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**Out of its Own Ashes: the *Freeman* and the Emergence of Libertarianism,  
1950-55**

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the ideas and history of the conservative magazine, *The Freeman*, from its debut in October 1950 to its overhaul at the start of 1956. *The Freeman* gives us a unique, unvarnished window into the cobbling together of an ideology in its formative years, and insight into how conservatives of all stripes hoped to market their ideas in a period of transition for the Right. It was in the pages of the *Freeman* that what we know today as libertarianism would form. *The Freeman* reveals this post-World War II libertarianism as a complex mixture of voluntarism, attitudes toward the natural world and totalitarianism, the ideas of the Old Right, and classical liberalism, which had never quite gone out of style in America and enjoyed resurgence partly due to the arrival of émigrés from a broken, totalitarian Europe. Moreover, the *Freeman* is also a record of the split in conservative ranks after World War II, when the anticommunists and traditionalists who would found the *National Review* recognised definitively their views were incompatible with the more radical 'individualists' of the *Freeman*. *The Freeman* traces the turbulent story of the nascent conservative movement in the early 1950s, which was finding its feet and attempting to become a potent force at the start of the decade, but would ultimately collapse under its contradictions. In doing so, the *Freeman* expands our understanding of the libertarianism and deepens the currently limited scholarly exploration of this ideology and movement which is growing in importance.

"Their number is negligible and they are stupid."<sup>1</sup> – Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954

"...most conspicuous these days for its advanced state of wither."<sup>2</sup> – Murray Kempton, 1956

"...irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas."<sup>3</sup> – Lionel Trilling, 1950

This was the state of conservatism at the beginning of the American half-century, as least according to its detractors. It was in this climate on 18 April 1950 that then-obscure Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises attended an event held in his honour by the University Club of New York.<sup>4</sup> Mises addressed the audience after dinner, speaking on the state of American political and economic thought. Mises' prognostications were little better than that of conservatism's critics. While thousands of anti-capitalist books supporting socialist policies had been published over the preceding fifty years, he said, those books advocating the free market made nary a drop. Left-wing authors vacuumed up praise and attention while their pro-market counterparts remained indistinct and unknown. Finally, Mises complained, "There are in this country many periodicals which in every issue furiously attack economic freedom. There is hardly any magazine of opinion that would plead for the system that supplied the immense majority of the people with...things which the subjects of other countries call luxuries."<sup>5</sup> Mises had expressed this sentiment before. Writing in 1948 to his friend, Philadelphia industrialist and right-wing financier J. Howard Pew, President of the Sun Oil Company, he had articulated the need for "an independent journal of opinion" to balance out the leftism of the press.<sup>6</sup> Unbeknownst to him, by the time of his April 1950 address, forces were already moving behind the scenes to establish just such a journal, an intellectual standard-bearer for the nascent Right. Only 6 months later, a *Newsweek*-sized fortnightly magazine called *The Freeman* would be sent out to a small pool of 6000 subscribers.<sup>7</sup>

*The Freeman* was crucial to both the development of postwar conservatism and, more pertinently to this thesis, libertarianism—or as the magazine's contributors originally called it, 'individualism.' Libertarianism is a political ideology that prizes private property, individual rights and freedom, with a particular distaste for governmental interference in individuals' lives. As such, free market economics has always occupied a large part of its thinking—the idea that individuals are entitled to earn, and do what they will with, the fruits of their honest labour, free from the meddling of the state, which would tax, regulate, and redistribute what they produce. The government's only responsibilities, say libertarians, are maintaining law and order, property rights and freedom of contract. Libertarianism defies easy categorisation: its rejection of state control on individual choices and critique of American imperialism means it often crosses over with the Left, in adherents as well

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<sup>1</sup> Kim Phillips-Fein, 'Top-Down Revolution: Businessmen, Intellectuals, and Politicians Against the New Deal, 1945-64,' *Enterprise and Society*, 7, 4, Dec 2006, p. 687.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind: National Review and Its Times*, Wilmington, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> James Brian McPherson, *The Conservative Resurgence and the Press: the Media's Role in the Rise of the Right*, Evanston, 2008, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Jörg Guido Hülsmann, *Mises: the Knight of Liberalism*, Auburn, Ala., 2007, p. 897; Ludwig von Mises, *Middle-of-the-Road-Policy Leads to Socialism*, <http://mises.org/midroad.asp> (Accessed 15 February 2014).

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Hülsmann, p. 891.

<sup>7</sup> Bettina Bien Greaves, 'FEE and the Climate of Opinion,' *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 46, 5, May 1996, p. 343; Charles H. Hamilton, 'Freeman 1950—,' in Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton, eds, *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, Westport, Conn., 1999, p. 322.

as ideology.<sup>8</sup> Libertarianism has been largely sidelined in America for much of its history, its party and Presidential candidates routinely fielding a minority of electoral votes, and kept alive only through its small band of dedicated followers, the writings of its intellectuals, and libertarian magazines like *Reason* or the *Freeman* itself. Key to libertarianism is the concept introduced by Albert Jay Nock of 'the Remnant,' the idea of an unappreciated minority keeping the movement's principles alive, ready to rebuild society when it falls at the hands of the vulgar masses.<sup>9</sup> While this is no doubt an ideal, libertarianism has nonetheless achieved increasing prominence in American political discourse through its small numbers. Thanks to mainstream conservatism's adoption of some of its ideas (mainly in economics), the emergence of the Tea Party movement, and the rise of libertarian political figures like former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson and long-serving Texas Congressman Ron Paul, libertarianism has held a disproportionate sway in American politics, now more than ever. How it reached this point is where the stories of libertarianism, the *Freeman*, and conservatism intersect.

The middle of the twentieth century was vastly more unwelcoming to conservative ideas than we are used to today. From our vantage point, where political orthodoxy has been defined by the respective Thatcher and Reagan 'revolutions' and neoliberal ideas suffuse not just public policy but the ways we think, talk and act, conservatism seems to have always reigned supreme. Yet well before these momentous shifts, contemporaries saw things differently. Americans' faith in business and free enterprise had already been battered by the turbulent decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Great Depression finished the job, shattering ordinary Americans' and workers' trust in these entities, whose excesses appeared to have caused their misery, and reorienting them toward a greater faith in the state.<sup>10</sup> This was the beginning of the supposed 'liberal consensus' of the 1930s to the 1980s, the three-to-four-decade-long unspoken agreement between the American state and its citizenry about the political values that would steer the republic through the twentieth century. Conservative leaders like Herbert Hoover were blamed for the Depression, while liberal statesmen, represented by Franklin Roosevelt, were held up as saviours.<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt won an unprecedented four terms in office, and the Democrats held an unbroken stranglehold on the presidency from 1932 to 1952. Roosevelt's 'New Deal coalition' united southern whites and northern blacks, Protestant farmers and urban Catholics and Jews, and industrial workers and the middle-class, thus siphoning away conservative support from the Republicans.<sup>12</sup> Conservatives were discredited, defeated, and written off as a significant force by the 1950s, when liberal intellectual Lionel Trilling proclaimed that "liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition" in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

More alarmingly from the perspective of conservatives and the business elite, certain trends appeared to threaten their very existence. The 1933 National Recovery Act and 1935 Wagner Act had empowered labour, swinging the heft of government behind workers, resulting in a dramatic rise in labour militancy during the Depression and war years.<sup>14</sup> The Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO), an influential federation of unions, led one of the largest strike waves in history in 1941, and the

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen L. Newman, *Liberalism at Wits' End: the Libertarian Revolt Against the Modern State*, Ithaca, 1984, pp. 16, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right Face: Organising the American Conservative Movement 1945-65*, Copenhagen, 2002, pp. 34-5; Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism: a Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement*, New York, 2007, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: the Business Assault on Labour and Liberalism, 1945-60*, Urbana, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up: a History of the Conservative Ascendancy in America*, Boston, 1996, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, London, 2006, p. 719; Hodgson, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> McPherson, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Fones-Wolf, p. 18; Foner, pp. 708, 792.

largest in 1946, when nearly 5 million workers walked off their jobs.<sup>15</sup> Society and the world appeared to be moving irreversibly leftward. A June 1954 survey revealed 70% of Americans agreed that “the Government can do anything to keep unemployment low and maintain prosperous times.”<sup>16</sup> In Western Europe, where Americans felt their closest kinship culturally and ancestrally, faith in state planning of the economy abounded after World War II.<sup>17</sup> The election of moderate communists to power in France and Italy in 1947, a moderate socialist government in Britain in 1945, and the size and significant electoral gains of local Communists in Western and Northern Europe appeared to further marginalise conservatives.<sup>18</sup> Most disquieting of all was the rise of the Soviet Union, which had swiftly taken over Eastern Europe following the end of World War II and by 1947 was industrialising and rearming at a staggering, and threatening, pace.<sup>19</sup> In 1949 it detonated its first atomic bomb, Communists took power in China, and the year before that, former State Department official Alger Hiss was outed as a Soviet spy—the first of a number of high profile spy cases in America—bringing the onset of the Cold War. This rapid sequence of developments helped impress on conservatives the urgency of their mission, as well as reinforcing their sense of envelopment by the enemy.

In truth, conservatism was never as defeated as it seemed. The ‘liberal consensus’ was and is a convenient fiction, for its political value, but also for the neatness it imposes on historical processes that are messy and unclear. This supposed consensus had always been an uneasy one, relentlessly contested from start to finish, and no better illustrated than by the precariousness of Roosevelt’s famed ‘fragile juggernaut’ of a Democratic coalition<sup>20</sup>. Some historians today are instead more likely to view this period as the ‘long exception’ to the underlying conservatism which has defined America from its earliest founding to the present day.<sup>21</sup> Leo Ribuffo has pointed out the way in which conservative ideas and movements continued to thrive from the New Deal onwards, helping to influence and mute the liberal policies pursued in this time of ‘consensus.’<sup>22</sup> Ever since Alan Brinkley famously exposed historians’ collective blindness to conservatism’s role in American history in 1994, an explosion in scholarship has established it as the dominant intellectual strain in American political belief and established the broad contours of its revival in the second half of the twentieth century: the gathering together of scattered intellectuals in the 1950s; the use of anticommunism as a wedge issue; the student activism of the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) in the 1960s; the passage of Civil Rights legislation and Barry Goldwater’s failed presidential campaign, which shattered Roosevelt’s coalition and galvanised a grassroots movement; and the increasing suspicion of government in the 1970s fermented by Vietnam and Watergate, culminating in the Reagan ‘Restoration’ of the 1980s. Was the revival of conservative ideology inevitable then? David Armitage has suggested a new way to think about the history of ideas which acknowledges the ‘big picture’ of history without ignoring context.<sup>23</sup> While contextualism had “sealed off similar contexts that occurred earlier or later in time from one another,” like a train hauling boxcars, Armitage urges us to build “corridors between the cars” and connect

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: the Labouring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, London; New York, 1997, p. 22-24; Foner, p. 792.

<sup>16</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, New York, 2003, p. 119.

<sup>17</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: a History of Europe since 1945*, New York, 2005, pp. 67-9.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 80, 207, 212.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 167-8, 189.

<sup>20</sup> Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore, ‘The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History,’ *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 74, 1, 2008, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Leo P. Ribuffo, ‘Why is There so Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything about It,’ *The American Historical Review*, 99, 2, April 1994, pp. 441-7.

<sup>23</sup> David Armitage, ‘What’s the big idea?’, <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1129685.ece> (Accessed 15 February 2014).

these contexts.<sup>24</sup> In this same way, the conservative resurgence of the postwar period should be seen as a reanimation of ideas that had always been floating in the ether of American thought, albeit in different forms.

Conservatives had been trying to shore up an oppositional movement, albeit unsuccessfully, from the first hundred days of the New Deal. Contrary to the *Freeman's* later protestations, business leaders had been at the forefront of efforts to roll back the power of labour and liberalism in the 1930s and, especially, after 1945.<sup>25</sup> The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), an anti-union organisation of businesses founded in the late nineteenth-century, saw its membership rocket up from a nadir of less than 1000 firms in 1931 to nearly 5000 by 1940.<sup>26</sup> NAM spent millions of dollars on a public relations campaign which included radio, film, direct mail and speakers, and fought laws like the Wagner Act.<sup>27</sup> Also significant was the American Liberty League, founded in 1934 by the three du Pont brothers, two former Democratic Presidential candidates, and various executives from General Motors, US Steel and other corporations.<sup>28</sup> The League claimed to be leading a movement of ordinary Americans, and had a smattering of representation from academics, labour and farmers.<sup>29</sup> These were never more than token, however, and until its dissolution in 1936 it never shook the accusation of being a "millionaires' union."<sup>30</sup> Despite its failure, it represented the genesis of a network of corporate elite and conservative intellectuals who would help build a concerted conservative movement after the war.

This network created an interlocking, somewhat incestuous series of initiatives from the 1930s onward intended to revitalise conservatism. Among the leadership of NAM were firms like International Harvester, Chrysler and General Electric, who along with the principal leaders of the Liberty League would later become prominent advertisers in the *Freeman*.<sup>31</sup> These and other firms would later finance an expensive economic education campaign by the Advertising Council in 1947, alongside their own personal educational efforts.<sup>32</sup> Some of the NAM membership overlapped with that of the America First Committee in the 1930s, a non-interventionist organisation financed by businessman William H. Regnery, whose son would later establish an alternative conservative publishing house, and whose president was the CEO of Sears, Roebuck, another *Freeman* advertiser.<sup>33</sup> Also among the leadership of NAM were Jasper Crane and the aforementioned J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil.<sup>34</sup> Crane retired from his position as executive vice president of Du Pont chemical after the war, a company already hip-deep in the burgeoning movement, and aimed to use his remaining time and money to combat liberalism.<sup>35</sup> He financially backed various organisations propagating free market economics, such as the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE).<sup>36</sup> As for Pew, along with helping to bankroll the defunct Liberty League, Pew funded advocacy groups, organisations, conferences, media, the conservative Grove City College, and the conservative Christian organisation Spiritual Mobilisation.<sup>37</sup> This business-funded, ground-up organising crossed over with the

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Fones-Wolf, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: the Rise of the American Conservative Movement*, New York, 2008, p. 62.

<sup>27</sup> Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: the Businessman's Crusade Against the New Deal*, New York, 2010, pp. 14-5.

<sup>28</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 10; Patrick Allitt, *The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities Throughout American History*, New Haven, 2009, p. 146; Lichtman, pp. 60-61.

<sup>29</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 12; Lichtman, pp. 61-2.

<sup>30</sup> Lichtman, p. 61; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 13; Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: the Transformation of American Conservatism*, Berkeley, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>31</sup> Fones-Wolf, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 51, 53, 83.

<sup>33</sup> Gregory L. Schneider, *The Conservative Century: From Reaction to Revolution*, Lanham, Md., 2009, pp. 30-1.

<sup>34</sup> Fones-Wolf, pp. 7-8;

<sup>35</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>36</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p.30.

<sup>37</sup> Fones-Wolf, pp. 7-8; Lichtman, p. 74.

intellectual world. Crane helped economist Friedrich Hayek achieve his goal of gathering together the scattered remaining individualist faithful with the first meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947, a soon-to-be-annual summit of right-wing scholars, journalists and businessmen.<sup>38</sup> Americans' attendance at the meeting was sponsored by the Volker Fund, a charitable trust which sponsored various right-wing initiatives, and also subsidised the careers of various right-wing intellectuals, including Hayek.<sup>39</sup>

This push by businessmen, right-wing financiers and movement builders intersected with a corresponding intellectual resurgence of conservative beliefs. Of course, there is a deep ancestry to works pitting the individual against the state, from Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* in 1849 to German sociologist Franz Oppenheimer's *The State* in 1908. It was the 1940s, however, which saw the publication of a rapid succession of books which would kick individualist, anti-state ideas from the margins of political thought: Rose Wilder Lane's *The Discovery of the Freedom*, Albert Jay Nock's *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, Isabel Paterson's *The God of the Machine*, Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*—all four of which were published in 1943—plus Friedrich Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* in 1944 and Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action* in 1949.<sup>40</sup> Three of these authors were foreign—Rand, a Russian émigré, and Austrians Mises and Hayek, two of the principal members of the free market 'Austrian school' of economics. All knew, or at least knew of, one another, respected one another's work, and were plugged into the wider conservative network. Mises had taught Hayek in Austria, and both corresponded with the American conservatives who admired their work.<sup>41</sup> Paterson maintained friendships with both Crane and Leonard Read, the founder of the FEE.<sup>42</sup> She, Lane and Rand were all friends, at least until the issue of religion drove a wedge between them and Rand.<sup>43</sup> Rand kept similarly turbulent acquaintance with Read, Hayek and Mises who, while influencing her, invariably ran afoul of her principles, and she had read Nock voraciously.<sup>44</sup> Nock in turn had praised Paterson and Nock's books as "the only intelligible books on the philosophy of individualism that have been written in America this century."<sup>45</sup>

All of these writers had considerable influence in reawakening interest in free market, individualist ideas. Nock has been dubbed the "father of postwar intellectual conservatism" by one historian and, besides his writings, personally mentored a number of important conservatives, including some of those involved in the *Freeman*.<sup>46</sup> Mises is considered "the fountainhead of modern libertarianism," mentoring libertarian scholar Murray Rothbard as well as serving as the "intellectual center [of the FEE] for more than two decades."<sup>47</sup> However, it was Rand and Hayek who achieved the most widespread success, beyond the confines of the budding movement. Rand's *The Fountainhead*, the story of an architect whose individual genius struggles against the stifling mediocrity of the collective, was, like her later novel *Atlas Shrugged*, a phenomenal bestseller, selling 400,000 copies in 1948

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<sup>38</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, pp. 43-4; Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets Since the Depression*, Cambridge, Mass., 2012, p. 94; Gregory Teddy Eow, 'Fighting a New Deal: Intellectual Origins of the Reagan Revolution, 1932-1952', PhD Thesis, Rice University, 2007, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> Burgin, p. 101; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, pp. 43-4

<sup>40</sup> Doherty, p. 113; Hodgson, p. 42; Brian J. Glenn and Steven M. Teles, 'Conclusion: Conservatism and American Political Development,' in Brian J. Glenn and Steven M. Teles, eds, *Conservatism and American Political Development*, Oxford; New York, 2009, p. 330; Allitt, p. 161; Hülsmann, pp. 839-40; Schneider, pp. 41, 110.

<sup>41</sup> Phillips-Fein, 'Top-Down Revolution,' p. 689; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 36.

<sup>42</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Doherty, pp. 117, 122; Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*, New York; Oxford, 2011, pp. 128, 139.

<sup>44</sup> Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, pp. 48, 104-5, 118-9, 141

<sup>45</sup> Doherty, pp. 113-4.

<sup>46</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 35; Doherty, p. 55.

<sup>47</sup> Doherty, p. 9; Hülsmann, pp. 851, 860.



alone.<sup>48</sup> Altogether, her books have sold over 20 million copies, bringing her ideas about the primacy of the individual, the virtue of human selfishness, and the evils of altruism to a popular audience.<sup>49</sup> *The Road to Serfdom*, which attacked the economic planning practised by Western nations, made Hayek a similarly household name, helped by a glowing review in the *New York Times* from future *Freeman* editor Henry Hazlitt as well as its serialisation in the *Reader's Digest*.<sup>50</sup> The book not only reached a mass audience, prompting discussion among prominent journalists and newspapers the world over, but quickly achieved a monumental status in the canon of conservative literature.<sup>51</sup> It captured the imagination of conservative leaders like Pew ("a great book") and Crane, who believed Hayek had fulfilled his wish for a "New Testament of capitalism."<sup>52</sup> The scene was thus set by the 1950s, intellectually, for a conservative journal of ideas to launch.

Numerous attempts to found a flagship publication for the movement had come from these overlapping projects, goals and visions, each proving inadequate. The magazine industry at this time was highly fluid, merciless toward big and small publishers alike, whose publications could vanish or blow up overnight.<sup>53</sup> Alfred Kohlberg, a textile importer and key figure of the anticommunist and interventionist 'China lobby,' funded *Plain Talk* from 1946, a militantly anticommunist journal that achieved a very modest circulation and folded in 1950.<sup>54</sup> The Pew-funded organisations Spiritual Mobilisation and Christian Freedom Foundation each put out religious papers on right-wing economics, *Faith and Freedom* and *Christian Economics* respectively.<sup>55</sup> Both were catered specifically to clergymen, though, and the former quickly became financially untenable while the latter was only a four-page paper.<sup>56</sup> Pew, along with Regnery, also had a hand in underwriting the noninterventionist weekly *Human Events* in 1944.<sup>57</sup> Its small circulation, however—below 10,000 by 1950—and its being only an eight-page newsletter meant it never became the opinion-leader of the Right, and following an editorial rift this same year it shifted to almost exclusively focusing on anticommunism.<sup>58</sup> There was also the *American Mercury*, a long-standing conservative publication founded in 1924 by eminent conservative author H. L. Mencken, which achieved a sufficiently high circulation of between 50,000 and 84,000.<sup>59</sup> With its emphasis on book reviews, entertainment, and general interest reporting, however, it never held the status of an intellectual standard-bearer for the Right, and besides this, by 1952 it would descend into anti-Semitism.<sup>60</sup> Needed instead was an inclusive journal allowing for intellectual debate and discussion while also unifying scattered but like-minded individuals, and relentlessly broadcasting the ideas of Mises, Hayek and other key thinkers to a broad audience.<sup>61</sup> It would be the right-wing counterpart to the liberal *Nation* and *New Republic*, which conservatives believed had facilitated the New Deal revolution during the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>62</sup> It was after Truman's demoralising 1948 election victory that Crane would get to work raising money for just such a "high calibre

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<sup>48</sup> Hodgson, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 25; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 41; Glenn and Teles, p. 330.

<sup>51</sup> Glenn and Teles, p. 330; Schneider, p. 41;

<sup>52</sup> Schneider, p. 41; Phillips-Fein, 'Top-Down Revolution,' p. 689; Burgin, p. 101.

<sup>53</sup> Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, Urbana, 1956, pp. 63, 74, 77.

<sup>54</sup> Lichtman, p. 154; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 105.

<sup>55</sup> Hülsmann, p. 890; Lichtman, p. 173.

<sup>56</sup> Lichtman, pp. 173-4; Eckard V. Toy, 'Faith and Freedom, 1949-60,' in Lora and Longton, pp. 155-6.

<sup>57</sup> Schneider, pp. 45-7.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 45-6; Thomas J. Ferris, 'Human Events, 1944—,' in Lora and Longton, pp. 449-51;

Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 99; Lichtman, p. 129; Hülsmann, p. 845.

<sup>59</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 102; Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*, New York, 1995, pp. 59, 326 n. 104.

<sup>60</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 103; Lichtman, p. 240.

<sup>61</sup> Hülsmann, p. 892.

<sup>62</sup> Blanchette, p. 9; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 80.

journal of opinion.”<sup>63</sup> Teaming up with Kohlberg, the two raised \$150,000 in capital, received a \$100,000 pledge from Pew, plus secured further backing from Inland Steel, Quaker Oats and Sears, Roebuck.<sup>64</sup> This was bolstered by a substantial donation and subscription drive from former President Hoover, whom one editor called the “principal founder of the *Freeman*.”<sup>65</sup> In October 1950, 31,000 promotional copies of the *Freeman* were printed and handed out, and the magazine replaced Kohlberg’s now-defunct *Plain Talk*, absorbing its list of subscribers.<sup>66</sup>

The magazine had a paradoxically long past before its debut. As its editor John Chamberlain put it, “the *Freeman* is a magazine that is always coming up out of its own ashes, like the phoenix.”<sup>67</sup> Its moniker appears several times across history, first on a magazine in Glasgow, Scotland in 1851, then in Indianapolis in 1885 and New York in 1908.<sup>68</sup> Its most notable prior iteration was as a journal launched in 1920 by the aforementioned Albert Jay Nock.<sup>69</sup> Like Nock himself, his *Freeman* was a hodgepodge of different intellectual tendencies that could broadly be described as radically individualist.<sup>70</sup> The magazine folded four years later, and was revived briefly as the *New Freeman* in 1930 by one of Nock’s former colleagues, Suzanne La Follette, featuring a regular column from Nock.<sup>71</sup> After it too collapsed within a year thanks to the Depression, it next appeared from 1938 to 1941 as a school newspaper at the Henry George School of Science edited, again, by Nock and by Frank Chodorov.<sup>72</sup> Reflecting Chodorov’s own antiwar, anti-intervention, anti-Roosevelt bent, this incarnation unsurprisingly did not survive past the attack on Pearl Harbour.<sup>73</sup> When the magazine was next resurrected, it was to be the flagship journal of the budding conservative movement, edited by Isaac Don Levine, former editor of *Plain Talk*, plus journalists Henry Hazlitt and John Chamberlain.<sup>74</sup> Its title was a deliberate homage to their idol Nock’s magazine.<sup>75</sup> After a clash with Crane led Levine to withdraw from the magazine, La Follette, herself fresh from co-editing *Plain Talk*, was brought in to replace him, further solidifying its connection to Nock’s *Freeman*.<sup>76</sup> The magazine was set for publication.

*The Freeman* comprised a virtual hall of fame of postwar conservatives, behind the scenes and between its pages. Besides Mises and Kohlberg, also the treasurer, on its board of directors and stockholders sat: FEE founder Leonard Read; ex-President of Carlton College and Spiritual Mobilisation co-founder Donald J. Cowling; Sun Oil executive, Joseph N. Pew, Jr.; Henning W. Prentis Jr., former NAM president and the Chairman of the Board of the Armstrong Cork Company; Dr. Leo Wolman, Professor of Economics at Columbia University; Roscoe Pound, Dean Emeritus of Harvard Law School; W. F. Peter, Vice President of Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad; Lawrence Fertig, an advertising executive and a trustee of both New York University and the FEE; and Herbert C. Cornuelle, Executive Vice President of the FEE and co-ordinator of the Volker Fund.<sup>77</sup> The backing of such luminaries,

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<sup>63</sup> Lichtman, pp. 154, 171.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>65</sup> Hulsman, p. 902; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 106.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Charles H. Hamilton, ‘*Freeman* 1950—,’ in Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton, eds., *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, p. 322.

<sup>67</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘People on Our Side: 1. Frank Chodorov,’ *Freeman*, 2, 16, May 1952, p. 24.

<sup>68</sup> Jude Blanchette, ‘*The Freeman* Through the Years,’ *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 56, 1, January/February 2006, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Hodgson, pp. 23,

<sup>70</sup> Doherty, p. 55; Blanchette, p. 9; Schneider, pp. 8-9; Charles H. Hamilton, ‘*Freeman* 1920-1924,’ in Lora and Longton, pp. 311-2.

<sup>71</sup> Doherty, p. 55.

<sup>72</sup> Doherty, p. 55; Hodgson, p. 28; Frank Chodorov, *Out of Step: the Autobiography of an Individualist*, New York, 1962, pp. 78-79; John Chamberlain, ‘People on Our Side,’ p. 24.

<sup>73</sup> Chodorov, *Out of Step*, p. 79; Doherty, p. 201.

<sup>74</sup> Hamilton, ‘*Freeman* 1950—,’ pp. 322-3.

<sup>75</sup> John Chamberlain, *A Life With the Printed Word*, Chicago, 1982, p. 137.

<sup>76</sup> Chamberlain, *A Life with the Printed Word*, pp. 137-8.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Contents,’ *The Freeman*, 2, 2, October 1951, p. 2; cited simply as ‘*Freeman*’ from here on; Hulsman, p. 901; Murray N. Rothbard, ‘What is to be Done?’ in David Gordon, ed., *Strictly*

hoped La Follette, would give the *Freeman* a certain prestige before it had even published a word.<sup>78</sup> Its editorship was no less auspicious. La Follette, along with her various editing stints, was also the daughter of former Washington Congressman William La Follette and cousin of former Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette.<sup>79</sup> Hazlitt, the best-known of the trio, had established a distinguished journalistic career characterised by editorial friction over his politics—among other things, he was literary editor of the *Nation* until his opposition to the New Deal forced him out, and an editorial writer at the *New York Times* before his stance against the Bretton Woods agreement forced his departure.<sup>80</sup> Though Hazlitt was never on the FEE's staff, he was one of its founding trustees, and his ideas and writings were central to its mission, particularly his 1946 introduction to free market economics, *Economics in One Lesson*—it was, and still remains, one of the most popular free market books of that century, one of the FEE's top sellers.<sup>81</sup> Chamberlain, for his part, was a former radical socialist who had followed the ideological trajectory of many of his comrades by gradually transitioning to conservatism.<sup>82</sup> He had made his name with an acclaimed critique of American Progressivism, and served as book reviewer and editor for the *New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Fortune*, and finally, *Life*, before joining the *Freeman*.<sup>83</sup> The magazine thus began with a strong pedigree.

*The Freeman* was at the heart of conservatism's resurgence. It billed itself as a "Fortnightly for Individualists," espousing the anti-statist thought and free market economics which was all but extinct from political discourse.<sup>84</sup> It opposed unions, discriminatory taxation, the United Nations, public schooling, inflationary fiscal policies, and any and all government interference in the economy. Conversely, it supported voluntary co-operation, lower taxes, reduced regulations on business, free trade, and supply-side economics—policies which favoured private investment in the economy over economic equality. It also represented a stringent anticommunism which it inherited from its predecessor, and held complex, often contradictory attitudes in foreign policy. At the peak of its influence, the *Freeman* reached a circulation of nearly 22,000, a more respectable number than it may seem considering the most popular journals on the left, the *Nation* and *New Republic*, only hit 36,000 at most.<sup>85</sup> *The Freeman* was no obscure, extremist rag—it had a high-profile status from its first issue. The *Nation* and *New Republic* carried advertisements for the *Freeman* before its debut, and both allocated space in their editorials for attacking the magazine.<sup>86</sup> While "there is a place for a conservative journal of opinion prepared to battle for its beliefs on an intellectual plane," wrote the *Nation*, the *Freeman's* philosophy held no appeal "to any important group, left, right, or centre, in this country," and it bemoaned "the whinings of John T. Flynn, the portentous platitudes of George Sokolosky, and [the] assortment of sneers and snarls" printed in the first issue.<sup>87</sup> The *New Republic* similarly decied it as "the voice of reaction" carrying articles by "extreme conservatives."<sup>88</sup> Numerous notable

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*Confidential: the Private Volker Fund Memos of Murray N. Rothbard*, Auburn, Ala., 2010, pp. 16-7; Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, Princeton; Oxford, 2012, p. 77; Merrill E. Jachow, *Private Liberal Arts Colleges in Minnesota: Their History and Contributions*, St. Paul, 1973, p. 73; Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s*, Madison, Wis., 1982, p. 117; Lichtman, p. 154; William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*, New York, 1984, pp. 33-34.

<sup>78</sup> Blanchette, p. 10.

<sup>79</sup> 'The New Freeman,' *Time*, 41, 16, October 16, 1950, p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> Hülsmann, p. 863; Blanchette, p. 8; Doherty, p. 92; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 104;

<sup>81</sup> Greaves, p. 338; Doherty, p. 33; Schneider, p. 48.

<sup>82</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 104.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*; Hamilton, 'Freeman 1950—,' p. 322.

<sup>84</sup> Greaves, p. 343.

<sup>85</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 106, 80-1.

<sup>86</sup> *The Nation*, 171, 16, October 14 1950, p. 349; *The New Republic*, v. 123, 15, October 9 1950, p. 27.

<sup>87</sup> 'The Shape of Things,' *The Nation*, 171, 17, October 21 1950, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> 'The Week,' *The New Republic*, 123, 17, October 23 1950, p. 7.

individuals engaged with the magazine: former Presidential candidate Henry Wallace twice wrote in objecting to his treatment in the magazine, Yugoslavian dictator Josip Broz Tito similarly complained about his, South Korean dictator Syngman Rhee sent the magazine a personal message, and a myriad of former and serving Congressmen, governors, mayors and newspaper editors sent letters to the magazine, either personally or through assistants.<sup>89</sup> Archconservative Senator Robert Taft read the *Freeman*, and even William Faulkner contributed an article.<sup>90</sup> The magazine had a presence beyond its numbers.

Each thirty-two page issue followed a standard format. It opened with 'The Fortnight', a round-up of and commentary on the preceding two weeks of news, followed by several pages of editorials—usually one leading editorial which stretched over a page in length, trailed by a few smaller ones of around half a page each. The bulk of every issue was made up of longer articles submitted by contributors, usually several pages long, and closed out with a cultural section—film, art, television, theatre and book reviews. The book reviews were the dominant element of this section, regularly taking up around the last ten pages of each issue. They opened with 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' John Chamberlain's regular review column which he continued to contribute to the magazine until well into the 1980s, followed by numerous much shorter reviews written by a revolving line-up of contributors.<sup>91</sup> It was a format that closely, and perhaps not coincidentally, matched that of the liberal *Nation* and *New Republic* more than it did other conservative publications like *Plain Talk* or *Human Events*. While the *American Mercury* did prominently feature cultural reviews, they were interspersed throughout every issue instead of concentrated at the end. Moreover, these tended to be straight reviews, whereas the *Freeman* invariably incorporated its ideology into every piece of writing, whether an article, review, or advertisement, using the occasion to expound on a topic of greater significance to the ideology and movement it represented. Articles ranged from humour and fiction, even poetry, to economic tracts and opinion pieces on the current events of the day, the latter two making up the vast majority of its output. All had one thing in common, however—these articles were exclusively about broadcasting the conservative-individualist ideology and undermining the dominant order of the day, liberal-leftism.

Recruited for this mission was an illustrious array of right-wing writers and intellectuals. This was no easy task. The editors struggled to find those available to write among the already small pool of conservative authors at the time, and even then their involvement was not guaranteed—Isabel Paterson was insulted that a du Pont-backed magazine would offer her only two cents per word.<sup>92</sup> After the first issue, however, the floodgates opened. The magazine united contributors across geographic and ideological borders, and published many of the same authors who had contributed to earlier conservative publications. Hayek and Mises both frequently wrote articles for the magazine, as did German neoliberal economist Wilhelm Roepke, free market Chicago economists Frank Knight and Milton Friedman, and British economist George Winder. It published articles from conservative religious figures, like Reverend Russell J. Clinchy, as well as political figures like Ohio Senator John Bricker. Its most sizable contingent was its interventionist anticommunist writers, which included the editors themselves, former *Human Events* editor Frank Hanighen,

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<sup>89</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 22; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, p. 22; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 4, 9, Jan 1954, p. 5; 'A Message from Syngman Rhee,' *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 13; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 2, 13, Mar 1952, p. 21; 'Among Ourselves,' *Freeman*, 2, 23, Aug 1952, p. 5; 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 2, 26, Sept 1952, p. 4; 'Among Ourselves,' *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 5; 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, p. 4; Christian A. Herter, 'How to Regain Purse Control,' *Freeman*, 3, 20, Jun 1953, p. 17; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 4; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 3, 25, Sept 1953, p. 4; 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, p. 4; 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct, 1955, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> 'Among Ourselves,' *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 5; William Faulkner, 'The Duty to be Free,' 3, 9, Jan 1953, p. 16.

<sup>91</sup> Hamilton, '*Freeman* 1950—,' p. 322.

<sup>92</sup> Chamberlain, *Printed Word*, p. 138.

and legions of others. Alongside them sat a faction of unreformed Old Right authors, such as George Sokolsky, Raymond Moley, Frank Chodorov, Garet Garrett and John T. Flynn, who tended to view interventionism and a global American presence with scepticism. These contradictory impulses would eventually tear the magazine apart, but until then they drew together a diverse and disparate collection of individuals, allowing for an unprecedented opportunity for intellectual debate, refinement and clarification. The Right, after all, did not know its intellectual tendencies were incompatible when it began putting itself back together. In this way, the *Freeman's* bringing together of conservative heavyweights not only magnified the quality of the magazine and its message, but also served the purpose that Hayek had envisioned for the Mont Pelerin conference: to foster "closer contacts between all those who have become gravely concerned about the chances of preserving a free civilisation."<sup>93</sup>

The story of the *Freeman* and libertarianism is also closely connected to that of the Foundation for Economic Education. Founded in 1946 by Leonard Read, the former general manager of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the FEE aimed to, as its name suggested, educate opinion makers on what one historian has termed "a stringent, crystalline vision of the free market."<sup>94</sup> From its headquarters in a seven-acre country mansion in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, it sent out books, pamphlets and letters to thousands of households, plus organised education programs like seminars and conferences for which it recruited economists like Mises.<sup>95</sup> Read, a committed believer in the "voluntary society" and as pure a libertarian as existed before that label had taken its modern meaning, consequently refused to solicit donations, relying instead on the business contacts he had acquired during his time at the Chamber.<sup>96</sup> The FEE received generous donations from US Steel, General Motors, Chrysler and Pew's Sun Oil, and the ubiquitous Crane sat on its board.<sup>97</sup> The FEE was significant as a policy institute as well as for providing an infrastructure for laissez-faire liberals to pool ideas and communicate, in a period of a dearth of such organisations on the right.<sup>98</sup> It was doubly significant, however, for its connection to the *Freeman*. As discussed earlier, Read was on the *Freeman's* board of directors while Hazlitt helped found the FEE, and both entities shared a number of trustees.<sup>99</sup> They would become more closely associated in 1954 when Read and the FEE bought the now-floundering *Freeman* and placed it under Frank Chodorov's editorship.

Chodorov was, along with the FEE, the other crucial influence on the *Freeman's* ideology and the formation of libertarianism. Born the eleventh child of Russian immigrants in New York City in 1887, Chodorov attended Columbia University and worked a variety of careers, including as a teacher.<sup>100</sup> He became attracted to the theories of Henry George early in his adulthood, a 19<sup>th</sup> century political thinker who called for the abolition of rent, and advocated that the government be funded solely through an exorbitant 'single tax' on unimproved land.<sup>101</sup> While Chodorov did not adopt these ideas, he admired George for his individualist beliefs.<sup>102</sup> Another thinker who equally admired George was Nock, and after the two met in 1936, the latter took Chodorov under his wing, expanding his knowledge of individualism.<sup>103</sup> After working with the George-inspired Single Tax party, and his subsequent disillusionment with electoral politics, Chodorov joined the

<sup>93</sup> Eow, p. 103.

<sup>94</sup> Lichtman, p. 160; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 27.

<sup>95</sup> Doherty, p. 157; Hülsmann, p. 851; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 27.

<sup>96</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, pp. 27, 54; Hülsmann, pp. 850-1; Doherty, pp. 157-8.

<sup>97</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 54; Lichtman, p. 160.

<sup>98</sup> Hülsmann, p. 851; Burgin, p. 98.

<sup>99</sup> Paul L. Poirot, 'The *Freeman*: Ideas on Liberty,' *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 46, 5, May 1996, p. 371.

<sup>100</sup> Schneider, p. 42.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 42-3; Doherty, pp. 53-4.

<sup>102</sup> Schneider, p. 43.

<sup>103</sup> Doherty, p. 200; Charles H. Hamilton, 'analysis 1949-51' in Lora and Longton, p. 332.

Henry George School of Social Science in 1937, where he and Nock edited the second-to-last *Freeman*.<sup>104</sup> When this was shut down, in 1944 he started, wrote, and edited *analysis* by himself, a four-page monthly of 4000 subscribers which was eventually merged with *Human Events* in 1951.<sup>105</sup> Finally, at the age of 67, he was brought in by Read to edit the *Freeman* in 1954. Under his radically individualist hand and that of the FEE, the magazine would cease its obsession with communism, move closer to the anti-state, noninterventionist beliefs of modern libertarianism, and settle on a name for this new movement and ideology. *The Freeman* became a monthly magazine of slightly longer length and, more pertinently, became the organ of the newly-christened *libertarianism*, leaving mainstream conservatism behind.

Libertarianism has largely been given short thrift by historians. It has “mostly failed to garner extended attention in American political and ideological history,” as libertarian writer Brian Doherty put it, partly because of its overlaps with better-known and more successful mainstream conservatism, and partly because it took until the mid-1970s for it to attract significant numbers.<sup>106</sup> When libertarianism has received historical attention, it has been treated solely as one ideological ‘pillar’ of postwar conservatism, alongside anticommunism and traditionalism, rather than as a movement and ideology of its own. This convention was established by George Nash’s seminal 1976 work, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*. While Nash influenced future historians to consider conservatism and conservatives in America as a legitimate intellectual force to be taken seriously—not the paranoid, class-conscious extremists portrayed by historians like Richard Hofstadter—he also presented libertarianism as “one branch of the postwar conservative intellectual movement,” one of “three strands of conservatism” that “comprised the developing conservative movement.”<sup>107</sup> Virtually all historians of conservatism have followed Nash’s lead, discussing libertarianism only in relation to its influence on mainstream conservatism, chiefly the latter’s absorption of libertarian free market economics under the rubric of ‘fusionism.’<sup>108</sup> Historians today tell us merely that “Libertarianism was an important part of postwar conservatism.”<sup>109</sup> The result is a skewed history which only considers libertarianism in light of what it adds to our understanding of conservatism, and negates the significant points of disagreement between the two ideologies which had occasioned their split in the first place.

