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## MAKING AMERICA RIGHT

THE MULTIPLE FALSE STARTS OF THE CONSERVATIVE  
MOVEMENT AND HOW IT TOOK OVER AMERICA (1940-  
1969)

Denis Savage

Master's thesis

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

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Master's Thesis History of Society

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, there was a seismic change in American politics, one that left academics, politicians, journalists and the world dumbfounded. This anomalous event was the election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> American president. The following day, the liberal British-American journalist, Richard Wolffe, wrote in *The Guardian* that Donald Trump's victory is nothing short of a revolution where an era that stretches back to Franklin D Roosevelt just came to an abrupt and ugly end.<sup>1</sup> No longer was the United States an expansive, outward-looking, globalist power, instead, it had now definitively turned inward.<sup>2</sup> Political experts quickly scrambled to find an explanation for Trump's electoral victory. Placing it in a global perspective, where the 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States reflects the phenomenon of populism. The populism preached by Donald Trump was based on the premise that because he was an outsider to the world of politics, it was he that would best serve to interests of ordinary Americans disgusted with the corrupt establishment, incompetent politicians, dishonest Wall Street speculators, arrogant intellectuals, and politically correct liberals.<sup>3</sup> Or more eloquently put by Trump's campaign slogan, he promised to Drain the Swamp.<sup>4</sup> Yet, such claims of Trump's election being a revolution, run contrary to how the word is defined in dictionaries.<sup>5</sup> While it may have been revolutionary that a reality tv-star and property magnate was elected president of America, it is a stretch to say that Trump's election was revolutionary, considering he merely utilised a platform provided to him by the conservative movement in America.

During the pandemonium of Trump's election and in the intervening time since he assumed office, the pivotal role that the conservative movement played in his victory was

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Wolffe, "Donald Trump's victory is nothing short of a revolution," *The Guardian*, 9 November 2016.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/09/donald-trump-victory-us-election-result-revolution> (accessed July 25, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash," HKS Working Paper, No. RWP16-026

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2818659](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2818659) (accessed August 15, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Julie Bykowicz, "Donald Trump's pledge to 'drain the swamp' and ban lobbyists complicates administration hiring," *Independent*, 17 November 2016,

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-lobbyist-ban-complicates-administration-hiring-a7422156.html> (accessed August 12, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a revolution is defined as 'a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system' or 'a dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes or operations. "Revolution - Definition Of Revolution In English | Oxford Dictionaries". 2017. Oxford Dictionaries | English. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/revolution> (accessed August 12, 2017).

completely ignored. It seems that every day, there is a never-ending cascade of newspaper articles which contain the following sentence ‘Trump’s latest unprecedented attack on the media.’<sup>6</sup> However, there is nothing new or innovative about Trump's assault on the liberal media as it has been the battle cry of the conservative movement for years. Leading this attack is the leading conservative media outlet *Fox News* which on a daily basis bemoans the overwhelming liberal dominance of the media and its anchor Sean Hannity routinely discusses the pervasive liberal slant of the dominant news organisations including left corporate news channels such as CBS, ABC, NBC, and CNN, and newspapers such as the *New York Times*.<sup>7</sup> Nor is this some sort of modern phenomenon, as by the mid-1950s, belief in liberal media bias had become a constitutive part of modern conservatism.<sup>8</sup> The entire modern conservative movement was borne out of a struggle against the dominant liberal consensus of the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, any depiction of Trump as merely a populist figure is flawed, as it fails to acknowledge historical precedent of the conservative movement in the United States, thus incorrectly casting Trump as a political revolution.

While Trump may be a political maverick, having in the past being registered as both a Democrat and a Republican, Trump’s core political base is unequivocally conservative.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, when it comes to influencing his policy making, those who occupy leading positions in his administration are extremely conservative. His Vice President Mike Pence once famously described himself as being ‘a Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order.’<sup>10</sup> A quote which is backed up by the American Conservative Union who declared that Mike Pence was ‘the most conservative vice presidential nominee the country has seen in 50 years’ and that he had a ‘99 percent alignment’ with their tenets.<sup>11</sup> That same

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<sup>6</sup> Marina Hyde, “Trump is a media Troll- so stop feeding him,” *The Guardian*, 17 February 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/17/donald-trump-media-troll-president-supporters-journalists-lies> (accessed July 25, 2017)

<sup>7</sup> Anthony DiMaggio, *Mass Media, Mass Propaganda: Understanding the News in the War on Terror*, (Lexington Books, 2008), 86.

<sup>8</sup> Nicole Hemmer, “From Faith in Facts to Fair and Balanced: Conservative Media, Liberal Bias, and the Origins of Balance,” in *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, (University of Pennsylvania, 2017), 128.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Costa, “Trump’s die-hard supporters are fuming after an apparent about face on ‘dreamers,’” *The Washington Post*, 14 September 2017,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/09/14/according-to-democrats-trump-has-done-an-about-face-on-dreamers-his-diehard-supporters-are-fuming> (accessed September 16, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Emily McFarlan Miller and Kimberly Winston, “5 faith facts about Mike Pence: A ‘born-again evangelical Catholic,’” *Religion News Service*, 14 July 2016,

<http://religionnews.com/2016/07/14/5-faith-facts-on-mike-pence-a-born-again-evangelical-catholic> (accessed August 19, 2017)

Jennifer Harper, “American Conservative Union: Mike Pence is the ‘most conservative’ VP nominee in 50 years,” *The Washington Times*, , 3 October 2016,

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/3/american-conservative-union-mike-pence-the-most-co> (accessed July 27, 2017).

organisation awarded Donald Trump's controversial attorney-general, Jeff Sessions, as their Conservative in the spotlight, 'a distinction awarded to a conservative leader who acts boldly to defend conservative principles.'<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, as a senator Sessions was considered one of the most conservative members of the Senate.<sup>13</sup> Completing Trump's conservative trinity is Steve Bannon, the White House Chief Strategist.<sup>14</sup> Bannon has had considerable sway in the conservative movement, having formerly been executive chairman of Breitbart News, a far-right American news, opinion and commentary website. Within conservatism, Breitbart has significant influence with a Pew Research Centre study on the political fragmentation of American media found that 48 percent of Breitbart readers label themselves as being consistently conservative, compared to just 19 percent of the Fox News audience.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Steve Bannon is a hard line conservative who keeps true to the roots of the movement, warning against 'the Ayn Rand or the Objectivist School of libertarian capitalism.'<sup>16</sup> Bannon believes that capitalism ought to rest on a 'Judeo-Christian' foundation.<sup>17</sup> The brand of conservatism promoted by Bannon is the same conservatism pedalled by William F. Buckley Jr., way back in the 1950s.

Although a recent poll undertaken by Gallup found that conservatism is the dominant ideology in American society, with 36 percent of Americans considering themselves to be conservative, the ideology has not always held the political ascendancy.<sup>18</sup> The present-day prominence of conservatism is relatively new, with American historian Rick Perlstein noting that 'what we call the modern conservative movement was seen to have emerged in the mid-1950s, when it was believed that conservatism was dead in American life.'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jeff Sessions Named ACU 'Conservative in the Spotlight, November 18, 2016, <http://conservative.org/jeff-sessions-named-acu-conservative-in-the-spotlight> (accessed July 27, 2017).

Eric Lichtbalu, "Jeff Sessions, as Attorney General, Could Overhaul Department He's Skewered," *The New York Times*, 18 November 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/us/politics/jeff-sessions-donald-trump-attorney-general.html> (accessed August 1, 2017).

