographic feature in the nation. Ransom wrote that the river was historically and economically important.²⁴ The government would start by buying one hundred and fifty square miles of land. Part of the land will be on one side of the river and part on the other. The area would be capable of handling a population of at least fifteen million people. Once the land was purchased, the government would begin construction. Contractors would construct roads, bridges, and public buildings. With the infrastructure completed, the government would sell off plots of land for businesses and homes. Since this would be the new capital, there should be no problems selling the remaining land at premium prices. Ransom noted that, if handled correctly, the sale of land would go a long way in recouping any construction costs. So while the plan did require a huge investment, once completed, and the land sold, Ransom believed that it would cost taxpayers nothing.²⁵

Ransom then turned to what the new capital will be like. He wrote that it would be “an ideal city, a shrine to the U.S.A., an American fair.” The city would be constructed with a mind towards form, function, and ceremony. When citizens traveled to the new capital they would be inspired by its majesty. Aside from the official buildings, the city would have new national monuments, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, concerts, and universities.²⁶ Ransom believed that this plan would accomplish multiple objectives. First, it would give Americans a national goal to strive for. Everyone would follow the construction of the new capital in the newspapers and on radio. It would be a point of pride for millions. The second goal would be that it will alleviate the demand that the government do something, do

²⁴ Ransom, “A Capital for the New Deal,” 139.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 141.

anything, to end the Great Depression. Ransom believed that the new construction would not end the Depression, but it would provide a distraction. The economy would recover naturally over time, once free of government meddling. Next the capital would be secure from attack. The United States is a massive nation and placing the capital in the center would make it invulnerable to attack. Finally, Ransom believed that the project would be cheap. If done correctly, the extra land would be sold to pay for the construction. Ransom believed that business, lawyers, lobbyists, even restaurants would pay top dollar to locate in the new capital. So for Ransom, the project fulfilled multiple goals with little downside.²⁷

Hilaire Belloc in his “Restoration of Property” series also wrote on the topic of limiting government power. Belloc began his work by exploring the modern division of labor. Belloc wrote that a modern nation and economy required a division of labor. However, if everyone was a specialist in one task then a society became too interconnected. This interconnectivity drove interdependency and would make it difficult for a community or a family to become economically self sufficient. Belloc believed that for an individual the task was nearly impossible. A powerful centralized state would exploit this weakness in modern economies. Since it was impossible for an individual or family to acquire economic independence the state would use its regulatory power to insert itself into every aspect of American life. Since economic interdependency was a reality, there was no way for an individuals to protect themselves from the power of the state.

²⁷ Ransom never mentioned what would happen to the District of Columbia. He made no indication that he would move any of the buildings or monuments. He also did not address the economic affect this would have on those who owned businesses or homes in the District of Columbia. Also, while including this passage in a chapter on limiting government might seem strange one has to keep in mind what exactly Ransom was proposing. The project was meant as a distraction. A way to placate the population and give the economy time to recover. End the end it would have been a massive project but would not, in Ransom’s view, expand the power of the government.

Next the author turned to what kind of government a free people needed. Belloc wrote that conservatives were not anarchists. Conservatives understood that a government was a necessity but that government must be tightly constrained and constantly monitored. From Belloc's perspective the government had three main roles. First, the government should ensure justice and equality before the law. This was one of the main reasons that a free people established a government and gave government power over the lives of the citizens. The second reason people established government was to keep the peace. Under this category, the government needed the power to punish criminals, protect one group against another, and put down riots or revolts. Finally, a government should keep citizens safe from foreign invasion. Belloc wrote that establishing justice and keeping the peace would mean very little in a society could not defend itself from foreign attack. Therefore, the state must have sufficient power to defend the nation. While the government needed enough power to accomplish these three goals the author believed that everything else must be denied to the government. Nowhere in Belloc's list was aid to the poor, old age pensions, or regulation of commerce. Belloc believed that tightly limiting the role of government would ensure the freedom of the citizens.²⁸

Belloc wrote that while not all governments were evil, they all had the potential to become evil. For Belloc even a government with the best of intentions would inevitably trample on the rights of families and individuals. Belloc wrote that the best way to tell when a government crossed the line from being a necessary evil to just plain evil was when wronged citizens no longer had the power to "seek a redress of grievances." For the author,

²⁸ Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 2-3.

it was a given fact that the government would trample on individual rights. The way to tell when a government had crossed the line was when the state could attack the rights of individuals and those individuals could do little about it. Belloc wrote that this was the mark of a government out of control.²⁹

Writing alongside Belloc in the first issue of American Review, Seward Collins believed that by examining greed, we could understand when a government went from representing to the people to oppressing them. The author wrote that at the heart of every modern government was a plutocracy. While some governments were better than others, at a government's core was a small group of men who rule without the consent of the governed. Therefore, Collins believed that it was really more a matter of degree. Where the plutocracy was small and less powerful, a free people could thrive but when the plutocracy firmly controlled the levers of power, people were subjects of the state. Collins wrote that the plutocracy ruled in the interests of a political and economic elite. According to Collins, as time went on, the line between those with political power and those with economic power becomes blurred. The plutocracy becomes one extended family, containing both powerful politicians and titans of industry. Taking his cue from Vladimir Lenin, Collins wrote that once the plutocracy had ruthlessly exploited their own nation, they become imperialistic. They would seek to conquer other nations, repeating the cycle of exploitation. To maintain their power, the elite sought to control all elements of society. They would begin with controlling the government and industry. After that, they seize control of the press to control the messages that people hear. Next all other element of society fall to the plutocracy. They

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

take control of the legal system, the universities and schools, and the churches. Any element of civil society that might oppose them would be conquered in turn. Collins believed that the elite pervert these institutions to actively support the plutocracy.³⁰ Finally, they destroy the idea of private property and liberty. The citizens would be naked against the final attack of the plutocracy. Free men cease to be citizens and become human resources for the state. While outwardly it would look like a democracy in reality it would be a government of a few powerful families that rule only for themselves.³¹

Another way an elite can seize control of the state was by manipulation of the tax code. Hilaire Belloc wrote that government used high taxation as a method of destroying the institution of property. This worked if one viewed property as either land or as all assets. Belloc wrote that if private property was land then the government, state or national, could levy a tax on land holdings. These taxes must be paid regardless of the economic situation of the farmer. If he cannot pay, then his land was forfeited. The same was true for property not defined as land. The government, through the tax code, could seize the assets of individual citizens depriving them of their property. The author noted that while taxes were required to run a government, and that government was necessary, taxes must never be allowed to rise to the point that they destroy the lives and property of the citizenry. For Belloc, even a progressive tax code was acceptable but again the taxes must never be so high that they destroy property or the incentive to work. Also, Belloc believed that, high taxation did not

³⁰ The author is drawing heavily from the Marxist idea of the Superstructure. Many early conservative writers used the ideas of Marx to formulate their worldview while rejecting the conclusions of Marxism.

³¹ Seward Collins, *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 20-21. Ironically, Seward Collins was the heir to a large chain of tobacco stores and a wealthy individual. In the 1920s and into the 1930s Collins was a fixture in the New York social scene and editor of [The Bookman](#).

ensure well distributed property. For Belloc, the exact opposite was true. High taxation destroyed property and created an unbalanced distribution of wealth.³²

For Silvester Humphries the destructive nature of big government was not part of some plot devised by plutocrats but was the result of ignorance. The author wrote that the central problem was that those who supported economic planning viewed economics as a science. If economics was a science then economists would be able to uncover fundamental rules and laws that would apply universally. For example, Humphries wrote that objects of mass attract other objects with mass. It was a scientific principle that was understandable and predictable. However, economics was not like this. A government could implement a plan to fix an economy, they could sell that plan by declaring that it was science, but the outcome was not predicable or repeatable. Instead, Humphries wrote that an economy was no more than the sum of the economic activity of each individual. With millions of individuals each reacting to economic conditions it was impossible to predict, with any degree of certainty, the outcome of economic policies. The author believed that some broad economic truths did exist but they should be seen as guides to bettering the economy and not as fixed facts. For Humphries, the problem was that many in government believed that they understood the laws of economics. These politicians and bureaucrats thought that if the correct policies were implemented they would create positive results. For the author, this was simply not true. Humphries wrote that what some see as economic laws were better understood as rough generalizations. However, when economists tried to implement their economic laws into practice they caused more harm than good. The changes created

³² Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property V: The Problem of Taxation," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 600.

uncertainty about the future. This uncertainty then undermined the economy's ability to recover naturally.³³

Many of the authors of American Review were skeptical about the nature of active government. This skepticism translated into opposition to the policies of the New Deal. Interestingly, the authors spent most of their time discussing the role of government in more theoretical terms. Little time was spent attacking specific New Deal policies. A notable exception was an article written in 1936 by Hoffman Nickerson. Nickerson article “President Roosevelt and War” attacked the National Recovery Administration or N.R.A.³⁴ Nickerson wrote that the N.R.A. far from helping the recovery hurt it. In a dramatic fashion Nickerson wrote that the symbol of the N.R.A. a blue eagle might as well have its “claws firmly fixed in the liver of the small American businessman.”³⁵ However, this was the exception. The writers of American Review were more interested in intellectual debate and not in current politics.

Apart from opposition to active government another major theme for conservative writers in the 1930s was anti-communism or anti-Marxism. While writers ascribed to limited government to various degrees, early conservative writers rejected all variations of Marxism. This was interesting as they seemed perfectly comfortable using Marxist theory within their writing. They accepted some degree of Marxist methodology while rejecting Marxist

³³ Silvester Humphries, “The Pseudo-Science of Economics,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 4 (September 1933): 443.

³⁴ Nickerson’s article appeared in the January 1936 issue of American Review. The Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the National Recovery Administration in May 1935.

³⁵ Hoffman Nickerson, “President Roosevelt and War,” *The American Review* Vol. 6 No. 3 (January 1936): 229.

conclusions. Also, under the topic of anti-Marxism we see the first appearance of articles from the American Mercury.³⁶

In the first issue of American Review, Christopher Dawson wrote an article that helped set the anti-Marxist tone of the journal. He wrote that conservatives had already begun a serious intellectual critique of the Marxist model. However, Dawson wrote that the best way to understand Marxism was not intellectually. Marxism was not an intellectual or philosophical movement. Instead the best way to understand Marxism was by thinking of it as a religion. The orthodox Marxist, like the Mensheviks, believed that history moved from one stage to the next and that that class conflict would result in the proletariat seizing the means of production from the bourgeoisie and ushering in the socialist era. With the disappearance of class conflict, society had no need of war, armies, crime would disappear, and the government would melt away like ice cream on a hot summer day. For Dawson, Menshevikism was not philosophy, it was not science, it was a religion. Dawson wrote that accepting this fact was the first step to understanding a modern Marxist. Additionally, Marxists had jettisoned the old gods but in their place they created new ones. The reverence that a Soviet held for Marx, Lenin, and Stalin went beyond admiration. Dawson wrote that a Soviet viewed these men as new gods.

Next Dawson turned his attention to what he believed really happened during the Russian Revolution. The author wrote that the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia was not a

³⁶ The American Mercury was published for 37 years starting in 1924. The journal was first published in January of 1924 and ran all the way to December of 1960. During the 1930s The American Mercury spent most of its time printing articles on arts and sciences and book reviews. It did discuss politics but not from the perspective of broad conservative ideas. While The American Mercury will be discussed in this dissertation it will not be discussed at the same length as American Review.

victory over conservatism or capitalism. In really it was a victory for all authoritarians. The Bolsheviks were not Marxists in the traditional sense. Unlike the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks were unwilling to wait for the inevitable revolution of the proletariat. The Bolsheviks believed that with a committed group of professional revolutionaries it was possible to force a revolution. Once in power they believed that it was possible to skip a stage of history. To go from feudalism all the way to socialism, skipping the intermediate stage of capitalism. Dawson asked why was this important? Dawson wrote that while Bolsheviks are Marxists in thought, they were authoritarians in action. The ideology of the Bolshevik was different from Italian Fascists but their actions, what they do and what they want, was the same. So the Russian Revolution was simply a victory of authoritarians and not proof of Marx's theories.³⁷

However, the victory of authoritarians over the Russian State was evidence that many western states lacked the fortitude to stand up the authoritarian threat. Dawson wrote that groups like the Bolsheviks and Italian Fascists filled the vacuum left by societies who no longer believed in themselves. Dawson wrote that this was why the fascists and Bolsheviks were on the march. Modern western states were susceptible to authoritarian tactics due to a lack of self confidence. Dawson concluded his article by proposing a solution. For Dawson since the Bolsheviks believed and behaved as if they were a fanatical religious sect the only way to combat them was for western nations to return to religion. Dawson believed that to survive a people must believe in something. A return to religion and social tradition would

³⁷ Christopher Dawson, "The Significance of Bolshevism," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 38-39. Dawson seemed to apply his idea that Marxism was a religion to any ideology what created a cult of personality around its leaders. So it would also apply to fascism as well as Marxism.

destroy the power vacuum that the authoritarians exploited. Dawson wrote that religion would allow a society to “match their certainty with our own.” A society with a belief in religion will believe in itself and would have the necessary fortitude to deal with the threat posed by authoritarians.³⁸

Edd Winfield Parks also wrote that Marxism should be understood as a religion. In an October of 1933 article for American Review, Parks wrote that the best way to understand Marxism was to view it as a religion. Parks believed that Marxism had all the elements required to make it the world’s first and greatest secular religion. The Marxist movement had its saints and heretics. They had the Garden of Eden in the first stage of history that Marx called Primitive Communism. They also had a secular heaven in the final stage of Communism. Parks noted that dead Marxist leaders were enshrined like Catholic saints and their living leaders were secular gods. Parks concluded by noting that to counter Marxism it was important for conservatives to understand that they were not dealing with a political party of a political ideology, they are dealing with religious fanaticism.³⁹

Another American Review writer, Nicholas Berdyaev described Marxism and Marxists within a religious construct. Drawing on events of the Reformation, Berdyaev wrote that the fear of heresy drove much of Marxism. He wrote that in the Soviet Union party members were in constant fear of falling on the wrong side of official Bolshevik doctrine. The problem, however, was that the official line changed. Berdyaev wrote that

³⁸ Ibid., 49. Dawson did not specify which religion a nation should embrace to defend against authoritarian ideologies. However, it stands to reason that he favored Christianity for western democracies.

³⁹ Edd Parks Winfield, “On Banishing Nonsense,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 565.

when any argument erupted within the party, members must quickly scrambled to pick a side. If their side proved to be the losing one, they must immediately renounce their previous folly and adopt the new line. No one was willing to stand on principle because, like in the Inquisition, the penalties for being an unrepentant heretic were severe. The result for Marxists was no individuality of thought. Berdyaev wrote that this created a state that lumbered forward driven not by what ideas were best but by fear of being out of sync with the official line.⁴⁰

In 1938, Harold Lord Varney wrote an article for The American Mercury proposing that the Republican party make anti-Marxism a central point in its platform. Varney wrote that conservatives needed to focus their efforts on taking over the Republican party and then use anti-Marxism to generate an electoral majority. If the messaging was handled correctly anti-Marxism would be synonymous with Republicanism. Varney wrote that the Republicans already had many in the middle class and those with property. The trick, according to Varney, was to add the American working class to the Republican ranks. To do this, the Republican party should stress that, despite their promises, Marxism was an atheistic ideology. Berdyaev noted that most of the working class were religious in orientation. The working class needed to see Marxism as an attack on their religious traditions and their churches. Berdyaev believed this worked well with Catholic immigrants, many African American voters, and even women. If the Republican party added these groups to the party it would lead to election victories. Also the Republican party could stress that Marxism was a foreign ideology and did not fit within the American political tradition. Taken together,

⁴⁰ Nicholas Berdyaev, "The General Line of Soviet Philosophy," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 537-38.

Berdyayev believed these two approaches would make the Republican party the party of God and country. If the Republicans grabbed this ground early then the Democratic party would have to scramble to catch up. However, Berdyayev noted that getting their first was what mattered in politics.⁴¹

Continuing with American Review's focus on Agrarianism, Allen Tate wrote that communism was simply a continuation of industrialization. Tate wrote that in communism the people did not control the means of production. Instead a small political and economic elite controlled all aspects of society. For Tate, communism was simply a rational used to create a pure industrial economy. Tate wrote that if communism took control in the United States the Marxists would finish the job of destroying the agrarian South. Tate argued that this process started with the U.S. Civil War under the pretext of ending slavery. Now the industrialists had a new ideology in Communism that would allow them to finish the job of transforming the nation from an agrarian republic to an industrial oligarchy. Tate warned that if the communists and Marxists won they would reduce all citizens to the status of serfs. This would mark the final victory of industry.⁴²

Writing for American Review a year later, G.K. Chesterton agreed with Allen Tate's analysis. Chesterton wrote that "communism is the only complete working model of capitalism." Chesterton stated that communism did not free workers or place workers in control of production. Instead the workers were left enslaved and indebted to their industrial

⁴¹ Harold Lord Varney, "What Can the Republicans Do?" *The American Mercury* Vol. XLIV No. 174 (June 1938): 129-138.

⁴² Allen Tate, review of *The People's Choice*, by Herbert Agar, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 237.

overlords. In both capitalism and communism the workers were given so little that after paying for the necessities of life the worker was left with nothing. Chesterton wrote that in the capitalist system the worker fell into debt to the company and could not leave until the debt was paid. Under communism, the workers were simply owned by the state. Like under capitalism, the workers were not free to leave the factories. For Chesterton, the difference was that under one system debt was used to control workers and under the other the power of the state kept the workers chained to their machines. Chesterton concluded by writing that in both systems there was no way for the worker to escape exploitation by industry.⁴³

Another American Review author, Hoffman Nickerson, wrote that the fatal flaw of Marxism was the belief that the nature of man was perfectible. Nickerson wrote that any ideology that believed that the nature of humanity could be changed or perfected was inherently dangerous. In addition, any ideology that believed in perfect people would have no use for checks and balances in government. A concept like the New Soviet Man who would always think of the good of all citizens, and would never exploit his power, would not require government checks. However, Nickerson wrote that this was a very old idea. Both Plato and Confucius spoke of creating “philosopher kings” who could lead their people into a golden age. Like the New Soviet Man, these rulers would be perfect people, free from both of sin and vice. For Nickerson, communism was just a new incarnation of this old idea. However, the result were always the same. Nickerson wrote that this belief had “produced little but a vast pyramid of corpses, reeking up its odor to heaven like a sort of devil’s incense

⁴³ G.K. Chesterton, “Sex and Property,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 279.

to testify to the romantic-naturalist lie.”⁴⁴ Hilaire Belloc was a bit kinder when he said that all socialism was “bad history pressed into the service of bad philosophy.”⁴⁵

Writers for both American Review and The American Mercury discussed the impact of Marxism in the United States. R.L Burgess wrote that Marxism had crept into the United States. Burgess wrote that Marxists worked to convince American progressives that the goals of Marxism and progressivism were the same. The Marxists told progressives that all they wanted was better working conditions and reforms to the existing system. Burgess wrote that progressives accepted this lie and saw the Marxists as allies. Burgess wrote that the Marxists secretly laugh at the gullibility of the American reformers. For Burgess, Marxists did not seek to reform what they called “bourgeois ideology” they sought to destroy it.⁴⁶

Dennis Lawrence writing for The American Mercury stated that American communists had two goals. The first was to try to maneuver the United States into a disastrous war with Germany. This war would benefit communism domestically and internationally. Internationally it would remove Germany as a threat to communism in Europe. Domestically, a long and painful war, even if successful, would go a long way in boosting the communist message. The second goal, according to Lawrence, was to infiltrate New Deal programs and agencies. The communists would then push for programs, reforms, and regulations that would make capitalism unworkable. Under the guise of reforming the

⁴⁴ Hoffman Nickerson, “Irving Babbitt,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 396.

⁴⁵ Hilaire Belloc, “The Restoration of Property II: The Handicap Against Restoration,” *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1933): 206.

⁴⁶ R.L. Burgess, “The Protestant Garrison in America,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 446-47.

economy the communists sought to destroy it. The collapse of the economy would be heralded as the fall of capitalism and the signal to begin the socialist phase of history. So the communists would be the cause and the beneficiaries of a ruined economy.⁴⁷

Gordon Carroll also writing for The American Mercury stated that capitalism had created a standard of living in the United States unmatched by any other nation. The U.S. economy, even in the Great Depression, produced products cheaply and efficiently. Carroll wrote that the U.S. sold its products overseas at a price lower than other nations' domestic goods. Even the poor in the United States had a higher standard of living and quality of life than the average Soviet citizen.⁴⁸

In conclusion, the most consistent theme for the writers of both American Review and The American Mercury was anti-Marxism. While many authors of American Review were opposed to modern capitalism, they all opposed the various forms of Marxism. The American Mercury was more favorable to capitalism but was equally hostile to Marxism. This theme was clearly seen in the modern conservative movement that developed in the nineteen fifties. A case can be made that anti-Marxism was the central organizing feature around which modern conservatism formed. While their opposition to Marxism was clear, their view on government was harder to grasp. The writers of American Review and The American Mercury accepted the idea of limited government but they never defined what they envisioned. They did not discuss the proper powers of government or proposed specific

⁴⁷ Dennis Lawrence, "The Real Communist Menace," *The American Mercury* Vol. XLIV No. 174 (June 1938): 147-49.

⁴⁸ Gordon Carroll, "Why Change America," *The American Mercury* Vol. XLIV No. 173 (May 1938): 22-23.

reforms. Instead they held a general dislike of government overreach but again they seldom defied exactly what they meant. An argument can be made that they simply disliked government in general. However, they were willing, as seen in the chapter on agriculture, to use government to achieve their goals. This seemed to be a disconnect between what they generally professed and the actions they proposed. This theme will emerge again in the conservatism of the nineteen fifties. The writers of National Review professed a dislike of government overreach while at the same time advocated using the power of government to achieve desired goals. The clearest example of this would be the use of congressional committees to attack perceived communists and communist sympathizers. In fact, the anti-communist crusade of the 1950s nicely illustrates that conservatives' hatred of Marxism can easily override the conservative impulse towards limited government.

