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Communism and the Politics of Cultural Labeling: Patriotism and Piety in American Life

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Introduction

It is no secret that political language is fraught with hyperbole. Describing one's opponent on the least charitable grounds possible seems to be a hallmark of successful political campaigning. And it seems that awakening a sense of historical fear or tension is central to the playbook of this rhetoric. A particular strain of this–what I will call anticommunism–floods American political rhetoric. Put simply, anticommunism in political rhetoric constitutes an insistence that the loyalties of one's opponent lie in Marxism, socialism, or communism.

A few examples of political rhetoric in the last three years illustrate this phenomenon. Speaking about several Democrats who were then freshman members of Congress, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) recently quipped on the popular "Fox & Friends" program, "We all know that AOC and this crowd are a bunch of communists."[1] Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) was particularly helpful in illustrating the amalgamation of the various terms discussed in my research when he asked a Fox host, "Don't ask me to get inside the mind of a liberal, progressive, socialist, Marxist, like President Biden."[2] Said Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-AL), "They call it progressivism or something, that's just a new word for socialism and communism."[3] Representative Madison Cawthorne (R-NC): "The direction our country is going is very dangerous. We are walking down a road that is very near socialism–they are trying to turn this country into a communist ash heap."[4] House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy stated that "You cannot be a leader of the free world if you want to appease socialism and communism."[5] Representative Margorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) has echoed this rhetoric as well, electing also to appeal to the popular additive of Islamophobia: "The Democrats are now controlled by the

[1] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists'" (CNN, March 10, 2022,) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =YHUrvN-hIM4&t=477s.
[2] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"
[3] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"
[4] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"
[5] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"

Jihad-squad led by AOC, the little communist from New York City."[6] Greene also finds accusations of Nazism to be a helpful rhetorical tool in opposing those with whom she differs, saying at a May 2021 "America First" rally, "you know Nazis were the national socialist party, just like the Democrats are now a national socialist party."[7] Senator Graham also found a piece of healthcare legislation proposed by the Democrat majority in Congress to be further evidence of a "Red" takeover: "This is not about infrastructure. This is about paving a path to socialism. This is about expanding the government in the most dramatic fashion since the New Deal."[8]

Where does this rhetoric originate, how has it evolved, and what makes it significant? These are the questions I sought to answer in writing this thesis. Intuitively, grandiose charges should require robust evidence, but often what I found to be the case painted a different picture: a picture of an anticommunist rhetoric that has been infused into much of the American civic sphere through decades of an "othering" process. To me, examining "othering" processes highlights the need for scholarship on its origins and the origins of the words, ideas, political, religious, and economic movements that underpin these sentiments. It is an inherently interdisciplinary undertaking as well–one that calls for examination in sociology, psychology, technology–all disciplines outside of the historical lens I employed to frame this argument. But in short, I have sought to shed light on three key movements that offer context to the current political moment. First, I examined the origins of Marxism, finding that Marx himself drew on philosophical and historical influences originating far before his era, such as the Bible, Plato, Hegel, and others. Second, I looked to the American appropriation of Marxism as a method of defining and eliminating those perceived to be associated with Soviet communism. Third, I examined these movements' effects on today's rhetoric, and discovered that Marxism, socialism,

[6] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"
[7] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"
[8] John Avlon, "Why politicians shouldn't call their political foes 'communists.'"

and communism are valued more for their connotations in the process of "othering" than for anything else. Critical study of Marxism seems to have little place in anticommunism, but the confident labeling of political opponents as Marxists seems to in fact be the end goal of anticommunism. As a result, I concluded that this lack of seriousness has greatly eroded the value of language and incentivized a vacuous approach to dialogue in the American civic sphere. With Marx now functioning as an ominous, anti-American bogeyman and actual Marxist theory left widely unaddressed, many public influencers instead use moral, religious, and otherwise xenophobic "othering" efforts against their perceived enemies as the go-to playbook in pursuit of maintaining a public psychology of loyalty and obedience to what has proved to be the fruitless and nearsighted enterprise of social and political exclusion.

Chapter 1: Ancient Foundations: Karl Marx and His Predecessors

Introduction

If one were to open an internet browser and type in the question "How old is communism?" or some such adjacent command in their search bar, they would meet a host of websites clamoring in succession to trace, historically, exactly how old communism is.[9] I will spare my reader the time in actually performing this task by offering a spoiler based on my own search: the first three websites (excluding the ever-persistent Wikipedia) built into this algorithmic answer all roughly offer some resemblant version of the following: "Communism was founded as a theory by Karl Marx and Frederich Engels in the mid-19th century and was developed as a political movement beginning with Vladimir Lenin." The sites will likely proceed to list countries that have attempted to employ communism or socialism as they understood it, and perhaps name a few revolutionary details about each. I am not interested in scrutinizing or debating the legitimacy of the self-described "communism" in those regimes or evaluating the moral and social implications of those ideas. I am, however, interested in defenestrating the grossly misappropriated rhetoric surrounding conversations on communism through a historical and contemporary analysis. While the bulk of this chapter will focus on Karl Marx's influences, evolution, and theory, I must disclose at the outset that none of this project's undertaking will be worth the staples used to bind it or the bandwidth used to publish it if I make the mistake of construing the invention of communism as belonging to Karl Marx. Rather, my aim is to show that communism as an idea is as ancient as any proposition of governance, and to then situate Marx and his writing more precisely in the context of his influences and the surrounding economic and political landscape. Thus, I hope to render Marxism as perhaps the most efficient

[9] Piloted using history.com, the Center for European Studies at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and alphahistory.com, all three of which were the first non-Wikipedia sites returned by Google during an initial search.

and sophisticated *communication* of pre-existing "communistic" intuitions, and then explore, in later chapters, the downstream effects of these ideas and their polarizing reception in American life, both past and present. Humorously enough, that shunned giant Wikipedia was the only search result to contain a quick acknowledgement of the birth of communism where it actually is: millenia into antiquity.

Thus, the goal of this chapter is to recall the roots of communism and highlight their influence on Karl Marx. First, returning to the Bible and other foundational texts to Marx's European upbringing yields traces of communist intuitions in religious and political settings. Analysis of these texts illuminates what is evidently missing in widespread understanding of Marxism: its pre-modern roots and their influence on Marx. And, most importantly, understanding the roots of Marxism helps explain why Marxist thought so thoroughly resonated with its time period, demonstrating that it is not a particularly new phenomenon. In short, I will argue that Marx simply nourished the long-planted seeds of communism and added new light to an ancient sentiment.

Ancient Philosophy and Communism: Ancient Texts and Marxist Background

While many see communism as a relatively recent system of ideas (c. mid 19th century), I find it critical to highlight foundational aspects of Marxist thought in both ancient religious and philosophical texts. Relayed in the Old Testament is a multitude of stories regarding concepts of fairness, wealth, and the cultivation of a healthy society. Mentions and opinions on financial matters offer little in the way of consistency in the Bible, and a few passages far older than the Acts account seem to condone the sharing of wealth. The entire sixth chapter in the Old Testament's Book of Joshua focuses on the sins of a man named Achon who kept possessions, including a "bar of gold," for himself following a raid on a neighboring tribe. His sin is detected

after tribesmen located in Ai snap the people of Israel's divinely inspired combat winning streak. The following passages describe the climax of the scandal and the punishment meted out on Achon:

> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the Lord. And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger.[10]

While nowhere near a clear endorsement of communism, the moral of this story is that gruesome condemnation waits for those who take possessions into private ownership rather than presumably acquiring them by the allocation of a governing body.

Historian Erik van Ree writes that the minority movement known as Christian communism drew particular inspiration from the Book of Daniel, which foretells the coming of myriad empires and civilizations, all of which will ultimately expire one after the other.[11] These communists believed that in the End Times, a futuristic government called New Jerusalem would establish a "system of common ownership…[and they were] anticipating its worldwide dissemination."[12]

The New Testament contains passages that further emphasize models of collective ownership. Principles of charity, sharing, rejecting the love of money, and giving up one's possessions proliferated from Jesus's lifestyle and sayings, and seem to have had immediate effect on his early followers. For example, in the Book of Acts, the biblical author describes the

[10] Joshua 6:22-26 (ESV)
[11] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia–Imagining Communism from Plato to Stalin* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 21.
[12] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 21

early church as a vibrant cohort that flourished on a communist model: "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."[13] Moreover, the communal economic structure relayed in Acts was not just an abstract description, but a somber mandate backed by an unsettling and uncannily morbid tale:

> But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.[14]

Soon after Ananias's unhappy demise, a clueless Sapphira comes to check on her husband, but faces questioning from Peter. She too gives a faulty disclosure of the couple's financial situation, and she too suffers the fatal audit of God.[15] Mainstream theology is certain to reject that any of the Acts accounts–or in fact, any of the entire Bible–endorse a Chrsitian brand of communism. But many of these theological scholars offering commentary on the subject, such as critic Art Lindsley, lean on the crutch of hindsight in order to refute the notion of ancient common purse communities and, using Marxist atheism as evidence to his point, claims victory.[16] But while mapping the *Communist Manifesto's* appropriation of religion and property onto the Bible may reverse-engineer the chronology and evolution of communism, it does not negate the various passages' endorsement of a communal economic model. In fact, proponents of less mainstream movements such as Christian communism often cited Acts 2-5 in support of their prescriptive messaging.[17] In the centuries following, radicalist movements germinated out of these concepts

[13] Acts 2:44-5 (NKJV)
[14] Acts 5:1-6 (ESV)
[15] Acts 5:7-11
[16] Art Lindsley, "Does Acts 2-5 Teach Socialism?" *Institute for Faith, Work & Economics.*
[17] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 19

and became established Christian minority groups for hundreds of years, though many suffered the wrath of the Catholic church's persecution for what was deemed heretical practice.[18] Engels himself characterizes later Anabaptist movements in *The German Peasants' War* as being communist in nature.[19]

While not an exhaustive list in the least, having established that intuitions sympathetic to the construct of communism existed in the Bible and subsequently gained traction throughout pre-modern history, it seems reasonable that these anecdotes fortify the assertion that communism–as at minimum an intuition for local governance centered around shared goods–played a significant role in evaluating the economic models available to those societies. And I hope it is irrefutably clear at this point that communism, no matter how sophisticated of a theory or practice, preceded Karl Marx and Marxism. I will now further seek to highlight the communist precedents set in history in the context of a more direct lineage to Marx than Christian religious text: the philosophical tradition.

Philosophical Lineage: Plato and Beyond

Van Ree writes that the "communist idea" was not only evidenced as having existed in classical antiquity, but among Greek and Latin philosophers and poets, such as Plato (427-347 BCE), Diodorus Siculus (90-30 BCE), Virgil (70-19 BCE), Ovid (died c. 18 CE), and Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE), and others, it was a "common enough assumption" that a communist, moneyless society existed at the outset of the world.[20] Eventually, many Fathers of early Christianity would borrow from these philosophers by perpetuating this nostalgic retelling of history.[21] Van Ree

[18] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 21
[19] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 23
[20] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17
[21] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17

characterizes their outlook on private ownership as a "late and unfortunate development" in the history of time and human civilization.[22]

Plato, however, offered much more in the way of communism than the other historical icons. Van Ree explains that those figures may have seen communism as the ideal into which civilization was conceived and which it subsequently polluted, but they saw no point in a return to this system of ownership.[23] Plato was different. Traveling to the Italian city-state of Tarenum, Plato may have been inspired by what were members of the Pythagorean Brotherhood there in Plato's philosopher-king manner, overseeing the domicile in communistic fashion. His *Republic* demonstrates a "tempered ambition" to bring a level of communism back to the state of governance.[24] Plato's "Guardian" class, which constituted the ruling elite of his time, would undertake this exemplary form of communism:

> [O]ur Guardians shall have no private property beyond the barest essentials…none of them possess a dwelling-house or storehouse to which all have not the right of entry.[25]

Additionally, on the working class becoming too rich or poor:

> One produces luxury and idleness and a desire for novelty, the other meanness and bad workmanship and the desire for revolution as well.[26]

For the ruling class Guardians, Plato's psychological evaluation of them was that the giving up of private property would help them to be good military commanders. Should they become too caught up in individualism and materialism, Van Ree says, Plato feared they would lose their collective allegiance to defending the state. In short, these Guardians could only be "virtuous administrators" if they relegated to others any and all possessions that could create conflicts of interest.[27] Plato was not merely formulating the idea of this type of state out of thin air, either.

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[22] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17
[23] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17
[24] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17
[25] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 17
[26] Plato, *The Republic* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004)
[27] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 18

Sparta was composed of a few thousand warrior-citizens and was a model city-state for its internal regulations and ability to resist the "temptations of luxury."[28] Perhaps Plato's ancient communism was, to him, a simple adaptation of already existing local states, rather than the explicit, revolutionary radicalism of later communistic sentiments and movements.

There is much more to trace in the lineage of communism as a sentiment and experiment before the time of Marx. From Plato's hypothesizing on ideal city states, to creative imaginations of New Jerusalem as communist, to armed revolts of Taborite communists against the Holy Roman Empire and their establishment of sectarian "community chest" regions, the ancient world built the medieval and communism took shape particularly in the radical wings of monasticism as well as anti-Catholic minorities. As the Renaissance took shape, many emerging humanists interested in natural philosophy and egalitarianism adopted a utopian communism as the end goal of their pursuits.[29] However, the storied cycles of French revolution and repackaged versions of coercive governance gave rise to modified forms of communism, with figures such as Francois-Noel Babeuf organizing revolutions and gaining rapid traction with French workers. Babeuf's goal for his French homeland was explicit and plain, writing that "society must be made to operate in such a way that it eradicates once and for all the desire of a man to become richer, or wiser, or more powerful than others." Babeuf's speedy execution in 1797 for rabble-rousing against the Directory only inflamed more disgruntled citizens to follow his ideology, with contemporaries such as Filippo Buonarotti directly invoking the ideals of Plato's *Republic* as a prototype and inspiration for modern France. Several decades later, so-called neobabeuvinist political parties focusing heavily on labor rights emerged beginning in the 1830s–most notably, the League of the Just, which Marx and Engels would soon take over.