That said, there has been some scholarly examination of libertarianism. Authors such as Bruce Caldwell, Jörg Guido Hülsmann and Daniel Stedman Jones have written intellectual biographies of Hayek, Mises, Milton Friedman and other right-wing economists, demonstrating their influence on libertarianism, as well illustrating through their lives “the development of modern economics” and the materialisation of neoliberal philosophy.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, much attention has been paid to neoliberalism by historians, be it David Harvey’s overview of the global spread of neoliberal ideas, Richard Cockett’s examination of the efforts of British think tanks to resuscitate the ideas behind ‘Thatcherism,’ or Juan Gabriel Valdes’ study of the role of Chicago economists in implementing neoliberal reforms in Chile, to name a few.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Hamilton, ‘*analysis* 1949-51,’ p. 332.

<sup>105</sup> Schneider, p. 43; Donald T. Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: how the GOP Right Made Political History*, Cambridge, Mass., 2007, p. 21.

<sup>106</sup> Doherty, pp. 8, 4.

<sup>107</sup> George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, New York, 1976, pp. 5, 131.

<sup>108</sup> Himmelstein, p. 14; Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: the Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, New York, 2001, p. 31; Charles W. Dunn and J. David Woodard, *The Conservative Tradition in America*, Lanham, Md.; Oxford, 2003, pp. 39-40.

<sup>109</sup> Allitt, p. 165.

<sup>110</sup> Hülsmann, p. xii; Bruce Caldwell, *Hayek’s Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F. A. Hayek*, Chicago, 2004, p. 7; Jones, pp. 4-5.

<sup>111</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford; New York, 2005, p. 4; Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931-1983*, London, 1994, pp. 4-5; Juan Gabriel Valdes, *Pinochet’s Economists: the Chicago School of Economics in*

But while neoliberalism and libertarianism are intimately related, they are not the same: the former is largely a set of economic tenets while the latter is an all-encompassing social and political philosophy. Other histories, such as those examining the business assault on the New Deal, intersect with libertarianism, but overall the ideology is but a small part of these works, thus relegated to the tangents of history.<sup>112</sup> To be sure, some historians have considered libertarianism on its own terms. Stephen L. Newman has briefly examined the history of libertarianism, from its philosophical roots and antecedents to the founding of its movement, though, as will be discussed later, his scope is limited.<sup>113</sup> More promisingly, Justin Raimondo has outlined the lives of various figures of the Old Right to determine the intellectual roots of libertarianism, and explain how conservatism in the US was, in his view, corrupted and co-opted into the soft-statism which defines it today.<sup>114</sup> Most recently, Brian Doherty has presented a wide-ranging and “freewheeling” history of libertarianism, from the founding of the Republic to the present day, told through the lives and stories of various thinkers, writers, publications and institutions.<sup>115</sup> This thesis owes a great deal of debt to Doherty’s thorough work. Regardless, while this scholarship is encouraging, it also needs expanding.

Historians’ treatment of libertarianism is mirrored in their treatment of the *Freeman*, though its significance is acknowledged in the history of conservatism. Writes Nash: “It is difficult to convey a sense of the crucial role of *The Freeman* at the height of its prestige, between 1950 and 1954. The American Left, in these years, had many well-known and reputable journals from which to choose...It fell to *The Freeman*, almost alone among popular journals, to focus dissent, to marshal its forces, to articulate practical alternatives” to the Left.<sup>116</sup> It was singled out for special mention by William Rusher, former publisher of the *National Review*, “because it was so clearly in the main line of conservative developments and led so directly to yet another [the *National Review*].”<sup>117</sup> Various authors recognise the *Freeman*, along with *National Review* and *Human Events*, as an important voice in the postwar conservative intellectual movement.<sup>118</sup> Yet Nash and Rusher’s comments hint at the historiography’s limitations. If historians are not neglecting the *Freeman* entirely in favour of the *National Review*—such as Donald Critchlow, who claims the latter’s founding made the *Freeman* “superfluous”—or only briefly mentioning the magazine before moving to other business, then they present a truncated story of the magazine that is important only insofar as what it tells us about the *National Review*.<sup>119</sup> In the histories written by Nash and others, the *Freeman* disappears from importance upon its purchase by the FEE in 1954, becoming a monthly emphasising economics above all other considerations, and passing its “position as leading voice for the new conservative movement” on to the *National Review*.<sup>120</sup> Although the post-1954 *Freeman* is vastly more complex than that, for these authors, the *Freeman* is merely the failed predecessor of the *National Review*, serving as a model and useful cautionary tale for the more successful and important latter.<sup>121</sup> In this all-roads-lead-to-*National Review* teleology, the *Freeman* does not shed light on the

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Chile, Cambridge; New York, 1995, pp. 2-5; Monica Prasad, *The Politics of Free Markets: the Rise of Neoliberal Economic Policies in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States*, Chicago, 2006, p. 5; Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: the Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, Cambridge, Mass., 2009.

<sup>112</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*; Fones-Wolf.

<sup>113</sup> Newman.

<sup>114</sup> Justin Raimondo, *Reclaiming the American Right: the Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*, Wilmington, 2008, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

<sup>115</sup> Doherty.

<sup>116</sup> Nash, pp. 27-8.

<sup>117</sup> Rusher, p. 33.

<sup>118</sup> Himmelstein, p. 29; Richard A. Viguerie and David Franke, *America’s Right Turn: How Conservatives Used New and Alternative Media to Take Power*, Chicago, 2004, p. 55.

<sup>119</sup> Critchlow, p. 21; Burgin; Allitt, pp. 159-65; Schoenwald, pp. 27-8.

<sup>120</sup> Lichtman, p. 171; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 113; Nash, pp. 28, 146-7.

<sup>121</sup> Schneider, p. 58; Nash, p. 148; Viguerie and Frank, pp. 62-3.

development of libertarian ideology, but solely illustrates the growing pains of mainstream conservatism and the eventual formation of the Right's chief intellectual organ. Much as libertarianism is subsumed for the benefit of conservatism in historiography, so too the *Freeman* sits in the shadow of the *National Review*.

Examinations of the *Freeman's* content are similarly limited. As mentioned before, the *Freeman's* cursory appearance in a number of books means its ideas are not often analysed. In his otherwise thorough overview of the modern Right, Allan Lichtman merely notes that "The *Freeman* disappointed conservatives" for putting "anticommunism above economics and suffer[ing] from internal dissension, editorial turnover, and lagging circulation."<sup>122</sup> True, a number of authors have gleaned value from paying attention to the magazine's actual words. Typically, however, these analyses follow a specific formula, focusing and commenting on the same narrow set of subjects. This includes the magazine's backing of Senator Joseph McCarthy, its combination of anticommunism and free market economics, its explicit rejection of the traditionalism represented by Russell Kirk, the divide amongst its ranks in foreign policy, and the dramatic editorial schism which nearly ended the magazine—surprisingly well-trod topics in the magazine's limited historiography.<sup>123</sup> In fairness, these topics are highly significant and deserve the attention they receive—even this thesis does not avoid them. *The Freeman* is richer than this, however, and very few authors have delved into the magazine in depth, examining its ideas and reading for the sources and motivations of its ideology. Moreover, even this same set of topics tends to suffer from the magazine's overall subordination to the *National Review*. Typically presented, the magazine's debates over tone, foreign policy, electoral politics and anticommunism are used to show the mainstream Right, represented by the *National Review*, taking shape and leaving behind its noninterventionist, radically individualist tendencies.<sup>124</sup> In reality, it is more accurate to say this represented the concurrent formation of two different ideologies. Likewise, fascinating developments in these issues continued past the FEE's acquisition of the magazine, the usual end point for the magazine's relevance. Only Doherty and Charles H. Hamilton, in his overview of the magazine, have ventured past this point to examine changes in its ideology, albeit to a limited extent.<sup>125</sup> *The Freeman* gives us a unique, unvarnished window into the cobbling together of an ideology in its formative years, and insight into how conservatives of all stripes hoped to market their ideas in a period of transition, an opportunity squandered when focusing on only a narrow set of topics.

The *Freeman* also pushes back the date of origins of libertarianism as a movement and ideology. Randy Barnett traces the origin of libertarianism to the split between Rand and Rothbard in the early 1960s, while Newman dates the start of the movement to the late 1960s, when Rothbard attempted to ally the libertarian Right with the New Left, and brought about a schism in the conservative YAF.<sup>126</sup> Though Newman mentions that both "libertarianism as a distinct ideology" and "small circles of self-described libertarians" first appeared in the late 1950s,<sup>127</sup> this is as early as he is willing to go—he does not discuss the *Freeman*, and gives credit for the spread of libertarian ideas purely to the novels of Rand and the teachings of conservative economists on college campuses, whose students comprised these "small circles."<sup>127</sup> Rebecca Klatch, in her history of left and right student activism in the 1960s, similarly claims that a libertarian movement only emerged at the end of the 1960s, the result of a purge of libertarians from the YAF, leading to the founding of the

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<sup>122</sup> Lichtman, p. 171.

<sup>123</sup> Hamilton, pp. 323-4, 326-7; Viguerie and Franke, pp. 56-7; Schneider, pp. 47, 55; Nash, pp. 125-6.

<sup>124</sup> Hodgson, p. 71; Himmelstein, p. 44; Viguerie and Franke, pp. 62-3; Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 106-7, 113, 119, 124; Nash, pp. 146-7.

<sup>125</sup> Hamilton, 'Freeman 1950—,' pp. 325-7; Doherty, pp. 203-5.

<sup>126</sup> Randy E. Barnett, 'The Moral Foundations of Modern Libertarianism,' in Peter Berkowitz, ed., *Varieties of Conservatism in America*, Stanford, 2004, p. 51.

<sup>127</sup> Newman, p. 25.



Libertarian Party in 1973.<sup>128</sup> Likewise, Jennifer Burns refers to the activities of the late 1960s and early 1970s as “the first libertarian movement, the ferment of intellectual and political activity...that produced the modern Libertarian Party.”<sup>129</sup> Yet the *Freeman* shows that long before libertarianism had a political party to represent it, libertarians (who were far from college students) were not only exchanging ideas with each other, but organising themselves and attempting to spread their philosophy through institutions like the FEE and publications like the *Freeman* itself. These initiatives may not have been as large, coherent and structured as later efforts, but they established an existing foundation for later developments to build on.

Equally, existing scholarship on libertarianism tends to associate the movement with a specific and incomplete assortment of individuals. This list tends to be limited to figures like Milton Friedman, the ‘Austrian economists,’ and in particular, Rand and Rothbard.<sup>130</sup> Burns examines Rand’s life and role in popularising libertarian concepts among the masses through her novels, and her interaction with an existing network of libertarians.<sup>131</sup> As noted before, numerous authors have also looked at the influence of ‘Chicago economists’ like Friedman, as well as the ‘Austrian economists’ Hayek and Mises, in spreading libertarian economics and turning it into a respectable set of beliefs. Patrick Allitt limits his brief look at postwar libertarians to the standard cast of Hayek, Mises, Rothbard and Rand.<sup>132</sup> Even Newman lists this familiar collection of figures, maintaining that “If any one person deserves to be called the founder of the modern libertarian movement, that person is Murray Rothbard.”<sup>133</sup> Though he notes that libertarianism “owes a profound debt” to figures like Chodorov and Hazlitt, this is their single, solitary mention.<sup>134</sup> *The Freeman*, however, offers up an alternative cast of key thinkers involved in popularising the ideology who are generally little-known today, including Hazlitt and Chodorov, but also figures like Leonard Read and even the staunchly anticommunist, interventionist John Chamberlain. These individuals, whose heyday came before the late 1960s and 1970s, were equally essential to the development of libertarianism as its more established emissaries.

Finally, the *Freeman* provides some perspective on the role of the media in the resurgence of conservatism, both its movement and ideas. Though the explosion of scholarly interest in the Right has filled in many gaps in our knowledge, Kim Phillips-Fein has recently noted that the “role of the mass media in the creation of the Right...has not yet received full attention from historians.”<sup>135</sup> This is particularly striking, she says, “given the centrality of conservative talk radio, television programs, and leaders such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck to the movement today.”<sup>136</sup> Indeed, as previously outlined, histories of conservatism are more likely to examine the role of think-tanks, books, intellectuals and businesses in shoring up in the formative conservative movement than to look at how this ideology was disseminated at the ground floor, to ordinary people, through more ‘vulgar’ methods. Moreover, when it has done so, it has tended to focus more on the broadcasting industry than the print media, natural given the centrality, noted by Phillips-Fein, of radio and television to today’s conservatism.<sup>137</sup> This applies whether it is Heather Hendershot’s analysis of the ultra right-wing’s use of the airwaves to promote their message, or Nicole Hemmer’s overview of the conservative Manion Forum radio and

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<sup>128</sup> Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: the New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, Berkely; Los Angeles; London, 1999, pp. 9-10.

<sup>129</sup> Jennifer Burns, ‘O Libertarian, Where Is Thy Sting?’ *Journal of Policy History*, 19, 4, p. 452.

<sup>130</sup> Dunn and Woodard, p. 106.

<sup>131</sup> Burns, *Goddess of the Market*.

<sup>132</sup> Allitt, pp. 159-65.

<sup>133</sup> Newman, p. 27.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Kim Phillips-Fein, ‘Conservatism: A State of the Field,’ in *The Journal of American History*, 98, 3, p. 735.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Phillips-Fein, ‘Conservatism...’, p. 735.

television enterprise from the mid-1950s onwards.<sup>138</sup> Examining the content of the *Freeman*, however, reveals the way in which conservative print media in the 1950s was essential in shaping the movement. Print was not only a way to disseminate ideas among the public, but was also a vital tool for organising its adherents, creating an audience for the conservative message, and indeed, forming ideologies.

This study is divided into four chapters, aiming to fill these gaps in the scholarship. The first chapter looks at the *Freeman's* role as a concerted tool for movement-building, explicitly modelled on the efforts of the Left. Through the *Freeman*, conservatives and individualists connected, formed networks, created an audience, built an atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of their ideas, and refined the delivery of their message. The second examines the ideological ingredients of early libertarianism. Although libertarianism and its advocacy of 'pristine' capitalism are today associated with secularism, things were different for the individualists of the *Freeman*. Their anti-statist philosophy was intensely religious, grounded in a set of interrelated ideas around the divinely-created order of the world, and what was and was not natural within it. Additionally, the emergence of libertarianism, and the return of anti-statist ideas, was informed by the events of the 1930s and 1940s, which saw governments become the chief purveyors of violence and oppression in the fascist and totalitarian states of Europe. The third chapter observes the increasingly widening split among the *Freeman's* contributors, chiefly over the issue of anticommunism, culminating in the magazine's near-collapse and its purchase by the FEE. This gradual process was key to the development of an independent and distinct libertarian ideology. The final chapter examines that rarely-ventured period of the *Freeman's* history, from July 1954 to the end of 1955, and how the ideology of the magazine had changed under the ownership and editorship of the radically more individualist FEE and Chodorov, respectively. It is here that the flowering and construction of a distinct and separate libertarian identity takes place, and where conservatism and libertarianism first begin to take separate paths. These examinations will place a new perspective on libertarianism, in which its relationship to mainstream conservatism, while essential to both, is not its be-all and end-all. We can finally ask the question of what the development of conservatism can tell us about libertarianism, not the other way around.

The terminology involved in any history of conservatism is complicated, and so a note is in order. This is partly due to the confusion of overlapping terms naturally involved—classical liberal, neoliberal, conservative, neoconservative, etc.—but is also exacerbated by the fact that the *Freeman's* writers used a variety of different, inconsistent terms for themselves and their opponents. Indeed, to expect otherwise would be unrealistic, particularly at such an uncertain time for the Right. This thesis takes the cue of existing scholarship and uses *conservatism* to refer to the broad collection of ideologies, attitudes and tendencies on the political right. While modern libertarians may chafe at being labelled conservative, or even being placed on the right, there is no doubt that its progenitors shared, and that libertarianism continues to share, an origin and at least marginally greater affinity with these categories. When referring to the specific, 'fusionist' conservatism of William Buckley and the *National Review* which was constructed after the war and would characterise right-wing politics in the 1960s and beyond—as represented by entities like the YAF and the GOP—I will talk about *mainstream conservatism*. One of the key elements of this 'fused' conservatism, along with anticommunism and libertarianism, is *traditionalism*, a philosophy advanced by figures like Russell Kirk and Leo Strauss which stressed the need to work within society's existing customs and traditions, and opposed radical change. Another important term is the *Old Right*, which refers to prewar conservatives characterised by their bitter opposition to the New Deal and American entry into World War II. *Libertarian* itself is a deceptively tricky term. As

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<sup>138</sup> Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest*, Chicago; London, 2011, pp. 12-6, 19; Nicole Hemmer, 'Messengers of the Right: Media and the Modern Conservative Movement,' PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2010, pp. 2, 5.

this thesis will show, libertarianism only became the name of the free-market, anti-state, anti-intervention ideology carried by the *Freeman* in 1954, when Chodorov put his stamp on the magazine. Until then it was simply an alternative label for broad conservatism. It is thus somewhat anachronistic to refer to 'libertarians' before this. I instead opt for the term *individualist* when dealing with events before this point, a name the *Freeman* and others called themselves and Chodorov admitted was substantially the same thing, though I will at times also use it to refer to a general ideological tendency. Finally, while 'Left' is generally used to describe more radical and left-wing ideologies, I use the term *broad Left* to encompass everything left of centre—from middle of the road liberalism to Communism. *The Freeman* was not so consistent, and for them 'the Left', 'left-wing', 'Leftist' and 'liberal' were often the same thing.

This thesis examines the *Freeman* from its first issue on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1950 to the final issue of its fifth volume on December 1954. This was a crucial period for both conservatism and the magazine itself. For conservatism, it was a formative period of uncertainty, debate, and disagreement, when disparate conservative thinkers got together to work out just what their future movement and ideology would look like. *The Freeman*, as the only real journal of conservative ideas in these years, gives us a first-hand look at this process, including the gradual tearing off of anticommunists and traditionalists from their more radically individualist compatriots. In November 1955, just as this period came to a close, these writers would form their own publication, the *National Review*, which would assume the role of the Right's flagship journal of opinion. As for the *Freeman*, this period was a formative one for it too. The disappearance of mainstream conservative writers from its pages, its purchase by the FEE, its coming under the editorship of Chodorov, all in 1954, heralded a sharp turn in its ideology in a number of areas. By examining this period, we gain a good perspective of just how the magazine's ideas changed and in what ways. Moreover, this period demonstrates the ongoing process of ideological formation, as well as a further solidifying of the separate ideologies of mainstream conservatism and libertarianism. By 1956, with the establishment of the *National Review* and the *Freeman's* becoming a more purely libertarian publication, these processes had come to a close, and so does the scope of this thesis. While it is too much to say libertarianism was fully-formed by this point, certainly much of the messy work of debate and clarification was done with.

Before all this could happen, however, the remains of the wider conservative movement had to be picked up, dusted off and put back together. This was the task of the *Freeman*.

## Rebuilding the Movement

The conservatives of the 1950s were not granted the luxury of hindsight. They could not know, as we do today, that their decade would be a formative period, a time to regroup and clarify their ideas, setting in motion the events leading to a turnaround in their political fortunes. They had to make it happen. As one historian noted, an American conservative movement had not *truly* existed prior to World War II, when conservative views on the role of the state were so ingrained and self-evident there was no need to articulate them nor mobilise adherents.<sup>1</sup> But the transformative effect of the Depression on American political thought pushed dormant conservative forces to go on the offensive. A flurry of activity by conservative writers, activists, intellectuals and businessmen—sometimes all four in one—in the decades during and after the Depression formed the crawl of a movement of which the *Freeman* was a key part.

*The Freeman* was not just a form of intellectual exchange, but a tool for the movement. It was a place where both conservative writers and readers could come together, establish solidarity, and plan out the next phase of the conservative movement. The magazine discussed its targets of conversion, primarily the impressionable youth and businessmen, publicised initiatives dear to the movement, and updated readers on the progress of the movement. It was a medium for beleaguered conservatives to vent their frustration, as well as nurturing a sense of victimisation to spur on ordinary readers. Finally, the *Freeman* undertook a variety of strategies to proliferate its ideas. Its very form and existence was a way of disseminating conservative beliefs on the cheap, and it chiefly focused on distributing reprints and upping its subscribers to broaden the audience for its ideas. It also engaged in discussion, both internal and among readers, about how to best sell the individualist message in a world hostile to such thinking. *The Freeman* was thus part of a conservative push that was a combination of both elitist and grass roots.

### *i. Resisting the Left-wing Ascendance*

*The Freeman* aimed to inject conservative ideas into the national political discussion which they had been shut out from for so long, and to convert to individuals to its side through education and persuasion. As historian Niels Bjerre-Poulsen argued, the “importance that right wing intellectuals attributed to the media partly reflected a strong conservative belief in ideas rather than in the struggle between interests as a primary force in social change.”<sup>2</sup> Its maiden editorial reflected this. “For at least two decades,” it began, “there has been an urgent need in America for a journal opinion devoted to the cause of traditional liberalism and individual freedom. *The Freeman* is designed to fill that need.” While the cause of freedom “would not seem to lack defenders...it is most often invoked today under some cloudy collectivist concept.” *The Freeman* would “clarify the concept of individual freedom and apply it to the problems of our time.” Its existence rested on “the faith that there is a substantial body of readers in America who share these ideals, and who will rally to a periodical dedicated to their reaffirmation.” As a later editorial explained, “We seek....not only to hearten and strengthen those who already accept the principles of individual freedom,” but also “to convert honestly confused collectivists to those principles.”<sup>3</sup>

Writers and readers alike underscored the importance of educating the public and countering the dominant liberal media message. The only way, one

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<sup>1</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 17; Hemmer, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> ‘The Faith of the Freeman,’ *Freeman*, 1,1, Oct 1950, pp.5-6; ‘Function of the Freeman,’ *Freeman*, 2, 7, Dec 1951, p. 5.

reader wrote, "to counteract the incessant propaganda of the 'liberal' intellectuals; to explode the fallacies of their tenets; and to give the youth of America...an opportunity to recognise fully the benefits which they derive from the American system of economic freedom" was through "an enlightened public opinion."<sup>4</sup> "This is the function of a journal of opinion like the *Freeman*."<sup>5</sup> Towner Phelan agreed, arguing that the "authentic liberal tradition" of America would survive only with "a reorientation of the philosophy of those who mould public opinion."<sup>6</sup> *The Freeman* would do this by broadcasting this tradition, but also by establishing itself as a part of this realm of public opinion. Writing on the occasion of the magazine's first full calendar year, the editors reiterated this point. Intellectuals—defined as "anybody and everybody who has gained an audience beyond that of his immediate family and friends, and whose opinions carry kudos and influence either with other intellectuals or with the man on the street"—set "the fashion in political, economic and moral ideas", an "intellectual leadership" which "the masses do respect and follow." If this group could be converted, say through the same type of influence once wrought by Marx or Smith, so could the masses.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the broad label of 'intellectuals', the *Freeman* was particularly concerned with swaying two other groups: businessmen and the youth, particularly university students. Businessmen, in their eyes, were not aware of just how imperilled their way of life was, and had to be educated not just in how to fight back, but also in basic political concepts. "Few practical businessmen realise how economic and social ideas originate and spread," it explained, "because they are not usually themselves students or readers...and most businessmen have enough to do in improving their particular product to satisfy consumers, in reducing costs and in meeting competition." The result was that businessmen allowed Congress and unions to "destroy their business" or make "some ruinous demand." Moreover, not realising these demands came from "labour leaders following a suggestion thrown out in some college classroom, or by some radical writer," businessmen either tried futilely to reason with those "hostile to business," or failed to answer their core premises.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, a reader chided "private enterprisers" who paid, published or sponsored radical commentators, the very "advocates of their own destruction," by giving them platforms in the media.<sup>9</sup>

*The Freeman's* bigger concern, however, was winning over the impressionable youth of America, captured as they were by the overpowering Leftism of public schools and universities. It is they who would be the future voters, intellectuals and leaders of the country – those moulders of public opinion whom Phelan and others stressed needed to be reoriented. When the FEE took over ownership of the *Freeman*, Leonard Read expressed his hope that "every student, every teacher, every clergyman, every high school, college, and public library...would want every issue."<sup>10</sup> The magazine pushed hard to make these hopes concrete. By April 1952, it had expanded its distribution to "fifty university cities, centering its efforts on university bookstores and newsstands as well as on key newsstands in those communities."<sup>11</sup> Four months later, it urged parents to "provide for YOUR student the political, social and economic truths" of the *Freeman*, given that the "textbooks, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets at the disposal of tomorrow's left-winger are legion in number—all part of a carefully organised effort to win the mind of the student." To combat this, the *Freeman*

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<sup>4</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 2, 11, Feb 1951, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Towner Phelan, 'The Secret Strength of Communism,' *Freeman*, 2, 13, Mar 1952, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard Read, 'From the New Publisher,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Newest Freeman,' *Freeman*, 2, 14, Apr 1952, p. 6.

offered to send issues to students through the school year if the parents paid for a subscription and provided the student's address.<sup>12</sup> But time was of the essence—as late as July 1955, the *Freeman* painted a portrait of a school system “brainwashing children and adults so that they will conform to preconceived patterns of behaviour,” more likely to consult consensus over principle.<sup>13</sup>

*The Freeman's* updates on its efforts to convert the youth revealed that their efforts were often reciprocated or even prompted from the bottom up—the ordinary conservatives who made up its audience and would make up this movement were just as active as the elite in starting the movement. The magazine reported the “heart-warming news” of student converts in Kansas, Villanova, and Ohio, the latter where “copies of the *Freeman* on a fraternity-house table...are getting dog-eared from frequent perusal.”<sup>14</sup> A Bronx student organisation named the Cobden Club received personal thanks for advising its members to read the magazine.<sup>15</sup> It was not just college students. It later reported on the FEE, full owner of the *Freeman* at this point, and its involvement in the national high school debate program, sending debate packets to “799 different secondary schools” by the close of 1955. This effort was a response to growing demand for libertarian literature from students and teachers alike, which had grown from 125 spontaneous inquiries to over a thousand once officials allowed FEE the use of their distribution channels. In this way, “many students and teachers have been introduced to libertarian ideas they would not have encountered otherwise” on subjects like “world government, the welfare state, American labour.”<sup>16</sup>

To a lesser extent, the *Freeman* also served as a nexus for organisation where like-minded, conservative individuals could reach each other for various purposes. A number of readers sought support for assorted conservative causes through the magazine. Mississippi Representative Frank E. Smith implored others from Washington to support his bill to repeal the “Buy-American Act.”<sup>17</sup> Another reader, representing a “non-partisan group of women” concerned about Communist spying, suggested those similarly concerned urge their representatives to support a law permitting wiretapped evidence in treason and espionage cases, as well as enlist their friends to do the same.<sup>18</sup> These individuals drew on the magazine's built-in conservative audience as a source of backing for their respective goals. Others used the magazine to offer guidance for the conservative movement more generally. One reader suggested others follow her and her husband's lead in attending discussion groups and challenging the arguments lobbed by “poisoned propaganda promoters” at “the impressionable,” while another proposed “some informal system of communication” between conservative writers to challenge Leftists' domination of the market.<sup>19</sup> While the Communist Party excelled at organisation, said the latter, the “lack of communication, the divergence of viewpoints among non-egghead writers” left them isolated and ineffective.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, the *Freeman* was as much a political tool as it was a forum for intellectual exchange. Despite Bjerre-Poulsen's insistence that conservatives' emphasis on the media reflected their faith in ideas to foster change, to view the *Freeman* as simply a magazine is to sell short severely its founders' efforts and

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Are You Educating a Leftist,’ *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Edward A. Tenney, ‘Education of a King Jerk,’ *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Bettina Bien, ‘Reaching High School Debaters,’ *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, pp. 29-30; these debate packets were handbooks of articles dealing with any given year's national topic, prepared by the National University Extension Association which ran the program, as well as other organisations.

<sup>17</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 8, Jan 1954, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 4; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 18, May 1954, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

ambition. Alongside these various efforts, the *Freeman* itself publicised initiatives that would extend its own aims of education and conversion. It reported on the Claremont Men's College summer institute of graduate studies, a series of lectures and seminars on "freedom and competitive enterprise" which would be a welcome antidote to most other colleges' Marxist teachings.<sup>21</sup> More prominently, the magazine promoted and sponsored a series of seminars under its auspices to be led by Ludwig von Mises on the "essential problems of the social sciences," particularly ethics, economics and history, giving the economist a platform with which to reach a greater audience.<sup>22</sup> It publicised and kept readers updated on the event's progress in several issues, and offered ten fellowships to those living out of town, covering the cost of transportation to and from the event as well as related expenses.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the magazine set aside a full page in one issue to promote the event indicates its importance to the magazine.<sup>24</sup> *The Freeman* was not merely a conduit for ideas but was actively involved in bolstering this budding conservative movement.

Arguably the flagship initiative of this period was the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI), which, along with being promoted by the *Freeman* also shared a basic kinship with the magazine.<sup>25</sup> Founded by Frank Chodorov and William F. Buckley, supported through donations, and run from the FEE's offices at Irvington-on-Hudson, the ISI was essentially a university mailing list for conservative literature which grew from 600 members in 1952 to 3500 by March 1955, though it also organised lectures and discussion groups.<sup>26</sup> Much as conservatives aimed to replicate the Left's tactics by establishing an analogous journal of opinion with the *Freeman*, the ISI was modelled on the Leftist Intercollegiate Society of Socialists, and shared many of the *Freeman's* backers: the FEE, J. Howard Pew, Jasper Crane, the Volker Fund, and Spiritual Mobilisation.<sup>27</sup> Students from "32 states and 165 cities" received books like Henry Hazlitt's *Economics in One Lesson*, Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* and Friedrich Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* free of charge, along with pamphlets and articles from conservative journals like *Human Events* or the *Freeman* itself. As one grateful letter made clear, the membership and influence of the ISI spread through word of mouth: someone might recommend the ISI to a friend, or vice-versa, and this friend would immediately begin receiving literature whether they requested it or not. In addition to spreading individualist ideas, the organisation also served as a clearing house for young conservatives' frustrations, with letters pouring in sharing stories of persecution, "indoctrination," and clashes with big government.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, a new regular column, *On Campus*, introduced late in the magazine's run printed letters from disgruntled student libertarians that arrived through the ISI. Their letters gave "some idea of the anticollectivist revolt brewing in our institutions of higher learning," and reported on the ailing state of conservatism in universities.<sup>29</sup>

More importantly, these outreach efforts to the youth, embodied by the ISI, served a higher purpose according to the *Freeman*. It gave students "the comforting knowledge that libertarianism is not necessarily the philosophy of what *Time* magazine sniffs at as 'the extreme right wing'" but "a respectable intellectual position supported by men of the most unimpeachable character." It acted as "a force of cohesion for the scattered libertarians throughout the nation's

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<sup>21</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 4, 15, Apr 1954, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> 'A Freeman Seminar,' *Freeman*, 1, 10, Feb 1951, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*; *Freeman*, 1, 12, Mar 1951, p. 32; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 18, Jun 1951, p. 4; 'The Mises Seminar,' *Freeman*, 1, 22, Jul 1951, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Freeman*, 1, 12, Mar 1951, p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> The ISI would later be renamed the Intercollegiate Studies Initiative (Diamond, pp. 317-318).

<sup>26</sup> 'Education, not Politics,' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, p. 11; F. R. Buckley, 'Revolt of the Classes,' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> Lichtman, p. 171.

<sup>28</sup> Buckley, 'Revolt of the Classes,' pp. 28-29.

<sup>29</sup> 'On Campus,' *Freeman*, 5, 17, Nov 1955, p. 34; 'On Campus,' *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 31.

campuses," a "germinating source of new ideas for the promotion of libertarian activities" and a "meeting place for men who formerly had no place to go." Lastly, it awoke students from their consensus-filled trance and helped sustain the "questioning spirit" which threatened to be extinguished.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the ISI was the *Freeman* writ small, serving the same purposes for students as the magazine did for marginalised conservatives throughout the country. By informing readers of the activities of the ISI and others, the *Freeman* acted as an agent of the burgeoning postwar conservative movement, keeping followers abreast of its rising momentum.

More than this, the *Freeman* provides a useful insight into the conservative mindset during the height of the supposed 'liberal consensus.' Its pages reflected the feeling of malaise coursing through the nascent movement. Writers and readers complained not just of a country, but a *world* awash in Leftism which dominated all relevant institutions and power structures, including the clergy, press, education and, of course, government.<sup>31</sup> Even libraries and encyclopaedias did not go untouched.<sup>32</sup> Outside of America too, socialism and communism were viewed as making increasing inroads, from the rise of Peronism in Argentina to Arab nationalism.<sup>33</sup> Europe was regularly portrayed as on the verge of collapse to communism, mired as it was in the "drab austerity" of its socialist policies, with Britain particularly afflicted – a nation of rising crime, malnutrition and health problems, where private investors were extinct and citizens exploited and welfare to fund bad habits.<sup>34</sup> In Mises' words, the US was now "one of the few free countries left in the world."<sup>35</sup> For conservatives, the marginalisation they faced in the postwar world was an existential threat to not just themselves but to global freedom.

*The Freeman's* writers were frustrated by the broad Left's postwar monopolisation of public opinion. Phelan outlined the process by which all-encompassing Leftism served as a brick wall to shut out conservative ideas from the political mainstream: the welfare state, he explained, was spread by

those who regard themselves as the 'intelligentsia.' They are the dominant left-wing majority among the thousands of university professors, teachers, writers, book publishers, book critics, newspaper editors, columnists, radio commentators, lecturers, clergymen and Hollywood script writers. They create public opinion. They in turn are influenced by new books, book reviews, and such left-wing periodicals as the *Nation*, *New Republic*, *New Leader* and *Progressive*.

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<sup>30</sup> Buckley, 'Revolt of the Classes,' p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Edmund A. Opitz, 'From Amsterdam to Evanston,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug, 1954, p. 17; Stewart M. Robinson, 'Clergymen and Socialism,' *Freeman*, 1, 23, Aug 1951, p. 717; Charles J. Dutton, 'Let the Clergy Speak,' *Freeman*, 2, 7, Dec 1951, p. 18; Walter M. Haushalter, 'Our Leftist Clergy 1. The Enigma,' *Freeman*, 2, 18, Jun 1952, p. 21; Frances Beck, 'What's Happening to Our Magazine Fiction?' *Freeman*, 2, 6, Dec 1951, p. 21; 'The Press and Pavlov's Dog,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 8; Friedrich A. Hayek, 'Leftist Foreign Correspondents,' *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, p. 23; Lewis H. Haney, 'It Costs to be Thrifty,' *Freeman*, 4, 1, Oct 1953, p. 19; Ludwig von Mises, 'Our Leftist Economic Teaching,' *Freeman*, 2, 14, Apr 1952, p. 11; E. Merrill Root, 'Our Left-Handed Colleges,' *Freeman*, 3, 2, Oct 1952, p. 14; Phelan, 'Secret Strength...,' p. 18; even these numerous examples are only a small fraction of articles which touched on this theme, and they fail to get across the extent to which this subject pervaded much of the *Freeman's* writings.

<sup>32</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup> Ernesto Sanmartino, 'In Hitler's Footsteps,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 17; Eudocio Ravines, 'Peronism at Bay,' *Freeman*, 3, 26, May 1953, p. 18; Bonner Fellers, 'Africa and Our Security,' *Freeman*, 1, 23, Aug 1951, p. 9; 'Field for Soviet Imperialism,' *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Twilight of the Utopias,' *Freeman*, 4, 9, Jan 1954, p. 17; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 4; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 25, Sept 1951, p. 5; Antrobus, 'No Rich, No Riskbearing,' *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 15; Freda Uitley, 'England After Austerity,' *Freeman*, 4, 11, Feb 1954, p. 16; Candide, 'Foreign Trends,' *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Mises, 'Our Leftist Economic Teaching,' p. 11.



In addition to controlling what was published, he went on, the coalition of Communists, fellow-travellers and “counterfeit” liberals were also using education to indoctrinate the youth “against the American tradition and in favour of totalitarian socialism.”<sup>36</sup> A reader voiced similar views, protesting that “our country is still ruled by a comparatively small group of self-styled progressive intellectuals,” a “clique” controlling “almost all the important media of communication and education” as well as the “tremendous Federal apparatus of political propaganda.”<sup>37</sup> *The Freeman* exaggerated the supposed left-wing bias of the American press – in fact, more often than not, newspapers tended to lean more conservatively.<sup>38</sup> Periodicals like the *American Legion Magazine*, *Reader's Digest* and *Life* presented conservative viewpoints regularly, as did the Hearst papers, the New York *Daily News*, and the Chicago *Tribune*, then the most widely read paper in America.<sup>39</sup> Still, even this lean sat comfortably within the spectrum of the postwar centre-left political order, and the *Freeman* was right in that few publications espoused the more radical, anti-statist ideology to which it was devoted – and those that did, like *Christian Economics*, were certainly not widely read. It is not unreasonable then that the *Freeman* would see its ideas as unfairly shut out from mainstream media and discussion, something its very existence aimed to correct.

Certain events served as flashpoints for these frustrations in the magazine, as the publication of Nancy Jane Fellers' ‘God and Woman at Vassar’ did near the end of 1952. Fellers was the daughter of General Bonner Fellers, *Freeman* contributor and assistant to the RNC Chairman.<sup>40</sup> Her article played on Buckley's similarly-themed *God and Man at Yale*, and recounted in detail her alleged persecution by Vassar's left-leaning faculty, particularly English Professor Helen Lockwood who, Fellers believed, failed her for her outspoken political beliefs. Lockwood was portrayed as an ill-tempered and wrathful bully who did not hesitate to fail and threaten her student over her “dangerous ideas.” “It was the clash of two forces diametrically opposed to one another, even as they are in the world,” wrote Fellers.<sup>41</sup> Her story tapped into a number of the currents running through the *Freeman*: a sense of persecution, the rampant Leftism of American intellectuals and universities, the hypocrisy of liberals who cried ‘academic freedom’ and criticised Senator McCarthy while themselves suppressing speech, and the sense that the global struggle for freedom had seeped into American society as a whole. Controversy over the issue lasted months, with both Lockwood and the *Vassar Chronicle* publishing responses criticising Fellers for blaming her grades on a plot, and impugning the *Freeman*'s journalistic integrity.<sup>42</sup> Though some readers defended Vassar and Lockwood, for the vast majority, Fellers' article proved what conservatives had long suspected about higher education, crystallising and focusing their sense of embattlement. It “attracted much attention [in New York] because of nearness to Vassar and confirmed what we had heard in part,” wrote one.<sup>43</sup> Although Fellers denied she had a persecution *complex*, she did feel *persecuted*, and did not hesitate to use the rhetoric of war (“I have told the truth. I shall not retreat.”), much like one reader who praised the article's first-hand treatment of “a brush with the enemy.”<sup>44</sup> The incident confirmed conservatives' suspicions of a left-saturated society, increasing their sense of urgency and affirming the importance of exposing such occurrences: “Incidents such as these are known to many people,

<sup>36</sup> Phelan, ‘Secret Strength...,’ p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 11, Feb 1952, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> McPherson, pp. 14, 26; Richard W. Steele, ‘The Great Debate: Roosevelt, the Media, and the Coming of the War, 1940-41,’ *The Journal of American History*, 71, 1, Jun 1984, p. 72.

<sup>39</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 79.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Our Contributors’ and ‘Boo to a Pumpkin,’ *Freeman*, 3, 3, Nov 1952, pp. 3, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Nancy Jane Fellers, ‘God and Woman at Vassar,’ *Freeman*, 3, 3, Nov 1952, pp. 11, 14. (V3,n3)

<sup>42</sup> ‘Vassar Answers Nancy Fellers,’ *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, pp. 16-18.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 33; ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Vassar Answers Nancy Fellers,’ pp. 18-19.

but are seldom aired, and that, I believe, is why they...apparently are on the increase."<sup>45</sup>

This incident further fed into the sense of victimisation already reflected and cultivated by the *Freeman*. In the same issue as Fellers' article, the editors mocked *Harper's* editor Frederick Allen's claim that "adventurous and constructive thought" was being "stifled," arguing that such claims of 'intellectual terror' were simply a way for the Left to maintain its dominance over institutions and ideological monopoly. The only terror, they went on, was against "those who would pursue the adventure of 'constructive thought' on the Right."<sup>46</sup> Similarly, like many social critics of the time one author bitterly complained that America was being overcome by what he termed "herd thinking." He, however, located this conformity in a widespread "fear of being thought conservative," which in many circles was thought shameful and unfashionable.<sup>47</sup> Chodorov informed readers that the media "have virtually closed their columns to opposition articles" since the 1930s, making the *Freeman's* job of offering "a medium of expression to embryonic writers" of a conservative bent all the more important, lest they be captured by socialism or give up.<sup>48</sup> He thus simultaneously conveyed the sidelining of conservatives and set up the *Freeman* as their safe haven and saving grace. Merely reading the *Freeman* was a rebellious act in an increasingly uniform society.