CHAPTER V

FASCISM AND REVOLUTION

The writers of American Review were intrigued by the new ideology of Italian fascism. Some of the early statements and articles were quite positive on many aspects of fascism. In the editorial notes of the first issue of American Review, Seward Collins wrote that fascism and fascist economic models were either ignored or attacked by the liberal or radical press. To counter this, Collins wrote that American Review would make it a mission to undertake a detailed exploration of the positives and negatives of the fascist model.¹ However, by 1937, the early interest in fascism by Seward Collins and others helped doom the journal.²

By the end of the first year of publication, Collins wrote that western democracy had failed. He believed that the Great Depression was only a symptom of the collapse. The real reason democracy had failed was that industry and industrialists had hijacked

¹ Seward Collins, "Editorial Notes," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 127.

² Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in American Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003): 7.

democracy and created a plutocracy. The plutocrats had combined industrial wealth and political power. Collins believed that the plutocrats had destroyed true property and reduced the American citizens to serfs. As the economy failed only two outcomes were possible. The United States would either fall into Communist revolution or embrace fascism as a way of preserving order. With only these two options, Collins predicted that for the United States some form of fascism was the most likely outcome. Collins thought that if the transition was properly managed then fascism could be used to restore true property, economic guilds, small farming, independent familists, and pre-industrial life.

Harold Goad writing for American Review in April of 1933 stated that as democracy failed the people must make a choice and that there were two possible examples to follow. One was the example of Russia and the other was Italy. Goad wrote that for a nation like the United States, fascism was the most likely outcome. Fascism had been successfully installed in Italy with little to no bloodshed. In contrast, Russia fell into a bloody revolution and an even bloodier civil war. The Bolsheviks overturned every aspect of settled society in their attempt to establish the socialist order. The American people would never tolerate such actions. Therefore, Goad wrote that we had far more to learn by studying the Italian model.³

Goad wrote that once the dust settled from the revolution, the Italian fascist government was able to deal effectively with many of their economic and social problems. While democracies spent years developing a government, the fascists had

³ Harold Goad, "The Principles of the Corporate State," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 80.

simply created a government out of their pre-revolution leadership. Those high up in the leadership of the party became high officials in the government. Minor officers in the party held local offices and positions. Goad wrote that the party itself was designed to facilitate this. The positions in the fascist party mirrored the position they would assume after the revolution. This prevented infighting and violence within the party. Everyone understood their duties and responsibilities before and after the revolution. Even the para-military street fighters who dealt with the communists were now incorporated into the military. For Goad, the revolution was handled smoothly and efficiently.⁴

As for civil rights, Goad wrote that the Italian fascists had released most of the political prisoners held under the previous government. Only the communists remained in prison. With the communists effectively managed, and a firm hand on the wheel, the fascists eased censorship. While they did not establish freedom of the press, responsible journalists could write and publish without fear of government action. Finally secure in power, most of the revolutionary fervor and radicalism of the Italian fascists faded away.⁵

Goad wrote that in little more than a decade, the fascists went a long way in fixing their economic and labor troubles. Goad wrote that because of the fascists the Italian workers were in a better condition than any other workers in Europe. The government created a guild system to manage each major industry and to ensure that the labor, owners, and the government each had a say in how the industry was managed. Goad

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 81.

believed that the fascists had done the impossible and brought owners, labor, and the government into productive cooperation.⁶

Goad then turned to the idea of democracy. The author wrote that the Italian fascist model was the new democracy. While it was not a democracy in the traditional sense since the will of the people was represented. Goad wrote that the “interests of the people are represented in a single cooperate body which is an expression of their will...”⁷ The fascist government represented the whole people without the need for elections, representatives, or opposition parties.⁸ While this definition might not suit advocates of traditional democracy, Goad wrote that such objections were irrelevant. Goad believed that the old method of representatives from political districts was hopelessly broken. The fascist system where workers, owners, and government each had a voice was far superior to representative democracy. The workers voted on who represented their interests in the guilds. These specialized representatives were be far more effective than “some jack of all trades politician.”⁹ Also such an arraignment eliminated the need for political parties. The representatives were free to vote the interests of their members. It freed government of politics and politicians and allowed the true will of the people to be acted upon.¹⁰

⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁷ Ibid., 85.

⁸ Ibid., 87.

⁹ Ibid., 88.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Finally, Goad wrote that since the government only got one vote in each industry guild, the guilds were not a “rubber stamp” for the will of the dictator.¹¹

In his conclusion, Goad wrote that the fascist model of Italy was truly democratic. However, it was democracy tempered with discipline and harmony. It was the only model of democracy that could withstand the dangers of the modern world. It was powerful enough to crush the communists and check the industrialists. It provided a middle road. Everyone was represented while at the same time established and maintained order.¹²

W.E.D. Allen also wrote on the topic of fascism. In the January 1934 issue of American Review, Allen wrote that part of the appeal of fascism was how easy it was to understand. Allen stated that liberalism and socialism both required an elaborate philosophical underpinning. Also with liberalism and socialism there were many variations to the same theme. For example, a socialist could be anything from a Social Democrat to a Bolshevik. They might believe in democracy or might not. Similar variations existed within liberalism. However, fascism was simple. All of society was organized to funnel power to the government. The government then placed that power in the hands of one individual. Allen wrote that it was more a philosophy of government than a true political ideology.¹³ Allen wrote that if you can grasp this one point then understanding fascism was simple. Coupled with this concept, fascism was nationalistic.

¹¹ Ibid., 90-91.

¹² Ibid., 93.

¹³ W.E.D. Allen, “The Fascist Idea in Britain,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 329.

Allen wrote that one positive aspect of fascism was that it has increased feeling of nationalism. This was in contrast to the Marxists who attacked nationalism as a barrier to class consciousness.¹⁴ Under fascism, every citizen thought of the interests of the nation first. While under liberalism a person was an individual first and foremost and under Marxism an individual was a member of a social class. In contrast to this, under fascism an individual thought of themselves as a member of a nation.¹⁵

Next Allen turned the discussion to industrialization, values, and discipline. The author wrote that unlike Marxists, fascists did not want to upend all of society. Fascists were not interested in placing the workers in control of the economy. Workers had a powerful voice, Allen stated, in the fascist system but they had only one vote in three. The interests of owners and the government also had to be considered on all economic matters. In the end neither owners, workers, or the government controlled industry. Industry was controlled and served the interests of the whole nation. Allen wrote that fascism also valued a nation's traditions while Marxists sought to overthrow the traditions, morals, and religion of a nation. Fascists, on the other hand, embraced a nation's values. They sought to restore old cherished traditions and customs. Fascism respected a nation's traditional values and promoted their continuation.¹⁶ Finally, Allen wrote, fascism promoted the idea of discipline. Allen believed that a fascist sacrificed his own interests to the interests of the nation as a whole. This was because a fascist thought of the nation first and not of himself or his economic class. While disciplined, a fascist

¹⁴ Ibid., 330.

¹⁵ Ibid., 331

¹⁶ Ibid., 331.

could also act independently and decisively. They did not have to wait to be told by a party boss what was to be done. Thinking of the nation first, a fascist would be able to act in time of need.¹⁷

Allen then wrote on who was attracted to fascist ideals. He wrote that fascism can appeal to both conservatives and radical leftists. Fascism's focus on tradition and nationalism would make it appealing to conservative-minded citizens. For radicals, fascism provided a way of reshaping large sections of society. Fascism was a revolutionary ideology and might appeal to leftists tired of the failures of Marxist revolutions. After the successful revolutions in Italy and Germany, Allen wrote that the United Kingdom and the United States were prime candidates for fascism.¹⁸ According to Allen, it was already under way in the United States with the policies of President Roosevelt. Roosevelt was implementing elements of Corporatism in his effort to combat the Great Depression. Allen wrote that F.D.R. was trying to bring together labor, owners, and the government in the same way that Benito Mussolini has done in Italy. Also Roosevelt was amassing ever greater power into the hands of the executive branch. While Roosevelt had not staged a revolution, he was creating fascism by way of evolution.¹⁹

In 1933, Douglas Jerrold wrote that Capitalist Democracies had only two viable ways forward. Either to fall into a communist revolution or to embrace fascism. Jerrold

¹⁷ Ibid., 332.

¹⁸ Ibid., 348.

¹⁹ Ibid., 342.

focused his article on the United Kingdom but noted that it also applied to all other developed democracies. For Jerrold, fascism was the only force strong enough to confront and defeat communism. Jerrold, like many American Review writers, believed that the liberal democratic model had failed. While fascism was not perfect or even desirable, it was the only way to save a nation's traditions, religions, and institutions.²⁰

The fundamental problem, according to Jerrold, was western nations had suffered a loss of morale. Jerrold wrote that once a nation no longer believed in itself and its mission it goes into decline. The communists and fascists believed in themselves, their ideology, and their mission. This gave them a strength. Jerrold noted that not long ago the United Kingdom controlled one of the largest empires in history. For Jerrold this was possible because the British believed that they had a duty to control territory, promote trade, and bring civilization to the backward peoples of the world. The United States shared a similar view. Jerrold wrote that whether this was right or wrong was irrelevant to the overall thesis. The point was that the United Kingdom believed in what it was doing. However, the Great War changed western democracies in a very fundamental way. The carnage of the war destroyed the sense of mission. Western democracies reevaluated their societies and their hitherto unquestioned role in the world.

Jerrold wrote that when western democracies were challenged by communism or fascism, the Western Democracies collapse. Not because of the power of the revolutionaries but because of a lack of faith in their systems and traditions.²¹ For

²⁰ Douglas Jerrold, "English Political Thought and the Post War Crisis," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1933): 150.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

Jerrold, this was a strange irony. Western nations produced a lifestyle unequalled in the world. If you took the example of the Soviet Union, England provided a better life for all classes of society than did the U.S.S.R. Yet Marxists in England demanded their nation follow the Soviet Union into ruin. Jerrold wrote that on the surface it made no sense at all. The only possible explanation was that those that benefit from democracy and capitalism were ashamed of their own history and traditions. They would not intellectually or physically defend their societies from the barbarians at the gates. Western democracy had brought incredible material wealth to their citizens but had failed to maintain faith in the systems that made that wealth possible.²²

For Jerrold, the tipping point had already been reached. Western democracies were unwilling to defend themselves against communism. The way forward was to embrace the model of Italian fascism. Jerrold believed that fascism restored a nation's sense of mission. It justified powerful actions to control the communists, restored nationalism, revitalized religion, and protected cherished traditions. Under fascism, order and freedom would be maintained. Even capitalism and free markets could thrive under the fascist order. Jerrold concluded his article by noting that each nation would have a choice. They could either embrace fascism and save their societies or they could fall into Marxist revolution and lose everything.²³

Also writing in 1933, Marvin McCord Lowes took aim at the critics of fascism. In his article, Lowes reviewed the anti-fascist work of John Strachey. Lowes wrote that

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 177-78.

Strachey's work would "serve as a model for other anti-fascist polemicists." According to Lowes, Strachey's work had two major intentional flaws. First, the work required the reader to know nothing at all about fascism except for what Strachey presented. Lowes wrote that even a cursory reading of Benito Mussolini was enough to inoculate an educated reader. Second, Strachey's work confused the ideas of Italian fascism and "German Hitlerism." Strachey's hand picked the most inflammatory elements of both ideologies and then presented them to the reader as modern fascism.²⁴

Lowes wrote that Strachey's work attempted to describe fascism in such a negative light that no one would accept it as a viable political model. Lowes wrote that Strachey's work used Adolph Hitler's actions against the Jews as a way of poisoning peoples minds against all of fascism. Strachey presented Hitler's "atrocities" in such a way that they would have maximum "emotional impact." Lowes also took offense at Strachey's assertion that fascism was an enemy of liberalism. Lowes wrote that this was done in an attempt to convince liberals that fascism was not a viable by claiming that the ideas and ideologues of fascism were incompatible with the Western Democratic model.²⁵

Writing in December of 1933, Geoffrey Stone defended Adolph Hitler against his literary critics. Stone wrote that Hitler was no different than previous German rulers. Germany did not have a history of representative democracy and therefore it should alarm no one that their experiment with democracy failed. Stone wrote that the fact that Hitler had seized power was more of a restoration of German tradition than a revolution.

²⁴ Marvin McCord Lowes, review of *The Menace of Fascism* by John Strachey, *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 4 (September 1933): 490.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 491.

Stone wrote that Hitler was “an entirely representative German, Teutonic character” which was nothing out of the ordinary. As for Hitler’s anti-semitism, Stone wrote that this too was not unusual for Germany. Germans had traditionally viewed Jews as outsiders. Anti-semitism was a powerful and persistent German bias. Stone wrote that by understanding the German character, Hitler’s bias and actions became less frightening. Unlike many European leaders, Hitler was truly a common man from a common background. He was not born into wealth and privilege. He fought in the Great War and understood the consequences of modern combat. According to the author, this turned Hitler into a “man of peace” who would never start a conflict unless given no choice.²⁶

While the overall attitude towards fascism in American Review was positive there were some articles that viewed fascism skeptically. Seward Collins wrote in the first issue of American Review that as time progressed his journal might publish numerous articles against Italian fascism. For Collins it depended on how the experiment in Italy proceeded. He also wrote that the concentration of power in the hands on one individual was not an ideal political situation. Collins thought that it could lead to abuses in liberty and freedom. However, if the choice was between Marxist revolution and fascism then fascism was the preferred choice.²⁷

²⁶ Geoffrey Stone, “The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis pt. II,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 91. It should come as no surprise that the positive reviews of Italian fascism and Nazism would come back to haunt the authors of American Review. Mussolini had been in power for more than a decade and the writers of American Review believed that Hitler would create a society much like fascist Italy.

²⁷ Collins, *The American Review*, 127.

Collins wrote that American Review might publish numerous articles critical of fascism. However, his journal only published one article that challenged the Italian system of government. In 1934, R.L. Burgess wrote that the conservative “filtration” with fascism was not a result of conservatives embracing fascist ideology. Instead it was the result of many on the right losing faith in democracy. Burgess wrote that with the rise of communism in Russia, the Great Depression, and the events in Germany and Italy many on the right believed that democracy was doomed. The democratic system of government was simply too fragile to defend itself against the new ideas of Marx and Mussolini.²⁸

Unlike Collins and other American Review writers, Burgess was unwilling to give up on democratic capitalism. He wrote that the best way to steer Americans away from fascism was to describe it as a Catholic and foreign. Burgess wrote that the structure of fascism was simple. It was the “Catholic Church minus God.” In fascist nations the citizens had replaced God and in his place they worshiped their leader. In addition, Burgess wrote that the political structure of fascism was modeled after the Church. Theoretically, in the Church all important decisions were made by the Pope while bishops, cardinals and others handled the day to day running of their assigned territory. In the same way, Burgess wrote, under fascism, all important decisions were made by the leader while his subordinates handled the day to day running of their territories. Like the Catholic Church, fascism demanded absolute loyalty. In contrast, Protestant denominations had never achieved the same level of loyalty. It was too easy for a

²⁸ R.L. Burgess, “The Protestant Garrison in America,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 441.

Protestant to attend another church or switch loyalty to a completely different denomination. Burgess theorized that this was why nations like Italy found fascism so appealing. Italians already understood and accepted the tenants of fascism for hundreds of years. Burgess concluded by writing that fascism might spread to other Catholic nations but it was unlikely that it would work, or be accepted, in nations with a Protestant majority.²⁹

Hilaire Belloc wrote that the dangers of Marxist revolutions were very real. The problem, as Belloc saw it, was that developed democracies had created a situation in which people were politically free. They had free speech, freedom of the press, and the right to vote. While enjoying economic freedom, the people were economically unfree. This theory by Belloc followed the same line of thinking many of the writers had on property and property's relationship to true freedom. Belloc believed that this was a very dangerous combination. People were free to choose politically but enslaved economically. Belloc wrote that such people were easy fodder for Marxists or other revolutionary groups. The economic serfs might decide that only through violent revolution could they be truly free. For Belloc, nations that deprive their subjects of real property were also careful to deprive them of political freedom as well. This dual oppression produced a functioning nation. In the same way, a nation could function when its citizens had real property and political freedom. However, when a nation had one and not the other revolution was inevitable.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Hilaire Belloc, "The Restoration of Property VI: The Essential Principles," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 47.

Belloc wrote that in the nations of Europe the imbalance of economic and political freedom had occurred. As a result the European parliaments were collapsing under the strain of this imbalance. He wrote that the government of the United Kingdom was the only European government still functioning properly. This was not due to the people having economic and political freedom but rather because the citizens continued to accept aristocratic institutions. This “aristocratic spirit” provided Britain stability and good governance. However, Belloc wrote, the government of France was starting to fail. It had not failed yet but it was moving in that direction, while in Italy and Germany democracy had failed.³¹

Before the fascist revolutions in Italy and Germany, the people were politically free but economically destitute. Belloc theorized that when this situation occurred parliaments must act swiftly to redress the peoples grievances. If no action was taken tyrants seize power and promise the population a choice. The tyrants propose that the people give up their political freedom in exchange for economic stability. In Italy and Germany the people took this offer.³²

Instead of discussing revolutions writer Geoffrey Stone focused instead on the self-proclaimed revolutionaries. Stone wrote that in developed democracies revolutionaries sought to transform all aspects of society. For Stone it was not important how a government was structured, how many branches it had, or how it handled elections; what was truly important were the ideas and culture of the people. This was

³¹ Hilaire Belloc, “Parliament and Monarchy,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (March 1934): 572-3.

³² *Ibid.*, 573.

what the revolutionaries sought to attack. Stone wrote that this was difficult for citizens of the United States to understand as our revolution was not a social revolution. Instead, it was a political revolution. It was about who would rule.³³

Belloc then asked who were the new revolutionaries? Answering his own question, Belloc wrote that the revolutionaries were not the proletarian masses envisioned by Marx. They were predominately wealthy elites. These privileged proletariates lived a bourgeois lifestyle while proudly proclaiming that they were revolutionary socialists. Belloc wrote that they dressed in the finest clothes, lived in beautiful homes, and had never lived the lives of the downtrodden they claimed to speak for. Being wealthy they had time to foment revolution and attack American morals and culture. They told the poor that wealth and poverty were simply a matter of fate. Some were born poor and will remain poor, while some were born rich and will die rich. Interesting enough, Stone wrote, this was true of most self proclaimed socialists as they did not earn their wealth but were born into it.

Stone believed that while the wealthy sons and daughters of elites “play” the game of revolution they did real damage to society. Those who accepted the Marxist message lived in a world where economic matters existed outside of an individual’s control. There was nothing an individual could do to change their situation. Only by reshaping all aspects of society could economic justice be obtained. Stone wrote that this ideology was poisonous to the poor. If someone believed that they could not help themselves, then they do not try to do so. So the poor wait for one of two things. First,

³³ Stone, “The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis,” 582-3.

Stone wrote, the poor may wait for revolution. However, if revolution did come the poor end up in a worst situation than before. Second, the poor might decide to wait for the help of powerful people or politicians. Stone wrote that this help will never arrive. So even without actual revolution, the ideas of the wealthy revolutionaries created a population of infants, unwilling but not incapable, of improving their station in life.³⁴

The writers of American Review, both those who accepted fascism and the few who opposed it, preferred fascism because it gave a nation a way to avoid Marxist revolutions. For most, if not all of the writers, the prospect of a violent Marxist revolution shaped their political views. This went a long way to explain their acceptance of fascism as a viable form of government.

The American Review's flirtation with fascism ultimately doomed the journal. How serious the writers were about implementing fascism or fascist solutions was difficult to determine. There was more discussion of fascism as an alternate economic and governmental system in the early years of American Review. All the articles on fascism appeared in 1933 and 1934. In the final three years of American Review there was no discussion of fascism as a possible solution to the Great Depression. However, the damage had been done. In the first issue, Collins wrote that fascism might be the solution to the problems facing western democracies and there was no way to take that back. In addition, such praise of fascism did not fit with the ideology of post war conservatism. However, American Review's position on revolution, especially the

³⁴ Ibid., 584-5

dangers of Marxist revolution, will help shape the views of both Human Events and National Review.

CHAPTER VI

CONSERVATISM, LIBERTY, AND MONARCHY

The politics and ideology of most of the writers of American Review were conservative in nature. The ideas of conservatism were ever present in the articles and reviews. In addition, the writers often described themselves as conservative. However, they also used terms like agrarianists, traditionalists, Christians, or anti-Marxists. Therefore, the modern American conservatism that developed after the war had its roots in the writings of the 1930s. Modern post war conservatism was composed of three central ideas. These ideas were respect for tradition, limited government, and finally anti-Marxism. The writers of American Review, and to a lesser extent American Mercury clearly embraced the ideas of tradition and anti-Marxism. The only area in which they differ from modern conservatism was the role of the government. Many writers of the 1930s believed that government could be used to restore tradition and defeat Marxism. As for Nationalism, all the writers in American Review and American Mercury viewed themselves as nationalists and rejected the Marxist notion of social class transcending one's nation.

Many writers of American Review discussed the idea of a conservative movement within the context of their articles or reviews. However, it was done in fleeting passages before the author moved on to discuss the issue at hand. The authors took it for granted that their ideas were part of a conservative movement and therefore did not require further explanation. This could be seen in the previous chapter topics like private property, agriculture, government, anti-Marxism, and revolution. However, conservatism changed after the war to embrace capitalism. In addition, conservatism jettisoned their flirtation with fascism as an alternative to democracy. The brief interest in fascism was more of a reaction to the Great Depression and events in Europe.

The first author to directly address the merits of conservatism was Agar Herbert. Writing for American Review in 1934, Herbert wrote that the Great Depression provided an opportunity for any political group willing to seize it. Herbert believed that the various Marxist groups were making the most of this opportunity and argued that capitalism had either failed or was in the process of failing. For Marxists this was an easy case to make. Marxist theory stated that capitalism would inevitably fail after a series of ever worsening economic collapses. For Americans out of work at the height of the Great Depression it seemed as if Marx's prophecy was happening. However, Herbert believed that there was also an opportunity for a new brand of political conservatism to seize the movement. Herbert believed that conservatives needed to point out "the value, both moral and practical of what conservatism can offer." This sentence was important in that it was the first use of conservatism to denote a political movement instead of a vague political philosophy or way

of viewing the world.¹ Two decades later, William F. Buckley would state that the writers of National Review were the first to name the movement. However, it seemed that a process was under way as early as the 1930s to brand and shape a modern conservatism movement.