<sup>14</sup>Bannon has since left the White House, but not without controversy. Originally it was stated that his departure was by way of mutual agreement, before Bannon quotes by Bannon in the now infamous book *Fire & Fury*, led Trump to declare that not only had he fired Bannon, but that Bannon had lost his mind as a result. It should also be noted that Bannon was also ousted from Breitbart at the behest of Trump supporter and larger conservative donor, Rebekah Mercer. Jerney W. Peters, "Steve Bannon Steps Down From Breitbart Post," *The New York Times*, 9 January 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/us/politics/steve-bannon-breitbart-trump.html> (accessed February 6, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Clare Malone, "Trump Made Breitbart Great Again, Five Thirty Eight," *FiveThirtyEight*, 18 August 2016, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trump-made-breitbart-great-again> (accessed July 28, 2017).

Christopher Caldwell, "What Does Steve Bannon Want?," *The New York Times*, 25 February 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/25/opinion/what-does-steve-bannon-want.html> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Lydia Saad, "US Conservatives Outnumber Liberals by Narrowing Margin," *Gallup News*, 3 January 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/201152/conservative-liberal-gap-continues-narrow-tuesday.aspx> (accessed July 27, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Jon Wiener, "Rick Perlstein: Trump has exposed the Dark Underbelly of American Conservatism," *The Nation*, 12 May 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/rick-perlstein-trump-has-exposed-the-dark-underbelly-of-american-conservatism> (accessed July 28, 2017)

Conservatism at the beginning of the 1950s was in disrepute, showcased in the following quote from Lionel Trilling's book, *The Liberal Imagination*, where he remarked that 'in the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition,' with conservatives expressing themselves not 'in ideas but only in action or in irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas.'<sup>20</sup> Fifty years later and against the odds, the roles have been reversed with conservatism now being the dominant ideology in America. This thesis will be an examination into how the conservative movement transformed itself from being a disregarded ideology into the number one political belief in America, creating a conservative tradition that provides the beacon point for Donald Trump's administration.

### 1.1 Research Question

My Master Thesis' purpose is to explore the origins of the modern conservative movement. More specifically, I aim to discover how modern conservatism was able to negotiate with the various contradictions that exist within the movement and how it ultimately reconciled these differences, readapting itself from various sub-elements into one all-encompassing ideology. I also investigate what role the various fore-fathers of the conservative movement had within this process, and to what extent were they able to imprint their respective beliefs onto the ideology.

Thus, in order to guide my research, I have formulated my main research question as follows: *What transformation did the American Conservative movement undergo during the time period of 1940 to 1969?*

In order to answer my research question, I have used sub-questions:

1. What was the state of conservatism in the initial post-war decades and what was the impact of Robert Taft and Senator McCarthy during this time?
2. What, if any, influence did the extreme radical right and Barry Goldwater have on the wider conservatism movement?
3. How did William F. Buckley reconcile the differences and contradictions that existed within the conservatism?

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<sup>20</sup> Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination*, (NYRB Classics, Main Edition, 2008), xv.

#### 4. To what extent, if at all, is William F. Buckley responsible for the movement?

### 1.2 Methodology

My research is qualitative in nature, following a causal process tracing design. I intend to identify the critical junctures which lead to the rise of conservatism to its present-day manifestation which, rather than specific moments in time, this dissertation argues are the emergence of key conservative leaders who helped to shape the ideological direction of the movement. Given the complexity of conservatism itself, this thesis will not seek to provide a new definition or interpretation of the movement. As a result, I will rely on secondary sources that examine the conservative movement as a whole, biographical accounts of each of the respective men and literature that examines each decade. These will provide the basis of my understanding on the development of the movement, which combined with primary sources, such as newspaper articles, opinion pieces, autobiographies, personal letters and attributed quotes, will allow me to obtain a ground-level perspective, from which I can compare the ideological rhetoric they espoused and its impact on the movement. Furthermore, given the highly divisive nature of politics in which commentators, politicians and activists exist in a dog eat dog world, in my research I will have to be mindful of the various political agendas and bias that the authors may have. Given the polarised nature of conservatism, I have to be aware of any subvert desire by an author to promote one conservative figure over another. The primary sources in conjunction with the general understanding provided by the secondary literature will allow me to provide a neutral and accurate examination of the impact of the selected conservative leaders.

### 1.3 Key Concepts

Within the 'umbrella' of conservatism, there is a wide variety of individual traditions, some of which have a large degree of cross-over, while some are diametrically opposed to each other. It is quite difficult to define conservatism, given that as an ideology it lacks a consistent internal structure and is instead, made up of a cluster of both related and unrelated ideas, from which those who identify as conservative draw upon.<sup>21</sup> Due to the fragmented nature of conservatism, this thesis will solely look at the following respective strands; traditional conservatism, libertarianism and neo-conservatism. These three have

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<sup>21</sup> Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *The American Historical Review* 99, no.2, (Apr. 1994), 414. DOI: 10.2307/2167281.

been selected because of both their primary localisation within the conservative movement, both in the present and the past, but more importantly, the present day conservative movement is a coalition of three diverse groups: libertarians, neoconservatives and social conservatives.<sup>22</sup> The above coalition is also extremely relevant to this thesis, given that Taft, McCarthy, Goldwater and Buckley were all aligned to at least one of the above three variations of conservatism.

At its most basic essence, libertarianism is solely concerned with the autonomy of the individual, they see the individual as the basic unit of social analysis, as it is only the individual who can make choices and be responsible for their actions.<sup>23</sup> From a political philosophy perspective, those that identify themselves as being libertarian, seek to reverse the progress of collectivism and authoritarianism.<sup>24</sup> It is their belief that because every individual is a moral agent, who possess a set of inalienable rights that transcend judicial law, with a particular concern with regards to property rights and laws that reduce the power of the individual. Although Libertarians view the government with a great deal of disdain due to the concentration of its power and its potential to restrict the liberty of the individual, they are not in favour of anarchism. Instead, they seek to establish a limited form of government in which its powers are greatly reduced. Furthermore, whilst each individual is offered a great deal of liberty, this does not mean that one is truly free to do as they please. Rather, libertarianism proposes a society of liberty under law, in which individuals are free to pursue their own lives so long as they respect the equal rights of others.<sup>25</sup> As a natural continuation on from their promotion of a limited form of government, many libertarians advocate for a laissez-faire approach to the economy. It is their view that the free markets are the economic system of free individuals and that if government intervention in people's economic choices is limited, people, in turn, will be both freer and more prosperous.<sup>26</sup> The biggest disagreement within libertarianism is with regards to foreign entanglements with a study undertaken by the Pew Research Centre finding libertarians almost evenly divided between supporting or opposing military intervention.<sup>27</sup> In short,

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<sup>22</sup> Carl T. Bogus, *Buckley: William F. Buckley Jr. and the Rise of American Conservatism*, (Bloomsbury Press, November 2011), 140.

<sup>23</sup> David Boaz, Key Concepts of Libertarianism, *Cato Institute*, January 1, 1999, <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/key-concepts-libertarianism>.

<sup>24</sup> Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 3 edition, January 2010)

<sup>25</sup> Boaz, "Libertarianism."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Jocelyn Kiley, "In search of libertarians," *Pew Research Center*, August 25, 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/25/in-search-of-libertarians> (accessed July 24, 2017).

Libertarianism aims at expanding economic freedom and individual choice, opposing nearly all forms of regulation, regardless if they are on morals or the economic marketplace.