[28] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 18
[29] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 39

While no doubt a simplified thread of communism's history, this glimpse should offer readers at minimum a traceable lineage to Karl Marx and illuminate the *direct* influence of thinkers such as Plato on his philosophical framework.

While it is eminently clear that communism is not new, and certainly does not belong to Karl Marx, the fact remains that Marx has endured in political legend as the most sophisticated, robust, and explicit communicator of communism, and thus endures as the subject of public affection or disgust to various nations and political factions. Since the ultimate goal of this research is to uncover not just the historical complexity and context of Marxism but also the anticommunist movements that shape political dialogue today, it is necessary to examine the figure of Marx himself and give further context to the person whose name still functions as a de facto scapegoat for American political turbulence today. It is therefore essential to explicitly describe, in the most objective and fairly analyzed terms possible, the historical realities and personalities that would eventually captivate the social and political attention over time in the United States. In contemporary society, in which the very notice of a name like Marx connotes imagery of tyrant or savior, hero or villain, and the mention of Marxism induces either one's deepest anxieties or unshakable optimism, it becomes necessary to inquire just exactly how these diametrically opposed stances evolved and what shaped their rise. In the public square, it hardly needs mentioning that figures such as Babeuf, Buonarotti, or Plato–Marx's own predecessors–connote very little, if anything, in the way of communism, and thus command no negative attention in that part of the American psyche devoted to defeating perceived Marxism. It is then critical to look into the life of Marx himself, understand his contribution to the long standing political theory of communism, and discover why his name would become the chief "whipping boy" of so much public outrage.

Karl Marx: Background and Influences

Born in 1818 to parents Heinrich and Henrietta, Karl Marx (d. 1883) spent his early and adolescent years in Trier, Germany. His parents were of Jewish background and descended from a long rabbinical lineage. Rights recognized and granted to Jewish inhabitants of Trier had unreliable shelf-lives, it seems, as areas including Trier in the greater Prussian Rhineland changed hands several times with the tumult of the Napoleonic wars and various attempts of the German empire to unify. Jews could thus see their rights enforced or revoked with the onslaught of any political upheaval, and, in order to protect their future children, Marx's parents elected to be baptized into the Protestant faith shortly before his birth.[30] Little, if any, indication exists that Marx's father, Heinrich, was religiously devout, either as a Jew or a converted Protestant. However, as a relatively successful lawyer in the town of Trier, one's social standing and thus, their religion, held a great deal of importance in relation to their career, social life, state-protected rights, and economic well-being. Thus, Heinrich and Henriatta Marx elected to pass on at least a nominal form of Protestantism to their children, baptizing in due time their son and two daughters that survived infancy.

One scholar of Karl Marx's upbringing, Paul Thomas, says that "what cannot be overstressed is how politicized the Trier of Marx's youth was," and suggests that Marx's exposure to politics at even the youngest age was riddled with the friction of hard times and an unhappy working class.[31] Heinrich was highly engaged in local politics during his son's upbringing, often speaking out against Prussian authorities as corrupt and decadent.

[30] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 24
[31] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx*, 24

Marx's political and philosophical influences are likely first traceable in papers he wrote toward the end of his high school years in Trier. Beyond his early exposure to thinkers, playwrights, and philosophers such as Rousseau, Shakespeare, Kant, and Voltaire due to his father's interests and influence, a young Marx began to curate ideas of his own about the life journey on which he would embark. At 17, Marx was already noticing the tensions causing so many people's occupation to misalign with their passions, whether due to disadvantage or outsized positions of power, perhaps shaping his eventually transformative intuitions on alienation and estrangement. Alluding to Rousseau's "Second Discourse" shortly before enrolling in university, he wrote that the "welfare of humanity" should dictate one's vocational path and that he viewed an emphasis on career ambition–prone to failure and letdown–in suspicion.[32] Marx scholar Lewis S. Feuer argues that these early inclinations of Marx not only stemmed from his father's ideological influence, but perhaps also from antisemitic prejudice from those who knew of his originally Jewish heritage.[33] Perhaps Marx's rather militant detachment from religion–what he would later refer to as "bourgeoisie values"--arose from open wounds caused by hostility to his Jewish heritage and his expedient baptism into a politically protected religious tradition. As his early years passed, the young Marx matriculated at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, where he studied law and philosophy, respectively.

His university experience studying law began as many unremarkable ones do: a good deal of alcohol, student clubs, disorderly conduct, and eventual arrest. But as his legal education matured, his interests began to diverge. Paul Thomas chronicles that Marx's classes in legal philosophy began to tug his intellectual tendencies away from taking the mantle of his father's professional life.[34] He preferred to "struggle with philosophy," he wrote to his father, for

[32] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx*, 32
[33] L. S. Feuer and David T. McLellan, "Karl Marx" (Encyclopedia Britannica, March 13, 2022)
[34] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx*, 32

philosophy was what underpinned law.[35] Historian Rolf Hosfeld writes that around this time, Marx's father saw it best for him to transfer to university in Berlin, where he could better indulge his intellectual needs and curtail his partying. Berlin, in particular, was known for its relative academic freedom from the constant scrutiny of the state, to which most universities were subjected.[36] Marx enrolled, but battled illness and took numerous leaves of absence to seek refuge and respite in a better climate. It was in these physically challenging times that he found insight in what he once thought of as the "gross craggy melody" of George W. F. Hegel's writings.

Hegel's Dialectics: The Backdrop of Karl Marx's Philosophy

It is critical to understand a few decades of background to Marx's evolution as a disciple of Hegel. While the work of Plato, Aquinas, Kant, and others interconnected to influence philosophy across centuries of civilization, Hegel profoundly shaped Marx's thought and helped him understand how pre-modern strains of thought fit together into a single philosophical system. Says Marxism historian Andy Blunden of Hegel:

> It is a remarkable fact that almost all the revolutionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries were either students of Hegel, Hegelians of the second or third philosophical generation or influenced by other figures of German Philosophy of the time–Kant, Fichte and Schelling, but above all Hegel–whether in the form of Marxism or other critical philosophical currents.[37]

In 1830s Germany, no figure "ruled the philosophical roost" for decades quite like George Frederick Wilhelm Hegel–a man whose intellectual tradition Karl Marx initially claimed to despise, but about whom Marx later wrote that he had found himself "carried like a false siren

[35] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx*, 32
[36] Rolf Hosfeld, *Karl Marx: an Intellectual Biography* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012)
[37] Andy Blunden, "What Is the Difference between Hegel and Marx?" (Hegel, Marx and Vygotsky 2021), 1

into the arms of the enemy."[38] Marx's contrarian attitude toward the overwhelming predominance of Hegelianism in German culture was soon overruled by his own obsession with engaging in Hegelian thinking. He went on to associate with the Young Hegelians movement–a movement infatuated with fine-tuning Hegelian thought to fit the present moment–and situated himself firmly in a school of those who would become his leading intellectual influences: Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and of course, the deceased Hegel.

The Young Hegelians, as an official group, were preceded by the predominance of an emergent Hegelian school of thought in the 1820s and 1830s, and, of course, by Hegel himself. In order to assess Hegel's and his critics' writings, a necessary disclaimer regards the sheer brevity of the scope of this project in contrast to the enormity and variety of not just Hegel's writings, but also interpretive commentary on those writings. To offer a fair hearing to all those who have translated, analyzed, and criticized Hegel or to attempt to do so myself would be far outside the bounds of this undertaking. Instead, I will seek to summarize Hegel's work in an effective and relevant manner, acknowledge the laden controversy and lack of consensus opinion surrounding these works and their meaning, and lastly, narrate some of the previously mentioned intellectuals' journey through and ultimately away from Hegel and the compound effect on Marx's trajectory.

Born in the latter part of the 18th century in Stuttgart, a city situated in one of Germany's lowly regarded regions known as Swabia, Hegel lived a relatively unremarkable childhood. He matriculated to seminary after his high school years and developed political enthusiasms and philosophical opinions. Hegel spent several years as a tutor, during which he began to write and publish works such as "The Life of Jesus" and "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate."[39] He then

[38] Karl Marx, "Letter from Karl Marx to His Father" (Translated by Paul M. Schafer. Letter from Marx to His Father by Karl Marx November 1837)
[39] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2014), 26

accepted a lecturing role at the university in Jena, where he soon published his magnum opus: *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Many of his publications in Jena, including the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, included the influences and criticisms of his close friend and colleague, Frederich Schelling.[40] Hegel would go on to hold multiple more positions in academia and journalism, and published numerous additional works on the philosophy of history, science, religion, and spirit. He died in 1831, leaving a trail of followers, such as Marx, intent on understanding and building upon his intellectual life's work.

In order to understand the premises from Hegel with which Marx most wrestled, I will first offer a glimpse into Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as posited by scholars J. M. Fritzman and Michael N. Forster–specifically Hegel's description of his own approach to philosophy. These authors begin by stating that Hegel begins his *Phenomenology* by fundamentally reshaping the idea of what constitutes philosophy as an enterprise. Fritzman says that Hegel's notion of philosophy is not the commonly assumed effort at creating a set of values aimed at consistency and adherence to those values, but rather a process by which one thinks about the world and derives those principles and propositions.[41] A guiding principle of Hegelian thought is that human beings have emerged from primal states of nature to form ideas, for those ideas to interact, and for sociological phenomena to occur which ultimately bring about the present moment. This is what is famously known as Hegel's "dialectic," which explains human history over time as occurring in a trivariable sequence: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. For example, when some movement *x* arises as a "thesis," a counter-ideological movement *y* arises as an antithesis, and the resulting compromise or conflict *z* is the synthesis–which will ultimately be a thesis-event *x* of its own, in its own time. This process of dialectic, to Friztman, "consists in

[40] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*
[41] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*, 32-33

taking some claim to truth and asking what must be the case in order for this claim to be not merely true, but even possible."[42] Hegel applies this method thoroughly not just in the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* but in all of his philosophical work. Hegel's work reveals not an attempt to create an ethical or moral system but rather an attempt to explain historical events, political systems, economic arrangements, religious tides, and social movements in their totality across time, and it was this meticulous framework in which Marx's intellectual and philosophical life took shape.

Fritzman also writes that Hegel also regards exclusively internal criticisms–negations–as legitimate for rebutting in any philosophical discipline.[43] That is, philosophers may simply evaluate whether objections to their claims come from an outside school of thought, or from the school of thought within which they are operating. If the objection is external, one may regard this as an issue of compatibility rather than a legitimate and internal objection.[44] A third and final component of Hegel's framework that is critical for understanding his work and the resulting system of thought under which Marx would later operate is Hegel's goal of converting philosophy into a scientific system.[45] To this end, Hegel writes in his introduction to the *Phenomenology* the following: "In virtue of that necessity this pathway to science is itself *eo ipso* science, and is, moreover, as regards its content, Science of the Experience of Consciousness."[46] To marry these three components of Hegel's method of writing and approach to philosophy shows Hegel's commitment to an interpretation of history as movement of the universal "Spirit" through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and his philosophical writing is grounded therein.

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[42] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*, 33
[43] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*, 33
[44] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*, 33
[45] J. M. Fritzman, *Hegel*, 33
[46] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Having established the significance of the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" process of dialectical reasoning, it is critical to understand the role of idealism and what this meant for Hegel, Marx, and their contemporaries. Idealism refers to the belief that "something mental," be it the mind, spirit, will, or consciousness, is the foundation or perhaps even the essence of all reality.[47] In Hegel's view of idealism, the spirit of the individual and the "Spirit" of the collective were of critical differences. Regarding the individual, Hegel writes that "spirit is the 'nature' of individuals, their immediate substance, and its movement and necessity; it is as much the personal consciousness in their existence as it is their pure consciousness, their life, their actuality."[48] The individual, however, pales in significance and strength to that which he terms the "universal":

> The universal is a people, a group of individuals in general, an existent whole, the universal force. It is of insurmountable strength against the individual, and is his necessity and the power oppressing him. And the strength that each one has in his being-recognized is that of a people. This strength, however, is effective only insofar as it is united into a unity, only as will….The universal will is prior to them, it is absolutely there for them – they are in no way immediately the same.[49]

Hegel here essentially argues that with respect to the individual spirit and the universal spirit, the sum of individual spirit-beings constituting the universal spirit is a sum which is greater than the parts represented by individuals–possessing the power to even displace the individual as its own originator and self. It is this universal or "Spirit," to Hegel, that is the centerpiece of his dialectical interpretation of history, and this notion of the collective spirit and individual spirit constituting the makeup of societies, nations, and various economic arrangements that formed historical reality is the point at which Marx most starkly contradicts his intellectual predecessor.