A number of *Freeman* contributors believed they were being directly targeted by the powers-that-be. One editorial suggested that the *Freeman* and *Economist* were being censored by the left-wing governments of Britain and America respectively, as foreign subscribers of each magazine complained of irregular delivery.<sup>49</sup> In fact, as the editorial explained and later events bore out, the US had ramped up its mail control program upon the outbreak of the Korean War, screening all foreign publications in order to root out, ironically, communist propaganda, ensnaring some issues of the *Economist* as a result.<sup>50</sup> It was and is unclear if the British government was behaving similarly to the *Freeman*, but "it is reasonable to assume the *Freeman* comes under scrutiny when it reaches London," especially since its ideas were more offensive to the British state than the *Economist* was to the American.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, conservative writer Taylor Caldwell wrote in about the "covert or open threats" she was receiving from Washington for her opposition to the Sixteenth Amendment.<sup>52</sup> Caldwell later wrote of a vicious, co-ordinated campaign of lies and smears launched to make an example of her after she began speaking out against communism, which included schoolteachers bullying her children in class. She received three phone calls from Washington, she said, warning her she would be framed if she continued on. Yet she remained defiant: "If we are deliberately ruined, and even if we lack bread, we'll fight on!"<sup>53</sup>

Readers chimed in with their own stories. *The Freeman* printed a 'friend's' letter to the Director of the New York Library, alerting him to some "cloak and dagger business" at one of its branches. While "the *Nation* and other publications of similar editorial inclinations" sat clearly on racks, the *Freeman* was "carefully hidden" under lock and key because, according to the librarian, it was frequently stolen. The editors declined to take sides, but prefacing the letter with sceptic's marks around the 'objectivity' of libraries and details of pro-Soviet books in a

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<sup>45</sup> 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> 'Boo to a Pumpkin,' pp. 8-9.

<sup>47</sup> J. Donald Adams, 'The Right to be Conservative,' *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, pp. 21-23.

<sup>48</sup> 'New Names,' *Freeman*, 5, 12, Jun 1955, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> "'Processing the Mails",' *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*; Alvin Shuster, '...Nor Gloom Of Censorship', *The New York Times*, Aug 2, 1959, p. SM11; Richard L. Lyons, 'Lawsuits Test Withholding of Mailed Propaganda', *The Washington Post*, Nov 22, 1959, p. A15.

<sup>51</sup> "'Processing the Mails",' p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 34.

<sup>53</sup> Taylor Caldwell, 'My War With the Reds,' *Freeman*, 3, 6, Dec 1952, pp. 19-20.

Connecticut library served as a subtle endorsement.<sup>54</sup> Another reader reported her own run-in with a clueless liberal-type, a university librarian in this case, who overheard the reader's comments about the Consumer Union being a communist front and launched an "emotional tirade" defending the Union and attacking the *Freeman*. She recounted her dogged pursuit of the truth and exposure of the librarian's ignorance, and ultimately "reported the librarian's efforts to conceal the truth and to discredit an honest source."<sup>55</sup> Whether such stories were sincere or not is unknowable. More important is the type of worldview these accounts helped construct and reinforce – one where, in the political climate existing in the 1950s, it was not hard for conservatives to see a wider plot or conspiracy behind administrative quirks or the overzealous actions of individuals.

This sense of overwhelming victimisation was essential for the budding movement. One of the main elements every political movement requires are social factors to push the apathetic and fearful into accepting change, as Brian McPherson has argued.<sup>56</sup> For those who already felt beleaguered, the *Freeman* assured them they were right, and for those who did not, it told them they should be. In the words of scholar Eric Hoffer, quoted by one reader about, ironically, the Left for its scapegoating of Wall Street, capitalists and McCarthyism: "Mass movements can rise and spread without belief in a God, but never without belief in a devil."<sup>57</sup> Conservatism was cast as the puny but plucky David battling an overwhelming Goliath, energising those at the grass-roots, as well as cloaking disparate individuals in a sense of community. "It is imperative," the editors wrote, "that those who already believe in a market economy, limited government and individual freedom should have the constant encouragement of knowing that they do not stand alone, that there is high hope for their cause."<sup>58</sup> It was important for circumstances to appear somewhat dire – how else to spur readers into expending the collective effort needed to restart the conservative movement? And by casting the stakes not as the loss of political influence, but as the loss of freedom and the very survival of the United States against an unscrupulous enemy, it gave urgency to the cause and allowed readers to rationalise their own hostility – it is easier to rail against an opponent who is foolish, unfriendly, or downright malicious than one who is a complex human being with different beliefs. Like the Republicans' exploitation of communism in 1950 and beyond, at once a reflection of sincere alarm over the Democrats' perceived weakness and a cynical ploy to return a marginalised party to power, these writings reflected genuine concern as well as helped galvanise a movement.<sup>59</sup>

## ii. *Spreading the Individualist Message*

Before its words could excite a nation-wide campaign, the *Freeman* would have to ensure they were actually read. The *Nation* and *New Republic*, gold standards of political journalism in conservative eyes, had achieved a virtual revolution with modest circulations of 36,000 and 30,000 respectively, which most conservative journals struggled to reach.<sup>60</sup> *The Freeman*, by contrast, started out with only 6000 subscribers, 5200 of those being unexpired

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<sup>54</sup> 'In the Libraries,' *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 9; for what it was worth, the *Freeman* published a reply from the New York Public Library the next issue which resented the letter's implications and confirmed that the *Freeman* did indeed tend to get stolen when placed on an open rack ('Letters,' *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, p.4)

<sup>55</sup> 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> McPherson, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Lichtman, p. 175-77.

<sup>60</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 80-1.

subscriptions from its predecessor *Plain Talk*.<sup>61</sup> From the very beginning it thus undertook a campaign to ensure, as one subscription advertisement proclaimed, "The influence of the *Freeman* extends far beyond its circulation." It listed four pillars of this campaign: reprints, other publications, libraries and subscribers. As it explained, the *Freeman* had articles reprinted in publications like the *Reader's Digest* as well as "hundreds of newspapers in the United States, Canada, and abroad," plus "scores of specialised publications in various fields." Moreover, it claimed, by February 1954 the magazine could be found in over 5000 libraries, the vast majority public ones that would allow it to reach a wider, more diverse audience. This was all thanks to its eager pool of subscribers, who the *Freeman* frequently encouraged to send the magazine to their local libraries.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, these were not wasted words.

It was its use of subscribers to spread the word and convert the ignorant, however—what it called "our greatest potential for sound growth"—that was the *Freeman's* most visible and important strategy.<sup>63</sup> *The Freeman* was helped in this effort by methods already developed by other conservatives. Anticommunist conservatives in the 1950s created a flood of inexpensive, compact and easily-distributable paperbacks which were often borrowed, copied and/or otherwise spread among like-minded individuals, educating them about the encroaching Communist menace and how to stop it.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Edward Rumley had pioneered the use of direct mail to oppose Roosevelt's court-packing scheme in 1937, broadcasting his message, direct and unfiltered, to a million people while flying under the radar of political opponents, and making sure to include subscription blanks for donations with every mailer.<sup>65</sup> *The Freeman* built on these schemes with its subscriber strategy. Being relatively cheap and lightweight itself, "Newsweek-sized" and a mere 25 cents an issue (a little over \$2 today), it was readymade for such bulk ordering, informal swapping and passing around.<sup>66</sup> It constantly pushed readers to sign friends up for the magazine as well as other interesting reading material, and advised them that a subscription to the magazine would make an ideal Christmas gift (complete with special Christmas rates).<sup>67</sup>

*The Freeman* explicitly advocated a word-of-mouth, peer-to-peer exchange of material, which would exponentially increase its reach. Indulging again in the rhetoric of battle, it implored readers to "Enlist [their] friends in the ranks of free men!" and "start a snowballing movement to build the *Freeman's* audience and influence."<sup>68</sup> An early issue pressed readers to "Subject More People to its Influence," recounting how the editors sent the magazine to a list of people, some of whom gave them another list of people, who gave another, and so on, and advised readers to make their own lists.<sup>69</sup> It frequently offered special rates for gift subscriptions, with an envelope enclosed for convenience, so as to help expand the magazine's ever-widening circle of influence."<sup>70</sup> For \$1 per reader, the

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<sup>61</sup> Hamilton, 'Freeman 1950—,' p. 322; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 106.

<sup>62</sup> 'IMPACT: Force Communicated,' *Freeman*, 4, 10, Feb 1954, p. 2; 'How Do Your Friends Stand on the UN,' *Freeman*, 5, 10, Apr 1955, p. 2; *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 33; Read, 'From the New Publisher,' p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> 'IMPACT: Force Communicated,' p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Laura Jane Gifford, 'The Education of a Cold War Conservative: Anti-Communist Literature of the 1950s and 1960s', in Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner, eds., *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda, and the Cold War*, Amherst, 2010, pp. 55-56.

<sup>65</sup> Lichtman, p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> Greaves, p. 343; Robert Sahr, 'Consumer Price Index (CPI) Conversion Factors 1774 to estimated 2023 to Convert to Dollars of 2012,' <http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/sites/default/files/faculty-research/sahr/inflation-conversion/pdf/cv2012.pdf> (Accessed 10 February 2014).

<sup>67</sup> "The gift of freedom is never forgotten" after all (*Freeman*, 3, 4, Nov 1952, p. 35); *Freeman*, 2, 4, Nov 1951, p. 32; 'Christmas Bells Are Liberty Bells,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p.36; *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 32.

<sup>68</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 15, Apr 1953, p. 4; 'How Far Will \$1 Go?' *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 35.

<sup>69</sup> 'Freedom is Contagious,' *Freeman*, 1, 8, Jan 1951, p. 32.

<sup>70</sup> *Freeman*, 1, 25, Sept 1951, p. 32.

editors would mail these “friends, associates and acquaintances” a sample of three months worth of issues, after which they would be asked to become regular subscribers.<sup>71</sup> These efforts paid off—circulation doubled in the first year, and on the magazine’s second birthday, the editors reported that they had acquired 21,000 subscribers, all without the adequate funds for any significant promotional effort—a result of their dedicated readership.<sup>72</sup> The magazine might well have reached 30,000 had infighting not torn the magazine apart, though the editors happily reported at the start of 1953 that they had achieved their highest circulation yet.<sup>73</sup> By the end of its run, the *Freeman* was asking readers merely for a list of friends and their addresses, who they could send issues to free of charge to whet their appetites.<sup>74</sup>

This message was not broadcast in advertisements only. In its second issue under the FEE, owner Read published a personal message titled “It is Up to You.” There are a dozen journals, he wrote, “plugging openly and unashamedly for various phases of socialism,” not counting middle-of-the-road liberal journals or the “hundreds” of publications which were conservative in name only. These journals had achieved staggering readerships through “the simple and effective method of reader-cooperation,” where “every subscriber adopts his journal as his very own and makes the distribution of it a personal project.” If “the readers of the *Freeman* will go and do likewise,” they could ensure libertarians were not “talking to ourselves only,” and help “swell ourselves into a much bigger and more influential minority.”<sup>75</sup> This personal appeal from the magazine’s new publisher solidifies the importance, perceived or otherwise, of readers’ efforts to the success of the *Freeman* and the wider movement, as well demonstrating again the rising conservative movement’s debt to the Left. Earlier issues celebrated these efforts occasionally in a feature called *Among Ourselves*, a small column of only a few paragraphs that graced the contents page each week. It reported on readers subscribing for their college-age children, opening a circulating library which included the *Freeman*, and “the gratifying custom of subscribing for...their brokers, bankers and doctors...their leftist daughters at Radcliffe and for pastors too smitten with Kirkegaard.”<sup>76</sup> Still finding its feet and perennially struggling to break even, the *Freeman* did not have the funds for more typical promotional methods, as it reminded its readers.<sup>77</sup> As such, readers and their dedication to spreading the libertarian message was a cornerstone of the magazine and movement’s eventual success, forerunners to the activities of Californian middle-class “suburban warriors” who helped expand the influence of the Right in the 1960s.<sup>78</sup>

Reprints were the final part of this four-pronged strategy. They were a commonly advertised feature, an “inexpensive, effective means by which [readers could] take part in the battle against collectivist propaganda.”<sup>79</sup> Like the magazine as a whole, these reprints were to serve as a primer for typical libertarian arguments, refreshing readers’ knowledge of the cause and helping them refute the opposition. “How often in arguments and discussions with friends have you exclaimed: ‘You ought to have seen the article in the *Freeman* on that.’ And how many times have you been unable to produce a copy of that particular

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<sup>71</sup> *Freeman*, 1, 25, Sept 1951, p. 32; *Freeman*, 3, 15, Apr 1953, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> *Freeman*, 2, 2, Oct 1951, p. 2; ‘Success Story,’ *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 33.

<sup>73</sup> ‘A Practical Testimony to the Vitality of the Freeman,’ *Freeman*, 3, 9, Jan 1953, p. 36; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> *Freeman*, 4, 1, Oct 1953, p. 33; *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Leonard Read, ‘It Is Up to You,’ *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 3; ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 2, 19, Jun 1952, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Success Story,’ p. 33.

<sup>78</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: the Origins of the New American Right*, Princeton, N.J., 2001, pp. 4-5.

<sup>79</sup> ‘More Questions...More Answers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 10, Feb 1954, p. 35.

article to back up your point.”<sup>80</sup> Well, “next time you get into a discussion, let a *Freeman* reprint clinch your argument.”<sup>81</sup> *The Freeman* regularly reprinted “articles and editorials which our readers have considered especially important”, and claimed to have distributed three million of these in three years.<sup>82</sup> Rates started at a paltry ten cents for a single copy, less than one cent today, and up to \$60 for a thousand.<sup>83</sup> One article on centralisation of power in unions was even offered at 100,000 copies for \$1500.<sup>84</sup> As it indicated, the content of these reprints could be influenced by readers—the magazine dutifully obliged a reader who requested an article to be reprinted, and prepared reprints of another article that had received an enthusiastic reader response—but the fact that reprints were sometimes advertised in the same issues the articles debuted in indicates this was not solely a bottom-up affair.<sup>85</sup>

Not included in this list, but just as important, was the *Freeman's* plugging into the “alternative library” established by conservatives in the 1950s and 60s to create “networks of educated readers” much as communists had earlier done.<sup>86</sup> Conservative publishers were largely excluded from mainstream publishing networks, forcing them to establish their own houses, which the *Freeman* played a part in publicising.<sup>87</sup> Its pages were replete with advertisements for paperbacks from conservative publishers like Regnery, Devin-Adair, Free Enterprise Booksellers, or in one instance, the University of Chicago Press, which offered tracts on conservative economics by authors like Hayek and Friedman.<sup>88</sup> Any books reviewed in the Book Section, which a reader thanked for breaching the “rigid censorship [of conservative literature] in force by most your competitors and by leading metropolitan journals,” were offered to be sent worldwide postage-paid if the reader only paid the bookstore price.<sup>89</sup> *The Freeman* even helped circulate oppositional literature to its readers, familiarising conservatives with the arguments used by the other ‘side’, the better to refute them. Some issues offered to send out Henry George’s “great masterpiece” *Progress and Poverty*, presenting “the Land Communist argument and point of view”, coupled with a “definitive exposé” of “26 pages of critical review and clarification” – all for \$1.50.<sup>90</sup> *The Freeman* similarly later carried an advertisement for “One of the few ‘protection’ arguments ever written,” Lewis E. Lloyd’s *Tariffs: the Case for Protection* – a “solidly grounded book” that “is a key book in its field.”<sup>91</sup> The magazine played a key role in bolstering networks of conservative readers.

*The Freeman* had specific groups it encouraged readers to sway with “the right side of the question.”<sup>92</sup> These included teachers, clergymen, the aforementioned libraries, workers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, businessmen, and community leaders.<sup>93</sup> It wanted its ideas spread “among the universities, the professional groups, the formers of opinion”—those tastemakers and people of

<sup>80</sup> ‘The RIGHT side of the question,’ *Freeman*, 4, 8, Jan 1954, p. 35.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> ‘You, Too, Can Be an Educator!’ *Freeman*, 4, 4, Nov 1953, p. 32; ‘IMPACT: Force Communicated,’ p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> ‘You, Too...,’ p. 32; *Freeman*, 1, 18, May 1951, p. 32; *Freeman*, 3, 12, Mar 1953, p. 35.

<sup>84</sup> *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, p. 32.

<sup>85</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 3, 12, Mar 1953, p. 4; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 3, 14, Apr 1953, p. 4; *Freeman*, 5, 12, Jun 1955, p. 11; ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 3, 26, Sept 1953, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Gifford, p. 50; Lichtman, p. 159.

<sup>87</sup> Gifford, pp. 55-56; Lichtman, p. 159.

<sup>88</sup> *Freeman*, 2, 6, Dec 1951, p. 31; *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, p. 36; *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, p. 31; *Freeman*, 5, 11, May 1955, p. 37; *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1953, p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 3, 9, Jan 1953, p. 54; *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 34; *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1952, p. 34.

<sup>90</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 3, Nov 1951, p. 33; *Freeman*, 3, 9, Jan 1953, p. 34.

<sup>91</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 36.

<sup>92</sup> ‘The RIGHT side...,’ p. 35.

<sup>93</sup> Read, ‘From the New Publisher,’ p.5; *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 32; (V1,n1); ‘The RIGHT side...,’ p. 35; *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 33; *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955; *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 44; (V5,n16/17/18)

influence it had singled out at the end of its first full calendar year.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, the *Freeman* fit neatly with other conservative organisations like the Manion Forum and business-based initiatives, which all targeted clergy and schools, recognising their importance in creating public opinion.<sup>95</sup> As already seen however, none of these groups were more important than the youth, who were not only regularly suggested as targets, but had several advertisements tailored directly around them throughout the magazine's run. *The Freeman* offered special subscription rates for students which ranged through \$3.50 for the September-to-May school year, \$3 for 8 months, or \$4 for a full year.<sup>96</sup> One offer even presented several plans for readers to alternatively: purchase subscriptions for an entire college fraternity, sorority, boarding club or dormitory reading room; all of their national chapters; or even for all such institutions at a single college, all for either one, five, or ten college years.<sup>97</sup>

Such advertisements reinforced the message of the magazine as a whole, presenting a student population beset on all sides by a stifling Leftism threatening to seduce their impressionable, young minds. This same advertisement recalled a meeting with a friend's college-age daughter attending "a leading Eastern university," who read only *The Nation* and similar publications to "find out what really to think about what's happening." "Now we offer you the opportunity to remedy this" and "back up the revolt against the collectivist trend on our campuses."<sup>98</sup> A final instance presented an image of a studious youth, nearly enveloped by blackness, kept illuminated by only a small pyramid of light from a lamp. "Countless forces contend for his mind," and the "answers that sway him today are the decisions which will guide America tomorrow." Thus, "if collectivism is ever to be defeated," then "the voice of freedom must make itself heard on the campus." Given that there was "no sparkling young professor to buttress his beliefs, no host of undergraduate sympathisers surrounding him," it was up to readers to "give him access to the philosophy of freedom" and "show him that he is not alone."<sup>99</sup> *The Freeman* was heartened to eventually learn that a Johns Hopkins professor had been handing out copies of the magazine to his classes as a "corrective", which they viewed as a measure of success—they had begun finally to penetrate those bastions of liberalism which had been heretofore inaccessible.<sup>100</sup>

*The Freeman's* emphasis on capturing the youth was a microcosm of its overall strategy to emulate its chief adversary—Leftism. Explaining its initiative to get copies of the magazine onto college reading tables everywhere, it asserted that the "left has always recognised that the students of today are the leaders of tomorrow."<sup>101</sup> "For years the forces of the Left have understood" that to sway the youth was to control the future—"and acted accordingly."<sup>102</sup> "Yesterday's rebels are now entrenched" because of these machinations, machinations the *Freeman* would adopt to 'rout' its foe.<sup>103</sup> The magazine and its editors freely acknowledged their debt to the opposition, pointing to the extraordinary success of the Left in swaying the public and setting the terms of political orthodoxy. As discussed, the very existence of the magazine was an homage to the success of liberal journals. As John Chamberlain later wrote, "If the *Nation* and the *New Republic* had not sold the intellectuals on the virtues of the planned economy in the '20's and early

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<sup>94</sup> 'Success Story,' p. 33.

<sup>95</sup> Hemmer, p. 65; Fones-Wolfe, p. 218.

<sup>96</sup> 'Are You Educating a Leftist?' *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 34; *Freeman*, 4, 1, Oct 1953, p. 34; 'Is this student alone?' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 41.

<sup>97</sup> 'How You Can Back Up the Revolt on Campus,' *Freeman*, 4, 5, Nov 1953, p. 33.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> 'Is this student alone?', p. 41.

<sup>100</sup> 'Success Story,' p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> 'How You Can Back up...', p. 33.

<sup>102</sup> 'Is this student alone?', p. 41.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

'30's, there would have been no Roosevelt Revolution."<sup>104</sup> Elsewhere, the magazine insisted individualists could "take at least one lesson from the enemy," specifically in gaining converts. Socialism in its various forms could neither have existed nor succeeded without the efforts of "well-fed middle-class intellectuals," who popularised and made fashionable socialist doctrines. It quoted Lenin approvingly that adherents should "present a patient, systematic persistent analysis," thus becoming what the author called "enlightened and able expositors, teachers, disseminators, proselytizers."<sup>105</sup>

Likewise, the *Freeman* also aimed its subscription advertisements at that other specially-coveted group: business leaders. We have seen how the *Freeman* regarded business leaders as naïve, yet potentially powerful allies in the battle for freedom. It thus naturally called on its readers to send reading material to their "employers" as well as "business and industrial associates."<sup>106</sup> There are hints that the *Freeman* was aware that this group, being especially receptive to its anti-tax, free-market message, may have made up a healthy selection of its audience. Though it is impossible to know, numerous advertisements implied a wealthy readership of industrialists, investors and businessmen. Fairbanks-Morse's ads boasted its industrial parts were "so often the answer to industry's problems," while Thompson Products offered to hire out its production lines and help with the "design, development, engineering and production of your product."<sup>107</sup> Also advertised was Greenbrier, an up-market resort with "three top-flight golf courses", "200 miles of scenic bridle trails", and "world-famous faces" in residence.<sup>108</sup> Companies and financial institutions like Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Beane, Safeway Stores, and Coast Federal Savings published their financial details, presenting themselves as viable options for investment. Coast was a "legal investment for your trust funds," noted one ad.<sup>109</sup> The magazine also advertised literature advising investors on their stock and securities options, such as the *Analysts Journal* or the *Value Line Investment Survey*, "to protect your capital" and "help you choose the strongest stocks." Not only would the information within aid opinion leaders, boasted the former, but "as a corporation official...you will want your company to advertise consistently in our pages" to keep it visible.<sup>110</sup> If nothing else, the *Freeman's* advertisers were aware of whom the magazine's potential audience was.

It is likely, however, that all of those involved in the magazine knew members of the business elite were reading it. As Brian Doherty put it, postwar libertarians were more a "gang" than a movement, numbering less than a hundred, all of whom knew and corresponded with each other.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, it had been founded thanks to generous donations from wealthy industrialists, and numerous business executives sat on its board of directors and that of its future owner, the FEE. Indeed, the *Freeman* encouraged businesses to purchase ad space in the magazine, citing its growth in circulation as well as readers' "strong and friendly sentiment" to advertisers, based on their devotion to free enterprise and private property.<sup>112</sup> Business' support was crucial for the substantial resources it could muster. *The Freeman's* special offers for up to hundreds of thousands of article reprints—anywhere between \$40 and \$1500—were a volume and cost far out of reach for the ordinary conservative doing their humble bit for

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<sup>104</sup> Blanchette, p. 9.

<sup>105</sup> 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> *Freeman*, 1, 23, Aug 1951, p. 32; 'A Christmas Suggestion for Freeman Readers,' *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 37.

<sup>107</sup> *Freeman*, 4, 4, Nov 1953, p. 35; *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 6; *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 25, Sept 1953, p. 6.

<sup>109</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 26, Sept 1953, p. 4; *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 6; *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 6.

<sup>110</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 33; *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 37.

<sup>111</sup> Doherty, pp. 197-8

<sup>112</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 11, May 1955, p. 43; 'A Note to Advertisers,' *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 2.



the movement by badgering friends and neighbours.<sup>113</sup> Rather, this amount was meant for businesses and institutions which had the funds and resources for such comparatively large-scale distribution. Indeed, the *Freeman* proudly noted that an Illinois manufacturer sent out 600 gift subscriptions in lieu of Christmas cards, saying that he had “received favourable comments from our customers.”<sup>114</sup> That same ad explicitly recommended that the reader purchase a subscription for “employees.”<sup>115</sup> This symbiotic relationship between business and the magazine would pay off later. Under union-busting, free-marketer Lemuel Boulware in the 1950s and 1960s, General Electric, a *Freeman* advertiser, distributed reading lists to its managers and supervisors in an attempt to displace labour leaders as the ‘thought-leaders’ of the workplace.<sup>116</sup> Listed among other publications were the *Wall Street Journal*, Buckley’s *National Review* columns, and the *Freeman*.<sup>117</sup>

Readers acted enthusiastically on all of these messages, regularly reporting back on their efforts to win over converts. Readers referred, lent, and bought subscriptions of the *Freeman* for their friends, significant others, even their schools, pledging themselves to spread its ideas wherever they could.<sup>118</sup> A subscriber professed that others had suggested that he subscribe no less than three times, and had received a letter from Cincinnati “couched in the most glowing terms, urging me to get it into schools, libraries, etc.”<sup>119</sup> One passionate Virginian notified the editors that she had written her friends urging them to try the magazine and subscribe, and had lent out copies as far as to Vermont and Chicago (“But I demand return, for I constantly refer to articles”).<sup>120</sup> Another told of his habit of buying multiple copies of the same issue from his local newsstand, which sold “many Communist publications,” so that “he will continue to carry some respectable literature.”<sup>121</sup> Writers and readers worked in tandem, each building on the other. It was one thing to express and articulate the ideas which would animate a nascent movement. But ideas cannot operate in a vacuum--they had to be exposed to the audience that would form this movement. Unlike earlier, more elitist attempts at movement-building, such as the Liberty League in the 1930s, those at the top here recognised the value of readers and ordinary individuals in diffusing their literature and ideas. Dedicated readers were thus active agents in mobilising themselves into a movement.

Yet once these ideas had been spread, there was still the matter of selling them to the reader, an enterprise for which the *Freeman* again took cues from what they understood the Left to be doing. The “people have been beguiled away from the truth upon which the American way of life was founded,” wrote Gareth Garrett; they must be taught the truth again.<sup>122</sup> The public needed “Economic Education,” which was “a job of salesmanship.”<sup>123</sup> One article argued that Americans’ continued support for a strong state presence illustrated “the need for interpreting the libertarian cause more widely, and in terms the public understands.” This was because “collectivists do a better job of selling their social merchandise than free enterprisers,” by clearly defining problems and then “selling the problem-solving features of their programs” in terms of their “good ends.” Conversely, free marketers were “negativists,” deflating reforms and union

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<sup>113</sup> ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 2, 26, Sept 1952, p. 5; ‘The RIGHT Side...’, p. 35; *Freeman*, 1, 17, May 1951, p. 32.

<sup>114</sup> ‘How Far Will \$1 Go?’, *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, p. 101.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 1, 8, Jan 1951, p. 21; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 1, 21, Jul 1951, p. 24; ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 34; ‘From Our Readers,’ 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 4; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 19, Jun 1954, p. 4; ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 1, 8, Jan 1951, p. 21.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 2, 25, Sept 1952, p. 33.

<sup>121</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 4.

<sup>122</sup> Gareth Garrett, ‘The Cry of Free Enterprise,’ *Freeman*, 1, 12, Mar 1951, p. 16.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

demands, and “negativism is the albatross around the neck of free market leadership.” Libertarianism needed “some good down-to-earth salesmen who can interpret the system in the simple terms of people’s daily experience”—namely, in terms of freedom.<sup>124</sup> Readers agreed. One encouraged conservatives to continue campaigning on the Hiss case well into the 1960s, given that the Democrats were still using the Great Depression “for material” as late as 1952—issues, both, which touched on the people’s fears and anxieties about the future of American life.<sup>125</sup> Conservatives may have been somewhat demoralised in the 1950s, but they recognised the value of borrowing from the opposition and were not shy about doing so.

Authors debated throughout the *Freeman’s* run about just how to communicate their ideas to the masses. They identified numerous flaws in the conservative message as it was. While advocates of socialism wrote deliberately for the layman, conservatives wrote in an overly esoteric, jargon-peppered style which did not help to win over converts.<sup>126</sup> One author recounted a conversation between himself and his wife, who proved unable to understand a *Freeman* contributor’s verbose style and wished they would write plainly and simply, for “us common people.”<sup>127</sup> While the *Freeman* style was perfectly comprehensible within the circle of contributors, he said, “there is no communication in talking to ourselves.”<sup>128</sup> Chodorov similarly expressed his desire to read and publish economics essays “that make liberal use of the parable, [are] free of didactics and constructed of square-toed Anglo-Saxon words and phrases.”<sup>129</sup> He wanted the magazine to stay away from “the gobbledegook professors of economics affect to cover up their ignorance of economic realities.”<sup>130</sup> Readers agreed. They complained occasionally of “intellectual jargon,” that the magazine’s language had become too erudite and obscure, and of writing “burdened with the technical terms and point of view of the professional economist.”<sup>131</sup> Alternatively, they praised authors “who never don the Oxford glasses,” “speak in the vulgate,” and make “use of plain straightforward English.” Not only would this win readers, they argued, but the libertarian’s mission was to “make known far and wide the basic tenets of individualism and free enterprise with the greatest degree of clarity.”<sup>132</sup> Jargon and unintelligibility were the hallmarks of bureaucrats and college professors, not freedom-loving individualists.<sup>133</sup>

For the *Freeman*, language was crucial in the ongoing ideological conflict particularly because the Left had succeeded in manipulating and bending it to its own devices. “It is a sad footnote to this age,” wrote one reader, “that our socialistic and communistic “friends” have been able to achieve a great measure of success by beclouding their insidious campaign against our free society in the most popularly appealing words.”<sup>134</sup> Commentators recognised the elasticity of words, and complained bitterly of the way left-wingers of various stripes used semantics to play with emotions and achieve their desired ends.<sup>135</sup> “Skill with the semantic and a consequent ability to destroy the English language have been necessary for the success of the New Deal liberal,” wrote assistant editor M.

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<sup>124</sup> Claude Robinson and Le Baron R. Foster, ‘Salesmen for Freedom Wanted,’ *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, pp. 11-12.

<sup>125</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 9, Jan 1954, p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> Mises, ‘Our Leftist Economic Teaching,’ pp. 11-12.

<sup>127</sup> Mercer H. Parks, ‘I Take an English Lesson,’ *Freeman*, 3, 6, Dec 1952, p. 14.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> ‘An Editor Dreams,’ *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 3.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 2, 23, Aug 1952, p. 4; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 20, Jun 1954, p. 4;

‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 6.

<sup>132</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 20, Jun 1952, p. 42; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 4, 18, May 1954, p. 6.

<sup>134</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> ‘Word Traps,’ *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 25.

Stanton Evans.<sup>136</sup> As George Orwell, a noted influence on the *Freeman*, had pointed out in 1984 and other writings, words and their meanings are not static and could serve a powerful political function. Words like 'democracy' and, especially, 'liberalism,' complained an author, had been subverted and become devoid of meaning, used by both communists and libertarians.<sup>137</sup> Leftists couched their policies in terms such as 'welfare', 'security', 'scientific, 'progressive' and 'reform', attaching positive emotional cues to their ideas while automatically besmirching their opponents and their intentions.<sup>138</sup> Towner Phelan similarly criticised the substitution of "government by slogan" for rational discussion, "techniques originated by Lenin and perfected by Michelson, Stalin, Goebbels and Hitler."<sup>139</sup> So-called liberals patterned their promotion of left-wing policies on Communist techniques, using "a smoke screen of emotion to conceal the dishonesty of their arguments."<sup>140</sup>

Nonetheless, the *Freeman's* contributors clearly recognised that they would have to employ such emotional appeals and sloganeering to combat collectivism. Their insistence on writing in simple, accessible language was one reflection of this. Elsewhere, an advertisement-cum-article promoting a pamphlet on the "Capitalist Counter Attack" lamented the quality of the Right's arguments, which had not advanced beyond "America has more bathtubs than Russia" or "Liberty is better than slavery."<sup>141</sup> They would have to be "more lively and convincing," and conservatives would need to formulate convincing answers to thirty particular "lying Socialist Slogans" if the Right was "to win its war with the left."<sup>142</sup> Public relations executive A. A. Imberman—whose firm had recently conducted an interview campaign with working people as part of business' campaign to reach the lower middle class and below—reported his findings on public sentiment to free enterprise in the magazine. Imberman's firm interviewed 22,000 people in 31 states over a two year period, including 16,026 members of 36 unions, as well some of their wives and non-union employees.<sup>143</sup> The average worker, he found, was: unconcerned with corruption; unquestioningly trusted his/her government, which he/she viewed as a "benevolent father"; saw things in terms of clichés and stereotypes, having limited "imaginative resources"; looked to outside authority, such as union leaders and clergymen, for guidance with the unfamiliar; was hostile and distrustful of business; and generally neither cared nor dreamt of matters beyond his/her home, job or daily routine. They were most concerned with their "immediate, ongoing life", and took some satisfaction in small, narrow fantasises of a better future—a promotion or commendation on the job for men, and "vague ideas of family betterment" or "freedom from dishwashing and responsibilities" for women.<sup>144</sup>

This "latter-day romance with the politicians," argued Imberman, was a result of the nature of the Left's political appeals, couched "in terms of bettering the worker's income, increasing his pay and his security in his job, enriching his daily existence." Counter arguments, by contrast, were couched "in abstract terms, presented impersonally, and without emotional appeal." There was evidence that workers preferred "the freedom of the American system," he concluded, but they had to be "told in language in which they can see themselves, in stereotypes familiar to them, or...how free enterprise safeguards their jobs and homes and improves their standard of living."<sup>145</sup> Elsewhere, one

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<sup>136</sup> M. Stanton Evans, 'What is a Semantic?' *Freeman*, 5, 17, Nov 1955, p. 33.

<sup>137</sup> 'Word Traps,' p. 25.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>139</sup> Towner Phelan, 'Controls Won't Stop Inflation,' *Freeman*, 2, 4, Nov 1951, p. 14.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> 'Coming Defeat of Socialism,' *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, p. 71.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Imberman noted that this group made up 65% of the population, making business' failure to influence them very costly.

<sup>144</sup> A. A. Imberman, 'Free Enterprise: the Worker's View,' *Freeman*, 2, 1, Oct 1951, pp. 15-17.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

reviewer endorsed a book which argued “that, to survive, free business must be an exemplary citizen, winning its place in the community by an intelligent participation in the solution of community problems,” thus “counteracting the untruthful and insidious propaganda of the Socialists.”<sup>146</sup> While at times grossly essentialising ordinary working people, articles such as this represented a genuine attempt to open conservatives’ eyes to the inadequacy of their communication strategy. Facts and philosophical sermons about the nature of liberty and freedom were important, but these points had also to be made into easily-digestible arguments that would strike at the gut, not just the head. These discussions of language thus essentially served a dual purpose: they further criticised the Left by pointing out its intellectual dishonesty while also providing a useful model for conservatives to copy in their quest to reclaim political ascendance.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the themes Imberman and others highlighted found their way into the magazine. Articles and advertisements adopted a more positive tone. The magazine revised its obsession with communism, observing that just as there is “only one right answer to the sum of 2 and 2, and infinite number of wrong answers,” so communism was just one wrong answer to “the basic social problem” which capitalism solved.<sup>147</sup> *The Freeman* “must base [its] criticisms on a positive program”—“the improvement and purification of Capitalism.”<sup>148</sup> It worked to rehabilitate the image of “the hard-pressed and often misunderstood men who run our large business enterprises,” and tie the success of private enterprise to American progress.<sup>149</sup> One editorial described a strike from a Ford representative’s perspective, caught between the equally financially ruinous demands of the union and the strike.<sup>150</sup> It reported on companies reinvesting huge sums to the benefit of ordinary workers, disproving the notion among Europeans and labour leaders “that capitalism is a way of sweating labour for the benefit of a few grasping stockholders.”<sup>151</sup> The purchase of a new shirt made from a new, superior fabric, Dacron, invented by du Pont, prompted one author to reflect that “It is a symbol of our way of life, of the restless urge for something better—that present-day version of the pioneer spirit which drives our industrialists to create ever-higher standards of living for the whole nation.”<sup>152</sup>

Business and industry themselves beamed these same messages from their advertisements in the magazine, which were as much about selling the virtues of business and the free market as about selling a product. Companies like American Cyanamid, Kidder, Peabody and Co., and Safeway Stores emphasised businesses’ focus on their employees’ welfare through safety inspections, training programs to avoid accidents, and farsighted “efforts to further the future welfare of their employees” through voluntary savings and investment plans and profit sharing schemes.<sup>153</sup> One four-page long Association of American Railroads advertisement implored readers to “recognise the railroads for the highly competitive industry that they are rather than the monopoly they are supposed to have been.”<sup>154</sup> Advertisements also tied business and industrial success to the march of civilisation. Sun Oil, with its slogan “Pioneering Petroleum’s Progress and Better Living for You,” repeatedly stressed the improvements in quality of life wrought by competition, while one du Pont ad argued that “Cultural gains, can take place only when people are spared the necessity of eking out a bare living...This comes about only through business and

<sup>146</sup> Edward Keller, ‘A Living Creed,’ *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 28.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Let’s Defend Capitalism,’ *Freeman*, 3, 11, Feb 1953, p. 8.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> ‘The FTC Talks Sense,’ *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 10.

<sup>150</sup> ‘The Point of Diminishing Returns,’ *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, pp. 9-10.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 2, 5, Dec 1951, p. 4.

<sup>152</sup> Sterling Morton, ‘Story of a Shirt,’ *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, p. 19.

<sup>153</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 36; *Freeman*, 4, 2, Oct 1953, p. 4; *Freeman*, 4, 19, Jun 1954, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 9, Jan 1953, pp. 2-5; *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 4.

industry.”<sup>155</sup> *The Freeman*, on its own and by acting as a medium for the business community, was already putting into practice the very strategies it had identified for selling its message.

Furthermore, discussion over the appropriate style, content and tone of the magazine carried on over the years. Would the *Freeman* be a sober, serious journal of facts and intellectual discussion aimed at the devoted individualist in order to sharpen and clarify his beliefs? Or a humorous, entertaining and accessible read, meant to preach beyond simply the inner circle of the already-faithful and build as broad a following as possible? For the most part, it chose the latter. Sections on art, television and theatre, as well as the usual book reviews, not all of which were political, graced its pages. Moreover, issues frequently contained satire, humour and fiction alongside more typical fare, as well as poems, quotes, cartoons, and a recurring feature named “This is What they Said”—a selection of quotations spoken by public figures, usually on the broad Left, sent in by readers illustrating hypocrisy, foolishness or both. This was in contrast to their relatively austere layout, which opted for simple, unadorned designs of two columns of paragraphs per page, basic font and plain article headings (though the magazine increasingly added some variety as time went on, inserting author portraits and other images into articles as well as employing somewhat showy article headings for certain features).<sup>156</sup> Readers responded positively to these features, expressing their appreciation for certain pieces of poetry and witticism.<sup>157</sup> One thanked the *Freeman* for its “salty humour,” which he found “enlivening and diverting.”<sup>158</sup> Another praised the humorous writing of ‘Argus’, insisting: “In this deadly serious business of preserving our country, we need a lift occasionally of humour.”<sup>159</sup>

Yet a couple of incidents illustrated the tension surrounding this matter. The first was a split in 1952 among the editors and director-stockholders over the magazine’s tone which partly occasioned the *Freeman*’s first major schism, to be discussed later in more depth.<sup>160</sup> The FEE’s purchase of the magazine in 1954 was the second. The FEE favoured a more fact and logic-driven approach—one need only look at the ascetic presentation of the organisation’s volumes of *Essays on Liberty*, which it sold and sent to subscribers, to be sure. Indeed, in his first issue as publisher, Read declared the magazine’s mission to deal “journalistically and topically with principles, ideas, and issues,” and “neither glorify nor vilify persons, nor...champion or oppose individuals holding or seeking political office.”<sup>161</sup> These stances hardly gelled with the views of certain writers like Chodorov, known for his affinity for parable, or, especially, John Chamberlain.<sup>162</sup> “Is it effective in 1954,” wondered Chamberlain, reviewing a volume of the FEE’s *Essays*, “to push the [already unpopular] doctrine of anti-Statism without recourse to the literary values of irony, sarcasm, humour, parody and occasional birching of the specific sinners who are busy committing the sins which Mr. Read deplures?” Read preferred “abstract argument” to “personalities” because “he rightly says it is not important to make a play to reach the masses.” Yet even Albert Jay Nock recognised the “virtues of style” and “logically extraneous devices,” which were just as important for reaching the ‘remnant’ as the masses. Chamberlain recounted his correspondence with FEE staff-member and sometime *Freeman* contributor F. A. Harper over this piece. Harper felt “that irony, invective sarcasm and parody lead to unfair and clouded judgements,” while “reason and

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<sup>155</sup> *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 35; *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 36; *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 44; *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 43.