Herbert began his article by describing what conservatism was not. He wrote that the Great Depression had discredited conservatism in the eyes of most Americans. In Herbert's view this was the result of conservatives backing large industry and industrialists at the expense of everyone else. Herbert wrote that this support began with the end of the American Civil War and branded conservatives as the allies of monied elites. When the Great Depression began the people blamed the industrialists and their conservative allies for causing the crash. However, Herbert wrote that those who were truly conservative must come to understand the correct position on industry. With this in mind, Herbert worked to redefine conservatism. Herbert wrote that it was not a conservative position to allow monopolies and large industry to "loot the continent" at the expense of small business and agriculture. Instead, modern conservatives should look back through American history and find practices and traditions that were worthy of conservation and renewal. Therefore, conservatism was not about maintaining the status quo, it was about returning the best parts of America's past. Making what was best about the United States part of everyday life again.²

Herbert wrote that to do this all conservatives should accept two main ideas. The first was the proper distribution of property. Herbert believed that if the citizens of a nation were

¹ Agar Herbert, "The Task for Conservatism," *The American Review* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1934): 1.

² *Ibid.*, 2.

unable to gain property and security they would begin to look for radical solutions like those proposed by the Marxists. However, if a people were free politically and economically then the nation would prosper. Herbert theorized that under such circumstances left wing radicalism would fall of deaf ears. The best way to ensure economic and political freedom was to return to agriculture. For Herbert, this did not mean abandoning industry but if American families could live a good and healthy life on independent farms, industrialists would be forced by labor shortages to pay and treat their workers better. For Herbert and many other American Review writers this return to the land solved many problems. It restored independence to the citizens while at the same time reining in the industrialists.

Herbert wrote that the government's role in this system was to ensure that agriculture remained the top priority of the state. However, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the United States government worked to promote industry at the expense of all other economic sectors. Now that this industrial model had failed, according to Herbert, the government should use its power to restore agriculture to its proper place. Once this was done, Herbert believed that agriculture would flourish without much government assistance. The author wrote that this must be the first step. All conservatives needed to embrace the idea of a wide distribution of property, family-based farming, and that such a distribution was a necessary requirement for good government.

Fitting within his ideas of looking at the past for things worth conserving, Herbert noted that such an agrarian republic played a prominent role in the ideas of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. These two founding fathers envisioned a nation of small farmers and little farming villages. There would also be businessmen, industry, and trade but the core of the

economy would be agriculture. Herbert wrote that for many of the founding fathers of the United States, a wide distribution of property was a requirement for democracy. It allowed enterprise to flourish and expand, developed and maintained family responsibility, and created a society where people could live a fulfilling life. Such a life would be truly free. Herbert also wrote that the founders of the United States would agree with this position that too great an accumulation of wealth in the hands of an elite was a dangerous situation. It would create an aristocracy in which families hold both economic and political power. Such families, once created, would be very difficult to control or destroy.³

The second principle all conservatives needed to adopt was an end to “unrestricted democracy.” Herbert wrote that allowing everyone to vote created reckless and rudderless government. Herbert declared that the right to vote should be granted only to people with property. Those who hold and or operate businesses, or farms, had a stake in the communities in which they lived and an active interest in promoting good government.⁴ Alternately those without property but wish to vote might be able to demonstrate, via a test on politics and history, that they were responsible citizens.⁵ Herbert believed that when a nation allowed the poor to vote one of two things happened. If the poor were in sufficient numbers they would vote themselves money from the public treasury. Since the government had no money of its own and must confiscate every dime it spends, then in reality the poor were voting themselves the wealth of their fellow citizens. The second possible outcome was when the poor were not the majority. In this instance, Herbert believed, the poor become the

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵ Ibid., 19-22.

pawns of the elite. The elite could be either politicians, wealthy industrialists, or often both. In this case the elite befriend the poor without empowering them. The poor become dependent on their benefactors forming a solid base of support not unlike what catapulted the ambitious men of Rome to the position of Emperor.⁶

Herbert then turned his attention to those who would lose their right to vote. He wrote that the disenfranchised would soon be able to vote again for two reasons. First, those stripped of their right to vote would soon become property owning farmers and would then have the right restored. This would be done by breaking the “monopoly of finance...and [restoring] ownership of real property.” For citizens who did not own property, Herbert suggested a voting exam on American history and politics as a qualification for voting. Second, by restricting the right to vote only to property owners and educated Americans, Herbert believed that voters would destroy the power of the financial elite. They would do this by passing laws that sever the corrupt connections between finance and government. Once this was done, the government would be free to enact sound economic policies that would end the Great Depression and restore real property to the people.⁷

Herbert then focused on finding a solution to the economic problems besetting the United States. The author wrote that the plan laid out by Roosevelt was nothing more than patching up the old system and placing some restrictions on industry and capital. For Herbert this was not, however, a real solution. It would simply allow the current economy to limp forward a few more years before collapse. The real solution was for conservatives to argue

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ Ibid., 21-22.

for an entirely new economic model. However, to do this and have it accepted by the public conservatives needed to explain the benefits of a new economic model. The advantages should not be laid out to the public with economic statistics but instead conservatives should stress the morality and stability of recreating an economy based on agriculture.⁸ This would reverse the trend in land ownership dating back to the end of the U.S. Civil War. However, reestablishing the small land owner would be a difficult task.⁹

Conservatives, Herbert wrote, must start by explaining to the people the idea of property and property rights. For Herbert and most of the writers of American Review, property in its purest form was land and real property rights protected the “widest possible distribution of land.”¹⁰ Herbert believed that this should be conservatives’ central message. This redistribution of land was not an excuse to seize or confiscate land from those who owned it. Herbert believed that the way forward was to work to reestablish small farms step by step. He did not support any massive land seizures or redistribution by the government. However the government was needed to help facilitate this process. Once small farms were reintroduced small scale local economies would flourish. Herbert envisioned a nation of little villages with local bakers, blacksmiths, shops, and restaurants. Herbert hoped that these micro economies would be isolated from the national economy and free from the boom and bust cycle that helped cause the Great Depression.

⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The process would not happen on its own. Herbert wrote that legislation would be needed to start the process, maintain it, and protect it once set up.¹¹ A return to the land would also cost a great deal of money. However, Herbert hoped that in the end the nation would be far richer in real terms than continuing down the path of “wage slavery.” Herbert was confident that if properly explained the American people would welcome and support a return to land ownership, small farming, and small village life.¹²

Herbert believed that the American people would accept such a plan if it were explained to them. However, he admitted that it would be difficult due to the lies told the American people by the elite. Herbert believed that the people must understand that if they draw a salary they were by definition a “wage slave.” For Herbert, even if a person were wealthy, or well off, their economic position was unstable at best. Far away economic events might bankrupt their company overnight. A worker could easily go from having a comfortable living to being broke due to no fault of the own. Even upper class managers and educated workers were at risk. Herbert wrote that their stocks and bonds could become worthless because of decisions made by anonymous men on the other side of the country. So no matter how much someone made or how much someone saved they were still “just a servant of finance.” For Herbert, the only way to be truly free was to own land and to have a self-sufficient farm located in a small self sufficient community. Such a life provided stability and prosperity independent of the wider markets.¹³ Herbert stated that fearing large industry and finance was not a sign of backwardness. He wrote that the elite used this

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

stereotype to attack the mental capacity of their opponents and win the argument before it even began. Finally, according to Herbert, economic prosperity, wealth, and stability were not dependent on large scale industry and finance. While industry and finance could generate wealth they could not generate well being. As noted before, Herbert reiterated that the wealth generated could just as easily be destroyed. To find true prosperity, stability, and wealth Herbert wrote that the American people we must turn back to the land. Herbert believed that before any progress could be made on his plan conservatives must point out each of these falsehoods to the public. Only when the people understood that the promises of the elite were indeed lies could the United States begin to restore property and well being.¹⁴

Moving away from what Herbert called “the lies of the elite,” Herbert turned to the promises of politicians. The author wrote that the American people must be convinced that well-distributed land ownership was the only way forward. To do this Herbert argued that conservatives should point out that all other plans had been tried and so far had failed. Ideas like returning to the gold standard, cutting government, growing government, freeing the markets, regulating the markets, cutting and raising taxes, limited and expanding poor relief, and pump priming were all proven failures. For Herbert, such measures were simply manipulating elements of a failed system. They could not create what was truly needed to ensure prosperity and stability.¹⁵

However having a plan and getting to the point where it could be enacted would be difficult. Herbert wrote that conservatives must be endlessly self critical. This would help

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9-10

the best ideas to come to the surface before those ideas were placed in front of the general public. Next, conservatism lacked leadership. Herbert wrote that there were no conservative intellectual or political leaders capable of challenging the status quo, to say nothing of fundamentally reforming the nation. Also conservatism was not nationally popular. Herbert believed that this was the result of big business conservative's relationship with industry. When the Great Depression hit the public blamed both industrialists and their conservative allies. Conservatism's current unpopularity, Herbert wrote, was not the result of some plot by Roosevelt, it was their own fault. Conservatives must understand this before they could move forward. Conservatives also failed to understand the severity of the Great Depression and instead believed that the same old remedies would work. Because of a lack of conservative leadership the public abandoned pre-depression conservatives and their ideas. The public then found Roosevelt and deemed him their savior.

Finally, Agar Herbert concluded his article by asking if fundamental reforms were possible under the current governmental system. He believed that many of his reforms might be possible but the power of the elite was so great that they would never allow a fundamental reshaping of the United State's economy. The solution, according to Herbert, was dictatorship. Herbert wrote that this dictatorship would be temporary but was a requirement to overcome the resistance of the elites. In the view of the author, the political situation was so corrupt that only by doing away with it in its entirety could the nation be saved.¹⁶

In his review of Benedetto Croce's work History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, American Review author Chas F. Ronayne examined the ideas of liberty and how liberty

¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

worked in modern states. According to Ronayne, Croce theorized that the goal of life was for each individual to elevate the human condition. This could not be done by governments but only by free institutions. A strong and robust civil society was a requirement for liberty. Along with a strong civil society a belief in a “transcendent God” was also a requirement for true liberty. For Croce, man was incapable of perfecting himself. The only way to improve society was to accept the idea that humans were inherently flawed. Religion played a role in this as it reinforced the idea of man as a fallen creature. Once this was accepted then society could move forward towards greater liberty and freedom accepting that human perfection was impossible.¹⁷

Ronayne wrote that a good way to understand this idea was to examine the Nineteenth century. In the Nineteenth century many, but not all, of the great men of history believed in the Enlightenment view of liberty.¹⁸ They were devoted to the concept of liberty while not always agreeing what exactly liberty meant. Ronayne wrote that there were other ideas that emerged in the Nineteenth century that were hostile to the Enlightenment definition of liberty, most notably Marxism, but the dominate ideology of the era was liberty.¹⁹ Croce identified four enemies of liberty. Those enemies were the Catholic Church, monarchy, democracy, and communism. In his review Ronayne wrote this list needed modification and explanation. While the Catholic Church could be an enemy of liberty, it was not always an

¹⁷ Chas F. Ronayne, review of *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, by Benedetto Croce, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 2 (December 1933): 242.

¹⁸ While Ronayne never defines the term liberty he seems to subscribe to the definition of liberty used in the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.” This document defined liberty as having the right to do anything as long as it does not negatively impact the rights and property of others.

¹⁹ Ronayne, review of *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 243.

enemy of liberty. It would be a great simplification to proclaim the Church an enemy of human liberty always and under all circumstances. Likewise, Ronayne wrote, both monarch and democracy had been enemies and supporters of liberty throughout history. However, Marxism was an enemy of liberty in all cases and circumstances. Ronayne wrote that Croce's work had many problems and historical errors, the most serious of which was that Croce omitted information that did not fit his theory. Ronayne wrote that Croce took the information that supported his conclusions, painting an entire century with a very broad brush. For Ronayne the Nineteenth century was far more complicated and complex than the simple picture Croce presented. However, one point that both authors agreed on was that Marxism in all its variations was an enemy and a threat to liberty and human freedom.²⁰

For the writers of American Review, another possible way of combating Marxism and saving western civilization might be a return to monarchy. Seward Collins wrote that monarchy might be a viable solution to the current economic and political crisis. Collins wrote that it would be difficult for many Americans to accept, as they fought a war to free themselves from a monarchy. For Collins, and many other writers, monarchy was not just a stop gap measure. He believed that it would work and work well.²¹

Collins wrote that the duties of the new king would be to protect the weak, police the justice system, and to reign in the economic elite. Collins hoped that a king would be a

²⁰ Ibid., 244-45.

²¹ Editorial Notes, "The Revival of Monarchy," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1933): 246.

check on the power of the wealthy and level the economic playing field for all Americans.²² While a revival of monarchy seemed ridiculous, Collins wrote that the process was already underway in Europe. Collins believed that the ascendancy of strong men from Hitler in Germany to Stalin in the U.S.S.R., demonstrated that the process had already begun. The amount of power each man had was irrelevant, Collins believed, as monarchy could mean anything from a constitutional monarch with limited powers to an absolute monarch. Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini were simply signs that Europe was “returning to its ancestral form of government.” In these nations, the new “kings” had enough power to right the ship of state, temper capitalism’s destructive elements, and restore stable government.²³

However, if the United States was going to have a monarchy then it must also have a new aristocracy. Collins wrote that again trends in Europe pointed to an answer. Collins wrote that someone did not join the Communist Party in the Soviet Union in the same way that one became a Republican or Democrat. To join the Bolsheviks, you must be accepted by the party faithful. In this way the Communist party had become the new aristocrats of Russia. To a lesser extent, Collins wrote, this was also happening in Italy and Germany. Therefore, party members would be the new nobility. In order to join you had to be loyal to the leader in the same way the nobles of old accepted the power and roll of the king. The

²² Collins did not believe that the current American Government could do this job. For Collins the government was firmly in the hands of plutocrats who used the power of the government to enrich themselves.

²³ Editorial Notes, “The Revival of Monarchy,” 252. Collins believed that the new dictators in Europe were simply kings by another name. He seemed to envision a new system of monarch and aristocracy. The only difference would be that title would not be passed from father to son. In many ways Collins was examining events in Europe and using old terms to describe, what for him, was current trends.

new nobility would seek to empower the leader who would then use this power “in the interests of the whole people.”

In a break from traditional monarchy and aristocracy, Collins proposed that nobility would not be hereditary. For example, Collins wrote that just because your father was a party member did not mean that you inherited his duties upon his death. A son or daughter might choose to join the party but they were not guaranteed admittance or position. This would allow a nation to have a stable class of “aristocrats” minus the drawback of being limited to those born into the system. Collins then asked, while this might work for the aristocrats, how would the king be chosen? Collins wrote that whenever a monarch died the most important party members would gather to select a new king from their ranks. Collins envisioned that this process would be identical to the way the Catholic Church selected a new Pope.²⁴

In Collins’s opinion, with a workable method of selecting the aristocracy and replacing the king, the new government could concentrate on their primary tasks. Collins wrote that the government would hamper the power of the industrialists and financiers by restoring agriculture as the “first and best industry.” Collins believed that liberty would be preserved, the family unit respected and supported, religion would flourish, as would human creativity.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., 255.

²⁵ Ibid., 256. Collins did not discuss how exactly all of this could take place. Since he references European dictators who came to power through revolution it is reasonable to think that he believed something like that might take place in the United States. In addition, he clearly was not interested in keeping any part of the current democratic system or the United States constitution.

In November of 1934 another writer Arthur Styron wrote in favor of a monarchy for the United States. In his article entitled “Shall We Have an Aristocracy?” Styron wrote that democracy in the United States was in long term and irreversible decline. For Styron this process began with the expanding of voting rights and the election of Andrew Jackson. The author wrote that Jackson epitomized the shift from the wise men of state that founded the nation to a “reign of vulgarity, bad manners, and bad tastes.” The only way to reverse this trend was to abandon the democratic experiment and instead return to the principles and practices of monarchy.

Like Seward Collins, Styron wrote that the new dictators of Europe were in reality a return to monarchy. Styron wrote that Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and even Joseph Stalin were monarchs. The party members, be they Nazi or Communists, behaved like an aristocracy. Styron believed that the way these party members lived their lives, the clothes they wore, and even the way they entertained guests and foreign dignitaries harkened back the customs of aristocracy.²⁶

Styron wrote that embracing monarchy did not mean abandoning liberty, liberalism, or the Enlightenment. Like the Enlightened monarchs of Europe, the aristocracy could promote and defend the ideas of liberty and freedom. This would be especially true in the United States, Styron believed, which had a tradition of liberalism and freedom. The new aristocrats would still hold these traditions dear and would be better able to protect and

²⁶ Arthur Styron, “Shall We Have An Aristocracy?” *The American Review* Vol. 4 No. 1 (November 1934): 2.

promote Enlightenment ideals. At the same time the new nobility would check the power of the plutocracy and restore balance to the economy.²⁷

Finally, Styron turned to the topic of who would form the new nobility. Unlike Collins, Styron did not lay out a clear idea of who would form the new nobility. He wrote that there should be no standard like party membership. Instead the nobility would be chosen because of their qualities. They should be men of talent and ability but Styron gave no further explanation of how the nobility would be chosen or if title would be hereditary.²⁸

Finally, on the topic of monarchy two additional American Review authors supported the idea. Marvin McCord Lowes wrote that fascist Italy proved that monarchy was not a dead concept from another age. Instead, monarchy could be restored to modern nations. Even industrialized, materialistic, democratic nations could restore monarchy. Lowes wrote that monarchy was far more flexible and adaptive than most people thought. While Benito Mussolini was not a monarch in name, Lowes argued, his position as head of state, head of the government, and his powers covered the core principles of a powerful European monarch.²⁹ Finally, Ross Hoffman made the case for monarchy in his February of 1935 article entitled “Authority and Tyranny.” Hoffman wrote that the United States needed a strong monarch to defend society against those that seek to destroy the nation. Much like the ideas of Confucius, Hoffman believed that a king would be able to set the example on

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 9. None of the authors who wrote in favor of an aristocracy believed in a “landed aristocracy.” That would go against the idea of small independent farmers. Instead they believed that the new “aristocrats” would form a type of bureaucratic class chosen by merit.

²⁹ Marvin McCord Lowes, “The Case for Monarchy,” *The American Review* Vol 3 No 2 (May 1934): 288.

cultural and moral issues. The king, Hoffman argued, would be able to intervene on economic matters and control the power of the wealthy elite. Having a monarch would create a new social order based on tradition, religion, family, and traditional morality. For Hoffman, this was the only way to save a society in economic and moral decline. Hoffman feared that without such change American society would fail. However, the biggest challenge would be in convincing the American people to accept the idea before the nation falls into chaos.³⁰

In conclusion, the writers of American Review, embraced the idea of monarchy as a possible alternative to American democracy. For the most part, they believed that the United States government was hopelessly broken and beyond repair. They were able to convince themselves that events in Europe, and the rise of dictators, was in fact a return to monarchy. The idea of a return to a previous era appealed to early conservatives who had lost faith in democracy. Their support of monarchy could also be seen as a way to find or create stability in uncertain times. How serious they were about really returning to, or creating, a monarchy is questionable. They never put forward any solid step by step plan on how monarchy might be restored. One can conclude that they never expected, or envisioned an American “king.” In the end their support of monarchy was more of a way to vent conservative impulses in uncertain times. As for conservatism, the writers took for granted that their ideas were conservative and the concept of conservatism was mentioned in many articles. In addition, they viewed conservatism as an intellectual movement and not just a cultural impulse.

Finally, their ideas of liberty were interconnected with their ideas on land and property. For

³⁰ Ross J.S. Hoffman, “Authority and Tyranny,” *The American Review* Vol 4 No 4 (February 1935): 385.

pre-war conservatives liberty equaled economic independence. To be truly free meant being economically self-sufficient and isolated from the fluctuations of the markets and finance.

CHAPTER VII

TRADITION

The influence of tradition was an important factor in understanding early conservatism. Even today, standing alongside anti-Marxism, and limited government, respect for tradition forms the one of the three pillars of modern conservatism. However, tradition was the hardest conservative idea to define. It meant different things to different people, and what was very important to one person hardly brought a response from another. In the pages of American Review the importance of tradition was seen in arguments over the role of religion, the family, ethics, and regionalism. We could also see the role of tradition in previous topics like property rights, agriculture, and industry. The authors of American Review wrote articles that addressed the importance of tradition directly as well as devoting time to morality, the importance of the family, regionalism, the arts, academics, and especially religion.

Setting the tone for his journal, Seward Collins wrote in the first issue of American Review that the problems and chaos of the modern world could only be addressed “by a

return to the fundamentals and tested principles” of tradition. Collins stated that the primary goal of American Review was to bring together writers and intellectuals who share this belief.¹

Responding to Collins’ call for traditionalist writers T.S Eliot wrote an article for the March 1934 issue. Eliot’s article sought to explain the differences between tradition and mindless orthodoxy. He wrote that tradition was often unconscious behavior for both groups and individuals. However, this behavior helped to define and ground individuals and civilizations. For Eliot, it gave generational stability and was therefore a positive influence in society. So while tradition was beneficial, Eliot believed, those who supported it must understand the dangers of orthodoxy. Eliot defined orthodoxy as an unquestionable tradition. By this he meant a tradition that people were not allowed to challenge. While traditions should be respected, to allow a tradition to become an orthodoxy, was dangerous and damaging to a society.²

Eliot’s point was especially important for conservatives to understand as they were the defenders of tradition.³ To properly defend tradition conservatives needed to examine the past and decide what traditions and practices were worthy of preserving. Equally important, for Eliot, was to decide what traditions needed modification or outright rejection. Once this was done a society must seek stability. Tradition was harder to maintain without social and

¹ Editorial Notes, *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 122.

² T.S. Eliot, “Tradition and Orthodoxy,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (March 1934): 527.