[47] Paul Guyer and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, "Idealism" (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022)
[48] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Spirit* (Jena Lectures, 1805-6, Jena, Germany, Accessed 24 April 2022)
[49] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Spirit*

In many ways, Marx agreed with and operated using Hegel's processes, his theory of history as dialectical, and ultimately believed that the human species orients itself toward progress and maximizing its own well-being. Yet while Hegel wrote at great length about his notion of the universal, national spirit, and world spirit–all concepts aimed at explaining a seemingly invisible agent dominating the tendencies of any given culture, time period, or historical event–these explanations and their relation to individuality, consciousness, and human flourishing left Marx wholly unsatisfied. Both philosophers focused heavily on the idea of *alienation*–a social ill leaving something meaningful to be desired between some subject and some object–as the central obstacle to human flourishing. But Marx diverged from Hegel's view that the dialectical process of history created a process of individual "self-manifestation or self-expression" in order to solve alienation between one's own self-consciousness and the true form of spirit or humanity.[50] Perhaps the main bridge from Hegel to Marx is illustrated in one of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* notably his breakthrough commentary of the Hegelian notion of alienation and human labor:

> He grasps *labor* as the *essence* of man–as man's essence which stands the test: he sees only the positive, not the negative side of labor. Labor is man's *coming-to-be* for *himself* within *alienation*, or as *alienated* man. The only labor which Hegel knows and recognizes is *abstractly mental* labor. Therefore, that which constitutes the essence of philosophy–the *alienation of man who knows himself*, or *alienated* science *thinking itself*–Hegel grasps as its essence; and in contradistinction to previous philosophy he is therefore able to combine its separate aspects, and to present his philosophy as *the* philosophy.[51]

Here Marx sharply criticizes Hegel's concept of human labor over the course of history as one that is, quite simply, out of touch with reality. Marx feels that here Hegel misunderstands not just

[50] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy: From the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche*, (New York: Doubleday, 1963)
[51] Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Economic-Philosophic-Manuscripts-1844.pdf)

the practical makeup of human labor and time, but the very human psyche itself. Hegel represents a theorist of the type that Marx would eventually categorize as belonging to the political economy and the bourgeoisie thought class. Francis Coplestone's volume on Marx in his *A History of Philosophy* series accurately captures Marx's grudge with Hegel, writing that Marx "opposes to the primacy of the Idea the primacy of sensible reality," this "sensible reality" referring to labor not in abstraction, but in a physical sense. Says Coplestone further:

> And he [Marx] maintains that the fundamental form of human work is not thought but manual labor in which man alienates himself in the objective product of his labour, a product which, in society as at present constituted, does not belong to the producer. This alienation cannot be overcome by a process of thought in which the idea of private property is regarded as a moment in the dialectical movement to a higher idea.[52]

Thus, Marx's main realization about Hegelian thought was that its founder subscribed to what one might call an "ivory tower" understanding of world economies and their impact on social and political history. Unlike Hegel, Marx viewed human history not as a dialectical "movement of thought about reality [but] the movement of reality itself," effectively establishing that Hegel's flaw was in his attribution of cause and effect.[53] The "mental" component of Hegelian idealism did not dictate how societies would coordinate physical labor and efficient economies, but rather, physical labor and economic scarcity dictated that ideology that Hegel so elevated as the prime driver of human history. This was the juncture at which Marx explicitly forsook the idealist component of the Hegelian dialectic and looked to naturalism and materialism instead to rectify what he considered to be the misinformed predominance of idealism.

Ultimately, to uncover the fundamental flaw in Hegelian idealism was to uncover the flaws in many of its implications spelled out in Hegel's work, and Marx elected to write at great length of the additional shortcomings of idealism as a framework to perceive religion, ethics, and

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[52] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 309*
[53] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 309*

practical reason in society, even going as far as to spell out a tedious line-by-line critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. But outside of these critiques of his own German philosophical tradition, Marx had realized that the priority of all economics and philosophy lay not in spelling out (or negating) the relationship between world-spirits to the individual mind, but in understanding and communicating the relationship between the individual as a physical laborer, that individual's physical labor, and the flow of capital that dictated this relationship.

The Communist Manifesto: A New Pursuit

During the years after Marx's studies at university, he began to write for the *Rheinische Zeitung,* of which he soon became the editor in 1842. Van Ree pinpoints this as being the era of Marx's life in which he converted from a "radical liberal" Young Hegelian to a self-described communist.[54] However, the newspaper was targeted for its communism by Prussian state censorship and quickly disbanded, causing Marx to become something of a sojourner in western Europe for the next few years. Having found a similar job as a co-editor for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in Paris, Marx gained exposure to French workers movements, Russian-born revolutionaries, and other German socialists fleeing from similar expulsions.[55] Coplestone notes of his work life that it "brought him into closer contact with concrete political, social, and economic problems," jading him further from the ultra-passive prescriptions of Hegel's theory that the philosopher should aspire "simply to understand the world and that we can trust…to the working our of Idea or Reason."[56] Theory, to Marx, needed to translate to a "practical activity" relevant to more than just a hegemony of academically accomplished philosophers: relevant to the "masses." Marx began to write affirmingly of

[54] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 54
[55] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 309*
[56] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 306*

Feuerbach's critique of religion, and, as Coplestone says, came to the conclusion that religion "reflects or expresses the distortion in human society," perhaps just as his parents' conversion had reflected the distortions of German antisemitism.[57] This distortion, to Marx, stemmed directly from the inability of humans to find fulfillment from their political, social, or economic standing, at which point they inevitably concoct and partake in the "self-administered opium" of religion.[58] Yet if religion filled this void for much of human society, was there any difference in the drugging effect that the passive Hegelian philosophy had for those who believed in it? Indeed, the false consciousness of the masses Marx viewed as induced by religion, of the philosophers he also viewed their false consciousness as induced by Hegelianism. A healthier philosophy looked more like political activism than armchair quasi-theology. To Marx, thought needed to catalyze action, and action, in this sense, was social revolution. And this social revolution would be born from the trenches of the lowest-ranking economic class famously known as the proletariat. Religion would not obscure the consciousness of the masses and further alienate them from their labor, and philosophy would not act as a substitute for religion in pacifying the academy.

Marx's conviction of the primacy of "sensible reality" rather than cerebral ideology solidified when he became involved in and influenced by contemporary socialist and communist movements in France and Britain. Though he stayed within a dialectical framework but with a new focus on economic standing–class struggle–as the driver of human history, Marx began to not even consider his forthcoming work as philosophy, but as empowering the more "in-touch" socialist movements with the intellectual tools rendered to him by German philosophy. Marx met his storied compatriot Friedrich Engels while visiting London, and the two befriended quickly.

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[57] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 309*
[58] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 309*

Expelled from France for again writing in favor of communism, Marx moved to Brussels and further critiqued the German philosophical tradition and advocated in favor of social action: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it," he argued, and Engels soon joined him in Brussels to collaborate on the subject with their writing *The German Ideology.* They further inverted the idealist Hegelian notion that consciousness determines life, instead stating that the "fundamental factor in history is the process of material or economic production."[59] Coplestone writes that the two logically concluded that the dialectical process of history moved inevitably to the "proletariat revolution and the coming of communism, not the self-knowledge of absolute Spirit or any such philosophical illusion." Van Ree comments that a "precondition of the communist society" in this publication, according to the duo, was that the "mass of humanity" had to lose much of its private property to the theft of the ruling elite.[60] Another precondition of communism in order for it to flourish was societal wealth and "mature industrialism," or else a rat race would ensue in a "struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business" purportedly made inaccessible to the proletariat by those with sufficient wealth.[61] Even though *The German Ideology* remained unpublished until well into the 20th century, it is the first version of much of the argumentation later emptied into their magnum opus: the *Communist Manifesto.* The maturing ideology of this foundational text also laid the groundwork for their rise to prominence among the communist movements they supported and led to the *Manifesto'*s contrivance.

With Marx's and Engels's each publication, the two moved further into influence among existing communist groups. With Marx having joined the Communist League in 1847, the pair were commissioned as its spokespeople to pen a guiding document of the League's ideology. The

[59] Frederick Copleston, *Modern Philosophy, 311*
[60] Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia,* 62
[61] Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The German Ideology,* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx /works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf)

resulting work was the famous *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Coplestone notes that shortly after its composition, activist insurrections began to take place across much of western Europe, including London, France, and Germany. Thus, the *Manifesto*–coinciding with several material attempts at the very type of revolution it promulgated–was by no means an invention out of a historical or philosophical vacuum, but just the opposite. The authors themselves point to their theory as being born out of older "Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions" in which "it was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves."[62] The composition of Marx and Engels was instead a communication of and prescription for the social, political, and economic anxiety felt across much of Europe and soon Russia.

The *Manifesto* is divided into four sections. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" opens the first section. Here Marx and Engels outline a supporting version of history–with undertones of a typical dialectic fashion–which narrates the arrangements of class "gradations" and the struggle between them in various previous societies. The authors assert that contemporary bourgeois society is characterized by the class "antagonism" of two main classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Older societies had class divide but it remained much more striated: "feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, [and] serfs" made of the classes of the middle ages. Society, however, is a sort of devil in a new dress. Marx and Engels point to phenomena such as America's rise, industrialization, and the optimization of worldwide commerce as catalysts for this boiled down system of classification. The bourgeoisie class thus emerged as whatever collection of citizens made off with the capital generated from the ever-developing "world market."[63] The same class then reinvented norms and laws aimed at protecting its capital under the guise of what the

[62] Doug Lorimer, "Introduction," *The Communist Manifesto and Its Relevance for Today* (Chippendale: Resistance Books, 1998)
[63] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Edited by Arthur P. Mendel (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15

authors call "that single, unconscionable freedom–Free Trade."[64] Under this smoke screen of individual rights "veiled by religious and political illusions," Marx writes that the true effect of free trade has been "naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation."[65] Only the proletariat–the "lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant"-- can lay waste to their oppressors, according to Marx, and the historical significance of such a revolt is in his assertion that it would be the world's first class movement in the interest of the majority. The "slavish existence" created by the bourgeoisie class prevents the immense majority of citizens from owning property, enjoying the privileged hobbies of religion, culture, and politics, and even alienates individuals from their own kin, all on the basis of wage labor. In fact, the bourgeoisie has perpetuated these myths and hobbies as values to be striven for, those which constitute a "false consciousness" of the masses and blind them from their *material* oppression. However, by these very means, the bourgeoisie ironically and ultimately ends up creating "its own gravediggers."[66]

Having claimed to establish this first section of theory as practically self-evident, Marx uses the following sections to catalog a few details and brandish additional arguments against private property. Marx dismisses critics of communism from a religious or philosophical standpoint as "not deserving of serious examination," claiming that since the history of all past society is explained by class antagonism–not religion, philosophy, or any other postulation–one can simply discard these counter-arguments as "bourgeoisie objections to Communism."[67]

To call the *Manifesto* a detailed script for the overthrow of capitalism and the installation of communism would be far from accurate. In fact, the most detailed section of the pamphlet is a ten-point list of priorities for the "most advanced countries" to consider, including the abolition

[64] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 15
[65] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 15
[66] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 23-25
[67] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 32

of all private property, the "centralization of the means of communication and transport," a "heavy progressive or graduated income tax," the equal distribution of labor, and "free education for all children in public schools."[68] These tenets are the preconditions of a society in which class distinction fades and in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."[69]

Marx and Engels proceed to make a few comments on the position of their newfound platform regarding various movements in Europe. They see countries such as contemporary Germany as needing a two-step revolution: a revolution of the bourgeoisie against monarchy, then the "immediately following" revolution of the proletariat against the unchangingly oppressive bourgeoisie.

Marx is explicit about the nature of this type of revolution: the bourgeoisie class justly deserved a violent radicalism that hid no intention of what would be the "forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions" in pursuit of an egalitarian society.[70] "Working men of all countries, unite!" the pamphlet concludes, a rally cry that would eventually ignite the major global superpowers toward or against communistic society.

Thus, Marx penned not an invention of communism, but a short, spirited, and foreboding response to the societal angst and economic hardship gripping Europe. Before turning to Marxism's appropriation in American culture, I want to briefly refasten Marx, Engels, and the *Manifesto* to their own time period–one that often gets lost in anticommunism's mayhem.

Contemporary Voices on Economic Hardship

[68] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 33
[69] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 33
[70] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* 43

One case study of Marx and Engels's time period that sheds light on contemporary sentiment is that of the city of Manchester, England. Economist George R. Boyer chronicles some of the contemporary opinions on the industrial city, and links Marx and Engels's understanding of material exploitation to their knowledge of workers' abuses in places like Manchester. The "hungry 40s" caught the attention of novelists and statesmen alike. Tocqueville wrote of Manchester as the place where "civilised man is turned back almost into a savage" and behaved in a "brutish" manner. Charles Dickens, known for his harsh literary critiques of industrial England, wrote of Manchester that "what I have seen has disgusted and astonished me beyond all measure."[71] Dickens's novels such as *Oliver Twist, A Tale of Two Cities, A Christmas Carol, Great Expectations,* and others resound with thematic elements of poverty, abuse of workers, horrific tales of child labor, orphanization, and more. His *Hard Times* novel even pays a specific sort of homage to Manchester's poor conditions, as the mythical "Coketown" resembles one neighborhood in the city. These are just a few of the contemporary voices reacting against the harsh standards of living in industrial England.

Improvements in machinery led to the rise of factory work and, as Boyer writes, "huge numbers of agricultural laborers and Irishmen migrated in search of employment" in emergent manufacturing towns such as Manchester and Birmingham.[72] Engels, the son of a Manchester cotton mill owner himself, particularly contributed to the duo's empirical basis for their frustrated text. Living conditions in these cities were unhealthy and untenable, and the actual work of the factory workers was often highly dangerous both in practice and in its long-term effect on workers. Engels claimed that in Manchester alone, 1 in every 30.8 residents died every year, a rate dramatically higher than other major cities in England.[73] Manchester acted therefore

[71] George R. Boyer, "The Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto" (The Journal of Economic Perspectives 12, no. 4 (1998): 151–174), 158
[72] George R. Boyer, "The Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto," 155
[73] George R. Boyer, "The Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto," 155

not just ground zero for Marx and Engels's description of the working class as exploited and enslaved, but physical indication that it was economic conflict that caused class divide, and moral justification for the rise of the proletariat and the violent overthrow of a pitiless ruling class that saw places like Manchester as the breeding ground of capital enrichment.

Conclusion

The goal of this opening chapter was to lay a foundation for conceptions of not just communism that will provide an underpinning to the later movement of anticommunism. Marx did not render the world a new ideology, but an apologia for an ancient sentiment that resounded with his time and place in 19th century Western Europe. A non-exhaustive analysis of the inklings of communistic thought trace back to the Old Testament, the early church, Plato, and other Greek and Roman philosophers. Communism also appears in various monastic communities and anti-Catholic movements of later centuries, and revolts materialize at the inspiration of utopian influencers in France and elsewhere.

Thus, with Hegel as the most recent contributor to the storied tradition of German philosophy, Karl Marx grew up and inherited the intellectual tradition of his predecessors. Marx accepted a dialectic understanding of history but replaced idealism with materialism, determining that economic hardships catalyzed the alienation of the individual from their "true self." Marx grew to loathe the passive practice of German philosophy, opting instead to endorse the revolution of the proletariat against those whom he claimed facilitated this economic hardship for their own material means. The *Communist Manifesto* is indeed one of his shortest works, with longer and more robust defenses of communism, atheism, and other ideas laid out in texts such as *Das Kapital* and *The German Ideology,* both of which were incomplete or unpublished at

the time of his death in 1883. Impoverished and reliant on cash payments from Engels, Karl Marx died a well- known figure, but nowhere near his posthumous spotlight. In the decades following his death, socialist and communist parties in Europe grew to mainstream influence by adopting his platform. Having communicated in his own words the tenets of and rationale for what has been an ancient political and economic sentiment, Marx translated into his own terms what would soon be adopted and attempted in various forms on nearly every continent and thus renders him perhaps the chief messenger of the last two centuries of progressive thought. Turning to Marxism's influence on America now leads to the 20th century and demands an analysis of its appropriation and reception by American culture.