<sup>156</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, pp. 15, 18, 21, 25, 28, 31.

<sup>157</sup> ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 34; ‘Letters,’ *Freeman*, 3, 2, Oct 1952, p. 34; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 34.

<sup>158</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 5, Dec 1951, p. 24.

<sup>159</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 18, May 1954, p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> Rusher, p. 34; Blanchette, p. 11; Nash, p. 146.

<sup>161</sup> Read, ‘From the New Publisher,’ p. 5.

<sup>162</sup> Chamberlain, ‘People on Our Side,’ p. 25.

logic are everything." But "logic often needs a prod," countered Chamberlain: "one cannot see the truth until the emotional desire not to see it has been destroyed or punctured by something." Illustrating again the Left's stature as a reference point, he noted that collectivists had "not won [their] literary victories by argument" but by "their superiority at literary politics."<sup>163</sup>

While Chamberlain may have had the last word in that exchange, the magazine appeared to head away from his preferred direction. Not only had it become a monthly, not fortnightly, publication of slightly longer length, but the first two issues of the new *Freeman* had a noted dearth of poetry and humorous or entertaining features, and by the third they had vanished entirely. 'This is What They Said,' which had appeared at least once every second issue previously, also disappeared entirely from the contents. Ironically, this was at the same time that the magazine sported a slightly more spruced up design, adding the aforementioned images, as well as ornate article headings for some features and photographs of authors and article subjects by the fifth issue.<sup>164</sup> This shift did not go unnoticed. By the second issue, a reader professed his belief that he would like the new *Freeman* even more than the old one, but cautioned editors not to "confuse seriousness of purpose with dullness of presentation."<sup>165</sup> Another complained a year after the changeover that "Ever since the management changed I have missed a great deal the occasional flashes of humour and tongue-in-cheek articles...although I do detect in recent issues some return to this attitude."<sup>166</sup> Not everyone agreed of course. A reader criticised Chamberlain's earlier suggestion "to introduce bits of literary come-ons to woo the reader," insisting that the magazine maintain "doctrinal purity" to make readers feel they have "graduated to a true institute of higher learning. The higher the literary level, the finer are the standards it sets."<sup>167</sup>

Nonetheless, whether by coincidence or by purposeful design, the magazine did begin phasing these features back in after this short experiment. Quotes from influential thinkers started appearing at the bottom of articles by the sixth issue, with some limited humour sprinkled in by the seventh.<sup>168</sup> From issue nine, 'This Is What they Said' appeared infrequently, albeit in a very reduced form, as did small amounts of humour and jokes from issue ten on.<sup>169</sup> The magazine also introduced a new column, 'Loaded Terms,' late in its run, printing readers' satirical 'true' definitions of certain political terms, such as "mixed economy", "social security," or "collective bargaining."<sup>170</sup> The magazine even experimented with a new feature, cartoons, which illustrated the thin line between government welfare and robbery and the drop in baseball players' take-home pay due to inflation and taxes.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, despite the changeover, the

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<sup>163</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, pp. 36-7; Chamberlain's review of the *Essays on Liberty* appeared in the magazine three issues after Read's vow to stay away from personalities.

<sup>164</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954; Frank Hanighen's new regular column, 'Washington D. C.', sported a much more ostentatious heading from this issue onward. The heading of the letters section did too; *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, pp. 15, 23, 28, 31.

<sup>165</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 4.

<sup>166</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 6.

<sup>167</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, p. 6.

<sup>168</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, pp. 16, 19, 33; The *Freeman* comments on a Biblical verse ordering the labouring husbandman to be the "first partaker of the fruits": "'Taint so, says the Internal Revenue Bureau: the withholding tax is first"; as well, an article appears about a social scientist, "Mr. Buttinski," moving in to the neighbourhood and snooping into people's lives (*Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, pp. 32-34).

<sup>169</sup> 'This is What They Said,' *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, p. 20; *Freeman*, 5, 10, Apr 1955, p. 28, 32; 'Notes on the News,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 11 (this section contained humorous commentary on current events); 'This is What They Said,' *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 26; *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, pp. 9, 12, 30.

<sup>170</sup> 'Loaded Terms,' in *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 8; *Freeman*, 5, 17, Nov 1955, p. 20; *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 33.

<sup>171</sup> 'Tale of a Coat,' *Freeman*, 5, 11, May 1955, p. 23; 'Ted Williams' Take-Home Pay,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 31.

*Freeman* never did see much of a shift in tone or style of writing, particularly with Chodorov at the helm. Chodorov laid out the kinds of articles he sought toward the end of the magazine's run: "the short story that tells of the human side of freedom," "satire as Mark Twain wrote it", "humorous anecdotes pointing up the foibles of political demigods", poems, "commentaries on the current of thought and manners," "inspirational pieces," and "factual information" with "easy continuity for easy reading" and without "tiresome peroration"—essentially endorsing the earlier calls for more accessible and literary writing.<sup>172</sup>

The same year that Lionel Trilling confidently declared conservatism dead and buried in America was also the start of a flurry of activity to revive it. Demoralised though they were, the conservative readers and writers of the *Freeman*, and conservatives more generally, were determined to return America to the form it took in its most glorious years. They set about gathering together the necessary materials for replicating the seeming triumph of the Left, a daunting yet achievable task, and one the *Freeman* is both a record of as well as a key player in. What is more, as the *Freeman* makes clear, the success of that goal involved the vitality and enthusiasm of readers and 'ordinary' conservatives as much as those more typically considered activists or intellectuals directing the movement. It was an exciting time—while previous attempts to reclaim political dominance had been stillborn, this time really seemed different. The *Freeman* is today a record of these hopeful efforts. More than just evidence of a burgeoning movement, however, the *Freeman* is also a record of the underlying beliefs and ideas which animated these thinkers' voluntarist, anti-statist, free market principles—beliefs which may surprise us today.

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<sup>172</sup> 'An Editor Dreams,' p. 3.

## Ideological Roots

Libertarianism today tends to carry some specific associations: individual rights, radically free market economics, modernity, and an at-times militant atheism. As *Reason* editor and libertarian writer Brian Doherty put it, libertarianism “is not backward looking or reactionary,” but by “extending individual liberty into radical areas of sex, drugs and science” is “the most future looking of American ideologies.”<sup>1</sup> There exists “a mighty wall of separation between libertarianism and religion,” writes Doherty, in place at least as far back as the 1960s, when the libertarian and conservative wings of the YAF battled over an insertion of ‘God’ into the Sharon Statement.<sup>2</sup> These casual assumptions about the ideology are all around us today—prominent libertarians today include magician Penn Gillette and South Park creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker, known for their rejection and mockery of religion. The 2007 video game *Bioshock*, a critique of libertarian belief, saw games explore an undersea dystopia destroyed by its pursuit of radical individual desires and rejection of the constraints of religion and traditional morality. As Doherty’s words show, the scholarship is little better. Writes one historian: “The libertarian defense of...pristine capitalism has often tended to be materialist and secular in nature,” justified instead by its efficiency, technological innovation, and advancement in material goods.<sup>3</sup> Libertarian author Jerome Tuccille has called Christianity “the traditional religion of conservatives,” one of the major points of difference between it and libertarianism.<sup>4</sup> The closest any authors come to suggesting there could be a kinship between the two is in Richard Viguerie and David Franke’s claim that “there is no necessary antagonism between libertarianism and religion.”<sup>5</sup> Not only do these authors discount the importance of Christianity, but the role of ‘nature’ is entirely absent from modern scholarship of libertarianism—none of these authors so much as mention it, despite its importance to the early libertarians of the *Freeman*. Newman writes simply that the “twin pillars of libertarian ideology are antistatism and capitalism.”<sup>6</sup>

The absence of religion is largely owing to the writings of Ayn Rand. Her bestselling novels popularised libertarian ideas and passed on her distrust and hostility to religion onto her admirers, including those libertarian students in the 1960s who devoured her books.<sup>7</sup> Yet libertarianism as a movement and ideology existed before Rand and the 1960s student protests, if only in an embryonic form. Its vanguard in the 1950s was not made up of rebellious youth but a network of writers, journalists and intellectuals who had come of political age in a different era. Their individualist anti-statist beliefs had enjoyed a revival after the totalitarian 1930s and early 1940s, convincing these and other writers that any form of state action paved the road to dictatorship. Their belief that any society which allowed its state to transgress certain boundaries was destined for collapse was linked to their concurrent beliefs about Christianity and nature. Contrary to our modern associations, for these early libertarians, a set of interrelated ideas about God, the market, and what were believed to be natural forces emanating from and intertwined with both, were at the core of their most basic premises – how they justified their distrust of government and their faith in the free market. These men (and they were mostly men) had a deep Christian faith, and viewed their individualist, anti-state beliefs as direct outgrowth of this faith. They were also captivated by the natural world, the creation of the God whom they worshipped, and along with influencing their concern for the environment it also

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<sup>1</sup> Doherty, pp. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 271; Klatch, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Himmelstein, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome Tuccille, *Radical Libertarianism: A Right Wing Alternative*, Indianapolis, 1970, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Viguerie and Franke, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Newman, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Doherty, p. 271; Klatch, p. 69.



represented for them a model for society. The market was a natural entity to them, and government interference into the market and other areas was not only violating nature's laws, but those of God, too. These were the pillars of thought at the core of early libertarian thinking.

*i. All Roads Lead to Totalitarianism*

The emergence of libertarianism must be understood in the post-World War II context in which it emerged. At the centre of the *Freeman's* thinking on the state and its role in human affairs was the belief that any kind of state power that transgressed certain acceptable limits would inexorably lead—be it in a matter of months, years, even decades—to an oppressed, totalitarian society. *The Freeman* frequently espoused this sentiment throughout its run. Editor Henry Hazlitt argued that through its nationalisation of industries like coal, gas and electricity, the British government “could control the whole economy of England,” and further charged that “semi-planning, or what is popularly known as middle-of-the-road policy, also leads by a series of steps and consequences to socialism.”<sup>8</sup> All sorts of measures, from farm subsidies, the nationalisation of Niagara Falls, government welfare, even publicly-owned parking lots and free, public golf courses, were viewed by the magazine as “a step toward socialism,” pushing America “past the ‘point of no return,’” or guaranteeing the “certainty of authoritarian control.”<sup>9</sup> At the “end of the road marked ‘National Health Scheme’ stands the barrack doctor of the Police State.”<sup>10</sup> These were not charges tossed out to gain easy rhetorical points. The idea that, given the wiggle room, the state would expand and seize more and more power until freedom was extinguished was a core premise of these authors’ beliefs that threaded its way through many of their arguments.

The idea went further than this, however. For many authors, it was not simply that these measures ‘furnished’ the road to some sort of totalitarianism, but the genuine belief that all ‘statist’ doctrines—Nazism, fascism, communism, socialism, among others—were one and the same.<sup>11</sup> There was no distinction between the Western capitalist welfare state and socialism, let alone between communism and Nazism, because each was a variation of the other with the same basic concept at heart—the subjugation of the individual to the whims of the state for some kind of greater good. The “differences between the welfare state and socialism, and between socialism and communism, are not differences of kind but merely of extent and degree,” wrote Hazlitt. “They grow inevitably out of each other as the frog grows out of the tadpole and the tadpole out of the egg.”<sup>12</sup> Such sentiments were repeated constantly in the *Freeman's* pages, frequently and casually conflating these ideologies in a variety of ways. Statism “includes socialism, New Dealism, communism, and what goes by the name of ‘liberalism,’” explained future editor Frank Chodorov.<sup>13</sup> One author, listing the chief collectivist leaders of the recent past, placed Britain’s Clement Attlee next to Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, equating Britain’s democratic, socialist government with the violent totalitarian states of the latter.<sup>14</sup> The casualness of this comparison indicates the extent to which the *Freeman* saw this as a logical,

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Hazlitt, “‘Welfare’ to Socialism to Communism,” *Freeman*, 2, 5, Dec 1951, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> F. A. Harper, ‘Agriculture’s Sacred Seventh,’ *Freeman*, 4, 6, Dec 1953, p. 18; Robert S. Byfield, ‘Why Socialise Niagara,’ *Freeman*, 4, 4, Nov 1953, p. 14; Helmut Schoeck, ‘Individualism vs Social Security,’ *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 17; E. W. Dykes, “‘Downtown’ Socialism,” *Freeman*, 5, 12, Jun 1955, p. 11; Sterling Morton, ‘Fore!’ *Freeman*, 5, 12, Jun 1955, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Rugged Individualism—or Merely Rugged?’ *Freeman*, 3, 8, Jan 1953, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> William H. Peterson, ‘Our Economic Maginot Line,’ *Freeman*, 4, 19, Jun 1954, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Hazlitt, “‘Welfare’ to...,” p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> ‘We Want It,’ *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Dean Russell, ‘The American Baby Bonus,’ *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 13.

understandable belief which could be taken for granted and needed no further elaboration or clarification.

*The Freeman's* references to Nazism were one of its frequent allusions. Again and again, laws and measures were compared or likened to Hitler's genocidal regime. The magazine talked of "educational storm troopers" taking over classrooms and called exchange controls "a totalitarian device first systematically adopted by Nazi Germany."<sup>15</sup> In a theatre review of *The Caine Mutiny*, whose story concerned a Navy Lieutenant's guilt over questioning the Navy's principle of authority, an author questioned if "this same attitude [did] not lead to such ultimate irresponsibility as we have experienced in the pleas of certain former Nazi officers."<sup>16</sup> Chodorov used the Nazis as a benchmark with which to measure America's own progression to socialism after the war, complaining that "in point of taxes we are little better off than" Germans under the Nazis, that "conscription has become a permanent fixture in the American way of life, even as it was under Hitler," and that "we are saddled with a bureaucracy that compares favourably in size with that of the Nazi regime."<sup>17</sup> A story of an American farmer being bothered by "a Washington alphabet outfit" harkened back to farmers in 1930s Germany being forbidden "to sell even one egg to a neighbour" as all eggs had to be "sent to a central agency in Berlin for national distribution."<sup>18</sup> Nazi Germany, not to mention fascism and totalitarianism in general, was generally the first case to consider when weighing up any particular issue, speaking to its importance to the *Freeman's* worldview.

Yet the *Freeman's* use of the historical experience of totalitarianism and the influence it had on its ideology was rooted in the times in which these authors lived. Isabel Paterson referred to Nazism and Communist Russia to illustrate how the desire to do good for the collective leads down a road of oppression, and prominent conservatives of the time—Jeffersonian Democrats, Chrysler executive B. E. Hutchinson, former Republican presidential candidate Alfred M. Landon, not to mention conservative icons Herbert Hoover and Robert Taft—also conflated these ideologies, seeing the New Deal as a sinister break from tradition in line with developments in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Within our contemporary context, these authors' comparisons and conflations of American liberalism to disparate totalitarian ideologies appear as glib hyperbole, irresponsibly using horrific events for political ends. For some of these authors this may have been the case, but the frequent and reflexive use of these ideas indicates that this was a genuine belief animated by the trauma of the war and the terrible reality of totalitarian Europe. The state violence, violation of basic rights, and property seizure of fascist Europe was no distant memory for these writers, and in fact was ongoing, due to the continued existence of the Soviet Union and its satellites. The denigration of property rights followed by subsequent human rights violations during and after the war, first by totalitarian states then the 'good guys', must have done much to cement the connection between state control over property and the rights of the individual.<sup>20</sup> Jews were stripped of money, goods, homes and businesses, which were redistributed among the Nazis and their allies, while fascist tactics and methods continued after liberation as postwar trials and anti-fascist purges punished individuals on grounds as arbitrary and doubtful as those cited by prewar governments.<sup>21</sup> "The state ceased to be the repository of law and justice," writes Tony Judt; "on the contrary...government was itself the leading predator."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> John T. Flynn, 'Have We the Brains to Be Free?' *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 21; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 2, Oct 1950, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Serge Fliegers, 'To Whom Authority,' *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1954, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> 'The Return of 1940?' *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> 'America Was Freedom,' *Freeman*, 2, 25, Sept 1952, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Isabel Paterson, *The God of the Machine*, New York, 1943, p. 237; Lichtman, pp. 87-8, 159; Allitt, pp. 145-6, 148; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 26, n. 18.

<sup>20</sup> Judt, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 38, 48-50.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.

It is no coincidence, then, that some of the thinkers who were most influential on the *Freeman* and its anti-state, free-market ideology had a European background. "For all the neo-liberals, the phenomenon of the Third Reich, whether viewed from abroad or experienced at home, was to affect their way of thinking about the nature of human society," writes historian A. J. Nicholls.<sup>23</sup> Neo-liberal economist Wilhelm Roepke, hailed by the American Right as the intellectual father of the German recovery (which the *Freeman* frequently praised as a model for the US) and a common name among the *Freeman's* bylines, was one of the first German professors to be dismissed by the Nazis, and narrowly evaded being harassed and murdered by the regime as some of his colleagues were.<sup>24</sup> Or consider Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, whom the *Freeman* admired and published and who, extolling laissez-faire 'Austrian economics,' did more than any other two figures to intellectually revive free market economics.<sup>25</sup> Both went into exile after the onset of Nazism, Hayek in 1931 and Mises, Jewish by descent, in 1934 after the Nazi takeover of Austria.<sup>26</sup> Few countries were as impacted by Hitler's rise. A country of 7 million people, Austria had 536,000 registered Nazis by the war's end, was overrepresented among concentration camp administrations and the SS, and its "public life and high culture were saturated with Nazi sympathisers."<sup>27</sup> While these experiences may not have occasioned the creation of their worldviews, they no doubt helped cement them. Writes Godfrey Hodgson: "[Mises'] passionate hostility to the State and all its works...had been hardened by his generation's experience of what the overmighty state had wrought in Europe."<sup>28</sup> "Like Hayek...[he] drew overgeneralised conclusions from the tragic experience of his own life. Most of us do."<sup>29</sup>

It is significant that these thinkers, Mises and Hayek particularly, espoused sentiments identical to that of the *Freeman's* other writers, both inside and out of the magazine. Government interference in the market, wrote Mises, would solve no problem but merely necessitate more and more interventions "until it has regimented every aspect of the citizens' lives," freedom of every kind disappears, and "totalitarianism of the type of the Hitler *Zwangswirtschaft* emerges."<sup>30</sup> State intervention in the economy "must either be abolished or it must lead step by step to all-around planning by the government, to full socialism."<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in his *Road to Serfdom*, Hayek noted that "the following pages are the product of an experience as near as possible to twice living through the same period."<sup>32</sup> He asserted, like the many authors of the *Freeman*, that "fascism and communism are merely variants of the same totalitarianism which central control of all economic activity tends to produce," and argued "that the unforeseen but inevitable consequences of socialist planning create a state of affairs in which, if the policy is to be pursued, totalitarian forces will get the upper hand."<sup>33</sup> These arguments predated but are practically indistinguishable from the writing in the *Freeman*.

However, the events of the 1930s and 1940s had had just as much of an impact on *American* conservatives as Europeans like Mises and Hayek. *The Freeman* regularly informed readers that part of its mission was to help fight

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<sup>23</sup> A. J. Nicholls, *Freedom With Responsibility: the Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918-1963*, Oxford; New York, 1994, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Nash, p. 34; Nicholls, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Doherty, p. 9; Dunn and Woodward, p. 3; according to Hulsmann, Mises was the FEE's "intellectual center for more than two decades." (p. 851)

<sup>26</sup> Allitt, p. 161; Hodgson, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> Judt, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Hodgson, pp. 23-4.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Ludwig von Mises, "'Freedom is Slavery",' *Freeman*, 3, 12, Mar 1953, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Sydney, 1944, pp. iii, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp. viii, xvii.

totalitarianism. *The Freeman*, it assured readers, was "partisan in behalf of the dignity, and rights of the individual, partisan in behalf of the West against the new barbarism of the Kremlin."<sup>34</sup> One of the *Freeman's* earliest subscription advertisements explained that the *Freeman* "was founded to defend human dignity and liberty against the creeping inroads of totalitarianism."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, in outlining the magazine's "function," the editors noted two key aims: to expound its political principles, and on "the negative side...to expose the errors...of statism, "planning," controlism, socialism, fascism and communism."<sup>36</sup> Such words make the *Freeman's* constant paeans to freedom and liberty more complex. These were not merely reiterations of familiar expressions freedom-loving Americans had made since their earliest history. They were also a call of alarm for values that were imminently under threat from encroaching totalitarianism. In one issue John Chamberlain outlined the reasons for his conversion from left-wing activist to ardent conservative. "Something has happened to me in the past two decades," he reflected:

I have merely lived to see at least four major brands of Statism tried out. I have seen Leninist and Stalinist Statism murder its millions in Soviet Russia. I have watched Hitlerian Statism kill Jews by the hundreds of thousands in central Europe. I have been a witness (sometimes on the spot) to the destruction of vitality and initiative forced by Socialist Statism in Britain. And I have lived through eighteen years of New Deal and Fair Deal governments that have cut the value of every insurance policy in America at least in half.<sup>37</sup>

Witnessing totalitarianism even at a distance had left a deep impression on Chamberlain, as it had for so many other conservatives, intertwining with their experience under what they saw as worryingly similar developments in the US under Roosevelt. This no doubt helped the ideas of European émigrés take hold so firmly.

Chamberlain's testimony also speaks to the disillusionment with the Left, fully evident in the *Freeman*, which had fed into the political evolution of many militant anticommunists. A significant membership of the Right, including *Freeman* contributors, began their political lives as left-wing radicals before turning away to the opposite extreme. In this case, their fixation was not on Nazism or Italian fascism, but more specifically on the Soviet Union. Among others, Frank Meyer had been the director of the Students' Bureau and Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, until reading Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* led him to switch allegiances; James Burnham had been a Trotskyist and editor of the *New Internationalist*; Ralph de Toledano a left-wing activist; William Schlamm, a "non-Marxian socialist;" Max Eastman, a Greenwich Village radical and editor of a socialist journal; and William Henry Chamberlain and Eugene Lyons had both been socialists enamoured with rapid Soviet modernisation before and during their time as foreign correspondents there.<sup>38</sup> This was a road travelled by many anticommunist conservatives, all of whom suffered some moment of disillusionment with the Soviet Union and consequently radical Leftism, whether it was the revelation of the man-made Soviet famine of 1932-33, the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, the 1936-38 purges, factionalism within the Left itself, or disgust at the Left's hypocrisy toward the Soviet Union.<sup>39</sup> In

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<sup>34</sup> 'Among Ourselves,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Nash, pp. 98, 91, 101, 145-46; David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development*, Cambridge, Mass., 2003, pp. 197, 202; Allitt, p. 173.

<sup>39</sup> Nash, p. 91, 101-2; Engerman, p. 238; Allitt, p. 173.

abandoning the Left, these former radicals transferred the framework that ordered their perception of the world to the Right, swapping a belief in capitalism's inevitable collapse with a fear of Western civilisation's inevitable collapse at the hands of communism.<sup>40</sup> This helps to explain the *Freeman's* often alarmist articles alerting readers about communist encirclement and subversion. These were not just a useful tactic for whipping up supporters, but also fit into this 'theology'.

Equally important to this transition was these conservatives' disillusionment, even disgust, with the broad Left. In their view, it was either overrun with communists and socialists deviously manipulating their more moderate, ignorant, and easily-swayed liberal colleagues, or it was hypocritically defending communism and the Soviet Union (or at least soft-peddling its crimes) while claiming to deplore fascism. "Communists, who are masters of the Big Lie," wrote William Henry Chamberlain, "found in Western countries audiences passionately eager for a Big Myth," including pastors, intellectuals, scientists and pacifists.<sup>41</sup> Chamberlain did not name any specific individuals, something which, outside of a handful of frequent targets like Owen Lattimore, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dean Acheson, or the *Daily Worker*, the magazine did not generally do. In fact, the reality of American communism fell far short of the menacing leviathan these writers imagined. Liberals had actually adopted much of the logic of the Red Scare, playing a vital role in undermining the Left.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, large-scale desertions in 1950-51 had cut the Communist Party's numbers in half from its claimed membership of 80,000 two years earlier, and after the mid-1950s the Party became, according to Milton Cantor "one of a number of powerless radical sects."<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the onset of the Cold War, the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act's requirement of a non-Communist affidavit from union officers, the resulting CIO purge of Communist-led unions, and the revival of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1945 meant support for socialism plunged.<sup>44</sup> The "backbone of the Popular Front social movement was broken" through the 1950s.<sup>45</sup>

Though the widespread infatuation with communism and the Soviet system these authors wrote about may not have existed in 1950s America, it was a different story decades earlier. The Great Depression and liberal capitalism's apparent failure led many to consider communism and fascism as solutions, including some conservative thinkers.<sup>46</sup> Even before that, during the 1920s and 1930s, a formative period for these authors' political development, many intellectuals, journalists, writers, composers, artists—including John Dewey, much-derided in the *Freeman*—enthusiastically endorsed the Russian system, believing it a desirable model from which the US had much to learn from.<sup>47</sup> Westerners made pilgrimages to Russia at a rate of around 5000 per year during the 1920s, returning with glowing tales of what they had witnessed on their selective and carefully arranged tours.<sup>48</sup> Many of these literal fellow-travellers played down, ignored or justified the enormous human toll involved in Russian modernisation as a regrettable but necessary cost, or on the basis of the Russian national character.<sup>49</sup> Newspapers and journals, including the liberal *Nation* and *New Republic*, were sympathetic to the Soviet Union and carried positive

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<sup>40</sup> Kevin Mattson, *Rebels All!: a Short History of the Conservative Mind in Postwar America*, New Brunswick, N. J., 2008, p. 30.

<sup>41</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies about Communism,' *Freeman*, 1, 20, Jul 1951, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: a History*, New York, 2010, p. 90.

<sup>43</sup> Milton Cantor, *The Divided Left: American Radicalism, 1900-1975*, New York, 1978, pp. 171-2.

<sup>44</sup> Denning, pp. 24.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>46</sup> Allitt, pp. 153-4.

<sup>47</sup> Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, pp. 34-5; Engerman, pp. 176-7, 197; James Weinstein, *The Long Detour: the History and Future of the American Left*, Boulder, Colo., 2003, p. 78.

<sup>48</sup> Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, p. 34; Engerman, p. 155; Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth Century America*, New York, 2003, p. 166; Cantor, p. 74.

<sup>49</sup> Engerman, pp. 2, 4-5, 157; Cantor, p. 100.

propaganda, some suppressing crucial information about the Soviet famine.<sup>50</sup> Cantor likens “obsessive loyalty to the USSR, which would narrow and impoverish radical theory at home and which defined fealty to socialism in terms of fealty to” Stalinist Russia, to a “religious conversion.”<sup>51</sup> As late as 1938, 150 prominent writers, artists and composers issued a statement supporting the purge trial verdicts and in August 1939, 400 American intellectuals released an open letter denouncing comparisons of the USSR to the totalitarian states of Western Europe.<sup>52</sup> Significantly, both of these were the broad swaths of individuals for whom the *Freeman* reserved the most bitterness. The memories of this no doubt fed into *Freeman* contributors’ regular repugnance two decades later at the Left’s hypocrisy and inhumanity, its charges that they prized economic welfare over basic human rights, and their accusations of liberal allegiance to the Soviet Union.

Though postwar individualists were more than just a collection of reactionary cranks, conservatism’s resurgence came in significantly large part as a reaction to historical developments. *The Freeman* bears out historian George Nash’s claim that the intellectual roots of anti-communist conservatism, “like so much else in the intellectual traditions of the American Right since 1945,” lay in responses to the 1930s.<sup>53</sup> Conservatives of all stripes were haunted by their memories of the destruction and inhumanity of this decade and the war which followed it. Moreover, events in Europe during the 1930s and, particularly, the 1940s reanimated the latent hostility to government which had always existed in American political thought. It was the coupling which linked together those ‘boxcars’ David Armitage wrote of, which carried the classical liberalism of the nineteenth century and the conservatisms of the twentieth. This also revealed the rift between the competing visions of conservatism. Those ex-radicals like the Chamberlains, Eastmans, Burnhams and others, repulsed by the Old Left’s admiration of and seduction by Soviet Russia, and as part of a reaction against their own former beliefs, viewed communism and the Soviet Union as the supreme threats to American liberty. As we will see, they thus tended to advocate any measures, regardless of their illiberality, to reverse the progress of communism. Meanwhile, those particularly fixated on European totalitarianism, as represented by Fascist Italy and, especially, Nazi Germany, as the greatest threat to global freedom viewed any state-aggrandising measure as a blow to liberty. This includes figures of the Old Right like Chodorov, but also the disciples of Hayek, Mises and other émigrés from a broken, totalitarian Europe, who on a more personal level had known the devastation of war and infiltration of Nazi culture, and tended to advocate as small a government as possible. Revived in a new context, these anti-state, individualist beliefs were additionally infused with ideas around God and the natural world.

## ii. *God, Nature and the Market*

The worldview of the *Freeman*’s contributors was strongly informed and shaped by the intensely religious times they lived in. Partly due to the threat of Godless communism, and partly due to the resultant “spiritual-industrial complex” cultivated by policy-makers for Cold War purposes, the 1950s were arguably the peak of private and public American spirituality.<sup>54</sup> Polls from the 1950s showed churches had become America’s most trusted institutions, 99% of Americans believed in God, while Protestant church membership rose from 27% of

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<sup>50</sup> Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, p. 36; Engerman, pp. 197, 224; Cantor, p. 74.

<sup>51</sup> Cantor, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup> Engerman, p. 171; Nash, p. 87.

<sup>53</sup> Nash, p. 86.

<sup>54</sup> Foner, p. 790; Lerone Martin, ‘Public Policy, Popular Culture, Celebrity, and the Making of a Spiritual-Industrial Marketplace in Postwar America,’ *American Studies*, 52, 3, 2013, pp. 55-56.

Americans in 1940 to 36% by 1960.<sup>55</sup> Catholic membership similarly rose from 17% to 23%.<sup>56</sup> Legislation was used to sacralise civic life. Between 1954 and 1955, 'In God We Trust' was inscribed on stamps and paper currency, and 'under God' was added to the pledge of allegiance.<sup>57</sup> This did not go unnoticed by the *Freeman*. The Reverend Edmund A. Opitz, a frequent contributor and trustee of the FEE, noted the "spiritual hunger" and "rising tide in the religious life of our time," and advocated for a leadership to "translate these terms into the language of political liberty, limited government, and freedom of enterprise in the market place."<sup>58</sup> This context and the generational qualities of the *Freeman's* contributors explain the centrality of religion to the journal's ideology.

*The Freeman's* writers frequently deployed religious terms and language in their rhetoric. Garet Garrett, a member of the unreformed Old Right, was eulogised as a "prophet" of freedom who cautioned in vain against reliance on the state.<sup>59</sup> Reflecting its tendency to view the Left as substituting state machinery for God, the *Freeman* decried liberals' "sanctification" of "St. Keynes," referred to Franklin Roosevelt's "idolatrous" supporters, and complained of supposed anti-Communist converts who not long before had written "ecstatically about the Miracle of Planning."<sup>60</sup> "Like Peter they have denied their 'Christ,'" grumbled noted black conservative George S. Schuyler about these former fellow-travellers, "but are too loud about it to be convincing."<sup>61</sup> This was not the only instance where an issue was framed in terms of Christian imagery. One editorial warned that the tax on individual gifts discouraged Christian charity and made it harder to "emulate the Good Samaritan."<sup>62</sup> Lamenting the control exercised over American literature by the "cabal" of professional critics, another author asserted: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an original writer to get into the Institute of Arts and Letters."<sup>63</sup> This casual use of Biblical language indicates how the authors' Christian faith was an easy point of reference for them to stake out their ideas.

Despite acknowledging the re-ascendance of religion in American life, the *Freeman* paradoxically viewed its faith as increasingly under threat.<sup>64</sup> This threat generally came from the twin perils of Leftism and intellectualism. On the occasion of the death of Philip Murray, President of the CIO, who it noted was motivated by his deep religious faith, it bewailed that future labour leaders would be driven only by an "unregulated urge for social domination."<sup>65</sup> John Chamberlain speculated how "the strivings of the Founding Fathers, the bravery of the early pioneers" could have turned into the gray suburban conformity of 1950s America.<sup>66</sup> He concluded that "the modern American has tended to forget the sources of his spiritual being," from which America's greatness had sprung.<sup>67</sup> The controversy around William F. Buckley's *God and Man at Yale*, a widely-read expose of the Godless and collectivist nature of his alma mater, was a flashpoint for these views. One author praised Buckley for exposing "the tricks by which popular professors have ridiculed the faith in which most of Yale's undergraduates believed when they entered college."<sup>68</sup> Reflecting on the controversy later, the

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<sup>55</sup> Lichtman, p. 192.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Martin, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> Edmund A. Opitz, 'Admiral Moreell: Recommissioned,' *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> 'Garet Garrett,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> 'St. Keynes, Pray for Us!' *Freeman*, 1, 26, Sept 1951, p. 21; John Chamberlain 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 25; George S. Schuyler, 'New Masks for Old,' *Freeman*, 2, 4, Nov 1951, p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Schuyler, 'New Masks for Old,' p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> 'Taxes and the Individual,' *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Dahlberg, 'Laurels for Borrowers,' *Freeman*, 2, 6, Dec 1951, p. 28.

<sup>64</sup> Ralph de Toledano, 'The Return of Sacred Music,' *Freeman*, 2, 1, Oct 1951, p. 23.

<sup>65</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Felix Wittmer, 'Collectivism at Yale,' *Freeman*, 2, 2, Oct 1951, p. 22.

magazine satirised universities as hotbeds of liberals and atheists who treated Christianity “just like any other tribal superstition,” and itched to clear out the “lot of obsolete theological rubbish.”<sup>69</sup>

The existence of Communism and its hostility to religion represented for the *Freeman* an added threat to their Christian faith. It was a “monstrous dogma that would banish God from heaven and earth,” a “mighty anti-God movement of international dimensions...out to destroy the Christian religion.”<sup>70</sup> “We stand before the wrecked and ruined remains of cathedrals and churches.”<sup>71</sup> Even more terrifying was its seductive nature. What one author referred to as “the well-meaning but fatal leaning of American Church liberalism to the Communist ideology” was a frequent point of discussion in the magazine.<sup>72</sup> This ‘lean’ was but one part of the West’s broader appeasement and acceptance of Communist ideology. Comparing the plain, neutral preamble of the United Nations charter to the richly-worded theologising of America’s founding documents, Howard E. Kershner, founder of the Christian Freedom Foundation and editor of its publication *Christian Economics*, complained that the UN was being made to ignore God “at the behest of the Moscow atheists.”<sup>73</sup> The modern world according to the *Freeman* was one where the walls were slowly closing in around Christendom. “The situation may yet be saved,” it cautioned, “but the hour is late.”<sup>74</sup>

The result was not merely a spiritual crisis, argued the *Freeman*, but also had political implications. The global triumph of Leftist ideologies was a direct result of the West’s spiritual decline and, in a vicious cycle, further hastened this decline. According to Wilhelm Roepke, the “secularisation of the modern mind,” coupled with the loss of transcendental norms, values and truths, softened people’s attitudes to revolutionary ideologies while creating “a vacuum which will be filled by new beliefs.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, in the fight against communism “a religious revival is as essential as any bombs...For those who believe in nothing may become prey to anything.”<sup>76</sup> These beliefs were not unique in 1950s conservative circles, which viewed the Cold War as a spiritual conflict between atheism and religion.<sup>77</sup> This view was famously crystallised in 1952 in Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness*, an account of his years as a Soviet spy in the 1930s.<sup>78</sup> *The Freeman* unsurprisingly lauded the book as “the story of how a basically religious and mystical nature must erringly seek for a materialist substitute when the flame of the great historic faith of the West – Christianity – burns low.”<sup>79</sup> Religion was the key to maintaining the moral and spiritual stability that would guard vulnerable Americans against the false promises of foreign ideologies.

Consequently, the *Freeman* tried to counter the prevailing narrative that socialism and even liberalism were natural outgrowths of Christian faith. Alignment between Christianity and left-wing goals had been fixed in the public imagination at least as far back as the development of the ‘Social Gospel’ in the late nineteenth century, which argued for an equalisation of wealth and power as a condition of spiritual fulfilment.<sup>80</sup> Yet Christianity, the *Freeman*’s contributors stressed, was incompatible with socialism. Any form of ‘Statism’ required the unwilling coercion of individuals backed by state-sanctioned violence, something

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<sup>69</sup> John Abbot Clark, ‘No God at Yale,’ *Freeman*, 2, 19, Jun 1952, pp. 32, 34.

<sup>70</sup> James Rorty, ‘Self-Destroyed Saint,’ *Freeman*, 2, 4, Nov 1951, p. 28; Walter M. Haushalter, ‘Our Leftist Clergy 2. The Remedy,’ *Freeman*, 2, 19, Jun 1952, p. 32.

<sup>71</sup> Haushalter, ‘Our Leftist Clergy 2,’ p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30; Haushalter, ‘Our Leftist Clergy 1,’ p. 22; Robinson, p. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Howard E. Kershner, ‘Except the Lord Build the House...,’ *Freeman*, 2, 20, Jun 1952, p. 24.

<sup>74</sup> Haushalter, ‘Our Leftist Clergy 2,’ p. 32.

<sup>75</sup> Wilhelm Roepke, ‘The Malady of Progressivism,’ *Freeman*, 1, 22, Jul 1951, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> George E. Sokolsky, ‘Christophers’ Crusade,’ *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 28.

<sup>77</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 29-30.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>79</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘Whittaker Chambers: Witness,’ *Freeman*, 2, 18, Jun 1952, p. 27.

<sup>80</sup> Foner, pp. 542-3.



profoundly un-Christian. Russell J. Clinchy advanced this idea, arguing that the Bible praised property-ownership when “it was used responsibly and with charity to the helpless, *acting upon the voluntary choice to give or to withhold*” (emphasis his).<sup>81</sup> By contrast, he said, there was “not a single suggestion in all of the New Testament that the use or sharing of property should be coerced into forms and ends determined by one’s associates”—this was a “form of stealing,” and there is “nothing in the Bible, or in the rule and practices of our churches,” which sanctioned such confiscation of property by force.<sup>82</sup> While the Left wished to “create a new spirit in man”, a more “brotherly attitude,” Clinchy went on, this would be as destructive as the Inquisition, the burning of Joan of Arc, or “the police force behind anti-discriminatory decisions,” all of which aimed to do one thing – “change one’s attitude or belief by force.”<sup>83</sup> Man could not be compelled to change his ways against his will, and any attempt to do so would inevitably result in self-defeating, immoral and destructive consequences.

*The Freeman* believed the Left was doomed in trying to alter man’s wicked nature, as it was hopelessly corrupted by Original Sin. British journalist F. A. Voigt argued that the belief among communists and others on the broad Left that “man is by nature good and only does wrong when he is the victim of economic circumstances” was “incompatible with the Christian doctrine of the Fall.”<sup>84</sup> Whereas Christianity’s reliance on the “voluntary acceptance of its doctrines” mandated individual freedom, wrote another, socialism demands “submission by physical force or bribery” and “forces its subjects into a man-made moral mode” to “transform an essentially selfish human nature into a completely unselfish human being.”<sup>85</sup> British economist George Winder took this reasoning some steps further. God had made man “naturally selfish, acquisitive, uncooperative, aggressive and dangerous.” However, while capitalism redirected these unwholesome impulses into productive endeavours, benefitting all, socialism took this achievement for granted and wished to replace self-interest with the desire to work for the common good. Such a “moral revolution” required that man’s “whole moral nature is changed.” But, Winder warned, “man can not change his civilisation as he changes his coat. “A new culture can not be imposed upon us by some Master Mind of the intelligentsia,” erasing “generations of human development”; humanity must be conditioned slowly, as through religious instruction, or else risk creating chaos and a moral vacuum, as happens in a revolution.<sup>86</sup> Capitalism was moral and successful because it worked *with* the pre-existing nature of man, as defined by Christian doctrine.