The second iteration of conservatism is neo-conservatism. Neoconservatism is a combination of other elements of conservatism such as traditional conservatism and certain parts of libertarianism such as the promotion of free markets. Although, the ideology is quite new, originating in the 1970s amongst political intellectuals who had a shared contempt towards communism and the counterculture movement of the prior decade, it is more a fusion of ideas from previous versions of conservatism than a revolutionary idea. It departs from libertarianism, in how it envisages the role of the government. Whilst one of the key tenets of libertarianism is a limited form of government, neoconservatives on the other hand support a far greater and intrusive style of government, one which taxes, regulates and redistributes.<sup>28</sup> With regards to the role of big government, libertarians oppose the idea outright. Neoconservatives, on the other hand, view it as being an integral part of democracy and thus instead focus on distinguishing those expansions of government that are degrading from those that are a natural response to the middle classes feelings of insecurity.<sup>29</sup> While Libertarians are against the welfare state due to its encroachment on peoples liberty, neoconservatives are against it on the basis of moral corruption, believing such proposals incentivise people not to work and encourage dependence on the state, thus causing damage to the societal structure.<sup>30</sup> Whilst libertarians are divided on the topic of the use of the military abroad, neoconservatives are united, believing that America's greatness is measured by its willingness to operate as a great power. Namely, through the implementation of its vast and virtually global military involvement.<sup>31</sup> In recent times, this belief has been best demonstrated by former Republican Presidential candidate Marco Rubio, with *The New York Times* writing, 'Rubio is the great neoconservative hope, the champion of a foreign policy that boldly goes abroad in search of monsters to destroy.'<sup>32</sup> Neoconservatives rationale behind the use of the military is on the basis of exporting

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<sup>28</sup> C. Bradley Thompson, "Neoconservatism Unmasked," *Cato Unbound*, published March 7, 2011, <https://www.cato-unbound.org/2011/03/07/c-bradley-thompson/neoconservatism-unmasked> (accessed July 28, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Adam Wolfson, "Conservatives and neoconservatives," *The Public Interest* 154, (Winter 2004), 43.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Jack Hunter, "What's a Neoconservative?" *The American Conservative*, June 23, 2011, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/2011/06/23/whats-a-neoconservative> (accessed July 28, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> Ross Douthat, "Rand and Rubio," *The New York Times*, June 19, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/20/opinion/20douthat.html?mcubz=3> (accessed August 2, 2017).

democracy, which they believe is the duty of America to liberate those who are oppressed, however many critics of neoconservatism would argue that such a claim is nothing more than the strawman fallacy.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, in recent times following President George Bush's disastrous military escapades in the Middle East, neoconservatism has been seen in a rather poor light.

The third and final strain of conservatism is social conservatism. Social conservatism diverges from both libertarianism and neoconservatism, in that it primarily focused on social issues rather than on governance and fiscal matters. Social conservatism was created as a conservative response to the sexual revolution of the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> Those who identify as being a social conservative by in large are opposed to abortion, equal rights and same-sex marriage. Furthermore, social conservatives typically are concerned with the decay of morality, family and religion.<sup>35</sup> While all conservatives are bound to the same core beliefs in that they are resistant to change, except if it's deemed to be an organic and natural process, along with an attempt to subordinate change to the belief that the laws and forces guiding human behaviour have extra-human origins.<sup>36</sup> However, it is only social conservatives who feel that politics should also encompass matters of sexuality or the definition of the family, and either because of their view of human nature or their religious beliefs, have a clear and unambiguous vision of what sexual or family ought to look like.<sup>37</sup> The development of conservatism in America is also the development of opposition towards conservatism's antithesis, liberalism. American politics is primarily divided between these lines; one either has conservative leanings or liberal leanings. Liberalism, just like conservatism has a wide array of meanings and interpretations. Due to its complex nature, for the purpose of this thesis, I will first begin by with defining what liberalism is and in doing so, a greater understanding of conservatism is obtained, as liberalism provides an illustrative counterpoint to conservatism as two ideologies inhabiting opposite ends of the political spectrum. Furthermore, with this in mind, my definition of liberalism will come from what

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<sup>33</sup> Maria Ryan, *Neoconservatism and the New American Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 10.

<sup>34</sup> James Farney, *Social Conservatives and Party Politics in Canada and the United States* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), vii.

<sup>35</sup> Jerome L. Himmelstein and James A. McRae, "Social Conservatism, New Republicans, and the 1980 elections," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 48, no.3 (Autumn, 1984), 592, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2748946> (accessed January 18, 2017).

<sup>36</sup> Farney, *Social Conservatives and Party Politics in Canada and the United States*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

the conservative figures were opposed to, which was primarily the welfare state, the expansion of government and a regulated economy.

#### 1.4 Historiography

The forthcoming paragraphs will examine the current literature on the conservative movement. It will discuss the various historical misrepresentations of the conservative movement, such as the discrepancies amongst historians in when the movement actually began. It will also look at the biographical accounts of the various, supposed founding fathers of the conservative movement, examining the differing responsibility that each figure is given. Lastly, it will look at the evolution of the movement during each decade, examining the literature to see which aspects of the movement are promoted during certain time periods.

Unlike other ideologies, any investigation into exactly what conservatism is, is greatly hampered by the ideology's malleability. The lack of a fixed ideal makes charting its beginnings quite difficult, as depending on which conservative affiliate you subscribe to, the movement will have a differing starting point. The leading consensus among historians is that the movement developed as a response to the New Deal Era. A stance that is also advocated by Lee Edwards, widely seen as the leading historian on American conservatism.<sup>38</sup> Edwards believes that the genesis of modern-day conservatism is 1953, the same year in which Russel Kirk published his seminal work *The Conservative Mind* and Dwight Eisenhower brought an end to the New Deal era by becoming President.<sup>39</sup> However, just like there are disagreements over what exactly constitutes being a conservative, there are some historians that argue for a very different start point for the modern-day conservative movement. For example, David Faber in his book *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism* makes the claim that the movement began with Senator Robert Taft, thus allowing him to connect the movement to the pre-World War 2 World, making the argument that it did not develop solely as a response to New Dealism.<sup>40</sup> Instead, it is not a more recent phenomenon as some historians would argue but rather entwined in America's history, making the rather

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<sup>38</sup> "Lee Edwards," Heritage, <http://www.heritage.org/staff/lee-edwards> (accessed May 1, 2017).

<sup>39</sup> Lee Edwards, "The Origins of the Modern American Conservative Movement," November 21, 2003, <http://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/the-origins-the-modern-american-conservative-movement> (accessed July 25, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> David Faber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 12.

controversial claim that the slaveholders were the ‘the New Right of their era.’<sup>41</sup> This rather new departure in the historiography of the conservative movement, allows Faber to also declare that the conservative movement has fallen, as the title of the book suggests, making the claim that Obama’s ascension into the White House, marked the end of the conservative era and ushered in a new liberal order. However, given recent developments in American politics, Faber’s claims seem more hyperbolic than factual.

Given that conservatism is such a fragmented ideology, composed of a multitude of seemingly never-ending sub-factions, it is only natural that various authors place different figures to the forefront of the movement. There is a plethora of books touting a wide array of people as being the sole leader or founding father of the modern conservative movement, ranging from Whittaker Chambers to William F. Buckley or Barry Goldwater and even Ronald Reagan. Rick Perlstein places Barry Goldwater, as the man responsible for the birth of the modern conservative movement, in his narrative history book *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*. Perlstein begins his narrative tale in 1960 documenting the rise of modern right along with Barry Goldwater, culminating with the now infamous 1964 election. Perlstein vividly showcases how a small but dedicated group of right-wing individuals with a tendency to dabble in conspiracies, were able to embody the plight of millions of Americans and thus go on to capture the Republican party, before then suffering one of the largest election defeats in American history. Perlstein argues that although Goldwater was overwhelmingly defeated, his defeat was not in vain, inspiring a new movement that would result in ‘two years later the country, electing dozens of men and women just like him.’<sup>42</sup> Although, not wrong in portraying Goldwater as having significant influence on the conservative movement, it somewhat overstates his role, suggesting that Goldwater had created a new age in the conservative movement. In actual fact, he was merely continuing the legacy of Senator Joe McCarthy, who was an idol of Goldwater. The claim that Goldwater continued McCarthy’s legacy, as opposed to creating a new rupture in the conservative movement, is further bolstered by the fact that during McCarthy’s censure, when asked if he would continue to support the controversial senator, Goldwater boldly replied ‘Yes. I have always done it, and I intend to continue it. Those