Chapter 2: Marxism's Appropriation in Post-World War II America

Introduction

This portion of my research examines the anticommunist American climate of the Red Scares (1920s–1960s) and its relationship to Marxism in order to show the efforts of governmental and cultural forces to define, castigate, and eliminate the perceived enemy of Marxism. Examining how anti-Marxist language wore the moral clothing of patriotism and piety in the United States government and in both the liberal and conservative Protestant social classes unveils a concerted effort on multiple fronts to translate Marxism into a tangibly evil public opponent. Pastors, politicians, and other influential figures have long relied on an amalgamated definition of Marxism, communism, and socialism that resulted in the presentation of a monolithic enemy to American identity. Slogans such as "In God We Trust," which emerged from the anticommunist agenda within the government, demonstrate political tactics engaged in support of this effort. Messages from American pulpits and theologies also acted as a catalyst for public religious resistance to Marxism, and Protestants of all political denominations, liberal or conservative, could agree that anticommunism was a central tenet of protecting the faith.For example, conservative Protestant Billy Graham, who characterized himself as peddling a theology far outside the realm of politics, became intensely involved in the fight against communism by defining it as "Satan's religion" and calling for its eradication. Thus, the core strategy of anticommunism was simplifying and maligning Marxism using ideals abhorred by the American social and political hegemony. Exploring these avenues of public influence highlights the interconnected effort of the nominally discrete structures of church and state in maintaining a simultaneously Christian and American identity in and throughout mainline Protestantism.

Marxism, socialism, and communism have long been lumped together in the American psyche and processed as one malicious, catch-all villain to the anticommunist. Stephen A. Smith argues that "historians tend to treat the history of communism separately from the history of anticommunism, yet the two were dialectically connected, especially after 1945."[74] In this analysis, I will show how scholars, pastors, theologians, politicians, and other prominent leaders told the story of post-World War II perceptions of Marxism, socialism, and communism both in American politics and academia as well as American culture and art, particularly in the "Red Scare" era of the 1950s and into the 1960s, and thus confirm Smith's assertion.

Context and Disagreement

Before delving directly into the heart of the Red Scares and their political and religious implications, it is imperative to set the stage for the dynamic between the cultural and political with some brief examples in American history. For example, in his 2018 book entitled *Christian: the Politics of a Word in America,* Matthew Bowman explores the convoluted and complex notion of what it means to identify as a Christian in America, with respect to society, culture, and public policy. Bowman argues that while the white Protestant has often seen Christian identity as synchronous with Western civilization, other groups identifying as Christian diverge from this norm and view their faith as integral to entirely different systems of society and government. Through presenting a chronological series of case studies overtly placing Christianity as the cause of highly diverse public policy efforts, Bowman shows readers not only the religious diversity embedded within American Christianity, but also the "centrality" of Christianity to the American government.[75]

[74] Stephen A. Smith, "Toward a Global History of Communism" (*The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15
[75] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), 30

Bowman employs a case-by-case examination of historical events in America, offering a microcosm of the ways in which Christianity interacted with the state and a look into the psychology of self-definition and nation building. In short, Bowman contends that throughout American history, religion and political activism tangibly influence each other. For example, in his opening case study entitled "Reconstruction and the Shape of an Argument," Bowman cites personal details of historical characters like 19th century women's rights activist Victoria Woodhull, in order to demonstrate the way her Christian identity defined her political goals and unconsciously shaped her motivations. He also placed Woodhull in the broader conversation of feminist movements, the 1872 election, and the larger perceived threat her counter-cultural Christianity posed to the status quo of Christian politics. In this way, Bowman offers creative insights into characters that aligns the anecdotal and the mundane with the macro-environment of America.[76]

Within the case studies, Bowman draws on tensions between groups with competing interests to articulate the underlying theme of the book: that the idea of being Christian is inherently ambiguous, complex, and fraught with internal tension. Bowman narrates the emergence of African American Christianity in the wake of the Civil War and white responses to it. Conversations about how to achieve social good and how materialism threatened these efforts often differed between white and black communities, yet both communities harnessed the banner of Christianity as their highest defense. Northern white Protestants agreed that the South needed wholesale religious reform, but their main concern with materialism was often how it affected women and the piety of their communities.[77] Black Christian communities responded by showing how materialism had corrupted white churches that had "championed the cause of the Negro but

[76] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 30
[77] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 30

are today working indirectly to promote racial distinctions…".[78] Bowman uses these narratives to show how disparate groups in post-war America grappled with "the meaning of Christianity itself" and how it informed their morality, politics, and social life.[79]

Bowman furthers the notion of Christian identity as the underpinning of vastly different notions of government and civilization. Two of his case studies are devoted to illustrating the tension between those who considered Western civilization Christian and those who did not. Bowman claims that on one hand, Americans were concerned that an evermore materialist Protestantism might bring about its own doom should its enablers find legitimacy.[80] Thus, Western civilization and its inextricable link to Christainty found its way into the classroom, media, entertainment, and public life. But many argued--particularly in the rising black intellectual community--that Western civilization had already defected to materialism. Since the onset of slavery in America, a number of Howard University faculty argued in the early 1900s, "Christians in America forgot the religion of brotherhood," and the notion of Protestant democracy ultimately represented the "basest betrayal of what Christianity stood for."[81]

Battles for defining Christian identity and its implications for America continue in each of Bowman's case studies. In his case entitled "The Anxiety of Christian Anticommunism," Protestants united under one "Christian" banner to ward off the "irreligious, tyrannical 'East.'"[82] This Christian fight against materialism manifested in numerous acts of "public piety," such as the "In God We Trust" motto and the addition of "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance as resolute responses to anti-religious sentiment embedded in communist doctrine.[83] Bowman argues that the maintenance of democracy, capitalism, individualism, and religiosity all

[78] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 31
[79] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 50
[80] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 79
[81] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 79
[82] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 109
[83] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America,* 109

effectively constituted the dominance of a pious, divinely ordained national identity. Thus, even while individual religious commitment began to decrease, Bowman argues that the comforting label of Christianity offered a social, economic, and political antidote to the dark forces of materialism and immorality across the globe.[84]

Bowman's case studies continue to trace the 20th century, touching concepts of global Christianity, the "Moral Majority," and ultimately culminating with the election of Donald Trump, in which a reinvigorated sense of white, Christian nationalism rallied against the secularity of the progressive left. Bowman brings together diverse opinions on the definition of Christianity and its political implications into a coagulated and cogent narrative about the tussle for Christian identity in America. [85]

Bowman's work contributes significantly to understanding the evolution and complexity of cultural and political messaging on Christianity: that Christian identity was inextricably linked to some form of political standing and conviction. Finding these historical links and their precedents helps Bowman connect the diverse eras, ideologies, and movements of American history with the ever-present and ever-moving needle of Christian identity. Bowman's work offers a caveat to this entire endeavor of examining communism through the lens of religious objection: that Christianity remains largely unclaimed and undefined by any one person or singular group, and that its history in relation to politics is not monolithic. Given his numerous examples in support of that argument and the scope of this research, my paper will focus particularly on that sect of Christian identity that influenced and was influenced by the state in support of an anticommunist agenda–in specific, mainline Protestants. Thus, an analysis of 20th

[84] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 110
[85] Matthew Bowman, *Christian: The Politics of a Word in America*, 111

century anticommunism and its tie to the political, religious, and cultural status quo also brings with it the complexity of context, diversity, and evolving senses of identity.

Anticommunism in Politics and Academia

It is worth noting that Karl Marx (1818-1883), author of *The Communist Manifesto,* had opponents who emerged as early as he did, implying that the shelf life of anti-Marxism begins roughly a century in advance of post-World War II America. Anticommunism as an American political movement gained traction in the beginning of the 20th century in an episode dubbed the "First Red Scare." The Red Scares were concerted efforts by politicians in the American government to crush communist sentiment. Erica J. Ryan describes the first of these Scares as originating from poor working conditions and the struggle to turn a once-agrarian society into an industrial one in the devastating wake of World War I.[86] The tension of change in the economic and working status of many Americans triggered upheaval in unions and strikes in the workplace.[87] Ryan describes escalating threats and occasional violence from self-named socialists which presented an ever-growing threat to a simultaneously emerging focus on creating "Americanism" as an identity in response to the growing phenomenon of "radicalism."[88] And thus, the Red Scares began. Directly from Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's office came orders to arrest anyone suspected of "seditious" activities, to raid the offices of teachers, and to investigate "radicalism" anywhere: police carried out thousands of arrests and deported hundreds of immigrants deemed dangerous.[89] They targeted "those who were not [just] communists but rather socialists or liberals," lumping together ideologies into a common enemy, posits Jonathan

[86] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism: The Red Scare and the Framing of Postwar American Culture." In *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare* (Temple University Press, 2015), 17-46.
[87] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism"
[88] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism"
[89] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism"

Michaels in his work *The Origins of Red Scare Anti-Communism*.[90] In fact, fully institutionalizing the pursuit of eradicating communism, the main logistical underpinning to investigations in the following decades was a four volume report entitled *Revolutionary Radicalism,* released by the ad-hoc Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities. This 4000+ page document chronicled the Committee's modus operandi in spotting cultural and political radicals, rooting them out, and establishing supplementary "Americanization" programs for cultural indoctrination.[91] [92] Ryan explains that this Committee incentivized political action groups, businessmen, and even various tycoons such as J.P. Morgan to compile and report lists of "dangerous American radicals" and their activities.[93] Moreover, this mounting anxiety–the worry of losing power over the status quo–among "mostly native, white, middle-class or elite Protestants" was more than just action against violence or explicit threats.[94] This demographic sought to preserve a status quo lifestyle and did so by "melding their concerns about politics with equally pressing concerns about their culture," which included a reinvigorated antifeminist and self-described "anti-modernist" effort.[95] Thus, the First Red Scare set the stage for more robust development of the civil policing of those considered threats in conjunction with the glorification of Protestant cultural norms and commitment to a patriotic culture.

The Second Red Scare represented a more sophisticated, coordinated attempt at rooting out perceived enemies to Americanism. Fresh off of the second World War, this movement came not just with renewed intensity but added persona: particularly that of Senator Joseph McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover, and their allies. Between the Red Scares came the installation of the House

[90] Jonathan Michaels, *The Realities, Delusions, and Politics Behind the 1950s Red Scare,* (New York, Routledge, 2017), 20
[91] Ryan, "Americanism vs. Bolshevism," 25
[92] New York (state) Legislature, *Revolutionary Radicalism: Its History, Purpose and Tactics with an Exposition and Discussion of the Steps Being Taken and Required to Curb it,* (Albany, J.B. Lion Company, 1920), https://lawcat.berkeley.edu
[93] Ryan, "Americanism vs. Bolshevism," 25
[94] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism," 25
[95] Erica J. Ryan, "Americanism versus Bolshevism," 25

Un-American Activities Committee in 1938, which worked around the clock to investigate and demolish disloyalty. Materially, the Second Red Scare produced much of what the First did–spied on citizens, arrested suspected communists, and threatened worse. But the Second Red Scare was far more calculated and proliferated into many more aspects of American life. University of Toronto associate Professor John Sbardellati writes that J. Edgar Hoover, then the director of the ever-growing Federal Bureau of Investigation, sought out particular Hollywood films and narratives to target.[96] *It's a Wonderful Life,* the heralded Christmas movie about small-town America, drew particular ire from the FBI. Sbardellati describes that the view of the FBI was that this movie "subverted unwitting audiences by encouraging class consciousness," and sought to attack the financial, economic, and social way of life through characters such as the wealthy, selfish Potter and the "everyman" George Bailey.[97] Director Frank Capra accordingly landed on the FBI's "Hollywood 10" list of directors and screenwriters, which would face none other than the House Un-American Activities Committee for questioning.[98] This type of search-and-destroy method of policing the film and entertainment industry originated in the mid-1940s and continued well through the 1950s. Thus, the state began not just to police rioting "radicals" as in the First Red Scare, but also began to seek control over the most influential cultural outputs shaping American dialogue as World War II came to a close and the 1950s began.

Other changes came with the Second Red Scare as well. In his book *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century,* Gary Gerstle traces shifts in anticommunist sentiment from the Red Scare of 1919-20 to the Red Scare of the 1950s. Gerstle argues that another major shift in anticommunist policy between the Red Scares was that politicians no longer focused on

[96] John Sbardellati, *J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies: The FBI and the Origins of Hollywood's Cold War,* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2012), 2, JSTOR Books EBA Pilot
[97] Sbardellati, *J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies,* 2
[98] Sbardellati, *J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies,* 2-3

targeting Jewish and Italian minorities, but instead targeted "high-born Anglo-Saxons" as the subject of scrutiny.[99] Gerstle explains that the government no longer went after immigrants and other minority groups because statespeople felt that these groups had developed favorable opinions of Americanism as they integrated; meanwhile privileged, white demographics were lulled to sleep by easy living and thus vulnerable to the supposed poison of Marxist thought.[100]

The lines between political, moral, cultural, and personal further blurred as McCarthy–and McCarthyism–spread in influence. The infamous Joseph McCarthy, a senator from Wisconsin, quickly drew notoriety from his bent for accusing many federal employees and public servants of being communist insiders sent to destroy America from within. While McCarthy kicked off various investigations and spearheaded deep-dives into his colleagues in Washington, he also sought to use culturally appealing language to vilify his opponents. Gerstle cites Joseph McCarthy's effort to construct ideals of American masculinity and morality as both institutional and personal conquests by politicians to maintain relative homogeneity in American mainline Protestantism, arguing that McCarthy ventured into the realm of launching homophobic attacks on the communist "sexual perverts" and "sexual offenders" whose debasement was ruining the moral fiber of America.[101] McCarthy sought to match his concept of effeminate with his concept of immoral and position himself as an antidote to both, Gerstle says, as he often spoke in a loud, deep voice, consumed heavy amounts of alcohol, and relished attacking the "masculinity" of those in his crosshairs.[102] James Zeigler compliments Gerstle's writing by asserting that others in the political realm felt strongly that not only was communism an immoral system, but also a psychological ailment. In his book *Red Scare Racism and Cold War Black*

[99] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century,* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017), 238-67, JSTOR Books EBA Pilot
[100] Gerstle, *American Crucible,* 240
[101] Gerstle, *American Crucible* 242
[102] Gerstle, *American Crucible* 242

Radicalism, he diverges from the idea that McCarthyism or pious patriotism was the only antidote to communism in the mid 20th century. Instead, he cites the viewpoint of Arthur Schlesinger, senior advisor to President John F. Kennedy and Nobel Prize winner, who believed that communists received "social, intellectual, and even sexual fulfillment" in the community of their belief system.[103] To Zeigler and Gerstle, sexuality considered deviant was traceable also to malicious political activity, further conglomerating, simplifying, and amalgamating this public opponent to mainline Protestant patriots.