*The Freeman* viewed all left-wing ideologies as “pseudo-religions” that sought to dethrone God and replace Him.<sup>87</sup> Secularisation, wrote Roepke, and the “‘politicisation’ of existence” that came with it, resulted in “the self-deification of man”, and later, the deification of a new idol—society. A “social obsession” had overtaken the modern world, he complained, which left people unable to judge anything or anyone without considering their value to wider society.<sup>88</sup> This was likewise the case with science. “The logical end of liberalism is humanism, the denial of any God beyond man or human values,” argued another. Religious liberals believed in “Science, the Great Messiah, leading mankind up the spiral of inevitable evolution to undreamed-of perfection,” that they could “speed mankind

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<sup>81</sup> Russell J. Clinchy, ‘Religion is a Free Response,’ *Freeman*, 2, 16, May 1952, p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 18-20; Clinchy illustrated his belief that Marx’s theories equated to theft thusly: “If one person should take ten dollars out of another person’s wallet without his consent, it would be theft. But if five acquaintances should vote that the owner of the wallet should give ten dollars – and then enforce their community decision – is that any less stealing?”

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> F. A. Voigt, ‘Why Stalin Rejects Peace,’ *Freeman*, 2, 23, Aug 1952, pp. 17-18.

<sup>85</sup> Edward A. Keller, ‘Socialism versus Christianity,’ *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> George Winder, ‘After Capitalism, What?’ *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, pp. 19-21.

<sup>87</sup> Roepke, p. 16; Keller, ‘Socialism versus Christianity,’ p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> Roepke, p. 16.

to a realisable Utopia” like scientists speeding up plant evolution.<sup>89</sup> Most dangerously of all, they would deify the state. Chodorov viewed ‘statism’ as a “secular religion,” and believed the Left endowed the state with a kind of divinity by ascribing to it the Godly power of creation.<sup>90</sup> Likewise, one author questioned who, in a secularised world,

is to fill the role of God, who is to see that the sins of ambition and discord do not destroy the universal accord...Who is so powerful and so aloof from worldly affairs that the greatest and smallest of men and of states are equally powerless before him? Who is so invincible that he can afford to be just, since his own welfare is never involved in the conflicts brought before him for decision?<sup>91</sup>

“Of course, the Christian leftists use the word God,” he asserted, but they really meant “whatever political development they regard with approval.”<sup>92</sup> *The Freeman* viewed *any* replacement for an omnipotent, omniscient deity, let alone that of the earthly mechanism of government controlled by fallible men, as inherently inadequate to run the lives of these same men. At the same time, the cold, mechanical, rationalist ideologies of the Left had secularised religious belief itself, creating false idols in place of the one true God and putting it to the task of overturning the natural, God-given order.

Indeed, the *Freeman* accused the Left of seeking to impose an artificial Kingdom of Heaven on earth, further upending God’s natural vision. In their eyes, the paradise which awaited humanity in the afterlife as a reward for living a good Christian life was being prematurely ushered in to the corporeal world by the Left. As Chodorov put it, Christ promised to humanity “the Kingdom of God – on earth as it is in heaven”, a perfect social order where justice rules and “the reign of legalised injustice by which man is robbed of his products and his self-esteem shall be no more.”<sup>93</sup> This state of affairs “is not of this world” and “unattainable save by obedience to the divine law and by the grace of an omnipotent deity.”<sup>94</sup> By prematurely ushering it in, the Left was yet again trying to play God. They assumed that “the Kingdom of God can be realised here on earth through personal effort supplemented and enforced by governmental action.”<sup>95</sup> Communists would initiate a “secular apocalypse” to institute a stateless, lawless world of “justice, equality and peace, of limitless freedom and superabundant plenty.”<sup>96</sup> Such a state could never exist, however: “those institutions of political irresponsibility and human equality which would be virtue in Heaven under God’s direct rule, are the organisation of a dreadful evil upon earth.”<sup>97</sup> The socialist vision may have been a Christian vision, but the resulting undoing of the natural, divinely-ordained scheme for the earth would only breed calamity.

Having critiqued the Left’s own claims to a religious pedigree, the *Freeman* instead presented individualism as the true heir to the Christian tradition. Before “Christ brought to a dispirited world the doctrine of human dignity,” the social order was dominated by predatory powers which exploited the ordinary individual, a state it quickly reverted to after his death.<sup>98</sup> Anticommunist author Ralph de Toledano agreed: “without God, man has no dignity; and without dignity

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<sup>89</sup> Haushalter, ‘Our Leftist Clergy 1,’ pp. 21-2.

<sup>90</sup> Thaddeus Ashby, ‘Chodorov: Complete Individualist,’ *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 30; Chodorov, *One is a Crowd*, pp. 100-1; ‘Thanks in November,’ *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, pp. 9-10.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence R. Brown, ‘The Christian Left,’ *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1954, p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>93</sup> ‘From Christmas to Christmas,’ *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Voigt, ‘Why Stalin Rejects Peace,’ p. 18.

<sup>95</sup> Clinchy, ‘Religion is a Free Response,’ p. 18.

<sup>96</sup> Voigt, ‘Why Stalin Rejects Peace,’ p. 18.

<sup>97</sup> Brown, ‘The Christian Left,’ p. 14.

<sup>98</sup> ‘From Christmas to Christmas,’ p. 9.

he is an animal.”<sup>99</sup> In fact, Chodorov envisioned this passing down of Christian ideas as a literal, direct inheritance of modern individualists, portrayed as the intellectual descendants of Christ’s apostles. When Christ spoke of dignity and self-esteem, he wrote, “only a few listened; only a remnant understood.”<sup>100</sup> His pointed use of the word ‘remnant’ conveyed this message, being the early libertarians’ own chosen descriptor for their perpetually-dwindling movement, foreseeing that individualist values would live on eternally if passed on from generation to generation by a group of small, dedicated followers.<sup>101</sup> By promoting free market, anti-statist ideology, the *Freeman* was literally doing God’s work.

Indeed, the *Freeman* made clear, the principles of individualism and the freedom which underpinned them could derive *solely* from this tradition. John Chamberlain stressed that “the American idea of the individual as a person with natural rights antecedent to government...could only come out of a community which insisted on the direct communion of the individual with his God.”<sup>102</sup> Opitz expounded further on this. Because tyranny rested on the idea that some men may impose their will on others, the basis of liberty was belief in a higher power governing relations between individuals, a power which eclipsed rulers as well as citizens. Religion necessitated recognition of the soul, he went on, and so “inculcates a sense of the worth and dignity of the person,” a worth and dignity which Left-wing ideologies implicitly denied. He cited archaeological evidence showing that among the mostly-pagan ancient civilisations, the Ancient Israelites alone neither venerated individual rulers nor drew laws from their decrees.<sup>103</sup> *The Freeman* drew a straight line from Christianity to free market capitalism, at times conflating the two. Where capitalism “is found in its purer form, it is better named free enterprise,” wrote one author; “Sometimes it is called Christian Civilisation.”<sup>104</sup> As John Chamberlain argued, the “West began by being Christian, and because it was Christian it became individualist, capitalist – and free.”<sup>105</sup> While other nations had forgotten that political liberty “rests upon a religious base,” America’s owed its continuing triumph to the fact that it had not – for now.<sup>106</sup>

The authors of the *Freeman* cited Biblical passages to back up these views. As others reconfigured the Left as materialistic for privileging the transfer of wealth over abstract rights, so one writer interpreted the Bible’s apparent condemnations of greed and excessive coveting of material possessions as warnings against socialism. How could one reconcile Marx’s vision of redistributing wealth from the top to the bottom, questioned one, with Christ’s words: “Who made me a divider over you?...Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”<sup>107</sup> Alternatively, the *Freeman* believed, such parables did not represent admonition of private property as socialists thought, but disapproval of those not sufficiently concerned with the state of their immortal soul. Referring to Christ’s parable of the man who built ever-larger barns, Clinchy argued that Christ was not criticising the man’s hunger for possessions, as most saw it (“the need for larger barns is the result of good farming”), but his regarding them as a measure of his salvation. Christ “was concerned with the security of the soul, which is...not conditioned by the ways of the world.”<sup>108</sup> By envisioning the earthly possession of property and the protection of the immortal soul as separate

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<sup>99</sup> Raph de Toledano, ‘A Wartime Testament,’ *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 24.

<sup>100</sup> ‘From Christmas to Christmas,’ p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> Doherty, pp. 55-6; Hodgson, p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> John Chamberlain ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 2, 5, Dec 1951, p. 25.

<sup>103</sup> Edmund A. Opitz, ‘Religious Roots of Liberty,’ *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, pp. 21-22

<sup>104</sup> Winder, p. 19.

<sup>105</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 26.

<sup>106</sup> Opitz, ‘Religious Roots of Liberty,’ p. 22.

<sup>107</sup> Robinson, p. 15.

<sup>108</sup> Clinchy, ‘Religion is a Free Response,’ p. 19.

matters, the *Freeman* argued one could be capitalist as well as a Christian as long as one satisfied the soul's craving for charity through personal, individual and voluntary means.

Contributors also referred to scripture to explain the Christian conservative's relationship to increasingly powerful and intrusive state policies. Nothing in the Bible, argued Chodorov, says "that the State is the instrument, if not the co-equal, of God."<sup>109</sup> Although he "had great compassion for the sick and disabled," Christ healed them through his own divine powers and "did not once refer his patients to socialised medicine"; He "said the labourer is worthy of his hire, but made no mention of labour union goons"; and neither did he mention industry nationalisation, unemployment insurance, social security, "nor any of the political schemes for the uplifting of man advocated by the modern vicars of Christ."<sup>110</sup> Using Christ's words to bolster modern government policies was anachronistic, and ignored the personal and divine nature of his philanthropy. Clinchy likewise used historical context to reinterpret Biblical passages. Although "it is true that the Gospels contain directives to a dedicated life," he denied they portrayed the ownership of material possessions as a sin, or that "competitive attitudes and the profit motive are antisocial and un-Christian." Echoing a sentiment found in Isabel Paterson's seminal protolibertarian work, *The God of the Machine*, he argued that while Christ may have directed the apostles to live ascetic lives of simple poverty, "this is not a blueprint for society." "These are directives to men who are to be members of a monastic order...Such living can not be a general pattern, for if all were required to live in this manner there would be no life beyond this generation."<sup>111</sup> By revisiting the very word of God the individualists of the *Freeman* could lay further claim that the lessons of Christianity were not the sole domain of the Left.

Connected to this religious basis of individualism was a fidelity to nature and a set of beliefs around what was and was not 'natural.' Ideas around nature had a long and illustrious record in American history. American freedom was founded on ideas derived from 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher John Locke about 'Natural Law' and 'Natural Rights'—immutable, God-given principles and rules governing man-made relationships which no man or government was above.<sup>112</sup> The Declaration of Independence after all begins by mentioning "the separate and equal stations to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle" all people. Thomas Paine, whose writings are considered part of libertarian canon, argued against hereditary right of Kings on the grounds that nature disapproved of it.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, Leo Marx demonstrated how prevalent the "yearning for a simpler, more harmonious style of life, an existence 'closer to nature'" has been in American culture, reflected in the flight from cities, the devotion to leisure activities like gardening, camping and hunting, and the regard for Westerns, among others.<sup>114</sup> Pastoralism was a defining theme in American culture, ever since Englishmen's earliest fascination with the myth of the regenerative powers of the New World's unsullied "virgin land."<sup>115</sup> This pastoralism, argued Marx, could either be an aesthetic form, or it could be turned to political uses.<sup>116</sup> The writings of the *Freeman* represent just such an expression of this reverence for nature.

*The Freeman* regularly used references to nature and natural law to define its ideology. Corruption would overrun any state which failed to base its 'legal' law on natural law, the magazine insisted, and any worthy institution of higher

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<sup>109</sup> 'Render Unto Caesar—What?' *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Clinchy, 'Religion is a Free Response,' p. 18; Paterson, p. 239.

<sup>112</sup> Foner, p. 127.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Paine, 'Of the Origin and Design of Government,' in David Boaz, *The Libertarian Reader*, New York, 1997, p. 11.

<sup>114</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America*, New York, 2000, pp. 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 36, 228.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 73-4.

learning must have respect in its curriculum for the “existence of an ordered universe as evidenced by natural laws no mortal man can alter.”<sup>117</sup> Such rhetoric was not limited solely to natural *law*, but alluded to *nature* more broadly. The individualists of the *Freeman* were fascinated by the natural world and saw it as a template for how society should function. “Our natural environment,” wrote FEE staff-member and economist F. A. Harper, “sets limits on the range of one’s choices...These natural limitations are beyond our control.” He likened it to gravity, which humans cannot fight but work with, as through a parachute, a frequently-recurring metaphor. “Anyone who assumes that since he can build a bridge, he can also build a new law of gravity, is making a fatal mistake.”<sup>118</sup> Similarly, Chodorov used seeds as an example of the futility of artificially forcing change. A seed, he said,

will blossom only when it drops on a given soil, with a given amount of moisture and with proper exposure to the sun...If we want that kind of flower or vegetable, we make sure that we plant that seed in a manner harmonious to nature; we do not try to get the desired results from ground that does not have sunlight or water.

This “causal relationship between events” was what ‘natural laws’ were, and the reason one studied nature and her laws was so to apply its lessons to one’s own purposes.<sup>119</sup> John Chamberlain even used one of his fortnightly columns to expound on his love of gardening and discuss different techniques for weeding and composting.<sup>120</sup>

Such paeans to nature translated into advocacy for conservation and what we might today think of as environmentalism. *The Freeman* eulogised Dr. Hugh Bennett, the ‘father of soil conservation’, for his “enlightened theories,” and awarded its ‘Oscar’ prize to a Weyerhaeuser Timber advertisement promoting its sustainable tree farming practices.<sup>121</sup> It included in a list of “Distinguished Devin-Adair Books” such titles as *Gardening With Nature* (“How To Grow Your Own Vegetables, Fruits, and Flowers by Natural Methods”), and *The Web of Life* (“The dramatic story of nature in terms of its interrelated parts”).<sup>122</sup> *The Freeman* frequently agonised over the environmental degradation caused by humans. In only the second issue, an author railed against the “lazy, bad, ignorant and destructive farmers,” who were federally subsidised “no matter how hair-brained or slothful or ignorant [they] may be” and “no matter how careless with regard to soil erosion and water losses.” He likened American farming to “a plague of locusts,” which had eroded the soil, destroyed waterways, and generally ruined the productivity of the land.<sup>123</sup> Rather than heedlessly wringing as much value from nature as possible, the *Freeman* emphasised the importance of living with it in harmony. One author heaped praise on the Algonquin Native Americans who “explored and appreciated an uninhabited continent, a sizable area of which we have fallen heir to, in devious ways.” Were it not for their arrogant belief in racial superiority, he argued, the American settlers could have learnt much from this unique people who “inhabited a region where the resplendence of nature was symphonic, without spoiling it.”<sup>124</sup>

*The Freeman* viewed the modern world as a product of man’s foolish attempts to thwart nature, emphasising instead the importance of living in

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<sup>117</sup> John Chamberlain ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 2, 1, Oct 1951, p. 26; F. A. Harper, ‘What College—If Any?’ *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 20.

<sup>118</sup> F. A. Harper, ‘The Omelet Has No Rights,’ *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, p. 44.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Laws the Government Cannot Make,’ *Freeman*, 5, 17, Nov 1955, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, p. 25.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 2, 17, May 1952, p. 6; *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 43.

<sup>122</sup> *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 37.

<sup>123</sup> Louis Bromfeld, ‘Brannan vs. Agriculture,’ *Freeman*, 1, 2, Oct 1950, pp. 19-20.

<sup>124</sup> Elliot Paul, ‘Of Shrimps and Potatoes,’ *Freeman*, 1, 3, Oct 1950, pp. 12-13.

harmony with it. In a profile of newspaperman and early financial backer of the FEE, Raymond C. Hoiles, Hoiles himself provided a brief outline of his philosophy.<sup>125</sup> It included, among other things, a belief in free trade, no immigration quotas, and voluntary military, tax, and education systems. Hoiles closed by declaring his “faith that gaining understanding of nature’s laws is the best way to be useful to one’s self and to his fellow-man.”<sup>126</sup> A similar profile of conservative icon Admiral Ben Moreell reported him declaring “that any effort to equalise the social and economic status of all individuals by the coercive power of the government is a contradiction of Nature’s laws.”<sup>127</sup> Chodorov similarly asserted that man’s scientific progress is “due only to his constant, meticulous and objective study of nature,” the observation of cause-and-effect which acts as a guide “to predict what will happen if he does so and so.” Libertarians were therefore “opposed to socialism...because parliamentary interventions in the economy run up against inexorable natural forces which do not bend to the will of men.”<sup>128</sup> The literal natural environment was thus figured as a microcosm of how the world worked as a whole. Common to these examples was the belief that while individualistic values accorded with nature, left-wing philosophies, with their broad belief in government coercion and degrees of egalitarianism, did not. As such, they mirrored the claims of explicitly-religious writing that the Left was undermining God’s divine order through its policies.

One need not search long for the presence of God behind these beliefs. The idea of natural law had always had a religious dimension to it—in eighteenth century England, the ‘laws of nature’ referred to by the Declaration of Independence consistently meant the majesty and will of God revealed in the natural order, and even Locke saw nature and the will of God as the same thing.<sup>129</sup> Reflecting on Leonard Read on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FEE, Mary Sennholz noted Read’s belief that the American way of life “ultimately rested on the tenets of the Judeo-Christian religion,” and that he “used what he knew about nature as evidence for his belief in God. Nature reveals certain qualities that are characteristic of an intelligent mind which designed nature for a purpose.”<sup>130</sup> Similar themes found their way into the *Freeman*. Moreell’s conviction that government ‘equalisation’ of individuals ran against nature’s laws was similarly grounded in religion. He prefaced this statement with his belief

that God made each of us after his image, but each of us different from every other one...that He had a purpose in designing us so...that each person is a distinct individual who was intended to be free to find his place in the scheme of things as determined by his own God-given abilities and his own freedom of choice.<sup>131</sup>

While morally, spiritually, and legally people may be equal, in terms of talents and abilities, argued Moreell, they were unequal by nature – a nature that was devised by God for His own mysterious purposes. To subvert Nature’s laws was thus to subvert His will.

Others drew this connection more subtly. John Chamberlain affirmed that the Ten Commandments figured in the natural law that all moral states must abide by and, more explicitly, extolled Chodorov for being “religious enough to believe in Nature’s God, which is to say that he believes in Natural Law.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Doherty, p. 172.

<sup>126</sup> ‘The Faith of R. C. Hoiles,’ *Freeman*, 5, 11, May 1955, p. 32.

<sup>127</sup> Opitz, ‘Admiral Moreell: Recommissioned,’ p. 23.

<sup>128</sup> ‘Laws the Government Cannot Make,’ p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> Dunn and Woodard, p. 121.

<sup>130</sup> Mary Sennholz, ‘Leonard Read: the Founder and Builder,’ *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 46, 5, May 1996, p. 353.

<sup>131</sup> Opitz, ‘Admiral Moreell: Recommissioned,’ p. 23.

<sup>132</sup> John Chamberlain ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 2, 1, Oct 1951, p. 26; Chamberlain, ‘People On Our Side,’ p. 25.

Chodorov's faith in a divine power alone, he implied, made him a *de facto* adherent to natural law. Chodorov explained this relationship in more detail upon becoming the magazine's editor. Introducing himself to readers, he outlined the newly-anointed 'libertarian' ethos: humans live in an environment shaped by all of the individuals who live in it – "man's environment is of his own making." But to function in this world, "God has provided man with the tools with which to shape his environment, tools which consist of certain immutable laws of nature." If humans can learn "how nature applies means toward ends" and apply this knowledge to their own lives, they will succeed; but "if [man] defies the lessons of nature he will come to grief."<sup>133</sup> The reason the natural world functioned so seamlessly was because it was governed by sacrosanct laws handed down from God himself. Humans could either apply the same standards of nature to themselves, or suffer calamity. The link between God and nature was so self-evident to the individualists of the *Freeman*, that the laws of God and natural law were virtually interchangeable concepts. These ideas animated much of the *Freeman's* ideology.

*The Freeman's* stance on a variety of issues was informed by the belief that change could not be forced by man, which would result only in misfortune, but had to happen organically, *naturally*. It accused Social Security of being "a great school for transforming the personality of the whole population," a way to reshape people into suppliant citizens who had no problem with being dependent on others.<sup>134</sup> As will be explored in more detail later, the foreign policy that would come to define the magazine under Chodorov insisted that people, such as communists, could not have their culture changed by force, but had to be educated and choose to do so over time. Similarly, under the FEE, the *Freeman's* former embrace of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, which desegregated Southern schools, was reversed, the magazine charging that the Supreme Court's order forced Southerners to turn against the social mores they grew up with, no different from forcing someone to attend a church they did not like. The order would forever seem tyrannical "until the Southerner has a change of heart."<sup>135</sup> This belief could even be read into the magazine's frequent advocacy of the gold standard, a supposedly natural measure of value, over paper currency, which was artificial and could be manipulated.<sup>136</sup>

These ideas meshed with the *Freeman* and other individualists' belief in voluntary co-operation over coercion. Voluntarism, a strand of classical liberalism which advocates the abandonment of force and coercion in favour of a society operating by mutual consent, was another theme of American political thought.<sup>137</sup> Though it had begun as a movement opposing state interference in schools in mid-nineteenth century England, it had been developed into an ideology by nineteenth-century thinker Auberon Herbert, who had taken natural rights theory to its "logical limits."<sup>138</sup> Perhaps its most famous American spokesperson was conservative luminary Herbert Hoover, whose aversion to government and belief in private charity, local control, and civic sacrifice was symbolised, inconsistently it must be said, by his 16-year political career dealing with various crises.<sup>139</sup> This tendency was equally evident in the *Freeman's* writings. It celebrated Hugh

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<sup>133</sup> 'About Me: An Editorial,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 6.

<sup>134</sup> 'Candidates for Utopia,' *Freeman*, 1, 4, Nov 1950, pp. 5-6.

<sup>135</sup> W. H. McComb, 'The Right to Be "Wrong",' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 31.

<sup>136</sup> Willard M. Fox, 'Our Rotting Dollars,' *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 15; Ludwig von Mises, 'Gold versus Paper,' *Freeman*, 3, 21, Jul 1953, p. 24.

<sup>137</sup> Carl Watner, 'Fundamentals of Voluntarism,' in Sklyer J. Collins, ed., *Everything Voluntary: from Politics to Parenting*, Salt Lake City, 2012, p. 39.

<sup>138</sup> P. J. White, 'Is Voluntarism in Decline?' *Industrial Relations Journal*, 9, 3, Jul 2007, p. 35; Eric Mack, 'Voluntarism: the Political Thought of Auberon Herbert,' *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 2, 4, 1978, p. 299.

<sup>139</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover*, New York, 2009, pp. 25, 31-2, 35, 40, 69, 108-9; Joan Hoff Wilson, 'Hoover's Agricultural Policies 1921-1928,' *Agricultural History*, 51, 2, April 1977, pp. 348-9, 359; Robert H. Zieger, 'Herbert Hoover: A Reinterpretation,' *The American Historical Review*, v. 81, 4, Oct 1976, pp. 803, 807.

Bennett's "faith in the voluntary way," advocating as he did the creation of local conservation districts through the voluntary action of farmers, and listed the principles of "voluntary cooperation" alongside those of individual freedom and traditional liberalism when outlining its ideology.<sup>140</sup> *The Freeman's* aversion to 'World Government' partly stemmed from the belief that such a union could only come through "the voluntary co-operation of the peoples of the world via an unfettered market place," not through people being forced to work together.<sup>141</sup> Finally, reviewing Hoover's memoirs, John Chamberlain noted that "the philosophy of voluntarism so pervades this book that it might very well be made standard reading in political science courses," demonstrating "that true voluntarism is sufficient to even the most devastating crises."<sup>142</sup> While this voluntarist ideology had an older lineage, it fit neatly alongside the *Freeman's* ideas around nature and change.

Where the *Freeman's* beliefs about God and nature most influenced its policy was in its free market economics. *The Freeman* did not advocate the free market simply on a practical, expedient basis, though to be sure, those arguments made their way into the magazine. Chicago economist Milton Friedman explained, in a rare contribution, why he saw the post-war 'dollar shortage' (nations lacking enough dollars to pay for US imports) as actually a result of government controls on exchange rates throughout the world. If controls were liberalised instead, he argued, exchange rates would find their own levels in the market and this shortage would no longer be.<sup>143</sup> One reader commended Friedman for his analysis, and reaffirmed that though the free market may not satisfy everyone's wishes exactly, it maximises trade and "in the long run, benefits everyone."<sup>144</sup> Similarly, articles about beef controls, farm relief programs and the Controlled Materials Plan, a central agency doling out scarce resources to industry, illustrated how government intervention created market distortions, inefficiency, absurd impediments to production, and generally hurt the very people it was trying to help.<sup>145</sup> Still, the vast majority of articles defended free enterprise on a philosophical, 'rights' basis, not on practical grounds. In the ongoing libertarian debate between efficiency and morality, the *Freeman* stood closer to the latter.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, Chodorov made sure to separate the *Freeman's* ideology from the utilitarian school of free market economics. Although economists like Friedman rejected the "metaphysical argument" of 'natural law' as unnecessary, wrote Chodorov, they ignored that the very reason capitalism was superior and efficient while socialism produced an "economy of scarcity" was because socialism went against "economic forces which operate regardless of man-made law."<sup>147</sup>

Central to the *Freeman's* ideology was the idea that the realm of nature encompassed not solely such things as the environment or the force of gravity but also more abstract concepts such as the market. The market was viewed as a *natural* entity, beyond the control or domain of man. This belief is evident even in the more utilitarian, practical defences above, which share a common formula: when man tries to influence or control the economy, his actions backfire in harmful, even catastrophic ways. This is a familiar trope by now, sharing similar

<sup>140</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 2, 17, May 1952, p. 6; 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>141</sup> 'One Worldism,' *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, p. 8; Dean Russell, 'Union by Freedom Only,' *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, p. 36.

<sup>142</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 2, 17, May 1952, pp. 28-29.

<sup>143</sup> Milton Friedman, 'Why the Dollar Shortage?' *Freeman*, 4, 6, Dec 1953, pp. 21, 23.

<sup>144</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 8, Jan 1954, p. 4; although another reader also denounced Friedman's academic and, at times, esoteric style as "turgid" as needlessly long-winded "Gobbledegook."

<sup>145</sup> Lewis Nordyke, 'Baloney in Beef Controls,' *Freeman*, 2, 16, Feb 1952, p. 16; Garet Garrett, 'Alas, the Food Bringers,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, pp. 11-12; Harold S. Taylor, 'Let's Decontrol Materials, Too,' *Freeman*, 2, 18, Jun 1952, p. 20.

<sup>146</sup> Doherty, p. 192.

<sup>147</sup> 'Laws the Government Cannot Make,' p. 10.



assumptions to the *Freeman's* discussions of nature and God. Indeed, the *Freeman's* writers emphasised the fundamental unpredictability of the market, doubting that mere mortals, experts or not, could foresee its course. One author cited incorrect forecasts of post-World War II depression, and of inflation during the Korean War, as evidence of Keynesian economists' inability to "predict the unpredictable." Economists before 1930, he argued, who saw the economy as dependent on the unpredictable combination of price-cost relationships and human psychology, "were not so bold—or so naïve—as to pretend to be able to calculate the coming of booms and depressions in advance."<sup>148</sup> *The Freeman's* world was one where humanity, awash in its own hubris, believed it could control things far larger than the limits of its knowledge would allow.

While these authors hinged the unruliness of the market on the unbound freedom and dynamism of the individual, this was not always the case. Former economic adviser to the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company and former *New Yorker* staff-member H. C. North satirised man's futile attempt to control impersonal forces by using the food chain of wheat, mice and hawks as a dizzying allegory for the market. Since mice eat wheat, he posited, by controlling the supply of mice one could thus control the supply of wheat, and all related features of the wheat market. But a wheat surplus would result in a mouse surplus, in turn resulting in a wheat *shortage*, necessitating control of the *hawk* population in order to control the mice. The introduction of hawks to a mouse surplus would either: lead to mouse shortage, and thus a wheat surplus; or the disease resulting from overpopulation of mice would weaken the numbers of mice, allowing hawks to prey on the weakest mice and leave the healthiest alive, leading to a stronger population of mice and, thus, back to a wheat shortage. North's hypothetical soon snowballs, requiring control of an ever-increasing cast of living things, including spiders, aphids, and plants, and even the soil and climate, to get at the hawks who "eat the mice that create wealth."<sup>149</sup> It was an amusing and effective way to illustrate one of the *Freeman's* tenets: that man needed to know his place in the world and the limits of his control. North's choice of extended metaphor was also significant. He did not use a case of human relations or, say, physics, to convey the volatility that comes of human tampering in the market, but the natural world. The delicate animal ecosystem was the perfect allegory for the market precisely because they had the same roots in nature.

Like North, many writers drew an implicit link between the market and nature. They conflated the two or implied that to meddle with one was to meddle with the other. "Do we respect the natural or God-given laws—such as that of supply and demand," asked one author— "or do we try to negate them through amendment by puny men?"<sup>150</sup> Moreell viewed 'economic equalisation' of individuals through state coercion, meaning government policies such as Social Security which would redistribute resources to the needy, as violating nature's laws.<sup>151</sup> Significantly, North prefaced his satirical plan to control wheat levels by explaining that "the trouble with other plans is that they are full of blind economic forces that are always creeping in and these forces seldom do what you want them to do." Instead, he had devised a "simple little plan for keeping the blind natural forces in line so that they are good for us."<sup>152</sup> His casual conflation of "economic" and "natural" forces suggests the degree to which these were viewed as interchangeable. Roepke argued that progressives' aversion to 'unplanned' economies was rooted in modern man's "emancipation from nature and the worship of technology," and viewed the redistributive "equalitarianism" of progressivism as a trust in "organisation, regimentation, canalisation and social

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<sup>148</sup> L. Albert Hahn, 'Predicting the Unpredictable,' *Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, p. 23.

<sup>149</sup> H. C. North, 'The Mice and Men Plan,' *Freeman*, 2, 15, Apr 1952, p. 22.

<sup>150</sup> E. Gordon Fox, 'The American Way,' *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, p. 36.

<sup>151</sup> Opitz, 'Admiral Moreell: Re-commissioned,' p. 23.

<sup>152</sup> North, p. 22.

machinery" over "everything organic, spontaneous, natural, differentiated."<sup>153</sup> As another author complained in an early issue, they were living through "an age marked by alienation from Nature unexampled in human history."<sup>154</sup> The implication of all these words was clear: the Left was mistaken in involving the human hand in the market instead of letting the natural forces of the economy do as they would.

Chodorov made this link explicit in his penultimate issue as editor, before the *Freeman* would be remade once more, as an organ of the FEE. "The case for the free economy hangs on the theory that 'natural law' operates in the field of economics even as it operates in the field of physics." Thus, just as stepping from a raised surface would result in "destructive consequences" due to gravity, so man-made laws running against the laws of economics would be similarly disastrous. Chodorov elaborated on this:

Whether he knows it or not, or even if he has never given thought to it, the advocate of the free economy assumes that in the field of economics there are inexorable laws of nature. He rejects the thesis of the planner that economics is merely a branch of politics...politics is the art of ruling and can be applied to human behaviour but not to the operation of economic laws.

Chodorov stated out loud this tacit assumption which underlay the economic arguments of all individualists, even those not writing from an explicitly ideological standpoint: that market forces were governed by nature, and as such were not man's to control. The issue of minimum wage illustrated this. Minimum wage, he argued, was "in conflict with a force of higher potency." The law assumed that wages could be "politically fixed", but it was an "invariable fact" that wages were a ratio between the number of labourers and the demand for their output. The language used here – of human powerlessness in the face of impersonal forces, of abstract laws, and the personification of an abstract concept – mirrored that of the *Freeman's* writings on nature. *The Freeman*, maintained Chodorov, "insists that the free economy is in the 'nature of things,' not in the statutes."<sup>155</sup>

It was not solely Chodorov who drew on such metaphors. John Chamberlain criticised the belief that "human freedom is possible in a society in which the State owns or controls the means of livelihood" as akin to believing one could jump off a cliff and survive unscathed. There is a *physical* connection, he insisted, between freedom and the right of self-ownership, and "there are laws governing this physical connection just as there are laws to explain the fall of the apple."<sup>156</sup> Similarly, arguing against price controls, one author explained that price is a measure of the market in the same way that a thermometer measures temperature, signposts indicate which direction is which, or rising and falling weights "actuated by the speed of the engine and the force of gravity" regulate the steam supply for a railway engine. You wouldn't permanently set a thermometer's temperature to avoid excessive heat, or change the signposts to make travelling easier, or fix an engine's weights to ensure a steady amount of steam—all "would be considered a lunatic act." Why then the double-standard with prices?<sup>157</sup>

This connection between the market and nature reinforced the importance of religion to this early libertarian ideology. If God created the natural world and all of the laws which governed it, and the market belonged to this domain of nature, then it followed that human interference in its workings at best defied His

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<sup>153</sup> Roepke, pp. 16-18.

<sup>154</sup> Henry Beston, 'Farm-Boy Naturalist,' *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, p. 25.

<sup>155</sup> 'Laws the Government Cannot Make,' pp. 9-10.

<sup>156</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 1, 15, Apr 1951, p. 25.

<sup>157</sup> Antony Fisher, 'Altering the Signposts,' *Freeman*, 1, 18, p. 20.

will, and at worst was an attempt to usurp His role. "We must remember that the message of Jesus applies to economic law as well as to moral law," Kohlberg, the magazine's treasurer, had written "—they are both God's law."<sup>158</sup> As the *Freeman* and many others besides attested, such a course of action was futile and would lead only to ruin. John Chamberlain made this link clear early in the magazine's run. Both the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, he explained, are rooted in eighteenth century Natural Law philosophy, which "presupposes that the phenomena of Nature—and of man, as part of the natural order—can be described in orderly terms, in principles, in *generalities*." Scientists and constitution-makers had essentially identical jobs, but while the former looked for those 'generalities' explaining planetary motion and the fall of objects, the latter sought those "which are best calculated to guarantee the individual 'rights' that are deducible from the nature of man." There is a Natural Law for humans in society, he believed, from whose workings one could deduce certain Natural Rights. Chamberlain admitted he had been accused by friends of 'mysticism', obscurantism, or even "selling out" to a "brooding Omnipresence in the Sky" for holding these views—something he denied. Yet these remarks were not far off: Chamberlain went on to praise a pair of books for their basis in "Natural Law thinking—and the God that they exalt is a God that any good eighteenth-century philosopher would recognise as "Nature's God".<sup>159</sup> One did not have to try hard to bridge the free market economics of the *Freeman* and its religious faith, which were intimately connected.

These beliefs were also subtly connected to the *Freeman's* ideas about totalitarianism. Its belief that to meddle in the workings of God and His natural order, including the market, led inevitably to disaster was a similar refrain to its seemingly non-metaphysical insistence that any state which overstepped its boundaries would be hopelessly corrupted and totalitarianised. The American Revolution, wrote John Chamberlain, fought for "ancient English rights which were a legacy of Christian Natural Law doctrines" and the founders rooted the Constitution in an "old, deeply-rooted Christian theory of the nature of man," resulting in a state "founded on respect for the individual and his Natural Rights." The French Revolution, by contrast, dismissed individual rights in favour of a theory of the supremacy of the general will. While America had remained stable and harmonious to the present day, the French Republic, "founded on a fundamental disregard for the individual's inalienable rights had worked itself out through the inevitable cycle of terror, bloodshed, dictatorship, war and collapse."<sup>160</sup> "Without the recognition of the presence of God who transcends all life," Clinchy wrote later, "even the secular Declaration of the Rights of Man, bestowed by man upon himself by the French Revolution, ends in a declaration of the right of the collective mass of natural beings to destroy" individuality. In the history of the fall of civilisations, "the loss of respect for human personality" was the common theme: "No nation has ever thrown away the belief in the worth of the human in man and used him as a chattel, and survived."<sup>161</sup> There was thus a common thread of logic which linked these two main pillars of postwar anti-state thought together.

The early libertarians of the 1950s believed the 'invisible hand' of the market which guided the economy was more than its name suggested – it was the divine hand. Understanding these facts can help us gain a better understanding of the role of religion not just in the formation of libertarianism, but political ideologies more generally. Though this reasoning may not necessarily have played a conscious role in future thinkers and activists' defence of what Chodorov referred to as "the miracle of the market place," it no doubt shaped

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<sup>158</sup> 'Economic Mastery Linked to Freedom,' *New York Times*, 22 Oct 1951, p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 1, 15, Apr 1951, p. 25.

<sup>160</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 1, 15, Apr 1951, p. 25.

<sup>161</sup> Russell J. Clinchy, 'The Protestant Basis for Individualism,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, pp. 21, 23.

their thinking on the subject in more subtle ways.<sup>162</sup> This was subtly connected to their fear of totalitarianisation, born of these writers' experiences of the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, there was a clear split emerging among its various contributors, who took away different lessons from the events of these decades. Ironically, at the same time that the conservative movement appeared to be finding its feet again, it was also collapsing under its own contradictions. An unstable particle all along, the split in conservatism would widen, the movement would be rent in two and with it, modern libertarianism would emerge.

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<sup>162</sup> 'One Worldism,' p. 7.

## The Rupturing of Conservatism

The 1950s were a pivotal moment for the Right. While the Depression and the Second World War had left it lost and confused, in the 1950s those who would come to represent mainstream conservatism settled on just what they stood for, believed in and represented. Until then, postwar conservatism was divided, largely over the issue of communism, domestic and international. Almost all of the prewar 'Old' Right were noninterventionists who opposed American empire and tying America's destiny to that of foreigners, a view harkening back to Washington's farewell address and early America's disengagement from Europe.<sup>1</sup> Such views were embodied by the America First Committee in the 1940s, a conservative-led coalition of various anti-war subsets, including liberals, pacifists, and even socialists and communists.<sup>2</sup> They were also represented by conservative idols ex-President Herbert Hoover and Ohio Senator Robert Taft, who argued against American involvement in the new European war and that joining it would concentrate undue power in the state, moving America toward totalitarianism.<sup>3</sup> The War and the postwar communist advance changed this. Nazi aggression prompted debate among the Right, and after Pearl Harbour, all but one of the Congressional 'isolationists' voted for war against Japan, Germany and Italy.<sup>4</sup> After 1947, the previously sceptical noninterventionist Republican majority embraced the Cold War, authorising military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, passing the Marshall Plan, and establishing the national security state.<sup>5</sup> Taft, who opposed the Marshall Plan and the interventionist Truman doctrine, was twice passed over as the GOP presidential candidate in favour of an Eastern internationalist.<sup>6</sup> "Noninterventionism was dead."<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the alarm over internal communist subversion challenged conservatives' traditional scepticism toward state power. The fall of China to Communists in October 1949 was followed in the next eight months by the revelation of the Russian atomic bomb, the outbreak of the Korean War and the exposure of no less than four Soviet spies.<sup>8</sup> Americans were bombarded with frightening stories of brainwashing, defection, and a coming tidal wave of communism.<sup>9</sup> With these threats in mind, conservatives would have to decide how far they were willing to go to annihilate the great menace of their age, if indeed communism truly was.

The divisions plaguing postwar conservatism were plainly visible in the *Freeman*. It published, after all, a broad swathe of conservative writers, but while the later *National Review* would 'fuse' these opinions into one ideology, the *Freeman* simply displayed a tension between the Right's different tendencies. On one side were its anticommunist, interventionist authors, who had accepted the Cold War's premises and viewed internal subversion as a threat to be stopped at all costs. These were largely the former leftist radicals and liberals who had converted to the other 'side', as well as prewar 'isolationists' reformed by events of the 1940s. On the other were its noninterventionist, pacifistic and firmly anti-statist authors who feared the power of government no matter its source. These tended chiefly to be unreformed members of the Old Right, who stuck stubbornly to their original beliefs. There was thus a schizophrenic quality to the *Freeman*, which engaged in a conflicted, at times inconsistent discussion of a variety of issues. Its hawkish and antiwar factions debated over the merits of war, both in general and more specifically in Asia, as well as over foreign policy. These

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<sup>1</sup> Lichtman, pp. 105, 107-8; Allitt, pp. 154-5.