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<sup>41</sup> Faber, *The Rise and Fall*, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York, Nation Books, 2009), xii.

people who would like to do away with McCarthy are the type of people who would also like to coddle Communists.<sup>43</sup>

Defining the conservative movement alone is quite a difficult task for historians, but as the above paragraph has demonstrated, attributing responsibility for shaping the movement, is equally as complex. A task made even more difficult, when you factor in figures such as William F. Buckley and Whittaker Chambers. Although neither were politicians, they both had a significant impact on shaping the movement, as evidenced by Buckley having the title the 'Father of Conservatism' bequeathed to him.<sup>44</sup> In an attempt to explain the rise of the modern conservative movement, Carl T. Bogus, places William F. Buckley front and centre in his biographical account, *William F. Buckley Jr. and the Rise of American Conservatism*. Ironically for a book on the conservative movement its author, Bogus, is a self-professed liberal.<sup>45</sup> Bogus uses the establishment of William F. Buckley's seminal conservative periodical *National Review* in 1955 as his starting point, concluding with Richard Nixon's election in 1968, correlating Buckley's rise and the growth of the conservative movement during that time period. If taken alone, Bogus who is a law professor, presents a rather compelling case for Buckley as the sole architect of the conservative movement. However, when viewed from a wider conservative lens which takes into account all the other figures, one notices that the timeline used also intersects with that of the other prominent figures, such as Barry Goldwater. Bogus' claim comes into further disrepute by those who would argue that the modern conservative movement began prior to Buckley's involvement in the movement. Historian Michael Bowen argues in his book *The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*, that the genesis of modern-day conservatism occurred in the years directly proceeding World War 2, in which there was a ferocious battle between New York Governor Thomas Dewey and Ohio Senator Robert Taft for control over the Republican Party. The crux of Bowen's argument is that modern day conservatism was born out of both men vying for control over the GOP. Initially, both were split into respective factions that were not

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<sup>43</sup> Adam Clymer, "Barry Goldwater, Conservative and Individualist, Dies at 89," *The New York Times*, May 29, 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/01/04/01/specials/goldwater-obit.html> (accessed May 1, 2017).

<sup>44</sup> "William F. Buckley, Father of American Conservatism," NPR, December 17, 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/12/17/143665421/how-william-f-buckley-fathered-american-conservatism> (accessed January 15, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> Geoffrey Kabaservice, "William F. Buckley Jr.: Right Man, Right Time," *The New York Times*, December 9, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/books/review/buckley-william-f-buckley-jr-and-the-rise-of-american-conservatism-by-carl-t-bogus-book-review.html?mcubz=3> (accessed January 15, 2017).

ideologically driven, but as time went on, the terms conservative and liberal took up a functional value and had become the only way to differentiate between the two factions.<sup>46</sup> This had a second order effect, as voters then began to expect 'conservatives' to govern conservatively and 'liberals' to govern 'liberally', thus causing the modern conservative movement to be created in the mould of Taft's ideals.<sup>47</sup>

In summary, the aforementioned literature tends to explain the movement, by focusing on one particular figure, often overstating the importance or involvement of their chosen protagonist, while downplaying and more often than not, ignoring those who had just as much a role in the development of the movement. This recurrent oversimplification of a complex political ideology and its non-linear ontological evolution is precisely the gap in the existing literature which this dissertation seeks to fill, providing a more nuanced and thorough examination of the interplay between multiple key figures and their ideas.

### 1.5 Structure of the thesis

In this first chapter, I have outlined the divisions that exist not only in the academic debates on the origins of conservatism but also the divisions present within the ideology itself. By highlighting these divisions, I have demonstrated the need for a greater understanding of the origins of modern conservatism, along with what the movement truly represents. This thesis aspires to address this current vacant gap, systemically addressing areas of contention before ultimately offering a new perspective. Given that the initial chapter has outlined the theoretical framework of the thesis, the preceding chapters will investigate the impact of the four forefathers of conservatism and selected key moments in the movements history. I will begin by looking at the 1940s, a decade seen as a critical moment in the establishment of a modern liberal order.<sup>48</sup> Here I will go into detail providing an account of the political and social appeal of conservatism, along with the challenges that faced the movement. I use the 1940s as my starting point, given that this decade was seen as the watershed moment for liberalism. It was during this time that the labour movement and the welfare state matured, civil rights emerged as a national issue, the United States replaced its cranky isolationism

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Michael Bowen, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Gerstle, Gary. "The Crucial Decade: The 1940s and Beyond." *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (2006): 1292-299. doi:10.2307/4485892.

with robust internationalism, and the Democratic Party secured its political ascendancy.<sup>49</sup> However, as dictated by the laws of physics, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, with the foundations for the future conservative movement being planted during this time. The chapters 2 to 5, will provide an understanding of how the conservative movement developed and the politics it represented. They will also provide a detailed account of the success and failures the movement had, along with how the movement was perceived by the mainstream populous. The final three chapters, will examine the claim that Buckley became the defining figure in the conservative movement, through the establishment of his conservative journal, *National Review*. I will look at how Buckley influenced the conservative movement, eradicating those he felt could potentially damage the image of the conservatism, providing account of Buckley's contradicting political, religious and economic beliefs and how he reconciled them. It will also discuss his vision of what the conservative vision should be and how he began laying the foundation for that vision to be enacted into reality. This linear charting of the history of the movement from 1940 to 1970, will allow me to answer my sub-questions, ultimately bringing me to my concluding chapter. It is here that I will address my findings, providing my final remarks on the topic, hoping to add a new perspective into the current academic debate and ultimately answer my research question, *What transformation did the American Conservative movement undergo during the time period of 1940 to 1969?*

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 2: From Dire Beginnings

This chapter will provide a narrative account of the state of conservatism during the 1940's and 1950's, discussing the public's perception of the movement, what were the political success and challenges to the movement during this time period, along with examining the influence that Robert Taft and Joseph McCarthy had on the movement.<sup>50</sup> The transformation that American society underwent from the beginning of the 1950s to the end the 1960s, is a textbook example of Hegel's dialectical process. In which, the two antithesis political ideologies of liberalism and conservatism, vied for contention to become the dominant ideology of America. In keeping with history's paradoxical evolution, the 1950s began with liberalism in the ascendancy, with conservatism being regarded as simply irrelevant.<sup>51</sup> The rather dire state of health of the conservative movement at the beginning of the 1950s is typified by the fact that 'sociologists and historians [have] identified the 1950s as an age of consensus.'<sup>52</sup> It was such an impotent political force, that Liberalist thinkers refused to take the ideology seriously, instead of viewing those who supported it with scorn, depicting 'conservatives and particularly the radical right [as] allegedly misanthropic, paranoid, irresponsible and generally psychologically unbalanced.'<sup>53</sup> The goal of this chapter is to evaluate the state of conservatism during the initial post-war decades and ultimately, ascertain if the movement progressed or regressed under the stewardship of Taft and McCarthy.

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<sup>50</sup> The irony of history is that, unlike time, it does not advance in a linear fashion, but rather through a never-ending process of non-linear contradictions. A phenomenon that can be traced back to the era of ancient Greek philosophy, where Plato used Socratic dialogues to advance philosophical thought by combatting two opposite and contradictory views against each other. Later expanded upon by the 19th-century German philosopher Hegel, who believed that progress in history, occurred through the passing from one extreme to the next, which has since been enshrined as Hegel's dialectics. "Hegel's Dialectics," The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, June 3, 2016, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/hegel-dialectics/> (accessed May 15, 2017).