The academy did not go unscrutinized in either Red Scare. Many American universities felt strongly that their departments must be rid of any ideological viruses, writes Don E. Carlton. By 1935, he writes, professors were "frequent objects of legislative investigation and harassment" in his home state of Texas.[104] Administrators that defended professors' right to free speech in the classroom were confronted and even ousted. At every level of government, state and federal politicians sought out academics and intellectuals who propagated ideas that could at all expose them as "Reds."

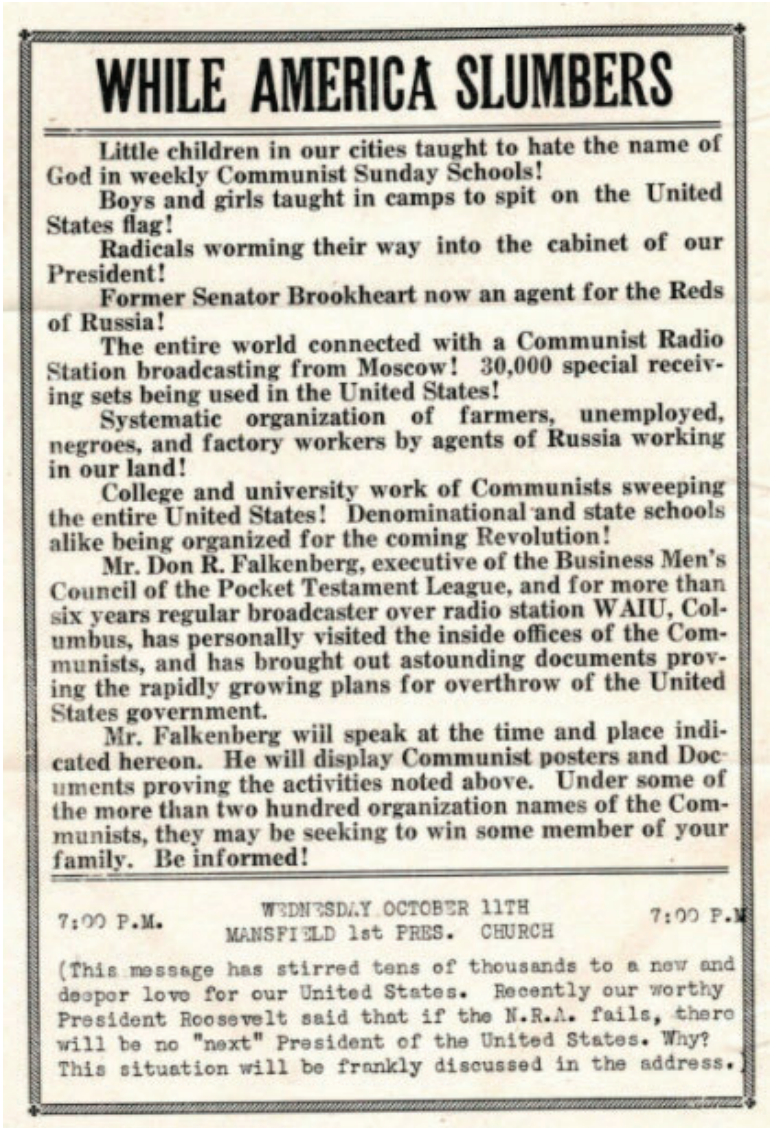
Anticommunism in Religion

Drawing a stark line between communism's cultural receptance and its political receptance poses an impossible task because the variables at play are inextricably linked and interconnected. However, a few authors offered specific analyses of non-politicians and non-academics whose work and opinions contributed to the fight against the perceived Reds. Shifting to the cultural front against communism reveals not just the language engaged in

[103] James Zeigler, *Red Scare Racism and Cold War Black Radicalism*, (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 27-28
[104] Don Carleton, *Red Scare: Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014), 156, Ebook Central Academic Complete

religious and social circles against communism, but also the effects of government authority in creating this sentiment among Protestants.

Other religious leaders had promulgated anticommunist discourse and framed communism as an enemy to their faith's existence, their country's existence, and their families' well being even before figures such as Billy Graham. The image below (see fig. 1) shows a poster hung by the Pocket Testament League advertising a meeting to discuss the existential threat of communism in 1933:



WHILE AMERICA SLUMBERS

Little children in our cities taught to hate the name of God in weekly Communist Sunday Schools!

Boys and girls taught in camps to spit on the United States flag!

Radicals worming their way into the cabinet of our President!

Former Senator Brookheart now an agent for the Reds of Russia!

The entire world connected with a Communist Radio Station broadcasting from Moscow! 30,000 special receiving sets being used in the United States!

Systematic organization of farmers, unemployed, negroes, and factory workers by agents of Russia working in our land!

College and university work of Communists sweeping the entire United States! Denominational and state schools alike being organized for the coming Revolution!

Mr. Don R. Falkenberg, executive of the Business Men's Council of the Pocket Testament League, and for more than six years regular broadcaster over radio station WAIU, Columbus, has personally visited the inside offices of the Communists, and has brought out astounding documents proving the rapidly growing plans for overthrow of the United States government.

Mr. Falkenberg will speak at the time and place indicated hereon. He will display Communist posters and Documents proving the activities noted above. Under some of the more than two hundred organization names of the Communists, they may be seeking to win some member of your family. Be informed!

7:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 11TH 7:00 P.M.
MANSFIELD 1st PRES. CHURCH

(This message has stirred tens of thousands to a new and deeper love for our United States. Recently our worthy President Roosevelt said that if the N.R.A. fails, there will be no "next" President of the United States. Why? This situation will be frankly discussed in the address.)

Figure 1. Meeting notice hung in 1933 to discuss the threat of communism.[105]

The opening line in this flier claims that "little children in our cities [are] taught to hate the name of God in weekly Communist Sunday Schools!", signaling the sound of alarm from the demographic most concerned: mainline evangelical Protestants. The poster goes on to warn readers of the infiltration of Reds into the government, media, and the economy. The poster calls for action and awareness in a nation that "slumbers," and announces a meeting to be held *in a local church*. Just as Bowman wrote, this poster embodies the anxiety felt by Protestants in pursuit of the maintenance of democracy, capitalism, individualism, and religiosity under the banner of the Christian name and the American flag.

As World War II came to a close and the attention of the American psyche turned yet again to the threat of communism, the culture war against communism also resumed. Understanding particularly what emanated from Protestant pulpits in relation to the growing tension reveals, much like the differences between the state-led Red Scares, a new and invigorated movement to eradicate communism and all it implied.

Raymond Haberski Jr. writes on the theological outlook by some of the most prominent pastors regarding the spread of communism in the 1950s, and he finds that not all pastors or theologians were staunch, overt anticommunists. Haberski explains that highly influential intellectual theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr developed nuanced systems of thought that did not entirely mesh with generic anticommunist rhetoric, arguing that Niebuhr wrote in favor of "moral ambiguity" in the Cold War, acknowledging the weaknesses of the West while even less preferring the ideology of the Soviet Union.[106] However, Haberski writes, Niebuhr's work was not consumed by the largest swaths of evangelical protestants. As Niebuhr's "affirmational

[105] "Anti-Communist Leaflet Business Men's Council Pocket Testament League," 1933, Image accessed on ebay.com
[106] Richard Haberski Jr, *God and War: American Civil Religion since 1945,* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2012), 83, JSTOR Books EBA Pilot

counterpart," Billy Graham took Neibuhr's intellectual propositions and spun them into a consumable, attractive selling point to his much larger audience, preaching the Cold War as a "manichean" battle of good versus evil.[107] Thus, Haberski shows, there lay an inherent mismatch between the theologies of some in the academy and those who propagated consumable faith to millions of enthusiastic believers.

The following contains an excerpt of an article written by Billy Graham (1918-2018) in the August 1954 edition of *The American Mercury.* Born in North Carolina, Graham grew up attending church and writes that he underwent a conversion experience at the age of 16. While attending Bible school a few years later, Graham began to preach to local churches and grow in notoriety. Graham held positions in academia, churches, and media for several years, before beginning his signature revival-style tours, first throughout the United States, and later globally. As Graham's persona grew immensely, so did the impact of his opinions on religion, politics, race, sexuality, and entertainment, and while Graham often tried to present himself as an apolitical character, his outspoken views on hot-button issues such as abortion, segregation, the Cold War, and sexuality gained both tremendous traction and criticism across the political spectrum. He is widely considered one of the most influential figures of the last century.

The American Mercury was a magazine publication running from 1924 to 1981. The magazine later went out of business after controversy surrounding its endorsement and publication of antisemetic authors, but Graham published this in a time when the magazine had primarily a protestant Christian audience in the early 1950s, and Graham wrote with the context of the ongoing Cold War and cultural/political battle against Marxism in mind:

> Has it ever occurred to you that the Devil is a religious leader and millions are worshipping at his shrine today? … The name of this present-day religion is Communism… The Devil is their god, Marx their prophet, Lenin their saint and

[107] Richard Haberski Jr, *God and War,* 83

> Malenkov their high priest. Denying their faith in all ideologies, except their religion of revolution, these diabolically-inspired men seek in devious and various ways to convert a peaceful world to their doctrine of death and destruction.[108]

The central tenet of Graham's article is that communism is "Satan's religion." By describing his idea of communism as an evil movement that "is never going to give up or retreat," Graham frames communism as not just an dangerous movement, but as one that supersedes mere politics and requires transcendent, Christian resistance. By characterizing the Devil as the true "god" of communism, Graham writes in order to position Christianity and communism both as religions diametrically opposed. He calls Marx "their prophet," Lenin "their saint," and Malenkov "their high priest," further painting in his readers' minds an illustration that could be easily mapped and easily condemned.[109] Graham further builds out his idea of what a perverted religion constituted by accusing communists of wanting to bring about "death and destruction" to a "peaceful world." Graham continued to contrast his idea of absolute truth and his idea of absolute evil. He wrote to create a villain for his audience that they would see as irredeemably evil, just as Satan is in Christian doctrine.

Billy Graham further identifies the various ways in which he saw communism as having "captured the loyalty" of its adherents.[110] Politically, he writes that the elevation of the state replaces the "God-given" worth of the individual.[111] Economically, he loathes the "replacement of private property" by collective ownership.[112] Socially, he claims that a communist sees marriage purely as a "biological arrangement" rather than a divine one, and that marriage was only allowed for the good of the state.[113] Graham goes on to accuse communists of supporting

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[108] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion", in *The American Mercury,* 1954, https://alphahistory.com/coldwar/billy-graham-communism-satans-religion-1954/
[109] Malenkov was a Soviet statesman and close colleague of Stalin.
[110] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"
[111] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"
[112] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"
[113] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"

"much of the unrest in the world" and being believers in the "big lie."[114] Lastly and most importantly to Graham, he calls those he considered communist "an atheist, a despoiler of churches, a murderer of Christians," his harshest and most violent accusation.[115] Graham sums up the war of ideologies as being the "secular against the spiritual" and a "material manifestation of the larger battle that rages in the hearts of men throughout the earth," thereby grounding his vociferous claims in a moral and spiritual context for his readers with this biblical allusion.[116]

Perhaps Graham's biggest presumption lies in his binary view of good and evil in the world, tying it down to the political and economic arrangements he sees as communism and non-communism (does not explicitly mention capitalism). His values are crystal clear: the maintenance of a Christian-centric state devoted to eradicating ideas he deemed poisonous.

Graham was a primary spokesperson for Protestant Christianity in the United States. For a figure who positioned himself as apolitical, Graham had no shortage of opinions on the matter of communism, but chose instead to frame it as an evil religion of the devil. Graham demonstrates thoroughly the inevitably interconnected nature of the religious and political realms explicitly designed to be so discreet in American life.

Anticommunism's Expanding Definition: Entertainment and Art

Those sharing Graham's sentiment were not just mega-preachers like himself. His popular ideology lived long after the 1950s and closely resembles the political religion of other activist groups focused on more than just faith. As the Cold War's height passed, anticommunists expanded their definitional understanding of communists, atheists, and materialists. John Bracket analyzes how Soviet communists disappeared from obvious relevance, but anticommunists did

[114] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"
[115] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"
[116] Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion"

not, and instead began to seek wholesale cultural reform in the space of music and entertainment. One example of morphing criteria involves the evolution of the "antirock" movement. Brackett analyzes the voices of the antirock movement emerging in the wake of the Cold War and during the rise of many popular artists who grew to fame in the 1960s. This evolving New Christian Right,[117] Brackett writes, became infatuated with opposing "secular humanists doing the work of Satan" who promote all kinds of evil, including the spread of Marxism.[118] Secular humanism showed its teeth especially in popular entertainment, which was both a "symptom and a cause of the moral decline of America" to the New Christian Right, a now sophisticated movement intent on eradicating not just Soviet communists, but *all* threats to its idea of pious patriotism, Brackett argues.[119] Proponents of this movement often took issue with music from bands such as the Beatles, whose frontman John Lennon penned anti-capitalist songs such as "Piggies," "Imagine," and at one point claimed to be of more relevance than Jesus.[120] Christian radio personalities responded to the latter by rallying a destruction campaign of Beatles records by teenagers who considered themselves "God-fearing, patriotic citizens" and attempted to coordinate a public burning of Beatles memorabilia.[121] The other most criticized bands included Led Zeppelin and The Who for their alleged Satanic lyricism and rebellious lifestyle, and Brackett highlights the outright similarities between the line of attacks used to castigate the work of these groups and those of the Red Scares back at the supposed pinnacle of anticommunist political sentiment.

