

BEYOND THE RHETORIC OF PLURALISM:  
THE JEWISH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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This is dedicated to Max Rabb  
who amused me as much as  
he informed me.

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## ABSTRACT

### BEYOND THE RHETORIC OF PLURALISM: THE JEWISH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

by Jennifer Vannette

In the early years of the Cold War Americans used religion as a spiritual weapon against godless Communism. Many of the nation's leaders expressed belief that the ideological battle against the Soviet Union would not be won through military might or economic policy alone, but through faith in God. The United States would be an example for the world. Civil religion demanded unity and the 1950s have been viewed as the "Era of Consensus."

Although leaders of the 1950s espoused rhetoric that Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism were the religions of democracy, consensus was only surface deep. In an effort to understand minority religious views of the era, this research began with the question of whether or not Americans truly embraced this pluralistic expression of national identity.

Many Americans had deep-seated prejudice against Jews and expressed their bigotry in subtle and over ways. Jews were often targeted in the witch hunt to root out Communist subversives. This thesis explores the often overlooked expressions of anti-Semitism, particularly that which was justified as anti-Communism, and also the American Jewish response.

Research was conducted through extensive exploration of primary source materials mainly from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive. Max Rabb's papers were of particular interest. Rabb was cabinet secretary under President Eisenhower, and he also handled minority affairs. Each of these archives held a considerable collection of papers regarding anti-Semitism in the mid-twentieth century. However, investigation of secondary

materials did not reflect this negative treatment of Jews. Many historians have glossed over the anti-Semitism or ignored Jews in the 1950s entirely.

Not every American could conform to the 1950s religious and political consensus. American Jews tried to define and claim their part of the civil religious identity, but they had to withstand anti-Semitism to do so. The prevalence of anti-Jewish attitudes suggests that this, too, is part of the American identity in the early Cold War.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

During World War I, so the story was told, three soldiers became close friends even though each was of a different faith -- a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew. They bonded in the trenches in France and made a pact. If any of the friends died, the survivors would inter the body and tell his family. The war raged on, and one day in a battle outside a small French village the Protestant friend was killed. When the battle ended, the two friends set out to make arrangements for the burial, but there was only a Catholic church in the village. The priest did not want to turn them away, but he was bound by the regulations of his church. Because the soldier was Protestant, he could not be buried on Catholic church grounds. The sympathetic priest offered a compromise. The soldier could be buried outside the fence of the cemetery and the priest promised to care for and protect the grave just as he would the graves inside the fence. Seeing no other option, the soldiers agreed and they buried their friend.

After the war, on the anniversary of their friend's death the surviving friends journeyed back to the French village to pay their respects. When they arrived at the church, they walked along the fence, but found no grave. Livid, they found the priest and accused him of betraying their trust. In response the priest beckoned the friends to follow him and he led them through the cemetery to a grave just inside the fence. The former soldiers were shocked to find their friend buried there. The priest said, "You know, some time after you left, I went back and studied our

regulations further. I found it to be very clear that while I was not permitted to allow the burial inside the fence, there was nothing which prevented me from later moving the fence over.”<sup>1</sup>

Public figures spoke of the need to move fences and find values everyone could agree upon during the early years of the Cold War in the United States. There are several such stories of interfaith brotherhood among soldiers in both world wars, and it mattered little if they were factual or not. The sentiment of pluralism counted and stories such as the three soldiers provided one representation of the public face of religious consensus. The bond of the soldier-friends could be emulated in the larger society against the common threat of Communism.

Americans like to look back at the 1950s through a nostalgic lens as a time when life was simple, easy to navigate, and even pleasant. A time where father knew best and everyone could leave it to Beaver for some fun shenanigans that could be solved in a half hour with common sense. It was the ‘Era of Consensus’ when politicians agreed and we all just got along. But, in reality it was a time of great anxiety. There were massive changes in society, including substantial migration from cities to suburbs, and more people attaining higher levels of education. There were territory disputes across the globe, many involving the spread of Communism. Destructive atomic weapons were reality rather than science fiction. Racial tensions simmered, boiling over into violence that garnered the national spotlight, such as Emmett Till’s murder, and those tensions sparked civil rights actions including the Montgomery bus boycott and *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Rosenbergs’ trial confirmed one of America’s worst fears - Communist spies were among them. With all of these events and

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<sup>1</sup> Leroy Collins, Address before the Annual Meeting of Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Columbia, SC, December 3, 1963, 5-7. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box: 10, folder: c-d, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

anxieties, the era's surge in psychiatry and self-help books should not be surprising, nor should the surge in church attendance.<sup>2</sup>

Religion provided part of the response to these anxieties and to fears of Communism. Americans touted Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism as the religions of democracy. The relationship between Communism and religion was inextricably intertwined once theologian Reinhold Niebuhr labeled Communism as an anti-God religion. The battle could never again be waged on purely political or economic grounds.<sup>3</sup> Religion became an expression of more than faith in God, but also an expression of American patriotism. This civil religious response to Communism defined the national identity and separated the United States from the godless Soviet Union.

Civil religion demanded consensus. Historians have long noted the rise in ecumenical relationships, particularly among mainline Protestant denominations including Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, American Baptists, Congregationalists, and Lutherans. Although there is great theological variety among these denominations, these churches shared a desire for interfaith relations and were all involved in shaping American culture, education, and politics. Understandably, histories of American religion focus primarily on mainline Christian denominations because the majority of the population belonged to that faith tradition. Some historians explored the connection to politics, and most have investigated the role of religion in

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Heinze. *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), introduction.

Alan Petigny moves below the veneer of consensus to explore the roots of what was to come in the 1960s from breaks in religious consensus, to the beginnings of the sexual revolution and the upswell of civil rights. His exploration shows that not only was consensus truly elusive, but also that the movements attributed to the 1960s all can be traced to actions in the 1950s. *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Warren L. Vinz, *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the 20th Century*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 105.

shaping American identity.<sup>4</sup> Interfaith movements promoted legislation that blurred the boundaries between church and state to promote a spiritual bulwark against Communism. There was little to no public dissent, and this lack of dissent is quite unique in the religious and political history of the United States. The trouble with the civil religious consensus of the 1950s is that not every American could claim the shared identity. Little attention has been paid to minority voices. Recent scholarship explores the rise of conservatism in the era as a minority viewpoint, and Catholic experiences have also been researched.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the religions of democracy were Protestantism, Catholicism, and *Judaism*. The Jewish experience in the 1950s is missing. Most histories of religion in the twentieth century completely ignore Jews or discuss Jewish involvement in politics prior to 1930 and after 1960.<sup>6</sup>

Historian Kevin Schultz provides an example of how religion is typically viewed in the era. In his book, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its*

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<sup>4</sup> Many histories explore the role of religion in the nation such as *Religion in American Life*, which gives scope to the religious history of the US and *Religion and American Politics*, which focuses specifically on the intersection of religion and politics. Other historians such as Amanda Porterfield and Robert Wuthnow give special attention to the transformations in religion in the twentieth century. The common factor in these historical treatments is a focus on Christianity, particularly Protestantism. Some discuss minority religious groups, but with Protestantism dominating the religious landscape of the US, other religious groups typically receive little attention.

Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mark Noll, *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Amanda Porterfield, *The Transformation of American Religion: The Story of a Late-Twentieth Century Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Allit, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Some historians have explored the role of American Jews in political life, however, they usually focus on the successes of prominent figures rather than the experience of the Jewish community as a whole. Gregg Ivers addresses some of the anti-Semitism of the 1950s, but his primary focus is on the role Jews played in various civil rights legal battles, and his book is mostly a legal perspective.

*Jews in American Politics*, ed. L. Sandy Maisel, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); Gregg Ivers, *To Build a Wall: American Jews and the Separation of Church and State*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1995).

*Protestant Promise*, Schultz argues that Americans accepted a “tri-faith” pluralism in the 1950s. He uses the court cases over separation of church and state from the late 1940s through the early 1960s as evidence that Americans were more accepting of religious diversity.<sup>7</sup> However, Schultz ignores the widespread backlash against the Supreme Court decisions banning prayer and Bible readings in schools or other public places. Waves of renewed anti-Semitism came with the adverse reaction to the court cases. Yet, many historians accept the veneer of public consensus, in part due to Will Herberg’s influential book *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, published in 1955 that makes a similar claim.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps another reason to ignore narratives that contradict acceptance of pluralism is due to the claim Americans made following World War II that the Holocaust would never happen again, and Jews should not be oppressed or persecuted. This, unfortunately, is an inaccurate picture of the post-war years. Anti-Semitism barred displaced European Jews from finding a new home in the United States, and created gentlemen’s agreements to prevent Jews from living in certain neighborhoods or working particular jobs. Jews also had to guard against suspicion of Communist activity because propagandists equated Judaism with Communism.

Niebuhr noted that while Communism could be brutal, Christianity could often be hypocritical.<sup>9</sup> Ecumenism extended to various Protestant denominations, and sometimes even Catholics who were, after all, Christians. However, Jews presented a problem because Americans were suspicious of anything that was a perceived attack on national tradition, and anything non-Christian could be perceived in such a manner. Beneath the spiritual resurgence,

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<sup>7</sup> Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to its Protestant Promise*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Butler, et al, *Religion in American Life*; Noll, *Religion and American Politics*; Porterfield, *The Transformation of American Religion*; Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*; Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion* v. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “The Religion of Communism,” *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1931): 466.

cracks appeared in the consensus. Although leaders began to speak of the nation as Judeo-Christian rather than Christian, not everyone really meant it. The 1950s brought upheaval and many people struggled to define their principles and apply them to the changing times. Jews attempted to claim and define the American civil religious identity. To do so, they had to withstand resistance from Christians who were often willing to use anti-Communism as justification for their aversion to true pluralism.

## CHAPTER II

### CIVIL RELIGION AS THE NATION'S RESPONSE TO COMMUNISM

During the early years of the Cold War, the United States emphasized its religious identity as a means of separating itself from the USSR's atheistic Communism. Americans have debated what role religion should play in the nation since the writing of the Constitution. In times of strife, such as the Civil War, religion became more important as a means to express how the country should behave or to explain the cause for the tensions. The Cold War also created a time of anxiety. In the late 1940s and 1950s, Americans embraced religion as a cornerstone of democracy, and civil religious expressions became synonymous with patriotism. As Rev. Edward L. R. Elson of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C. declared, "The truth of the matter is that no one can understand the United States except in terms of religion."<sup>10</sup> Any rejection of God was a rejection of national identity.

In the 1950s, religion was discussed, but rarely debated. Four pieces of religious legislation became law: national day of prayer, 'under God' added to the Pledge of Allegiance, 'In God We Trust' mandated on all currency, and 'In God We Trust' became the national motto. For the first time, lawmakers presented no objections to religious bills and the public mostly remained silent. The use of civil religion, which is the use of religious symbols, customs, and speech in a manner that represents the state, as a response to Communism elucidates the national identity and why it could not be claimed by all citizens.

Robert Bellah, noted sociologist, examined American civil religion and wrote that societies find common definitions for moral values, and those values are translated into a

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<sup>10</sup> Edward L.R. Elson quoted in Kenneth Goff, "Nation Under God," *American Mercury* (May 1958): 61.

religious paradigm to make sense of the greater world. The paradigm legitimates society.<sup>11</sup> Civil religion, for better or worse, shaped politics in the United States as it shaped culture, and it is tied to patriotism in both overt and subtle ways. Thomas Jefferson invoked the Creator in the Declaration of Independence, politicians take their oaths of office by placing a hand on a Bible, and presidents have beseeched and declared that God bless America. Although civil religion has been part of the nation since colonial days when John Winthrop envisioned a city on the hill, the level of intensity reached by this patriotic piety in the early Cold War changed the role of religion in the nation. Not only was religion a part of the lives of a record number of people in the 1950s, civil religion was aggrandized to the level of true patriotism and provided a definition for American identity.

In the years following World War II, Americans felt great anxiety about Communism and nuclear weapons. They believed the Soviets were winning the Cold War, and a general religious spirit emerged as response to these fears.<sup>12</sup> Americans had a sense that religion was a good thing, but it was vague and often lacked content outside a patriotic value.<sup>13</sup> The nation intended to prove the greatness of their identity and ward off Communism. Therefore, in the face of godless Communism, Americans were spiritual. Religion was the bandwagon on which to jump, and Americans did. By 1954, seventy-nine percent of those polled said they were members of a

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Bellah, *Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), ix.

<sup>12</sup> George H. Gallup, "Cold War, Survey #469-K, February 2, 1951," *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 963.

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Henry, "'And I Don't Care What It Is': The Tradition-History of a Civil Religion Proof Text," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49.1 (March 1981): 35, <http://0-www.jstor.org.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/stable/1462992> (accessed October 15, 2011).

church. Ninety percent said that they believed in the Holy Trinity.<sup>14</sup> Politicians and religious leaders alike capitalized on the idea of Communism as an anti-God pseudo-religion and provided a solution: go to church and uphold the Judeo-Christian tradition. A show of American faith in God would not only prevent Communism from taking hold in the United States, but American faith would set an example for the world. In this manner, real faith became an effective weapon against pseudo-religion.<sup>15</sup> During this Cold War era, with its pervading fear of Communism, to be different was to be under suspicion. Church attendance became a pragmatic way to spend a Sunday morning. This attitude paved the way for overtly religious legislation to become law with no real dissent, not even on the grounds of protecting the separation of church and state.

Beginning in 1945 and continuing throughout the 1950s, many faith drives occurred throughout the country. Most were instigated by political and business leaders. The goal of faith drives was to motivate Americans to deepen their spiritual lives. Often these drives equated religion with patriotism, and they were a call to wage spiritual warfare on Communism.<sup>16</sup>

The faith drive that most blurred the distinction between government and religion was the Freedom Train. At the behest of Attorney General Tom C. Clark, a group of government officials and businessmen met at the White House on May 22, 1947. Those in attendance included CEOs of Paramount Pictures, Standard Oil, General Electric, Time, Inc. and also political leaders such as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. This group became the American Heritage Foundation.

The Freedom Train was envisioned as a presentation of the nation's "sacred documents," such as the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The train also incorporated a display on religious

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<sup>14</sup> George H. Gallup, "Church Attendance: Survey 532-K, Question 15a, July 19, 1954" *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 1252; Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 73.

<sup>15</sup> Herzog, "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex and the Policy of Revival in the Early Cold War," *Journal of Policy History* 22.3 (2010): 341,343. <http://0-muse.jhu.edu.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/>. (accessed September 7, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Herzog, "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex," 341,343.

freedom including photographs of documents from the Puritans, reproductions of Roger Williams's statement on religious freedom, and an early publication of the Virginia Bill of Rights. This display highlighted the themes "Freedom's Heritage" and "Seeds of Freedom in Colonial America."<sup>17</sup> The exhibition featured the Constitution and the governmental system that granted Americans their freedom and liberty. The American Heritage Foundation believed that, although people sometimes disagreed, Americans were united on the grounds of their common heritage and the documents of the country's history provided the foundation necessary for "their survival as a free people." Louis Novins, Vice President of the American Heritage Foundation, spoke of the documents as living institutions, much in the same way that Christians speak of the Bible, saying, "Without our heritage of freedom, differences become subversive, personal opinions become futile, and controversy becomes anarchy."<sup>18</sup> The Freedom Train was, as characterized by a staffer, "Paul Revere all over again -- riding through the countryside and crying out 'Wake up, America! Look at what you've got!'"<sup>19</sup> The train traveled to 200 cities (the expenses covered by the railroads and the CEOs), and prior to arriving in each city there was a rededication week.<sup>20</sup> Attorney General Clark claimed the train was "vital" to America because he

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<sup>17</sup> "Documents Obtained to Date and Set Aside for Justice Department's Proposed Bill of Rights Exhibit," presented at Union Club, Park Ave., NY Jan. 27, 1947, American Heritage Foundation, 1. *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 37, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>18</sup> Louis A. Novins, "Address at the White House Conference on the American Heritage Foundation," May 22, 1947. *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 18, folder: Am. Heritage Foundation, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO; Winthrop W. Aldrich, "Suggested Introductory Remarks," May 22, 1947, 2-3. *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 18, folder: Am. Heritage Foundation, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>19</sup> Novins, "Address at the White House Conference on the American Heritage Foundation," 3.

<sup>20</sup> "Clark Explains Funds for 'Freedom Train,'" *New York Times*, June 19, 1947, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 15, 2011).

had evidence of disloyal citizens, though he never provided specifics.<sup>21</sup> The pinnacle of the rededication week was the recitation of The Freedom Pledge:

I am an American. A free American.  
Free to speak -- without fear,  
Free to worship God in my own way,  
Free to stand for what I think is right,  
Free to oppose what I believe is wrong,  
Free to choose those who govern my country.  
This heritage of Freedom I pledge to uphold  
For myself and all mankind.<sup>22</sup>

Speaking at the rededication week in Des Moines, Iowa, Clark said that all of the documents demonstrated how American liberty was a divine model for all the world. He rallied the crowd, using the Biblical parable of the man who survived the flood because he built his house on the rock. Clark exhorted his audience to be like that man and build the foundation of the country on Christianity.<sup>23</sup> President Harry Truman supported the faith drive, and the train draped in red, white, and blue was well received, beginning its tour in Philadelphia on the 160th anniversary of the United States Constitution.<sup>24</sup> An estimated 50 million people, about one third of the population, took part in the rededication weeks.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Lewis Wood, "Freedom Train to Start Sept. 17: Clark Sees Year-Long Tour with Documents as Vital - Cites Disloyalty Evidence," *New York Times*, May 23, 1947, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 15, 2011); Tom C. Clark, "Address at the White House Conference on American Heritage Program," May 22, 1947, *Tom C. Clark Papers, Speech and Trip File*, box 111, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>22</sup> "The Documents on the Freedom Train," The American Heritage Foundation, 20, *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 39, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>23</sup> Tom C. Clark, "Address for the 21st International Sunday School Convention," Des Moines, IA July 24, 1947. *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 111, folder: Int'l Sunday School Convention. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

Perhaps we should note that Clark also spoke warmly to Jewish audiences about their role as a religion of democracy. Later as a Justice of the US Supreme Court, he sided with the principles of separation of church and state.

<sup>24</sup> H. Walton Cloke, "Truman Asks U.S. to 'Share Liberty': Message is Read by Clark at Independence Hall to Mark Arrival of Freedom Train," *New York Times*, Sept. 17, 1947, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 15, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Herzog, "Spiritual Industrial Complex," 344.