<sup>51</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History of the Modern American Conservative Movement* (Washington, D.C., The Heritage Foundation, 2004), ii.

<sup>52</sup> Sean McMahon, *Social Control and Public Intellect* (New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 1999), 173.

<sup>53</sup> M.M. Goldsmith and Michael Hawkins, "The New American Conservatism," *Political Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 1, 1972): 73. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.1972.tb00697.x.

## 2.1 The rise of Robert Taft

While, the majority of America were content with the policies laid down by the New Deal, which created a system of mildly-regulated free enterprise undergirded by a moderate welfare state.<sup>54</sup> However, beneath the surface, the wheels were slowly turning in motion as those who had disdain and contempt for the current liberal order, set about resurrecting the conservative movement from its moribund state. The forerunner of the movement was to be Robert A. Taft, a senator from Ohio, who billed himself as a liberal conservative.<sup>55</sup> Inspired by his guiding legislative principle, in which he believed that ‘every policy should be tested on that touchstone, whether it increases or decreases the liberty of our people and the promise of continued liberty in the future.’<sup>56</sup> Taft had become wearisome with the constant expansion of the role of Government by the Democrats. together with his Republican colleagues, he set about attacking the status quo and bringing a conservative agenda to the political fore.

Following the end of World War 2, America began to engage in political introspection. Up until this point, the American electorate had placed unwavering support behind those who championed the liberal cause, routinely voting for those whom promised to use the power of government to safeguard them from the vicissitudes of the capitalist system and to fight against America’s enemies abroad.<sup>57</sup> But, as the nation sought to rebuild itself and in the face of the ever-encroaching spectre of communism, public interest was being piqued by the previously rejected proposals on offer by Senator Taft, who sought to persuade the American people that ‘individual initiative and private enterprise [were] the keys to securing economic prosperity and social progress.’<sup>58</sup> Since the era of the Great Depression and throughout the war, Taft had been preaching to deaf ears, that his belief in ‘the free enterprise system and a self-disciplined, moral citizenry provided the United States with the tools needed to achieve prosperity, maintain liberty, assure domestic tranquillity, and pursue national greatness.’<sup>59</sup> However, the tide was beginning to turn against the Liberal establishment. Taft’s conservative cause was helped by the emergence of a united wave of

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<sup>54</sup> James A Nuechterlein, “William F. Buckley, Jr. and American Conservatism.” *Commentary Magazine*, June 1, 1988, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/william-f-buckley-jr-and-american-conservatism> (accessed January 15, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Caroline Thomas Harnsberger, *A Man of Courage, Robert A. Taft* (Illinois, Wilcox and Follet Company, 1952), 7.

<sup>56</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Political Principles of Robert A. Taft* (London, Routledge, 2010), 62.

<sup>57</sup> David Faber, *The Rise and Fall*, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Clarence E. Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 113.

<sup>59</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 16.

dissent towards FDR's New Deal and Truman's Fair Deal, from those in the business elite. These aristocratic men would provide a solid base for Taft's conservatism. This was not only a domestic battle, but also an international ideological battle. These were men who did not need to read the conservative seminal work that was Friedrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, to know that capitalism was good and communistic state planning was bad.<sup>60</sup>

In this *age of consensus*, a new political divide was beginning to emerge in America. Prior to the Great Depression, there was very little on which the electorate could differentiate between a Republican or Democrat candidate on ideological grounds. The hegemony of political ideology during this period is perhaps best encapsulated in the following example, during the 1932 Presidential elections. Franklin Roosevelt was asked by a young reporter 'What is your philosophy then?'<sup>61</sup> who wanted to know whether Roosevelt was either a communist, socialist or capitalist. Roosevelt retorted simply, 'Philosophy? I am a Christian and a Democrat- that's all.'<sup>62</sup> Yet, it was Roosevelt the supposed ideological Teflon, who set in motion the domestic ideological battle during his acceptance speech at the 1936 Democratic Party convention. Leading conservatives such as Taft felt that the rhetoric of Roosevelt's speech constituted the misappropriation of the liberalist ideals of the American founding fathers.<sup>63</sup> In a bid to bring economic stability and security to America, following the great depression, Roosevelt felt that it was necessary to reinvent the role and the reach of the government in the United States.<sup>64</sup> To get the country behind his proposals, he likened his own liberal crusade to that of the founding fathers, whom had sought freedom from the tyranny of a political autocracy from the eighteenth-century royalists who held special privileges from the crown.<sup>65</sup> However, this time the New Deal liberals would fight for

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Hamilton Basso, "The Roosevelt Legend," *Life Magazine*, November 3, 1947, 144.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Polytetrafluoroethylene revolutionised the cooking world as it allowed for the creation of "non-stick" frying pans. It was also famously the nickname given to the infamous head of the Gambino family, John Gotti, who was dubbed the "Teflon Don" after evading several criminal prosecutions. Selwyn Raab, "John Gotti dies in Prison at 61." *The New York Times*, June 11, 2002.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/11/nyregion/john-gotti-dies-in-prison-at-61-mafia-boss-relished-the-spotlight.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=N.Y.%20%2F%20Region&action=keypress&region=FixedLeft&pgtype=article> (accessed on February 8, 2018).

<sup>64</sup> Farber, David. *The Rise and Fall*, 21.

<sup>65</sup> Franklin Roosevelt, "Acceptance Speech for the Re-nomination for the Presidency," The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15314>, (accessed June 1, 2017).

America's economic freedom<sup>66</sup> from the economic royalists<sup>67</sup> who had created a new despotism and wrapped it in the robes of legal sanction.<sup>68</sup>

FDR had ushered in a new interpretation of liberalism. One in which liberalism shifted its focus from limiting the scope of government to utilising the powers of the federal government in the interests of the poorer sections of the community.<sup>69</sup> The result was that the former liberal creed of *laissez-faire* individualism, used to limit federal intervention, was now to be called conservative.<sup>70</sup> A move which angered those such as Taft, who had subscribed to the old style Liberalism, but were now left feeling that the values on which America was founded, were being cast by the wayside through the actions of Roosevelt. Taft firmly believed that liberalism, was a political philosophy that championed individual liberty, and he and his followers were the rightful guardians of the Anglo-American tradition.<sup>71</sup> The politics advocated by the Senator from Ohio were in a similar mould to the politics advocated by that of the modern founder of the conservative movement Edmund Burke.<sup>72</sup> The branch of conservatism, championed by Taft was referred to as traditionalist conservatism, with its main tenants being gradual change, a small role for government with an emphasis on preserving and strengthening local communities, and an allergy to foreign entanglements.<sup>73</sup>

The outbreak of World War 2 came, just as the conservative movement was beginning to gather steam and threaten the liberal hegemony of Roosevelt's New Deal liberalism. Whilst the 1944 election was a difficult time to be a conservative, particularly in Taft's case as he had been a one time isolationist prior to the war. The Democratic party frequently reminded the voters of Taft's reluctance to counter the Axis forces, issuing pamphlets emblazed with the title 'He wanted to do business with Hitler and Hirohito- The Amazing Story of Senator Taft.'<sup>74</sup> However, although Taft barely got re-elected, the conclusion of World War 2 brought more kindling to the growing fire that was conservatism.

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<sup>66</sup> Farber, David. *The Rise and Fall*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> Roosevelt, "Acceptance Speech."

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> M.M. Goldsmith and Michael Hawkins, "The New American Conservatism," *Political Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 1, 1972), 62, . doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.1972.tb00697.x.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 22.

<sup>72</sup> Peter J. Stanlis, *The Relevance Of Edmund Burke* (New York, P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1964), 45.