³ *Ibid.*, 519. The use of the term conservative to denote a political or social movement is rare in the first year of American Review. However by 1934 the term is being used widely by the writers of American Review.

political stability. Eliot then listed what conservatives should do to ensure stability. First, the majority of the population should be economically prosperous. This did not mean economically equal but if the bulk of the population was comfortable then stability was easier to maintain. Next, a population needed to be homogeneous with one major culture. Eliot believed that having multiple cultures each following their own traditions and practices was a recipe for disorder. Religious unity was also important. This should not be seen as a call for religious purity but the more unity the better. Also, Eliot wrote, it was never good for a civilization to allow large numbers of Jews into the population. Next, conservatives should seek to balance the interests of urban and rural citizens. Finally, related to balancing the interests of urban and rural citizens, a balance needed to be struck between the interests of industry and agriculture.⁴

Apart from articles that directly addressed tradition, the writers of American Review gave positive reviews to works that supported tradition. In the January 1934 issue, Dorothea Brande gave a favorable review to Sigrid Undset's novel Ida Elisabeth. The novel was set in 1930s Norway and chronicled the decisions and consequences of a young woman who made a poor choice in marriage. The heroine, Ida Elisabeth, married her childhood sweetheart against the wishes of her family. Soon after marriage it became clear that her husband was unwilling or unable to support their growing family and proved to be unfaithful. In the review Brande Dorothea pointed out that the novel demonstrated how a disrespect for family tradition and selfishness caused the heroine's constant suffering. Dorothea pointed out that, like the heroine in the novel, most of our own suffering was the result of poor decisions.

⁴ Ibid., 517.

However, it was only by suffering the consequences of those decisions that we can learn. By the end of the novel *Ida Elisabeth* had learned that the older traditions were correct and that all of her hardship was the result of abandoning traditional mores. The novel also contained themes on the importance of marriage as a permanent unbreakable union.⁵ In a similar review, writer Geoffrey Stone positively reviewed the art and writings of Wyndham Lewis. Stone wrote that Lewis clearly identified with tradition and conservatism and had a strong streak of anti-modernism that should endear him to conservatives.⁶

Interconnected with the idea of tradition was respect and support of family. For many writers of *American Review* the family, and not the individual, was the primary unit of society. Hilaire Belloc wrote that this was the proper way to view society. Belloc believed that society was not as a collection of individuals, but instead, a collection of independent families. Each family was economically interconnected but this interconnectivity provided freedom for a family unit. This in turn provided real freedom for individuals within the family. Belloc believed that our freedom stemmed from our membership in an economically independent family unit.⁷

The independence of the family unit was also central to the ideas of Geoffrey Stone. Stone wrote that any social movement that sought to destroy the family would lead to the enslavement of individuals. Stone believed that without the family, individuals lacked the

⁵ Dorothea Brande, "Sigrid Undset and His Critics," *American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 320-21.

⁶ Geoffrey Stone, "The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 579.

⁷ Belloc Hilaire, "The Restoration of Property," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 1 (April 1933): 3.

power and support necessary to maintain true liberty. The author then turned his sights on feminism. Stone wrote that feminism made a false promise. It promised to liberate women by freeing them from the family and family obligations. However, Stone wrote, this freedom was a lie. In reality the liberation of women from the family would simply make them easier to exploit.

However, feminism was not only about women. Stone wrote that feminism sought to destroy the family as an institution. So it was not just women who are in danger as a result of feminism. Once the family was destroyed it will be easy to set men against women and to divide society into countless warring clans. Stone wrote that if this was allowed, if society was broken into individuals, and those individuals were set against each other, then subjugation was inevitable. For Stone, the individual was simply too weak on their own; family was a requirement of political and economic freedom.

Stone also addressed feminism's affect on men. Stone wrote that while men might think that feminism benefited them by alleviating the responsibilities of family and fatherhood, in truth feminism hurt men. Stone noted, that when women were allowed to act as men, then men would lose their role in society. Men would not seek to be the father, the breadwinner, or the model of responsible masculinity for male children. In the end feminism would turn the women into men and the men into women.⁸

Like Stone, G.K. Chesterton questioned the goals of feminism and its affect society. Chesterton wrote that feminism sought to disconnect sex from pregnancy and childbirth. In

⁸ Stone, "The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis," 586.

traditional societies, sex resulted in pregnancy and then the birth of a new child. In this way societies moved from one generation to the next. Chesterton wrote that another benefit of traditional sexual norms was that the act of sex was kept within marriage to facilitate the economic health of the family as well as giving the children proper role models. However, Chesterton believed that feminism sought to destroy this beneficial tradition. Feminists preached that the act of sex should have nothing to do with pregnancy. Instead sex was to be enjoyed as a recreational activity. Both unmarried men and women would engage in sex as recreation and be free of all consequences that might result. Chesterton wrote that this was “like abolishing the holiday and keeping the feast.” The feast would have no meaning without the holiday. If feminists were successful in disconnecting sex and fertility, then the act of sex would lose all meaning.⁹

Regionalism was another important aspect of tradition for early conservative writers. In the pages of American Review the importance of agriculture was interwoven with the idea of regionalism. American Review wrote favorably in support of agrarianism especially the 1930 publication of I’ll Take My Stand.” Donald Davidson, one of the writers of I’ll Take My Stand wrote in American Review that he was surprised by the support the journal gave to agrarian ideas. Davidson stated that I’ll Take My Stand’s intention was to speak for Southerners alone. He was pleased with the reception their work received outside of the South and how others had taken agrarian ideas and expanded on them.¹⁰ That expansion

⁹ G.K. Chesterton, “Sex and Prosperity,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 278.

¹⁰ Donald Davidson, “I’ll Take My Stand: A History,” *The American Review* Vol. 5 No. 3 (Summer 1935): 301.

included applying the ideas of regionalism to all the United States, not just the southern states.

John Ransom, writing for American Review in 1934, stated that a regionalist was someone who was deeply connected to one place. However, being connected to one place was not enough. A regionalist must also be connected to the people and culture of a region. This connection to a region was deeply felt. So much so, that if a regionalist moved to another state he would still belong to his region even if he did not live there. Ransom wrote that being a regionalist was far superior than being cosmopolitan. This was because those who pursue a cosmopolitan lifestyle had no roots and no people they could call their own. A cosmopolitan was an individual who was alone in the world where a regionalist always had a people and a place.¹¹

Ransom wrote that being a regionalist was also better from an economic standpoint. Ransom believed that small regional economies simply worked better. They were less susceptible to collapse; they were isolated from far away events and when downturn occurred regional economies recovered faster. For Ransom an ideal regional economy would include a city and the surrounding countryside. Almost like a city-state. The countryside would include farms and small farming villages. It would be the countryside's job to produce food to feed their local city. The city would include the region's manufacturing, merchants, traders, and shops. The city and countryside would form a self-sufficient economy. One would produce the food and the other would produce the goods. However, it was important

¹¹ John Crowe Ransom, "The Aesthetic of Regionalism," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 294.

to note that the economy was closed. The cities merchants would not trade with other cities. This would create interdependency between cities. Ransom believed that this interdependency was how local downturns in the economy turned into national depressions.¹²

While the city would have industry the people would be careful not to let manufacturing dominate the agricultural economy. Ransom used the term “machine economy” to denote an economic system in which industry dominated all aspects of the economy. This “machine economy” sought maximum efficiency above all other objectives. Ransom believed that this type of manufacturing was the enemy of regionalism. It destroyed the balance between farming and industry, destroyed the agrarian lifestyle, and eventually industry ended up destroying itself.¹³

Regionalists chafed at the mockery heaped on small town life by writers and journalists living in populous northern cities. Writing this time for American Mercury, Sarah Lynwood Slay sought to turn the tables on northern critics. Slay’s satirical work was a reaction to northern articles that portend to survey the South for gawking northern audiences. Slay wrote that she “finally undertook to make a trip myself with the intentions of interpreting conditions.” However before getting into the substance of her survey, she could conclude that “most of the conditions of the North are exceedingly unfortunate.”

Slay wrote that while Northerners might look the same as Southerners they were fundamentally different. Northerners lacked all proper social graces and the men seemed ignorant of gentlemanly behavior. Slay wrote that the situation was so dire that the men in

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 304-05.

the North do not remove their hats indoors, they put their feet on their desks, and even more shockingly Northern men did not give up their seats to women on trains and streetcars. The lack of social graces made the author wonder why “Northerners want to go on living at all.” In the rest of the article, Slay took the same satirical approach to Northern habits, manners, gender roles, childrearing, and economics. Slay used the same tactic used by Northern writers. She portrayed Southern habits as the norm. This allowed her to show the North as backward, ignorant, regressive and all the other stereotypes the North loved to heap on the South.¹⁴

More than any other single issue, religion defined tradition for early conservatives. They believed that religion shaped the national culture. In turn, that culture determined the success or failure of a society. Religion was not an individual matter but something that affected everyone, believers and non-believers alike. With this in mind, for conservative writers in the 1930s religion and national problems were interconnected events. Many of the nation’s economic problems were the result of individual moral failings and the rejection of religion. The sum of all moral failings could steer a civilization’s direction. This concept drew on the writings of Adam Smith who wrote that a national economy was no more than the sum of millions of individual economic decisions. Therefore the total of each individual’s religious beliefs affected the nation’s politics and practices.¹⁵

¹⁴ Sarah Lynwood Slay, “A Southerner Surveying the North,” *The American Mercury* Vol. XLIV No. 174 (June 1938): 139-145.

¹⁵ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in America Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003): 9-15.

R.L. Burgess addressed the issue of religion and society in his 1934 article “The Protestant Garrison in America.” Burgess began his column by writing that the idea of a separation between the state and religion was a cherished American ideal. However, this idea became strained when new religious ideas were introduced the United States. What was soon discovered by “old stock” Americans was that while the United States had a separation of church and state, American democracy was crafted by a specific religious outlook. That outlook was Northern European Protestantism. Burgess wrote that new immigrants brought new religions that did not accept many of the foundational principles of the republic.¹⁶

Burgess wrote that the failure of Al Smith in the election of 1928 was clear evidence that many Americans viewed Catholicism as inconsistent with democracy. Also the more conservatives come to understand Fascism as a Catholic doctrine, the more they would reject it as a solution to the nation’s problems. Like the rejection of Fascism, Americans would come to associate Marxism with Judaism and likewise reject it as a foreign philosophy. For Burgess, this only left one option. A restoration of pragmatic democracy, the only governing philosophy that fits with Protestantism.

Burgess wrote that this was not a rejection of other religions or Christian denominations but simply an acceptance that religion and government were connected. The United States consisted of Protestants, Jews, and Catholics overwhelmingly. These three groups would each have a role in restoring democracy. For the United States to prosper, Burgess wrote that Jews, Catholics, and Protestants needed to change. Burgess wrote that the

¹⁶ R.L. Burgess, “The Protestant Garrison in America,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 434.

first step for Jews and Catholics was to assimilate into the broader American culture. The Jews had many economic talents but they seldom see themselves as members of the nation in which they live. This needed to change. Jews in America must become American Jews and develop nationalism. In turn, Catholics must accept that the institution of government cannot be modeled on the Church. This was what Fascists in Europe had tried, a top down government with all the power in the hands of one individual. Burgess wrote that such a system would never be accepted by the majority of Americans. Finally, Protestants must come to accept that they were a smaller proportion of society than before. Protestants needed to help the other two groups change but also change themselves and their attitudes.¹⁷ As Jews and Catholics jettison parts of their old beliefs, all three groups would be able to use their unique talents for the betterment of the United States. Burgess concluded by stating that the purpose of his article was to bring together the three dominant religions while understanding that they each have their own talents and contributions to make.¹⁸

Agreeing with the previous authors, E.P. Richardson wrote that there was a strong connection between religion and government. Richardson wrote that Christianity, especially Protestantism, allowed for the creation of modern democracy. Christianity stressed the value of each individual as each individual had a soul. This ran counter to the ideas in Fascism which insisted that the group was more important than the rights of the individual. Additionally, it was diametrically opposed to Marxism which insisted that class conflict trumped all other factors. With Christianity, each human being had value. Richardson wrote

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 447

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 448.

that this idea brought people together and created consensus on political and economic issues.

Richardson wrote that once democracy and Christianity were combined a new idea was born. That idea was that the state existed to ensure and protect the rights of the individual. Individuals did not exist to serve the state.¹⁹ Richardson believed that Europe had forgotten this principle and fascism and Marxism were the results of that neglect.²⁰ Therefore the solution to the problems of Europe and the United States was to re-embrace “the moral and intellectual authority of Western Civilization.” A key component of this was a re-birth of religion. However, according to Richardson, that was only one component. The Western World must also make the intellectual case for democracy as the best governmental model. Finally, to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity and democracy the West must push the development of science. Scientific advancement and invention was a clear way to show all peoples the benefits of the Western model.²¹

Hilaire Belloc picked up the on the idea of science and religion in his 1934 article for American Review. Belloc wrote that science was being misused by politicians who were hiding behind the name of science to push political policies. Belloc stated that when a politician stated that science proved this, or science clearly showed that, that politician was not really referring to science. Instead anyone who used science in this manner was referring

¹⁹ E.P. Richardson, review of *The Modern Dilemma*, by Christopher Dawson, *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1933): 229. Unlike Burgess, Richardson made no distinction between various denominations of Christianity.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

to what Belloc called “the scientific spirit.” Belloc wrote that “the scientific spirit” was really more of a mindset. It was a way of arriving at a conclusion that excluded religion. So, Belloc asked, what was true science? Belloc stated that it must be narrowly defined as “a body of provable facts.”²²

To further clarify his point, Belloc wrote that in order for something to be science it must fulfill several criteria. The first was that there must be a provable and repeatable sequence of cause and effect. The second criteria was that whatever was being studied must be accurately measurable. Finally, science could only apply to the material universe. If it was not part of the material universe it was not measurable and therefore cannot be science. For instance, human behavior was hard to measure and did not always conform to cause and effect. Therefore human behavior cannot be studied scientifically. Scientists might be able to apply some general theories to human behavior but they would not be able to reach scientific truth.²³ In the same way, science could not study religion. Religion relied on the personal judgment of the individual. It accepted the authority of religious texts and religious institutions. Therefore, religion and faith could not be measured; they did not adhere to cause and effect; and they did not exist in the material universe.

Belloc wrote that while they were different institutions, science and religion made many of the same mistakes. Science had the bad habit of confusing theories and hypothesis with fact. Belloc wrote that many scientists made this mistake. Scientists then compound their error by combining multiple “facts” to create a new hypothesis that they also believed to

²² Hilaire Belloc, “Science and Religion,” *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 406.

²³ *Ibid.*, 406-07.

the scientific truth. Conversely, religious institutions began with what they considered to be divine truth and then used deduction to apply their truth to other areas. The problem here was that they come to conclusions from a faulty original premise.²⁴

Belloc wrote that science and religion disagreed strongly on the nature of the human condition. For Western religions, pain, poverty, and suffering were part of the human condition. They have been with us from the beginning and will always be part of life. This suffering was a test that must be borne by the faithful. For those who subscribed to “the scientific spirit” this was abhorrent. They believed that science could uplift the poor and move humanity into a utopian future. For example, Belloc wrote that those who believed in “the scientific spirit” endorsed euthanasia for those terminally ill, sterilized those deemed undesirable, and cast aside morality in a quest to improve the human condition. For the religious, such practices were unacceptable.²⁵

To further his point, Belloc turned to several topics to show how science and religion viewed issues differently. On the issue of marriage, for the religious minded, marriage was permanent and sacred. It was an institution ordained by God, the foundation of society, and the proper institution for the raising of children. Therefore, Belloc believed that marriage was the cornerstone of civilization. Belloc wrote that for those who subscribed to the scientific spirit, marriage was a human contract that could be entered into and broken at will. It had nothing to do with spirituality and no higher meaning. Marriage was not required for the raising of children or a requirement for civilization. The same conflict was found in the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 407.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 408-09.

study of history. Belloc wrote that for those who consider history a science, a document was scientific proof. That proof could be added to other evidence and a grand theory reached. Belloc believed that scientific historians scoffed at relying on tradition or common sense to understand historical developments. The documents were all that mattered. For the religious minded documents were weak evidence. One should always question a document using common sense and an understanding of human nature. Belloc wrote that the conflict between religion and science even dragged in topics like beauty. The scientific spirit said that beauty, in either humans or in the arts, was absurd. All beauty was subjective. True beauty could not exist. However, those who viewed the world through religion believed that contemplating the nature of beauty could allow an individuals to reach higher truths.²⁶

Belloc concluded his article by noting that this conflict would increase not decrease as time went on. It was a conflict that could not be resolved as each side viewed the world through completely different eyes. Almost any topic, be it political or social, would break down into these two camps. One camp defended religion and tradition while the other believed in “the scientific spirit.” However, too often the conclusions reached by those who believed in “the scientific spirit” dealt with topics that were either unmeasurable or unrepeatable.²⁷

Picking up on Belloc’s argument, Howard Roelofs wrote a satirical article on religion for the next months issue. Roelofs wrote his article from the position that science had proven all religions false. He wrote that anthropology, psychology, sociology, had definitely proven

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 409.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 409-10.

that there was no god or gods in the heavens. However, Roelofs wrote that religion was a positive and necessary element in society. So what was to be done? Roelofs wrote that sociology could be the new religion that would bind society together. This way, civilization would get the benefits of religion and science in one convenient package. Roelofs then proposed sociology-themed prayers, services, and beliefs. However, Roelofs wrote that all religions needed a simple manifesto of beliefs that all adherents could believe in. To foster the creation of sociology the religion, Roelofs wrote a prayer to define this religion.²⁸

A New Canticle

Venite, Exultemus Sociology²⁹

(To be said or sung at the openings of all groups)

O Come, let us sing unto Sociology; let us heartily rejoice
in the strengths of our group consciousness
Let us come before her presence with thanksgiving; and
show ourselves glad in her with projects
For Sociology if a great hope; and a great Light above
all Hopes.³⁰

Finally, two more American Review authors dealt with the subject of religion and society. Allen Tate in his review of Southern culture noted that, thankfully, the South was still very religious. The American Southern states, unlike the North, still believed in Christianity and practiced a form of liberal Protestantism. Tate wrote that this was very fortunate for the South as it gave society a foundation of beliefs that held society together. However, while religious, Southerners had compartmentalized their spiritual and material

²⁸ Howard D. Roelofs, "Venite Exultemus," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (March 1934): 529-30.

²⁹ Come, Exult Sociology.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 529-30. The prayer goes on for many more lines. I have included just the first stanza.

lives. This allowed them to live in the modern world while maintaining the benefits of stability and community that come with Christianity.³¹

Disagreeing with Tate's analysis, Allen J. Bryan believed that religion was in decline even in the South. Bryan wrote that once Christianity became disconnected from culture, Christianity began to decline. Bryan wrote that in the Nineteenth century, Christianity existed within all elements of American culture. Americans understood freedom, politics, culture, and artistic tastes through the prism of Christianity. However by the 1930s, the educated and elite had abandoned Christianity in favor of science, progress, and internationalism. Christianity still existed but it was strongest among the uneducated and poor. Bryan wrote that this needed to change. The educated and the elite needed to learn that Christianity had real tangible benefits for society. To leave it to the poor alone was to let it die. Christianity needed to be at the center of Southern life for all classes. However, Tate wrote that as it currently stood "Christianity is a sinking ship with treasure in its hold."³²

The writers of American Review, and to a lesser extent American Mercury, focused their debate on tradition to topics like religion, family, and morality. However, they devoted some time to smaller issues like the state of modern art and academics. While pre-war conservative writers disliked modern art, their position on colleges would help shape modern conservatism's attitudes towards academics. In the 1950s William F. Buckley wrote that conservatives decided to bypass academia and instead made an argument directly to the

³¹ Allen Tate, "A View of the Whole South," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 426-27.

³² Bryan J. Allen, review of *Selected Essays by Oscar W. Firkins*, by Oscar W. Firkins, *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 376.

population. However, as early as the 1930s pre-war conservatives had developed a dislike for the political and moral culture present at colleges and universities. In fact, American Review was founded to allow pre-war conservatives to bypass academia. The journal was a place for traditionalists to discuss their ideas amongst themselves before those ideas are presented to a wider audience.

While discussing Marxism, Edd Winfield Parks wrote that part of the appeal of Marxism was the result of the poor state of college academics. Berdyaev believed that part of the role of colleges and universities were to produce the leaders of tomorrow. Colleges were supposed to produce students who could think independently. The students should be able to take information and produce logical conclusions based on sound evidence. However, Parks wrote that at modern universities the emphasis was placed on the short term retention of trivia. The students were not trained to question this rote memorization. Added to this was a heavy dose of left wing propaganda, especially prevalent in the education departments.³³

The next problem facing the universities and colleges, Parks believed, was an emphasis on numbers and enrollment. Colleges had huge classes sometimes numbering in the hundreds and overall enrollment in the thousands. Universities had become factories turning out students who could not discern the difference between propaganda and facts. Parks wrote that even if these students could detect facts they had not been trained to take those facts and draw conclusions.

³³ Henri Massis, "Difficulties of History," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 (January 1934): 283-84.

Finally, Parks wrote that the universities had become little isolated worlds. A student could, if they wished, live in a tiny campus bubble for four or more years. This was dangerous as college was not the real world. Colleges produced thousands of propagandized students incapable of independent thought. In addition students had no idea what the real world was like. Parks wrote that in many ways the students were worst off intellectually than the day they first stepped onto campus.³⁴

Also taking on the problems of academia, Henri Massis wrote an article for American Review on the modern state of historical studies. For Massis the problem was twofold. First history was not a science and could not be made into a science no matter how hard the historian tried. History, Massis wrote, relied primarily on documents. These documents could take many forms but they were often incomplete. Also since documents were written by people they often contained biases, lacked important information, or could be outright lies. It was up to the historian to take this mess of material and create a coherent story. By definition, Massis wrote, this was not science. Science relied on observable facts. These facts allowed for scientific laws. No such situation existed for history.³⁵

Massis wrote that in response to this reality many historians had accepted relativism. For the relativist nothing was absolutely certain, except the fact that nothing was certain. Massis wrote that relativism had infested academia and could be found in every department. However, it attacked historical knowledge the hardest. Losing all certainty in history cut people off from their past and made them susceptible to all types of foolish beliefs.