Although many people supported the Freedom Train, it was not without its detractors. In the development stage, Attorney General Clark was criticized for including a piece about the goals of Russian democracy during the Russian Revolution. New York Congressman Ralph Gwinn expressed disappointment that any documents in support of Russia, given the opposition to Communism, would appear in the train. Clark responded that the document was not in support of Communism, but that the list had since been updated and that particular document had been removed.<sup>26</sup>

The National Blue Star Mothers of America protested to the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), J. Edgar Hoover that the use of original documents was an act of treason that was likely perpetrated by Jews. The National Blue Star Mothers was a group dedicated to bringing their sons home from war and securing promised benefits. At their first meeting in 1942 in Flint, MI, 300 women and men attended, and an additional thousand people committed to the organization through mail-in responses. Soon there were charters in nine states, and Congress recognized their national charter in 1960. Blue Star Mothers also became involved in various service projects, but the FBI investigated the group during the war for seditious propaganda. Hoover mentioned no charges, but the FBI had labeled them as an anti-Semitic group with strong ties to anti-Semitic publisher Gerald L. K. Smith.<sup>27</sup> The protestation letter from the National Blue Star Mothers questioned the nature and authority of the American Heritage Foundation. The women saw the Freedom Train as an attempt to jeopardize government documents that could lead to their destruction just like in Russia. To the Blue Star Mothers, this

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<sup>26</sup> Exchange of letters between Ralph W. Gwinn and Tom C. Clark, Feb. 5 and 7, 1947, *Tom Clark Papers*, box 39, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>27</sup> J. Edgar Hoover, "Office Memorandum," Sept. 23, 1947, *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 38, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

was a clear attempt to overthrow the government. It was an act of treason to remove the documents from their protected environments and parade them about, and this activity was a “Communistic set-up.”<sup>28</sup>

When nothing came of their complaint, the Blue Star Mothers published a piece entitled “Freedom Train Junket can Lead to the Enslavement of Christendom.” They appealed to citizens to stop the train, claiming that the entire enterprise was created to promote the United Nations and subject the United States to rule by one world government. In the publication they insinuated that Jewish groups such as the Anti-Defamation League may be behind the American Heritage Foundation and these Jewish groups were intent on making the United States subject to minority rule. It was a convoluted attempt to place blame on the Jews for what they saw as a desecration of sacred government documents.<sup>29</sup>

The Crusade for Freedom was another faith drive that demonstrated the government’s use of religion as a spiritual weapon. The National Committee for a Free Europe sponsored the Crusade, and it was headed by General Lucius D. Clay, who was the military governor during the Berlin Airlift. The goal was to raise the spirits of those Europeans who lived under Communist rule. The Crusade asked people to donate one dollar and sign a Freedom Scroll. The signer pledged: “I believe in the sacredness and dignity of the individual. I believe that all men

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<sup>28</sup> Letter from Agnes Lewis on behalf of the National Blue Star Mothers of America to J. Edgar Hoover, Sept. 12, 1947. *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 38, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>29</sup> “Freedom Train Junket Can Lead to the Enslavement of Christendom,” National Blue Star Mothers of America (attached to office memo from Hoover dated Oct. 27, 1947, but no date on article.) *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 38, folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

Other detractors included the Communist Party USA and the NAACP which noted the irony of promoting freedom while curtail the civil liberties of various groups. For example, the Emancipation Proclamation was featured and yet African Americans were not permitted to view it with white people in parts of the South. Office Memorandum from Hoover, Sept. 30, 1947; Office Memorandum from Hoover, Oct. 2, 1947; Office Memorandum from Hoover, Oct. 7, 1947 with photostat of the *People’s Voice*, *Tom C. Clark Papers*, box 37, folder 3, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

derive the right to freedom equally from God. I pledge to resist aggression and tyranny wherever they appear on earth.”<sup>30</sup> The money collected paid for a bronze bell that was ninety-eight inches in diameter and weighed ten tons. An image of human races passing the torch of freedom etched the bell, and the inscription read: “That this world under God shall have a new birth of freedom.” The bell was sent to West Berlin as a “spiritual airlift.”<sup>31</sup> Money went to Radio Free Europe as well. President Truman encouraged participation in the Crusade for Freedom.<sup>32</sup>

There were many other faith drives, and each invoked God without specifying a religious creed all while promoting civil religion. Notable ones included Religion in American Life which created advertising that featured celebrities encouraging Americans to actively participate in religion and the nation. Committee to Proclaim Liberty, under the leadership of Walt Disney, Cecile B. DeMille, Ronald Reagan and several others, used utility bills to advertise “Independence Sabbath.” In 1951, Independence Day fell on a Sunday. Committee to Proclaim Liberty wanted people to go to church, read the Declaration of Independence and let freedom ring through church bells.<sup>33</sup> Each of these drives blurred the distinction between God and country.

The nation’s military and political leaders also set an example of linking faith with patriotism. President Harry Truman, raised Presbyterian, often spoke of religious faith. Truman called Communism a false philosophy, and was the first president to call for the use of patriotic piety as a weapon against Communism. During his 1949 inaugural address, Truman made clear

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<sup>30</sup> Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 346.

<sup>31</sup> “Crusade for Freedom,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1950, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 15, 2011); Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 346.

<sup>32</sup> “Truman Approves Free Europe Drive,” *New York Times*, May 2, 1950, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed August 28, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 344, 347. Religion in American Life lasted for ten years and included many celebrities and public figures, among them, Jackie Robinson, Betty Crocker, J. Edgar Hoover, and Norman Rockwell.

his belief that God created humans equal. Our individual rights and freedoms, especially freedom in worship of God, separated the free world from Communism. “Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty,” Truman assured the nation, “we will advance toward a world where man’s freedom is secure.”<sup>34</sup>

Truman supported the efforts of various faith drives, spoke to religious groups, and held prayer breakfasts in the White House. In 1948, he also formed the Committee on Welfare and Religion in the Armed Forces, more popularly known as the Weil Committee. Truman charged the committee with “encouraging and promoting the religious, moral, and recreational welfare and character guidance of persons in the armed forces and thereby enhancing military preparedness and security of the nation.”<sup>35</sup> The government’s task was to convince citizens that they wanted a standing army in peacetime, and that the military would behave appropriately. The Weil Committee concluded that godlessness was a national security risk and religion provided backbone. Therefore, education and indoctrination were necessary to “strengthen [the soldiers’] effectiveness as instruments of our democratic form of government.”<sup>36</sup> This was the first overtly religious mandate from a president, and from the 1950s on, military basic training included a religious component.<sup>37</sup>

While Truman promoted the connection between patriotism and spirituality, General Douglas MacArthur expressly stated that an absolute link between patriotism and Christianity existed. According to MacArthur, there could be no compromising with Communists because

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<sup>34</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1949, eds. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13282>, (accessed November 30, 2011.)

<sup>35</sup> Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 340.

<sup>36</sup> Mark R. Grandstaff, “Making the Military American: Advertising, Reform, and the Demise of an Antistanding Military Tradition, 1945-1955,” *The Journal of Military History* 60 (April 1996), 318-319.

<sup>37</sup> “Religious Needs and Church and Synagogue Responsibilities: Group Discussion,” May 26, 1949, *President’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces*, Box 1, Folder 1B, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO; Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 341.

they were godless. He warned that there were people within the United States who would lead the nation down the path to Communism through socialist thinking. The faith of the people in God and Country, he believed, would prevent the spread of communism. To MacArthur, the cross and the flag were the symbols of American strength. The teachings of Christianity and the nation were, he claimed, “the mighty bulwarks against the advance of those atheistic predatory forces which seek to destroy the spirituality of the human mind and to enslave the human body.”<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most successful leader to harness the use of civil religion was President Dwight Eisenhower. Even before he became president, Eisenhower used the concept of spiritual weapons against foes. He said that all of the freedoms soldiers fight for are based on a “religious foundation.”<sup>39</sup> Like Truman, Eisenhower supported religion as a way to combat communism. He encouraged participation in faith drives, held prayer breakfasts, and supported legislation during the 1950s that extolled religion.

Nevertheless, many criticized Eisenhower for a shallow faith that was merely a political tool. A vocal critic of Eisenhower’s use of religion in politics was Senator Matthew Neely of West Virginia. In a speech before the United Auto Workers in 1955, Neely said he was tired of seeing the president’s faith on the front of every newspaper, especially since he only joined a church after he became president. He harshly declared that “any man who tries to parade his religion that way before the public is ungodly.”<sup>40</sup> But America liked Ike, and America was already invested in the use of spiritual weapons, so it was Neely who took a political hit from the

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<sup>38</sup> Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder, *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1988), 190.

<sup>39</sup> Pierard, *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, 194.

<sup>40</sup> Herzog, “Spiritual Industrial Complex,” 355.

comments. Neely's constituents flooded his office with mail stating they would never again vote for the senator. Eisenhower's Presbyterian Church felt compelled to defend his faith as "sincere." Senator Joseph McCarthy attempted to publicly shame Neely through the media, demanding Neely apologize to the president and also to the American people "for thrusting religion into politics."<sup>41</sup> Neely did backpedal somewhat to state that it was simply the publicity Eisenhower garnered for church attendance that bothered him, and his statement was not meant as an attack on the president's faith. The extent of the political damage is unknown, however, because Senator Neely died in 1958, never having faced re-election after this incident.<sup>42</sup>

Eisenhower's faith has been wrongly criticized due to his most famous quote on religion: "Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."<sup>43</sup> This statement is usually found out of context, and it does seem to lack true depth of faith. Yet in context, Eisenhower seemed to embrace true pluralism. He said this as part of a larger speech delivered before the Freedoms Foundation, a group that promoted "Americanism" that included "a fundamental belief in God."<sup>44</sup> Eisenhower wanted to make the case that the only way to combat Communism was through faith. To illustrate the divide between the Soviet Union and the United States, he related conversations he had with Soviet Marshal Georgi Zhukov when the men were occupation commanders in Germany. Zhukov claimed Soviet troubles stemmed from desire for individual glory. The Soviet goal was to encourage their citizens to work to bring glory to the country rather than the person, but some Soviets struggled

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<sup>41</sup> "President Championed: McCarthy Backs Eisenhower on Church-going Issue," *New York Times*, March 30, 1955, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed November 8, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> "Neely Clarifies Attack: Target Held Not Eisenhower's Church-going, but Publicity," *New York Times*, April 1, 1955, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed November 8, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Pierard, *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, 195.

<sup>44</sup> "President-Elect Says Soviet Demoted Zhukov Because of Their Friendship :Eisenhower Tells of Zhukov Ouster, Eisenhower Recalls a Wartime Conversation," *New York Times*, December 23, 1952, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/> (accessed November 21, 2011).

with that idealistic goal. Zhukov told Eisenhower, “But you tell a man, ‘why, you can do as you please and there are really no restrictions on the individual.’ So you are appealing to all that is selfish.”<sup>45</sup> To Eisenhower, the check on such selfishness was basic belief in God, and there lay the true distinction between the United States and Soviet Union. Eisenhower illustrated this by speaking of the Founding Fathers’ need to state their reasons for breaking with England. Their explanation was that “‘We hold that all men are endowed by their Creator...’ Not by the accident of birth, not by the color of their skin or by anything else, but ‘all men are endowed by their Creator.’” Eisenhower made the point that the government’s fundamental foundation was built on God. He continued,

In other words, our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don’t care what it is. With us of course it is the Judeo-Christian concept but it must be a religion that all men are created equal...Even those among us who are, in my opinion, so silly as to doubt the existence of an Almighty, are still members of a religious civilization, ...

Then he told his agreeable audience that once Americans were sold on this fundamental belief in God, then the United States would win the ideological war and thus be leaders of the world.<sup>46</sup>

Eisenhower actually spoke easily and often of faith in a creator, and he very seriously believed that our civic understanding was only illuminated by God. He did not, however, elevate any particular religious creed other than a civil religious expression.<sup>47</sup>

Eisenhower promoted civil religion in many ways. Prayer breakfasts were common during Eisenhower’s tenure. He opened many speeches with an invocation. Not only did Eisenhower embrace the National Day of Prayer, but he used it as a platform to call upon “the

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<sup>45</sup> “President-Elect Says Soviet Demoted Zhukov Because of Their Friendship.”

<sup>46</sup> “President-Elect Says Soviet Demoted Zhukov Because of Their Friendship.”

<sup>47</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1953, eds. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9600>, (accessed November 30, 2011).

reds” to come to faith and pray. He had his message sent by satellite to the Soviet Union and told them that the solution to the tension between the nations was not going to be found through war and military might, but through religion.<sup>48</sup> There would be no more need to fight if communists believed in God. “What is our battle against communism if it is not a fight between anti-God and a belief in the Almighty? Communists know this...When God comes in, communism has to go.”<sup>49</sup> Religion was harnessed not for the good of the individual, but for the good of the nation. Even Reverend Billy Graham, perhaps unintentionally, promoted civil religion over true religious conversion when he crusaded for the repentance of national sins and claimed the salvation of the United States could be the salvation of the free world.<sup>50</sup>

In this climate, Americans became accustomed to the use of “spiritual weapons” against Communism, and key religious legislation made its way into law. Each of these new laws danced along the barrier separating church and state, though the legislators were careful to never mandate a particular religion. In the short span between 1952 and 1956, the National Day of Prayer became law, the Pledge of Allegiance changed to add the phrase “under God,” by law all currency bore the inscription “In God We Trust,” and the phrase also became the national motto. Many people who brought the ideas forward did so out of genuine faith. Many politicians saw the political benefit of using these bills to present themselves as anti-communist. So through these acts of Congress, civil religion became law.

The first of the 1950s legislation to blur the church-state boundary was the National Day of Prayer. Billy Graham led a revival in February of 1952 in Washington, D.C. that culminated

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<sup>48</sup> “Eisenhower Urges Reds to Join in Prayer,” *New York Times*, September 22, 1954, <http://0-search.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/docview/113081074?accountid=10181> (accessed August 28, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Pierard, *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, 198.

<sup>50</sup> Petingy, *Permissive Society*, 89.

in a worship service on the Capitol steps. “What a thrilling, glorious thing it would be,” Graham preached, “to see the leaders of our country today kneeling before Almighty God in prayer.... What renewed hope and courage would grip the Americans at this hour of peril.”<sup>51</sup> Listening to Graham’s message, Representative J. Percy Priest of Tennessee felt called to introduce a bill for a National Day of Prayer.<sup>52</sup> On April 17, 1952, President Harry Truman signed into law US Congress Joint Resolution 382, which states that the president is to call for a National Day of Prayer each year on a day other than Sunday. The day is meant for the people to attend the house of worship of their choosing, to meditate, and pray to God.<sup>53</sup> Days of prayer were not uncommon. Several times Congress voted on resolutions asking for the president to call a Day of Prayer, often tied to a symbolic holiday such as Memorial Day or Thanksgiving Day.<sup>54</sup> The bill passed with no objection and no real notice by newspapers.

In 1954, the American nation under God became official when the Pledge of Allegiance found religion. Francis Bellamy wrote The Pledge of Allegiance in 1892 for school children to use during celebrations for the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s discovery of the Americas. There were slight modifications through the years, and it became the official pledge

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<sup>51</sup> Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, “A Legacy of Revival in the Nation’s Capitol: Looking Back at Billy Graham’s 1952 Washington, D.C. Crusade,” <http://www.billygraham.org/articlepage.asp?articleid=6012>, (accessed November 22, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> “National Day of Prayer Urged,” *New York Times*, February 5, 1952, <http://0-search.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/docview/112553545?accountid=10181> (accessed August 28, 2011); Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, “A Legacy of Revival in the Nation’s Capitol.”

<sup>53</sup> Louis Fisher and Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, “Adopting ‘In God We Trust’ as the U.S. National Motto,” *Journal of Church and State* 44.4 (Autumn 2002): 671, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=8897612&site=ehost-live> (accessed August 28, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> “Ask National Day of Prayer,” *New York Times*, May 5, 1950, <http://0-search.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/docview/111377186?accountid=10181> (accessed August 28, 2011).

by act of Congress in 1945.<sup>55</sup> The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic brotherhood, had been working to add the phrase “under God” to the pledge since 1951.<sup>56</sup> Some congressmen, such as Michigan Democrat Louis Rabaut, introduced legislation, but few took notice until one year later.<sup>57</sup>

The idea of adding “under God” to the pledge received much consideration after President Eisenhower and several other government representatives visited the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 7, 1954, where Rev. George M. Docherty delivered a sermon on freedom and “the American way of life.” It was tradition for the president to attend the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on “Lincoln Sunday,” the Sunday closest to President Lincoln’s birthday, and to sit in the Lincoln family pew.<sup>58</sup> Docherty’s sermon was civil religion at its finest - a sprinkling of biblical text mixed with a sweep of US history from the Puritans to Lincoln.

Docherty spoke about the Pledge of Allegiance and a realization he had from listening to his children recite it. “There was something missing in this Pledge,” he said, “and that which was missing was the characteristic and definitive factor in the ‘American Way of Life,’” and that

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<sup>55</sup> Original Pledge of Allegiance: “I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” In 1923, the Pledge was changed from “my flag” to “the flag of the United States.” The phrase “of America” was added in 1924 so that the Pledge was as follows: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” This version was adopted by Congress in 1945. Lee Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist: how the Pledge of Allegiance Got Religion in Cold-War America,” *Journal of Church and State*, 45.2 (Spring 2003), 305, <http://0-vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/hww/> (accessed September 7, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist,” 305.

<sup>57</sup> “Pledge to Flag Changed,” *New York Times*, June 9, 1954, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed August 28, 2011); John Lesinski, “Eulogy of Louis C. Rabaut,” November 16, 1961, *Homer Ferguson Papers*, Box 13, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI; “Rep. Louis Rabaut of Michigan Dies,” *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1961, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed September 14, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Matt Schudel, “Rev. George Docherty Urged ‘Under God’ in Pledge,” *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2008, <http://wwrn.org/articles/29705/?&place=united-states&section=presbyterian> (accessed November 15, 2011).

characteristic was faith in God.<sup>59</sup> The Soviet Union could claim, rightly or wrongly, that it too was a country founded on principles of liberty and justice. The US needed to take action to distinguish its identity, and according to Docherty, that action should be adding the phrase “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance.<sup>60</sup>

Three days later, Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan submitted Senate Joint Resolution 126 that would change the Pledge of Allegiance by adding the words “under God.” Speaking on the floor, Ferguson proclaimed, “Spiritual values are every bit as important to the defense and safety of our nation as military and economic values. America must be defended by spiritual values which exist in the hearts and souls of the American people.”<sup>61</sup> Ferguson explained that belief in God was the very thing that separated the free world from Communism. The House revived Rep. Rabaut’s earlier proposal to add “under God” as well.

The Senate resolution passed first in May 1954. Senator Ferguson explained his proposal, again linking Communism to godlessness and extemporizing about America’s greatness because the nation believed in God.<sup>62</sup>

Before the House voted, an editorial appeared in the ecumenical magazine *The Christian Century*. The uncredited author was certain the bill would pass without objection, not because Congress was so devout, but because no one wanted to appear soft on Communism or opposed to

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<sup>59</sup> Rev. George M. Docherty, “Under God Sermon,” February 7, 1954, downloaded from Tom Gibb, “Minister Reprises ‘under God’ Sermon,” *Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, August 19, 2002, <http://post-gazette.com/nation/20020819pledge0819p1.asp> (accessed September 14, 2011).

<sup>60</sup> Docherty, “Under God Sermon.”