Music was not the only offender of the rule of anticommunism. Sarah Schrank argues that Los Angeles underwent tremendous scrutiny in the days of the Red Scares. Modern art exhibits were constantly under investigation at the will of "Red-hunting politicians," who sought to

[117] NCR refers to an emerging group that is going after all forms of immorality, not just Soviet communism.
[118] John Brackett, "Satan, Subliminals, and Suicide: The Formation and Development of an Antirock Discourse in the United States during the 1980s." *American Music* 36, no. 3 (2018), 271–302, https://doi.org/10.5406/americanmusic.36.3.0271.
[119] Brackett, John. "Satan, Subliminals, and Suicide"
[120] "The Beatles – More Popular than Jesus," Billy Bullshit, March 23, 2008, informative video, https://youtu.be/Wo42684XU9Y
[121] "The Beatles – More Popular than Jesus"

"dislodge" expressionism and other art that grew in popularity during the Depression era.[122] In sum, anticommunism was a holistic endeavor not just applied to governments and economic systems, but also matters of faith, media, and entertainment.

Analysis and Conclusions

This research has sought to highlight, most importantly, the interconnected nature of church and state in upholding the identity of patriotic Protestantism against the perceived foe of communism. Bowen's work demonstrates that suppression of social and political movements has occurred for centuries in the United States, and the tension therein often highlighted religious motivation for political and social causes. Bowman's work also highlights the importance of understanding the political and cultural context of historical figures and the complexity of defining Christian identity in America by using examples from the Civil War era through the election of Donald Trump. His work positions the Red Scares in the center of this evolving timeline and relationship between the cultural and the political.

The Red Scares and the history laid out here highlight, primarily, that a government that often touted the importance of civil liberty quickly turned on this notion for the sake of eradicating perceived threats to the undefined status quo of "Americanism." Erica J. Ryan demonstrates how these Red Scares targeted not just Soviet communism, but "radicalism" and any activities deemed seditious or suspicious. This failure of the state to define its enemies left manual laborers, academics, screenwriters, and other influencers in the crosshairs of the state. Between the nominal Red Scares, the state institutionalized legal action in opposition to its ill-defined civil enemies, such as the HUAC. The FBI, Senate, and Executive branch offered similarly damning characterizations of those who would threaten the assumed norms of

[122] Brian Lloyd, Review of *Art on the Fault Lines*, by Sarah Schrank, in *Reviews in American History* 39, no. 2 (2011): 360-65

American life: namely Protestant Christianity and the "God and country" identity of its adherents. Malignment of perceived Reds ranged in nature from racist, to nativist, to homophobic, to misogynistic, and to other forms of xenophobia.[123]

But this state-led effort to eradicate communism was not just that. It garnered the attention and momentum of some of the most powerful influencers in Protestantism and proliferated throughout social circles over the country. From organizations such as the Pocket Testament League calling forums to discuss the threat of communism to Billy Graham leveling satanist accusations at Marxists, the full force of the church-state complex deployed in an effort to subdue its perceived enemies. And these dual forces–both legislative power and cultural messaging, groomed anticommunism into much more than just policing work strikes or infiltrating labor unions. Hollywood, the Beatles, art exhibitions, and college classrooms were prime targets of government scrutiny, religious criticism, or both. The overlap between state and religious interest in Protestantism was palpable and explicitly sought to uphold a status quo American identity.

These categories of defining and analyzing anticommunism also reveal that categorization is nearly impossible due to the interconnected nature of politics, academia, culture, and media in America. Yet categorizing the apparent differences between anticommunism among religious, political, and other cultural and social circles highlights just how intertwined these efforts were and the ways in which they influenced each other. Both scholarly analysis and primary source comparison show that anticommunism took on many faces and defined communism as that which it stood in opposition to, in many different ways, using various policies, social tactics, and theologies to combat its ambiguous foe and maintain the cultural and political dominance of Protestantism.

[123] Xenophobia primarily used in reference to attacks on so-called atheists or Satanists.

Chapter 3: Enemies Here, There, and Everywhere: Marxism's Worsening Amalgamation

Introduction

"Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness," Boston lawyer Joseph Welch snapped at Joseph McCarthy, "You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency, Sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"[124]

These impassioned words from the nationally televised censure hearing of then-Senator Joseph McCarthy drew millions of viewers in the summer of 1954, and public opinion of a politician so engrossed in the extraction and eradication of his political opponents plummeted as McCarthy scored numerous own-goals on his political aspirations. Rather than revealing the truth about those whom he believed were traitors, McCarthy's career lived–and died–by his devotion to conspiracy and libel.

It is telling that the televised Army–McCarthy hearings drew such moral outrage over the corruption of a politician: historian Robert Griffith notes that after these hearings and the subsequent censure issued on McCarthy, his remaining years on the Senate floor were marked by the inattention of his colleagues to his continued antics. Even as an official of a government with stated opposition to communism, McCarthy's tactics had appeared to cross boundaries that were fundamentally too disturbing to be left unaddressed.

Yet anticommunism has continued and thrived. As discussed in the previous chapter, so ingrained has the moral imperative of anticommunism become that its legacy lives on in its own rite. I presented various cases of this anticommunist effort that sought to uphold a standard of "Americanism" using religious, patriotic, and other conformist appeals to the maintenance of the status quo. From classrooms at University of Texas, to art festivals in California, to sold-out

[124] "Have You No Sense of Decency?" United States Senate (website). www.senate.gov/about/po wers-procedures//investigations/mccarthy-hearings/have-you-no-sense-of-decency.htm.

stadiums fixated on Billy Graham, to radio stations banning the "ungodly" Beatles, anticommunism's reach permeated every corner of American society–and, as I now argue, so it does today.

In the decades that followed the 1950s and 1960s, the emergence of the New Christian Right has upheld many of the traditional tenets of anticommunism, both from the pulpit and in the legislature. I do not intend to go decade by decade in order to simply retell what the reader may already know or find intuitive, but I do wish to render intelligible the relevance of this discourse on contemporary American society. In essence, I will argue that, perhaps due to emergent technological variables such as social media and a 24-hour news cycle, anticommunism's adherents have *further* weaponized polarizing, divisive language in today's politics, religion, and culture. From Karl Marx's time to today, this telephone game of political language bound in moral terms exposes a lineage of language and action aimed at stifling opponents of status quo viewholders. I also argue that the traditionally amalgamated perceptions of Marxism, communism, and socialism have devolved further to include new and recent trending perceived threats such as cultural Marxism, critical theory, critical race theory, and more. As politicians use age-old tactics to define, castigate, and eliminate their opponents, it is increasingly evident that defeating what is political often seems to require the deployment of everything else: morality, religion, and culture.

I first disclose a few of the addendums made important by changes in time and culture, then I move on to discuss the evolution of the enemy of perceived Marxism as no longer being a Soviet enemy, but an internal one. "Marxism" has in effect become a trigger word for an increasing number of other words that are both interchangeable and reprehensible to the anticommunist ideologue. I then discuss how these ideas have proliferated from 1990s pioneers

of contemporary anticommunism, to the rise of Donald Trump, to the re-adoption of this language in the broader political sphere, and finally, how many Protestants have aligned themselves with a patriotism fixated on a past that promises to make America great again.

Differences and Disclaimers

I want to advocate that one should not view contemporary anticommunism as the effort of the vast majority to suppress the vast minority. Indeed, just as someone on the political right will hastily label their anonymous Twitter foe a subversive, destructive communist, someone on the political left may just as well retort with the predicable "nazi!" or "racist!" or "Hitler!" accusation. In fact, a good illustrator of this phenomenon is the now-popularized Godwin's Law, an adage hypothesizing that online discussions revolving around politics grow evermore likely to contain mentions of and comparisons to Hitler or the Holocaust.[125] These grim observations are depressed further by social studies indicating that Americans tend to vastly overestimate the demographics of various minority groups, particularly when they could be seen as a threat.[126] In addition, as I wrote at the outset of this project, I am not interested in engaging in a defense of the actual theories of Marxism, communism, or socialism, but am instead hoping to evaluate the language societies use to rid themselves of perceived threats and examine how that language becomes mainstream in daily life–and what more relevant of a perceived threat has America historically faced than communism?

Neo-Marxism: a Neo-Enemy

[125] John Jewell, "Hailing Hitler: why Godwin's law never gets old," The Conversation 2014, no. 17 Feb (2014)
[126] Taylor Orth, "From Millionaires to Muslims, Small Subgroups of the Population Seem Much Larger to Many Americans" (YouGovAmerica, January 2022). Retrieved from https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2022/03/15/americans-misestimate-small-subgroups-population.

The process of "othering" used today has evolved and matured with the passage of time and the natural undulations of culture. While the anticommunists of the mid-20th century may have concerned themselves with the threat of atheism, degeneracy, and subversion infiltrating America via the Soviet Union, the anticommunist now concerns themself primarily with what they feel is an *American-made* pandemic of ideas uniquely tailored to destroy what was once a flourishing society. This purported plague is often referred to as "Neo-Marxism," "cultural Marxism," or "critical theory."

Self-identified liberal and conservative scholars agree that cultural Marxism largely emerged, in an academic setting, from the German Frankfurt School, an institute associated with Goethe University Frankfurt. The university added the Frankfurt School in 1929 during the days of the Weimar Republic, and it drew a community of philosophers, activists, and political theorists who focused on applying mostly Marxist critiques to various societal and political issues.[127] The institute spread to other parts of Europe and eventually New York City in order to escape the Nazi regime arising in the 1930s. Jerome Jamin writes that cultural Marxism can be viewed in two different ways: as a school of thought to some, and a conspiracy theory to others. As a school of thought he writes that cultural Marxism "considers culture as something that needs to be studied within the system and the social relations through which it is produced, and then carried by the people."[128] Adherents of cultural Marxism and critical theory take few, if any, cultural elements or ideologies as natural or intuitive, but instead "denounce this fake appearance, and stimulate a deep critical analysis of the production of cultures and ideologies within our societies."[129] According to Jamin, this theoretical framework motivates many within academia to take on questions of research as part of a "struggle for a better society" and thus

[127] Jerome Jamin,"Cultural Marxism: A Survey" (Religion Compass, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1111/Rec3.12258.
[128] Jerome Jamin,"Cultural Marxism: A Survey"
[129] Jerome Jamin,"Cultural Marxism: A Survey"

renders them open to accusations of bias, academic dishonesty, and motivated reasoning.[130] Cultural Marxism as critical theory proliferated in influence after the 1930s, and cultural Marxism as a conspiracy theory began to gain traction as recently as the 1990s. Those who subscribe to the notion that cultural Marxism is a conspiracy theory contend that economic principles of Marxism are mappable–in a false and subversive manner–onto cultural principles within society.[131] For example, the economic claim that the bourgeoisie has exploited the proletariat for their own profit could translate in a sense to the cultural claim that Anglo-Saxon Protestants have exploited ethnic and racial minorities, and thus the cultural Marxist can adopt this conspiracy theory to play a sort of trump card to their advantage with any political, sociological, religious, or other relevant issue. Tanner Mirrlees leans on Jamin's research and categorization of cultural Marxism in order to assert that the American Right has made full employment of cultural Marxism as a conspiracy theory in order to "other" its opponents:

> For almost three decades, everyone from paleo-conservatives to neo-Nazis has used the phrase 'cultural Marxism' as a shorthand for an anti-American bogeyman, a symbol for every liberal or left-leaning group the right defined itself against, and an epithet for progressive identities, values, ideas, and practices that reactionaries believe have made America worse than before.[132]

According to Mirrlees, members of the political right lean on the gravity of past perceptions of Marxism–as synonymous with the Soviet communist regime–to sow distrust in the motives of anyone they deemed to be to their political left.

Scholars like Mirrlees and Jamin both trace cultural Marxism to the Frankfurt School and argue that a sort of cultural "anti-Marxism" has emerged in the last few decades. In order to connect these observations to the ongoing telephone game of political "othering," I will build on this background description of the emergence of cultural Marxism to demonstrate its

[130] Jerome Jamin,"Cultural Marxism: A Survey"
[131] Jerome Jamin,"Cultural Marxism: A Survey"
[132] Mirlees, Tanner. "The Alt-Right's Discourse on 'Cultural Marxism': A Political Instrument of Intersectional Hate." *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, and Social Justice* 39, no. 1 (2018), journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/5403.

pervasiveness today. Buried in the texts of some of the leaders of this anticommunist movement beginning in the 1990s is language foundational to the polarity of American dialogue today. In the following section, I will analyze texts from opponents of cultural Marxism and discuss their similarity to older sources such as that of Billy Graham. Finally, I will focus on their similarity to the dialogue of the present moment.

Jamin identifies three primary opponents of cultural Marxism as being responsible for the rise of modern anticommunism: William Lind, a widely published "paleo-conservative" author, Pat Buchanan, a media commentator and politician, and Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian terrorist known for carrying out the 2011 Norway Attacks that left 77 dead.