<sup>2</sup> Allitt, p. 155; Lichtman, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Allitt, pp. 154-5; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Allitt, p. 154; Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 92-3

<sup>5</sup> McPherson, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Hodgson, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> McPherson, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Hodgson, pp. 52, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Cumings, p. 79.

debates brought up the issue of civil liberties and state power, placing the magazine in the awkward position of criticising the power-grabbing of the administration which had been done at the behest of the very war it backed. At the same time, despite its opposition to government censorship, the magazine and its readers found themselves eagerly defending McCarthy and anticommunist excesses. What these issues would ultimately do is slowly divide the intellectual tendencies that would define libertarianism and conservatism, and prove them to be irreconcilable.

i. *War and Militarism*

Like the wider conservatism it represented, and like *Human Events* and its predecessor, *Plain Talk*, the *Freeman* was predominantly an organ for hawkish, interventionist views. Article after article affirmed the need for a more aggressive foreign policy, which would step up pressure on, and ultimately “disintegrate the formidable Communist empire.”<sup>10</sup> *The Freeman* dismissed ‘talks’ and peace agreements. Russia’s history of violating pacts meant that only “the dissolution of the Soviet empire,” not negotiations, could achieve peace.<sup>11</sup> “Further indulgence in words can only bring on all-out war.”<sup>12</sup> It urged “the destruction and overthrow of the Communist dictatorship”, and advocated placing nuclear weapons “threateningly nearer Soviet targets” and using clandestine agencies to “set the Soviet lands ablaze with revolt.”<sup>13</sup> Unless America aimed for “the elimination of the men in the Kremlin”, through the training of proxy forces, mobilising the already-trained World War Two veterans, and threatening Russia with nuclear war if it crossed the Iron Curtain, “we are handicapped like a shadow-boxer.”<sup>14</sup> To “hide away, apologise for, announce that we won’t use” the full American military arsenal without others’ permission, and even then only as retaliation, “is to carry on against a ruthless aggressor with all the iron resolution and realism of a bunch of maiden aunts playing croquet.”<sup>15</sup> For a substantial chunk of the *Freeman*’s contributors, the Cold War was an all-or-nothing battle that required openly aggressive measures to win, the only kind of message the malevolent leaders of the Soviet Union understood.

*The Freeman*, like many conservatives, including Taft, equally disdained the Truman administration’s policy of containment.<sup>16</sup> Containment aimed only to restrict communism to where it already was, letting it collapse through its own internal faults.<sup>17</sup> For the *Freeman*, this was an inadequate, self-defeating response based on the wrong-headed belief in coexistence between the communist bloc and the free, capitalist West.<sup>18</sup> It failed to intimidate the enemy into negotiation, denied Americans “the means of exercising the pressure which is the only inducement [Soviet leaders] can not ignore,” and reassured them they would always be safe.<sup>19</sup> Instead of ‘containing’ Russia, the administration needed to use “the supreme power of the nation” for “ruthlessly extinguishing any evil

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<sup>10</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, ‘Balance Sheet of the Cold War,’ *Freeman*, 3, 11, Feb 1953, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> ‘If They Want Peace,’ *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 7; ‘Nonaggression Bear Traps,’ *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, ‘Calling Stalin’s Bluff,’ *Freeman*, 2, 7, Dec 1951, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*; Alfred Kohlberg, ‘The Great Debate,’ *Freeman*, 1, 9, Jan 1951, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, ‘Strategy for America,’ *Freeman*, 1, 10, Feb 1951, pp. 9-10.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Schoenwald, pp. 27.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 23-4

<sup>18</sup> James Burnham, ‘Critique of Containment,’ *Freeman*, 3, 10, Feb 1953, pp. 7-9; F. A. Voigt, ‘The Containers Contained,’ *Freeman*, 2, 16, May 1952, pp. 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

force that dares to overstep the limits."<sup>20</sup> These hawkish positions echoed contributor James Burnham's influential 1950 book, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, and were partly driven by perceptions of the concept of 'appeasement'.<sup>21</sup> *The Freeman's* contributors were haunted by the memory of Europe's meek response to fascist aggression in the 1930s, and were determined not to let history repeat. "It might have been hoped," complained one, regarding postwar Britain's conciliatory policies, "that Hitler had at least taught the British people...that no abiding agreement is possible with any totalitarian power."<sup>22</sup> Just as the historical memory of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s influenced the *Freeman's* political ideology, so too did it play a part in its stance toward communism.

Clearly, these beliefs frequently led the *Freeman* to back and propose some extremely aggressive positions, which stood contrary to its concerns over ballooning debt and state power. Alongside its suggestions of ratcheting up hostilities with the Communist world and using its nuclear arsenal to threaten Russia, writers also urged the US to "step up the hot war in Korea" and wished that General Charles MacArthur had only "been permitted to use all weapons at his disposal to win" the Korean War.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, this position also pushed writers to endorse a more active and expansive US foreign presence, signalling conservatives' shift from the prewar "noninterventionism" of the Old Right, which viewed American foreign entanglement with scepticism.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the *Freeman* strongly, and justifiably, resented the label of 'isolationist' which it and its idol Taft had been tagged with by other publications and the broad Left.<sup>25</sup> Chinese intervention in the Korean War had made such labels obsolete, it argued, and made clear that the country now needed "a new clear-sighted, muscular internationalism singly aimed at victory and survival and facing at long last our destiny."<sup>26</sup> *The Freeman* was mystified that it could be called isolationist when it called for the build up of American air and sea power and the support of Chiang Kai-shek in fighting the Chinese.<sup>27</sup> It adhered to the Domino Theory, warning multiple times that the fall of Korea would begin a chain of Communist takeovers which would envelop Australia, New Zealand, even Iran and the Suez, and eventually the world.<sup>28</sup>

A number of articles instead pushed readers to consider a deepening presence in Asia. One reflected in detail on the popular fallacies about the "vastness, teemingness, mystery" and "alleged immunity of China to occupation," myths which kept the US immobilised while the Communists benefitted.<sup>29</sup> Another dismissed fears of becoming 'bogged down' in China as "idiocy" which assumed no middle ground "between the poles of total abstention and total commitment."<sup>30</sup> In the final issue before the magazine's changeover, General Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur's Chief of Intelligence during the Second World War, wrote the headlining piece, outlining "fifteen practical conclusions" for how to proceed in what was then Indo-China, a more vital location than Korea for its "prime strategic raw materials." Willoughby suggested sending foreign troops in the guise of 'volunteers', like the Soviet Union, plus the use of "mass destruction

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<sup>20</sup> Melchior Palyi, 'What is Russia Waiting For?' *Freeman*, 1, 15, Apr 1951, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Schoenwald, pp. 25-7.

<sup>22</sup> Lord Vansittart, 'The Left Never Learns,' *Freeman*, 3, 11, Feb 1953, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Max Eastman, 'After Stalin, What?' *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mr 1953, p. 7; 'Peace Without Victory,' *Freeman*, 3, 17, May 1953, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Himmelstein, pp. 35-36.

<sup>25</sup> 'Facing the Convention,' *Freeman*, 2, 21, Jul 1952, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Forrest Davis, 'Senator Taft's New Deal,' *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> 'To Our Friends In Europe,' *Freeman*, 1, 13, Mar 1951, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6; Charles A. Willoughby, 'How to Hold Southeast Asia,' *Freeman*, 4, 19, Jun 1954, p. 13; 'An Oriental Munich,' *Freeman*, 4, 12, Mar 1954, p. 7; 'The Risk of No-Policy in Asia,' *Freeman*, 1, 16, May 1951, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Chen Shu, 'China is no Riddle,' *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> 'Keeping out of Bogs,' *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, p. 5.

weapons to offset the inexhaustible manpower of Asia" and "create a belt of scorched earth...to block the Asiatic hordes" who are "employed as cannon fodder of Communism in the human-wave tactics of the modern Genghis Khans." These weapons, argued Willoughby, imposed "no more moral strain" than Truman's use of them in World War II, especially when "the provocation then was far less."<sup>31</sup> It made a fitting capstone to this iteration of the *Freeman*, closing out five years of vehement anticommunist opinion pieces with a piece more hawkish than any preceding it. *The Freeman* would rarely, if ever, again publish articles of this kind again, as it transitioned to a more noninterventionist and war-averse form.

Nevertheless, this *Freeman* also had a notable if less pronounced antiwar streak. Its hostility to war stemmed not just from an aversion to becoming enmeshed in foreign squabbles and wasting resources, but also on a more philosophical basis that war enlarged state power, and a genuine revulsion at its destructive and horrific consequences. One review refuted as "ponderous follies" the idea that "wartime improvements in industrial technique and organisation more than compensate for the harm done to society by our own mass massacres" and praised the notion of pursuing "the rational objective of limiting war."<sup>32</sup> The use of the word 'rational' here implicitly placed this concept in the same echelon as other quintessentially individualist and self-interested activities. The magazine also admired antiwar intellectual Randolph Bourne, putting him alongside other anti-statist icons like Albert Jay Nock, Franz Oppenheimer and Henry David Thoreau. Expounding on Bourne's continued relevance in light of "a possible war with Russia" and its potential consequences, it praised Bourne's prescience in understanding "that the State can win a war abroad while its own people are defeated at home," and that Americans must be vigilant lest the State "win the war and eat its own social organs." America's supremacy in war-making abroad "enfeebles our arts," makes Americans "conspicuously poor in human learning," and puts them "in danger of growing a corrosive war-nerve culture and not an era of love and human connection." "War is America's most conspicuous waste!"<sup>33</sup>

This revulsion toward war was further reflected in the magazine's disgust with the dropping of the atomic bomb over Japan, which it variously called "little short of being a high crime" and a "monument to moral sadism and bad military thinking."<sup>34</sup> This view was not atypical—many conservatives had condemned Truman's decision at the time.<sup>35</sup> Even more hawkish writers expressed dismay at this event and the existence of nuclear arms more generally. Max Eastman, not known for his coddling of America's enemies, called it a "wanton and exuberant employment of crime" that the administration had "rushed into a war *which they had already won* [emphasis Eastman's]—in which the enemy had already made overtures for peace—and without the decency of an adequate warning reduced two of his cities to rubble, and struck, not terror, but the most agonising death into the hearts of their populations."<sup>36</sup> One editorial, affirming the importance of the US maintaining the "lead" in the nuclear arms race and decrying disarmament and peace talks as futile, nonetheless called the hydrogen bomb "a formidable new link in the long chain of violence" which began with the "tremendous slaughter" of World War One.<sup>37</sup> Such sentiments sat uneasily next to the magazine's calls for aggression and nuclear intimidation, and revealed a pacifistic, more war-weary side to the *Freeman*—appropriate given the war-heavy decades that these writers had only just lived through.

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<sup>31</sup> Willoughby, pp. 13-14.

<sup>32</sup> Hoffman Nickerson, 'Can War Be Limited?' *Freeman*, 1, 24, Aug 1951, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Dahlberg, "'Untimely Papers": A Re-Review,' *Freeman*, 2, 13, Mar 1952, pp. 26-7.

<sup>34</sup> Forrest Davis, 'Did Marshall Prolong the Pacific War?' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 9; Harry Roskolenko, 'Aussies in Japan,' *Freeman*, 2, 9, Jan 1952, p. 30.

<sup>35</sup> Lichtman, pp. 146-7.

<sup>36</sup> Max Eastman, 'Science for Science's Sake,' *Freeman*, 3, 23, Aug 1953, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> 'Hydrogen Hysteria,' *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 8.



Several articles also expressed discomfort with the post-World War II global American presence, and promoted a more individualistic foreign policy. *The Freeman* mirrored the words of 'isolationists' like Taft, who believed the First World War had not ended conflict but simply created "more extreme dictatorships" than ever.<sup>38</sup> Until Woodrow Wilson embroiled America in the First World War, wrote an early editorial, the US had for a century minded its own business to no objection.<sup>39</sup> "Whatever may be said for the old policy, it gave us a century of peace," while the preceding 33 years of involvement "enmeshed us in three wars thus far—two of them the most destructive in history—while before us stretches the prospect of endless conflict."<sup>40</sup> Further reflecting ambivalence to overseas intervention, one author outlined an alternate history where Wilson really had kept America out of the First World War, thus avoiding disrupting the balance of European power and inextricably tying the States into European affairs. In this future, an unbroken Germany quashed the Bolshevik revolution, Europe was rehabilitated by America, and Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini were missing from the history books, apart from the latter, whose "unsuccessful career as an intransigent Socialist" got a single mention.<sup>41</sup> While meddling in others' business produced only disaster and instability, this tale made clear, keeping to oneself on the international stage, as in the market, yielded unpredictable, positive results.

Indeed, a number of writers advocated a kind of individualism on the global stage, arguing that postwar circumstances made America the first and last line of defense in the Cold War. *The Freeman* echoed the prewar, anti-imperial fears of Midwestern noninterventionists and America First that internationalists would embroil the US into saving Great Britain and her empire.<sup>42</sup> Internationalism was simply a new word for imperialism, argued one editorial, an "evil system" involving the seizure of land, the enslavement of peoples, and the exploitation of resources.<sup>43</sup> Internationalism, another author argued, had emerged from a world where the US was dependent on the British mercantile empire, tying its interests up in Britain's security. The end of World War II had reversed these roles, however, and a strong American 'nationalism' was now necessary, as "our defeat would give the Kremlin world mastery."<sup>44</sup> Garet Garrett, an Old Right stalwart, was a consistent exponent of this.<sup>45</sup> Like others, Garrett saw the US as a budding empire with a dense network of dependent satellites, making for a "vast system of entanglement, which makes a war anywhere in the world our war too."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the Cold War and Korea had for the first time in America's history led it to permanently station soldiers in a global network of foreign bases, what one historian called a "light hold on the jugular," along with involving it in a myriad of alliances and supranational organisations.<sup>47</sup> Instead of the Truman Doctrine's assumption of "unlimited political, economic and military obligations," (emphasis Garrett's) which would bleed the "American giant" to death through "many unrequited wounds" and "allies who take more than they give," Garrett suggested establishing a military power "dedicated to American defense," with stringent and conditional assistance to others.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Allitt, p. 155.

<sup>39</sup> 'A Vital Reform,' *Freeman*, 1, 5, Nov 1951, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Ben Ray Redman, 'The Long Peace,' *Freeman*, 2, 25, Sept 1952, pp. 24-25.

<sup>42</sup> Hodgson, p. 50; Lichtman, pp. 107-8; interestingly, the director of the Committee was the son of the executive Vice President of Quaker Oats, and was chaired by the chairman of the board of Sears, Roebuck—both frequent advertisers in the *Freeman* (Lichtman, p. 106)

<sup>43</sup> 'A Vital Reform,' p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence R. Brown, 'Eisenhower vs. Taft—the Vital Issue,' *Freeman*, 2, 13, Mar 1952, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Doherty, pp. 59-60.

<sup>46</sup> Garet Garrett, 'Marks of Empire,' *Freeman*, 2, 15, April 1952, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> Cumings, pp. 218-9.

<sup>48</sup> Garet Garrett, 'Fruits of "Unity",' *Freeman*, 1, 9, Jan 1951, pp. 10-11.

This was a minority view, however, and even then it was tempered. Unlike prewar noninterventionists, who couched their opposition to war in their fear of America's becoming an empire, in this iteration of the *Freeman* even those who warned of the US being fatally entangled still favoured intervention abroad if it was on American terms.<sup>49</sup> Garrett may have fretted about the existence of an American empire, but he was more outraged that this empire was paying *its satellites* for the privilege of protecting *them*, an "Empire of the Bottomless Purse," than he was about any inherent distaste in America adopting this role. In his view empires such as the Roman and the British had been positive, civilising forces.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, editor Henry Hazlitt wrote that "A day hardly goes by in which we do not take on more world entanglements and move world commitments," and approvingly quoted Washington's farewell address which warned against this very threat. But, he clarified, "it is not alliances per se that our first President warned against, but *entangling*" or permanent, alliances. He urged policymakers to quit fighting wars under the restrictive auspices of international organisations, and instead only pledge themselves to militarily aid those nations invaded by a communist state.<sup>51</sup> Hazlitt recognised his colleagues' and other Americans' weariness with Europe and the rest of the world, but insisted that this was no longer "a reasonable attitude, in terms of American security, which, whether we like it or not, is bound up with the often difficult and sometimes downright unreasonable attitude of faraway peoples in Europe and Asia."<sup>52</sup> It is significant that Hazlitt, further on the libertarian end of the scale and affiliated with the FEE, wrote this. Diversity of thought existed not just among conservatives in general, but purer individualists too. It was difficult to classify individuals and place them into narrow boxes, particularly in this formative time.

*The Freeman's* conflicted stance on war and foreign policy was best embodied by its position on the Korean War, which America entered in June 1950, a mere four months before the magazine's debut. *The Freeman* and its contributors never adopted an entirely cohesive attitude to the war. In stark contrast to what would soon follow, its very first article on Truman's intervention described it in grand, heroic terms, as "the first, epochal stand of the United Nations armed forces against the insidious, continuous encroachment of Communism upon free peoples." Bonner Fellers, the author of the piece and father of Nancy Jane, referred to "the President's fateful decision," the "valiant fight against...a savage enemy. Though he cautioned there were limitations to the war, he nonetheless raved that "possibly no campaign was ever more brilliantly conceived and executed."<sup>53</sup> Foreshadowing an impending ideological rift, an editorial only three pages earlier emphasised the need to balance the federal budget, something an ongoing conflict in Korea (and elsewhere) would make difficult.<sup>54</sup> Even later articles more critical of the war insisted that "President Truman had been right in going into Korea," that the US was right to send troops, albeit it not under the auspices of the UN.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the magazine repeatedly slated the truce negotiations at Panmunjom, viewing them as an unacceptable surrender—a "no-decision draw in a struggle with two economically backward Asiatic satellites of the Soviet Union"—and would look back on the end of Korea as the "acceptance of defeat," a humiliating and costly failure, and a "stalemate

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<sup>49</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> Garrett, 'Marks of Empire,' p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> 'Time for Disentanglement,' *Freeman*, 3, 25, Sept 1953, pp. 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> 'The Imperial Ice-Cap Cracks,' *Freeman*, 3, 23, Aug 1953, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Bonner Fellers, 'Lessons of Korea,' *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, pp. 8-9.

<sup>54</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 20, Jul 1951, p. 3; 'Are we U.S. or U.N., and When?' *Freeman*, 1, 2, Oct 1950, p. 5.

to avoid any concept of victory."<sup>56</sup> Nothing less than a resounding victory was acceptable.

At the same time that some of its factions cheered the war effort, the magazine also seemed pessimistic about staying the course. Authors repeatedly criticised the apparent purposelessness of the war, which was costing tens of thousands of American lives for no discernible goal.<sup>57</sup> A mere six issues in, five following Feller's lauding of the war effort, the editors suggested a "strategic withdrawal" from Korea "against apparently overwhelming odds," so as to "lose a battle in order to win a war."<sup>58</sup> Two issues after this, the possibility of "orderly withdrawal" was again brought up, though less emphatically, insisting on the need for continued, limited military action "to keep alive the threat of a reinvasion" and save American prestige and influence.<sup>59</sup> Garrett wrote somewhat unfavourably of "a war that in six months had already cost us half as much as the rest of our total exertions in World War I" and "stripped the home base of its defenses."<sup>60</sup> It was a complicated issue for the *Freeman* and conservatives in general. It was not unusual at this time to hear conservatives simultaneously call for an expansion of the war while attacking Truman for American casualties.<sup>61</sup> On the one hand, the US was avoiding 'appeasing' the enemy by launching a full-blown military offensive against a communist aggressor. On the other, this offensive had been launched by a Democratic administration that the *Freeman* had accused of being "being partly ignorant and partly infiltrated" by communists.<sup>62</sup> Further complicating this was the strong anti-interventionist and antiwar strain of thought demonstrated earlier, which continued to inform contributors' thinking, as well as the fact that the war appeared to be stalling despite the US' overwhelming military might. There was much to untangle.

The war also posed a dilemma for what might today be termed civil libertarian reasons. Truman had bypassed a constitutionally-required declaration of war from an intervention-weary Congress by declaring the war a "police action" and sending troops in unilaterally. This animated those elements of the *Freeman* more sensitive to civil liberties. The war was at once the culmination of a steady concentration of presidential power, and a warning of what was to come if this impulse was left unchecked. While granting the attack on South Korea may have "made resistance on our part imperative," one author nonetheless disliked going to war "by Presidential edict." Since the Presidencies of the first Roosevelt, Wilson, and particularly that of the later Roosevelt, "we have permitted the pernicious doctrine to become established that determination of foreign policy is the peculiar province of the White House." This belief, now generally accepted, was "at variance with the plain language of the Constitution," and the values of the Founders.<sup>63</sup> The editors supported this view in principle, describing the declaration of war as a "usurpation," "the decision of one man, taken swiftly in the night."<sup>64</sup> They repeatedly urged Congress to assert its opposition to the President's foreign adventures, seize back its constitutional prerogative, and even obtain the power to recall the President in cases of no confidence, as was possible

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<sup>56</sup> Geraldine Fitch, 'Defeat at Panmunjom,' *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 19; 'No More UN Wars,' *Freeman*, 3, 20, Jun 1953, p. 9; Harold Lord Varney, 'Our Failure in Korea,' *Freeman*, 3, 21, Jul 1953, p. 11; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 9, Jan 1951, p. 3; Garrett, 'Fruits of "Unity",' p. 10; Alice Widener, 'Second Anniversary in Korea 1. War of Appeasement,' *Freeman*, 2, 20, Jun 1952, p. 25.

<sup>58</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 3

<sup>59</sup> 'For a New Foreign Policy,' *Freeman*, 1, 8, Jan 1951, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Garrett, 'Fruits of "Unity",' p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 98.

<sup>62</sup> 'But is it Churchill?' *Freeman*, 2, 4, Nov 1951, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Samuel J. Kornhauser, 'Harvest of Folly,' *Freeman*, 1, 2, Oct 1950, pp. 16-18.

<sup>64</sup> 'Why Truman Should Resign,' *Freeman*, 1, 9, Jan 1951, p. 5; 'A Vital Reform,' p. 7.

in parliamentary democracies.<sup>65</sup> They criticised Truman's proclamation of a national emergency as a measure that would "not build a single added plane, tank or gun," but "merely give Mr. Truman more legal powers for internal controls" and "entangle our economy in restrictions and red tape."<sup>66</sup> Korea appeared to be proving the prophecies of the totalitarian potential of war true.

Along with its disgust with the administration's arrogance and the "impotence" of Congress, the *Freeman* pilloried the eagerness of their fellow citizens to cheer for this usurpation of power.<sup>67</sup> It criticised a *New York Times Magazine* article for dismissing the role of Congress and "deriding debate" by being "blissfully unaware of the totalitarian implications of praising one-man rule."<sup>68</sup> Such determined opposition to increasingly centralised state power set the *Freeman* apart from other opinion-makers, but it also sat uneasily with its insistent calls for decisive action in the Cold War. *The Freeman* ultimately did settle on a consistent line on the war that wove its way through a number of articles. Truman had been reckless in committing *ground* troops in an "untenable" conflict, a "military trap."<sup>69</sup> With this done, the US had two alternatives: either 'untie the hands' of the military by giving commanders the freedom to do whatever was necessary to win the war, or withdraw land forces from the conflict.<sup>70</sup> If the latter, the US should then embark on a strategy of bombing Manchuria and "carefully selected targets" in China, blockading the latter, rearming Japan, and supplying Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists and other local anticommunist forces with arms and other resources, to remove the burden from American hands.<sup>71</sup> "The one indefensible policy is the one we are following—to put our ground troops into Korea, and to tie their hands."<sup>72</sup> This strategy tied together a number of strands of thought which ran through the *Freeman*, such as its support of the Chinese nationalists in Formosa, its faith in American technological superiority, and its grudging admiration of the Soviet Union's strategy of using proxy forces to fight its wars. It was a coherent policy, chosen after some soul-searching over a war that was as messy in ideological terms as it was to fight.

The issue of militarism also illustrated the tension between competing conservatisms in the *Freeman*. Alongside its demands for an uncompromising stand against the growing Soviet threat and a corresponding militarisation of society, there was a profound distrust of the consequences of such a society. The editors were frustrated with European "pacifism" and reluctance to rearm, ridiculed suggestions that the US move to universal disarmament, and argued that reducing Western armed forces by half would mean total impotence.<sup>73</sup> Yet they also drew a line at what they thought acceptable, fearing that greater militarisation would stifle freedom at home and create the kind of state power and control they were trying to halt overseas, much as Taft and other Old Right 'isolationists' had warned before the war.<sup>74</sup> The prospect of Universal Military Training (UMT) was particularly distasteful, the *Freeman* repeatedly referring to it as "involuntary servitude" and "therefore repugnant to our whole basic

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<sup>65</sup> 'Why Truman Should Resign,' p. 6; 'How to Curb One-Man Rule,' *Freeman*, 1, 10, Feb 1951, pp. 5-6; 'A Vital Reform,' p. 7; Henry Hazlitt, 'Our Political Paralysis,' *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> 'How to Curb One-Man Rule,' p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Hazlitt, 'Our Political Paralysis,' p. 6; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 17, May 1951, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> 'What Aims in Korea?' *Freeman*, 1, 14, Apr 1951, pp. 5-6; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 20, Jul 1951, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> 'What Aims in Korea,' p. 5; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 17, May 1951, p. 3; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 7, Dec 1950, pp. 3-4; 'For a New Foreign Policy,' *Freeman*, 1, 8, Jan 1951, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 20, Jul 1951, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> 'Neither Guns nor Butter,' *Freeman*, 1, 26, Sept 1951, p. 22; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 4; 'Truman Deals Four Aces,' *Freeman*, 2, 5, Dec 1951, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> Allitt, p. 155; Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 89-90.

constitutional philosophy. If a State can seize a young man for military training in peacetime, it is equally entitled to seize older men to build roads for future military transport"—after all, the Soviets used the same justification of defending the commonwealth to justify their slave camps.<sup>75</sup> One author chastised proponents of UMT, who believed such permanent training would strengthen institutions and the social order, for being blind to “the matter as a step toward socialism by increasing the already excessive powers of our nominally federal government.”<sup>76</sup> Just because a good citizen ought to vote or defend their country, observed one editorial, did not mean they should be compelled to do so.<sup>77</sup> The state could not force citizens to be moral or virtuous.

For the *Freeman*, adoption of the UMT was simply one more inch in the slide toward totalitarianism. “War has been the food on which the monstrous Leviathan states of today have grown so great,” as evidenced by the French Revolution, which saw the “longest single invasion of individual liberties” in history when the Revolutionary Republic levied on mass for military service.<sup>78</sup> “We realise that we are treading on boggy ground,” the editors wrote, “with Soviet Russia herding millions of its slave citizens into a gigantic mass army, and into a gigantic industry designed solely to support that army.” But, not only had UMT in Europe from 1870 on culminated in fascism, the US’ victory in two world wars without such compulsion showed its military might stemmed from precisely the individual freedom to learn and experiment which UMT would stifle. The youth “may need basic training in the elements of fighting...but he will be a more resourceful aviator, a cannier tank-driver, if he has been left alone in his formative years to tinker with auto engines, or to run a tractor in summer months.”<sup>79</sup> As always, that which was natural and left to organically run its course was superior to a process superimposed by the state. Since the US could never match the USSR in manpower, the *Freeman* instead proposed building American sea and air power into “the equivalent of the British Navy in the...days of William Pitt the Younger.”<sup>80</sup> As the editors explained, such measures would allow the *Freeman* to reconcile their “basic libertarian principles” with empowering the state to win a global war with an ambiguous end point.<sup>81</sup>

Militarism was also a clot in the nation’s economic health and freedom. *The Freeman* cautioned about the military-industrial complex long before Eisenhower made his farewell address, echoing the prewar warnings of ‘isolationists’ like John T. Flynn of a militaristic collusion between big business and New Deal liberals.<sup>82</sup> America was in the midst of an “armament economy,” where security concerns turned the government into the biggest buyer of domestic commodities, and led it to whisk “potential labourers” into the military and interfere in private enterprise to ensure its security.<sup>83</sup> It had been in a perpetual state of war for the preceding twelve years, a period where War and Defense had been “insatiable customers...imperiously commanding all the surplus goods of the world” along with “an expansion of productive capacity beyond anything that had been profitable in time of peace.” What would happen when peace eventually heralded the end of the war boom, sticking Americans with an excess of surplus goods, industrial capacity, and manpower?<sup>84</sup> Flynn himself would continue his

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<sup>75</sup> ‘The Mania for Compulsion,’ *Freeman*, 1, 4, Nov 1950, p. 7; ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 2, 12, Mar 1952, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> Hoffman Nickerson, ‘Universal Training: A Fraud,’ *Freeman*, 1, 11, Feb 1951, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> ‘The Mania for Compulsion,’ p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Nickerson, ‘Universal training: A Fraud,’ p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> ‘The Mania for Compulsion,’ pp. 7-8.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7; ‘Facing the Convention,’ *Freeman*, 2, 21, Jul 1952, p. 7; Alexander P. de Seversky, ‘We Have No Air Power,’ *Freeman*, 2, 9, Jun 1952, p. 13; Bonner Fellers, ‘Our Principal Ally: Superior Air Power,’ *Freeman*, 3, 22, Jul 1953, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> ‘The Mania for Compulsion,’ p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 96.

<sup>83</sup> Walter Sulzbach, ‘How to Defend Free Enterprise,’ *Freeman*, 2, 11, Feb 1952, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> ‘For an Economic Equivalent of War,’ *Freeman*, 1, 22, Jul 1951, p. 7.

warnings about militarism in the magazine's pages. "America is now definitely and permanently launched on a career of militarism, not as a military but as an economic institution," he warned." It was the beginning of the road taken by Europe in the 1870s, Germany in particular, adopting militarism as a means of welfare for the general populace. "As long as this grandiose adventure of defending the whole world can be carried along, there will be jobs for all."<sup>85</sup>

Such articles also implicitly undermined the magazine's bedrock of hawkish Cold Warriorism. *The Freeman* heavily criticised the military's "notorious" appetite for more money than it needed, either clinging to the money it had left over "like the abalone to the rock" or spending wildly to avoid the embarrassment of admitting it had asked for too much. "Far more than half the Federal Budget enjoys a kind of immunity from criticism," the magazine complained, because "Nobody likes to challenge a military estimate."<sup>86</sup> Flynn similarly complained that defense was "the one institution that can enable [Truman] to spend vast sums of public money to provide jobs while at the same time avoiding competition with private industry"—after all, "Who dares to lift his voice against paying taxes and lending money to our government when it faces the terrifying Communist giant?"<sup>87</sup> Pronouncements like these showed a startling lack of faith in the military, which the *Freeman* typically trusted and believed was actually being hampered and restricted by civilian leaders. They also displayed an uncharacteristically dismissive and cynical tone towards the underlying assumptions of the Cold War. Even on this issue, however there was not unity. The same issue that Flynn attacked the United States' move to militarism, one editorial pointedly suggested that there was only one way to head off the threat of inflation: "to trim to the bone federal expenditures on [everything] other than defense enterprises."<sup>88</sup>

*The Freeman* wrestled head on with the contradiction between small government and Cold War principles late in its run. Later editor Florence Norton discussed "the dilemma from which [conservatives] have been trying to extricate themselves since the beginning of World War Two" and may ultimately "prove incapable of resolution." The "indispensable elements of the conservative credo" and "theme of numerous articles in these columns" were a balanced budget, end of deficit financing, lowering of taxes, and the decentralisation of governmental authority, all "calculated to contrast the scope and spending power of the federal government." Yet despite the *Freeman's* complaints about the welfare state, she admitted that "it is the maintenance and employment of large armed forces that are the principal sources of the stupendous expenditures" and growth of "public power and functions" of the preceding decade. There was no chance of this trend being curbed, however, if the "mounting financial requirements of an army, navy and air force ready to go to war at the drop of a hat" anywhere in the world continue. The US, she suggested, could not merely tweak its military policy and strategy, but had to totally overhaul its foreign policy.<sup>89</sup> It was no coincidence such issues were coming to a head at this point. The Korean War had occasioned an unprecedented growth in the prominence and influence of the military in American society—the establishment of a large standing army, hundreds of foreign military bases, and a quadrupling of defense-related spending which ate up three-quarters of the federal budget.<sup>90</sup> Though Norton's editorial offered no resolution to the "inescapable dilemma" posed by these developments, the mere acknowledgement of this paradox at the core of the *Freeman's* ideology signalled that the uneasy coexistence of different conservatisms was untenable. Somewhere down the line, this would have to be dealt with.

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<sup>85</sup> John T. Flynn, 'North Pacific,' *Freeman*, 1, 3, Oct 1950, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> 'The Military Budget,' *Freeman*, 1, 19, Jun 1951, p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Flynn, 'North Pacific,' p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 1, 3, Oct 1950, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> 'Inescapable Dilemma,' *Freeman*, 4, 18, May 1954, pp. 9-10.

<sup>90</sup> Cumings, pp. 207, 210-11; Lichtman, p. 186.

ii. *Domestic Communism and Civil Liberties*

This paradox also meant the magazine would have to re-evaluate its stance on anticommunism and civil liberties. Certainly, the *Freeman* did do civil liberties some service. In the very first issue, George Sokolsky stressed the importance of “varieties of thought and opinion” at a time “when unity is being stressed as a political device to maintain a party in power.” While in Russia, “one man’s judgement prevails and if he is in error, error triumphs,” in a free society like America, “the truth is pounded out on the anvil of contention and difference.” In a time of war, he continued, Americans still defended the “right to think, speak, write and act as Marxists, so long as they are not spies.” And even for spies, the American legal system granted them the benefit of the doubt, protected their basic civil rights, allowed the *Daily Worker* (“devoted to Stalin”) to be published and sold, and let Marxists teach at universities. This was more than could be said for the Western, capitalist equivalents in Russia. While acknowledging “a limitation must inevitably be enacted restricting Communists as the war between the two countries becomes more severe,” he insisted that this would remain the case only for criminal acts like espionage and sabotage—“A thief is arrested not because of what he believes, but because he commits a felony.”<sup>91</sup>

Just as in foreign policy, however, the threat of communism in the domestic context superseded all other concerns. The magazine was defined by a more hard-line stance dismissive of civil liberties, prompting liberal intellectual Daniel Bell to complain that “*The Freeman* intellectuals want the Communists shriven or driven out of all areas of public or community life.”<sup>92</sup> The magazine had partly grown out of *Plain Talk* after all, a virulent anticommunist magazine whose stance, articles and list of contributors were barely discernible from that of the *Freeman*. Moreover, the Red Scare had a legitimate hold on public anxieties, and so conservative anticommunism became part of a mutual feedback loop, feeding into the hysteria which helped produce it. By May 1948, 77% of Americans thought communists should register with the government, and two thirds that American communists were loyal to the Soviet Union.<sup>93</sup> Several states and some cities passed laws harassing subversives, and on September 23 1950, a week before the *Freeman* debuted, a bipartisan coalition (including some iconic liberal Senators) passed the McCarran Internal Security Act which, among other things, established concentration camps for alleged security threats.<sup>94</sup> For its part, the *Freeman* reconciled its seemingly contradictory beliefs by viewing communism and its adherents not as a legitimate ideology and group with a difference of opinion, but alternately as “the armed doctrine of a regime” set on global conquest, an “anti-American conspiracy directed by a foreign power,” or a “criminal and seditious conspiracy devoted to furthering the aims of a foreign power.”<sup>95</sup> By reframing it as an issue of law and order and treason, the *Freeman* could rationalise any inconsistencies around matters of inalienable rights.

In fact, the *Freeman* and its contributors were all for empowering the state when it came to fighting communism. It had little time for talk of liberties and rights which it viewed at best as soft-headed nonsense. It derided the conviction that one could not be compelled to reveal one’s political opinions as “the most ingenious burglar’s tool that totalitarian conspirators had ever laid their hands

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<sup>91</sup> George Sokolsky, ‘Freedom—A Struggle,’ *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, pp. 16-17.

<sup>92</sup> Bell, p. 67.

<sup>93</sup> Hodgson, p. 54.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 55; Cumings, p. 93.

<sup>95</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, ‘Fallacies About Communism,’ p. 21; ‘HST Won’t Outlaw Them,’ *Freeman*, 2, 24, Aug 1952, p. 9; ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 6.

on."<sup>96</sup> Liberal concerns about free speech were "mere rationalisation" of their sympathy for the communist ideal.<sup>97</sup> America's "civil liberties *must* be defended and preserved," insisted one author, "since to lose them would be to lose our fight against totalitarianism." But communist subversion "threatens and attacks our civil liberties far more dangerously than does any current manifestation of anti-Communist hysteria."<sup>98</sup> Eastman similarly chastised "ritualistic liberals" who, blind to "the distinction between heresy and conspiracy, would in the name of free speech defend the efforts of a gang of unscrupulous conspirators to abolish the last vestiges of free speech." He saved some of his harshest words for Justice William O. Douglas, who had likened the 1940 Smith Act, which criminalised advocating the overthrow of the government and required all non-citizen adults to register with the state, to Soviet laws curtailing anti-socialist speech. Douglas "shields behind a wilful ignorance of Communism a disposition to wallow in abstract libertarian sentiments," wrote Eastman, one of the clearest statements of hostility to the principles the magazine would eventually be defined by.<sup>99</sup> Like the concept of 'academic freedom' in universities, these mushy ideals were an abdication from reality and simply useful tools for subversives to continue quietly dismantling the American way of life.

Authors instead proposed various legal measures to curtail this threat. They recommended "legislation forcing totalitarians to...come out in the open, under sanctions, and be counted," loyalty programs, constant 'redbaiting' to expose "volunteer voices", and even the outright outlawing of communism.<sup>100</sup> Eastman called for "an investigation by the people's representatives" of the American Association of University Professors, notably avoiding pairing the words 'government' or 'state' with 'investigation', terms generally reserved in the magazine for policies which were perceived as overstepping a line. He preferred this state intervention to faculty committees handling the problem in-house, doubting the latter could effectively deal with it, and thus rejecting the efficacy of private channels to problem-solve in favour of state control, an uncharacteristic reversal of the magazine's typical views.<sup>101</sup> This particular private matter was one in which the state could freely and *successfully* interfere, Constitutional principles be damned. "A legal and constitutional system framed in a spirit of genuine liberalism, heavily and properly weighted with safeguards in favour of the accused...is incapable of coping adequately with Communist conspiratorial techniques," one editorial complained.<sup>102</sup> "If there are excesses in those necessary attempts to combat foreign infiltration" by a Communist threat unparalleled in human history, "these excesses must be laid to the account of the evil force in Moscow."<sup>103</sup> Potential violations of individual rights that might result from these measures were simply the price of ensuring the continuation of American freedom.

Divisions similarly appeared over Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose name today is synonymous with opportunism, hysteria and repression. The early *Freeman* sided strongly with McCarthy, viewing him at best as a persecuted hero bravely taking on a vast conspiracy, and at worst as a well-intentioned, though unsavoury character who was nonetheless carrying out a vital, thankless task by exposing communist infiltration.<sup>104</sup> He was "the irrepressible young man with a

<sup>96</sup> 'How Not to Write a Law,' *Freeman*, 1, 3, Oct 1950, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> 'HST Won't Outlaw Them,' p. 10.

<sup>98</sup> James Rorty, 'Where the Home Front is Soft,' *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, p. 25. (V1,n1)

<sup>99</sup> Max Eastman, 'Our Most Ticklish Problem,' *Freeman*, 3, 17, May 1953, p. 24.

<sup>100</sup> 'How Not to Write a Law,' *Freeman*, 1, 3, Oct 1950, p. 5; William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies About Communism,' p. 22; 'HST Won't Outlaw Them,' p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> Eastman, 'Our Most Ticklish Problem,' p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> 'The Necessity of "Red-Baiting",' *Freeman*, 3, 18, Jun 1953, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies About Communism,' p. 22.