<sup>61</sup> Homer Ferguson Public Release, February 13, 1954. *Homer Ferguson Papers*, box 13, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>62</sup> Homer Ferguson Public Release, May 17, 1954, *Homer Ferguson Papers*, box 13, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

God. The editorial compared a “no” vote on adding “under God” to the pledge with voting against the very idea of motherhood.<sup>63</sup>

As predicted, the House bill also passed unanimously. Rabaut spoke before the House connecting God and patriotism. “Our country was born under God,” Rabaut extolled, “and only under God will it live as a citadel of freedom.”<sup>64</sup> Representative Charles Oakman of Michigan claimed faith was a private matter, but the nation’s “underlying philosophy recognizes the existence of God.”<sup>65</sup> It did not matter what one believed, as long as he or she believed in the United States. God became less a matter of religious contemplation and more about the nation.

On June 14, 1954, President Eisenhower signed into law the resolution that changed the Pledge of Allegiance to read: “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Amid much pomp and circumstance, a new flag was presented by the American Legion. The military band played “Onward Christian Soldiers,” and Senator Ferguson and Representative Rabaut had the honor of leading everyone in the new version of the pledge.<sup>66</sup>

Given the decidedly Christian atmosphere of the signing ceremony, one wonders about the voice of minority religions and secularists. With the prevalence of HUAC witch hunts, one possibility remains that minorities remained silent so that they did not draw attention or suspicion. Some minority religious groups ignored the Christian aspect of the ceremony and accepted the new pledge as nondenominational. Congressmen had argued on the floor that the

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<sup>63</sup> Editorial, “Insert ‘Under God’ in Flag Pledge,” *The Christian Century* 71, (May 26, 1954), 629.

<sup>64</sup> Congress, House, Representative Rabaut of Michigan speaking for the Joint Resolution on Adding Under God to the Pledge of Allegiance, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 99, pt. 10 (March 23, 1953-May 18, 1953): A 2063.

<sup>65</sup> Congress, House, Representative Oakman of Michigan speaking for the Joint Resolution on Adding Under God to the Pledge of Allegiance, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess. *Congressional Record* 100, pt. 2 (February 8, 1954-March 8, 1954):1698.

<sup>66</sup> Homer Ferguson Papers; Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist,” 305.

Pledge of Allegiance was not an inherently religious act, so no one had grounds to attack it. Also, it was not compulsory, so it did not violate free exercise laws. Theodore Leskes, in an address before the National Conference of Christians and Jews, explained, “The words ‘under God’ are in the pledge as descriptive of the nation,” so there was no argument.<sup>67</sup> This was in keeping with the promotion of Judaism as one of the religions of democracy.

Eisenhower approved of the bill. In his address at the signing he spoke of America’s fear of atomic weapons, and sadness in violence and war that had been perpetuated around the world. To Eisenhower the law was not simply symbolic, it had “profound meaning.” It was America’s heritage and “in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country’s most powerful resource, in peace or in war.”<sup>68</sup>

In 1955, Congress mandated that currency bear the motto “In God We Trust.” God had appeared and been removed from coins at different times throughout the nation’s history. Various colonial coins invoked God. The Carolina one-cent piece, for example, was inscribed: “God preserve Carolina and the Lord’s proprietors.”<sup>69</sup> Beginning in 1795, the common motto appearing on coins was “E Pluribus Unum,” meaning “Out of many, one.”

The phrase “In God We Trust” appeared for the first time in 1864. During the Civil War, Rev. M.R. Watkinson feared that the war-torn nation was shamed by “disowning God.”<sup>70</sup> He

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<sup>67</sup> Theodore Leskes, “Religious Dimensions of Church-State Relations: a Jewish Viewpoint,” *National Conference of Christians and Jews*, Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church-State Relations, Jewish Viewpoints. Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>68</sup> Dwight Eisenhower, “Statement by the President Upon Signing Bill to Include Words ‘Under God’ to Pledge of Allegiance,” *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, (June 14, 1954): 140, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/478402.1954.001/613?rgn=pages;view=image;q1=eisenhower;op2=and;q2=pledge+of+allegiance> (accessed October 11, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Fisher, “Adopting ‘In God We Trust’,” 617; ‘In God We Trust’ Voted As Official Motto of U.S.” *New York Times*, July 24, 1956, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 19, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth M. Fowler, “In God We Trust: Biography of an Old American Motto Report On Motto: ‘In God We Trust’ Episcopalian Discord,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1956, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 19, 2011); Fisher, “Adopting ‘In God We Trust’,” 617.

suggested invoking the name of God on currency, and he attracted the favorable attention of Samuel P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury. Secretary Chase told the director of the U.S. Mint, James Pollack, “No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins.” This statement was to be expressed in as few words as possible. Pollack condensed it to “God our Trust” and the inscription was placed on the half dollar and half eagle in 1862.<sup>71</sup> Variations of God and nation appeared on different coins, and then in 1864 Congress ordered the U.S. Mint to change the whole composition of the two-cent coin and the motto “In God We Trust” first appeared.<sup>72</sup>

The motto did not remain permanently. President Theodore Roosevelt felt that the motto bordered on irreverence. Roosevelt found the phrase acceptable on monuments and buildings, but believed invoking the phrase on common coins was not spiritual. The sculptor Saint-Gaudens, commissioned to design the new coins, wanted to remove it for reasons of artistic composition, and this was the main reason for removing the motto.<sup>73</sup> The first coin designed by Saint-Gaudens without “In God We Trust” was minted in 1907, and produced a public outcry. The political fight amounted to asking the public to choose between God or Roosevelt. Due to public pressure, Congress passed legislation to put “In God We Trust” back on the coins and Roosevelt signed it into law May 19, 1908.<sup>74</sup>

Paper money did not bear the inscription. During the 1950s, a businessman from Camden, Arkansas, named Matthew Rothert noticed this absence. Rothert was a coin collector and member of the American Numismatist Society, so he paid special attention to currency and

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<sup>71</sup> Fisher, “Adopting ‘In God We Trust’,” 617.

<sup>72</sup> Fowler, “In God We Trust;” Fisher, “Adopting ‘In God We Trust’,” 617.

<sup>73</sup> Willard B. Gatewood, “Theodore Roosevelt and the Coinage Controversy,” *American Quarterly* 18.1 (Spring 1966):41, 45; Fowler, “In God We Trust.”

<sup>74</sup> Gatewood, “Coinage Controversy,” 46, 50.

knew the historical background of coins. It struck him that only the paper money, which did not witness to trust in God, circulated outside the United States. He felt God was prompting him to take action.<sup>75</sup>

Rothert sent out over 1,000 letters to politicians, coin collectors, and businessmen to garner support for his effort to have a law created that would place the motto on all currency.<sup>76</sup>

Oklahoma Senator Michael Monroney finally initiated the bill and it went to the Banking and Currency Committee, chaired by Rothert's friend, Arkansas Senator William Fullbright. In the House, Charles Bennett of Florida and Oren Harris of Arkansas also introduced a bill. The bills passed unanimously in 1955. Charles Bennett spoke on the floor:

these days when imperialistic and materialistic communism seeks to attack and destroy freedom, we should continuously look for ways to strengthen the foundations of our freedom. At the base of our freedom is our faith in God and the desire of Americans to live by His guidance. As long as this country trusts God, it will prevail.

There were no opposing statements made on the floor. The only caveat was to wait until the new dies were scheduled to be recast.<sup>77</sup>

The following year, with no floor debate, "In God We Trust" became the national motto. Many believed our motto was "E Pluribus Unum," but both the Senate and House reports indicated that Congress wanted something that was inspiring and was "in plain...English."<sup>78</sup> The origin of the phrase "In God We Trust" is found in the "Star-Spangled Banner," and more than one legislator cited that fact. Proponents claimed that Americans would accept the national motto

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<sup>75</sup> Fischer, "Adopting 'In God We Trust'," 617.

<sup>76</sup> Fischer, "Adopting 'In God We Trust'," 617.

<sup>77</sup> Congress, House, Representative Bennett of Florida speaking on the Joint Resolution to add "In God We Trust" to Currency, 84th Cong. 1st sess. *Congressional Record* 101 pt. 6 (May 26, 1955-June 15, 1955): 7796.

<sup>78</sup> "House Asks U.S. Motto Of 'In God We Trust,'" *New York Times*, April 17, 1956, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu> (accessed October 19, 2011); Fischer, "Adopting 'In God We Trust'," 617.

because they had already approved of the song for the national anthem.<sup>79</sup> However, the phrase is buried in the never sung fourth stanza, so it is questionable how many Americans actually knew the phrase was in the anthem.<sup>80</sup>

These pieces of religious legislation in the 1950s received little to no debate. Public dissent remained minimal. However, a few people spoke out, usually pointing to the vague and shallow quality of American piety.<sup>81</sup> Political commentator William Lee Miller sharply criticized the altered Pledge of Allegiance, writing, “The Pledge, which has served well enough in times more pious than ours, has now had its rhythm upset but its anti-Communist spirituality improved by the insertion of the phrase ‘under God.’” In his criticism of the nation’s actions he continued, “The faith is not in God but in faith; we worship our own worshipping.”<sup>82</sup> Robert Bellah held Eisenhower as a symbol of a “generalized religiosity and America’s self-satisfied patriotic moralism.”<sup>83</sup>

There were many external shows of faith. Church attendance rose, congregations built new houses of worship, a Catholic priest had one of the highest rated television shows, and the newest translation of the Bible flew off the shelves. An opinion piece in the *Atlantic Monthly* also questioned the root of piety and figured that the appeal of religion was partly due to good public relations. The author debated the motivations of people seeking religion, and concluded that it had very little to do with faith formation.<sup>84</sup> Americans seemed more concerned with the appearance of piety than actual faith. Sixty-three percent of respondents to a poll claimed to

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<sup>79</sup> “House Asks U.S. Motto”

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>81</sup> Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), 219; William Lee Miller, *Piety Along the Potomac: Notes on Politics and Morals in Fifties*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964), 34.

<sup>82</sup> Miller, *Piety Along the Potomac: Notes on Politics and Morals in Fifties*, 41, 43.

<sup>83</sup> Henry, ““And I Don’t Care What It Is,”” 37.

<sup>84</sup> Harry C. Meserve, “The New Piety,” *Atlantic Monthly* (June 1955), 34-36.

have read at least part of the Bible in the past year. Respondents presented with a Bible quiz, however, were repeatedly unable to answer most basic questions correctly, such as what is the first book of the Bible.<sup>85</sup> While it would be unfair to generalize that Americans did not actually have faith in God, this type of quiz does demonstrate that there was a lack of engagement.

Although Americans united under the banner of religion to combat the atheistic forces of Communism, cracks in the consensus appeared by the end of the 1950s. The anxious climate that produced a hyper-religious response changed as American attention shifted to other interests. No doubt many these leaders fervently wished to block the spread of Communism and truly believed religion was a key aspect. However, this legislation was destined to divide the people because it was not just anti-Communist; it also made a statement about national identity. The people decreed that to be a patriot, one must be a believer in God. For much of the decade, civil religious consensus seemed triumphant, but even Christian denominations debated the values of civil religion. Rather than embracing a pluralistic view of God and faith, Americans expected assimilation. Belief (or unbelief) in God held different meanings for various religions, and that led to discord as Americans publicly defined their principles.

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<sup>85</sup> George H. Gallup, "Revised Edition of the Bible: Survey 509-K, Question 14d, December 27, 1952" *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 1111; George H. Gallup, "Biblical Quiz: Survey 539-K, Question 1, December 20, 1954, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 1293-1295.

### CHAPTER III

#### DISCORD IN THE GOLDEN ERA OF CONSENSUS

Although the United States began referring to its religious identity as Judeo-Christian in the early Cold War, Christians made a clear majority. While Christians shared in common a desire to thwart Communism and protect what they saw as the Christian heritage of the nation, they did not necessarily agree on theology or public policies. Catholics and Protestants were the major divide, but Protestants splintered into many denominations as well. No religious group was monolithic, however, for the sake of brevity some generalizations in perspectives can be made when trying to understand the dominant religious viewpoints of the post-war years.

The 1950s have been called the Era of Consensus. Many people felt anxious about the world in which they lived, and Americans banded together against common threats including Communism, materialism, and rationalism. In 1945, the Federal Council of Churches stated, “We are living in a uniquely dangerous and promising time.”<sup>86</sup> The world was changing; that provided possibilities, but also great fear. The Soviet Union successfully tested its first atomic bomb in 1949, which only made Americans more uneasy. Many believed the Soviet Union was the greatest threat to United States security, and that the USSR was winning the Cold War.<sup>87</sup> Major changes continued in the world. Europe was divided between the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union, and US isolation was never an option again. More tangibly, Americans also feared societal changes at home. Soldiers returned from war and needed to be

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Wuthrow, “Quid Obsurcum” in *Religion and American Politics* 2nd edition, eds. Mark Noll and Luke E. Harlow, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 450.

<sup>87</sup> George H. Gallup, “Most Important Problem, Survey #480-K, October 31, 1951” *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 1018; George H. Gallup, “Cold War, Survey #469-K, February 2, 1951” *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* volume 2 (New York: Random House, 1972), 963.

reintegrated into society. The role of women in society had changed and would continue to change. People sought ways to cope with this brave new world.<sup>88</sup> One method of coping was religion, and “[Americans] settled for a warm, fuzzy, pragmatic faith that tried not to draw any distinctions too carefully.”<sup>89</sup> Many viewed religion as the cornerstone of democracy, and expressed American identity as Judeo-Christian.<sup>90</sup> Religion could ease fears and help the pious find meaning in life, and also the nation could find its purpose. Clergy proselytized that America could only maintain its power to spread democracy and maintain its greatness through virtue.<sup>91</sup> In this way the motivation to religiously develop the country for both the sake of virtue and for the sake of stopping Communism became intertwined.

Catholics, Protestants, and Jews positioned themselves as “the religions of democracy.” The aftermath of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust prompted religions to increase cooperation and emphasize tolerance.<sup>92</sup> Clergy called for unity in religious virtue to protect the values of society and promote democracy. Labeling the major US faiths as the “religions of democracy” and the increasing ecumenical relationships provided a picture of consensus. However, to accomplish this interfaith cooperation, churches had to shift focus from dogma, or established doctrine and belief, toward the common ground of public morality. So, it sounded as if they agreed on more matters of faith than they really did.<sup>93</sup> Ecumenical relations brought new

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<sup>88</sup> Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 187.

<sup>89</sup> James Hudnut-Beumler, *Looking for God in the Suburbs: The Religion of the American Dream and Its Critics 1945-1965* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 83.

<sup>90</sup> Goren, *Politics and Public Culture*, 193; Wuthrow, “Quid Obsurcum,” 448.

<sup>91</sup> Hudnut-Beumler, *Looking for God in the Suburbs*, 19.

<sup>92</sup> Wuthrow, “Quid Obsurcum,” 452.

<sup>93</sup> Butler, *Religion in America*, 366- 367. Petigny, *Permissive Society*, 66-67; Wuthrow, “Quid Obsurcum,” 448, 450.

questions. If the three dominant faiths of the country all provided full expression of American civil religion, did that mean the country embraced a pluralistic society?

Pluralism refers to societies that allow for minority groups, whether religious, racial, or social, to maintain their own cultural identity and pursue their own special interests within the construct of the common society. Will Herberg promoted pluralism in his book *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* by presenting the three dominant religions in the United States each as a full expression of American identity. Herberg's work, published in 1955, addressed concerns regarding pluralism because many were not comfortable with the concept. A writer for *Christian Century* went so far as to call pluralism a menace; the article decried immigrants as a danger to tradition just as Congress debated allowing more displaced Jews from Europe to immigrate to the United States. Pluralism could pave the way for Communists, particularly if society lost its vigilance over virtue. The writer claimed that America had always been homogeneous and it should remain so.<sup>94</sup> Oscar Handlin, noted immigration historian, said the opposite. Speaking about pluralism for a lecture series of the American Jewish Congress (AJCongress), Handlin reminded his audience that the nation never really consisted of only one kind of people. Religion presented the perfect example of cultural differences that had always been present. So how, then, had people managed so long to live in relative harmony? Handlin's answer: free expression. Each person needed to accept a government of majority rule as long as it allowed for free expression by minorities.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "Pluralism -- National Menace," *Christian Century* (June 13, 1951): 701-703.

<sup>95</sup> Oscar Handlin, "Freedom and Restraint in American Jewish Life," speech delivered at 7th Annual Lessing J. Rosenwald Lecture Series, December 4, 1961, Philadelphia, PA. *National Conference of Christians and Jews*, Minneapolis, MN. Box 16: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: American Council for Judaism, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

The term pluralism has been misused. Sometimes the word was used when the person or party wanted to actually promote assimilation, which is the absorption of people of differing backgrounds into one national identity. Assimilation involves relinquishing some cultural traits while adopting traits of the dominant culture. Immigrants who give up their language and speak English after moving to the United States provide one example of assimilation. From the 1800s to the end of World War II, Jews promoted assimilation among Jewish immigrants and many wanted to blend in after escaping political persecution.<sup>96</sup> However, maintaining principled belief in the ‘rightness’ of one’s religion while accepting other’s belief in the ‘rightness’ of their religion was a challenge. Most religions, but Christianity in particular, require an effort on the part of the believer to proselytize and convert people. People agreed that religion provided morality and public virtue; how to express and teach that caused division.

As people moved up in economic class and out to the suburbs, the physical barriers separating religious groups began to dissolve. Often the waves of immigrants created religious enclaves that dominated different parts of major cities, but the 1950s sprawl included a mingling of faith groups all while Protestants, Catholics, and Jews experienced increased church attendance. The major United States’ religions all saw increased funds along with membership and began to build churches and synagogues in the suburbs where population was moving.

Denominational divides erupted due to promotion of ecumenical relationships. Churches disputed ecumenism because they saw it as watering down dogma, and they feared moral relativism was trumping past certainties. Some denominations responded by becoming more isolated.<sup>97</sup> Although several religious leaders worked together for greater acceptance and

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<sup>96</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 32.

<sup>97</sup> Petigny, *Permissive Society*, 66-67; Butler, *Religion in America*, 366.

understanding through groups such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, there were still great divisions among the three dominant American religions. The rift in consensus first appeared and grew the greatest in the public schools.

Protestants and Catholics shared some concerns. Clergy warned people to guard against the corrupt forces of secularism. A number of reasons caused Americans worry over the perceived moral decline of society. The relaxing of Blue Laws, such as retail stores opening on Sundays or hunting on the Sabbath, which Eisenhower himself did, caused major concern.<sup>98</sup> Some Christians thought that these developments broke the Third Commandment: Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.<sup>99</sup> Christians also shared fears of immorality in the form of materialism, drinking, crime, and inflationary spending. They worried over loss of industry, comfort and security.<sup>100</sup> But even with the common bonds of Christianity and opposition to Communism, Protestants and Catholics still had great tensions. The growing Catholic population set the Protestant community on edge and some feared that the pope intended to rule America politically as well as religiously.<sup>101</sup>

Catholicism was a minority religion in a United States that was dominated by Protestant Christians. Although Catholics experienced discriminations, during the 1950s with their anti-Communist credentials firmly in place, American Catholics were often embraced as Christian allies in the Cold War. Catholics opposed Communism in its infancy. In the late nineteenth century, Pope Leo XIII denounced socialism as atheistic and materialistic. European Catholics stood against all forms of totalitarianism and saw the actions of the Communists after the

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<sup>98</sup> Petigny, *The Permissive Society*, 63-65.