³⁴ Edd Winfield Parks, "On Banishing Nonsense," *The American Review* Vol. 1 No. 5 (October 1933): 563-65.

³⁵ Massis, "Difficulties of History," 283-84.

However, relativism also infests other disciplines destroying all knowledge and truth. Massis believed that this was behind most of the uncertainty plaguing the modern world.³⁶

Geoffrey Stone, again while reviewing the ideas of Wyndham Lewis, wrote that the problem with academia began with those who called themselves academics. To become an intellectual required no tests or classes, a simple assertion of being an intellectual was enough. These self appointed intellectuals cut themselves off from the rest of society. Stone wrote that believing in their superior intellect, the academic began to hate their fellow citizens who they believe to be mentally inferior. To separate themselves further, they engage in behavior considered taboo by society at large. It did not matter what society or culture the intellectual lived in, they defined themselves by defying societal norms. For instance, if they lived in town where everyone walked they would drive but if everyone drove, they would of course walk. Stone wrote that in the United States this impulse to challenge norms was the reason we see so much homosexuality and drug abuse within intellectual circles.³⁷

Stone wrote that the destructive nature of the intelligentsia explained why critics like Wyndham Lewis spent so much time refuting and arguing with writers like Anita Loos and James Joyce. Stone wrote that Lewis spent considerable time attacking faculty members at universities. T.S. Eliot stated that Lewis spent too much of his time arguing with unknown professors but Lewis argued that the battle of ideas must be waged on all fronts. Stone

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 283.

³⁷ Geoffrey Stone, "The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis pt 2," Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 87.

concluded his article by stating that Lewis felt that it was his duty to defend traditional Western civilization and to challenge the ideas of anyone who sought to undermine it.³⁸

Stone then shifted his discussion of the ideas of Wyndham Lewis to art. For individuals like Stone and Lewis, artists and intellectuals were often the same people. They operated in the same circles, believed the same things, and ultimately sought to undermine the foundations of society. Stone wrote that Lewis believed that the state of modern art was the result of two ideologies, romanticism and nihilism. The first ideology was the older of the two. Lewis believed that the romanticism of the Nineteenth century still influenced art. However, that romanticism was now mixed with nihilism. In combination, they produced art that did not seek to elevate civilization but instead tried to destroy it. In the Nineteenth century Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley epitomized Lewis' view of the intellectual artist. This tradition continued into the Twentieth century creating art and literature destructive to society.³⁹ Together the nihilists and romanticists had thrown art into chaos. Lewis believed that the current state of art was so poor that society was no longer capable of producing great art or great artists.⁴⁰

Besides nihilism and romanticism, conservative critics of art and literature believed that art had lost its connection with the past. It had become "rootless, pointless, ephemeral" and the only praise it deserved was to call it original.⁴¹ T.S. Eliot took up this topic in his

³⁸ Ibid., 96.

³⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁰ Stone, "The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis," 581.

⁴¹ Dorothea Brande, "A Letter to a God-Daughter," *The American Review* Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 453-456.

1934 article for American Review. Eliot wrote that artists concerned with originality would destroy what was left of art and literature. In fact, Eliot wrote, being called simply “original” was not much of a complement. Many things were original without being great, or even particularly interesting.⁴²

In conclusion, in the 1950s William F. Buckley defined modern conservatism as a combination of anti-communism, limited government, and a respect for tradition. However, the idea of tradition had already been embraced by self-styled conservatives in the 1930s. For these conservatives, tradition was interwoven with religion, regionalism, marriage, family, and morality. Tradition also influenced their views on industry, property rights, and agriculture. However, tradition was harder to define than topics like anti-Marxism or limited government. For the writers of American Review and American Mercury tradition was an important element of conservatism. They believed that tradition, and especially religion, provided stability and guidance in turbulent times. This respect for tradition, clearly seen in the journals of the 1930s, would emerge as a cornerstone of post war conservatism.

⁴² Eliot, “Tradition and Orthodoxy,” 521.

CHAPTER VIII

RACE RELATIONS AND IMMIGRATION

With many of the writers of American Review supporting a Southern agrarian lifestyle, it should come as no surprise that matters of race and race relations were never far from their minds. For the most part they supported the continuation of segregation and white supremacy in the South. When problems arose between white and African American Southerners, American Review writers blamed outside agitation or communist influences. In most instances they believed that outside agitation and communist influences were one and the same. Interestingly, while they viewed the world from the perspective of white supremacy, they were not against immigration so long as the new arrivals assimilated to the dominate white culture.

Geoffrey Stone defended the idea of white supremacy in his two part review of the ideas of Wyndham Lewis. Stone wrote that before industrialization the treatment of African Americans as second class citizens provided benefits for white Americans. The African

Americans provided a social bottom that no white could fall beneath. Stone wrote that no matter how poor, indebted, or uneducated every white person believed that they were better than African Americans. Therefore, a white person could only fall so far. It did not matter if an African American had more land, more livestock, or more education, white Americans were the social and racial superiors. However, Stone wrote, that this was changing because of industrialization and the shift to paid wages.

Stone wrote that together “wage slavery” and industrialization were erasing the color line between whites and African Americans. Stone wrote that the new industrial economy was pushing white Americans down to the same level as African Americans. The industrial elite was only interested in manpower and cared nothing for maintaining the social separation common in the South. Once white Americans found themselves stripped of the land, of their privileges, and working alongside African Americans in the factories all social separation would disappear. In a nod to Marx, Stone wrote that this would result in only two social classes, the owners and the wage slaves.¹

While reviewing the works of Wyndham Lewis, Stone wrote approvingly that Lewis was an unapologetic supporter of white supremacy. Lewis, being a writer and artist, believed that the arts provided proof of white cultural superiority. Whites were clearly better poets, writers, painters, and sculptors. Stone wrote that an occasional skilled African American artist might pop up here or there but the overwhelming evidence was that whites contained an artistic spark lacking in the darker races.² Stone noted that while Lewis believed white

¹ Geoffrey Stone, “The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis pt II,” The American Review Vol. 2 No. 1 (November 1933): 82-83.

² *Ibid.*, 83.

culture and arts superior, that did not mean African Americans were incapable of high culture. Lewis wrote that given the proper education African Americans could produce distinguished thinkers, artists, playwrights, and scientists. However, Lewis wrote this had yet to happen. For Lewis, African American art and music represented a “march toward primitivism.”³

Stone wrote that the cultural superiority of whites was under attack. Many whites had come to believe that they were not superior. Stone called this a growing “white inferiority complex.” This feeling of inferiority was being driven by two popular individuals. The first was T.E. Lawrence who abandoned the white race in his attempt to transform himself into an Arab. In Stone’s opinion, by adopting an alien culture Lawrence was arguing that somehow the ways of Bedouin Arabs were superior to his native England. This would not be a problem if it were not for Lawrence’s fame and his promotion of such ideas to the population. The second person arguing for an abandonment of white European culture was Sherwood Anderson. Stone wrote that Anderson argued for whites to reject their own culture and to instead embrace the philosophy of American Indians. Anderson believed that white society was fundamentally unhappy. White society spent too much time chasing material possessions and this resulted in constant dissatisfaction and regret. By adopting the ways of less advanced peoples, whites could enjoy a more happy and carefree existence.⁴ For Stone, the ideas of Lawrence and Anderson were threatening. Both implied that white Americans and Europeans should abandon their own culture and adopt a foreign identity. Even worst,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 84-86.

Stone believed that some whites had accepted the idea that they might be culturally and artistically inferior to other peoples of the world. Stone worried that an idea had taken hold that primitive peoples created purer more meaningful art by embracing the simplistic and the savage.⁵

Stone believed that pride in one's race and its accomplishments was healthy and necessary.⁶ For Stone, if a society did not believe in itself, its actions, and its history then societal collapse would follow. Also a strong attachment to one's own race would help blunt the communist arguments on class conflict. Stone wrote that the Marxists hoped to divide all of society into two groups, the workers and the owners. This division was a requirement for the worker's revolution that would usher in the socialist era. However, race consciousness cut across class lines. If a society divided itself on race then it could not be effectively divided by class. Stone believed, a way forward might be already occurring in Europe. Stone wrote that Adolph Hitler's emphasis on race and racial pride might provide a blueprint for reversing the "white inferiority complex" pushed by Lawrence and Anderson.⁷

Allen Tate, writing in American Review's April 1934 issue, agreed with Stone that the loss of racial solidarity provided communists an opportunity for dividing society along class lines. Tate was far more interested in culture than economics. He wrote that the communists had successfully boiled everything down to an economic argument. This tactic divided everyone into those who supported socialism and the defenders of capitalism. Tate wrote that

⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁶ In his article, Stone seemed to apply this idea to those of European ancestry.

⁷ Stone, "The Ideas of Wyndham Lewis pt II," 92.

this was a false argument designed to confuse the real issues. Tate theorized that what the communists really sought was a way to destroy the status quo. If they could get everyone to align by way of class, then all workers become “abstract brothers” and the West would destroy itself from within. For Tate, this was already happening. The “dark people” were rising up and challenging the colonial order. This dual attack would result in communist revolution. Like in the Soviet Union the outcome would benefit no one. A small elite made up of party members would rule over a vast slave state made up of everyone else. The workers would not achieve their utopia. Instead, Tate wrote that the workers will have constructed their own prison. The new utopian order would be in reality a slave society, where only the few benefit. Tate wrote that if this occurred, the world would lapse into a new Dark Age.⁸

In a separate article published in February of 1934, Tate blamed lynching in the South on poor enforcement of racial norms. Tate wrote that as a member of the white race, he supported white rule in the South. For Tate, the lynching of African Americans was “a symptom of weak, inefficient rule.” Tate believed that if whites felt secure in their position as rulers of the South then the lynching would be unnecessary. Tate wrote that those arguing for the rights of African Americans in the South were being irresponsible. For Tate, the first step in changing the South must be the improvement of agriculture. African Americans, and all southern farmers, must be moved from share cropping to land ownership. To propose

⁸ Allen Tate, “Spengler’s Tract Against Liberalism,” The American Review Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 1934): 46-47.

massive social change without first giving African Americans an economic base was foolhardy in Tate's opinion. It will only result in chaos.⁹

Tate believed that land ownership would fix the problem of white on black lynching. By placing both white and African American farmers on their own separate land, they would be physically separated and economically independent. Tate hoped that this would lessen the racial tensions that fuel white attacks on African Americans.¹⁰ However, giving African Americans their own land would not result in economic equality. Tate wrote that economic equality was a myth. It had never existed and to promise it to any group was silliness. Instead, the new African American farmers would get what they earn from their land. If they run their farms well they will prosper. White farmers will be told the same thing.¹¹

Tate concluded his article by stating that lynchings in the South had been in decline since 1889 but had increased in the 1930s.¹² Tate wrote that the phenomenon of lynching was complicated. However, Tate wrote that four factors contributed to white attacks on African Americans. The first factor was communist agitation. Talk of revolution had made white Southerners uneasy. This unease manifested itself through attacks designed to maintain the social order of segregation. The second factor, also related to communist agitation, was African American criminal behavior. For Tate, Marxists believed that crime was the result of economic necessity. The criminal was therefore not responsible for their

⁹ Allen Tate, "A View of the Whole South," The American Review Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 424.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 423-24.

¹² By recently, Tate meant that lynchings had increased since about 1930 forward. Tate was writing this article in February of 1934.

actions. A criminal was the byproduct and victim of capitalism. While they might be ignorant of Marx, Tate wrote, these ideas had slithered into the minds of many poor African Americans. If accepted this would serve as a justification for criminal behavior. In response, white Southerners resorted to mob justice to set an example. The third factor driving the increase in lynching was the overall economic condition of the nation. The Depression has created fear and instability. White Southerners had projected their fear on African Americans and the result was an increase in attacks. Finally, Tate wrote, that the fourth factor was again outside agitation. However, this time it was not communists. When an African American was accused of a crime and brought to trial, misguided Northerners feel compelled to intervene. This nationalized trials and created racial animosity, which in turn drove the lynchings as many Southerners decided to bypass the trial and go right to the execution.¹³

Frank L. Owsley also placed the problems of Southern race relations at the feet of the communists. Owsley wrote that communists, and other various Marxists, were behind the deterioration of relations. Specifically, Owsley argued that the communists had made promises and arguments that placed whites and African Americans at odds. First, the communists told African Americans that they were the rightful owners of white property. Specifically, that all possessions of white Southerners rightfully belong to African Americans. Owsley believed that this argument was designed to place white and African American Southerners at odds. If an African Americans accepted this line of thinking then stealing was not really stealing. It was a method of returning property to its rightful owner. Even worst, if an African American was caught in the act, a physical altercation might result.

¹³ Tate, "A View of the Whole South," 426.

In Owsley's view this hurt race relations. Next, communists had argued that African Americans deserved their own state. Sometimes this was proposed as a state in the Union and sometimes it was proposed as a truly independent nation. This was particularly insidious as the communists knew this would never happen. Also the communists were fond of promising land, livestock, tools, and support. Owsley wrote that it should be no surprise that the promises made by communists were the same as the promises made during Reconstruction. In reality, the communists were using African Americans as instruments of destruction. The goal was to destabilize the South, paving the way for a Marxist revolution. Just like the peasants in Russia, if the revolution succeeded African Americans would end up slaves of the state.¹⁴

While this was the long term goal, the communists understood that it would take time. Owsley wrote that the communists proclaimed to be fighting to give African Americans land, justice, or a state of their own but in reality they want none of these things. Nor do the communists seek to protect African Americans from a biased Southern judicial system. The Marxists wanted as many high profile cases as possible. They wanted African Americans convicted of crimes and even executed. Owsley wrote that this simply furthered the aims and goals of the communists. Convictions provided martyrs. Martyrs allowed for more propaganda, which the communists hoped, would result in race riots. The communists did not care if this resulted in race riot or dead African Americans as that would serve as even better propaganda.¹⁵

¹⁴ Frank L. Owsley, "Scottsboro, The Third Crusade: The Sequel to Abolition and Reconstruction," The American Review Vol. 1 No. 3 (June 1933): 282-83.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 284-85.

While this was the overall plan of the communists, Owsley wrote that it would not work. The South would not fall into a communist revolution as a result of agitation. The people who would truly be hurt would be the African American community. Owsley believed that Marxist ideologies would be detrimental to African Americans. Owsley wrote that if African Americans tried to rebel and overthrow the state governments, then the National Guard would destroy them. If Marxist rebels tried to wage a guerrilla war against local and state government, then they would face both the National Guard and white paramilitary organizations. So both an overt attempt to seize the state and a prolonged guerrilla war would fail. For the white communist agitators, Owsley argued, this would be a great thing. It would provide more opportunities for propaganda, but it would be a disaster for African Americans in the South.¹⁶

Owsley wrote that although a communist revolution was impossible, Marxist infiltration was already damaging African Americans. Owsley wrote that the communist position on African Americans in the South consisted of five main points. The first point was that all the land worked by African American tenant farmers rightly belonged to the tenant. Owsley argued that this attacked the very idea of property rights. The tenants were only on the land because they had an agreement with the land owner. They did not own the land any more than a factory worker owned the machine he operated. The second lie told to African Americans was that the local and state governments in the South were out to destroy African American communities. This portrayed local government as armies of occupation that should be resisted by force if necessary. The third communist position was related to point

¹⁶ Ibid.

two. Owsley believed that the communists told African Americans in the South that they should have their own separate governments. Communists argued that African Americans should separate themselves from white society and set up their governments. The result of this would be to create a shadow government operating alongside the legitimate elected government. Along with their own government, the communists stated that African Americans should establish their own military. The fourth communist position was that African Americans had the right to secede from the United States. Finally, to back up the first four points, the fifth communist position was that African Americans had the right of self determination. Owsley stated that any one of sane mind, even communists, knew that this plan was impossible.¹⁷ Therefore Owsley believed that the goal of communists was to cause as much chaos and disorder as possible.

Owsley wrote that if African Americans accepted the communist propaganda, it would create lawlessness, theft, and eventually outright rebellion. Owsley then turned to examples that he believed proved his point on outside communist agitation. In the Dadeville Case, an African American tenant farmer shot four deputy sheriffs who came to the farm to serve foreclosure papers. Owsley noted that once inside the house, officers found communist propaganda. This fit with what Owsley believed, that communists were arguing that a tenant farmer was the rightful owner of the land they work. Once brought to trial, the communist party paid lawyer Irwin Schwab to defend the tenant. Owsley worried that this trial would probably be decided by the Supreme Court as Schwab had argued that the trial violated the Fourteenth Amendment. The second example that Owsley presented was a case in

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

Birmingham, Alabama. Owsley cited an incident in which an African American killed two white women and shot another while spewing propaganda out of the communist handbooks. Finally, the third example Owsley presented was the Scottsboro trial. Owsley wrote that the Scottsboro trial had all the signs of communist agitation. In this instance, Owsley believed that the communist party had committed itself to defending the accused to stir up racial anger and hopefully violence.¹⁸

Of all the articles that dealt with race and race relations only one American Review writer challenged the idea of white supremacy in the South. John C. Rawe argued in 1935 that whites and African Americans had proven that they could enjoy the same liberties and rights, could live in the same communities, while maintaining peace and tranquility. However, this argument was part of a larger argument about corporate rights and not the basis for a whole article.¹⁹

Interconnected with the idea of race, the writers of American Review were also concerned with immigration and assimilation. With the issue of immigration, the ideas of ethnicity, religion, and culture all intermingled. R.L. Burgess, writing in 1934, stated that the core idea on which the nation was founded had religious and cultural origins. This was important to understand, according to Burgess, because too many Americans believed the principles of liberty and democracy were universal ideas. Burgess argued that they were not. As new immigrants come the United States many old stock Americans were shocked to discover that the ideas of liberty, democracy, individualism, and federalism were either

¹⁸ Ibid., 281.

¹⁹ John C. Rawe, "Corporations and Human Liberty: A Study in Exploitation pt II, Regaining the Right of the Individual," The American Review Vol. 4 No. 4 (February 1935): 477.

unknown or outright rejected by the new arrivals. Burgess argued that this made many Americans feel that they were part of a “Protestant Garrison” amid a sea of foreign immigrants.²⁰

Burgess wrote that American culture developed from a distinctly northern European heritage. American culture was also dominated by English and Protestant ideas. Burgess wrote that this could be a hard fact to accept for many educated Americans who believed that their ideas were universal. The new immigrants simply did not share the same ideas on core American concepts. Burgess noted that after a wave of immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, old stock Americans passed laws that restricted immigration from eastern and southern Europe. This had the effect of limiting Jewish and Catholic immigration to the United States in favor of immigration from Northern Europe.²¹

Burgess wrote that the new immigrants held views that were at odds with what “old stock” Americans considered universal truths.²² To solve this problem, Burgess examined three possible responses. The first solution would be to stand fast. Simply, declare that American ideas on government and culture were universal. However, there were major problems with this approach. First, Burgess wrote, it was simply not true. Trying to maintain such a lie in the face of evidence was futile. Another problem was this steered the nation in the direction of fascism. Burgess wrote that fascism was not an American tradition

²⁰ R.L. Burgess, “The Protestant Garrison in America,” The American Review Vol. 2 No. 4 (February 1934): 433.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 434. Here Burgess was referencing the Immigration Act of 1924, the National Origins Act, and probably the Asian Exclusion Act.

²² *Ibid.*, 434-5.

and therefore could not be used to defend tradition. The second major response would be to reject all American traditions and declare all cultures morally valid. To do this, Burgess argued, Americans would have to declare their own culture immoral and abandon it. This was also not a solution as it would destroy the nation.²³

With two unworkable solutions discussed, Burgess then turned to his third idea. Burgess wrote that old stock Americans must first admit that the founding and foundational ideas on which the nation stood were not universal. American ideas on democracy, individualism, and liberty came out of Northern Europe and began with the Reformation. However, Burgess stated, that did not make the ideas invalid. Americans could still defend and promote their culture while admitting that new immigrants would have wildly different views.²⁴

Burgess wrote that immigrants should be encouraged to assimilate into American culture. The author noted that this could be dangerous if done improperly. Burgess wrote that if Americans were absolutist in their instance that immigrants shed all of their customs the experiment would fail. Such a position would cause the immigrants to cling tenaciously to their old ways. Instead the assimilation needed to be sold in a “good-humored way.” Old stock Americans needed to convince, not force, the new arrivals to see the benefits of democracy, individualism, and federalism. Also, old stock Americans needed to encourage and promote the best traits of the immigrants. Burgess believed that Americans could not sell

²³ *Ibid.*, 435.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

immigrants on assimilation if the immigrants believed they were assimilating into a culture that did not value them.²⁵

Finally, Americans must assert that they had a history, and traditions that new immigrants must respect. Burgess argued that American culture, more than any other factor, had shaped the course of United States history. If that culture was changed, if the nation lost its identity under a flood of immigration, then the problems which drove the immigrants to American shores would take hold in the United States. Burgess wrote that this cannot be allowed to happen. Americans must first, in a friendly way, defend their traditions and then seek to teach those traditions to the new arrivals.²⁶

With only one notable exception, the writers of American Review accepted the dual ideas of segregation and white supremacy. When events brought white and black Americans into conflict, the writers blamed outside communist agitators for creating or exacerbating the problems. On issues of immigration, the authors did not object as long as the new arrivals assimilated to American culture and ideas. While little was written in the post war conservative journals on immigration, civil rights was an important topic. On this, William F. Buckley was unequivocal. In an editorial on 24 August 1957, Buckley wrote:

The central question that emerges...is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes – the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 437.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Buckley went on to explain that the position of Southern states on the issues of segregation and white supremacy were the same positions held by the editors of National Review.²⁷

²⁷ William F. Buckley. "Why the South Must Prevail." National Review Vol. 4 No. 7 (24 August 1957): 148-49.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY POST WAR CONSERVATISM

Early post war conservatives developed and refined many of the ideas of American Review. This was most clearly seen in positions on communism and the idea of “well distributed property.” However, there will also be changes. Early post war conservatism shifted its position on the roll of government. Conservatives during the Great Depression argued that government power could be used to restore the economy and heal society. With the end of World War II, early post war conservatives embraced a stricter view of limited government. This philosophy argued that the Federal Government had overstepped its role with the New Deal. These conservatives hoped to roll back the New Deal and to restore their vision of federalism. They defined limited government as a Federal Government tightly constrained by the enumerated powers mentioned in the Constitution. Any other powers not granted to the Federal Government would be handled by local or state government.¹

¹ For the sake of clarity, when an author writes about “the government” they mean the Federal Government. When they write about local or state government they always specify “local government,” “city government,” “state government,” and so forth.