<sup>73</sup> Gerald Russello, "William F. Buckley and Individualist Conservatism," *The Imaginative Conservative*, July 11, 2012, <http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org/2012/07/buckley-and-individualist-conservatism.html> , (accessed January 12, 2017).

<sup>74</sup> James T Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 275.

It allowed Taft to not only wage a domestic war against the welfare state but now also, an international ideological war against communism. For the millions of men coming home after the war, they returned to a nation gripped by economic trepidation. The future uncertainty of America, in the post-war world, was further compounded by the unexpected ascension of Harry Truman to the White House, following the sudden death of Franklin Roosevelt, who had been at the nation's helm for the past twelve years. Amidst these uncertain times and sensing a political opportunity with the return of the Republican Party to congressional control after fourteen years in the political wilderness,<sup>75</sup> Taft and his Republican colleagues sought to usher in a conservative agenda to the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress. Concern was starting to mount for those on the left in America, as they became concerned with the prospect of their liberal hegemony unravelling. A fear further exacerbated by the rise in power of Robert Taft, with the *New Republic* declaring that 'Congress... now consists of the House, the Senate, and Bob Taft.'<sup>76</sup>

The 80<sup>th</sup> Congress was a seminal moment in history, with the first live television broadcast from the House Chamber occurred during its opening session.<sup>77</sup> It also marked the beginning of the conservative movement attempting to reverse the New Deal legacy, and by the end of the first session, Republicans had succeeded in cutting \$2.8 billion from Truman's budget, a reduction of about 7.5 percent.<sup>78</sup> Having won the first battle, Taft, true to his conservative roots, set his eyes on achieving a significant tax reduction, seeing it as 'essential to the welfare of the country, because the present heavy burden of taxation is an evil in itself.'<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately for Taft, the proposed tax reduction bill by Congress was swiftly vetoed by President Truman, who reading from liberal playbook, evoked the timeless class card citing that the Republican bill favoured the wealthy over the middle class and lower-income citizens.<sup>80</sup> Taft responded to Truman's veto, by utilising the Republican-led house to pick up enough votes to override it. Their triumph over Truman was to be short-lived, as the Senate fell five votes short of the necessary two-thirds.<sup>81</sup> Rather than be dismayed by the outcome, Taft looked shifted his attention to the looming 1948 election, hoping that his

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<sup>75</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 31.

<sup>76</sup> James T Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 337.

<sup>77</sup> "Speaker Martin's Television Debut: The House and Television," US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives, <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/Electronic-Technology/Television/> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>78</sup> Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement That Remade America* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2002), 19.

<sup>79</sup> James T Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 373.

<sup>80</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution*, 19.

diligent work in reducing government spending would inspire the electorate to demand further reductions in tax.

The Democratic Party had now occupied the White House for the past sixteen years, first with Roosevelt and now the unelected Truman, leading Taft to the belief that possibly now it was his time. Having been affectionally dubbed 'Mr Republican', he led a Congress that had reduced spending more than any other Congress in recent history.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, he had worked extremely hard in cultivating a legislative bill, the Taft-Hartley Act, a bill that not only bore his name but also encompassed his conservative political ideals. The Taft-Hartley act sought to reform labour-management relations, along with stopping the leftward trajectory of labour<sup>83</sup> and ultimately bring an end to the militant unionists who had organised some five thousand strikes<sup>84</sup> which had brought American industry to a standstill. The majority of the American people were against the strikers, because of the difficult nature of Post-war life. Food prices were skyrocketing and having experienced the Great Depression along with World War 2, the American public wanted to return normality, where America could once again prosper. The combination of the passing of this nationally popular bill in conjunction with his successful stint at leading the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress, Taft believed that he had done all that was required to earn him the Republican Presidential candidate in the 1948 election. In a bid to cement his position, he began a national tour laying out his political agenda in a series of tirades against Truman, vilifying him for his New Deal policies: 'He believes in a government of men. He says nothing of individual incentive or self-reliance. His whole emphasis is on a higher material average of living to be conferred upon by a paternal state and he says nothing of the necessity for hard work and sacrifice to reach that better standard.'<sup>85</sup>

Although it seemed that Taft had done everything possible to ascertain a presidential nomination, politics is an unsavoury, volatile world to work in. Ironically, as the leader of a Republican Congress that had brought in a raft of tax reductions, Taft saw his popularity as a potential presidential contender wane steadily as the session went on.<sup>86</sup> The rather

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<sup>82</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 11.

<sup>83</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 32.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*.

perplexing lack of public appetite for Taft was duly noted by the then leading conservative publication, *Human Events*, which stated that ‘there has been little evidence of public gratitude’ for all his hard work.<sup>87</sup> Conservatives seeking a scapegoat to explain the lack of political traction that their policies had achieved, pointed the finger at the establishment, citing the poor coverage that the Republican-proposed tax cuts had received in mainstream media publications such as *The New York Times*. But such claims were mainly an attempt to deflect culpability away from conservative hands. In reality, the failure to generate widespread public support for the Republican initiative stemmed from the lack of an organised grassroots conservative movement. While he had been successful at leading Congress and was the so-called face of the conservative movement, outside Capitol Hill Taft’s ability to lead was greatly diminished. Taft was found lacking in charismatic zeal, he was terrible at retail politics, failing to greet supporters and almost pathologically unable to smile or wave enthusiastically to bystanders at campaign stops.<sup>88</sup> Had his unwavering hard work on Congress been combined with a grassroots organisation whose members were flooding congressional offices with telegrams, phone calls, and letters Taft would have almost certainly been the Republican nominee for the 1948 election.<sup>89</sup> The GOP instead opted to play it safe, deciding to go with a more mainstream candidate in the form of New York Governor, Thomas E. Dewey, who had 4 years prior, had run a close but ultimately unsuccessful Presidential campaign against Roosevelt.

Devout conservatives were extremely dismayed with the Republican Party’s decision to look past Taft but found consolation in Dewey’s failure to win against a President who had a job approval rating of 36% in the election year.<sup>90</sup> The inability of Dewey to win an election that was previously deemed a foregone conclusion emboldened conservatives with the notion that going forward, the GOP would be now forced to pick a candidate that would take a stand on decisive issues, a candidate such as Taft. As the 1940s drew to a close, the conservatives were gifted a national crisis that they could use to further the conservative cause, in the form of the Alger Hiss spy case. This event would result in the political entrenchment of America politics into separating two polarising camps, between the liberals

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<sup>87</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 11.

<sup>88</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 33.

<sup>89</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 11.

<sup>90</sup> Frank Newport and Joseph Carroll, “Reflections on Presidential Job Approval and Re-Election Odds,” *Gallup News*, June 10, 2003, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/8608/Reflections-Presidential-Job-Approval-Reelection-Odds.aspx>, (June 2, 2017).

and conservatives. Liberals saw the Harvard-educated Hiss, as one of their own.<sup>91</sup> Conservatives, on the other hand, sided with the Hiss's accuser, Whittaker Chambers and his persecutor, Richard Nixon. They believed that this was an investigation not only about Hiss and his communist links but also into the liberal hegemony. Following the conviction of Hiss, the right felt triumphant, resulting in the formation of the anti-Communist element in an emerging conservatism.<sup>92</sup> In the eyes of the public, the outcome of the Alger Hiss Case served in making domestic communism supremely suspicious and tarnishing the New Deal elite.<sup>93</sup> Exploiting the change in public sentiment and not wishing to miss out on free political points, conservatives decided to add the gauntlet of anti-communism to their ever-growing list of ardent causes.