<sup>99</sup> Exodus 20:8.

<sup>100</sup> Vinz, *Pulpit Politics*, 139.

<sup>101</sup> Vinz, *Pulpit Politics*, 139; Wuthrow, "Quid Obsurum," 448.

Russian Revolution as vindication of their stance towards Communism.<sup>102</sup> It is no surprise that American Catholics followed the leadership of the pope and also took an anti-communist position. Clergy and groups of Catholic laymen, such as the Knights of Columbus, worked to position faith as a weapon against Communism. Catholics also wanted to be above reproach in regards to patriotism because they had long struggled to gain acceptance in the United States due to unfounded fear that Catholics wanted to replace the president with the pope.<sup>103</sup>

The most famous American spokesperson was Bishop of Rochester Fulton Sheen, who first became popular on the radio and then for his very successful television program *Life Is Worth Living*. Sheen warned that the United States did not represent a perfect God-fearing society. Many clergy cautioned their followers against slipping into moral decline, but, as Bishop Sheen stated on his program, “our great problem, of course, is Communism.”<sup>104</sup> In a masterful delivery during the 1951 season finale, Sheen argued that Communism preyed on decaying countries like vultures and the only way to prevent the vultures bringing death to the United States was to be strong in faith. Not only would the United States withstand the Communist threat, but the country was destined to bring Christian conversion to the Russian people. The nation was to bear the burden of bringing salvation to the world. He spoke to his viewers of the “fire of patriotism,” and equated patriotic duty and Christian duty.<sup>105</sup>

Sheen appealed to a wide audience, but Catholics struggled to present themselves as fully pluralistic in attitude for the simple fact that they believed there was no salvation outside the

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<sup>102</sup> Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 24-25.

<sup>103</sup> Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals*, 17-20.

<sup>104</sup> “Life is Worth Living,” *Great Speeches Vol. 6*, videocassette, (Greenwood, IN: Alliance Video, 1992).

<sup>105</sup> “Life is Worth Living.” Sheen’s vulture metaphor seemed to indicate a belief that vultures bring death, though we know that vultures do not bring death, but rather feed on the dead. Sheen intended to be dramatic, not scientific.

Catholic church. Protestants viewed Catholics warily as they feared a takeover by Rome.<sup>106</sup> The relationship between Catholics and Jews could be even more contentious. Several Jewish rabbis appealed to the mainstream through psychology. Rabbi Loth Liebman, considered America's most respected rabbi, published *Peace of Mind* in 1946. Although the themes were Jewish, its broad appeal was through psychology and a feel-good-type theology.<sup>107</sup> Bishop Sheen did not approve of psychology, and he directly attacked Liebman's book on an episode of *Life Is Worth Living*. Sheen expressed disapproval of the Christian flock who were seduced by new ideas and rituals in Liebman's writings because the only path to salvation was through the grace of Christ and through confession of sins. He compared psychologists to Pharisees and claimed Judaism was "speech without vision."<sup>108</sup>

Clare Booth Luce, congresswoman, ambassador, author, and wife of *Time* mogul Henry Luce, converted to Catholicism after her daughter's death in 1944, and began to publicly promote Catholicism. Sheen personally oversaw Luce's instruction in the faith, and her very public conversion. She wrote and spoke about her beliefs. Although she received support from many in defending herself from accusations of anti-Semitism, she very much believed that Christianity was superior, and labeled Judaism as "the red religion."<sup>109</sup> Reporter Fanny Sedgwick Colby summarized Luce's views for a piece in the *American Scholar*. "Mrs. Luce's thesis is this:" wrote Colby, "We Christian innocents have been duped into our present godless condition by the unholy triumvirate of Communism, Psychoanalysis, and Relativity. These three, symbolized by Marx, Freud and Einstein, are the result of the messianic impulse of the

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<sup>106</sup> Vinz, *Pulpit Politics*, 139.

<sup>107</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 218.

<sup>108</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 236, 250.

<sup>109</sup> Clare Booth Luce, "Christianity and the Red Religion," delivered before Archdiocese Council of Catholic Women, Chicago (November 20, 1974) quoted in Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 250.

religiously frustrated Jewish ego.”<sup>110</sup> Luce wanted to justify her conversion to Catholicism beyond talk of finding God’s grace or repentance of sins because she felt that to anyone who did not have faith those explanations would be meaningless. She expressed concern that people had embraced the Marxist idea that the individual is not the sinner, but rather classes become “group-perpetrators” of sin. Luce thought this removed any guilt or responsibility from individuals and that was its appeal. Luce’s “real reason” for becoming Catholic related to her desire to understand the world and her search for “Truth.” She wrote that she found God is all that endures.<sup>111</sup>

Protestants, being the majority in the United States, did not have to fear ridicule or being cast as outsiders due to religious beliefs. That did not mean they shared a unified faith.

Although the 1952 publication of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible strengthened ecumenical relationships, it also caused worry and division. People across many Protestant denominations celebrated the RSV, and the first printing of one million copies sold out within two days.<sup>112</sup> The RSV Bible translation was highly readable, and also based on new scholarship in ancient languages. While it was popularly received, it was not without controversy. Many conservatives felt that any retranslation of the Bible would discredit the idea of the biblical inerrancy.<sup>113</sup> Fundamentalists claimed the King James Version, the longest accepted English translation of the Bible, was the only translation inspired by God.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Fanny Sedgwick Colby, “Monsignor Sheen and Mrs. Luce,” *American Scholar* (1948), quoted in Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 242.

<sup>111</sup> Clare Booth Luce, “The ‘Real’ Reason,” *McCall’s* (February 1947):117-118

<sup>112</sup> Petigny, *Permissive Society*, 71.

<sup>113</sup> Petigny, *Permissive Society*, 74; Vinz, *Pulpit Politics*, 110.

<sup>114</sup> Peter J. Thussen, “Some Scripture Is Inspired by God: Late-Nineteenth Century Protestants and the Demise of a Common Bible,” *Church History* 65 (December 1996): 610, <http://0-jstor.org.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/stable/3170389>, (accessed November 8, 2011).

Protestants faced challenges in the political arena, where some were questioned about the strength of their anti-communist sentimentalities. Protestants across many denominations had a history of promoting a Social Gospel that focused on care of others and ministering to the outcast. Some of these ideas in practice seemed opposed to capitalism because Social Gospel focused on the injustices of wealth inequality. If leftist ideas did not make someone a Communist, one could still be “pink” as Richard Nixon infamously stated.

These divisions among Protestants made them more vulnerable to suspicion of Communist activities than Catholics who had long spoken out against Communism. In 1953, J.B. Matthews, a former member of the U.S. Socialist Party turned anti-communist informer, claimed before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) that “the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen.”<sup>115</sup> He did not remain vague, naming, among others, Rev. Harry F. Ward, who testified before HUAC and was found by that committee to be a Communist. HUAC Chairman Harold Velde also publicly stated concerns about clergy with communist sympathies. He carefully reassured people that there was no interest in investigating the churches themselves, just the clergy. This prompted an outcry on both sides. It even divided the committee, with several members wanting to make clear that it was Velde’s agenda and not the committee’s idea.<sup>116</sup> Several pastors spoke out, stating that there was no evidence against them and that faith was the very thing that stood against communism. A committee from the National Conference of Christians and Jews sent a telegram to President Eisenhower, calling on him to defend the clergy. They wrote that churches were the best line of defense against Communism, but they were

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<sup>115</sup> J.B. Matthews, “Reds and our Churches,” *American Mercury* (July 1953): 3.

<sup>116</sup> Clayton Knowles, “Red Inquiry Group Assails Chairman,” *The New York Times*, March 11, 1953, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.cmich.edu>, (accessed November 14, 2011).

weakened by unjust attacks. Eisenhower did come to their defense, and the exchange of telegrams appeared in the *New York Times*.<sup>117</sup> In the firestorm of public opinion, Velde chose his own target, G. Bromley Oxnam, Methodist Bishop of Washington. Oxnam spoke critically of HUAC, so although there was not any evidence against him, he annoyed Velde and was called before HUAC to defend himself.<sup>118</sup>

The Oxnam hearing took place on July 31, 1953 in the spacious Old House Caucus Room. Testimony began at 2:30 p.m. and lasted ten hours, dismissing after midnight.<sup>119</sup> Most of the questioning was handled by hired counsel Robert L. Kunzig, who relied on fabricated evidence, such as insinuating that Oxnam demonstrated pro-communist leaning by supporting friendly Soviet relations during World War II. Oxnam countered that Eisenhower encouraged good relations with our ally at that time, but Velde attempted to remove that from the record.<sup>120</sup> In a similar manner, the committee tried to suggest guilt by association. Oxnam had served on the board of a magazine, *The Protestant Digest*, but resigned in 1942 after being warned of its Communist ties. The attorney general's list declaring the magazine Communist appeared in 1947.

MR. KUNZIG. I might add that the lists are retroactive.

BISHOP OXNAM. I have heard that but I have never been able to understand how a list can become retroactive...saying that an organization was subversive 20 years ago because somebody found it subversive 20 years later.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> "Texts of Documents in Matthews Case," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1953, <http://0-www.proquest.com.catalog.cmich.edu>, (accessed February 16, 2012).

<sup>118</sup> Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), 334, 337.

<sup>119</sup> G. Bromley Oxnam, "Testimony of G. Bromley Oxnam," *Hearing before the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, 83rd Congress, 1st sess., (July 21, 1953), 3585, <http://www.archive.org/stream/testimonyofbisho00unit> (accessed November 22, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> G. Bromley Oxnam Testimony, 3603.

<sup>121</sup> G. Bromley Oxnam Testimony, 3632.

Kunzig tried to railroad Oxnam, but the audience was not having it. Velde had to ask the audience to “restrain themselves” several times.<sup>122</sup> Committee member Clyde Doyle made a motion for the record to show that there was no evidence of communist activity or affiliation from Oxnam. That motion passed, but a second motion by Doyle to have the record amended to note Oxnam’s denial of communist party membership failed.<sup>123</sup> While this ended the hearing, Oxnam was not exactly cleared of wrongdoing. He left the Old House Caucus Room neither guilty nor exhonored. HUAC demonstrated that it cared little about actual evidence. In this climate of suspicion, it was prudent for clergy to take a strong anti-communist and pro-patriotic stance, and one option was to take to the pulpit to do so.

Even though Protestants faced some political strife, most did not. They felt called to preach against Communism, not because they were under suspicion, but rather because they fervently believed it was God’s will. The most well-known figure in the Protestant movement was Reverend Billy Graham. While it took Graham some time to neatly package his idea of Christian involvement in the political process, very early in his ministry he spoke of piety and patriotism as one.<sup>124</sup> Graham was staunchly anti-communist, and believed one could not be Christian and Communist. However, while Graham’s crusades brought him national popularity, his involvement in ecumenical relations, his support of the RSV Bible, and his desire for greater engagement in politics actually moved him further from the stance of Baptists and other conservative denominations.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> G. Bromley Oxnam Testimony, 3633.

<sup>123</sup> G. Bromley Oxnam Testimony, 3801-3802.

<sup>124</sup> Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 202.

<sup>125</sup> Vinz, *Pulpit Politics*, 110-111.

Norman Vincent Peale, another popular Protestant minister, made the best seller's lists with his 1952 book *The Power of Positive Thinking*. It sold over twenty-two million copies. The book was mostly psychology and part theology. In the first chapter, Peale encourages the reader to truly believe Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."<sup>126</sup> The purpose of *The Power of Positive Thinking* was to help Americans overcome their feelings of inferiority and fear. Each person needed to "develop a tremendous faith in God and that will give you a humble yet soundly realistic faith in yourself."<sup>127</sup> Peale believed that if Americans had more positive attitudes, they would be capable of rising to meet life's challenges, including the fight against Communism.<sup>128</sup>

No religious group was immune to the hysteria of McCarthyism. However, in the early Cold War "the pulse of America was to equate Jewishness with cultural subversion."<sup>129</sup> Catholics and Protestants, though wary of each other at times, held the common bond of Christ and a belief in the superiority of Christianity. The religions of democracy shared the Old Testament and its call for justice. Each faith believed in Jefferson's inalienable rights of the individual. However, all wanted to influence society, and they disagreed on a wide range of issues including medical ethics, marriage, censorship and education. If pluralism was to work, everyone had to agree to amicably disagree.<sup>130</sup> That would be a problem, particularly where Jews were concerned.

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<sup>126</sup> Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), 3.

<sup>127</sup> Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Butler, *Religion in American Life*, 367.

<sup>129</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 242.

<sup>130</sup> John C. Bennett, "Cultural Pluralism: the Religious Dimension: What Difference, Then, Does Religion Make?" November 15, 1960. *National Archive of Christians and Jews*, Box 10: Speeches, Folder: Speeches, a-b; Denis A. McCarthy, opening address of the Goodwill Conference May 16, 1931, *National Archive of Christians and Jews* Box 10: Speeches, Folder: Early Publications, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

## CHAPTER IV

### BEYOND THE RHETORIC OF PLURALISM: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Bishop Sheen, Reverend Peale, and Rabbi Liebman's mass appeal indicate cultural pluralism, however, other than popular success and opposition to Communism, they agreed on very little theologically. Liebman's Jewish faith separated him from the pack of post-war religious revivalists. As Christians, Sheen and Peale could more easily transcend their theological boundaries with common treatment of Jesus's teachings and view of God's grace. Liebman appealed to the general public through psychology blended with Judaism. His perspective was something wholly new to most Americans. With his book, *Peace of Mind*, remaining number one on the *New York Times* best-sellers list for a year, it seemed to indicate that Americans were embracing pluralism and that anti-Semitism would wane. Yet Liebman was still outside the American religious tradition, and theologians, including Sheen, attacked Liebman's book and declared Judaism inferior to Christianity.<sup>131</sup> Claiming the American civil religious identity would remain arduous. The popularity of a rabbi did not transcend American wariness of Jews.

The Jewish experience in the United States began as an immigrant experience. Jews first settled in New Amsterdam, now New York, as early as its founding in 1625. The migration was an extension of the diaspora that began with the Spanish expulsion in 1492 until Jews were finally forced from the Iberian peninsula in the sixteenth century. Many of these Jews found a

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<sup>131</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 163, 218, 236; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 272.

new home first in Amsterdam, and some finally crossed the Atlantic. Through the course of various European upheavals, more Jews came to the United States seeking a new home.<sup>132</sup>

Jews followed very typical immigrant patterns. The first and second generations attempted to remove the taint of “otherness” by conforming to their new homeland. Often the first generations became so thoroughly American that the third generation wanted to understand their familial history and returned to their roots. Many rabbis encouraged this response because they worried that Jews would discard their faith along with their foreignness, so they began efforts to promote their religious heritage.<sup>133</sup>

Jews did not have as much difficulty finding acceptance in the United States as in Europe. Nevertheless, the influx of Eastern European immigrants that began around 1870 caused consternation. By the turn of the twentieth century Americans vocally called for immigration reform. They hoped to restrict access to those deemed less desirable, and they used pseudoscience based on Charles Darwin’s theories to justify their racism. Pseudoscience supported the idea of multiple European races wherein the Northern European race was superior. Henry Goddard, an intellectual psychologist, started testing immigrants at Ellis Island and found Eastern Europeans to have a high percentage of “moronism.” Other psychological studies concluded that non-Western Europeans were less intelligent. Published in 1923, Carl Bingham’s research also indicated that Jews were less intelligent than caucasians, but he left out data to support his view. When American Jews were given the same intelligence tests, their scores were equivalent to other Americans.<sup>134</sup> These psychological studies appealed to people who raised the alarm that inferior Eastern and Mediterranean immigrants would overcome or at least dilute the

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<sup>132</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), 186.

<sup>133</sup> Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, 201, 186-189.

<sup>134</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 143.

better “racial stock” of white Americans.<sup>135</sup> Although belief that Jews were somehow deficient mentally or physically had been common in Europe, Americans “were less obsessed than Europeans” with casting Jews as abnormal; Jews were just one minority among many.<sup>136</sup> However, these stereotypes of Jewish abnormality took root in the United States as well, particularly during economic downturns, which tend to bring out prejudice.<sup>137</sup>

Christians and Jews had a long, antagonistic narrative that followed Jews everywhere they went. Christians historically justified forced conversions and expulsions of Jews because Jews killed Christ. World War I provided a turning point in their relationship after Christians and Jews fought in the horrific trenches as allies. With a new found spirit of tolerance, Christians from many countries, though mostly European, came together in 1927 for two conferences to address the “Christian Approach to the Jew.”<sup>138</sup> They began by acknowledging that oppression and persecution were wrong. However, even as their report chastised Christian behavior, they still felt compelled to justify their historical treatment of Jews. Their rationales included a claim that since Jews had always been victims of aggression even before there were Christians, all the blame should not lie with Christians. Additionally, those participating in the conference used the classic “they started it” defense because the biblical Book of Acts detailed Jewish acts of aggression against early Christians.<sup>139</sup> Clearly, Christians attending conference were not ready to take full responsibility for their actions, but they did express shame for the wrongs Christians committed against Jews.

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<sup>135</sup> *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History*, ed. Jon Gjerde, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998), 273-274.

<sup>136</sup> Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 150.

<sup>137</sup> Laura E. Weber, “Gentiles Preferred: Minneapolis Jews and Employment 1920-1950,” *Minneapolis Historical Society* (Spring 1991): 171.

<sup>138</sup> *The Christian Approach to the Jew: Being a Report of Conferences on the Subject Held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927), 195.

<sup>139</sup> *The Christian Approach to the Jew*, 2-6, 26.

The call for a new approach centered on a few changes in perspective. First, they had a renewed look at the fact that Jesus was a Jew. They also showed renewed interest in the common ground that the Old Testament provided as Scripture used by both religious faiths. The Old Testament stated that Jews are God's chosen people, and Christians believe that God sent Jesus to save his people. If Jesus was a Jew, then it followed that his people were Jews. This perspective could have promoted the possibility of a pluralistic existence. Instead, the conference planned its new evangelizing mission. They wanted to condemn anti-Semitism, but promote conversion using methods such as lectures, teaching, and personal kindness because "it would be a tragedy if they accept Christian civilization without its Christ... [the only] true consolation of Israel."<sup>140</sup> The ideas from these conferences became the common view held by Christians.