<sup>104</sup> 'The Press and Pavlov's Dog,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 8; 'The Big Lie Backfires,'

*Freeman*, 3, 1, Oct 1952, pp. 10-11; Max Eastman 'Facts and Logic Re: McCarthy,' *Freeman*, 4, 15, Apr 1954, p. 30; Louis Bromfield, 'Back of the Brennan Plan,' *Freeman*, 1, 14, Apr 1951, pp.



scorn," "a pop-off guy with a gift for dramatising the issue" whose accusations had a "considerable quantity of truth."<sup>105</sup> What we think of today as hysteria these authors dismissed as a convenient fiction. The idea of a climate of fear and 'McCarthyism' was laughable, the latter being simply a "sloganised 'bad word'" that was invented and propagated by communists to shut McCarthy up.<sup>106</sup> The 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings, which would ultimately finish the Senator, were viewed alternatively as a distraction receiving too much press, a "circus" "deliberately precipitated" by the Truman administration and the Pentagon, and a ploy by a "cabal" of Administration officials, Democrats, and other liberals to "get" him.<sup>107</sup> Though John Chamberlain assured readers that "we do not endorse McCarthy one hundred per cent"—he "exaggerated" in one case and "went a little bit askew in his attack on [Arthur] Schlesinger and others"—his books were still "well-documented," and it was a shame no "professor in the land" would "challenge him line by line" instead of hiding behind the "grand shriek of 'McCarthyism'."<sup>108</sup> The early *Freeman's* fate was intimately connected to McCarthy. Its rhetoric was nearly identical to that of McCarthy—from his linking of communism to intellectuals and effeminacy, to his ceaseless accusations against Secretary of State Dean Acheson—and several of those involved in the *Freeman*, such as treasurer Alfred Kohlberg, contributor Freda Utley, and editor Forrest Davis, worked directly for him.<sup>109</sup> Davis had actually written McCarthy's infamous 60,000 word speech impugning Secretary of Defense George Marshall's loyalty.<sup>110</sup> It is no wonder Hazlitt would complain of the magazine making McCarthy a "sacred character."<sup>111</sup>

Despite Chamberlain's mild condemnation, the *Freeman* did in fact have a history of disapproval regarding McCarthy. Such articles paled in volume to those supporting McCarthy, but they nonetheless reflected some conservative disquiet with his methods. One editorial gently reproached him for needlessly linking "thinkers around Adlai Stevenson to the Kremlin" when he could have simply pointed out their documented intellectual dishonesty.<sup>112</sup> Another more sternly warned that some of McCarthy's actions in what became the 'Bohlen Affair,' including impugning the Secretary of State's integrity and his "inept proposal" to put Eisenhower's nominee for the Soviet Ambassadorship to a lie detector, "have made things more difficult for his defenders and easier for his detractors." While no one had done more than McCarthy to shine a light on the issue of Communists in government, he "has been a sort of one-eyed bull in the political China shop" who now threatened to divert public discussion toward his personality over more pressing matters.<sup>113</sup> His "intemperate language" and "usurpation of authority," lectured another, was helping to discredit Congressional investigation, along with

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11-12; William F. Buckley, 'Senator McCarthy's Model?' *Freeman*, 1, 17, May 1951, p. 21; Burton Rascoe, 'Stop that Character Assassination,' *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, p. 20; Eastman, 'Our Most Ticklish Problem,' pp. 24-5.

<sup>105</sup> 'The Press and Pavlov's Dog,' *Freeman*, 2, 3, Nov 1951, p. 8; Bromfield, 'Back of the Brennan Plan,' p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> 'Fortnight' and "'McCarthyism"—Communism's New Weapon,' *Freeman*, 4, 6, Dec 1953, pp. 5-6, 7; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 3, 17, May 1953, p. 6; George E. Sokolsky, 'Contour of an Election,' *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 14; Although Morris H. Rubin, editor of the *Progressive*, did write in to the magazine informing them the term was actually coined by political cartoonist Herblock ('From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 9, Jan 1954, p. 4).

<sup>107</sup> Hodgson, p. 57; 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 4, 17, May 1954, p. 5; 'From Our Readers' and 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 4, 19, Jun 1954, pp. 4, 5; 'How Not to Run a Party,' *Freeman*, 4, 20, Jun 1954, p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> 'Vassar Answers Nancy Fellers,' p. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Cumings, p. 89; Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 106-7.

<sup>110</sup> Hart, p. 92.

<sup>111</sup> 'Battle for the Freeman,' *Time*, 61, 4, 26 Jan 1953, p. 76.

<sup>112</sup> 'Re: Certain "Liberals",' *Freeman*, 3, 4, Nov 1952, p. 11.

<sup>113</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 3, 15, Apr 1953, p. 5.

threatening “orderly administration” and the “constitutional allocation of powers.”<sup>114</sup>

One of the most strident criticisms of McCarthy came surprisingly early, at the end of September 1951. Frequent contributor Towner Phelan wrote of the Senator’s “reprehensible tactics” which had “hurt—not helped—the many sincere and patriotic people who are fully justified in being alarmed and deeply concerned over” the Truman administration’s response to Communist infiltration.<sup>115</sup> Phelan was harshly denounced by readers and staff. Editor Suzanne La Follette noted that while the *Freeman’s* inside front cover explicitly disclaims “any necessary agreement” with the authors it publishes, Phelan’s article compelled her to “enter a specific disclaimer of agreement.”<sup>116</sup> No less than four readers criticised Phelan the following issue, accusing him of the very “smearing” he decried. He “renders a distinct injustice to the valiant efforts of Senator McCarthy in his self-effacing campaign of patriotism.” Davis too weighed in, agreeing with La Follette that Phelan had “unwittingly become the victim of the Left Wing smearbund,” and accusing him of lacking the mettle to challenge the “popular fable” regarding McCarthy.<sup>117</sup> This was such a fraught topic that the leading article of an issue four months later had Phelan “elaborate his charges,” while giving McCarthy himself space for a reply. Phelan reiterated his points, explaining that he wanted to recognise “the faults of those who are on our side” in order to win over the moderate, “fair-minded and intelligent people” McCarthy alienates. Nonetheless, having “no desire to help the left wing build up the blatant faults of McCarthy into a gigantic false issue,” he vowed to “write nothing further on this subject in the *Freeman*.”<sup>118</sup> This was ideological consolidation in action, the wider fold pushing and succeeding an outlier to temper his/her beliefs for the sake of the movement. Moreover, McCarthy’s defenders here—Davis, La Follette, Chamberlain—were the same three whose strident anticommunism would fatally clash with Hazlitt and the board of directors’ view of the *Freeman’s* direction. This debate thus presaged the coming split between anticommunists and libertarians in the conservative ranks.

Phelan was not the only one scolded for his disapproval of McCarthy. Contributor Burton Rascoe wrote in, dismayed that “Occasionally there creep into the columns of the *Freeman* indications that some of your writers have been deluded” by the myth that McCarthy “is a roughneck as careless of facts as he is in his choice of a tailor.” McCarthy’s only faults were “too delicate and fine a sense of fair play” and “an honesty and integrity of purpose so great that he will allow foul blows to be struck at him time after time without protest.”<sup>119</sup> In response to the *Freeman’s* editorial on the Bohlen Affair, one reader pointed out that McCarthy’s tactics were the only ones to bring “serious matters to public attention and action thereon,” while another was “shocked, dismayed, and disheartened” to read the piece. “For a right-wing publication to pick on and attempt to discredit a loyal right-wing public figure is really a sad situation,” especially when a “division in the ranks of the right-wing is exactly what the left-wing forces wish to accomplish.” One lone voice praised the *Freeman* for its “fairness and balance” on the affair, believing it better “to put principles above personalities” and simply defend the man when attacked and call him to account when out of line.<sup>120</sup> Ultimately, as these letters signalled, a split in the ranks is exactly what would come of the McCarthy issue, as conservatives within the movement had increasingly divergent priorities. The movement could stay

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<sup>114</sup> ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1954, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Towner Phelan, ‘Modern School for Scandal,’ *Freeman*, 1, 26, Sept 1951, p. 29.

<sup>116</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 1, Oct 1951, p. 22.

<sup>117</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 2, Oct 1951, p. 24.

<sup>118</sup> Towner Phelan, ‘Mr. Phelan’s Criticism,’ *Freeman*, 2, 10, Feb 1952, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>119</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 2, 8, Jan 1951, p. 22.

<sup>120</sup> ‘From our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 3, 17, May 1953, p. 34.

diverse, its adherents sticking to their principles, or it could stay unified, but it could not stay both.

A more nuanced middle ground was found on the matter of censorship, casting a difference between state and private censorship. *The Freeman* did occasionally espouse civil libertarian sentiments, with an editorial in the second issue admitting that while the “Left is always wailing about censorship,” the staff generally sympathised with their complaints about specific instances. “It seems to us that the freedom to write and publish is a basic American right that ought never to be questioned.”<sup>121</sup> *The Freeman* viewed the state as the greatest oppressor of such rights through history, and naturally deemed it untrustworthy to decide what was acceptable and unacceptable. The “villain in the abridgement of freedom throughout history has been government itself,” wrote Flynn. The state “had never been fully tamed to serve as the protector of the people’s rights without becoming itself the oppressor” until the American Revolution divided and distributed state power among a number of smaller republics and branches.<sup>122</sup> Elsewhere, the editors criticised the Supreme Court’s overturning of a lower court’s ban on a film on the grounds of sacrilege. They were disappointed the Court specifically emphasised its concern with the case’s religious element, not the state’s ability to censor in general. “Ruling on the grounds that ‘sacrilegious’ was too vague a standard, but leaving it open for the government to ban films by the equally vague standard of obscenity, the Court was wading into a discussion of semantics instead of doing its job: “to safeguard the American citizen against governmental infringements of his Constitutional rights,” including “his right to be free of censorship—no matter on what grounds.”<sup>123</sup>

Mostly, however, the *Freeman* was sceptical of liberal-left complaints about intellectual suppression, viewing it as simply a taste of the Left’s own medicine. Indeed, it supported censorship by voluntary community-based groups and private organisations. Though Flynn believed in the right of Communists and fascists to speak, to publish books and magazines, to found schools teaching their ideology, and for any newspaper or private college to hire them, he also believed in the right of a school board or editor to refuse them employment, and that anyone who did not was “justly entitled to the denunciation of the citizens who oppose these evil doctrines.”<sup>124</sup> Hazlitt similarly defended the withdrawal of school textbooks based on alleged subversive passages discovered by voluntary groups, where librarians had been persuaded not to order controversial material. He rebuked the *Times* for its reporting, which implied “that failure to order a book is tantamount to its suppression.” What the *Times* called ‘censorship’ was simply “the right of criticism” and the very “free inquiry” it accused these groups of threatening. Furthermore, the *Times*’ sinister portrayal of “voluntary censorship groups” implied “the statist doctrine that only what government does has a right to be respected” and “voluntary initiative on the part of citizens is to be feared.”<sup>125</sup> These views did not entirely mesh with the *Freeman*’s frequent complaints, often from these same authors, about the shutting out of conservatives from the publishing industry and market.<sup>126</sup> *The Freeman* was being pulled in three different directions, caught between the principles of individualism, halting the Communist menace, and criticising the Left and its hypocrisy. While these three impulses did not necessary gel, the belief in the right

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<sup>121</sup> ‘Fortnight,’ *Freeman*, 1, 2, Oct 1950, p. 4.

<sup>122</sup> Flynn, ‘Have We the Brains to Be Free?’, p. 20.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Justice Clark Finds,’ *Freeman*, 2, 19, Jun 1952, p. 12.

<sup>124</sup> Flynn, ‘Have We the Brains to Be Free?’, p. 21.

<sup>125</sup> Henry Hazlitt, ‘Educators vs. Free Inquiry,’ *Freeman*, 2, 20, Jun 1952, p. 31.

<sup>126</sup> John T. Flynn, ‘Experiment in Suppression,’ *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, p. 19; Flynn himself argued in the first issue that though “it is not forbidden by law to write a book,” the presence of “radical reviewer[s]” in most newspapers and the fact that “the whole road a book must travel from the author to the reader is well-patrolled by small but vocal busy and effective squads in the service of the new Radical Bigotry.”

of citizens to protect their own communities as they saw fit certainly spoke to a latent libertarian strain running through these articles.

The only issue on which the early *Freeman* would take a consistent position akin to what we would classify today as 'libertarian,' was over *morality* and censorship. Aside from an early article which defended the Code as a good defense against local censors, the *Freeman* was a surprisingly progressive voice arguing against the paternalistic protection of adults based on subjective definitions of 'decency' or 'morality'.<sup>127</sup> The Supreme Court's aforementioned ruling on sacrilege, wrote the editorial, "explicitly refused to base its finding on the one clear and pertinent issue" of "the inadmissibility of Statist meddling with man's spirit."<sup>128</sup> After a TV adaptation of *1984* censored its famous torture scene, one author insisted that, to become a mature medium, television "must not be guilty of protecting its audiences."<sup>129</sup> Elsewhere, the magazine hailed Alfred Kinsey's 1953 report *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* as a "progressive step" toward "enlightenment" which should give "moralists" pause.<sup>130</sup> Thus, a small but significant number of authors were already expressing discontent at 1950s social mores and their ability to stifle the full-flowering individual.

The magazine gained a consistent voice espousing these views with the addition of Serge Fliegers to the 'Books and Arts' section later in its run. Fliegers, Swiss-raised and Cambridge and Harvard-educated according to his bio in the *Freeman*, kept up a steady drumbeat against the Motion Picture Producers Association (MPA) and their Production Code, which imposed strict rules about what could and could not be shown on movie screens. "The question of movie censorship has long perturbed those among us who have staunchly maintained the right to be entertained or educated without interference from...bureaucrats," he wrote.<sup>131</sup> He ridiculed the MPA as "masters of our morality" who formed in the 1930s "when Hollywood producers were getting a bit reckless with shots of scantily clad jungle-queens and overamorous sheiks."<sup>132</sup> The MPA's rules and judgements were vague and "medieval," Fliegers argued, often not borne out by the facts, and counter-productive, as the element of the forbidden led moviegoers to flock in droves for a taste of immorality, turning otherwise unremarkable films into hits.<sup>133</sup> Alternatively, the Code ensured American audiences were fed "a bland diet of front-porch romances and happy endings." Code administrators "lived under the happy delusion that you can make people lead a Pollyanna life by showing them Pollyanna pictures," but the increase in crime under the Code disproved that. It ruled that criminals must always be caught, policeman must always be good, marriage is inevitably happy, and divorce can only bring unhappiness, when in real life, the opposite was often true.<sup>134</sup> Fliegers' lonely crusade against the Code exemplified the less-than-prominent undercurrent of libertarianism in the *Freeman's* early years, placing faith and trust in individuals to decide for themselves what was and was not acceptable, free of society's constraints.

They also opened up a rift among the more traditionally conservative readership, however. "I am a bit tired of Serge Fliegers and his ranting against the movie Production Code," wrote one.<sup>135</sup> Others criticised his "childish prattle" as the "one blemish in the *Freeman*," and accused him of advocating "anarchistic

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<sup>127</sup> Ben Ray Redman, 'Moonshine Hollywood,' *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 28.

<sup>128</sup> 'Justice Clark Finds,' p. 12.

<sup>129</sup> Flora Rheta Schreiber, 'TV Drama Grows Up,' *Freeman*, 4, 3, Nov 1953, p. 33.

<sup>130</sup> 'Briefer Mention,' *Freeman*, 4, 2, Oct 1953, p. 30.

<sup>131</sup> Serge Fliegers, 'Codes and Morals,' *Freeman*, 4, 11, Feb 1954, p. 32.

<sup>132</sup> Serge Fliegers, 'Morality and the "Moon",' *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 32.

<sup>133</sup> Fliegers, 'Codes and Morals,' p. 33; 'Morality and the "Moon",' p. 32.

<sup>134</sup> Fliegers, 'Codes and Morals,' p. 32-3.

<sup>135</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 15, Apr 1954, p. 34.

ideas.”<sup>136</sup> “The alternative seems to be for the Court to allow a flood of unorthodoxies to sweep away the moral code which affects economics as well as sex,” one charged; “Experiments are a poor substitute for experience.”<sup>137</sup> Even the positive review of Kinsey had elicited a strong reaction from one reader, saying that “Just because 5940 women revealed some of their secrets to Kinsey’s researchers does not mean that the natural law or moral law has changed. It is just as wrong today to be immoral as it was...1000 years ago.”<sup>138</sup> These responses revealed a pushback against the more radical individualism increasingly seeping into the magazine through its early years. Some were not so devoted to the cause of liberty to allow it to override considerations such as morality, decency and tradition.

There was another split evident here, however, as evidenced by one reader’s response to Fliegers’ work—a generation gap. An “avid *Freeman* reader” praised the magazine as “one of the few consistently conservative, anti-regimentation publications around today.” “Most right-of-centre journals of opinion tend, as do their left-wing counterparts, to adopt the views of those who would curb many of our basic freedoms,” he wrote; “a deep-seated distrust of the people” who are thought “so hopelessly inadequate that some sort of Big Brother is needed to plan out every phase of existence.” He identified this tendency in the “recurring craze” for censorship—“a mania which afflicts conservatives as well as left-wingers.” Significantly, this reader both identified himself as a college student and admitted, despite his partiality to the magazine, he “rarely agree[d] with your views.”<sup>139</sup> It would be his generation and those to follow which, more open to new perspectives on social mores, would foster a friendlier environment for libertarian ideas. This was particularly so in the 1960s, when libertarian students split from the traditionalists of the YAF in 1969, and found a kinship with the New Left over their mutual support of abortion rights, drug use, gay rights and sexual freedom, among other things.<sup>140</sup> But while this decade is generally cited as the start of an independent libertarian movement, the controversy around Fliegers in the *Freeman* shows that these debates and the split they engendered could be traced earlier, to the 1950s.

The animated discussions found in the *Freeman* prove that the magazine was not solely an instrument for movement-building and disseminating conservative ideas. *The Freeman’s* encompassment of a spectrum of conservative views, a far cry from today’s more rigid conservative media, reflected a genuine attempt to work out the shape of postwar conservative ideology, providing a platform for diverse individuals to interact and exchange ideas. These exchanges also revealed a tension, however, between hawkish anticommunism and the desire to protect the rights and freedoms of the individual from the state, along with a divide between those eager to use the power of the state to protect traditional values and those wary of granting government any more control. The cracks that issues like war, foreign policy and censorship had opened up in the 1950s conservative movement had started widening into fissures by the end of the *Freeman’s* initial run, and would eventually come to a dramatic head in the magazine’s pages. Something would have to give.

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<sup>136</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 4; ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1954, p. 34.

<sup>137</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 13, Mar 1954, p. 34.

<sup>138</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 4, Nov 1953, p. 34.

<sup>139</sup> ‘From Our Readers,’ *Freeman*, 4, 16, May 1954, p. 4

<sup>140</sup> Klatch, pp. 184, 213-4.

## The Emergence of Libertarianism

The various divisions plaguing the *Freeman* had long caused instability in the magazine. Between October 1950 and the close of 1955, the *Freeman* changed editorship four times, as well as reshuffling its staff at various points in between, not to mention its eternally precarious financial standing. When the magazine was finally bought by Leonard Read and the FEE in 1954, it was on the verge of bankruptcy, its board-members desperately scrounging for new funds.<sup>1</sup> It had lost a staggering \$400,000 in four years.<sup>2</sup> *The Freeman's* editors and backers had conflicting visions of the magazine's political allegiance, direction, purpose, even its tone. These conflicts and disagreements tore the *Freeman* apart and, according to one historian, spelled "an early death for the magazine as a vibrant force in the conservative intellectual movement."<sup>3</sup> However, rather than being simply the start of a slide into irrelevancy as some historians depict it, this tearing apart helped solidify for the first time the emergence of two separate, distinct ideologies—conservatism and libertarianism—which were recognised as incompatible, their differences hardening into something more permanent.<sup>4</sup>

This behind-the-scenes turbulence fed into an ongoing process of identity formation. This process saw traditionalists and anticommunists—abandoning what they saw as a sinking ship—split from the magazine to look for an alternative medium for their beliefs, leaving behind a more ideologically-streamlined, individualist *Freeman*. These factions, as well as those who would adopt the label 'libertarian', subsequently adopted new identities and a more coherent and consistent set of beliefs. The creation of a new, postwar conservatism was key to this, providing a benchmark for what libertarians were *not*, as much as publications like the *Freeman* reminded them what they *were*. For its part, the *Freeman* reversed many of its earlier stances, settling on a noninterventionist, even pacifist, foreign policy, a disregard for the dangers of communism, and the inkling of a stronger commitment to civil liberties. This all culminated in an explicit rejection by the magazine of the traditionalist New Conservatism represented by Russell Kirk. Although libertarians and conservatives would continue to have close interactions after the *Freeman's* changeover, this marked the launching of a distinct libertarianism which later events would help further define.

### *i. A Partition in the Ranks*

The first major fault came in October 1952 over the battle between Robert Taft and Dwight Eisenhower for the Republican Presidential candidacy. The consensus between the two major parties on the government's role in the economy frustrated the *Freeman*, which bewailed the ineffectualness and 'metooism' of the GOP.<sup>5</sup> Yet the magazine was still vaguely aligned with the party and hoped it could turn itself around electorally and ideologically. Opinion within the magazine was split, as it was among Republicans in general, over the right choice to lead the party: Eisenhower, viewed as the all-things-to-all-people, Democrat-lite choice of the liberal East, or Taft, long championed by the *Freeman* as the sole-surviving representative and saviour of true, anti-statist conservatism.<sup>6</sup> A number of director-stockholders who shared Eisenhower's pragmatism, such as J. Howard Pew, Leo Wolman and Jasper Crane, denounced

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<sup>1</sup> Hülsmann, p. 913.

<sup>2</sup> Nash, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Hülsmann, p. 913.

<sup>5</sup> Cohen, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Lichtman, pp. 180-1; Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 107.

the editorial endorsement of Taft, preferring that the magazine stayed neutral until after the convention.<sup>7</sup> This clash was precipitated by the addition of Forrest Davis to the editorial team in May 1952, hired by Henry Hazlitt to lighten his workload and balance out editorial politics.<sup>8</sup> It was sharpened by the fact that both Davis and Chamberlain were hip-deep in the Taft campaign—Davis a consultant, and Chamberlain a founder of the Arts and Letters Committee for Robert A. Taft for President.<sup>9</sup> The editors were accused by both Eisenhower and Taft supporters of not sufficiently supporting their preferred candidate. “Being extreme individualists themselves,” however, “the editors have had no uniform cookie-cutter approach to the problem of nominating and electing a libertarian President”: Chamberlain was for Taft, Suzanne La Follette for MacArthur with Taft as second choice, Hazlitt for Harry Byrd, and Davis for Taft. The editorial concluded that “At least three of us will cheer lustily if Taft wins. If Eisenhower wins, all of us will do our utmost to sell him a real two-front strategy [in foreign policy] and a real anti-Communist knowledge and conviction,” the two areas they perceived him as lacking in.<sup>10</sup> Despite its chaotic potential, this quarrel appeared to have been settled amicably.

This magnanimity, however, disguised what George Nash called a “severe internal crisis” over the magazine’s form and direction.<sup>11</sup> Ludwig von Mises and Hazlitt believed the *Freeman’s* function was to educate the public, “make it possible for dissenters to challenge the ideas of the Left,” and muster the dignity and authority necessary to win over the intellectual class—not engage in political battles.<sup>12</sup> La Follette and Chamberlain, however, wanted a more aggressive magazine that attacked personalities, parties, and entered the fray of contemporary politics as it had with the Eisenhower-Taft debate, not an obscure journal for economists to communicate.<sup>13</sup> Hazlitt had believed when he hired Davis that they both shared a political philosophy, but was disappointed to find Davis “bent on making the *Freeman* a McCarthy and primarily an anti-communist organ rather than an exponent of a positive libertarian philosophy.”<sup>14</sup> Hazlitt and several director-stockholders charged the *Freeman* with becoming a ‘scandal sheet,’ and board-member Lawrence Fertig complained that it had become “intemperate” instead of “convinc[ing] by logic and reason, with less shrillness, less direct hysteria.”<sup>15</sup> Davis, for his part, resented that this faction would turn a “militant magazine appealing to strong emotion” into “a quiet, semi-academic review of economics.”<sup>16</sup> While the board-members believed their funding entitled them to some say about the magazine’s direction, the editors viewed this as “interfering with freedom of the press.”<sup>17</sup> It was a divide between what one historian called the “purer classicists” like Hazlitt, Crane, Mises, Fertig and Read, who wished to be above journalistic squabbles and expound classical liberalism from a “distant, nonpartisan perspective,” and those who sought an accessible, entertaining publication that appealed to a broad audience.<sup>18</sup> A divide, in other words, between principle and populism, between keeping the pure individualist faith alive and unsullied, and cultivating a ‘big tent’ conservatism, as the *National*

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<sup>7</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 112-13.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Battle for the *Freeman*’, p. 76; Chamberlain, *Life with the Printed Word*, p. 143.

<sup>9</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 107; Blanchette, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Facing the Convention,’ p. 7; ‘Battle for the *Freeman*,’ p. 76; although the *Freeman* did not say specifically which editors supported which candidates, by cross-checking this editorial with *Time’s* profile of the *Freeman* it is easy enough to deduce.

<sup>11</sup> Nash, p. 146.

<sup>12</sup> Hülsmann, pp. 910-11.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Blanchette, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, p. 113; ‘Battle for the *Freeman*,’ p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Battle for the *Freeman*,’ p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Rusher, p. 34; Blanchette, p. 11; Nash, p. 146; Chamberlain, *A Life with the Printed Word*, p. 142.

*Review* would later do.<sup>19</sup> It was the same divide that had earlier broken up *Human Events* editors Felix Morley and Frank Hanighen in the late 1940s and 1950, when that magazine was climbing in intellectual importance.<sup>20</sup> The results this time were much the same, if not messier.

The competing visions for the *Freeman* nearly destroyed the magazine. Hazlitt was officially “on leave” from June 1952, putting off an official resignation at the request of Mises, Fertig and other board-members who wanted to avoid handing control to the other editors.<sup>21</sup> He ultimately resigned in October 1952, his name dropping from the contents page in November.<sup>22</sup> During his absence, Chamberlain, La Follette and Davis sought to secure independent funding, and thus free themselves from the influence of Hazlitt’s backers, by planning a fund-raising dinner for the *Freeman*’s second anniversary, lining up \$60,000 and inviting Taft to speak.<sup>23</sup> The Hazlitt-friendly board scuttled the plan one month before the date.<sup>24</sup> Soon, the various camps were openly hostile, trading insults.<sup>25</sup> It all came to a head at the annual director-stockholder meeting on 21 January 1953. Treasurer Alex L. Hillman resigned, protesting that “it has been almost impossible for the past six months to run the magazine,” and with the board against them, so did Chamberlain, La Follette and Davis.<sup>26</sup> Crane and Fertig had lined up a majority behind their position, unanimously replacing the three with Hazlitt and Florence Norton, the former editor of fellow conservative journal *American Mercury*.<sup>27</sup> This was accompanied by a spruced up contents page and a clear statement of direction which emphasised Hazlitt’s ‘purer’ principles over the other three’s controversy-chasing: “In addition to exposing the fallacies of the Socialists and the Communists, [the *Freeman*] will seek variety of tone and content, and will put its emphasis on the positive values of a free economic system and the dignity and liberty of the individual.”<sup>28</sup> It was a goal more in line with the principles of the FEE, soon to take over the magazine, which divorced itself from the grub of politics and focused instead on intellectual discussion and economic education—fitting, given Hazlitt’s affiliation with the Foundation.<sup>29</sup> This of course did not mean an immediate and dramatic shift. As already evidenced, much of what characterised the early *Freeman* and set it apart from its later incarnations continued well past this. But it was the first major signal that change was coming.

Part of this change was a process of identity-formation in which the *Freeman*’s writers and readers took part. Their traditional descriptor, ‘liberal’, had been appropriated by the Left, a casualty of their semantic warfare. Conservatives complained bitterly of this, “one of the semantic bastardisations of our day,” the word degraded so it was now “identified with a loss of faith in the virtues of individualism and self-reliance and a blind faith that the state can do for men what they can not do for themselves.”<sup>30</sup> One grumbled that Franklin Roosevelt had debased it to refer to “watered-down Marxists” like Harold Ickes or Henry Hopkins, who cared only for material things and not about the individual’s soul and spirit.<sup>31</sup> *The Freeman* and its readers regularly placed sceptics’ marks

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<sup>19</sup> Allitt, p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 98-99; coincidentally, both would later be *Freeman* contributors.

<sup>21</sup> Hülsmann, p. 912.

<sup>22</sup> Nash, p. 146.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Battle for the Freeman,’ *Time*, p. 76; Hülsmann, p. 912.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 913.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Battle for the Freeman,’ p. 76; Bjerre-Poulsen, pp. 112-3.

<sup>27</sup> Hülsmann, p. 913; Chamberlain would continue to write for the magazine and bring his more populist and stringently anticommunist views.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Among Ourselves,’ *Freeman*, 3, 10, Feb 1953, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Hans F. Sennholz, ‘Onward Still,’ *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 46, 5, May 1996, pp. 332-3.

<sup>30</sup> Ernst F. Curtz, ‘Social Significance Catches Up,’ *Freeman*, 1, 1, Oct 1950, p. 30; William

Henry Chamberlain, ‘Swiss Shangri-La,’ *Freeman*, 1, 9, Jan 1951, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Louis Bromfield, ‘The Triumph of the Egghead,’ *Freeman*, 3, 9, Dec 1952, p. (V3,n9)



around the words 'liberal' and 'liberalism' when referring to their left-wing variants as a perpetual reminder of the word's perversion and a subtle denigration of the Left.<sup>32</sup> They also came up with alternative disparaging names, to differentiate it from their 'classical' brand of liberalism: "so-called liberals," "misnamed liberals," "pseudo-liberals," "false liberals," "State liberals," as well as referring to "counterfeit liberalism" and—one which caught on and appeared frequently thereafter—"McLiberals."<sup>33</sup> One reader even suggested using the recently-coined "gulliberal."<sup>34</sup> Though accepting its label had been lost, the *Freeman* still clearly yearned at least for some possibility of its rehabilitation. The *National Review*, by contrast, appeared to abandon such hopes upon launching, referring to liberals with nothing more extraneous than a capital 'L'.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, realising that the label was unlikely to change hands again in the near future, the *Freeman* sought a replacement. This would be doubly difficult given the stew of various ideologies making up postwar conservatism which the magazine was already grappling with. There was an endless variety of terms to choose from—selecting the somewhat ungainly 'libertarian' was hardly inevitable. *The Freeman's* maiden editorial and later statements of principle referred simply to "traditional" or "true" liberalism and "the classic liberal tradition."<sup>36</sup> Although the term 'conservative' appeared from time to time, the editors pointedly referred to it in sceptics' marks at one time, like the 'liberalism' which had fallen into disrepute.<sup>37</sup> In one later update, the editors avoided affixing any label to the magazine at all, though 'individualism' and its variants were frequently used by contributors throughout.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, after its facelift in April 1952 the magazine carried the header "A Fortnightly for Individualists" atop its contents page.<sup>39</sup> Max Eastman bemoaned that while a survey showed there were around 200 influential and reputable figures around the world standing for classic liberalism, "it would appear that no single term or convenient phrase has emerged which would distinguish them in popular parlance" from the Left. He cycled through various suggested prefixes to 'liberalism'—constructive, revisionist, sociological, critical, spiritual, realist, humanist, scientific—but being either too literate, too narrow and so likely to repel various individuals, or too "technical and laboratorial," he rejected them all. He also rejected "True Liberalism" and "New Liberalism," the former because it suggested something fixed in the past that could not be developed, the latter because by the time the movement achieved its goal neither its adherents nor the ideology itself would be "new." Eastman settled on "liberal conservative," which implied that "civilisation is on the defensive," trying to conserve what was associated with nineteenth century liberalism.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Rorty, 'Where the Home Front is Soft,' p. 23; 'How not to Write a Law,' p. 5; Forrest Davis, 'The Treason of "Liberalism",' *Freeman*, 1, 10, Feb 1951, p. 17; 'The Times "Frames" a Question,' *Freeman*, 1, 19, Jun 1951, p. 8; 'How Dead is Pétain?' *Freeman*, 1, 23, Aug 1951, p. 8; 'In An Age of Mutiny,' *Freeman*, 2, 17, May 1952, p. 7; 'Success Story,' p. 33; 'Wanted, Some Reporters,' *Freeman*, 3, 9, Jan 1953, p. 9; 'Profit-Seeking Science,' *Freeman*, 4, 11, Feb 1954, p. 10; 'Conservatives for Liberty,' *Freeman*, 4, 20, Jun 1954, p. 10; this is by no means an exhaustive list, which in fact would be impossible given that this was a built-in stylistic feature of the *Freeman*.

<sup>33</sup> Felix Wittmer, 'Collectivism at Yale,' *Freeman*, 2, 2, Oct 1951, p. 28; William Henry Chamberlain, 'Europe Turns to Freedom,' *Freeman*, 2, 6, Dec 1951, p. 9; Mises, 'Our Leftist Economic Teaching,' p. 11; McComb, p. 31; Louis Bromfield, 'Triumph of the Egghead,' *Freeman*, 3, 5, Dec 1952, p. 12; E. Merrill Root, *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 35; Phelan, 'Secret Strength...', p. 18; 'Let the Campus Listen,' *Freeman*, 3, 4, Nov 1952, p. 10; 'Wanted, Some Reporters,' p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 3, 7, Dec 1952, p. 34.

<sup>35</sup> 'The Week' and 'Publisher's Statement,' *The National Review*, 1, 1, Nov 1955, pp. 4-5.

<sup>36</sup> 'Faith of the Freeman,' p. 6; 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> 'Function of the Freeman,' p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> 'Success Story,' p. 33.

<sup>39</sup> *Freeman*, 2, 14, Apr 1952, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Max Eastman, 'What to Call Yourself,' *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 14.

Eastman's article prompted a dialogue within the magazine. Readers wrote in over the next few issues with their own suggestions, including "Constitutionalist" and "Personalist," as the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights both speak of and protect an individual's personal rights.<sup>41</sup> One offered "dynamic conservatism," for "the people who want to move forward in all ways except they don't think the Constitution should be scuttled in the process."<sup>42</sup> Hazlitt, as editor, agreed that it was "a problem that now troubles all of us who still adhere to a philosophy of individual freedom, of limited government, and of a free market economy," whose name has "been stolen by our enemies." "It seems hopeless for us now to take the name back without increasing the confusion." He too cycled through other possibilities—'traditional,' 'classical' and 'neo-classic' liberals, as well as 'neo-liberals' and 'paleo-liberals'—but found them all lacking, settling ultimately on Eastman's suggestion of "liberal conservative." There was one other possibility, however, which Eastman had neglected but "an increasing amount of people have been calling themselves": libertarian. It may be "awkwardly long" and could be confused for 'libertine,' but then so were opposing terms like 'authoritarian,' and even 'liberal' had licentious connotations before it was engrained in political discourse. Moreover, its definition in the Webster's Dictionary, "a person who advocates full civil liberties for the individual," was "not too far from the broader meaning we are looking for."<sup>43</sup> It was an ongoing issue that dwelled on the conservative mind throughout the early 1950s. Even with a fixed set of principles and beliefs, the movement would be shapeless and indistinct without a name to call itself.

Upon the FEE's purchase of the magazine, it appeared to have definitively settled on a rebranded name, one which, as Hazlitt indicated, writers and readers had been employing since the very first issue.<sup>44</sup> The magazine's header changed from "A Fortnightly for Individualists" to "A Monthly for Libertarians," and Frank Chodorov, its new editor, encouraged readers to use the term 'libertarianism,' which was "substantially the same thing" as individualism, but had "as yet escaped defilement."<sup>45</sup> Readers expressed their dislike for the word, one deeming it "a weak and high-falutin' word," and urged the *Freeman* not to give up on the "good old-fashioned 'conservative.'"<sup>46</sup> Chodorov playfully accused those individualists objecting to the label of being perfectionists, "prone to argue among themselves over the correct expression of every concept," a symptom of "definitionism, which is a dread disease." A number of readers believed the label a "concession to modernism and a misnomer," but the dictionary defined it as a defense of "individual liberty of thought and action." "What's wrong with that?" he asked.<sup>47</sup> This gentle mocking of the unnecessary pedantry of individualists was seemingly the last word. The magazine devoted no more space to it after this. The ideology and movement promulgated and represented by the *Freeman* had a name at last, a distinct label setting it apart from what came before and what ran alongside. This was not an inconsequential cosmetic detail. Upon launching a little over year later, the *National Review*—the ideology of which prioritised moral concerns, anticommunism and community over freedom, peace, and the

<sup>41</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 3, 25, Sept 1953, p. 4; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 1, Oct 1953, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> 'Fortnight,' *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Rorty, 'Where the Home Front is Soft,' p. 24; 'Mania for Compulsion,' p.7; John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 1, 17, May 1951, p. 25; Cecil Palmer, 'Our Enemy, the State: a Review,' *Freeman*, 2, 11, Feb 1952, p. 26; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 4; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 3, 25, Sept 1953, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> 'About Me: An Editorial,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 6; although Chodorov said he would continue to use the word 'individualism,' because of his "strong leaning toward the loves of my youth."

<sup>46</sup> 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 4; 'From Our Readers,' *Freeman*, 4, 20, Jun 1954, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> 'About a Word,' *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 11.

individual—adopted the label ‘conservative’ to describe its ideology, and by the late 1950s mainstream conservatives had decided this would be their name.<sup>48</sup> These were thus more than just labels—they were statements of difference as much as anything else in the *Freeman*, indicating the splintering of postwar conservatism in earnest, and the beginning of a separate path for the *Freeman* and its ideology.

ii. *Ideological Revision*

Many of the ideological qualities of the magazine would subsequently come in for re-examination, if not outright transformation. The magazine retained much of its style, appearance, thematic territory, and general outlook—many of the same writers continued contributing articles in this final year, after all. However, some significant details signalled its gradual transition away from anticommunism and traditionalism, and closer to what became libertarianism. There was a notable changeover in staff—the departure of James Burnham, William Schlamm and the aforementioned La Follette to the editorship of the *National Review* deprived the *Freeman* of many of its reliably hawkish and militantly anticommunist voices, as did the virtual disappearance of writers such as Eastman, Eugene Lyons, Ralph de Toledano, Burton Rascoe, Thaddeus Ashby, Davis, and even Hazlitt. All of these writers tended to err on the side of, if not full-throated commitment to, anticommunism when it came to issues of civil liberties and war, and their output for this revamped *Freeman* was either minimal or non-existent. William Henry Chamberlain was the sole member of this group who continued to regularly produce articles for the magazine. Perhaps more importantly, the war-and-intervention weary Chodorov took over editing duties. Chodorov was a member of the ‘isolationist’ Old Right of the 1930s and 1940s, a sceptic of American foreign intervention who had opposed US involvement in World War II, and whose more pacifistic and voluntarist views came to dominate the magazine.<sup>49</sup> He and the FEE would ultimately have the greatest impact on the *Freeman*’s evolving ideology.

While the *National Review* was defined by its overarching anticommunism, the *Freeman*’s obsession with communism, once colouring a majority of its subject matter, became sharply tempered.<sup>50</sup> Though the magazine continued to voice its strict opposition to socialism, communism and all other forms of ‘statism’, as well as explode the fallacies of Marxist and socialist thought, it kept redbaiting articles to a minimum, those pieces sounding the alarm over Communist infiltration and subversion as well as attacking prominent Leftists and liberals as secret Reds. As Chodorov complained towards the end of his editorship, approximately “one in four of the manuscripts submitted to the *Freeman* deal with the subject of communism,” be they examinations of Soviet or Chinese atrocities, or reports on “the machinations of domestic communists” and the spread of communism through various parts of the world. Filling issues with such material would lead to a pallid “sameness” and “dullness,” plus divert attention from equally threatening developments at home, such as the concentration of executive power and the push for government schooling. Communism was just one of a number of equally offensive authoritarian ideologies, and in stressing its opposition to it, the *Freeman* was forgetting that it was *for* something too: freedom, for the market and for the individual. “Sometimes,” he concluded, “as I read these anti-communist manuscripts, an unkind suspicion comes upon me: are these writers *for* freedom or only *against*

<sup>48</sup> ‘Publisher’s Statement,’ ‘The Magazine’s Credenda,’ and ‘National Trends,’ *National Review*, 1, 1, Nov 1955, pp. 5, 6, 12; Lichtman, pp. 204-5; Himmelstein, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> Gary North, ‘The Moral Dimension of FEE,’ *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 46, 5, May 1996, p. 363.

<sup>50</sup> Hodgson, p. 81; Allitt, p. 175.

communism?"<sup>51</sup> It was as direct a repudiation of the magazine's early direction and mainstream conservatism as would ever appear in the *Freeman*, and one which bore no small similarity to Hazlitt's earlier desire to focus less on controversy and more on the positive aspects of the free market system. This time, however, these words were backed up with tangible changes.