Following Dewey's failure to get elected in 1948 and the proceeding controversy of Alger Hiss, it seemed almost preordained that Taft would be the GOP's presidential nominee in the upcoming 1952 election. The electorate had become increasingly sceptical of the liberal New Deal dominance, now tarnished with an association to clandestine communism and all that was wrong with America. Conservatives saw Taft as the only man who could produce the cure for this rampant malady. The GOP found itself in a precarious position with an ominous editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* showing the predicament the GOP would find itself in, if it once again it overlooked Taft; 'If the same forces control the next Republican convention the party is finished and the millions of patriotic men and women who have looked to [the Republican Party] for leadership will have to look elsewhere.'<sup>94</sup> The 1952 Republican Presidential Race once again pitted the two dominating ideologies of the Republican party against each other. Dwight Eisenhower represented the moderate Liberal wing of the party, a candidate who disgusted conservatives due to his of the New Deal and embodiment of the me-tooism, that the conservatives felt were beginning to take a dangerous hold on the Republican party.<sup>95</sup> Even though Eisenhower represented the pragmatic, win at all costs faction of the Republican party, most political reporters thought that Taft would win. Taft and his supporters were left further buoyant by a statistical survey

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<sup>91</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 17.

<sup>92</sup> George H Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, (Wilmington, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006), 100.

<sup>93</sup> Michael Kimmage, *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009), 942.

<sup>94</sup> Herbert Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusades* (New Brunswick, Routledge, 1998), 20.

<sup>95</sup> Bo Anderson, Morris Zelditch, Jr., Paul Takagi and Don Whiteside, "On Conservative attitude," *Acta Sociologica* 8, no.3 (1965): 189.

undertaken by Emil Hurja, a former member of the Democratic National Committee, which described Taft as ‘the champion vote-getter in the Republican party’ causing Taft to boldly predict ‘a victory by 5 million votes.’<sup>96</sup>

As the Republican National Convention loomed in the distance, both sets of supporters were predicting that it was their candidate who would be victorious. During the summer of 1952, it seemed that all roads led to International Amphitheatre in Chicago. Although, it had been twenty-four years since the GOP last won the Presidential election, it didn’t stop the cascade of bold declarations that the Republican convention was going to be the greatest show on earth given that ‘no party convention within living memory has taken so firm a grip of the popular imagination, not only in the United States but throughout the Western Democracies.’<sup>97</sup> Of the 1,206 Republican delegates that would be in attendance, Taft had 530 pledged to him until hell froze over<sup>98</sup> with Eisenhower having about 100 less.<sup>99</sup> Having spent the past fifteen years toiling away as the de facto leader of the Republican party, it seemed that his time had finally come, especially now given that on each of the various committees, Taft had a majority of support thus giving him a supposed control of the mechanism of the convention.<sup>100</sup> The esteemed general who had overseen Operation Overload, however, had one last final, a cunning attack planned. Eisenhower and his strategists decided to challenge the accreditation of the almost solidly pro-Taft delegations in Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.<sup>101</sup> Following the arrival in Chicago, of two separate delegations from Texas, each claiming to be the official representative, and with Taft’s men in control of the convention ready to approve of the pro- Taft delegation, the Eisenhower camp sought to change the convention rules so that no contested delegate could vote on any matter before the convention, unless his seating had been recommended by two-thirds of the national committee.<sup>102</sup> In one clean swoop, Eisenhower was able to once more seize victory from the jaws of defeat, leaving Taft for the third time to pick up the piece of his presidential campaign.

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<sup>96</sup> “Senator Predicts Victory: Taft sees victory by 5 million votes,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1952, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/112264228/608704E0F4AB4139PQ/1?accountid=13598>, (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>97</sup> “Republican challenge,” *The Irish Times*, July 7, 1952, 5, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpirishtimes/docview/524384724/D67AC3CFA8744481PQ/1?accountid=14504#> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>98</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 24.

<sup>99</sup> “Republican Challenge,” *The Irish Times*, 5.

<sup>100</sup> “Ford-Reagan Battle Recalls 1952 Convention,” *The New York Times*, July 4, 1976, 28, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/122929421/98CA74A736754DC7PQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

While many cite the Texas delegate fiasco as an explanation as to why Taft lost his election bid in such a humiliating fashion, such a claim ignores the other, more pivotal factors. Primarily, the lack of an organised conservative movement, especially a financially lubricated organisation. The presence of an organised national conservative movement would have prevented those who should have supported Taft's platform, as noted by the leading conservative publication of that time *Human Events*, from 'stupidly donating money to foundations which oppose his ideas or complacently waiting for his triumph at the polls.'<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, the state of the conservative movement at the beginning of the fifties was one of a barren landscape of conservative political and media organisations. Those that existed, were either in disarray or served the sole purpose of providing comedic fodder for mainstream liberal America. As evidenced by leading conservative radio broadcaster, Fulton Lewis Jr., constantly being ridiculed by his liberal counterparts, who frequently tarred him with the far-right brush. CBS's Mike Wallace, for example, invited television viewer's one evening to listen to Lewis explain 'the attraction the far right has for crackpot fascist groups in America.'<sup>104</sup> While Taft may have been branded as Mr Republican and led the Republican party in Congress, the Republican party was still run by the more, moderate Eastern Establishment, especially now with Eisenhower's triumph. Under Taft, conservative politics had come on leaps and bounds, but it still was regarded with great distrust and contempt by those outside of the conservative circle. The conservative movement seemed to be stuck in a political quagmire, with each successive Taft defeat only further increasing the animosity between moderate Republicans and their conservative cohort. Taft, in a true testament to his personal character, put aside any resentment he felt towards Eisenhower, declaring in a joint press conference with that he would do everything possible in the campaign to secure Eisenhower's election and to help in his administration.<sup>105</sup> Taft saw Eisenhower's accession into the White House over him, as an opportunity to further the republican cause, rather than a means to break ranks with the party. Through Eisenhower's face on the ticket and the public support he received from Taft, the Republicans were able to control both the White House and Capitol Hill for the first time since 1932. Realising how momentous this occasion was for the Republican party, Taft remained an ardent and loyal supporter of Eisenhower,

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<sup>103</sup> "The problem of Taft", *Human Events*, November 7, 1951, 399, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/HumanEvents-1951nov07-00005> (accessed June 2, 2017).

<sup>104</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 32.

<sup>105</sup> William Smith White, *The Taft Story* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1954), 181, <https://www.questia.com/read/59494191/the-taft-story> (accessed June 2, 2017).

telling former President and close friend Herbert Hoover, that the stakes were high for the administration. Taft speculated that if the administration did not succeed and the Republicans lost the White House in 1956, the nation and the party would go, 'into a long, long slide.'<sup>106</sup>

## 2.2 One step forward and two steps back

A preliminary conclusion of Taft's impact on improving the state of conservatism was that in the end, Taft's noble efforts were for naught. Within six months of the Eisenhower reign, Taft after a hard-fought battle succumbed to cancer. It seemed that this was not only the literal end of Robert Taft but also for his beloved political ideology, conservatism. The issues that existed within the conservative movement that saw Taft unable to follow in his father's footsteps and become the President of the United States, were the same issues that would go on to cause the movement to wane considerably in influence following his death. The main issue, in particular, was the lack of an organised grassroots conservative movement. Whilst he may have provided a platform that saw conservatism elevated from the fringes of society into the public theatre, Taft had also failed to create a concrete base. Already occupied with leading the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress, Taft had little time or interest to indulge in creating grassroots organisations to grow conservatism. At that time, Taft encapsulated the conservative movement and it seemed that with his death, conservatism was in need of resurrection.

## 2.3 The dramatic rise and public fall of McCarthyism

With the death of Taft, the conservative movement was deprived of its figurehead and went into disarray. Seeking new leadership and guidance, it turned to Senator Joseph McCarthy. This transition marked a significant evolution in the politics of conservatism, as it no longer was solely concerned with domestic issues but instead developed an even greater focus on foreign policy, something which had not been a strong area for Taft.<sup>107</sup> In doing so, a dark cloud was cast upon the conservative movement. During the years that directly preceded the end of the Second World War, America was gripped in a frenzy about the potential danger of subversive communism, a fear that the politically astute McCarthy tapped into and exploited. The later years of President Truman's administration will forever

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<sup>106</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 28.