Youth are often central in proselytizing efforts. Theoretically, youth were easier to sway because they were less entrenched in religious doctrine. However, after World War I, youth, particularly European youth, became involved with socialism and labor concerns. As Communism took over in Russia, many anti-Jewish laws ended. Jews in several European countries embraced Communism, but that made them "an object of even greater suspicion to the conservative and privileged elements."<sup>141</sup>

In the United States, Jews were the largest single ethnic group to join the Communist Party.<sup>142</sup> The party provided a sense of belonging for Jewish immigrants who wanted to throw off the ways of their old country, but yet were not embraced by their new country.<sup>143</sup> Another reason Jews joined was simply the politics of labor organization. Most of the Jewish immigrants

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<sup>140</sup> *The Christian Approach to the Jew*, 7, 37, 39.

<sup>141</sup> *The Christian Approach to the Jew*, 195.

<sup>142</sup> "Guide to the Communist Party of the United States Records," *The Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives*, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York. [http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/tam\\_132/tam\\_132.html](http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/tam_132/tam_132.html)livepage.apple.com (accessed March 26, 2013).

<sup>143</sup> Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarythism in America*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.: 1998), 150.

would have begun in the United States as unskilled laborers. The largest labor union in the early twentieth century was the American Federation of Labor (AFL), but the AFL only organized skilled labor. Following the Russian Revolution, trepidation about the spread of bolshevism gripped the United States, and the AFL understood the connection between labor and the “red scare.” The leaders made efforts to present the AFL and labor organization as “the bulwark against bolshevism.”<sup>144</sup> However, while the AFL was trying to hold radicalism at bay, the Communists, broken into two separate parties, took an active role in labor negotiations on behalf of unskilled workers and supported the use of strikes. Industrial Workers of the World, often in conjunction with the Communist parties, offered a voice to unskilled, immigrant laborers, and drew many Jews into the Communist Party. As mid-century approached, the large number of Jewish members in the Communist Party led to a justification in discrimination. It did not occur to anti-communist crusaders that the Communist Party opposed Hitler in the 1930s while the rest of the world was practicing appeasement, and that was a major attraction to the party. Nazi opposition was one reason so many Jewish intellectuals became members of the party.<sup>145</sup>

After World War II, American Jews were in a precarious position. Jews in the United States had rights not granted elsewhere. In fact, there was no special legal consideration for being Jewish, which was a welcome change. American Jews understood that although minorities in the US were entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other citizen, this was not necessarily reality. However, the United States still provided better opportunities than in European countries, where they were legally second class citizens with no hope of altering their position. Jews faced discrimination in the US though. Much of it was quiet, such as being denied

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<sup>144</sup> Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 106.

<sup>145</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 120; Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes*, 79, 150.

certain jobs or accommodations. Nevertheless, Jews were so horrified over the Holocaust, particularly the newest group of immigrants who escaped the continent, that they were unwilling to rock the boat. Many Jews pushed for assimilation rather than true pluralism because they sought acceptance in American society.<sup>146</sup>

Jews did not have great influence over public policy, and they took care to not appear too aggressive lest they open themselves to persecution. Some Jews, however, tried to influence politics indirectly to create a reality of minority protections and American pluralism.<sup>147</sup> They were also active voters and supported the involvement on the part of the American Jewish Congress (AJCongress) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Establishment Clause and racial discrimination lawsuits.<sup>148</sup>

Entering World War II did not lessen anti-Semitism nor did knowledge of the Holocaust, though the public picture was different. National leaders proclaimed that America was *Judeo-Christian*, and Judaism was a religion of democracy. Will Herberg's influential book *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* boldly declared that America had successfully embraced a pluralistic society and to be Catholic, Jewish or Protestant were all acceptable and "alternative ways of being American."<sup>149</sup> This general embrace of Judeo-Christian piety reminisced the Founding Father's promotion of virtue, which they believed necessary for the survival of the country. The vitality of democracy could only be maintained through religious virtue.<sup>150</sup> However, a national poll

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<sup>146</sup> Ivers, *To To Build a Wall*, 31-32.

<sup>147</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 3.

<sup>148</sup> Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture*, 190.

<sup>149</sup> Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, 274-275.

<sup>150</sup> Hudnut-Beumler, *Looking for God in the Suburbs*, 19.

indicated anti-Semitism peaked before the war and ebbed during the conflict, but at the war's conclusion anti-Semitism rose again.<sup>151</sup>

The post-war years brought prosperity to the United States, which had emerged from World War II as an undeniable world power. New-found affluence created a new environment - the suburbs. Upper-middle class and middle class families used their new purchasing power to buy homes outside cities. For many, it meant moving away from apartment living to a more permanent residence. The trend brought many Protestants to suburbia and they built new churches. Although Protestants dominated the population of the suburbs, many Jews also moved out of the cities. Sociological research showed that the suburbs attracted intellectuals and professionals in occupations such as academics, law, and medicine. A large percentage of Jews held these jobs, so even though Jews were a minority of the overall suburban shift, many American Jews moved from cities.<sup>152</sup> Thus, early suburbanization primarily began as a Protestant and Jewish transition. As Jews settled into the suburbs and purchased homes, they too began to build houses of worship. Between 1945 and 1960, Jewish congregations constructed six hundred synagogues and temples.<sup>153</sup> People began to live more closely with people who were ethnically, religiously, racially, or socially different. This both raised social consciousness and caused tension. These dynamics became themes in popular culture forms such as books and movies.

The 1947 movie *Gentleman's Agreement* addressed anti-Semitism. The critically acclaimed film, based on the novel by Laura Hobson, received three Academy Awards the following year. *Gentleman's Agreement* examined the nature of the prejudice that existed in the United States against Jews, noting the main thrust of anti-Semitism was not overt or aggressive.

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<sup>151</sup> Weber, "Gentiles Preferred," 179.

<sup>152</sup> Hudnut-Beumler, *Looking for God in the Suburbs*, 6.

<sup>153</sup> Goren, *The Politics of Public Culture*, 187.

It was, as the title says, a gentleman's agreement. The idea that people would not rent or sell to "non-Aryans" or hire non-gentiles was not necessarily discussed over the water cooler, but it was understood. The movie addressed a component of anti-Semitism that is perhaps most difficult to pinpoint - that it was there but no one wanted to talk about it.<sup>154</sup> Gregory Peck's character Phil Green, a gentile journalist, went undercover as a Jew to discover the depths of anti-Semitism and was most shocked by this gentleman's agreement: the nice people who went along. Phil experienced prejudice in the work place, discovering his own secretary changed her name and posed as a gentile because their employer did not hire Jews, trouble with medical care for his mother once the doctor realized they were Jewish, and the inability to check into a hotel. The moment that shook Phil the most was when his son, Tom, came home upset because the school children would not let him join in play, calling him "a dirty Jew." Tom's tears and childish confusion over why religion could matter so much wrenched the viewers' emotions. To soothe him, Phil's fiancé, Kathy, tried to assure the boy that he is fine because he was not really Jewish. When Kathy and Phil were alone, he lost his temper. "You just assured him," he yelled, "that the loveliest of all creatures is the white, Christian American. You instantly gave him that lovely taste of superiority, the poison that millions of parents drop on the minds of millions of children." Later in that scene Phil addressed the main problem with anti-Semitism after Kathy questioned him on whether he thought she was an anti-Semite:

No, it's just that I've come to see lots of nice people who aren't. Who despise and detest and deplore it and protest their own innocence, then help it along and wonder why it grows. People who would never beat up a Jew or yell "kike" at a child. People who think anti-Semitism is something way off in some dark

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<sup>154</sup> Ken Burns, "Back Story," *Gentleman's Agreement*, DVD, Directed by Elia Kazan (Hollywood: 20th Century Films, 1947).

crackpot place with low-class morons. That's the biggest discovery I've made about this whole business. The good people. The nice people.<sup>155</sup>

Many in Hollywood feared possible backlash from addressing the topic of anti-Semitism. Most of the movie moguls were Jewish, but they declined the movie rights to Hobson's novel. Daryl Zanuck wanted to challenge the status quo even though other producers asked him not to rock the boat. Many directors refused the job. The House Committee on Un-American Activities's (HUAC) Hollywood witch hunt made the movie even more relevant. Soon after *Gentleman's Agreement*, HUAC subpoenaed forty-three people from the movie industry. Congressman John Rankin believed that Hollywood had been infiltrated by Communists who wanted to use the screen to promote their subversive message. Rankin was known for anti-Semitic speech and he tended to link the Jewish presence in the movie business with seditious motives.<sup>156</sup>

The examples of discrimination in the movie were taken from real life. Just as the character Phil Green could not check into the inn because he was Jewish, many Jews were barred from various services such as hotel accommodations. The *Boston City Reporter* published an exposé on the matter in 1951. Hotels used coded phrases like "select clientele" to indicate they would not let rooms to certain races or religions. When advertising location and amenities, these hotels would mention nearby Protestant and Catholic churches. Two-hundred fifty of the 275 Massachusetts hotels responded to a survey and forty percent of respondents admitted their unwillingness to accommodate Jews.<sup>157</sup> For an article in the Jewish journal *Commentary*, writer Harry Gersh investigated the gentleman's agreement that barred Jews from living in Bronxville,

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<sup>155</sup> *Gentleman's Agreement*, DVD, Directed by Elia Kazan (Hollywood: 20th Century Films, 1947).

<sup>156</sup> Burns, "Back Story," *Gentleman's Agreement*.

<sup>157</sup> Isabel Currier, "There Ought to Be a Law -- And There Is," *Boston City Reporter* 32 (August 1951): 1, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 39, folder 1, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

New York. Whenever Gersh went to a realtor with an assumed gentile-sounding name, they were eager to show him houses and promote the benefits of the community, such as the school system. When he told the same relators that he was Jewish, they suddenly could not find any houses for him in Bronxville and suggested neighboring communities. He discovered that even if someone wanted to sell their house to a Jew, they would suffer ostracism in other aspects of life. Their former neighbors were also their co-workers. The sale would be considered a betrayal of the friends left behind. The people of Bronxville were nice enough to Harry Gersh and made excuses about how the gentleman's agreement might not be right, but what could anyone do? Gersh pointed out that maintaining the agreement to bar Jews needed only a few active participants, "but it does require -- and evidently commands -- the majority's assent."<sup>158</sup>

Subtle anti-Semitism appeared in many forms. In 1947, American poet Robert Frost published "A Case for Jefferson." The poem decried the societal and social attitudes of the time. The fictional Harrison wanted to make changes to the country, but those changes would ultimately be destructive, according to the poet. Not because Harrison had no love of his country, rather because he was naive and was seduced by Freudian and Marxist ideas. Midway through the eleven line poem Frost notes, "It isn't because he's Russian Jew. He's Puritan Yankee through and through."<sup>159</sup> Harrison had many wrong thoughts, but at least he was not Jewish. That type of sentiment was exactly what *Gentleman's Agreement* lamented.

It can be difficult to assess how many people were anti-Semitic when one takes into account the subtle variant that Phil Green articulated. The superiority that "nice people" felt was

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<sup>158</sup> Harry Gersh, "Gentlemen's Agreement in Bronxville: The 'Holy Square Mile,'" *Commentary* 27.2 (February 1959): 111.

<sup>159</sup> Robert Frost, "A Case for Jefferson," 1947, <http://sites.google.com/site/donslibrary/Home/united-states-fiction/robert-frost/steeple-bush/a-case-for-jefferson> (accessed January 16, 2013).

unlikely to be expressed in a poll or other forum. Nevertheless, the *Catholic Digest* did try to explore what different religious adherents thought about each other. The digest's article used an interesting approach; it was a study of perceptions. The survey solicited thoughts about those who professed different faiths, and the study attempted to gauge what people of one religion believed others thought of them. When asked about "ill-feelings" a vast majority of Jews and Catholics responded that they bore no ill-feelings towards Protestants, however sixteen percent of Jewish and twenty-two percent of Catholic adults believed that Protestants looked down on them. When Christians responded to the survey, twenty-one percent of Catholics and twenty-five percent of Protestants answered that they had some ill-feelings toward the Jews. However, only four percent of Catholics and four percent of Protestants believed that Jews tried to religiously interfere with their beliefs. The writers at the *Catholic Digest* viewed all the numbers in a positive light: although there was some negativity, it was always the minority. The article cautioned Americans not to "complacently congratulate themselves," but also enthused that "bigotry and intolerance...[was] not a real threat to our national unity."<sup>160</sup> The survey explored whether or not people perceived that others of a different religion looked down on them, but it never directly asked if someone did feel superior to another. Knowing the specific reasons behind these feelings would be interesting, but unfortunately, the article did not explore that question.

Richard Feynman, theoretical physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project, related anecdotes from his early days as a professor that expressed both subtle and overt anti-Semitism. After World War II, Feynman began teaching at Cornell University. First, the head of the department asked Feynman's opinion on a candidate for late admission. Feynman reviewed the

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<sup>160</sup> "What We Think of Each Other," *Catholic Digest* (February 1953): 63, 65-66.

student's application and deemed him qualified. But then he was asked what he thought of the student's picture. Feynman responded, "What possible difference could that make?" and the department head was glad to hear that Feynman wanted to judge students solely on their qualifications. The test indicated that prejudice commonly had a role in determining a student's admission. Shortly after, another professor came to ask Feynman to join a club. The club believed that the Nazis were not bad. "He tried to explain to me how there were too many Jews doing this and that -- some crazy thing," Feynman said. "So I waited until he got all finished, and said to him, 'You know, you made a mistake: I was brought up in a Jewish family.'"<sup>161</sup>

Apparently the professor just left and Feynman reported no backlash from the incident other than his own loss of respect for professors in the humanities at Cornell. He presented these stories back to back, illustrating prejudice was just as present in the liberal bastion of academia as elsewhere. In fact, Jews had much more difficulty attaining a higher education and had to fill out an average of one-third more college applications than Christians. There were Jewish quotas and once filled, other Jews, no matter their qualifications, would be turned down. As a student, Columbia rejected Feynman due to its Jewish quota.<sup>162</sup>

Political battles highlighted anti-Semitic attitudes. For all the bluster about religions of democracy, members of Congress who were motivated to bar Communism from the United States' shores created legislation that was decidedly Christian in nature. Even if "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance was not meant to promote one religion over another, the fact that the

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<sup>161</sup> Richard P. Feynman, *Classic Feynman: All the Adventures of a Curious Character*, ed. Ralph Leighton, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2006), 186-187.

<sup>162</sup> Feynman, *Classic Feynman*, 101. Anti-Defamation League pamphlet "Case History #2: Discrimination in Higher Education," *National Conference of Christians and Jews*, Box 16: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Anti-Semitism and Religious School Textbooks, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

The ADL instituted a campaign to end discrimination and drew together many university leaders. They demonstrated that separate was not equal and the results of the 1949 meeting were that many university removed questions about race, religion, and parents' nativity from applications.

signing ceremony was capped with the playing of “Onward Christian Soldiers” leaves little to the imagination as to the point legislators were truly making.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, many felt that Christianity rather than simple faith in God created an anti-Communist bulwark. When speaking to a Sunday School convention in Des Moines, Iowa, Attorney General Tom Clark directly made the claim that “Christianity and our democracy are synonymous.” To Clark and his audience, there could be no United States without Christianity. Clark told the audience that he was not advocating any particular creed, yet he did: “Teach a nation true Christianity, and its statesmen will translate that faith into the words of the Four Freedoms...they will exercise tireless patience to maintain an enduring peace...Good causes need the right kind of leadership.”<sup>164</sup> There were many organizations that felt the same way. Some groups and individuals took the equation of Christianity and democracy to mean that religious minorities were not patriots; they justified their anti-Semitic behavior as leadership in the crusade against Communism.

White supremacists supplied hate propaganda that blamed all of the nation’s problems on minorities in general, but Jews were singled out repeatedly. Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock to enforce desegregation of schools, and the propagandists even blamed the Jews for that, saying Eisenhower was “Jewry’s little errand boy in Washington.”<sup>165</sup> Much of the propaganda claimed to have knowledge of the “invisible government,” a conspiracy theory that Jews were behind the scenes ruling everything and that those in government, elected and appointed, were merely puppets. However, these groups did not just promote racism. They directly linked Judaism with Communism. Papers such as *Common Sense* and groups like Keep America

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<sup>163</sup> Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist,” 305.

<sup>164</sup> Clark, “Address for the 21st International Sunday School Convention.”

<sup>165</sup> “Little Rock Crisis Produces Intensified Smears Against Jews,” *For Your Information* 2.9 (October 1957): 1. *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 2, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

Committee claimed their purpose was to stop the spread of Communism, yet they spent an inordinate amount of time explaining their problems with Jews. The Christian Anti-Jewish Party was very blunt about the equation. Their propaganda called for the deportation of all Jews because “Communism is Jewish!” All wars, revolutions, and economic crises were the fault of Jews as part of communist conspiracy and “without the Jews there would be NO communism.”<sup>166</sup>

In December 1951, Keep America Committee distributed a pamphlet that warned citizens that their character was defamed by a subversive campaign to label Christian patriots as anti-Semites. The committee had ties to many far-right political groups in southern California, and published many anti-Communist, anti-Semitic pamphlets. The pamphlet made a list of beliefs that could lead to slanderous accusations beginning with “If you are a Christian believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ crucified, You are a potential anti-Semite. You will be so classified by the leaders of the Anti-Defamation League, which is a brand of the powerful Jewish Order of the B’NAI B’RITH.” Other beliefs include: “If you believe and say that America is a Christian nation, You are an anti-Semite, a dangerous one...If you oppose INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM under all its forms, variations, transformations, disguise and masks and trace it every time to its source, You are an anti-Semite.” The pamphlet encouraged people to be firm in their knowledge of the truth even though there would be “Whispering drives started against you.” The hate group created a nice reversal of the reality of slanderous rumors that led to accusations of Communist sympathies and activities. Keep America Committee rallied its

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<sup>166</sup> Christian Anti-Jewish Party, “Destroy Communism,” *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 2, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

readers to bear the term anti-Semite as the “trade mark of fearless Christian American Patriotism opposed to Communist Internationalism.”<sup>167</sup>

Anti-Semitic groups commonly claimed that they were the ones who were being discriminated against. A two page Western Union telegram delivered to the White House ranted that President Eisenhower actually discriminated against the majority of the population who were not Jews and opposed Communism and Zionism.<sup>168</sup> *Common Sense*, published by Conde McGinley, considered a “professional bigot” by the Department of Justice, reprinted a speech by former Utah Governor J. Bracken Lee that questioned how the government could favor a minority with beneficial legislation considering everyone was part of some minority. Bracken feared that creating legislation and organization to help minorities was too similar to how the Communists operate and had the potential to aid a Communist take-over of the government.<sup>169</sup>

These groups, although numerous, remained on the fringes of society. However, they did affect the nation. In May 1955, *The Pittsburg Press* ran a series called “Hate, Inc.” with the goal of spotlighting and then dismantling propagandists’ bigotry. Writer Jack Steele determined, after months of investigating, that hate-mongering was on the rise and that most of the groups used anti-Communism as a “screen” from “attacks” over their prejudiced views.<sup>170</sup> Steele contended that all religious groups had members who were prejudiced. He named many people who were opposed to Catholics or Jews, but he did not unearth any indication of Jews promoting bigotry against Protestants or Catholics. The main targets of the propagandists were African-Americans,

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<sup>167</sup> “Are You an Anti-Semite?” Keep America Committee, December 1951, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 2, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>168</sup> Robert H. Walhome, “Naming Dangerous Red Zionists to Key Posts,” letter to President Eisenhower August 12, 1955, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 2, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>169</sup> J. Bracken Lee, “Will U.S. Fall ‘Like a Ripe Plum’ as Lenin Predicted?” *Common Sense* 277 (June 1, 1957): 1. *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 2, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>170</sup> Jack Steele, “Hate, Inc.: Organized Bigots, Racketeers Poison Mails, Spread Fear,” *The Pittsburg Press* (May 2, 1955): 21, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

Catholics, and Jews. President Eisenhower was also a popular target. Steele noted, “The ever-recurring theme in these attacks is that the President is a ‘front’ for Bernard Baruch and that his Administration is the ‘captive’ of a Jewish ‘invisible government.’”<sup>171</sup> Because most of the groups that printed these bigoted publications were not required to make public financial reports, Steele could not be certain if the groups made money from their papers or even how many people read them. Also, most of these groups did not rely on subscriptions alone. Many sent out mass direct mailings that were financed by donors.<sup>172</sup>

Perhaps one can only judge the impact of these hate groups indirectly. The presence of so much subtle anti-Semitism suggests that although society might not have agreed with the extreme vitriol of hate-mongers, people were somewhat swayed by the linkage of Judaism to Communism. Their silence suggests some consternation over the loyalties of Jews.