This ambivalence toward an excessive focus on communism seeped into writing on other matters, most notably regarding war. The early *Freeman*, as already demonstrated, believed that "the nature of the [Soviet] menace is essentially military," and "must be held in check with the requisite striking power."<sup>52</sup> William Henry Chamberlain had dismissed the belief that, being an idea, communism could not be stopped by force, calling this a "cliché" that was an "addiction of the anti-anti-Communists."<sup>53</sup> Yet this "inaccurate banality," as he called it, became the cornerstone of the *Freeman's* revised foreign policy.<sup>54</sup> The purpose of the American war in Korea and its prospective interventions in Indo-China and Guatemala, wrote Chodorov, was to kill or intimidate the natives, who "carry an ideological germ that threatens our way of life." But the "evidence of history is that ideas are impervious to weapons," like how "the traditional culture of the Jews managed to outlive the paganism of the Roman legions." One could not rid the world of an idea by killing its adherent, "because the idea may have spread and you cannot destroy every carrier of it," so it was better to attack and kill the idea itself and "let all natives live."<sup>55</sup> Another author stated bluntly:

our war with communism is a war of ideas. It is a contest to win the minds of men. This is a contest which cannot be won through military supremacy. It will not be won or lost on battlefields.

By staying the course of traditional, American, individualistic freedom, America would "continue to surpass the rest of the world in our accomplishments," and the world would voluntarily emulate its success, leaving communism behind.<sup>56</sup> This idea would have significant effects on the magazine's changed outlook on foreign policy and America's role in the world.

These authors felt confident in pronouncing these more pacifistic beliefs because they did not view the Soviet Union as an imminent, existential threat, another sharp change from the *Freeman* of yesteryear. As much as the early *Freeman* emphasised the inferiority of the communist system, and the comparative superiority of capitalism and the American way, it also tended to portray the Soviet Union as a nigh-unstoppable juggernaut threatening to steamroll over the free world at any moment. A "tremendous empire, stretching from Stettin to Canton," and "centrally directed by a small group of men in Moscow who...feel a double urge to extend the area under their control by every means of intrigue, subversion, threat of force, and...force itself."<sup>57</sup> It was "larger and more formidable than Genghis Khan's...and numbering some 800,000,000 subjects, about one third of the population of the world."<sup>58</sup> More alarmingly, Moscow controlled "the worldwide fifth column," using "fellow travellers, front organisations, dupes and innocents" to corrode a nation from within while applying "a dizzying mixture of pressure and cajolement, promises and threats" from without.<sup>59</sup> The US, by contrast, was on "the verge of national ruin" and

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<sup>51</sup> 'An Editorial Problem,' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> J. Anthony Panuch, 'A Trap for the GOP,' *Freeman*, 2, 21, Jul 1952, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies About Communism,' p. 20.

<sup>54</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'No Peace in Appeasement,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 23.

<sup>55</sup> 'Reds are Natives,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, pp. 9-10.

<sup>56</sup> E. Gordon Fox, 'The American Way,' *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, p. 35-36.

<sup>57</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies About Communism,' p. 22; 'If they Want Peace,' *Freeman*, 3, 24, Aug 1953, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> 'If they Want Peace,' p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, 'Fallacies About Communism,' p. 22; Burnham, p. 8.

"headed toward financial bankruptcy," its "mountainous confusion of civilian agencies" and compartmentalised military thinking comparing unfavourably with "Moscow's streamlined agencies."<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, America was being strung along by complacent, selfish, if not outright disloyal, 'allies' who refused to contribute to the fight.<sup>61</sup> The situation was decidedly grim.

Next to this, the 'new' *Freeman* was positively nonchalant about the Soviet threat. Chodorov did not doubt the Communists' sincere intention to conquer the world, but he was "not frightened because I am not convinced of the world-conquering potential of the Moscow gang, or of their ability to invade my country." Though the American people were told they were dealing "with a crowd of honest-to-goodness maniacs" in the Kremlin, a sentiment espoused in the *Freeman's* own columns, in Chodorov's estimation "the Soviet leaders are not crazy," and would thus not do something as irrational and potentially self-destructive as "invade us with hydrogen bombs."<sup>62</sup> Another author concurred, disagreeing that Russia was "a deadly threat to our very survival as a nation" as "we are told." Its military and industrial capacity made it a "minor league team," and the idea of a Russian conquest of the States was "utterly fantastic."<sup>63</sup> Despite "her gigantic army and abundant armament," wrote another, Russia's woeful and badly-equipped transportation system, the shambles that was its agricultural system, its army of oppressed and disaffected citizens, and its lack of "food and necessary raw materials" made it "utterly unfit for a sustained war operation."<sup>64</sup> In these few passages, these authors rejected one of the core assumptions which had driven the early *Freeman's* desire to zero in on anticommunism at the expense of peace, civil liberties and the free marketplace.

This fed into a reconsideration of the kind of foreign policy the magazine wished to be associated with. The magazine now confronted head-on the ongoing conflicts between 'non-interventionism' and 'internationalism,' limited government and aggressive anticommunism, which writers like Florence Norton had earlier acknowledged. William F. Buckley, who in a little over a year would found the *National Review*, confronted this "dilemma" in the second issue. Conservatives had "kept so busy surviving" that they "paid scant attention to an enormous fissure in their ranks" over what they were "to do about the Soviet Union." 'Containment' conservatives, explained Buckley, believed it impossible for any one nation, let alone the Soviet Union, to control the world without spreading itself too thin. For them, like the Old Right 'isolationists,' the greatest danger to American freedom was that by militarising, "overdoing national defense," making war, and debasing the currency through deficits, America would either then fall to the Russians or "we shall totalitarianise ourselves to the point where life in the United States would be undistinguishable from life in the Soviet Union." 'Liberation' or 'interventionist' conservatives, meanwhile, believed the other side underestimated the Soviet Union's strength, the cunning and resourcefulness of its leaders, and communism's allure. They stressed the communists' "dazzling military and diplomatic successes" and the technological and military progress which made Russia a "direct physical threat" to the US—essentially the narrative advanced by the early *Freeman*. Buckley criticised these interventionist arguments as "morbid," unable to "disguise the fact that only the State can direct a war," meaning that "to beat the Soviet Union we must...imitate the Soviet

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<sup>60</sup> 'The Case Against Acheson,' *Freeman*, 1, 6, Dec 1950, p. 6; Wheeler-Nicholson, 'Strategy for America,' p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Garet Garrett, 'Buy, Buy, Buy the World,' *Freeman*, 2, 2, Oct 1951, pp. 10-11; Varney, 'Our Failure in Korea,' p. 12;

<sup>62</sup> Frank Chodorov, 'A War to Communize America,' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, pp. 20-21; Edward Hunter, 'Government by the Insane,' *Freeman*, 3, 13, Mar 1953, p. 11; Palyi, 'What is Russia...,' p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> Samuel, B. Pettengill, 'Forty Years of Interventionism,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> N. I. Stone, 'Achilles Heel of the Soviet Giant,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 26.

Union" through conscription and taxes.<sup>65</sup> Such a pessimistic view of America's perceived Cold War responsibilities was an early sign that this 'new' *Freeman* would be a different animal.

The 'new' *Freeman* was critical of the imperialist role America had been thrust into. The attitudes inherited from the 'isolationist' Old Right, like an uncompromised hostility to imperialism and of the paternalistic notion of America's mission to reform and democratise the world's peoples, became more prominent in the magazine.<sup>66</sup> America was engaged in a new, indirect kind of imperialism, alleged Chodorov—one where other countries' sovereign rights are viewed as "conditioned by American foreign policy," and relying on "subtle intervention" over military or economic pressure to "wheedle foreign nations into acceptance of its policies and purposes."<sup>67</sup> "Intervention and one-worldism have put us on the wrong side of history," confirmed another author. "For more than a century American sympathies were always with the little people struggling to be free from foreign landlords," but its entangling alliances had now made Americans "the unhappy supporters of European colonialism in Africa and Asia against a new tide of nationalism sweeping over the colonial races as it swept over our shores in 1776."<sup>68</sup> His reference to "one-worldism" indicated the United Nations as a further source of resentment, already looked upon with suspicion by conservatives. Authors like Chodorov and Flynn believed it a "racket" to induce America into protecting the British Empire, and bulldoze over local cultures and traditions.<sup>69</sup> Like interventionism, it was "the conceit that absolute wisdom resides in some people who are duty-bound to impose their special gift on the less enlightened," ignoring the idea that people "might be happier if permitted to live by the particular cultures that time has evolved for them."<sup>70</sup> In other words, an elitist, paternalistic attempt by those who believed they knew better to override local wisdom and customs which had developed organically over time. It is no coincidence this view mirrored the *Freeman's* complaints about government's butting into the economy.

For Chodorov, the situation in 1954 harkened back to the eve of the US' entry to World War II in 1940. Then, too, he had been on the 'isolationist' side as "libertarians of the time" debated whether to postpone their fight for freedom until "Hitlerism is disposed of." He argued that history had proven the old 'isolationist' case right, that the cause of freedom "would be set back by war, regardless of military outcome:" since World War II, conscription as well as taxes and bureaucracy had grown and become entrenched, not to mention the nation's debt and the loss of citizens' "sense of personal independence." The 'isolationists' had known that, historically, "during war the State acquires power at the expense of freedom, and that because of its insatiable lust for power the State is incapable of giving up any of it." Much the same would happen if America was now dragged into a Third World War.<sup>71</sup> This stance resulted in tangible changes to the magazine. Chodorov complained about the flood of 'foreign affairs' literature which was not satisfying a real demand but was rather "foisted on the public" to give "aid and comfort to our Washington interventionists," and bolster their arguments. This literature never suggested keeping out of other countries' business would be in America's best interest, and so Chodorov admitted to publishing in the *Freeman* only those foreign affairs articles taking this stance.<sup>72</sup> One such article appeared that very issue, grumbling that forty years of

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<sup>65</sup> William F. Buckley, 'A Dilemma for Conservatives,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, pp. 15-16.

<sup>66</sup> Lichtman, p. 112.

<sup>67</sup> 'The New Imperialism,' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Pettengill, p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> John T. Flynn, 'Two Rackets of the UN,' and 'Interventionism is War,' *Freeman*, 5, 9, Mar 1955, pp. 40, 8.

<sup>70</sup> 'Interventionism is War,' p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Frank Chodorov, 'The Return of 1940?' *Freeman*, 5, 3, Sept 1954, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> "'Foreign Affairs'," *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 10.

interventionism had not only failed to make the world safer and freer as promised, but had led the US to betray its ideals and allies, and lose its "independence of action" via the "spider webs of countless treaties and secret executive agreements." It was time to "sober off" and "Get over this internationalist drunk."<sup>73</sup>

This divide came to a head in the fifth issue, when former contributor William Schlamm and Chodorov each presented their respective sides of the debate. Schlamm accused Chodorov of desiring freedom without consequences—"unrestricted liberty" without the price of "an armed brawl with thugs"—without bothering to explain how such a brawl could be avoided. This was an abdication of the responsibilities that come with freedom, a charge that must have been especially cutting to an ardent individualist like Chodorov. Schlamm denied the supposed similarity between 1954 and 1940, pointing out that, the merits of their argument aside, the 'isolationists' of 1940 did not "simply contend that war is evil and expensive and that it tends to suppress liberties at home," but actually gave an "intellectually responsible and rationally-argued position" why the US could safely wait the war out.<sup>74</sup> Schlamm could not see how, "once [Russia] has added the gigantic industrial powerhouse of western Europe to the manpower and natural resources of Asia," an "unarmed US, minding its own pleasant business of freedom, could avoid being overrun by a communist world monopoly of military power." Moreover, Schlamm dismissed as "unmitigated frivolousness" the idea that there was no difference between the likely restrictions an American wartime state would impose, and the "existence a victorious Soviet government would force upon innumerable American generations."<sup>75</sup> This was a less doctrinaire and more pragmatic response to the crises plaguing America, which implicitly rebuffed one of the *Freeman's* and libertarianism's core premises: that granting the State only a little bit of power would inevitably lead it to seize more until totalitarianism was established.

In reply Chodorov drew on a number of by now familiar arguments: that the idea of a Soviet invasion of the US or even the incitement of a successful revolution by Moscow was unlikely or improbable; that a Soviet takeover of Europe would simply create imperial overstretch and precipitate its collapse, in the same way as American withdrawal from Europe would strengthen the US; that "war adds power to the State, at the expense of liberty;" and that the US would be "infected by the same virus we set out to exterminate" in a war with Russia, which is "certain to communise our country." It would be the latest in a series of "conscript wars" since World War One, all of which were preceded by similar "fear campaigns ...manufactured out of whole cloth," warning of an invasion. He lambasted Schlamm's choice between temporary unfreedom and a Russian dictatorship as a false one, when in truth the only choice was "a condition of slavery" where Americans could pick their masters' nationality. Finally, he disregarded the very idea of a temporary dictatorship, "for no dictatorship has ever set a limit on its term of office."<sup>76</sup> Schlamm and Chodorov's exchange here forebode the disappearance of militaristic, interventionist and virulently anticommunist arguments from the *Freeman*. True, John Chamberlain would keep up the interventionist drumbeat in his capacity as lead reviewer, labelling as "timidity" the attitude that "Nobody wants war," and insisting that America would continue "buy[ing] Boeing bombers until Hungary and Poland are free."<sup>77</sup> These

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<sup>73</sup> Pettengill, p. 17.

<sup>74</sup> They argued the US could wait for Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia to wear each other out to the point where neither could challenge an armed US, which could then swoop in and create a peace settlement in Europe.

<sup>75</sup> William S. Schlamm, 'But it is Not 1940,' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, pp. 17-19.

<sup>76</sup> Chodorov, 'A War to Communize...,' pp. 20, 22.

<sup>77</sup> John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 5, 12, June 1955, p.35; John Chamberlain, 'A Reviewer's Notebook,' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 34.

were rarities, however, and on the whole such views ceased to dominate the magazine.

The “fissure” Buckley had warned about was as evident among the readership as the contributors.<sup>78</sup> Each article received both praise and criticism from readers. One charged Chodorov with overlooking “the fact that with gangsters on the loose, you are not give a choice of whether or not you’ll fight.”<sup>79</sup> Another, a newspaper columnist before the war who had “argued for peace, for isolation, for a strong America”—and warned of the same consequences as Chodorov now—recounted how he was fired for his views and was now seeing a “tragic history...being repeated.”<sup>80</sup> This reaction to Chodorov and Schlamm’s exchange further signalled the cementing of right-wing attitudes to foreign policy. The majority defended Chodorov, though most praised both. Schlamm “made out the best case possible for war,” but Chodorov’s rebuttal ensured “there wasn’t much left on the opposition side.”<sup>81</sup> “I stand with Chodorov,” pledged one reader who was particularly receptive to Chodorov’s suggestion for a ‘Fortress America’. Another reader contended that “Schlamm’s whole argument is based on the hypothesis that free society is so pitifully weak that in times of danger it must turn to dictatorship (militarism) in order to save itself,” while in fact the opposite was true. A reader from Vermont chided both for leaving out economic issues from their arguments, but nonetheless advanced a non-interventionist line, insisting that all the US had to do to avoid World War Three was stop trading with communists and cut off all aid to those that did.<sup>82</sup> Whether this relative unanimity in opinion was genuine or simply presented that way through selective publishing of letters cannot be known—either case, however, suggests that the magazine was being pushed into a new direction as the voice not for the broad conservative movement but of a more focused libertarianism.

This debate appeared to have an identical effect on the other ‘side’ too. Buckley described the controversy as a “healthy” one that was good to see “finally being ventilated.” Though he was “as pessimistic as Chodorov about the possibility of domesticating the State after the war is over,” and despite his earlier criticisms of the “morbid” interventionists, he put himself, “dejectedly,” on the side of Schlamm and all those “who favour a carefully planned showdown, and who are prepared to go to war to frustrate communist designs.”<sup>83</sup> Americans, Buckley explained, “will have a fighting chance in a future war against the State and I do not see that we will have a fighting chance to save ourselves from Soviet tyranny.”<sup>84</sup> Sure enough, when Buckley launched the *National Review* a little under a year later, it was as an isolationist-free, militantly anticommunist magazine committed to a large defense state and leading role for America in the Cold War—nearer to the old *Freeman* than what the magazine had now become.<sup>85</sup> For most historians, the splintering of the conservative movement seen here represented the end of the *Freeman*’s relevancy and the definitive death of noninterventionism in conservative thought, already decimated by the start of the Cold War.<sup>86</sup> More than this conservocentric view, however, the schism over this issue drew a line between mainstream conservatives and those dubbed ‘libertarians,’ whose main intellectual organ would no longer carry the mixed messages it previously did.

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<sup>78</sup> Buckley, ‘A Dilemma...,’ p. 15.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p.4.

<sup>83</sup> Buckley, ‘A Dilemma...,’ p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Hodgson, p. 80; Allitt, p. 175; Jennifer Burns, ‘Godless Capitalism: Ayn Rand and the Conservative Movement,’ in Nelson Lichtenstein, ed., *American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century*, Philadelphia, 2006, p. 272.

<sup>86</sup> McPherson, p. 33.



While foreign policy was where the *Freeman* saw the most decisive break, less dramatic changes were also evident in issues like civil liberties. To be sure, the *Freeman* continued to show a muted regard for civil liberties when compared to today's civil libertarians. One author urged Congress to allow wiretap evidence in federal court for convicting spies, saboteurs and traitors, while dismissing principled concerns about privacy and abuse, arguing only sleazy private investigators had sullied these methods' reputation while the "FBI has never abused its wiretap authority."<sup>87</sup> Another author compared the ideological conflict between Queen Elizabeth I and the Catholics to America's current conflict with communism, both being about disloyal criminal conspiracies among the ordinary citizenry hoping to subvert the political order at the behest of a foreign leader (the Pope). He compared the timid response of "fuzzy modern 'liberals'," "who can't tell the international communist conspiracy from an ordinary political party," to the emphatic opposition to "poperie" by civil libertarian icons like John Milton and John Stuart Mill—"some of the noblest architects of our liberties. "The history of Anglo-American civil liberty," he wrote, "is a history not just of guaranteeing rights but of crushing those who would crush them," and showed "that freedom does not die when its adversaries are restrained but, on the contrary, thrives and flourishes on the restraints."<sup>88</sup>

Few articles showed this level of disregard to civil liberties, however, and in fact the *Freeman* appeared to have newly prioritised them. The magazine published an open letter "To My Friend, the Liberal," from future *National Review* editor and drafter of the Sharon Statement, M. Stanton Evans. Although gently mocking liberals' "incessant uproar about infringement of civil liberties" as exaggeration, he nonetheless acknowledged "that what you charge is substantially true...the power to crush the civil liberties of American citizens is latent in our government" and numerous times "has come to the surface, and some helpless citizen has been sucked down."<sup>89</sup> When Congress passed the Communist Control Act in 1954, seemingly outlawing the Communist party as the *Freeman* had long urged, Chodorov questioned the effectiveness and enforceability of the law. 'Communist' was a broad label—did it encompass one who was "an admirer of the Soviet system" but "opposed to the Kremlin regime?" What about loyal American communist soldiers "in open war with the Soviet Union," or even one who believed the Soviet system was "a perversion of his religion" and urged "its adoption here in what he considers its pure form?"<sup>90</sup> While "the authorities have confined themselves to the cloak-and-dagger activities," he argued elsewhere, "the ideas and values on which communism rests its case have hardly been challenged," allowing them to successfully make their ideas "popular and respectable." Traditional American values and institutions would be preserved by "exposing, analysing and refuting communist concepts", a job for "the publishers and readers of the *Freeman*," not the police.<sup>91</sup> Change could only come organically through intellectual exchange, not forced through state action. These were not denunciations of the frequency, scale and passion reserved by the *Freeman* for topics like the UN, taxation, or unions, but it did signal the widening gulf between what the *Freeman* now was and what it used to be.

Not everything changed, of course. The magazine's always-consistent denunciations of militarism became more prominent. *The Freeman* still tied militarism to the policies of Bismarck, Revolutionary France, and totalitarian

<sup>87</sup> John L. Kent, 'To Wiretap or Not to Wiretap,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, p. 28.

<sup>88</sup> C. P. Ives, 'The Liberals of Elizabeth I—and Now,' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, pp. 33-34; this article was unsurprisingly pilloried by a Catholic reader for its "dogmatic" justification of "rough treatment" of Catholics ('Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 4).

<sup>89</sup> M. Stanton Evans, 'An Open Letter to My Friend, the Liberal,' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> 'In Need of Definition,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 12.

<sup>91</sup> 'The Conspiracy,' *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 9.

Europe, continued to lament the regimentation and stifling of individual development inherent in military training, and kept on assailing the economic distortions it produced.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, despite Chodorov's open disinterest in communism, the magazine continued churning out redbaiting articles on the communist leanings of the Smith College faculty, governmental workers, soft-headed liberals, and so on, albeit at a *vastly* reduced number.<sup>93</sup> Readers still sent letters warning that American business and media were "permeated with communist cells," or criticising African American poet Langston Hughes for helping the communists stir up "anti-American feeling along racial lines" through his antagonism to the South.<sup>94</sup> The magazine displayed numerous continuities on issues such as the UN, foreign aid, education, government spending, unions, and of course economic policy—unsurprising, given that mainstream conservatism and libertarianism shared, and continue to share, many fundamental assumptions. The divisive McCarthy proved to be one clearest examples of such continuity. The 'new' *Freeman* certainly started out promising for those fed up with McCarthy's antics. Publisher Leonard Read informed readers in the opening issue that the magazine would no longer "glorify nor vilify persons, nor will it champion or oppose individuals holding or seeking political office," appearing to signal a drift away from the controversy-courting and defense of the Senator the magazine had earlier embraced.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, issue thirteen's 'Education of a King Jerk' featured one of the most stringently anti-McCarthy statements in the magazine's short history. An "evil end corrupts good means" and vice versa, contended the author, and McCarthyites' statements that they admired McCarthy's aims but not his methods, a common refrain in the earlier *Freeman*, was tantamount to saying "hatred of an evil is sufficient to justify evil."<sup>96</sup>

All the same, the *Freeman* and its readers largely continued to pull for McCarthy. Chodorov offered a veiled defense of the Senator mere pages after Read's promise. He pegged the Army-McCarthy hearings an "imbroglio" which nevertheless exposed the ugly, petty workings of government and its hidden bureaucracy, now "fighting for its position" after McCarthy "attempted to invade their sacred precincts threatening to expose to public view the workings of their publicly supported private machine."<sup>97</sup> Articles claimed McCarthy was being muzzled for re-election purposes, defended him from a supposedly left-leaning book critical of his methods, and satirised liberal overreaction to "The Ten Terrible Years of the McCarthy Terror."<sup>98</sup> 'Education of a King Jerk' was criticised by two readers, one "made disconsolate" by the suggestion that "there was something evil in McCarthy's investigative methods," and another who charged it with relying on the misconception spread by a hostile press that "the followers of McCarthy embraced wrongful means in their commendable fight against subversion."<sup>99</sup> Another reader condemned the "censuring and distracting" of the

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<sup>92</sup> Howard Buffett, 'UMT: the Promise of Disaster,' and John T. Flynn, 'Bismarck's Public Debt,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, pp. 31, 18-20; William F. Buckley, 'Making a Man Out of a Soldier,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, pp. 20-1; Charles F. Hamilton, 'What is a Boy?' *Freeman*, 5, 10, Apr 1954, p. 20; Peter Crumpet, 'I Saw "Defense",' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 31-32; John T. Flynn, 'The Experiment—"Noble in Purpose",' *Freeman*, 5, 11, May 1955, pp. 24-26.

<sup>93</sup> Aloise Heath, 'The "Liberals" of Smith,' *Freeman*, 5, 2, Aug 1954, p. 24; Victor Lasky, 'The Hysteria of the Hissians,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, pp. 26-7; George W. Price, 'The World's Greatest Suckers,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, pp. 27-8.

<sup>94</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 18, Dec 1955, p. 6; 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 8, Feb 1955, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> Read, 'From the New Publisher,' p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Tenney, p. 25.

<sup>97</sup> 'Televised Education,' *Freeman*, 5, 1, Jul 1954, pp. 7-8.

<sup>98</sup> Frank C. Hanighen, 'Washington, D.C.,' *Freeman*, 5, 4, Oct 1954, p. 14; Alfred Kohlberg, 'McCarthy's "Methods",' *Freeman*, 5, 5, Nov 1954, p. 39; Cedric Silverfish, 'Child's History of the People's America,' *Freeman*, 5, 17, Nov 1955, p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 4; 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 16, Oct 1955, p. 6.

Senator while he carried out vital work.<sup>100</sup> Only one reader expressed disquiet at the magazine's apparent sympathy for McCarthy, who has "aided the cause of communism...by the public revulsion against his methods."<sup>101</sup> Opinions thus did not change in a dramatic instant, and the changes that did happen were mainly slow and cautious. The splitting off and formation of libertarianism was a process.

The magazine's rejection of Russell Kirk and his 'New Conservatism,' did present an explicit tearing away from mainstream conservatism, however. Kirk was the most influential traditionalist thinker in the postwar period, a Burkean who glorified the state as a "divinely-ordained moral essence," held an admiration for Jefferson and Southern agrarianism, and held an equal dislike for big business as big government.<sup>102</sup> He was a passionate admirer of 18<sup>th</sup> century thinker Edmund Burke, who had viewed society as an union of tradition, order and community between the dead, living, and yet to be born.<sup>103</sup> Kirk and his philosophy had emerged and helped to spread through many of the same historical developments which animated the *Freeman's* libertarians: the horror of totalitarianism and total war, the growth of secularism and mass society free of traditional social and moral norms, as well as the rise of an alleged relativism and simultaneous decline of Western civilisation.<sup>104</sup> They both also espoused a cynical view of the nature of man and an aversion to social scientific planning.<sup>105</sup> The similarities stopped there however. Kirk also rejected laissez-faire economics, criticised the drabness and brutality of modern industrial existence (which he claimed figures like Mises ignored), and prized order, tradition, and hierarchy over individualism.<sup>106</sup> Still, the relationship began amicably enough—Kirk wrote in early on, congratulating the *Freeman* on its climbing circulation and promising to do his "small bit" to subscribe friends, and Schlamm hailed the "intellectual importance" of Kirk's *Program for Conservatives*.<sup>107</sup>

The first shot was fired by Frank Meyer, not surprisingly under Chodorov's watch. Though Meyer would later become the chief proponent of fusionism, insisting that traditionalists and libertarians needed each other, at this point he deemed 'New Conservatism' "another guise for the collectivist spirit of the age."<sup>108</sup> It was a "natural complement to the Eisenhower version of Rooseveltism," a compromised me-tooism in other words, which envisioned a society based on values like authority, duty, community and obedience over the *Freeman's* prized concepts, freedom and the individual. Under modern "technological facilities for power and centralisation," argued Meyer, allegiance to such values would "move inevitably to totalitarianism." All these conservatives wanted to conserve, he concluded, was "the New Deal and its works," and their position was playing into the hands of the Left, who could now "justify expelling into outer darkness the principled champions of limited government and a free economy," a.k.a. the *Freeman's* libertarians, "as 'crackpots' and 'fringe elements.'"<sup>109</sup> Chodorov cited Meyer's article as evidence of a "nascent movement among Socialists...to appropriate the Conservative label."<sup>110</sup> John Chamberlain

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<sup>100</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> 'Readers Also Write,' *Freeman*, 5, 7, Jan 1955, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Dunn and Woodard, p. 103; Hodgson, pp. 40-1,

<sup>103</sup> Hodgson, p. 17.

<sup>104</sup> Nash, p. xiii.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*; Mark C. Henrie, 'Understanding Traditionalist Conservatism,' in Peter Berkowitz, ed., *Varieties of Conservatism in America*, Stanford, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> J. David Hoeveler, Jr., 'Conservative Intellectuals and the Reagan Ascendancy,' *The History Teacher*, 23, 3, May 1990, p. 313; Hodgson, p. 83; Critchlow, pp. 19-20.

<sup>107</sup> 'Letters,' *Freeman*, 2, 22, Jul 1952, p. 34; William S. Schlamm, 'Civilized Conversation,' *Freeman*, 5, 6, Dec 1954, p. 37; Schlamm's praise of Kirk was fitting, given that he himself leaned more toward the traditionalist, anticommunist end of the conservative spectrum, and would eventually leave the *Freeman* for the *National Review*.

<sup>108</sup> Hodgson, p. 89; Dunn and Woodard, p. 104; Allitt, p. 179.

<sup>109</sup> Frank S. Meyer, 'Collectivism Rebaptized,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, pp. 22, 24.

<sup>110</sup> 'Conservatives Conserve,' *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 9.

also responded to the “concerted attack on individualism” by the New Conservatives, arguing that they were “doing their cause a great deal of harm by stressing the ‘primacy of the community’” when all community had a “huge vested interest in individual variation.”<sup>111</sup> Whatever goodwill had existed between the magazine and Kirk quickly evaporated following these criticisms and a negative review of one of Kirk’s books.<sup>112</sup> *The Freeman* “subscribes to a kind of ossified Benthamism,” wrote Kirk in November 1955, “...and is edited by a philosophical anarchist [Chodorov] who declares that government is an unnecessary evil and that radicals are the salt of the earth.”<sup>113</sup> A reconciliation did not appear to be imminent.

Readers reacted in a number of ways to this conflict, yet one more illustration of the rupturing of conservatism. Some were dismayed at what its effects on the already-unsteady conservative movement would be. A couple saw it as an irresponsible act, a “sickening attack” that would “give much comfort and propaganda material to the statist” and “a powerful weapon for confusing and dividing our side.” “This is hardly the time for fratricidal strife between those who wear the *Freeman’s* libertarian label and those who, like myself, subscribe to the unhyphenated conservatism of Dr. Russell Kirk.” *The Freeman’s* attack on New Conservatism’s faith in community and moderateness would be used to prove that conservatism really was just a “selfish and greedy” Toryism rebranded, and not a principled philosophy based around protecting the individual. By contrast, two other self-confessed New Conservatives praised Meyer’s article for both locating what was so “woolly and vague and ungraspable” about the ideology, as well as opening up the discussion between what one saw as the only truly valid sides of the political spectrum—Kirk’s New Conservatism and the *Freeman’s* libertarianism.<sup>114</sup> This tension between competing sides of the movement had surfaced before. One author had somewhat elliptically criticised this moderate conservatism when discussing left-wing conformity in American thought, stating that there were two kinds of conservatism: “one real and constructive,” with “roots in inner conviction, intellectual and moral honesty and integrity,” and a “false conservatism” which lacks roots and “floats on the current which follows the easiest way.”<sup>115</sup> Meyer’s critique of Kirk had thus been a long time coming, a culmination of the various tensions which had been building up within postwar conservatism.

The collapse of the *Freeman* over internal power struggles and infighting, and its subsequent makeover under the FEE and Chodorov, was more than just the end of the story of the magazine and the beginning of the story of conservatism. It was also the beginning of the story of modern libertarianism, as a self-conscious and clearly-defined ideology and movement separate from its conservative counterpart. While the *National Review* would attempt to build a big-tent, mainstream movement which combined the disparate strains of traditionalism, anticommunism, and libertarianism (at least in the economic sphere), the *Freeman* refused to compromise by diluting its message for a wider audience.<sup>116</sup> Broadcasting to a reduced readership, it maintained its radical anti-statist ideology and carried the torch for an older, less accommodating set of beliefs which had gone out of fashion in the broadly liberal postwar world. And while it had not fully evolved into what we would now think of definitively as libertarianism, it kept the flame alive for future generations to sharpen and clarify.

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<sup>111</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 5, 14, Aug 1955, p. 35.

<sup>112</sup> William F. Buckley, ‘Essay in Confusion,’ *Freeman*, 5, 13, Jul 1955, p. 38; it is somewhat ironic that Buckley wrote this review.

<sup>113</sup> Nash, p. 81.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Readers Also Write,’ *Freeman*, 5, 15, Sept 1955, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Adams, ‘The Right to be Conservative,’ p. 21.

<sup>116</sup> Burns, ‘Godless Capitalism,’ pp. 272-3; Allitt, p. 173.

## Conclusion

From 1950 to 1955, libertarianism as a distinct movement and ideology gradually materialised within the *Freeman's* pages. This postwar libertarianism was a mix of voluntarism, attitudes toward the natural world and totalitarianism, the ideas of the Old Right, and classical liberalism, which had never quite gone out of style in America and enjoyed resurgence partly due to the arrival of émigrés from a broken, totalitarian Europe. By the time the magazine was completely overhauled by the FEE in 1956, becoming a digest-sized, 52-page monthly, the distinction was set in stone between the mainstream conservatism of the older *Freeman* and the *National Review*, and this uncontaminated libertarianism of the now FEE-owned *Freeman*. Certain positions hardened. Religion and nature continued to have a place in the magazine's thinking.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, while the *Freeman* of old had not necessarily been opposed to preventive war to halt the Russians, viewing it in fact as a necessary inevitability, the very first issue of the new *Freeman* (indeed its first two articles) posited that there was "vastly more to gain...from peaceful exchange" with the Russians than war, and condemned the idea of 'preventive war': "every war is likely to generate a new war."<sup>2</sup> Alongside its standard economic tracts, it continued its preoccupation with the youth and updating readers on the progress of the movement, and there was still room for ideological clarification.<sup>3</sup> Leonard Read asserted that the modern political vocabulary was "a semantic graveyard" for libertarians, who were "neither Left nor Right in the accepted parlance of our day"—these were "authoritarian positions."<sup>4</sup> The magazine's obsession with communism and redbaiting disappeared entirely, and it certainly curbed its focus on controversy and personalities, as its 'purist' members had long wished. It did still comment on current events, albeit less directly, as in Frank Chodorov's regular column for the magazine. Alongside Chodorov, the magazine enlisted a number of FEE staff to write for the magazine, such as Edmund Opitz, F. A. Harper and Paul Poirot, with some familiar names appearing from time to time, including Ludwig von Mises, and both Chamberlains.

Still, it was not as if libertarians and conservatives were irreconcilably divorced, even after all this. Figures like Chodorov and John Chamberlain, who continued to appear in the *Freeman*, also contributed to the conservative *National Review*, as did libertarian English Professor and frequent *Freeman* contributor E. Merrill Root, among others.<sup>5</sup> There was still some cooperation between these camps, who shared *some* common ground in their embrace of free market economics and hostility to the Left, and who in Frank Meyer's view needed each other.<sup>6</sup> It would take many more years and further incidents to more concretely define these divisions. The tenth-anniversary Mont Pelerin gathering in 1956, and Russell Kirk's attendance at it, was one such incident. It became a bitter memory for Kirk, when Friedrich Hayek used the occasion to publicly renounce Kirk's political philosophy which he viewed as too close to socialism.<sup>7</sup> The release of Ayn Rand's bestselling *Atlas Shrugged* in 1957 likewise became a flashpoint for ideological conflict. While John Chamberlain, enthused in the *Freeman* that "Passage after passage" of the 1957 novel belonged "in an anthology of libertarian economic readings," Whittaker Chambers eviscerated the book in the *National Review*, leading a number of readers to cancel their subscriptions of the

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund A. Opitz, 'Black Magic,' *Freeman*, 6, 2, Feb 1956, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Fellers, 'Lessons of Korea,' p. 9; Burnham, 'Critique of Containment,' p. 7; John Strohm, 'Russia's Farmers Pay Us a Visit,' *Freeman*, 6, 1, Jan 1956, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> 'On Campus,' *Freeman*, 6, 1, Jan 1956, p. 35; 'The Growth of an Idea,' *Freeman*, 6, 2, Feb 1956, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard Read, 'Neither Left Nor Right,' *Freeman*, 6, 1, Jan 1956, pp. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> Burns, 'Godless Capitalism,' pp. 284-85.

<sup>6</sup> Allitt, p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> Burgin, pp. 143-4.

latter.<sup>8</sup> Debate between libertarians and conservatives over the merits of Rand continued in the *National Review* in 1960, and again in 1967, when William Buckley asked M. Stanton Evans to write the “definitive” conservative repudiation of Rand’s philosophy.<sup>9</sup> Finally the 1960s and 1970s did much to cement the difference between these movements, as historians have often noted—the split between libertarians and conservatives in the YAF, and the formation of the Libertarian Party. Libertarianism and the fissure between it and conservatism may have sprung into existence over the *Freeman’s* early years, but this was not the end of the story.

This story of libertarianism requires further scholarly attention. Just as Doherty’s *Radicals for Capitalism* helped inspire this thesis, so hopefully this thesis will inspire others to fill the gaps and explore in greater detail the history of the ideas within. The role of nature in free market, anti-state, individualist thinking has been little explored in the historiography, apart from historian Philip Mirowski’s claim that the Mont Pelerin participants agreed “that for the purposes of public understanding and sloganeering, market society must be treated as a ‘natural’...state of humankind,” leading to “natural science metaphors[being] integrated into the neoliberal narrative.”<sup>10</sup> The widespread usage of the rhetoric of nature among a variety of *Freeman* contributors, not just those associated with Mont Pelerin, such as Chodorov, Read and Chamberlain, indicates this was more than just a marketing ploy, however. Even Albert Jay Nock wrote of “how nature pursues her own free way, regardless of the formulas and prescriptions which purblind men devise,” and that “it is in the nature of things” that society can not be improved through “grandiose schemes.”<sup>11</sup> It is thus worth investigating how far back these beliefs date, what forms they took, and when they stopped being instrumental to American political thought. This is likewise the case with Christianity, whose relationship with free market economics is hinted at in the *Freeman*. What can other libertarian magazines, such as the explicitly Christian *Faith and Freedom* and *Christian Economics*, tell us about this relationship? Do they advance the same beliefs as the *Freeman*? Moreover, why and when did religion cease to be so important to the libertarian ideology and movement? Was it indeed during the 1960s, a product of Rand’s influence and the rise of student activism, or is the story more complicated?

One might also consider the continuing evolution of the *Freeman* itself. How did it change as time went on, not just during the late 1950s, but into the late 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement and Barry Goldwater’s Presidential Campaign occupied broad conservative thinking? Furthermore, the original *Freeman* of the 1920s, edited by Nock, requires more attention than it has received, considering Nock’s importance to both conservatism and libertarianism, and the fact that the modern *Freeman* explicitly took that magazine as its model. Such an analysis has the potential to push back the history of libertarianism even further. Finally, certain individuals key to libertarianism, such as Chodorov, Read, or Nock, could use greater illumination. Chodorov has been called “the key figure in the revival of both conservatism and libertarianism, though few people remember him today,” and he left an important imprint on the *Freeman* with his editorship.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, though the figure of Nock is hardly ignored in historiography, considering his mentoring of several key figures and his intellectual influence on the conservatisms of the postwar world, his life and beliefs deserve more scrutiny than they have received. Given the numerous

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<sup>8</sup> John Chamberlain, ‘A Reviewer’s Notebook,’ *Freeman*, 7, 12, Dec 1957, p. 53; Burns, ‘Godless Capitalism,’ p. 284.

<sup>9</sup> Burns, ‘Godless Capitalism,’ pp. 284-5, 287.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Mirowski, ‘Postface: Defining Neoliberalism,’ *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: the Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, Cambridge, Mass., 2009, pp. 436-7.

<sup>11</sup> Albert Jay Nock, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, New York, 1943, pp. 190, 306-7.

<sup>12</sup> Gary North, ‘The Moral Dimension...,’ p. 363.

intellectual biographies of Mises and Hayek in existence, it is difficult to argue that enough has been done on these other individualist thinkers.

Libertarianism has become a significant force in American politics today. It is the perpetual irritant of the American left-right political spectrum which, as Read pointed out over half a century ago, is no longer an adequate method for categorising political beliefs, if it indeed it ever was. The rise to prominence and popularity of libertarianism in recent years, particularly among university students, has forced political commentators and historians to take notice. In the increasingly blurry margin between the American Left and Right, who hold a broad consensus on issues of foreign policy, government size, the war on drugs, and state surveillance, libertarians are at times the only voices offering an alternative political vision—a less bellicose and involved American global presence, a dialling back of the ‘war on terror’ and its related parts, the end of punitive drug policies which have only exacerbated the issues they were meant to solve, the scaling back of a meddlesome and intrusive government, and the freedom of individuals from undue interference in their private, personal lives by the state. These ideas have all become more, not less, prominent in recent history, partly due the increasing volume of libertarian voices in political discourse. Given all this, it is useful to understand the origins and roots of this ideology that, aside from what we identify from its appearances in political theory and the news, we know little about. By taking libertarianism out from under the wing of conservatism, we can begin to explore its history in the depth fitting of its significance, and expand our knowledge of it. As one *Freeman* contributor wrote, pondering the idea of ‘usable’ history: history “can perform no such service” as to act as “a detailed guide to conduct.” “But in a larger sense, all history, even the most distant, most obscure, is usable...No man can really know where he is, and why, unless he knows by what road he has come to where he is, and why.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ben Ray Redman, ‘Shorter and Better,’ *Freeman*, 3, 12, Mar 1953, p. 30.

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