American Review ceased publication in October of 1937. This left American Mercury as the sole conservative journal for the next seven years. However, American Mercury seldom discussed conservatism as an ideology. Instead the writers of American Mercury spent most of their time criticizing policy without offering an alternative.² In February of 1944, Human Events was first published. The founding editor, Felix Morley, wrote that Human Events would focus on foreign policy and how events overseas affect the United States. There would be a limited discussion of domestic issues but it would be relegated to the end of each issue in a column called “Not Merely Gossip.”³

Felix Morley was born in Haverford Pennsylvania, and attended Haverford College before receiving a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. In 1933 He received a Ph.D from the Brookings Institution. After gaining his doctorate, Morley edited the Washington Post from 1933 to 1940. While at the Washington Post, he earned a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writings.⁴ In 1940, he left the Post and began his tenure as president of Haverford College.⁵ In 1944, Morley founded Human Events.⁶

² American Mercury had a very long run. It was first printed in 1924 and ceased publication in 1981. However, the journal never shaped conservative opinion in the same way that The Freedmen, American Review, Human Events, and National Review have.

³ Felix Morley, “An Adventure in Journalism: A Year of Human Events, A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen,” *Human Events* Vol. 1 (27 December 1944): VII.

⁴ Martin Weil, “Felix Morley, Scholar, Educator, and Journalist, Dies at 88,” *Washington Post*, 3 March 1982.

⁵ “Felix Morley Backs Wilkie,” *New York Times*, 31 September 1940.

⁶ Weil, “Felix Morley,” 3 March 1982.

Initially, the journal hoped that after the war the United States would return to a policy of isolationism and nonintervention. This would be similar to how the United States participated in World War I and then returned home. However, as a result of the journal's anti-communism Human Events changed from a position of isolationism to supporting active confrontation with the Soviets by the late 1940s.⁷

Felix Morley would be guided by two interconnected principles. First, the journal would seek to “preserve and develop American ideals” and would work to restore the idea that “all men are created equal.”⁸ Second, Morley wrote that Human Events would work to restore journalism to its rightful place. Morley believed that wartime necessity had changed the nature of news. Instead of a press that actively challenged government and held it accountable, journalists had allowed themselves to become a propaganda arm of the state. Morley argued that having an alliance between government and the press was inherently dangerous. It undermined democracy and ran “counter to Christian traditions.” Morley wrote that having the press and government allied might have been necessary during the war but now that victory was close this alliance must be broken. Morley wrote that Human Events would return critical analysis to foreign policy reporting. Morley stated that the writers and editors of Human Events would analyze, and where necessary, criticize the U.S. government on matters of policy and practice.⁹

⁷ Gregory Schneider, *Conservatism in American Since 1930* (New York: New York University Press, 2003): 8.

⁸ Morley, “An Adventure in Journalism,” IX.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VII.

However, Morley argued, this was not to say that Human Events would not have a point of view. Morley wrote that Human Events planned to bring together tough reporting and ideology.¹⁰ The journal would be written from the point of view of American Nationalism. It would respect and promote American tradition upon “which civilization depends.”¹¹ As for the format of Human Events, Morley wrote that the journal would be published weekly. Each edition would only cover one topic. The weekly topic would then be covered in four articles not to exceed 1200 words. In this way, Morley hoped, the reader would get four points of view on the hot topic of the week. Morley promised that the reader would get a clear, concise, and quick review of the issue at hand. After the four articles on foreign policy there would be a single article devoted to domestic concerns or any other topic the editors choose.¹²

The topic most often chosen by the writers and editors of Human Events was anti-communism. Like the pre-war conservatives of American Review, the writers of Human Events were uniform in their opposition to all forms of Marxism. However, the pre-war writers worried mostly about communist infiltration and revolution, they did not concern themselves with the power of the Soviet State. After the end of World War II, the conservative writers of Human Events believed that attacks could come from both within and

¹⁰ Felix Morley wrote that mixing essays and ideology was common in the eighteenth century. He hoped to restore this tradition in Human Events. The writers quote endlessly from the Founding Fathers and founding documents. In fact, the title of the journal was taken from the first line of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

¹¹ Felix Morley, “The Second Year,” *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): VII. Like with American Review, the writers of Human Events defended the ideas of tradition and put such ideas at the center of their ideology.

¹² Morley, “An Adventure in Journalism,” VII.

from without. After WWII, the power of the Soviet military was undeniable. As for the Soviet economy, the writers of Human Events believed that they were facing something new. The Soviets had built a totalitarian “slave state” which denied its people even the most basic human rights. If not stopped this plague would spread to the rest of Europe and eventually the United States.¹³

William Henry Chamberlin, writing in December of 1944, believed that the threat was primarily external. Chamberlin had been a Marxist in his youth before a trip to the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in the 1930s. His experiences caused him to turn on all forms of collectivism be they fascist or Marxist. Chamberlin wrote that Lenin’s Soviet Union sought to promote a international communist revolution. Lenin believed strongly that the revolution in Russia was but one in a series of coming revolutions. After the war ended, Lenin believed, revolutions would sweep the industrialized world. Stalin, Chamberlin wrote, was a different leader entirely. Stalin did not believe that world revolution was possible and instead concerns himself with “great state politics.” Chamberlin wrote that the goals and aspirations of Stalin’s Soviet Union would be instantly recognized by any Russian Czar. Stalin sought to gain control over Eastern Europe, gain access to the Mediterranean, and have a strong presence in Asia. Chamberlin wrote that Stalin had no time to play revolutionary as he was already building a vast empire.

¹³ Kaarel Pusta, “The Problem of the Baltic States,” *Human Events* Vol. 3 No. 2 (9 January 1946): 3. Conservative writers both before and after World War II used the idea of liberty and slavery in their writings. In American Review the writers often talked about “wage slaves” and “slaves of the state.” In Human Events the same type of language existed.

Chamberlin then turned his discussion to American communists. Chamberlin stated that on orders from Moscow, American communists had changed the name of their party, stated that they believed in democracy, and even in free enterprise.¹⁴ Chamberlin write that communist groups in nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia were simply too weak to be a real threat. They would confine their activities to propaganda, infiltrating unions, and organizing. Communists may be disciplined but they were small and unpopular. Chamberlin argued that in the United States, communism was so unpopular that American communists had to set up front organizations to hide who they were. For Chamberlin, the best way to identify them was to look at groups that sought to promote the power or prestige of the Soviet Union or the Soviet system.¹⁵

By analyzing Stalin's war propaganda, Chamberlin came to the conclusion that Stalin had little interest in a world revolution but instead spurred troops to do their patriotic duty.¹⁶ However, Chamberlin argued that Stalin did have plans for international communist groups. Chamberlin feared that Stalin would use local communists as a way to gain influence and take control of nations bordering the Soviet Union. In the nations that fell to Soviet Armies, Stalin enlisted native communists, turning them into a new national leadership. Chamberlin stated that these local communists took their orders from Moscow, but being from the nations they rule, Stalin could cleverly argue that no Soviet takeover had occurred. Chamberlin theorized that this would probably happen in Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania,

¹⁴ William Henry Chamberlin, "The True Soviet Challenge," *Human Events* Vol. 1 (27 December 1944): 44.

¹⁵ William Henry Chamberlin, "Stalin's Fifth Columns," *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 86.

¹⁶ Chamberlin, "The True Soviet Challenge," 44.

Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary, and Albania. It had already happened in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Finally, Chamberlin speculated that Stalin would also try to take Greece if given the chance.¹⁷

Then Chamberlin asked, if world revolution was no longer a communist goal, what was the true threat? The true challenge, according to Chamberlin, was that the United States, and other Western powers, face a centralized, well organized, dictatorship. This dictatorship controlled not only the vastness of Soviet Russia but would soon control large parts of Europe and Asia.¹⁸ In some ways this was beneficial as the struggle with the Soviets would be a conventional fight among major powers. Looking towards the future, Chamberlin wrote that after the war ended, Stalin would seek to expand his borders but had no interest in revolution. Therefore, Chamberlin argued that the best way to understand Soviet aims was to examine the goals of previous Russian leaders. Finally, Chamberlin argued that after the war the Soviets would seek to create a buffer zone between themselves and the Western powers and to expand whenever they were given the chance.¹⁹

With the war ending, Chamberlin wrote another article discussing the conflicts outcome. While proven correct, Chamberlin was furious with Soviet actions in the nations they occupied. Chamberlin lamented that the United States and Britain fought the war to

¹⁷ Chamberlin, "Stalin's Fifth Columns," 84-85.

¹⁸ Chamberlin wrote this article in December of 1944. At that time the United States and Britain were still fighting to enter Germany. It was still unknown how much of Germany would fall to Soviet armies.

¹⁹ Chamberlin, "The True Soviet Challenge," 46. Chamberlin's analysis of Soviet intentions fit closely with what occurred after the war.

stop the appeasement of one tyrant only to end up appeasing another.²⁰ Chamberlin wrote that the war began over the independence of Poland. With the war over, Poland was given to the Soviet Union. However, it was not just Poland, the West had abandoned all of Eastern Europe to Stalin. Chamberlin angrily wrote that Stalin promised free elections at Yalta and now clearly no free elections would ever take place.²¹ The West did much to win the war but then lost the peace at the bargaining table.²² However, Chamberlin wrote that did not mean that the struggle with Stalin was over. The United States and her allies must understand that Stalin, while a wartime ally, was an enemy of the Western world. The United States must use its power intelligently and realistically to roll back what has been lost. Only with great effort, Chamberlin wrote, will the United States be able to defeat the Soviets and restore human freedom.²³

While clearly shocked at the scale of the Soviet betrayal, Chamberlin noted that it was predictable. Chamberlin pointed out that when the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia the Soviet Foreign Commissioner Vyacheslav Molotov said “and we declare that all nonsense about Sovietizing the Baltic countries is only to the interests of our common enemies and of all Soviet provocateurs.” The Soviets ultimately placed the Baltic nations under military occupation, banned all political parties except the Communist party, and forced the population to vote without giving them a choice of

²⁰ William Henry Chamberlin, “Some Consequences of the Second World War,” *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 140.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

²² *Ibid.*, 142.

²³ *Ibid.*, 143.

candidates. For Chamberlin, and other post war conservative writers, this proved that the Soviets could never be trusted to keep their word. Chamberlin wrote that the Soviets made promises, broke those promises, and congratulated themselves on their cunning.²⁴

Like Chamberlin, Felix Morley the Human Events editor was shocked by the actions of the Soviet Union in the wake of World War II. In a series of articles in 1945 and 1946, Morley wrote on the scale of the Soviet betrayal and what the United States should do, and not do, about it. Morley believed that the Soviets had gained an “outstanding diplomatic victory” at Yalta. The Soviet victory was so complete that newspapers in the United States tried to find any Soviet compromise no matter how small. For example, Morley wrote that the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin ran a story entitled “Soviet Cooperation” in which the Soviets promised to leave a handful of small Polish villages under their own governments.²⁵ For Morley, even things that the Soviets agreed to at Yalta, like elections, were simply lies. Morley wrote that the Soviet elections in 1946 were a fraud. The only candidates who ran in nations like Poland were pre-approved from Moscow. Citizens in occupied nations would not be allowed by law to criticize the local communist parties or their candidates. The Soviets controlled the elections and took possession of the ballots. Also it was not a secret ballot. To vote against a hand picked communist candidate required a black ballot. In such an atmosphere of intimidation, Morley wrote, no sane person would cast a vote against the communists.²⁶

²⁴ William Henry Chamberlin, “Orphans of the Baltic,” *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 14.

²⁵ Felix Morley, “For Yalta, Read Munich,” *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 29.

²⁶ Felix Morley, “Two Conflicting Philosophies,” *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 176.

Moving from foreign affairs to domestic concerns, Morley wrote that domestic communist infiltrators demand protections and freedoms that they sought to destroy. They asked for the right to free speech, the right to organize, to stand for office, and for protections under the law. Morley wrote that if victorious they would deny these freedoms to everyone else. In Morley's opinion, in all the ways that count communists and fascists were no different. They both believed in a single party state where all power rightfully belonged to the government. Morley wrote that this could be difficult for many Americans to accept because the Soviets were our allies in the war and sacrificed more than any other nation to defeat Hitler. However, Morley argued that the only way for the United States to prevail in this new struggle was to accept that the Soviet Union and the United States were mortal enemies. That the alliance was merely a convenience against a mutual enemy. The next step was to use all existing laws to ferret out and destroy domestic communist infiltration.²⁷

However, Morley worried, that this was just one aspect of the Soviet victory. The U.S.S.R. eliminated Germany as a military threat. Italy was so weakened that communist takeover was now possible. Japan, once a check on Soviet power in Asia, was in ruins. So in both the West and the East there was no power capable of counterbalancing the Soviet Union. In the Western nations that survived, communist infiltration into the colleges, labor unions, media, and government posed a serious threat.²⁸

While Morley wrote about the problem of domestic communist infiltration, Frank C. Hannighen had no hesitation in proposing a solution. Hannighen wrote that first, Congress

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁸ Felix Morley, "Mr. Baruch Poses the Issue," *Human Events* Vol. 3 No. 25 Issue 125 (19 June 1946): 2-3.

needed to pass a law that would allow for the termination of employees “regardless of regulations.” The next step was simple, fire all communists and fellow travelers from the State Department. Hannighen believed that this would quickly clean out the State Department which “is honeycombed with communists and fellow travelers.” After the State Department the same process should be used with the Department of War, the intelligence services, and finally all sectors of government and academia.²⁹

Morley believed that the coming battle would be a struggle over ideology. He wrote that free enterprise and capitalism could not exist in a world dominated by the Soviet Union. For Morley, socialism and capitalism were completely separate ideas. They could not exist together; one must destroy the other. In the same way, the United States and Soviet Russia, while allies during the war, were now bitter enemies. One must destroy the other. Morley wrote that this was a different situation than what led to World War I or World War II. With World War I, the world was divided into half a dozen great powers jockeying for position and territory. After World War II, the world was divided into two camps. In one camp you had the United States and nations that embraced democracy and capitalism. In the other you had the Soviet Union and her conquered nations. Morley believed that any attempt at cooperation was doomed to fail. The Soviet Union and the United States were fundamentally different societies. On key issues like religion, the nature of humanity, and the role of the state the two major powers had no similarities. For Morley, coexistence was simply impossible.³⁰

²⁹ Frank C. Hannighen, “Not Merely Gossip,” *Human Events* Vol. 3 No. 26 (26 June 1946): V.

³⁰ Morley, “Mr. Baruch Poses the Issue,” 2.

Morley believed that the relationship between the two powers was so bad that people had begun talking about an inevitable war.³¹ In the case of a war who would win? Morley wrote that the United States would defeat the Soviet Union as long as the United States retained sole possession of atomic weapons. However, it would be a pyrrhic victory. Morley wrote that to destroy the Soviets through nuclear bombardment would be devastating to the American psyche. It would change, fundamentally, who Americans were as a people. Morley worried that such a change would not be only psychological, the United States would also lose what it fought to protect. Morley wrote that the only way to fight and defeat totalitarian regimes was to adopt many of their practices.³² The author worried that a war with the Soviets so soon after a war with the Nazis would mean that the government expansion seen during the Great Depression would be permanent. War would mean a new draft, new propaganda, and a state that would control all of society. Morley believed that the result would be a single party state and a dictatorship. So in victory, the United States would lose all it fought for.³³

By 1948, Chamberlin had changed his opinion on the danger of domestic communist infiltration. In 1945, Chamberlin described homegrown communists as mostly a nuisance. However the years between 1945 and 1948 had seen a civil war in Greece and the takeover of both Romania and Czechoslovakia. Chamberlin urged the Republican party to include anti-communism in its platform. Chamberlin wrote a draft of what he would like to see. He

³¹ While ideologically anti-Communist, Morley did not support direct military action against the Soviet Union.

³² Felix Morley, "The Betrayal of Values," *Human Events* Vol. 3 No. 36 Issue 136 (4 September 1946): 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2.

wrote, “We pledge a vigorous enforcement of existing laws against communists and enactment of such new legislation as may be necessary to expose the treasonable activities of communists and defeat their objective of establishing here a godless dictatorship controlled from abroad.”³⁴ This exact wording appeared as part of the Republican party platform in 1948.

Writing in 1948, Edna Lonigan worried about domestic communism but was unable to come up with a viable solution. Lonigan wrote that the various communist parties in the United States were not a true political parties. Instead, Lonigan believed that they were agents of the U.S.S.R and directed by the N.K.V.D. If they were spies then the solution would be simple. Direct the F.B.I to investigate and indict. However, Lonigan noted that the activities of the domestic communists seldom included espionage. More often, they sought to place their members in key positions in the government, colleges, businesses, media, and the military. Once in position, these infiltrators attempted to either influence decisions, or if that failed, to upset policy. Lonigan lamented that while their presence was known there was little that could be done. They had broken no laws and, therefore, could not be arrested. So they were free to wreak havoc from within. While they might not be able to stage a non-violent revolution they could do real damage the United States.³⁵

Like with American Review, the writers of Human Events were very concerned with the ideas of liberty and its connection with property. In 1948, Edna Lonigan explored the

³⁴ William Henry Chamberlin, “Civil Liberties and Communist Conspiracy,” *Human Events* Vol. 5 No. 32 Issue 237 (11 August 1948): 2.

³⁵ Edna Lonigan, “More Than Espionage,” *Human Events* Vol. 5 No. 36 Issue 241 (8 September 1948): 1.

connections between freedom and property in her article “The Roots of Freedom.” Lonigan wrote that American ideas on freedom were a product of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. To properly understand these freedoms it was important to understand that they were not universal timeless ideas but instead the product of a specific time and place.³⁶ In addition, like in the seventeenth and eighteenth century liberty was again under attack. However, Lonigan wrote that this time it was not monarchs and nobles who were seeking to strip liberty from the people. It was not an assault from above it was an attack from below. Common men and women, stirred up by professional agitators, were attacking the very freedoms they should be protecting. Both communists and non-Communists had learned that resentment and entitlement were powerful tools with which to whip up the poor and disenfranchised. Lonigan worried that a skilled politician could use anger to come to power upon a wave of popular discontent.³⁷

To prevent this, Lonigan wrote, Americans must understand the root of freedom. Echoing the ideas of American Review, Lonigan wrote that the foundation on which all freedom rests was well distributed property. In agriculture this meant millions of small independent farmers, who owned their own land and could produce most of what their families need. Lonigan argued that this provided the farmer with true freedom. The farmer would not be dependent on the government, banks, or the promises of politicians. For the non-agrarian economy, true freedom rested with small business ventures. A shop owner would be less free than the farmer but, nevertheless, could achieve a good degree of

³⁶ This theory fits closely with what was argued in the pages of American Review.

³⁷ Edna Lonigan, “The Roots of Freedom,” *Human Events* Vol. 5 No. 22 Issue 227 (2 June 1948) 1.

economic independence. Lonigan believed that this kind of well distributed property was a roadblock to those who sought to destroy freedom. First, Lonigan believed that a man who was economically independent would not covet the property of others. Such a man could not be stirred up by talk of redistributing property. He was immune from resentment and entitlement. The same was true of the small business owner. In addition, Lonigan write that if property was well distributed it was impossible for a tyrant to seize it, and it would create an economy that was resistant to central planning.³⁸

Lonigan wrote that this was the key to understanding freedom and for maintaining a free society. Lonigan argued that no nation would maintain its freedom if they allowed the destruction of well distributed property. It was also important to understand that no business activity that depended on the state could ever be free of the dictates of the government. Government dependency, Lonigan argued, could not equal real freedom. Handouts, support, and benefits might seem tempting but they would tie an individual to the government. Such benefits destroyed self-sufficiency, turned neighbor against neighbor, and ultimately stripped every one of their liberty.³⁹

Finally, Lonigan turned to Europe and what should be done to fix the devastation of World War II. Lonigan wrote that the goal for Europe should be to restore true liberty. Too many politicians and commentators were focused on stopping communism. Lonigan wrote that the best, and maybe only, way to stop communism was to ensure well distributed

³⁸ Ibid., 2. Lonigan was not arguing that commerce, industry, or banks made liberty impossible. Instead, she was arguing that large scale industry created economic inequality that allows crafty politicians to use the resentment of the underclass to gain power.

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

property. If the United States helped Europe regain property, Europeans could then embrace liberty, and abandon central planning. Finally, for Europe, and the United States, well distributed property created societies based on private economic activity. Only then could individuals be truly free.⁴⁰ Apart from well distributed property, Lonigan argued that education was also a necessary component in defending liberty. She argued that people like Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin succeed because too many people did not understand what freedom and liberty meant. Finally, Lonigan argued that if people did not understand the interplay of liberty, property, and democracy they could not defend freedom against those who sought to take it away.⁴¹

Felix Morley, editor of American Mercury, wrote that the greatest danger to liberty was the creeping encroachment of state bureaucracy. Morley wrote that all centralized states be they communist, socialist, or fascist used the power of bureaucracy to crush liberty and destroy the idea of “government for and by the people.”⁴² While noting the danger, Morley did not believe that state centralization would destroy liberty forever. He wrote that even if centralization won, eventually, the power of liberty and individualism was more powerful than totalitarianism. Morley believed that in the end the people would rise up and destroy the centralized state.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Morley, “An Adventure in Journalism,” X.

⁴³ Ibid. XI.