Fear and suspicion had a real affect on the nation. Physicist Robert Oppenheimer, known as the father of the atomic bomb, faced the accusation of being Communist, and defended himself in a McCarthy hearing. He came under suspicion for vocal opposition to developing a hydrogen bomb. Several scientists found themselves morally opposed to the weapons they had helped create. Oppenheimer was then alleged to have connections with Communists and the Atomic Energy Commission claimed he was a security risk.<sup>173</sup> The smear was enough. During World War II, Oppenheimer headed the successful Manhattan Project that led to the capability of dropping the atomic bombs on Japan that ultimately ended the war, yet that was not enough to

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<sup>171</sup> Jack Steele, “Hate, Inc.: Organized Bigots, Racketeers Poison Mails, Spread Fear,” *The Pittsburg Press* (May 2, 1955): 21, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.; Jack Steele, “Hate, Inc.: Prejudice Virus Infects Individuals of Every Religion,” *The Pittsburg Press* (May 5, 1955): 17, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>172</sup> Jack Steele, “Hate, Inc.: Organized Bigots, Racketeers Poison Mails, Spread Fear,” *The Pittsburg Press* (May 2, 1955): 21, *Max Rabb Papers*, box 45 folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>173</sup> *Jews in American Politics*, 38.

prove his loyalty. The government stripped him of his security clearance. This action seemed to justify the claims of anti-Semitic crusaders who believed that Oppenheimer intentionally stalled the hydrogen bomb project to allow the Soviets to advance first.<sup>174</sup>

The Hollywood Ten, a group of screenwriters, provides another example of how fear of Communism and anti-Semitism collided. The HUAC trials began in earnest by investigating Hollywood. In an effort to avoid accusation of Communism, the heads of the major movie studios had met at the Waldorf Hotel and agreed that they would not employ Communists, thus creating the blacklist that would bar actors, writers, and directors from working in the industry (only Samuel Goldwyn refused this agreement). Did HUAC focus on Hollywood simply because many in the movie business were Jewish? Investigative reporters and some of those accused questioned whether HUAC intended to express anti-Communism or anti-Semitism. Of the Hollywood Ten, six were Jewish. They were denied the ability to defend themselves, jailed, and the Supreme Court rejected their appeal. Soon others were called forth and blacklisted if they did not give evidence of communist activities committed by friends and family.<sup>175</sup>

Of course not everyone brought before HUAC was a Jew. However, Chairman John Rankin so frequently expressed his anti-Semitism, one can easily understand why many, particularly those facing accusations in Hollywood, felt that Communist had become code for Jew. Rankin attacked the film industry for subversive messages that sought to “poison the minds of your children, distort the history of our country and discredit Christianity.”<sup>176</sup> In New York,

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<sup>174</sup> Walhome, “Naming Dangerous Red Zionists to Key Posts.”

<sup>175</sup> Michael Freeland, “Hunting Communists? They Were Really Hunting Jews,” *The Jewish Chronicle* (August 2009): 20.

<sup>176</sup> John E. Rankin quoted in Harold David Brackman, “The Attack on Jewish Hollywood: A Chapter in the History of Modern American Anti-Semitism,” *Modern Judaism* 20.1 (February 2000): 5. [http://0-muse.jhu.edu.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/journals/modern\\_judaism/v020/20.1brackman.html](http://0-muse.jhu.edu.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/journals/modern_judaism/v020/20.1brackman.html) (accessed February 19, 2013).

school teachers were subpoenaed because they were allegedly members of the Communist Party. Twenty-four of the twenty-five teachers were Jews.<sup>177</sup>

Political leaders were sending a mixed message. Congressmen such as Rankin were unashamed to express anti-Semitic views and to equate Judaism to Communism, but these views were not state sanctioned. The public message of the 1950s was that freedom of worship should be protected and respected. In the military, the Jewish Sabbath was granted equal status with the Christian Sabbath, which made it easier for Jews to observe their holy days and religious holidays.<sup>178</sup> Eisenhower often spoke of his belief that spiritual values were important to the country and to creating a free world. Yet he was careful to be inclusive of all religions, and sought assurances about the inclusive nature of assemblies before addressing them.<sup>179</sup>

Tolerance was not expected when one was accused of espionage. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were charged with spying in 1950. The British government had arrested physicist Klaus Fuchs and uncovered an alleged plot in which the Rosenbergs passed American atomic secrets to Fuchs, who then passed them on to the Soviets. The Rosenbergs were convicted in 1951 and sentenced to death. The presiding judge claimed their crime was especially heinous because they aided godless Communists.<sup>180</sup> At the time the Rosenbergs themselves felt they were accused due to anti-Semitism. The government attempted to assuage such accusations by

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<sup>177</sup> Philip Mendes, "Remembering the Rosenbergs: Jews, Communism and Spy Scandals in Cold War America," *Arena Journal* 21 (Annual 2003), 197. [http://0-go.galegroup.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALEA127539388&v=2.1&u=lom\\_cmichu&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1](http://0-go.galegroup.com.catalog.lib.cmich.edu/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALEA127539388&v=2.1&u=lom_cmichu&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1) (accessed February 19, 2013).

<sup>178</sup> "Army Gives Jewish Sabbath Equal Status," *Jewish News* 43. 37 (September 14, 1956): 1. *Max Rabb Papers*, box 1, folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>179</sup> Exchange of letters between John Foster Dulles and Dwight D. Eisenhower dated Dec. 11, 1958 and Dec. 12, 1958. *Dulles-Herner Series*, box 10, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>180</sup> Steven M. Gillon, *The American Paradox: A History of the United States Since 1945*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 66.

packing the court, all the lawyers and judge, with Jews. In this way, as one juror noted, it was not Christians accusing Jews. But the Jewishness of the court meant the public could not ignore the Jewishness of the Rosenbergs.<sup>181</sup> American Jews were divided as to what to do though. Many feared that the Rosenbergs would not receive fair treatment because they were Jewish. The leaders of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which was established in part to help wrongly accused Jews, struggled because of the community dissension. Leaders worried that the trial created a connection in people's minds between being a Jew and being a 'communist traitor.'<sup>182</sup> There were Jews (and other Americans) who protested the Rosenbergs' convictions and asked for clemency, but there were others who distanced themselves so as to not be tarnished as radical. Anxiety of communist suspicion ran high. Rather than address the issue of guilt or innocence or fight for the Rosenbergs, Jews instead promoted a public message that highlighted the common values that Jews had with all Americans.<sup>183</sup>

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Jews were more comfortable with involvement in legal cases about civil liberties than criminal cases such as the Rosenbergs. American Jewish groups such as AJCongress, AJCommittee, and ADL unabashedly used the legal system to fight for civil rights. They represented defendants directly or, more frequently, wrote *amici curiae*, or friend of the court briefs, for cases where they were not a direct party involved, yet had an interest or experience. Sometimes they would also work in conjunction with other civil rights groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). For much of the early twentieth century the AJCongress, AJCommittee, and ADL worked to educate and made "good-faith appeals...[in order to] win

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<sup>181</sup> Mendes, "Remembering the Rosenbergs," 197.

<sup>182</sup> Goren, *Politics and Public Culture*, 201.

<sup>183</sup> Goren, *Politics and Public Culture*, 195.

Jews their rightful place as equals in the scheme of American pluralism,” but by the end of World War II, the use of law became the more prominent tool.<sup>184</sup>

Although Jews took an active role in many civil liberties cases, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, they received the most exposure for efforts to end religious involvement in public schools. In 1947, the Supreme Court heard arguments about the constitutionality of private and parochial students benefitting from tax-payer funded public school busses. The *Everson v. Board of Education* ruling was that the service provided to the individual, not the religious institution, and therefore did not violate the First Amendment. It was a split decision that was narrowly defined, but the importance of *Everson* was Justice Hugo Black’s definition of the Establishment Clause:

The “establishment of religion clause” of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa.

In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect a “wall of separation between Church and State.”<sup>185</sup>

This definition became precedent and applied just one year later to *McCullum v. Board of Education*, in which Jewish lawyers were involved through *amicus curiae*. *McCullum* brought

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<sup>184</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 3.

<sup>185</sup> Justice Hugo Black, Majority Opinion *Everson v. Board of Education*, Supreme Court of the United States, 1947 quoted by Theodore Leskes, “Religious Dimensions of Church-State Relations: A Jewish Viewpoint,” lecture delivered at Institute on Church-State Relations in America, July 9, 1962, Washington, D.C., Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church State Relations, Jewish View. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN,

the much contested issue of release time for religious instruction to the Supreme Court. Just as public leaders were calling for citizens to embrace religion as a way to keep Communism at bay, so too were public and religious leaders calling for morality and religious virtue in schools; religious instruction would help curb delinquency and materialism. The school board in Champaign, Illinois, allowed a private inter-religious group of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to come into the school during regular hours to provide religious instruction once a week. The board felt it was acceptable because they were not promoting a particular religion and participation was not compulsory.<sup>186</sup> The administration tracked attendance in the program, and those who did not participate just attended regular classes. Vashti McCollum filed on behalf of her son, an atheist, who felt ostracized by non-participation.<sup>187</sup>

The case highlighted several questions about church-state relations. The first assertion was that attendance in school was compulsory by state law, therefore any release time that did not provide state approved curriculum was breaking state law. Because students who were released were mandated to attend the religious class of their choosing, the mandate meant that schools were promoting religious education. The second assertion was that private religious instructors were coming into publicly funded school buildings and using publicly funded school time to provide religious education which, in essence, meant that tax dollars were funding religion and in doing so, violating the Establishment Clause. Under the First Amendment no one could be discriminated against based on their participation or non-participation in any religious activity, so the act of tracking student participation in religious classes also violated the First

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<sup>186</sup> *McCollum v. Board of Education*, U.S. Supreme Court, 333 U.S. 203 (1948), <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=333&invol=203> (accessed January 19, 2013).

<sup>187</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 78.

Amendment, according to the defense.<sup>188</sup> The case law clearly demonstrated just how complex the debate over release time could be.

The National Conference of Christian and Jews (NCCJ), which strove to bring religious leaders to understanding and agreement on a wide variety of topics, held a considerable number of conferences on the subject of religion in schools. Even if a majority felt some sort of religious values should be promoted to children, questions arose as to what form those values should take and whether or not public funds (taxes) should or even could fund these programs or anything related to parochial schools. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews tried to define their positions, though it is important to note that each religious community could not arrive at complete consensus. As noted in a NCCJ discussion guide, “Most of us would find it comfortable if we could make over the American community into our own image, have everybody else of our same religion, political party, economic class, social caste, intellectual level, skin color, and so on. But, this is clearly not the case, like it or not we are pluralistic. We must learn to live with it.”<sup>189</sup> The NCCJ admitted that consensus was difficult to achieve and on principle each group should fight for what it believed, but ultimately compromise would be necessary.

The Protestant view changed a bit during the 1950s. At the behest of the NCCJ, Protestants met to discuss their views on religion in schools, and in 1952, this conference expressed concern that religious neutrality actually meant godlessness. The Protestant gathering believed that students should receive religious instruction during their “working day” or normal school hours. In the following years, continued Protestant conferences made bolder statements

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<sup>188</sup> *McCullum v. Board of Education*.

<sup>189</sup> “Religion in a Pluralistic Society: A Discussion Guide and Resource Book,” National Conference of Christians and Jews (draft Jan. 10, 1961), 6. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 7: Studies, Relations, Manuscripts, Folder: Religion and Public Education in a Pluralistic Society 1961, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

that the primary place for religious instruction was the church and the home, however, they still believed that the school had a role to teach the cultural heritage of faith traditions and the moral foundation of God. By the end of the decade Protestant leaders were calling for a balance. Activities such as baccalaureate services should be allowed, voluntary release time should be allotted, but “the public school is not the arena for evangelistic or proselytizing endeavors.”<sup>190</sup> However, there were many denominational differences. Just as some leaders moved toward a balanced approach, others claimed to want separation of church and state. Those Protestants still called for providing an “atmosphere and friendliness to and acceptance of the concept of God.” The National Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals wanted Bible reading, as long as the teacher did not expound upon his or her own thoughts on the passage, and saying the Lord’s Prayer daily. The evangelical conference also called for release time for religious education of the participants choosing.<sup>191</sup> Protestants did not arrive at consensus in the 1950s except that all wanted release time.

Catholic statements about release time remained consistent throughout the decade. Tax dollars needed to be distributed evenly but should be allowed to fund religious instruction including parochial schools. In this manner “taxes for education should provide opportunities rather than standardization.”<sup>192</sup> They argued that the religious values found in Christianity, particularly love of neighbor, were inclusive and should be embraced. Catholic leaders did not want to mandate a particular religion, but schools needed to guard against the creep of secularism. Secretary of Education for the Archdiocese of New York, Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J.

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<sup>190</sup> “Religion in a Pluralistic Society: A Discussion Guide and Resource Book.”

<sup>191</sup> “Religion in a Pluralistic Society: A Discussion Guide and Resource Book.”

<sup>192</sup> Catholic Statements, 15. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 7: Studies, Relations, Manuscripts, Folder: Religion and Public Education in a Pluralistic Society 1961, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

Voight, laid out the basics and fundamental truths that all children should learn, which included “the existence of God,...the basic equality of all men under God, ...[and] man’s responsibility to the moral law as formulated in the Ten Commandments.”<sup>193</sup> Catholics felt these basics could be taught inclusive of all children and faiths. Similar to Protestants, Catholics consistently called for release time, but they also suggested that high school course credit could be granted for participation in release time.<sup>194</sup>

The Jewish stance was consistent throughout the decade, though it differed from Christian viewpoints. Jews wanted complete separation because they felt the place for religion was in the home and in the church. Jews remembered their history in which Christianity had been imposed on them; many worried that even though Christians claimed religious instruction was about values and principles, they would really attempt to proselytize the Jews.<sup>195</sup> Only twenty years earlier, the conference on the Christian Approach to the Jews claimed a desire to convert Jews, so they had reason to worry. The NCCJ’s Jewish conference noted, “Religious rites in public schools are Christian, have a captive audience, and compelled students to at least say ‘Amen’ which challenges their own religious sensibilities.” One in five Jewish students reported that they were “called upon in the public school to explain or defend their disbelief in Christ during the Christmas season.”<sup>196</sup> For these reasons, the Jewish community opposed teaching any religious doctrine in school, though they did not oppose objective teaching of the

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<sup>193</sup> Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Voight, “Statement by Guild of Catholic Lawyers of New York City,” (Sept. 28, 1955), *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 7: Studies, Relations, Manuscripts, Folder: Religion and Public Education in a Pluralistic Society 1961, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>194</sup> Catholic Statements, 18. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 7: Studies, Relations, Manuscripts, Folder: Religion and Public Education in a Pluralistic Society 1961, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>195</sup> Jewish Statements, 3. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 7: Studies, Relations, Manuscripts, Folder: Religion and Public Education in a Pluralistic Society 1961, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>196</sup> Jewish Statements, 1.

role religion played throughout history. Jewish leaders released several statements noting practices that Jews opposed, including the reading or recitation of prayers, reading the Bible (except as literature), distribution of religious tracts, taking religious census of students, the observance of religious festivals, and release time.<sup>197</sup> Jews' stance on religious holidays also expressed their consistency. Not only did they oppose the observance of the primary Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter, but they opposed joint religious observations such as combining Chanukah and Christmas celebrations because it "could violate the conscience of Jews and Christians alike."<sup>198</sup>

Most Christians sided with the notion of release time throughout the decade, but the ever evolving picture lacked consensus. Therefore, views on the role of religion in public schools were not settled when *McCullum v. Board of Education* reached the Supreme Court. The Jewish community also divided over what role to play. Although they strongly believed in the fight for separation, many felt the AJCongress under Leo Pfeffer was overstepping because McCollum was atheist. Many Jews questioned why they should enter the fray and risk the rise in anti-Semitism for someone who did not even believe in God. The ADL assumed it would be a public relations nightmare for Jews because so many already feared the Communists were trying to take religion away and Jews did not want to appear to be on the side of Communists.<sup>199</sup>

The Supreme Court heard the arguments in *McCullum* and decided the school's actions were unconstitutional. Because the religious groups came into the schools and used school resources, the court ruled that this violated the Establishment Clause; it amounted to the state sponsoring church activities. Justice Black once again wrote the majority opinion making clear

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<sup>197</sup> Jewish Statements, 7.

<sup>198</sup> Jewish Statements, 7.

<sup>199</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 79.

the court's position that the school board's program was "beyond all question a utilization of the tax-established and tax-supported public school system to aid religious groups to spread their faiths."<sup>200</sup> Although there was debate among the Jewish organizations over the prudence of supporting *McCullum*, after the verdict the AJCongress, AJCommittee, and ADL all hailed the court's ruling. The ruling did realign loyalties though. Protestants and Catholics who disdained the verdict began forming coalitions in order to guard against encroaching secularism and atheism.<sup>201</sup>

Buoyed by the definition of the Establishment Clause in *Everson* and its application in *McCullum*, Jews, particularly the AJCongress, gained confidence that separation of church and state would be fully realized through the law. So when the ACLU consulted with Leo Pfeffer on a type of release time happening in New York, the AJCongress became fully involved in building the case. Pfeffer felt the case was the same as *McCullum*, but even with this confidence in how the court would rule, the legal team still built a careful, thorough case.

*Zorach* and *McCullum* differed in the design of the release time program. In fact, the New York City program would be better defined as 'dismissed time' because the school had no direct involvement other than allowing students to participate during school hours. Students who participated were released from classes and received religious instruction off-site and without the use of tax dollars.<sup>202</sup> This fundamental difference would be key in the court's decision.