William S. Lind rose to journalistic prominence as publisher of the *New Electric Railway Journal* in the late 1980s, from which he leveraged his influence to begin writing against cultural Marxism. Lind describes cultural Marxism as consisting of the belief that "Western culture oppresses everyone except white males" and that its objective is "the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion."[133] Scholar Joan Braune argues that Lind's grievances with cultural Marxism "might all seem comical if it were not for [their] power and influence" on the collective American psyche.[134] Indeed, Lind and longtime co-author Paul Weyrich worked to establish a number of now flourishing think tanks and other ideological projects such as the Free Congress Foundation and Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority.[135] Lind's work has had continued influence much past the 1990s as well; in 2015, Lind's novel *Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War* (penned under the pseudonym Thomas Hobbes) describes a fictional–yet eminent–armed conflict between the alleged hegemony of cultural Marxism and a decentralized campaign of Christian militias who seek to take their country back. A particularly grimacing novel scene

[133] Joan Braune, "Who's Afraid of the Frankfurt School? "Cultural Marxism" as an Antisemitic Conspiracy Theory," *Journal of Social Justice* 9 (2019), 4
[134] Joan Braune, "Who's Afraid of the Frankfurt School?" 9
[135] Joan Braune, "Who's Afraid of the Frankfurt School?" 10

outlines a vision in which the "entire faculty of Dartmouth University are massacred" due to their alignment with cultural Marxism.[136] Shortly after this publication was released, Lind met with then presidential candidate Donald Trump and gifted the campaign copies of another of his publications on restoring order to a subverted nation.

A 2007 publication by Lind entitled "Who Stole Our Culture" tightly sums up the potency of modern anticommunist language. The short document–ironically resembling somewhat of a manifesto–offers a highly narrative run-down of what Lind considers the grim recent trajectory of American life, then offers several prescriptions for this ailment.

> Sometime during the last half-century, someone stole our culture. [I]n the 1950s, America was a great place. It was safe. It was decent. Children got good educations in the public schools. Even blue-collar fathers brought home middle-class incomes, so moms could stay home with the kids. Television shows reflected sound, traditional values.[137]

Lind here spells out a clear vision of America's past that embodied widespread happiness among citizens, where Christian values dominated the civic sphere and entertainment posed no threat to Americanism. Lind's telling of the very time period of McCarthyism and the Red Scares directly contradicts his ideological allies' anticommunist message of those very times. As I noted in the previous chapter, politicians and pastors echoed this exact tactic of invoking new and unprecedented entrants to the American political landscape as just cause for a *bona ira*–righteous anger–overthrow of these so-called communists. Moreover, Lind's description of cultural Marxists "deliberate agenda" follows this hagiographical opener of America's past. The agenda of Soviet communist infiltration is no more, Lind claims, but now a "new cultural Marxism has become the ruling ideology of America's elites."[138] Lind's history of Marxist influence follows these rough boundaries: first, Marxism failed to unite the working class of Europe, and instead

[136] Joan Braune, "Who's Afraid of the Frankfurt School?" 13
[137] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?" In *The Culture-wise Family: Upholding Christian Values in a Mass Media World* (Ada: Baker Publishing Group, 2007)
[138] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?"

destroyed them. Then, as Marxists wondered why their economic theories had failed, they turned to embrace a cultural remix of their original principles in the hopes of reverse-engineering their economic ideals. The primary goal of these principles was to destroy Christianity, Lind continues. This could most effectively take place through sexual indoctrination, which necessitated the total dominance of Hollywood and the university, something Lind decides has been "all too successful" thanks to the influence of the Frankfurt School.[139] The enduring success of this movement, according to Lind, "now wages a ceaseless war" from which "most of America's traditional culture lies in ruins."[140]

Lind finds futile the idea of attempting to "retake the existing institutions" from cultural Marxism–an apparent break from his novel's fantasy. Instead, Lind's prescription for this catastrophe borrows directly from the playbook of his imagined opponents:

> Thus, our strategy for undoing what cultural Marxism has done to America has a certain parallel to its own strategy, as Gramsci laid it out so long ago. Gramsci called for Marxists to undertake a "long march through the institutions." Our counter-strategy would be a long march to create our own institutions. It will not happen quickly, or easily. It will be the work of generations – as was theirs. They were patient, because they knew the "inevitable forces of history" were on their side. Can we not be equally patient, and persevering, knowing that the Maker of history is on ours?[141]

Lind's denouncement of cultural Marxism as destructive of a "good old days" society profoundly resonates in the modern marketing brand of what is now not necessarily the church-state alliance of the mid-twentieth spelled out in the 1950s and 60s, but rather a new and reinvented narrative of anti-cultural Marxism that requires the very strategy to fight it that its adherents have used to spread it. Lind's denouncement of cultural Marxism adds another dimension to this imperative as well: the well-informed anti-cultural Marxist cannot hope to cross political divides and retake institutions lost to the opponent. Instead, Lind's vision of retaking control of the American civic

[139] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?"
[140] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?"
[141] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?"

psyche requires the patriot to retreat from spoiled institutions and attempt to reestablish the 1950s elsewhere. Lind particularly applauds those who "secede" from the corruption of culture, praising those who have withdrawn their children from educational institutions, set up farm-based communities, and pursued homeschooling models.[142] In closing, Lind sardonically alludes to the dialectical nature of Marxist theory as involving "inevitable historical forces" and instead promises followers comfort in the knowledge that God's–not history's–blessing is sure to prosper those who follow Lind.

Lind's contrarian theory offers an excellent backdrop for understanding the language equipped by contemporary voices with far greater reach than his own. Politicians and pastors frequently engage in this "lost cause" style of thinking in order to goad voters and congregants into the uncomfortable psychological feeling of victimhood. In essence, Lind's method of success involves not just "othering" the cultural Marxist but also a strategic "self-othering" of his own tribe in order to prompt action. The repeated theme of magnifying ideology as an existential villain logically means that opposition to it is justified and out of self-defense.

I want to show that Lind's ideas accurately exemplify what has now taken root as a guiding principle in contemporary political rhetoric and theology, and recent political cycles have demonstrated a full-bodied embrace of this messaging. With instant access to widely viewed social media sites and sound bytes that superenthrone narrative messaging over substantive engagement, the language of the anticommunism movement not only lingers after the Red Scares, but is arguably more robust and developed than ever before.

Politicians

[142] William S. Lind, "Who Stole Our Culture?"

A politician needs not the FBI or other secret investigation to try to purge America of opponents, and pastors need only rely on familiar theology to propagate a supporting message. The perceived threat of cultural Marxism has permeated the current political landscape, and politicians often seek to condition their electorates to respond in kind.

The 2016 election began to bear the fruits of contemporary anticommunism's seed, but anticommunism's popularity in the years following have reached a fever pitch. Accusations of radicalism, anti-Americanism, and socialism or communism clog the civic sphere. These accusations each underpin a party platform component as well–if one opposes building the border wall, perhaps they do not care about America. If one doubts the merit of an immigration ban on Muslims, perhaps they too root for the further demise of the glorified mid-twentieth century and loath Christianity. In this section, I will pull speech from political figures as evidence of a psychological push to inflate the enemy of all things Marxism–and therefore evil–in the minds of American voters.

Most of President Trump's remarks on communism and socialism came packaged in opposition against then-candidate Senator Bernie Sanders. The following is a transcript of an October 2015 campaign event in which President Trump commented on the ongoing Democratic debates:

> But I watched last night as Hillary and Bernie Sanders–they just couldn't give things away fast enough–and they're giving them to illegal immigrants. They want healthcare for illegal immigrants, they want driver's licenses for illegal immigrants….the poor woman [Clinton] has gotta give everything away 'cause this maniac that was standing on her right is giving everything away so she's following…this socialist-slash-communist, okay, nobody wants to say it…this guy, he's gonna tax you people at 90%. He's gonna take everything, and nobody's heard the term communist, but you know what, I call him a socialist-slash-communist, you know what, because that's what he is [loud applause].[143]

In a May 2018 political rally, he issued the following remarks referring to Sanders:

[143] Donald Trump, "Trump Calls Sanders a Maniac Following Debate" (Associated Press, October 15, 2015, 1:32, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENwpdgPMdMk)

> "I'd love to run against her [Hillary]. I'd also love to run against a communist [referring to Sanders]. It's true. I never thought we'd see the day in our country when a communist, because that's really, when you think about it, when a communist is the leading Democrat–we're gonna have a communist against an entrepreneur–I like the entrepreneur, don't you think [applause]?"[144]

The rhetoric here engages exactly in the age-old tactic seen so many times throughout the course of this research, wherein conceptions of socialism, communism, and any other expedient terms are lumped together to describe a "maniac" opponent in question. Contemporary rhetorical play-calling looks something like the following: amalgamate the definition, level the charge, relish in the applause.

President Trump's second campaign incorporated these tactics more frequently–and more deliberately, rallying voters against a version of Joe Biden rendering him as a malignant, aspiring dictator. At the 2020 Republican National Convention, Donald Trump Jr. took the stage to issue a quintessential contemporary version of anticommunist rhetoric:

> Except, there's a difference this time. In the past, both parties believed in the goodness of America…this time, the other party is attacking the very principles on which our nation was founded: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the rule of law.[145]

The transcript of Trump Jr.'s speech could be taken straight from the playbook of William Lind. Beginning with the invocation of the "good times," ironically the very era in which his ideological predecessors also feared an imminent communist takeover, the speaker goes on to build on the thesis that the American way of life is under attack:

> Imagine a world where the evils of communism and radical Islamic terrorism are not given the chance to spread, where heroes are celebrated and the good guys win. You can have it. That is the life, that is the country, that is the world that Donald Trump and the Republican party are after, and yes, you can have it…it starts by rejecting radicals who

[144] Donald Trump, "I'd love to run against that communist Sanders" (Daily Mail, March 15, 2018, 1:29, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCMgbkrIxkE)

[145] Donald Trump, Jr., "WATCH: Donald Trump Jr.'s full speech at the Republican National Convention | 2020 RNC Night 1" (Associated Press, August 24, 2020, 10:25, https://ww w.youtube.com/watch?v=LDEkjuZenLU&t=1s)

> want to drag us into the dark and embracing the man who represents a bright and beautiful future for all.[146]

It seems too that the pressing talking points of the party make a good addition to the prime moral imperative of anticommunist: at the time of the speech, stoking fears of "radical Islamic terrorism" appear to be an expedient supplement to this rhetorical concoction. Moreover, this rhetoric has resulted in a sort of downstream multiplier, as both seasoned politicians and a new wave of elected officials have resorted to conducting media appearances and campaign events centered around invoking the same language, such as the quips of Senator Graham and Representatives Greene and Cawthorne I laid out in my introductory remarks.

Politicians also now increasingly indulge the even broader narrative of anticommunism that includes cultural Marxism, critical theory, critical race theory (often signaled by using the term "woke," I found). While recent controversy over critical race theory and education would be entirely outside the scope of this project, the *language* used in some of the conversations around it has now roped in more and more terms to further build up the opponent of perceived communism, while further tearing down the fundamental meaning behind the language itself. Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida recently leveled a speech at "cultural Marxism" while promoting the "STOP Woke Act" aimed at restricting teaching methods deemed dangerous in schools:

> Now with the rise of this [*in air quotes*] 'woke' ideology, it is an attempt to really delegitmize our history and delegitimize our institutions. And I view the wokeness as a form of cultural Marxism [applause]. They want to tear [*sic*], it's not just people saying 'they're leftists or socialists,' it's not just taxes and all that–yeah, they do want that and that's not good–but they really want to tear at the fabric of our society and our culture….and so we have a responsibility to stand for truth and for what's right…but we also have to protect people and protect our kids from some very pernicious ideologies that are being forced on them all over this country.[147]

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[146] Donald Trump, Jr., "WATCH: Donald Trump Jr.'s full speech at the Republican National Convention"
[147] Ron DeSantis, "'Cultural Marxism': DeSantis Tears Into 'Wokeness' And Critical Race Theory" (The Hill, 3:42, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mnk8vd5-WY&t=26s)

Here DeSantis explicitly abandons pursuing any economic critique of what he views as Marxism, instead opting to chase instead after the cultural elements of this ideological villain. It appears that to engage in any face-on critique of tax economics under Marxism, bad as they may be, constitutes a boring enterprise compared with the more abstract and foreboding notion of Marxism as a sort of ethereal, demonic force. Indeed, even at the first mention of the term "cultural Marxism," the crowd immediately erupts in applause as if it were anxiously waiting to finally hear its nemesis called out.

Protestants and Protestant Leaders

Protestant leaders, with the support of politicians, have taken up the mantle of upkeeping "Americanism" from the pulpit as well. Many of the cases I examined did not show well-known pastors specifically alluding to Marx, but all of them contained some form of identity maintenance centered around a moral imperative of patriotism. And, as established, some notions of Americanism root themselves in a political, cultural, and religious history that makes little room for new entrants. It is intuitive, therefore, that messages of patriotism and piety do not grant space for what could be considered cultural Marxism or any of the other myriad terms now attached to Marx.

That Christianity has major political support is hardly controversial–but the linguistic framing within dialogues from the pulpit or from politicians about Christianity are highly telling when examining this process of magnifying and "othering" the opponents of one's ideology. President Trump frequently employed the "othering" branding to refer to the purportedly anti-God "radicals" ready to pounce on Christians and their faith. In 2016, he offered the following solace to Liberty University students worried about their religious freedom: "We're

going to protect Christianity, and I can say that. I don't have to be politically correct," later adding, "Two Corinthians 3:17, that's the whole ballgame, right? Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[148] A few months later, he delivered the message that "There is an assault on everything having to do Christianity" and vowed to fight it.[149] In an event at a Detroit church, President Trump took a similar route of invoking God to save the nation from political opposition, saying, "Now, in these hard times for our country, let us turn again to our Christian heritage to lift up the soul of our nation."[150]

Many churches have responded in kind. One example is the "Patriot Network," an alliance of various evangelical congregations from Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. These self-described "Patriot Churches" merged into this network due to the following conviction, found in their collective mission statement:

> Our country is under attack by demonic principalities and powers. They are destroying the very cultural and religious fabric that makes the USA so special. Their evil agenda is cloaked in phrases such as, "end racism," "redistribute wealth to the disadvantaged," and "open borders." Their outright Marxist propaganda bombards us daily. Many Christians listen to cable news and no longer recognize lies from truth. The Bible tells us, in the latter days, good and evil will be confused. Those days are here, and God wants us to resist tyranny wherever it exists.[151]

The Patriot Network accurately captures the essence of contemporary anticommunism in this statement, decrying the "evil agenda" behind the "outright Marxist propaganda" of perceived threats to the "cultural and religious fabric" of America. This present day iteration of alleged Marxism is *so* evil, the statement argues, that it has triggered the eschaton they believe the Bible foretells. The statement progresses to praise pastors who fought in the American Revolution and

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[148] Melanie Arter, "Donald Trump: 'We're going to protect Christianity'" (https://www.cnnews.com/news/article/melanie-hunter/donald-trump-were-going-protect-christianity)
[149] Leah Klett, Quote from Donald Trump in 2016 (https://www.nairaland.com/2555335/donald-trump-condemns-great-assault)
[150] Politico Staff, "Donald Trump addresses African-American congregation in Detroit" (2016, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/donald-trump-detroit-transcript-227713)
[151] Patriot Church, "What is this movement about?" Excerpt from mission statement (2021-22, https://patriotchurch.us/patriot-network)

urges members to summon a peaceful brand of that same courage in contemporary America.[152] On display again is the repeated tactic of labeling opponents as existential threats to the current way of life, creating a shared sense of minoritization based on this threat, and provoking a moral, religious outrage at the pure evil of political opposition's perceived existence.