Conservatives view on limited government was one noticeable change from pre-war conservatism. During the Great Depression conservatives, traditionalists, and agrarianists often favored using the power of the government to achieve their goals. After the experience of the New Deal and World War II, post war conservatism embraced limited government. The reasons for this change was complex. During the economic collapse of the Great Depression pre war conservatives argued that only the power of the state could correct the economy and repair society. They borrowed much from the example of fascism in Italy. For these pre-war writers, fascism seemed the only alternative to failed democracy and a bulwark against communism. After the war ended, and the economy recovered, they abandoned such ideas and returned to an even earlier form of conservatism. They reclaimed a style of conservatism that argued for a very limited role for government. Each author defined limited government in different ways. However, some themes did emerge. On the economy and business, they favored a laissez faire approach championed by presidents like Calvin Coolidge. Pre war conservatives believed that the role of the federal government should be strictly limited to the enumerated powers in the Constitution. They also believed that any activity not specifically mentioned in the enumerated powers was reserved to the states under the Tenth Amendment. This signals both a change from the approach championed in the 1930s and a return to conservative ideas from before the Great Depression.

Edna Lonigan wrote a series of three articles for Human Events that set out the journal's position on the size and scope of government. Lonigan wrote that while the New Deal ended with the start of World War II, the damaged caused by Roosevelt's programs

continued. She believed that it would take a great deal of time and effort to reverse and repair the damage.

Lonigan believed that the New Deal was connected with previous efforts to erode representative government. For many conservatives, Lonigan included, the New Deal represented an American reaction to a global shift towards big government. This shift began with the policies of the Soviet Union, continued under the fascist regimes of Hitler and Mussolini, and had now metastasized into accepted American policy. Lonigan believed that the best way to counter the drift towards ever larger government was to stress the limited government principles of America's founding.⁴⁴

Lonigan wrote that the New Deal coalition was not a true political movement but a conglomeration of interest groups. These groups behaved and voted as tribes. Individualism did not factor into their thinking. Some of these groups included poor farmers, unionized labor, southern Democrats, and African Americans. Lonigan wrote that each group was promised a piece of the pie and a seat at the table. It was the job of various agitators, like labor union bosses, to guarantee that their group showed up and supported the coalition.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Lonigan argued that the preferred method of rewarding each group was bribery. However, if a politician payed for votes he would be arrested and sent to jail. The genius of the New Deal, in Lonigan's view, was that politicians had discovered a way to buy votes by drawing on the public treasury. A politician took money from a group that did not

⁴⁴ Edna Lonigan, "The End of the Beginning," *Human Events* Vol. 4 No. 1 Issue 153 (1 January 1947): 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

support him and then gave it to another group in exchange for loyalty. Congress had surrendered the power of the purse as bribery benefits them as well. Lonigan believe that all politicians from the president to a lowly councilmen used this method to ensure reelection. Average citizens who benefit from redistribution came to accept this as normal, forgetting that they had a hand in their neighbor's pocket.⁴⁶

Lonigan wrote that as the power of the state grew. The checks and balances built into the system no longer worked. For Lonigan, this was already happening. She wrote that the Supreme Court bent to threats of court packing. The House and Senate saw the advantages of legal bribery and became a rubber stamp for the executive. Lonigan wrote that as long as everyone agreed with the wishes of the president they would get something to pass along to their constituencies. Normally when governments engaged in this type of behavior they swiftly go bankrupt. However, Lonigan wrote that the planners of the New Deal had a solution to that problem as well. The government could print all the money it needed. The unchecked printing of money would cause inflation unless other measures were taken. Therefore, at the beginning of the New Deal, Roosevelt banned citizens from owning gold, stopped the U.S. Treasury from issuing gold coins, and ended the practice of allowing people to redeem paper money for gold.⁴⁷

While Americans were focused on fighting and winning World War II, Lonigan wrote, the Roosevelt administration transformed the Federal Government into an all powerful

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

state.⁴⁸ The proponents of the state argued that they were using their power for the betterment of the common man. Lonigan wrote that the average citizen, especially those on the dole, accepted this argument and offered up ever more power in return for a promise of economic security. Lonigan theorized that if this continued society would divide into two groups. The politicians would coalesce into a new aristocracy and, the like the serfs of old, the people would become peasants, dependent on the government for their livelihood.⁴⁹ Lonigan wrote that this process must be stopped. Lonigan bemoaned the fact that the United States Constitution would not help as judges either agreed with the change or were too afraid to challenge it. Unless something changed, a once independent people would be unable to live without government assistance, taxes would destroy small business, and money would be worthless. The only way to stop this inevitable shift backwards was constant struggle. The politicians and powerful would not stop on their own; they would continue until the nation was destroyed.⁵⁰

After stating the problem, Lonigan then proposed a solution. Lonigan believed that reduced taxes, a restored civil society, and federalism was the solution to big government. First on taxes, Lonigan wrote that no nation could claim to be free if its government seized more than 20% of an individual's income.⁵¹ The more money the government took in, the greater would be its reach and power. In addition, the more government spent the more it

⁴⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹ Lonigan does not state if she means federal, state, or local government. However, the implication is that she is referring to the federal government.

would want to spend. Lonigan argued that with unlimited funds, the government's tentacles would creep into every aspect of life. Business, education, science, and the arts would all be regulated, controlled, or paid for by the government. Citizens would be forced to go to the government for either approval or funding of all ventures. While not a long term solution, Lonigan recommended keeping taxes low to limit the spread of government as she believed that a government derived its power by way of spending the peoples money. Therefore for Lonigan, the best way to limit the power of the state was to limiting its money.⁵²

Next, on civil society, Lonigan wrote that historically people created the organizations and associations they needed. It was an organic process. If a town was founded the people soon formed a school, a church, and a chamber of commerce. The government did not have to step in and make this happen. The people knew what they needed and what they did not. There was no waste, little corruption, and the needs of the community were meet. This happened in small towns, large cities, in nations, and even internationally. Lonigan argued that when the government got involved, when they stepped in to set up the schools or to regulate trade, the people began to associated these activities with a responsibility of the government. If the government failed in its new duties, or did them poorly, the citizens believed that it was not their job to intervene. After all, they pay their taxes, it was now somebody else's job. Therefore the solution was also related to taxes. Lonigan wrote that if government was starved of funds it would be unable to displace civil society. In places

⁵² Edna Lonigan, "Taxes and the Republic," *Human Events* Vol. 4 No. 36 Issue 188 (3 September 1947): 1.

where the government had already destroyed civil society the lack of funds would compel the citizens reassume their responsibilities.⁵³

Lonigan's third solution was a return to federalism. She wrote, that from a problem solving standpoint, centralization was a mistake. Lumping all the major problems together in Washington, D.C., and expecting bureaucrats and politicians to solve them was foolishness. Lonigan believed that the history of both the United States and the United Kingdom showed that problems were better handled at the local level. If the local government was unable to solve the problem, then the state government might help. Few, if any, problems required the intervention of the Federal government. The government had taken on roles rightfully reserved to the state. American citizens should not look first to the Federal government to solve problems. Instead citizens should look first to local government, then to their state government. Finally, Lonigan argued that only as a last resort should people look to the Federal government. For Lonigan, conservatives must make the argument that a government that was closer to the people was best. Only by winning the argument first can federalism be restored.⁵⁴

Writing in the "Not Merely Gossip" section of Human Events, Frank Hanighen discussed the idea of limited government. Hanighen wrote that the reduction of the power and size of government was the "paramount issue of the day." Not only did the size of government need to be reduced, but after four terms of Roosevelt, the power of the presidency must also be reduced. Hanighen wrote that many of the powers of the presidency

⁵³ Edna Lonigan, "The Mountain of Miseries," *Human Events* Vol. 111 No. 42 Issue 142 (16 October 1946): 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

needed to be returned to the Congress. After that, Congress needed to return power to the states. Quoting from Senator Taft, Hanighen wrote that the Congress needed to commission a study of the New Deal. The study would examine the powers granted to the government under the New Deal. In addition, the study would find ways to either eliminate those powers or move them to the states.⁵⁵

Picking up on the idea of taxation and its connection to limited government, Frank Chodorov wrote that the problem really started with the Sixteenth Amendment. He argued that while the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction settled the issue of secession it left the states with a great deal of autonomy. It was the Sixteenth Amendment, Chodorov wrote, that destroyed the states's commonwealth status. As money flowed into the federal coffers, people shifted their loyalty from their states and to the federal government. Also, with its new-found wealth, the Federal government was able to start interfering in previously local matters like schools, roads, etc. Finally, under the New Deal the Federal government became the source of subsidies, aid, and job programs. Chodorov wrote that this finished the job that the Sixteenth Amendment started and turned Washington, D.C. into "the Mecca of handouts."⁵⁶

Felix Morley, the Human Events editor, agreed with Chodorov's argument. Morley wrote that the New Deal had transformed American elections. What had before been contests over ideas and the direction of the nation were now defined by groups maneuvering for handouts. Morley wrote that progressive groups, who claimed to represent average

⁵⁵ Frank C. Hanighen, "Not Merely Gossip," *Human Events* Vol. 4 No. 2 (8 January 1947): 5.

⁵⁶ Frank Chodorov, "Dewey Out-Centralized Hamilton," *Human Events* Vol. 4 No. 48 Issue 200 (26 November 1947): 1.

Americans, made promises that equated rights with commodities. In this way, a progressive candidate argued that it was someone's right to have this, or be paid that.⁵⁷

Finally, the writers of Human Events used their limited government arguments against the newly created United Nations. Felix Morley wrote that the United Nations suffered all the same drawbacks and difficulties as the defunct League of Nations. While Morley would not argue to give the U.N. more power, he did not see it as having any real benefit.⁵⁸ Edna Lonigan also disagreed with the creation of a new international body. She wrote that the problems being tackled by the U.N. would be solved more efficiently by private groups. Civil society, either national or international groups, were much more responsive and creative at dealing with issues as they had greater flexibility. An international body of bureaucrats was not the place to take issues of global importance.⁵⁹

The early post war conservative writers of Human Events took much of their ideology from the writers of the 1930s. Both the writers of the 1930s and the 1940s agreed on the idea of anti-communism. In addition they agreed that the nation should avoid war with the Soviet Union. Such a war, even if won, would do irreversible damage to the United States. They also agreed that communism was both an internal and external threat. They believed that within the United States communists worked to undermine the foundation of the nation. The solution to this, for both writers of pre and post war conservatism, was to use the power of the Federal government to investigate, and possibly arrest, communists. As for the external

⁵⁷ Felix Morley, "Two Conflicting Philosophies," *Human Events* Vol. 2 (1945): 177.

⁵⁸ Morley, "Mr. Baruch Poses the Issue," 1.

⁵⁹ Lonigan, "The Mountain of Miseries," 4.

threat of communism, both pre and post war conservatives favored a strategy of confrontation with the Soviet Union but stopped short of arguing for war. On economic matters, the writers of American Review and Human Events favored the concept of “well distributed property.” In this economy small farmers would strive for economic independence and land ownership. As with farming, businesses were best when they were small and local. However, a business owner was less independent than the farmer. Finally, the biggest change from pre to post war conservatism was the embrace of limited government. Pre-war conservatives sought to use the power of the government to fix the economy and restore American traditions. After the war, conservatives returned to an idea that predated the conservatism of the 1930s and adopted the philosophy of limited government.

CHAPTER X

POST WAR CONSERVATISM

By the mid 1950s, the few conservative journals still in existence were failing. American Review, which folded in 1937, left a vacuum in conservative thought that no other journal could fill. American Mercury, in publication since 1924, failed to reach a broad audience. Focusing mostly on criticizing New Deal policies, American Mercury neglected the more critical task of defining and shaping conservative ideology.¹ In December of 1952, facing financial collapse, eccentric millionaire Russell Maguire bought American Mercury. Maguire, a noted Anti-Semite, took editorial control of American Mercury and began launching attacks against all things Jewish. In protest, the top editors and writers resigned.² This included a young Yale educated conservative named William Buckley.³ After this event,

¹ Linda Bridges and John R. Coyne, Jr, *Strictly Right: William F. Buckley, Jr. and the American Conservative Movement* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2007): 28-29.

² John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988): 112.

³ Bridges and Coyne, *Strictly Right*, 28-29.

American Mercury lost any credibility it once had.⁴ Human Events was still in publication but its focus on foreign policy made it difficult to reach a wider audience. Human Events' format also hurt the journal. Each issue was devoted to a single topic. That topic was examined by four writers who were limited to 1200 words. This made Human Events more of a pamphlet than a true journal.

In 1955, The Freedman, a prewar journal, was revived by Henry Hazlitt, John Chamberlain, and Suzanne LaFollette.⁵ However, soon The Freedman suffered from internal difficulties. The journal was plagued by infighting among the editors and writers. Forrest Davis was put in control of the journal but his temperament and opinions exacerbated the situations. Davis angered his fellow editors and alienated the journal's owners. The result was that the journal lost its most talented writers and editors. After the writers and editors left, the financial backers followed. This left The Freedman without its best writers and struggling to cover its costs. Leonard Reed, a follower of the Austrian School, agreed to save the journal. However, Reed had conditions. He demanded that The Freedman focus only on economic matters. This change made the journal dull, plodding, and academic.⁶

Therefore, by the mid 1950s the situation for conservative journals was bleak. The Freedman existed but few people read it. Human Events was forced to abandon its format and transform itself into a weekly news report. Finally, American Mercury's Anti-Semitism made it a pariah within conservative circles.

⁴ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 112.

⁵ Bridges and Coyne, *Strictly Right*, 28-29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

This situation left an opening for a new journal. The former writers and editors of Human Events, American Mercury, and The Freedman were eager to write for a new conservative journal. Most of the early writers and contributors to National Review had written previously for one or more of the earlier journals. Therefore the failure of previous journals ended up benefiting National Review. First, the failed journals provided writers to National Review and second, there was no other reputable conservative journal in publication.⁷

It would be difficult to tell the story of the origins of National Review without briefly discussing William F. Buckley, Jr. Buckley argued that modern conservatism sprang from the pages of National Review. He discounted or diminished the work of other conservative voices and journals. However, Buckley's own turn towards conservatism began because of American Review writers especially Albert J. Nock. Nock was a friend of William Frank Buckley, Sr. Soon, Buckley, Jr. began reading the works of Nock while in High School. Nock became Buckley's favorite writer. Many of the quotes and ideas attributed to Buckley were either direct quotes or paraphrased ideas of Albert Nock and other American Review writers.⁸ However, while many of his ideas were borrowed, Buckley succeeded where other conservatives had failed.

Buckley's personality and character accounted for much of his appeal. Buckley brought three indispensable qualities desperately lacking among conservative writers. First,

⁷ Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement* (New York: Twayne, 1993): 11.

⁸ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 44.

he had an unquestioning belief in himself and his mission.⁹ While in elementary school in London, Buckley wrote King George VI demanding that Great Britain repay its war debt to the United States.¹⁰ After graduating from Yale University in 1950, Buckley published God and Man at Yale. In this work Buckley attacked his alma mater for its intolerance towards Christianity and capitalism. He also questioned the system of tenure. Buckley wrote that lifelong employment created professors who were unaccountable to community standards. Buckley believed that the citizens of the town and state in which a university resided had every right to dictate what was taught in the classroom. In Buckley's opinion, when a professor attacked capitalism, Christianity, or the traditions of the United States, the community had the right to remove that professor if they wished.¹¹ Second, Buckley had capital. Buckley could draw on his father's wealth, business contacts, and friends. Finally, Buckley was funny. Most of the writers of American Review, American Mercury, Human Events, and the others, approached conservatism as a dull intellectual exercise. Their writing was plodding, methodical, logical and ultimately boring. Buckley embed conservatism with a sense of fun, both in his writings and in his lifestyle.¹²

This last point, more than any other, helped explain the success of National Review. Their had been previous journals that defined conservative ideology. Buckley took this

⁹ John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004): 50.

¹⁰ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 18.

¹¹ Buckley believed that the students and graduates of a university were like current and former customers. If they did not like what a professor was selling they could fire that professor. When asked what affect this would have on academic freedom Buckley replied that the professors can go to a school and town in which their ideas were accepted.

¹² Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 50.

conservatism and made it fun. Before Buckley, the left's response to conservatism was to simply ignore it. However, Buckley was impossible to ignore. During the day he would write articles for National Review, in the evenings he would appear on television, and at night he was a fixture of New York's social scene. He was a true "man about town" and this more than any other factor separated him from previous conservative intellectuals.¹³

In the first issue of National Review, Buckley wrote that the intent of his journal was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" Buckley wrote that National Review would work to halt the growth of atheism and collectivism in the United States. The journal would work to protect American traditions, argue for limited government, and attack all forms of Marxism. In addition, the name National Review reflected the journal's goal of bringing all conservatives together in one national movement.¹⁴ For inspiration, Buckley looked to unlikely sources. The Nation and The New Republic had helped create and promote liberalism and F.D.R's New Deal. Buckley hoped to duplicate this success.¹⁵

Before any of this could happen Buckley, needed to find a way to fund the upstart journal. Buckley leaned on his father for an initial investment of 100,000 dollars.¹⁶ However, political journals seldom generated a profit and never in the first few years. Buckley figured that he would need another half a million to cover the inevitable budget

¹³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁴ Ibid., 50.

¹⁵ Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (New York: The Free Press, 1999): 78-79. and John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988): 118.

¹⁶ Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr*, 118.

shortfalls.¹⁷ He found his funding among the business class, former Yale classmates, and from conservative actors in Hollywood. By September of 1955, Buckley had raised almost three hundred thousand dollars, enough to start publication but not enough to go two full years without substantial profit.¹⁸

With a budget in place, Buckley started his new journal. William S. Schlammm, who had encouraged Buckley to found National Review, joined the magazine. Schlammm agreed with the three principles of limited government, tradition, and anti-Marxism but further refined their scope.¹⁹ For limited government, the magazine would look to the writings of Frank Chodorov. Chodorov's theories focused on the ownership of land. He believed that true freedom stemmed from land ownership and independent farmers. This idea was clearly popular with the writers at American Review, especially Albert Jay Nock. On issues of tradition, Schlammm believed that National Review should look to the writings of Russell Kirk. Kirk believed that tradition, and especially Christianity, were central the success of western civilization. Finally, for anti-Marxism, National Review should follow the writings of James Burnham. Burnham had written anti-Communist articles for The Freedman and later joined National Review as a contributor.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., 119-20.

¹⁸ Ibid., 120-21.

¹⁹ William "Willi" Schlammm was born in 1904 in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He became a communist party member in 1920 and met with Lenin shortly before Lenin's death. Schlammm left the communist party in 1929. In 1944, He moved the United States and became a naturalized citizen. He worked as an assistant for Henry Luce the editor of Life, Time, and Fortune magazines. Schlammm then became a co-founder of National Review and its first senior editor. He later broke with Buckley and became an editor for the John Birch society newsletter.

²⁰ Like with William Schlammm, James Burnham had been a communist in his earlier years. He broke with communism in the early 1940s.

Schlamm and Buckley believed that journals like American Review had failed not because of their ideas, but because of their approach. The old journals had alienated both friends and foes. Therefore, Schlamm and Buckley were careful not to offend wealthy Republican donors who supported the moderate approach of President Eisenhower.²¹ Buckley and Schlamm planned to criticize President Eisenhower's policies without attacking the president personally. They hoped to show Eisenhower as a phony conservative so the president could not claim leadership of the movement. This type of approach was typical in the early years of National Review. For example, National Review would attack the United Nations, but not N.A.T.O. The journal would support internationalism but not interventionism. In this way, they could make their arguments without being painted as extreme. They hoped to give conservatism a new image and repackage conservatism for a new generation.²²

A major part of this repackaging was to change the look and tone of conservatism. The journals of the Old Right put little or no thought into creating a slick modern journal that would appeal to a general audience. Journals like American Mercury, The Freedman, and especially American Review hoped to start a conversation among conservatives. If non-conservatives wished to join in, then all the better, but the goal was not to bring new people into the movement. In previous journals the writing was logical, informative, lengthy and ultimately very dull. To change this, Buckley chose his wife Priscilla Buckley to be the managing editor of National Review. Before coming to National Review, Mrs. Buckley

²¹ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 118-19.

²² *Ibid.*, 119.

worked in daily journalism and radio. It was her job to take the mountain of news that came across her desk and turn it into short, peppy, readable articles. On the radio, she would take the days news and transform it into fifteen minute news summaries. Mrs. Buckley believed that to be successful, National Review had to be concise and clear. Articles should get to the point. Any articles that meandered around in an attempt to set the stage or paint a picture would be rewritten to conform to her guidelines. Within the first paragraph a reader should know what the article is about and the writer's thesis. National Review would be a place for journalists, not creative writing majors.²³

The look of National Review also had to be different. Prewar conservative journals spent little time worrying about how they looked. Typically, they had a plain cover, a table of contents, and articles. That was it. Old journals from the 1930s had no pictures, and no styling, nothing but black ink on white pages. National Review hired James P. McFadden to change this. McFadden wanted to create a journal that looked more like a magazine. First, it should be in color and not black and white. It should have pictures, an interesting cover, and feel contemporary. Towards this end McFadden recommended hiring James P. O'Brian. O'Brian worked at the New York Mirror. He had a track record of modernizing the look of magazines and streamlining production. O'Brian was also a conservative and a Catholic. O'Brian demanded that National Review have better covers and art than its competitors. However, he did not stop there. O'Brian wanted to change everything about how a journal should look. He reworked the mail solicitations, color schemes, and fonts. O'Brian even had a say in advertising. If an ad did not look modern, it would not run in National Review.

²³ Priscilla L. Buckley, *Living It Up at National Review: A Memoir* (Dallas Texas: Spence Publishing Company, 2005): 6.

O'Brian brought in young artists so National Review would not just seem young, it would be created by young people.²⁴

For the tone of National Review, Buckley wanted a journal that was biting, witty, and a mix seriousness and frivolity. This type of writing was not new. British weeklies, with which Buckley was familiar, used this style with success. Some prewar conservatives, like Russell Kirk, did not like this approach. Kirk wrote that it made National Review look “sophomoric.” Brushing off Kirk’s criticism, Buckley believed that National Review had to be different. Conservatives had tried the plodding academic style of journals like American Review. Buckley believed that it was time for a change in tactics.²⁵ In the end, Buckley was right. The look and feel of National Review made it stand out. It was more interesting to the eye and the articles were fun to read. However, the key component was humor. Having a sense of humor made National Review harder to criticize. Because of their style, prewar conservative journals were easy to demonize as magazines for maniacs. Not so with National Review. By combining humor, snappy writing, and interesting covers Buckley defused the criticism that had limited the readership of previous journals.²⁶

National Review began publication in November of 1955. National Review’s first office was in New York City on East 37th street. The office was right next to the Midtown Subway entrance, and because of this, the rent was reasonable. The office itself had a small waiting room for visitors. It was a no-frills office where desks were placed haphazardly

²⁴ Ibid., 15.