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<sup>200</sup> *McCullum v. Board of Education*..

<sup>201</sup> *Ivers, To Build a Wall*, 83.

<sup>202</sup> *Zorach v. Clauson*, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Supreme Court, 343 U.S. 306, <http://www.casebriefs.com/blog/law/constitutional-law/constitutional-law-keyed-to-cohen/religion-and-the-constitution/zorach-v-clauson/>

The lawyers needed a plaintiff to stand for the challenge to the school board and Tessim Zorach volunteered.<sup>203</sup> He was an Episcopalian in good standing which the AJCongress hoped would alleviate the problems faced in *McCollum* with defending an atheist. Zorach's father, a well-respected sculptor, was known to have left-wing political sympathies, but his anti-communist employer helped to mitigate Zorach's political ideology.<sup>204</sup> Still, Pfeffer and the AJCongress were targets of the new Catholic and Protestant alliances who believed the Jewish organization was determined to destroy the traditional religious values of the nation. The AJCongress decided that the ACLU would be the lawyers of record in order to make the case appear to be decidedly non-Jewish.

Beyond the question about use of tax dollars, the lawyers uncovered a climate of coercion. Students who chose not to participate in the release time program were mocked by other students and teachers. The lawyers collected sworn statements to that effect from students, parents and teachers. *Zorach* claimed that the school board violated the First Amendment based not only on the precedent set forth in *McCollum*, but also in creating conditions wherein students were coerced into participation in religious instruction. However, the lower courts dismissed these statements from evidence and *Zorach* was decided solely on the nature of the release time.

In 1952, the appeal to the Supreme Court ended in a 6-3 decision that ruled in favor of the school board, citing the key differences in the release time program that the lower courts had noted.<sup>205</sup> Justice Black wrote a dissenting opinion wherein he held that the differences in *Zorach* and *McCollum* were of little note; the cases were essentially the same. Justice Robert Jackson also dissented, arguing, "The day that this country ceases to be free for irreligion it will cease to

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<sup>203</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 86.

<sup>204</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 86.

<sup>205</sup> *Zorach v. Clauson*; Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 88-89.

be free for religion except for the sect that can win political power.”<sup>206</sup> But this minority opinion provided little consolation. The *Zorach* decision was a stinging blow to the Jewish organizations that had finally put aside their differences and had embraced the avenue of litigation. The Jewish community was unsettled as to what direction to go now. Although Jewish institutions remained involved with civil rights cases, such as writing an *amicus curiae* in *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Zorach* stung enough to end attempts at litigating separation of church and state issues for the remainder of the 1950s.

Although Americans prefer to focus on moments when the population embraced pluralism, the predominance of gentleman’s agreements suggest a different story. Popular culture attempted to highlight anti-Semitism as more than just aggressive actions against Jews, but also the subtle treatment of the minority as “other.” Rather than Judaism becoming synonymous with democracy and patriotism, propagandists successfully linked the religion with Communism. American Jews attempted to use legal battles to define pluralism as protection of minority rights and to create a space wherein they could claim the American civil religious identity. Yet their success remained surface deep and Jews were forced to retreat from Establishment Clause battles through most of the decade.

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<sup>206</sup> Justice Jackson quoted in Theodore Leskes, “Religious Dimensions of Church-State Relations: a Jewish Viewpoint,” 1962, *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church State Relations, Jewish View, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

## CHAPTER V

### AMERICAN JEWS, ANTI-COMMUNISM, AND FOREIGN POLICY

During the early years of the Cold War, and even still today, a persistent mythology claims that American Jews were highly influential in gaining US recognition for Israel and for administering aid for the two million displaced European Jews. American Jewish organizations attempted to draw attention to the refugee crisis and some of the Jewish community wanted to support Israel, however, their influence was minimal. President Truman, Congress, and the State Department were torn between the nation's interests: placating Arabs of the Middle East due to national oil needs and supporting a new democratic state in the region.

The Cold War divided the world into spheres of influence between the Soviet Union and the United States. The world-wide community debated what to do about displaced Jews and the merits of turning Palestine into a UN trusteeship. Jews in Palestine had already stated their desire to control their own Jewish state, and Arabs had already threatened war if that happened. The United States feared lack of recognition of Israel would grant an opening to Soviet influence in the region.<sup>207</sup>

Foreign policy decisions during the early Cold War were entangled in the commitment to anti-Communism. Truman saw godless Communism spreading in those first years after the war. Stalin believed that capitalism and Communism could not coexist. Mao Zedong advanced across China, and even Vietnam already experienced outbreaks of anti-colonialism led by a Communist revolutionary named Ho Chi Minh. As laid out in the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan,

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<sup>207</sup> Clark Clifford and Richard Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President*, excerpted in "President Truman's Decision to Recognize Israel," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 563 (May 2008). <http://jcpa.org/article/president-truman%E2%80%99s-decision-to-recognize-israel/> (accessed February 17, 2013).

the United States needed to act quickly and decisively to contain the spread of Communism and aid the economic recovery of Europe to create a bulwark.<sup>208</sup> Truman's concerns over Israel also related to his compassion over Jewish refugees, and their need to find a secure home. Clark Clifford, Special Counsel to President Truman, prepared an argument for recognition of Israel at Truman's request. In addition to the desire to preempt Soviet influence in the region, Clifford focused on humanitarian goals. Jews in Communist-controlled Eastern Europe still faced discrimination and they had waited long enough for a homeland. Clifford claimed this moral obligation rather than national interests were most important to Truman.<sup>209</sup>

Displaced Jews in Europe after World War II created a humanitarian crisis. People expressed compassion, but as a report from the Interim American Jewish Council explained, there were many problems related to providing aid. Although euphemistically titled, these Displaced Jewish Centers were essentially substandard refugee camps. Sanitation and overcrowding were major issues. The American Jewish Council delegation chastised, "Cold, hungry, scantily clothed men, women and children, escaping with their lives, need to be housed and fed immediately. They cannot be regarded as numbers or inanimate objects which may be set aside and dealt with at a later or more convenient date."<sup>210</sup> The council report sought to remind American leaders that these people's lack of funds and resources was no fault of their own; their possessions had all been taken and absorbed into the German economy before the end of the war. Seeking to alleviate some of the issues the refugees faced, the delegation made suggestions for

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<sup>208</sup> Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 411.

<sup>209</sup> Clifford, *Counsel to the President*.

<sup>210</sup> Alfred Fleishman, Sameul L. Sar, Hans Lamm, "Interim Report of American Jewish Conference Representatives in American Occupied Zones of Germany with Reference to Jewish Displaced Persons Centers," (December 12, 1945), 1-2. *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, Folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

work programs, education, and even making farm land available, but these were temporary measures. Displacement centers could not be a permanent solution. Emigration needed to be addressed. The majority of Jews interviewed for the report expressed a desire to move to Palestine, and many wanted to join friends or relatives in the United States. Staying in Germany was not an option for a vast majority: “They feel, and we agree, that they can never be rehabilitated in a land whose every square inch they regard as being saturated with the blood of their families.”<sup>211</sup> Walter O. Lewis, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, also toured the displacement centers and concurred that most Jews did not wish to return to their homeland. Lewis also noted that Jews had been treated badly by the Russians as well.<sup>212</sup>

President Truman issued a directive to study the conditions of refugees in Germany and Austria and to study options for emigration. This report noted that “in some countries persecution of Jews is rampant, individual reprisals here and there,” but no details were mentioned. The delegation gleaned information from Jews who tried to regain admittance to the displacement centers. Many did not even try to return home because they believed they would never be free in Europe.<sup>213</sup> The world powers debated how to solve the problem of so many displaced people. President Truman barely hid his frustration with various political interests when issuing carefully worded public releases on the issue. Truman claimed he could not “stand idly by while the victims of Hitler’s madness were not allowed to build new lives. The Jews

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<sup>211</sup> Fleishman, et al., “Interim Report of American Jewish Conference,” 3.

<sup>212</sup> Walter O. Lewis, letter to Harry S. Truman (May 10, 1946), *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, Folder 2, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>213</sup> Notes on Project for Immigration, (Dec. 12, 1945) *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, Folder 4, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

needed someplace to go.”<sup>214</sup> He called for simplifying and expediting the full immigrant quota to the United States.<sup>215</sup>

The business of waging war caused a restriction in immigrants, making the number of people admitted to the United States far less than the quotas allowed. Truman thought it was necessary to immediately reverse the trend, and that visas should be allocated fairly among all nationalities, creeds, and faiths, though he did want special attention paid to orphans.<sup>216</sup> Congress did not fully agree with Truman. Immigration quotas during and after the war remained at 150,000 annually, and that number was divided into allotments based on race and skill. Essentially, only a small portion of displaced Jews would even qualify. Americans were divided in their opinions over immigration, but polls indicated some fear in allowing an influx of Eastern European immigrants.<sup>217</sup>

Again, racism and ideology became mixed. Many reasoned that Eastern Europeans were Communists, and some held paranoid beliefs that Communists had a plan to infiltrate the United States through legal immigration.<sup>218</sup> Many Eastern European refugees, Communist or not, were Jews. All were victims of the war, therefore, the ideology that Communists must be prevented admission to the United States actually hurt the victims who needed aid.

The McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952 addressed the issue of immigration quotas, ideology and race. The act did not raise the total immigrant quota, and so it remained at

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<sup>214</sup> Harry S. Truman quoted in Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 438.

<sup>215</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Statement by the President,” October 4, 1946, *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 3, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>216</sup> President’s Directive (Dec. 22, 1945) *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 4, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>217</sup> Cheryl Shanks, *Immigration and the Politics of American Sovereignty, 1890-1990*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 103-104, 106.

<sup>218</sup> Shanks, *Immigration and the Politics of American Sovereignty*, 129.

150,000 people, though racial categories were reconfigured. World War II added complexity to the way Americans viewed race. Before the war, immigrants from Asia were labeled “oriental” and limited by the oriental quota no matter from which Asian country the person came. During the war China was an ally whereas Japan was an enemy. Americans could no longer lump them together as one race after WWII, so they viewed the nationalities as distinct. Also, those of “nordic” descent had been given preferential treatment in the racial hierarchy, but Nazi atrocities proved that race could not be the determining factor in the type of character a person would have. These changes in race perceptions caused Americans to turn to ideology as a determining factor. Although the McCarran-Walter Act removed the racist immigration restrictions, it added discriminations against people with ideological differences, particularly Communists. If an immigrant had the remotest connection to Communism they would be denied entry to the United States. Some recognized the problem with the McCarran-Walter Act lay in the reality that most of the Eastern European Jews had ties to Communism, so the new immigration policy would force Jews to return to a homeland that had discriminated against them and did not want them to return. For this reason, Truman vetoed the act. He linked US action in the arena of immigration policy to American identity, claiming that how we treated those who needed to find a new home would inform the international community about the nation’s moral leadership. He said that the country’s choices in immigration policy were vital to strengthening the US and were “the core of the defense of the free world.” Presidential candidate Eisenhower also disdained the McCarran-Walter Act saying that the policy made the American dream a “mirage.”<sup>219</sup>

Congressmen knew Jews would be barred from the US under the McCarran-Walter Act, and that was precisely the point. They understood the hardships displaced Jews faced and yet

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<sup>219</sup> Shanks, *Immigration and the Politics of American Sovereignty*, 136, 137.

believed that allowing Jews to immigrate to the country would diminish the “dignity and integrity of the citizenship of the United States.”<sup>220</sup> Congress overrode Truman’s veto.

Clearly the United States would not welcome displaced Jews, so several US citizens and immigrants offered alternate ideas for settling refugees. New immigrant Herman Fuernberg had worked on the problem of displaced Jews since 1938. He suggested Ethiopia as the solution. The country had already absorbed displaced Greeks during the war and were willing to take all two million Jews with only one condition. Ethiopia wanted Eritrea returned, which had been taken from them by Italy. However, many viewed Ethiopia as “backwards.” So, giving the more modernized Eritrea to Ethiopia was deemed unacceptable even though a seaport would have helped Ethiopia modernize more quickly.<sup>221</sup> Harry Warner of Warner Brothers Studios offered one of the most interesting proposals. He suggested that Congress streamline visas for resettlement of European Jews in Alaska because there was plenty of land with little population. He anticipated complaints that the plan would allow backdoor admittance to the rest of the United States, and proposed a restricted status that did not grant full citizenship or even travel rights. Warner’s solution sought to both find a home for displaced Jews, and also appease the gentlemen’s agreements and anti-Semitism boiling in Congress within their immigration debates.<sup>222</sup>

By 1948, before the immigration question was settled in the United States, Truman adamantly pushed for Palestine to admit 100,000 Jews. Britain continued to hinder the

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<sup>220</sup> Shanks, *Immigration and the Politics of American Sovereignty*, 103.

<sup>221</sup> Herman Fuernberg letter to Harry S. Truman, *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 5, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

<sup>222</sup> Harry M. Warner, letter to Harry S. Truman (June 13, 1946), *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 3, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.

immigration process, leaving refugees in limbo. However, even Truman's advocacy of 100,000 emigrants to Palestine represented only a tiny fraction of the two million people waiting in displacement centers. Nevertheless, the prolonged debates continued. Britain wanted to place Palestine in a UN trusteeship that would be partitioned into a Jewish section and an Arab section, with Jerusalem as a joint, neutral zone.<sup>223</sup> Many in the US State Department, including Secretary of State George Marshall, agreed with the UN trusteeship and strongly opposed a Jewish state in Palestine.

Clark Clifford and Ambassador Richard Holbrooke have presented the May 1948 events as a fight between Marshall and others in the State Department who opposed Israel, and Truman who always wanted to support the Jewish state. Correspondence indicates that many outside Washington believed that Truman opposed the creation of Israel.<sup>224</sup> Journalists also stated that Truman supported the UN trusteeship. The American Jewish community divided. Some were Zionists, or people who wanted to create a Jewish state in Palestine. Some did not believe that Judaism could be a political state; it was a religion.<sup>225</sup> Historians, such as Andrew Preston, have promoted Clifford's version of events, stating that Truman always knew he would support Israel. However, this certainty remains unclear because Clifford was the only one who talked publicly. Marshall made sure the record reflected his opposition to Truman's decision, but he did not

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<sup>223</sup> Drew Pearson, "Hope for Homeless Jews," 1945, *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 10, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*.

<sup>224</sup> At this point, Israel was still known only as "the Jewish State." Many thought the name would be Judea, and those working for recognition had to use the term Jewish State because the name Israel was not known until David Ben-Gurion's official announcement on May 14, 1948, declaring the independent state. Use of the name Israel here is for clarity. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*.

<sup>225</sup> Alex F. Sachs letter to Harry S. Truman *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Student Research File*, Box 6, President Truman and the Plight of Displaced Persons in Europe Following WWII, Folder 10, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO.; Pearson, "Hope for Homeless Jews."

speaking against Truman at the time.<sup>226</sup> Senator Owen Brewster (ME-R), part of a group planning to go to London to lobby for immediate action regarding displaced Jews, first met with President Truman. Brewster claimed that although Truman listened to their arguments about creating a Jewish state, Truman remained unconvinced. He told Brewster that he supported a Palestine that would be governed by Muslims, Jews, and Christians.<sup>227</sup> It is possible that Truman had a change of heart between that meeting in 1945 and the recognition of Israel in 1948, but it does cast doubt on Clifford's stance that Truman always wanted to recognize the right of Jews to their own state in Palestine. The one certain aspect was Truman's deep concern over the humanitarian plight. The president wanted the victims of Nazi aggression to find peace. He pressured Britain to allow some displaced Jews to resettle in Palestine and even directed Eisenhower to supply US naval transport. He also ordered the Army to billet any Jews who wished to remain in Europe. He believed that if they could not repatriate Jews to their native countries in Europe, the Allies had failed in a key aspect of World War II.<sup>228</sup>

Recognition of Israel created several problems. Truman worried that a separatist state of Jews was counter to the aims of the United Nations. American Jews, with the exception of staunch Zionists, supported the creation of the UN. Rabbi Louis Finklestien, President of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York felt that aggressive nationalism was the cause of war and that an international body such as the UN would curtail such aggressions. "The creation of an enduring peace presupposes an active cooperative relationship among nations and peoples," Finkelstein said, "which makes the question of statehood less and less relevant."<sup>229</sup> Anti-Semites

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<sup>226</sup> Clifford, *Counsel to the President*.

<sup>227</sup> Pearson, "Hope for Homeless Jews."

<sup>228</sup> Alex F. Sachs letter to Harry S. Truman; Pearson, "Hope for Homeless Jews."

<sup>229</sup> Rabbi Louis Finklestien quoted in Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith*, 402.

considered American Jews to be un-American because supporting Israel meant their loyalties were divided. In their propagandists newspapers, Smith, McGinley, and others claimed that Zionists were all Communists. To them dual loyalties equalled treason. Rabbi Robert J. Marx countered that everyone has multiple loyalties. All people care about their family, their religious community, their nation, and the nations of the world.<sup>230</sup>

Communism played a role in Truman's ultimate decision to recognize Israel in May 1948, which he did against the wishes of the State Department. Truman received word that the Soviet Union planned to recognize Israel, and he felt he must do it before the USSR did or not at all in order to maintain the superiority of the American sphere of influence.<sup>231</sup> Truman believed that the Soviet goal was complete control of the region including economic, political, and military control. He saw Israel as both a "bastion of democracy" and "symbol of fidelity of American promises." Quick recognition of Israel would make the United States the clear leader in the region.<sup>232</sup> On the other hand, the State Department feared that recognition of Israel would push the Arabs of the region toward alliance with the Soviet Union. In fact, many trusted advisors were adamantly opposed to the creation of a Jewish state, and "on purely strategic grounds, then, the United States would likely not have recognized Israel."<sup>233</sup>

Unsurprisingly in an election year, a common accusation was that Truman recognized Israel for the Jewish vote. Bernard Baruch, a Democratic Party strategist, promised to deliver the Jewish vote of New York. Truman admitted he had to worry more about Jews than Arabs in the election because he did not have many Arab constituents, though he also claimed that he never

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<sup>230</sup> Robert J. Marx, "Non-Zionists and the Israeli Crisis," sermon delivered March 1, 1957, Temple Sinai, Stamford, CT, 2. *Max Rabb Papers*, Box 39, folder 3, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>231</sup> Clifford, *Counsel to the President*.

<sup>232</sup> Michael T. Benson, *Harry Truman and the Founding of Israel*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 84-84.

<sup>233</sup> Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 436.

read any mail from Jewish lobbyists.<sup>234</sup> However, the Jewish vote did not turn the tide in New York. Truman won the election without winning New York. Jews comprised only four percent of the population, with the majority living in New York. Clearly, it was not a large enough voting bloc to change the course of an election.