Another example is First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, which boasts one of the largest (and wealthiest) congregations in the United States under the pastorship of Dr. Robert Jeffress. Jeffress, President Trump's personal faith advisor during the oval office years, has been an outspoken advocate for Christian patriotism and opponent of those to his political left. Jeffress's widely circulated sermons on Trump revolve around the presidency being imbued with a "God-given" responsibility to maintain American values.[153] These American values are what the Make America Great Again idea seems to imply in the usage of the word "again": a return to a supposedly lost era in which Christianity thrived with a more homogenous following, and a fight against new entrants that Jeffress believes the prophet Daniel foretold specifically about America in the eponymous apocalyptic Old Testament text. Issues of Trump's personal religiosity, to Jeffress, are irrelevant because, hearkening upon a common theme, his available replacements were *that much worse* than Trump was.[154] Jeffress's insistence on Protestant support for Trump ultimately culminated in his church choir and orchestra composing and conducting an anthem entitled "Make America Great Again," which they performed at the Kennedy Center for the Trump family. The lyrics spell out exactly the kind of Christian nationalism that many American Protestant Evangelicals have summoned in support of Americanism:

Make America great again

[152] Patriot Church, "What is this movement about?"
[153] Robert Jeffress, "Dr. Robert Jeffress: Trump fulfilling his God-given responsibilities" (Fox News, July 21, 2018, 4:26, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsnxBXOh6tg&t=198s)
[154] Robert Jeffress, "Pastor Robert Jeffress defends Trump after leaked 2005 audio" (Fox News, October 8, 2016, 4:26, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXHbZu7Hnls)

Make America great again
Lift the torch of freedom all across the land
Step into the future joining hand in hand
Americans from ev'ry corner of this blessed land
Come together with one voice…

Like the mighty eagle that is rising on the wind
Soaring t'ward our destiny
Hearts and voices blend
With a mighty melody oh let the song begin
And make America great again.[155]

The lyrics, without mention of God, make repeated calls for uniformity around a "mighty eagle" and the "torch of freedom," both used as imagery for a transcendent nation under divine blessing and a vision of the future in which a president approved by mainline Protestants guides America in its quest to retrieve a lost civilization.

The realm of Protestant Christianity and its general relationship to party politics prompts many more questions about church and the state, but my analysis here remains focused on the specific language of "othering" and exclusivity used to embolden churches like Jeffress's. In short, the messaging of American exceptionalism evident in Jeffress's theology is indicative of something greater in the Protestant psyche regarding patriotism: that patriotism is a moral imperative sanctioned by God. Downstream of this conviction is the logical conclusion that anything perceived as anti-American, or rather, at odds with a specific type of Protestant memory of America that must be reified must, without exception, be castigated and eliminated, because it is anti-God. To be "great again" is to reconstruct the implied precedent of that "again" concept. And thus, perceived cultural Marxism and all its linguistic fellow travelers fall out of line with God's moral will.

[155] "First Baptist Church of Dallas Choir 'Make America Great Again'" (July 1, 2017, 2:28, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k8Ubs5BMvw)

Conclusion

In this final chapter, I sought to demonstrate that anticommunism has proliferated into more areas of American life and further cheapened the language of today's civic sphere. Figures such as William Lind simultaneously broadened the scope of anticommunist opponents to include those he considered cultural Marxists as well as reinforced a sense of "self-othering," that is, emphasizing the code-red status of American religious conservatives as being oppressed and pushed out of a culture that is purportedly belongs to them. I argued that politicians quickly followed suit and adopted these techniques for their own political gains, giving examples such as active members of Congress and the former president engaging in this inflammatory rhetoric. I offered an example of a collective action movement of churches in multiple states creating a "Patriot Network" whose explicit goal is to fight alleged Marxism and prepare for the end times provoked by that alleged Marxism. I also provided a case study of a prominent pastor–much as I tried to show with Billy Graham–whose ideas on Americanism have neatly fit into the modern Protestant agenda: taking on the cloak of "Make America Great Again" politics, even so literally as to pay religious homage to it with the eponymous worship song. I finally discussed how the concept of "great again" carefully and explicitly implies the reification of an imagined past, one whose homogeneity is its virtue. In my next section, I will conclude my findings with a piece of reflection on what I believe this rather grim narrative tells the concerned listener.

Conclusions: The Lasting Caricature of Marx

"What does all of this really indicate?" I wondered as I came upon finding after finding of deliberate political low-ball and historically concerted efforts to define opponents in the language of human morality and virtue. I came to one particularly ominous conclusion: the ongoing psychology and continuing telephone game of ideological warfare has waged a thoroughly destructive war on the civic sphere of American life. The language of "othering" has continued to expand its reach and snatch up more and more terminology in search of destroying ideological opposition. In fact, what I observed is perhaps what one might call a divorce of politically contentious words from their *definitions* and a careful remarriage of those words to their *connotations*. This stripping of value from language renders Marx, in today's language, a mere caricature of the Marx of the mid-19th century. Indeed, the separation of the term "Marx" from the person and remarriage of "Marx" to anything perceived as atheist, socialist, communist, subversive, or otherwise against the grain of Protestant political hegemony serves as the perfect example of this disingenuous divorce and remarriage. It leaves words vacuous and legitimizes the destruction of the civic sphere.

This led me to reflect on something else that particularly emerged in the third portion of my research: what I consider the fundamentally unserious nature of modern anticommunist rhetoric. The amalgamation of various hot-button political terminology has not just delegitimized the original meaning of ideas and political ideology, but I believe it desensitizes the population to real-world issues. Politicians who simultaneously lament the human rights abuses and other horrors of global communist regimes, such as the Soviet Union under Stalin or People's Republic of China under Chairman Mao Zedong, unblinkingly and intentionally cast their colleagues into the same arena as the engineers of now-crumbled empires. If Senator Ted Cruz really believed

that the modern Democratic party is "in bed with Chinese communists,"[156] would he not do more than tweet about it? If his left-leaning colleagues actually pushed the "Great Leap Forward" effort on the scale of Mao's regime that Republicans have accused–complete with reeducation camps and stringent punishment–might they do more than drum up the age-old playbook of anticommunist rhetoric? Perhaps, then, the contemporary anticommunist does not truly see their opponents as threats, but I doubt that the effort of modern rhetorical tactics show that. Indeed, one must take into account the seriousness with which the claims are leveled, coupled with realizing the anticommunist's unserious attitude of their own implications. Consider the Victims of Communism Foundation Memorial statue erected in the heart of Washington, D.C. Its inscription reads the following: "To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty," followed by "To the freedom and independence of all captive nations and peoples."[157] If the nation's capital houses this condemnation of death and dictatorship, should not its anticommunist politicians hesitate to align their colleague, neighbor, or voter with those who murdered millions? I ask this not in the least to imply that a reinvention of anticommunism is necessary, no, but to challenge the paradoxic and simultaneous effortlessness of incendiary rhetoric coupled with its malintent. If one claims to be educated on the horrors of so-called communism but levels these charges against their fellow citizens, we are left to doubt both their understanding of the subject and its gravitas that they freely ignore. And thus it is only intuitive that this unserious effort at understanding Marxism has resulted in maligning roughly 50% of the American electorate with actually murderous dictators under the umbrella of communism and has had devastating effects on civic sphere.

[156] Ted Cruz, "Press Release: Sen. Cruz on Fox News: The Democrat Party is Structurally Pro-China" (Campaign website, https://www.cruz.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/sen-cruz-on-fox-news-the-democrat-party-is-structurally-pro-china)
[157] Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Engraved text on D.C. statue (website) (https://victimsofcommunism.org/about/memorial/)

Rhetoric often centered around concepts like unity pushed by Trump and his ideological camp appears to rely on the ability of anyone opposed to him to simply endure the predictable slander of contemporary anticommunism, among other things. Why are we so divided, they ask? Blame no one other than everyone who disagrees with you, they answer. If the opponent can somehow fit into one's perception of cultural Marxism, any means of suppression are justified by the glorious end in which, to borrow again from Donald Trump Jr., the "good guys win." This ultimately forms a macro-sense of confirmation bias and a *deus vult* approach to overthrowing political opponents. Popular radio host Jesse Kelly hosted a podcast episode–poetically distributed on the Christian Worldview Institute's website–entitled "How to be an Anti-Communist," in which he claimed that self-identifying as a conservative is simply an insufficient response to the alleged oppression of freedom-lovers.[158] In addition, various educational policies across the country look to censor classroom discussions out of the purported worry that the school will not imbue children with some form of loyal Americanism.[159] In the realm of Protestant American Christianity, debate rages over whether popular pastor Timothy Keller is a "Marxist," with some religious pundits insisting that no denial of such an accusation would be enough to overturn his apparently self-incriminating ambivalence–perceived as Marxist support–regarding the Black Lives Matter movement.[160] Indeed, even McCarthy's attacks on sexuality and masculinity have unburied themselves, with overnight internet sensation Steven Crowder sporting a t-shirt daily on his podcast containing the slogan "Socialism is for F*gs [*sic*]." YouTube's attempts to demonetize Crowder's channel resulted in further accusations of

[158] Christian Worldview Institute (website). "How to be an Anti-Communist | Guest: Jesse Kelley" (https://christianworldviewinstit ute.com/how-to-be-an-anti-communist-guest-jesse-kelly-ep-419/)
[159] Ron DeSantis, "'Cultural Marxism': DeSantis Tears Into 'Wokeness' And Critical Race Theory"
[160] JD Hall, "Tim Keller is a Marxist: a Response to Carl Trueman" (October 9, 2018, https://pulpitandpen.org/2018/10/09/t im-keller-is-a-marxist-a-response-to-carl-trueman/)

cultural Marxism and hegemonic structures hellbent on his ideological destruction. One is left to question the extent to which Crowder suffers from political silencing, as his YouTube channel boasts upwards of five million subscribers and one billion views.

Thus, the success in casting political opposition as belonging to Graham's "Satan's Religion" has rendered the most extreme response justifiable in this ultimately spiritual battle. This tension highlights that perhaps the state of the civic sphere forewarns further fracture than the present moment. Psychologist Jonathan Haidt describes the fracturing of the civic sphere as reminiscent of the biblical tale of the Tower of Babel, in which no goal or impetus remains relevant other than the "fragmentation of everything."[161] Haidt points to social media and the ease of anonymity within those platforms as the breeding ground for further fracture of the civic sphere.[162] Instant access to politically charged speech in a time wherein rhetoric like that of anticommunism threatens to rob political speech of value and is a recipe for the continuation of the same trend. Four social scientists conducted a recently published "Hidden Tribes Study," in which they found that group identity has dragged majority opinions on both sides of the American political aisle toward the fringes of each side. A mere 8% of Americans self-identify as "progressive activists,"[163] a term that does not even include mentions of Marxism, socialism, or communism. Yet voters are told to prepare for impending doom at the hands of politicians with a scarlet letter-style "D" beside their name, and are implored from television screens and pulpits to flee to the ideological hills. A recent, bipartisan U.S. News survey conducted by analytics group YouGov demonstrated statistical confirmation of what the rhetorical reinforcement of feelings of minority status seeks to accomplish: when asked to guess the

[161] Jonathan Haidt, "Why the Past 10 Years of American Life have been Uniquely Stupid" (*The Atlantic*, May 2022 issue. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/05/social-media-democracy-trust-babel/629369/)
[162] Jonathan Haidt, "Why the Past 10 Years of American Life have been Uniquely Stupid"
[163] Steven Hawkins, Daniel Yudkin, Miriam Juan-Torres, and Tim Dixon, "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape" (New York: More in Common, 2018)

percentage of various demographic groups relative to the United States population, the groups often offered views skewed by "media portrayal" and "fears of outgroups."[164] Respondents estimated that 20% of the American populace identifies as transgender, while the true proportion sits around 1%.[165] They estimated the percentage of Muslims at 27%; the number is also at 1%.[166] Estimated atheists, 33%; reality, 3%. "Are gay or lesbian" drew a 30% estimation while the true number is roughly 3%.[167]

In the context of this research, these findings show that the psychology of "othering" has found a home–a mansion–in the American psyche. If a bipartisan study suggests that the average citizen believes 33% of the population is atheist, I dismally wonder how that figure would shift if it only included the sentiments of contemporary anticommunists.

Where does this leave the study of Marx, Marxism, and their legacy? It leaves Marx, the historical figure, left vacuous and functioning as a political bogeyman valuable for the contemporary anticommunist's linguistic arsenal. It leaves a political atmosphere in which the enduring myth of Marx is far more potent than the German philosopher ever was. It leaves Marxism, as an economic and philosophical science, unstudied and unengaged with, thereby preventing any actual breakthrough in political dialogue. And finally, it renders the legacy of these movements as vacancies for the rhetoric of political "othering" to thrive in political and religious circles. Perhaps an emergence of genuine engagement with seemingly foreign concepts will aid in restoring just a fraction of cohesion in the American civic sphere.

[164] "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape" (New York: More in Common, 2018)
[165] "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape" (New York: More in Common, 2018)
[166] "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape" (New York: More in Common, 2018)
[167] "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape" (New York: More in Common, 2018)

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