²⁵ Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr*, 133.

²⁶ Ibid., 134.

around the room. Wherever someone could place a desk, typewriter, and trash can they did.²⁷

While the ideas of National Review did not differ from prewar conservatism, Buckley believed they had to distance themselves from what he called the “irresponsible right.” The point was to argue that National Review was something new and unrelated to prewar conservatives.

In later years, Buckley claimed that National Review purged conservatism of its undesirable prewar elements. However, the right-wing pogrom never really happened. In the first year of National Review, the journal never criticized any earlier conservative group by name. Instead, National Review published many authors like Dr. Fred Schwarz, founder of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, and Revilo Oliver of the John Birch Society. National Review also defended and protected Senator Joe McCarthy and Committee on Un-American Activities. However, Buckley knew better. Buckley had met with McCarthy and realized that he was dealing with an irresponsible alcoholic.²⁸ Despite this fact, National Review defended Senator McCarthy.²⁹ In 1954, Buckley and Brent Bozell, Jr. wrote a defense of Senator McCarthy entitled McCarthy and His Enemies. In this work, Buckley and Bozell wrote that defending McCarthy was tantamount to defending the United States against the forces of communism. Buckley wrote, “Not only is it characteristic of society to create institutions and to defend them with sanctions. Society must do so...or else they cease to exist.”³⁰

²⁷ Buckley, *Living It Up at National Review*, 11.

²⁸ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 137.

²⁹ Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 13

For Buckley and the writers of National Review, the fight against Marxism was so paramount that they lost all sense of perspective. They confused the enemies of the United States with the critics of McCarthy. This was reinforced by the fact that many of the same liberals that attacked conservatism also attacked McCarthy. Buckley believed that liberals hated McCarthy because the Senator challenged Marxism, redistribution, and egalitarianism.³¹ When dealing with those that wanted to destroy American society, Buckley wrote, that civil liberties did not apply. The United States should not extend rights and privileges to those that, given the opportunity, would strip those rights from everyone. While attacking McCarthy would have been an excellent way of showing that modern conservatism was different and new, Buckley and National Review passed on the chance. However, if the claim of excommunicating the “irresponsible right” were to be believed, Buckley had to target someone eventually. To keep conservative infighting to a minimum, Buckley picked two targets.³²

The first was Ayn Rand. Buckley believed Rand was a perfect choice. She was not a conservative, had not worked for any of the prewar journals, and had a small but devoted following. This would be a perfect opportunity for National Review to make good on its claim of being something new. Ayn Rand espoused a philosophy called Objectivism. In this philosophy, each individual acted only in their own interest, not just on economic matters but in all aspects of one’s life. Rand wrote that an Objectivist must be completely selfish, doing nothing for anyone else unless it provided you with something in return. Once in an

³¹ Ibid.

interview Rand was asked why she was married and if she applied Objectivism to her marriage. Rand said that she married because she gained stability and benefits from a husband. Anything she did for her husband was simply a way of continuing a beneficial situation. Rand had other personality quirks. She often wore a cape fastened in the front with a golden dollar sign. She believed that smoking cigarettes showed man's dominance over fire. Finally, as a young girl in Russia she fell in love with Alexander Kerensky the leader of the interim Russian Government after the overthrow of Czar Nicholas II. Buckley assigned Whittaker Chambers to write on Ayn Rand.³³ Chambers called Rand's philosophy "a heap of pagan nonsense." Rand fired back saying that Rational Review was "the worst and most dangerous magazine in America."

The second target was The National Christian Crusade. This organization believed in a Jewish plot to conquer the United States and founded its beliefs on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. However, outside of Rand and The National Christian Crusade, National Review did not attack any other members of the "irresponsible right." By picking two minor targets, Buckley was able to claim that National Review represented something new and was committed to creating a responsible and respectable conservative movement.³⁴

In the early years of National Review, the most consistent theme was anti-Marxism. Like with American Review and Human Events, anti-Marxism defined what it meant to be conservative. While there might be disagreements about the meaning of tradition, or limited government, there was no debate about anti-Marxism. This fervent anti-communism helped

³³ Whittaker Chambers was a former communist and member of the Communist Party USA. In 1938 Chambers left the Communist Party USA and became an outspoken critic of Marxist ideologies.

³⁴ Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 51.

to shape postwar conservative thought. National Review attacked the theory of Marxism, Soviet imperialism abroad, and domestic policies that they believed represented socialist impulses.³⁵ However, National Review did not call for war with the Soviets. The writers and editors understood that the Cold War would be a long and protracted struggle. They believed that the United States must challenge communism at home while simultaneously blocking Soviet expansion abroad. This two-pronged approach was a reoccurring argument in the early years of National Review. This, in part, explained National Review's defense of McCarthy. The fact that McCarthy was a poor spokesman for anti-communism did not seem to factor into Buckley's thinking. The important fact was that McCarthy was on the right side of history. Buckley and the writers of National Review routinely defended both McCarthy and the House Committee on Un-American Activities. In defense of HUAC Buckley wrote, "We need to make a definite stride forward in a political theory of freedom suitable to a world in which things like Communism and the atom bomb exist." With stakes this high, the writers of National Review decided that anti-communism was more important than the civil liberties of domestic communists.³⁶

The initial journalistic reaction to National Review was to ignore it. Many such journals had come and gone. Even the successful ones like American Review lasted only a handful of years. Long-running journals like American Mercury had a habit of destroying themselves with editorial infighting. However, something was different with National Review. While the ideas were the same as older journals, National Review was growing.

³⁵ Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

National Review seemed able to gain a wider audience. The magazine looked better than previous journals. The articles were clever, easy to absorb, and humorous. There were no thirty-page, six-part discussions on the nature of private property and no long treatises on the importance of agriculture or tortured articles defining Agrarianism. National Review was the kind of magazine someone might see in a dentist's office and, unlike American Review, a person could pick it up and enjoy it.

After it became clear that National Review was succeeding, three articles appeared with the intent of destroying it. John Fischer, the editor of Harpers, wrote a scathing attack on National Review. In his March of 1956 article entitled "Why is the Conservative Voice so Hoarse?" Fischer wrote that that National Review could not define itself as conservative. Instead, National Review was another magazine for maniacs. Fischer wrote that if anything National Review was a radical departure from accepted American political thought. The second attack came from Dwight MacDonald. MacDonald, writing for Commentary, stated that National Review was a huge disappointment. It was not a good magazine nor was it conservative. Finally, Mary Kempton, this time writing for The Progressive, argued that National Review was the last gasp of the political right. However, all three articles contained a variation of the same argument. Each author stated that they wished a good, well-written, and thoughtful conservative journal existed. While they might disagree with a such a journal, it would add richness to the political debate. However, all three writers agreed that National Review was not that journal.³⁷

³⁷ Buckley, *Living It Up at National Review*, 185.

Despite such attacks, National Review grew each year it was in publication. By 1960, National Review was financially solvent and had 30,000 subscribers. In the year Barry Goldwater lost in a landslide to Lyndon Johnson, National Review had over 100,000 subscribers. Neither of these figures included newsstand sales. As it grew, National Review continued its tradition of recruiting the best writers and editors from other journals until it was the conservative journal of record.³⁸

While Goldwater lost a crushing defeat in 1964, it was not the end of conservatism. Conservatism regrouped and began organizing in places like Orange County California. From 1964 to 1980, National Review defined the conservative position on a wide range of topics.³⁹ In 1985, National Review celebrated its 30th anniversary. In front of a crowd that included William F. Buckley and his wife Priscilla, President Ronald Reagan said:

You and I remember a time of the forrest primeval, a time when nightmare and danger reigned and only the knights of darkness prevailed: when conservatism seemed without a champion. And then, suddenly riding up through the lists, came our clipboard-bearing Galahad: ready to take on any challengers in critical battle of point and counterpoint. And with grace and humor and passion, to raise a standard to which patriots and lovers of freedom could rally.⁴⁰

In this speech President Reagan alluded to the narrative found in most books on modern conservatism. That narrative stated that conservatism was wholly a creation of the mid-fifties. This theory stated that Buckley, and National Review, distanced conservatism from the ideas of the Old-Right and created something completely new. A modern conservatism

³⁸ Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 50, and Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, 11.

³⁹ Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr*, 14.

⁴⁰ Bridges and Coyne, *Strictly Right*, 3.

founded on three key principles. Those principles were anti-Marxism, tradition, and limited government. However, this was not the case. Twenty years before the first publication of National Review, the writers of American Review, and to a lesser extent Human Events, had already defined conservatism as a combination of anti-Marxism, tradition, and limited government. The change with Buckley and National Review was a change of style. The message was the same, it was the packaging that had changed.

In addition, other events drove a resurgence of conservatism. For the writers of American Review it was hard to argue, in the depths of the Depression, that conservatism provided the answers. However, after the New Deal, four years of war, and the beginning of the Cold War, many people were ready for a change. Conservatives seemed committed to waging the Cold War and winning it. Conservatives also believed that the government had simply grown too large. Advocates of an activist government had promised for a generation that the federal government, given enough resources, could solve many economic and social problems. Conservatives were arguing the counterpoint, that government was the problem.⁴¹ Demographics also helped. During the war, people moved from the Northeast and began settling in the West and the South. These areas were more conservative on a wide range of issues. The West proved the most important region in birthing a grassroots conservative movement.⁴²

⁴¹ Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (New York: The Free Press, 1999): 1.

⁴² Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 40, 47.

These western conservatives joined forces with social conservatives in the South to form a viable movement.⁴³ In the 1950s and into the 1960s, the West was economically booming. In an ironic twist, much of the expansion was the result of wartime government spending. However, many chafed at the government regulation that came with federal dollars. In addition, most of the land in the West was government owned or controlled. It would be here where conservatism morphed from intellectual argument to activism. People began joining anti-Communist societies, trading anti-Communist literature, getting involved with local politics, and volunteering for the Republican party. These new conservatives argued the government could not solve the nation's problems, no matter how efficient or well intentioned. Instead government was the problem. The activists hoped to reduce the size, scope, and reach of federal bureaucracy. They wanted to lower taxes, limit government, fight communism, and restore American traditions.⁴⁴

For the grassroots conservatives of the 1960s, anti-communism was the primary issue. However, with time the movement broadened to include other topics and concerns.⁴⁵ To draw in younger Americans, William F. Buckley helped to found the Young Americans for Freedom in 1960. Soon, Y.A.F. chapters sprung up all over western states. In 1964 alone Y.A.F. added more than five thousand members. For comparison, the Students for a Democratic Society had only fifteen hundred members total.⁴⁶ As far as who joined the new

⁴³ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. and Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 59.

⁴⁵ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 4.

⁴⁶ Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Right Nation*, 51.

conservative organization, most were highly educated, white collar workers, living in suburban communities.⁴⁷ They joined out of a concern over communism but soon adopted other core conservative issues related to tradition and limited government. However, by the mid 1960s conservatism had transformed itself. The message did not change but now the message had moved beyond the journals and created a populist movement.

In conclusion, the basic elements of modern American conservatism predate the publication of National Review. In the pages of American Review, conservatives of the 1930s formulated a brand of conservatism that championed anti-Marxism and tradition. The idea of limited government was the only difference between conservatives of the 1930s and conservatives of the 1950s. The conservatives of the 1930s hoped to use the power of government to reinforce American traditions and anti-Marxism. Buckley was familiar with these ideas as he was an avid reader, and friend, of American Review writer Albert J. Nock. When it came time to pick an individual to shape National Review's position on limited government Buckley selected Frank Chodorov. While Chodorov wrote for The Freedman his theories about property, land, and freedom echo the ideas first set out in American Review. By the late 1940s, Human Events defined conservatism as a mix of anti-Marxism, tradition, and limited government.⁴⁸ Therefore, as early as 1950, self styled conservatives had already defined modern American conservatism and set out its basic ideology. As the old journals of the Old Right failed, Buckley, and National Review, hired the best editors and writers of the defunct publications. Therefore, the real accomplishment of William F. Buckley, and

⁴⁷ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 8.

⁴⁸ Buckley admitted that National Review and Human Events shared many of the same ideas. However, he argued that National Review was a far more important journal.

National Review was in repackaging these earlier ideas and changing the tone of conservatism.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 119.

Appendix of Selected Authors

Herbert Agar: Born in New Rochelle, New York in 1897. Agar graduated from Columbia University in 1919 and then received a Ph.D from Princeton in 1922. After earning his Ph.D. Ager taught English and History at the Hun School located in Princeton. In 1929 he moved to England and became acquainted with future American Review authors Hilaire Belloc, Douglas Jerrold, and G.K. Chesterton. In 1934 Ager won the Pulitzer Prize for his work *The People's Choice, From Washington to Harding: A Study in Politics*. Ager self identified as a Jeffersonian conservative.

Irving Babbitt: Irving Babbitt founded New Humanism in the 1920s, a philosophy that stated humanity had a dual nature. According to Babbitt, humans struggled to free themselves of all limitations on behavior. However, human nature also contained a desire for discipline and order. This dual nature was at the center of New Humanism. Babbitt was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1865. He entered Harvard University in 1885 and after graduation taught at Harvard as a professor of languages. Babbitt defined himself as a conservative and follower of Edmund Burke. After his death, Babbitt's work influenced the writings of Russell Kirk and George Will.

Hilaire Belloc: Belloc was born in 1870 in France to a French father and an English mother. After his father died, Belloc moved with his mother to England. He attended Cardinal Newman's Oratory School in Oxford, England. After graduation, Belloc worked as a journalist, served in Parliament, and wrote over one hundred books in his lifetime. His political philosophy

argued for a return to preindustrial society. Belloc was against industrial capitalism, socialism, and communism.

Dorothea Brande: Brande was the wife of Seward Collins and the associate editor of American Review. She was born in Chicago in 1893 and attended the University of Chicago. Brande wrote several books including *Becoming a Writer* and *Wake Up and Live*. In 1941, Brande and Collins retired from public life. She lived with her husband on a farm in New Hampshire until her death in 1948.

William Henry Chamberlin: Chamberlin was an outspoken critic of communism and the Soviet Union. He was born in 1897 in Brooklyn, New York and graduated from Haverford College in 1919. While in school he identified with anarchism. In 1922 he took a job as the Moscow correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*. His experiences in the Soviet Union changed his views on collectivization and planned economies. In 1935, the *Christian Science Monitor* reassigned Chamberlin to Asia. While in Asia, Chamberlin witnessed Japan's rise to power and he chronicled the events in his work *Japan Over Asia* published in 1937. In the 1940s, He was an editor of Human Events, New Leader, and a contributing editor to The Wall Street Journal. Politically, Chamberlin identified himself as a conservative in the tradition of classical liberalism. He further defined conservatism as a mix of religion, patriotism, family, and private property.

G.K. Chesterton: Chesterton was born in London, England in 1874. He attended the St. Paul's School, the Slade School of Fine Arts, and University College. While Chesterton never fully accepted the label of conservative, his ideas and writings identify him as cultural conservative.

He worked as a journalist and writer all of his life. He wrote over one hundred books including the popular *Father Brown* series. He is most remembered today for his defense of Christianity.

Seward Collins: Collins was the publisher and editor of American Review. He was born in 1899 and grew up in New York. Collins' father owned a national chain of tobacco stores. After graduating from Princeton University in 1926, Collins worked for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and Vanity Fair. In 1928, Collins read the works of Irving Babbitt and converted to New Humanism. In 1933, Collins launched American Review. The journal ran for almost five years and was devoted to conservative and traditionalist ideas. He married American Review associate editor Dorothea Brande in 1936. With the end of American Review Collins and Brande retired in 1941. Collins died at his New Hampshire farm in 1952.

Donald G. Davidson: Davidson was an English professor at Vanderbilt University. While at Vanderbilt he was a leader in two major literary movements. The first was a group of writers called the Fugitive poets. The name came from a literary journal called Fugitive which ran from 1922 to 1925. This journal was responsible for a rebirth in Southern literature. However, in the late 1920s Davidson began adding economics and politics to his writings. This resulted in a new movement known as the Agrarians. Agrarians defended a traditional southern way of life based on farming, land ownership, religion, and conservatism.

T.S. Eliot: T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1888. He studied at Harvard University, the Sorbonne, and Oxford. At the age of 25 he moved to London where he would live for the rest of his life. After converting to Catholicism in 1927, Eliot wrote that the only way to fix western society was a return to Christianity. Eliot befriended G.K. Chesterton and upon

Chesterton's death Eliot wrote two eulogies dedicated to his longtime friend. Eliot identified with the ideas of Edmund Burke, Irving Babbitt, and American conservatism. In 1948, Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his contributions of poetry.

Andrew Nelson Lytle: Lytle was born in 1902 in Tennessee. He contributed to the 1930 essay *I'll Take My Stand* and was a noted southern conservative. His works defended small town southern society and land ownership. Lytle taught for the University of Florida and the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. He was also the editor of the Sewanee Review.

Albert Jay Nock: Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1870, Nock was raised in Brooklyn, New York. However, he spent considerable time in a small town near Lake Huron. Here Nock embraced the idea of small town life, individualism, self reliance, and community. In 1887, he entered Bard College. After college Nock worked as a journalist writing articles for American Magazine, Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's, and Harper's. In his articles and books, Nock attacked big government and collectivism. He was the favorite author of William F. Buckley, Jr and greatly influenced Russell Kirk.

Felix Morley: Morley was the founding editor of Human Events. Born in Haverford, Pennsylvania in 1894, Morley's parents were active members of the Society of Friends. He attended Haverford college and then Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. After college, Morley worked as a journalist and editor for The Baltimore Sun and The Washington Post. In 1936, Morley was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for this work at The Washington Post. In 1940, Morley became the president of Haverford College. Along with Frank C. Hanighan and Henry Regnery, he founded Human Events in 1944. In the pages of Human Events, Morley advocated

limited government, attacked the New Deal, and cautioned against unlimited ill-informed democracy.

Frank Owsley: Owsley was a historian of the American South. He was also a southern conservative and contributor to *I'll Take My Stand* in 1930. Owsley graduated from Alabama Polytechnic Institute and the University of Chicago. He taught History for Birmingham Southern College, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Alabama. Owsley argued that widespread land ownership was necessary for democracy and true liberty.

John Crowe Ransom: Born in 1888 in Tennessee, Ransom was a Rhodes Scholar and taught English at Vanderbilt University. In the 1920s Ransom was a member of the Fugitives, a group of poets who contributed to the Fugitive poetry journal. In 1930, Ransom contributed to *I'll Take My Stand* writing one of the best and most remembered section. Ransom argued that southerners should be resistant to cultural change. However, he believed that some change was beneficial. Therefore, Ransom argued, the South should only allow modernization that did not threaten cherished cultural traditions.

Allen Tate: Tate was born in Kentucky in 1899, while attending Vanderbilt University, he came to the attention of English professor John Ransom. Tate joined the Fugitives and began contributing to their journal. Tate also impressed and became friends with T.S. Eliot. After college Tate helped found a literary school called the New Criticism. This school emphasized a close reading of the text instead of examining the lives of the authors. Tate also edited the Sewanee Review and contributed to *I'll Take My Stand* in 1930. Tate died in Tennessee in 1979.

Appendix of Selected Journals

American Review: Founded and edited by Seward Collins, American Review ran from 1933 to 1937. It was the only intellectual conservative journal in print in the 1930s. The journal focused on criticism of the New Deal, opposing socialism, and resisting modernity. The major intellectual focus of American Review was Southern Agrarianism. The journal presented the American South in romantic terms and glorified pre-industrial society. However, the journal did not attract a wide readership and did not influence public policy. American Review ceased publication after a five year run in 1937.

Human Events: Founded in 1944 by Felix Morley and Frank Chodorov. In the first year, Human Events had a small readership and a circulation of only 127 copies. However, the journal survived its tumultuous start and grew into a powerful voice for conservatism. With the Cold War, the editors and writers were split on how to deal with the Soviet Union. The libertarian writers opposed a military buildup and did not view the Soviets as an immediate threat. The conservative writers took the opposite view. They viewed the Soviet Union as an imminent threat and favored an aggressive foreign policy. This rift grew as the Cold War intensified leaving Human Events split along ideological lines. By the mid 1950s, Human Events was replaced by National Review as the journal of record for conservatism.

National Review: Founded by William F. Buckley, Jr. in 1955, the aim of the journal was to bring all self-styled conservatives together under one roof. Buckley hoped that after accomplishing this goal the journal would influence decision makers and the general population. At first the journal came out weekly, but in 1958, Buckley changed this to biweekly, and then

eventually monthly. In its first few years, National Review had a circulation of less than 20,000. However, by 1968 the journal had grown to over 100,000 subscribers. Today, National Review is the widest read conservative journal in the United States. The central themes of National Review were deference to tradition, limited government, and anti-communism. This framework was broad enough to accommodate most conservatives. The journal became a place for conservatives to debate and discuss not only conservatism but also current events, foreign policy, the arts, and to defuse these ideas to the population.

For further information on conservative authors and journals please see Bridges, Linda and John R. Coyne Jr. *Strictly Right: William F. Buckley Jr. and the American Conservative Movement*. Hoboken NJ: John Wiley & Sons inc, 2007; Edwards, Lee. *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America*. The Free Press, 1999; Finch, Phillip. *God, Guts, and Guns*. New York: Seaview/Putnam, 1983; Frohnen, Bruce, Jeremy Beer, and Jeffrey O. Nelson, *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2006; Bridges, Hoboken NJ: John Wiley & Sons inc, 2007; Gottfried, Paul. *The Conservative Movement*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993; Himmelstein, Jerome L. *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990; Judis, John B. *William F. Buckley, Jr: Patron Saint of the Conservatives*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988; McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001; Micklethwait, John and Adrian Wooldridge. *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004; Miles, Michael W. *The*

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