Also, the Jewish community was divided on the issue of Israel. Some supported Zionism while others did not, so the Jewish vote could not have been cultivated on recognition of Israel alone. One could be a Zionist, a non-Zionist, or an anti-Zionist. A person who supported Israel and wanted Jews to have political state was a Zionist. Anti-Zionists opposed Israel and also did not want any ties between Americans Jews and Israel. A non-Zionist could have many different views including someone who felt Israel should be a state, but wanted nothing to do with it. Some Jews viewed a Zionist as one who made a commitment of loyalty to Israel, therefore a person who defined Zionism through commitment might label anyone who did not share that loyalty as a non-Zionist no matter their support or opposition to the Jewish state.<sup>235</sup> Even though many Jews sympathized with Jews of Israel, some worried over the state's aggressive actions against Arabs. They disapproved Israel's decision to ignore the UN. Yet other Jews insisted that the UN had forsaken Jews and aggressive action was required for Israel's defense.<sup>236</sup> American Jews did not have a consensus on how to handle Israeli affairs.

Simply recognizing Israel did not negate conflict on the matter at home or abroad, and the conflict was bequeathed to President Eisenhower when he won the next election in 1952. Eisenhower supported Israel, and during the campaign he stated support for Jewish relocation to the region. However, he also emphasized the need to create peace between Jews and Arabs and

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<sup>234</sup> Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 437; Benson, *Harry Truman and the Founding of Israel*, 94.

<sup>235</sup> Marx, "Non-Zionists and the Israeli Crisis."

<sup>236</sup> Marx, "Non-Zionists and the Israeli Crisis."

pledged aid to both. Eisenhower also wanted negotiated access to Islamic holy places.<sup>237</sup> While he and his advisors signaled their desire to maintain relations with Arabs and Jews, Zionists pushed Eisenhower for candid pro-Israeli statements, and he refrained from making them. He would only say that he was “friendly” to the cause and the US should strengthen its policy toward Israel. His experts were studying the matter to prepare Eisenhower if elected.<sup>238</sup> Even though he did not want to overstate support for Israel, he spoke publicly about the aftermath of World War II and how witnessing the sufferings of Jews made him sympathetic to their plight. Eisenhower told the United Jewish Appeal, “Only one who has seen, as I have, the mental and physical effects of savagery, repression and bigotry upon the persecuted of Europe, can realize the full need for the material help and encouragement you propose to give.”<sup>239</sup>

Eisenhower’s administration worried over divided interests in Arab-Israeli affairs. As Secretary of State Dulles laid out, the United States’ first priority in the region related to oil access and military bases. Establishing peace in the region could ultimately secure US goals. American politicians wanted to secure the trust of Arabs, and try to convince them that the US would be fair in its dealings with both parties rather than just support Israeli expansion. At the same time, American leaders wanted to assure Israelis that the US endorsed their democratic state. Dulles talked of trying to help Israel settle into its place as part of the Middle East community. Any policy the US would take in the region needed to first protect oil interests, then promote the ideals of the free world and deal with “the urgency of the situation caused by Soviet

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<sup>237</sup> Kenen letter to Max Rabb, August 11, 1952, *Max Rabb Papers*, Box 4, Folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>238</sup> Novins letter to Max Rabb, August 15, 1952, *Max Rabb Papers*, Box 4, Folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>239</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower as quoted in “Attitude of the Major Candidates Political Parties on Israel and the Near East, Private Memo,” (August 7, 1952), 3, *Max Rabb Papers*, Box 4, folder 5, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

designs and penetration...”<sup>240</sup> However, the Eisenhower administration discovered that Arabs feared Zionism more than Communism, so peace proved difficult.<sup>241</sup>

Neither Truman nor Eisenhower callously used religion in foreign policy, yet for both men, religion did inform foreign policy. Acting in the the nation’s best interests in regards to Israel proved difficult due to conflicting interests. Americans cared most about access to oil, and influencing the region as part of the containment policy. Jews were natural allies against the tyrants of the world. Judaism, after all, was one of the religions of democracy. Each of these interests related to a different side in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Historians suggest that Truman ultimately decided to recognize Israel due to his personal and religious beliefs.<sup>242</sup> Politically, he swam against the current to do so. Eisenhower witnessed the aftermath of Nazi concentration camps and the difficulties of resettling displaced Jews. He, too, was affected by a desire to fix the humanitarian crisis. They navigated the arguments with anti-Zionists who claimed Judaism was only a religion, not a nation. Zionists tried to apply pressure on American leaders to support Israel. Both presidents also heard from Christian millennialists who called for an independent Israeli state. Millennialists interpreted the prophecy of end times found in the biblical book of Revelations to mean that Jews must control Israel in order to bring about the battle of Armageddon. This would mark the return of Jesus and lead to his ultimate reign.<sup>243</sup> Truman and Eisenhower felt the wrath of a small, but vocal constituency that linked Communism and Zionism. The pressures from various constituencies does not indicate strong Jewish influence.

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<sup>240</sup> John Foster Dulles, “General Approach to Arab-Israeli Peace,” (June 1, 1953). *Max Rabb Papers*, Box 41, folder: Arab-Israeli Relations (1), Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>241</sup> John Foster Dulles, “General Approach to Arab-Israeli Peace.”

<sup>242</sup> Benson, *Harry Truman and the Founding of Israel*, 82-85.

<sup>243</sup> American Council for Judaism pamphlet, *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 16, Folder: American Council for Judaism, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

Jews were as divided as the rest of the United States over Israel, yet they are alternatively lauded or criticized for their role based on a false belief that Jews controlled the political outcomes. Zionism became a key weapon for hate propagandists throughout the 1950s, and when it was convenient to make the claim, Zionists were labeled Communists who wanted to remove God from the nation. Israel became a weapon against American Jews in the battles over separation of church and state: "...if absolute separation is the lesson of Jewish experience, it seems strange that the State of Israel did not adopt it. Christians have learned from history that absolute separation is the slogan of anti-religious government..."<sup>244</sup> However, this opinion ignored the numerous American Jews who did not agree with Israel's existence as a Jewish state, and it ignored the consistency of American Jewish belief in the importance of separation of church and state to provide vitality to both. As a nation, the United States claimed the moral high ground in the post-war years, yet the McCarran-Walter Act and the inability to effectively help displaced Jews demonstrates that Americans did not fully embrace Jews or accept Judaism as an equal religion of democracy.

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<sup>244</sup> "Current Comment: Jewish Congress on Church-State," *America* (January 10, 1953): 386 editorial quoted in Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 103.

CHAPTER VI  
THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE JEWISH VOICE

It is now clear that Jews faced much anti-Semitism in many aspects of life during the 1950s. Protestants and Catholics attacked the Jewish position on religion in public life during and after *Zorach*. As the accusations of Communist activity escalated, Jews assumed a more “submissive attitude” about policy put forth by Christians during the 1950s “so as to not be considered unfaithful to America’s stance as defender of religion in the Cold War.”<sup>245</sup> Nonetheless, Jews did not abandon all concerns with religious activity in the public sphere. Instead of using the legal system to define pluralism during the 1950s, Jews attempts to use personal negotiations and education. They had limited success and decided to take bolder action in the 1960s.

Jews once again entered the legal arena in 1962 with *Engel v. Vitale*, more commonly referred to as Regents’ Prayer. The New York State Board of Regents (school board) provided a prayer to be said each day at the start of school. The prayer, instituted in 1951, read: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country.”<sup>246</sup> It took some time to begin the challenge, and for the case to work through the lower courts which upheld the prayer because student participation was voluntary. Jewish organizations were aware of the prayer and possible litigation, but they were already embroiled in *Zorach* and when that failed, they retreated. Involvement only came when smaller separation cases provided hope that the higher court was ready to fully apply the

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<sup>245</sup> Ivers, *To Build a Wall*, 104.

<sup>246</sup> “Church State Issues,” American Jewish Yearbook, 105. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church State Relations, Jewish Views, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN

definition of the Establishment Clause from *Everson*. Jewish leaders also felt that their methods of education and negotiation clearly had not worked, and it was time to take a stand.

Regents' Prayer became the landmark case involving religion in schools and one of the most notable cases under Chief Justice Earl Warren, who also presided over *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Miranda v. Arizona*. In a 6-1 decision, the court ruled that the recitation of prayer, being a religious activity, was barred from public schools under the First Amendment. With admirable consistency, Justice Black penned the majority opinion confirming as he had in *Everson* and *Zorach* that school supplied religious activity was inevitably coercive due to the authority that a school held over a minor. Just because a student had the option to abstain did not mean that the student could truly feel free to exercise that option.<sup>247</sup> This provided a major victory for the AJCongress, and also the other organizations that supported the case.

Victory had a bitter taste. Jews were warned during *McCollum* that there would be an anti-Semitic backlash, and they were warned again with *Engel*. Before the decision the Catholic magazine *America* posted an editorial entitled "To Our Jewish Friends." It warned that a court ruling against the Regents' prayer would lead to anti-Semitism and there had been "disturbing things of heightened antisemitic feelings." The editorial did not place blame on the whole Jewish community, but rather singled out Leo Pfeffer and the AJCongress. "What will have been accomplished," the author asked, "if our Jewish friends win all the legal immunities they seek, but thereby paint themselves into a corner of social and cultural alienation?"<sup>248</sup> Anti-Semitic feelings rose during the year 1962, and were expressed through demonstrations, racist and pro-Nazi pamphleteering, and outright calls for violence including murder. Fervor over the typical

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<sup>247</sup> *Engel v. Vitale*, U.S. Supreme Court, 370 U.S. 421, [http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0370\\_0421\\_ZS.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0370_0421_ZS.html) (accessed January 19, 2013).

<sup>248</sup> "To Our Jewish Friends," *America*, (Sept. 1, 1961), 116.

themes grew: Jews as Soviet and Communist plotters, manipulating and controlling wealth, politics and media, and “mongrelizing the nation by furthering desegregation.”<sup>249</sup>

There were vocal outcries of tradition in a country that had always been (mostly) Protestant. Catholic and Protestant groups met to discuss what separation really meant to the Founders and what it should mean for the future of the country. The National Conference of Churches voted to reject an “absolute wall of separation.”<sup>250</sup> The members called for a resolution that would seek “flexibility” to promote interaction between church and state, though, this resolution was matched with another that called for respect and support of the Supreme Court decisions.<sup>251</sup>

However, not everyone was willing to find common ground or accept compromise. Congressman Frank J. Becker (R-NY) proposed a constitutional amendment in order to overrule the Supreme Court decisions that banned prayer and Bible readings in schools. This challenge to the Establishment Clause garnered great support in Congress and also from religious leaders. There was popular support as well. It was widely believed that the necessary three-fourths of states for ratification would support the amendment. Some communities made public statements. In Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, the citizens flew “One nation under God” flags on government property. The mayor explained the rationale behind the flags claiming, “It is

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<sup>249</sup> “Anti-Jewish Agitation,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1963, *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church State Relations, Jewish View, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>250</sup> William B. Ball, “Protestants on Church-State,” *The Columbus Conference* (March 6, 1964), *National Conference of Christians and Jews*. Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs, Folder: Church State Relations - Protestant View. Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>251</sup> “No Absolute Separation” *National Conference of Christians and Jews*. Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs, Folder: Church State Relations - Protestant View. Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

important that protests be made because the prayer ban could be the beginning of a trend that might also lead to the abolishment of allegiance.”<sup>252</sup>

A religious coalition involving the AJCongress, the ADL, some evangelicals, and many mainline Protestants, including leaders of the National Council of Churches, spoke out against the amendment and worked to persuade members of Congress to retract their support. In a savvy maneuver, because they realized that if voted on the amendment would likely pass, the coalition convinced head of the House Judiciary Committee Congressman Emanuel Celler to table the bill, allowing it to die in committee without a vote.<sup>253</sup> Even as these various denominations came together to support the ideology of a wall of separation, there was great anxiety. Addressing the National Council of Churches, Theodore S. Meth spoke of an uneasy pluralism. Separation would not alleviate problems and tensions, but it was the only fair solution. Pluralism might cause confusion, but Americans faced confusion in many other aspects of life, and would have to do so in matters of religion as well.<sup>254</sup>

It was extraordinary that the AJCongress and other Jews renewed their aggressive legal battle over religion in schools given the uphill battle that the *Zorach* precedent set and the wave of anti-Semitic activity. So why risk the fight? The answer is complex. First, efforts to use education and negotiation to end religious instruction in public schools had clearly failed.

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<sup>252</sup> “Statement of the New Jersey Region of the American Jewish Congress on the Flying of ‘One nation under God’ Banners on Municipal Premises,” *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 13: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: ‘Under God’ Public Pennants, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN; “Church and State: A Tide Reversed,” *Time* (June 19, 1964): 60.

<sup>253</sup> “Religion and the State -- Some Jewish Attitudes,” *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 12, Folder: Church and State Relations, Interfaith Views, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN; “Becker Amendment,” *Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties*, <http://american-civil-liberties.com/legislation-and-legislative-action/3176-becker-amendment.html> (accessed February 13, 2013).

<sup>254</sup> Theodore S. Meth, “Religion in an Urban and Industrial Age: The Uneasy Pluralism,” Address before National Conference on Church and State, National Council of Churches, Feb. 6, 1964 Columbus, OH. *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 12: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs Project, Folder: Church State Study Conference National Council of Churches, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

Release time in many forms, Bible readings, and prayers were common practices in schools across the nation. Since education did not work, bolder action was needed. Despite the Catholic magazine *America* calling Jews hypocritical because Israel clearly promoted Judaism, American Jews had actually been remarkably consistent in their belief that separation of church and state was the only way to insure freedom of religion for all people. Christians often felt that although most religious instruction should happen in the home or church so that children can be taught matters of faith appropriately, schools should foster the knowledge that God exists and is the source of human rights. This is how they defined pluralism. Jews, on the other hand, consistently said there is no such thing as a least common denominator religion, nor should people want that. Jews defined pluralism as a defense of minority rights.<sup>255</sup> Further, Jews actually defended the Christian Bible saying that any move toward making Christian teachings more secular would actually diminish the value of their religious doctrine.<sup>256</sup> Jews were not anti-religion, they wanted to uphold freedom of religion.

Another reason for Jewish legal teams to enter the fray once more related to the changing social attitudes toward religion. The extreme religiosity of the 1950s had waned by the beginning of the next decade, and religion became a less important tool in the battle against Communism as Americans' notoriously short attention-spans drifted elsewhere. Whenever Gallup pollsters asked about Americans' biggest fears, domestic and foreign Communism topped the list in the early 1950s. As the years passed, Communism slid down the list until it was completely gone by 1960. This is very curious considering the crises in Cuba and Vietnam and concerns about

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<sup>255</sup> "Church State Issues," *American Jewish Year Book*, (1962), 116-117. *National Conference of Christians and Jews*, Box 12, Folder: Church and State Relations, Interfaith Views, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN; Leskes, "Religious Dimensions of Church-State Relations: A Jewish Viewpoint."

<sup>256</sup> National Conference of Christians and Jews Report, *Dr. Everett Clinchy Collection #5317*, Box 20, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

decolonization in Africa were about to grab the nation's attention, certainly the attention of the American leaders. If Communism created the impetus for burgeoning church pews, lack of fear of Communism makes a reasonable hypothesis for the decline of religiosity.

Societal views on religion also changed with the campaign and election of John F. Kennedy, who was Catholic. Supporters made the case that due to separation of church and state, Americans had no reason to fear a Catholic president and his potential ties to the pope. Religion would not rule a secular government. Even Richard Nixon spoke publicly that a man's religion should not matter.<sup>257</sup> Protestants and Catholics shifted from their positions of creating legislation to tear down the wall of separation, and moved to become defenders of the First Amendment.

One notable exception were Protestants that were part of the emerging right-wing evangelical movement which first grew in California amid alarm over liberal antics on college campuses. These conservatives greatly feared the spread of Communism and blamed liberals for allowing worldwide Communist gains including Cuba, just ninety miles away from the United States.<sup>258</sup> Civil rights and the removal of prayer in schools were all part of a plan to spread Communism and the Jews were to blame in the minds of these activists. While the religiosity of most Americans diminished, evangelicals grew in numbers and political power as it became part of the Christian Coalition in the 1980s.

The re-emergence of the Jewish voice in Establishment Clause battles did not appear because anti-Semitism waned. Rather, Jews claimed their part in the American civil religious identity in spite of anti-Semitic attitudes. They sought coalitions with Christians who realized the

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<sup>257</sup> Robert Bendiner, "Our Right Not to Believe," *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 12, Folder: Church-State Relations, General View, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>258</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 69.

vitality of religious expression in the United States was due to the separation of church and state. The success of Regent's Prayer and political protection of the Supreme Court decision bolstered Jefferson's wall of separation and forged a new civil religious identity for Americans -- an identity defined by pluralism.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The perceived consensus of the 1950s created a social, political, and cultural environment that was inconsistent with the beliefs of many. The legislative and legal battles over the role of religion in public education express the complexity in the struggle over identity, particularly national identity. Religious communities endeavored to define their principles amid fears of societal changes, particularly as suburbanization brought people with different beliefs and customs to live in close proximity to one another. Although efforts to strengthen separation of church and state made Jews a target of hate, many bore that risk because they understood the Establishment Clause as the traditional foundation of the national identity. Americans feared godless Communism, and many felt any effort to remove God from schools or other public spaces opened the door to atheism and Communism. *Everson, McCollum, Zorach* and *Engel* did not create anti-Semitic feelings, rather they highlighted a systemic problem in society. The propagandists who promoted aggressive anti-Semitism remained on the fringes of society, but their linkage of Judaism to Communism affected the nation as a whole. Many Americans were nice people who simply went along with the gentlemen's agreements. To the propagandists, anti-Communism was an acceptable front for being anti-Semitic. Certainly Jews were linked to Soviets for the express purpose of proclaiming their inferiority. Prejudice against Jews did not end after these legal cases bolstered the wall of separation, and some Christians expressed misguided ideas of how to be more tolerant. One film crew member on *Gentleman's Agreement* believed the moral of the movie was that one should be nice to Jews because they might turn out

to be Christians.<sup>259</sup> Still, as the 1950s drew to a close, religious leaders spoke out more about how mistaken stereotypes should be put aside and “to a large extent...the differences are not in principles, but only in applications of them.”<sup>260</sup> Unity in theology would not be achieved, but there was hope that the national identity could be expressed through true pluralism.

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<sup>259</sup> “Gentleman’s Agreement,” *Saturday Review of Literature* (December 6, 1947): 71.

<sup>260</sup> George W. Cornell, “Interfaith ‘Dialogues’ Ease Religious Conflicts in U.S.,” NCCJ New Direction (1960), *National Conference of Christians and Jews Archive*, Box 11:NCCJ Publications, Folder: Religious Freedom and Public Affairs, Elmer L. Anderson Library, Minneapolis, MN.

## APPENDIX

### The Star-Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight  
O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,  
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream,  
'Tis the star-spangled banner - O long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion  
A home and a Country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand  
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with vict'ry and peace may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto - "In God is our trust,"  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> "The Lyrics," *Smithsonian Institute*, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/the-lyrics.aspx> (accessed October 27, 2011).

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