<sup>107</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 33.

be remembered, amongst other things, for Senator McCarthy's persistent charges of treachery and Communism in the State Department.<sup>108</sup> While he was alive Taft attempted to a certain degree to keep McCarthy restrained. For example, in a bid to keep the anomalous Wisconsin Senator in check, Taft gave him the chairmanship of the Government Operations Committee as opposed to the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, something which McCarthy highly coveted and was widely tipped to land.<sup>109</sup> However, the ensuing power vacuum that was caused as a result of Taft's death, allowed McCarthy free rein of the House Un-American Activities Committee to conduct the often-care-less senatorial inquiries in 1953 and 1954, which in turn allowed liberals to transform anti-communism into McCarthyism and hang it around the necks of conservatives for decades.<sup>110</sup>

During the Alger-Hiss case, unwittingly, the Secretary of State Dean Acheson laid the groundwork for the later hysteria that would become McCarthyism, when he declared on the day of Hiss's conviction that he would not turn his back on him.<sup>111</sup> The combination of the conviction of Hiss and the subsequent support that he received from the Secretary of State, gave the wild, predominately baseless accusations concocted by McCarthy and other leading anti-communist figures, the essential touch of credibility, making their charges of Communist involvement against other officials headline copy instead of back-page filler.<sup>112</sup> The turning point of Senator McCarthy's political career occurred in Wheeling, West Virginia on the ninth of February 1950. In attendance at the Lincoln Day dinner for the Ohio County Women's Republican Clubs, McCarthy burst onto the public stage declaring in a passionate address that 'the State Department is thoroughly infested with Communists. I have in my hand fifty-seven cases of individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.'<sup>113</sup> With the utterance of this now infamous speech, a reign of terror was ushered into America, which was dubbed McCarthyism. Much of the hysteria could have

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<sup>108</sup> "The McCarthy Touch," *The Irish Times*, December 31, 1952, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/524425411/B5B5065A944447E7PQ/1?accountid=14504> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>109</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 26.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Janny Scott, "Alger Hiss, 92, Central Figure in Long-Running Cold War Controversy," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1966, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/09/reviews/hiss-obit.html> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>113</sup> "The Nation: McCarthy v. State," *The New York Times*, March 19, 1950, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/111488472/CBA539E6D09C460BPQ/4?accountid=13598> (accessed August 2, 2017).

been dissipated had the Truman administration challenged McCarthy claims, but instead, it allowed McCarthy claims to remain unchallenged and thus not unproven, as ‘the administration has the evidence and will not produce it in court.’<sup>114</sup> In the post-War world, America was in the midst of an identity crisis, and in failing to immediately counter McCarthy’s claims, the Truman administration created an air of ambiguity that would have significant implications for the direction in which American politics was headed.

Whilst the Alger Hiss debacle was certainly the catalyst for McCarthy’s rapid explosion onto the national political stage, ironically, the seeds had been sown in the Democrat’s attempts to combat the global spread of communism. The national hysteria and paranoia towards Communism were in part created by the Truman administration, in an attempt to acquaint the public with what was afoot abroad and to bring the public into support of programs that were expensive economically and in political capital in an effort to halt communism.<sup>115</sup> However, these attempts while successful abroad, created a wave of domestic resentment, especially towards the increase in taxes, which farmers believed were due to foreign-aid programs.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, while the narrative from the administration framed communism as the greatest threat to American sovereignty, both sides of the political aisle were unsure as how best to confront this threat; ‘the Republicans uncertain because they have no real understanding of the precise appeal of what may lie in their hands; the Democrats uncertain because they have no real understanding of exactly what it is that they have to fight.’<sup>117</sup> This political state of limbo was the perfect breeding ground for Senator Joseph McCarthy and allowed for the Republican Party to be in a position to attack their political foes. And attack they did. For a man who had just reached the age of 40 and up until this point had limited experience on the national stage, McCarthy displayed astute political abilities, causing an immense degree of problems for his political foes, causing Democrats to frantically run to fire alarms. When one charge of Senator McCarthy’s had been allowed to subside, another would take its place. Mr. McCarthy, even allowing for the

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<sup>114</sup> “The Story of the Plot to Communize America,” *The Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1950, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/166159206/D865161BC21E48A0PO/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>115</sup> “Communism as an issue baffles both parties,” *The New York Times*, June 8, 1950, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/111695831/F53F32359290478FPQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>116</sup> “McCarthy’s primary sweep is variously explained,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 1952, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/112339837/50C20B9EAEFC4174PO/1?accountid=13598> (Accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>117</sup> “Communism as an issue baffles both parties,” *The New York Times*.

old fact that charges run a faster rate than denials, showed an unexpected tactical skill in keeping ahead of his antagonists in publicity, and thus keeping himself in the public eye.<sup>118</sup>

Unbeknownst to him, Truman had created a political quagmire, which was delightfully inhabited by the swamp rat-esque figure of Senator McCarthy. The national preoccupation with communism allowed for McCarthy to further his political career, without having to do anything of real political substance. Capitalizing on the public obsession with communism, McCarthy refused to be distracted by any other issue, regardless of how big it was. McCarthy imitated the approach taken by former Senator Robert La Follette (who also hailed from Wisconsin and in 1946 lost the Republican Primary to McCarthy), who would choose a particular issue and refuse to waver from it until it was resolved. McCarthy had taken the issue of communism and done the same thing, refusing to be 'trapped into any discussion of his own record. It paid off for him just as it did for La Follette.'<sup>119</sup> However, unfortunately for McCarthy, he was unwittingly wielding a double-edged sword. While politically astute enough to exploit the public paranoia towards communism, his sole approach of attack was akin to that of someone who simply knows that somebody threw a tomato and the general direction from which it came.<sup>120</sup> Further hampered by his defective character flaw in which he would rarely take into consideration the advice or guidance of others, McCarthy embarked on a personal crusade that would, in turn, inflict death by association for the conservative movement.

The wildfire of McCarthyism was ignited by the failings of the Truman administration to call his bluff, in the end, the seemingly never-ending claims of Soviet subversion within American institutions, which had at first brought McCarthy his popularity would ultimately be the cause of his downfall. His approach of throwing enough mud at the wall until some of it stuck, was beginning to unravel. The more baseless allegations that he uttered, the deeper he was digging his political grave. After more than 3,000,000 words of testimony, Senator McCarthy had not been able to produce even one identified Communist Party member in the State Department, thus allowing his political foes to assemble a bulging dossier against him.<sup>121</sup> It seemed that McCarthy was hell-bent on turning the entire nation against him,

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> "McCarthy's primary sweep is variously explained," *The New York Times*.

<sup>120</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 30.

<sup>121</sup> "McCarthy's Surge to National Prominence Sparked by Timely Attacks on Reds in '50," *The New York Times*, May 03, 1957, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/113977722/174602BE4BB34A16PQ/1?accountid=13598> (Accessed August 2, 2017).

most famously when he made an ill-advised attack on General of the Army George C. Marshall, during an address to the Senate on June 14, 1951. Unlike his previous attacks, McCarthy had bitten off more than he could chew. General Marshall was a man of great stature in America, having been the Chief of Staff of the United States Army during World War II, later serving as Secretary of State and before going on to become the first professional soldier to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his Marshall Plan efforts to revive the Western European economy. McCarthy alleged that Marshall was a traitor to his country as he sought to aid Soviet world domination and was therefore complicit in a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man.<sup>122</sup> Unlike his prior wild accusations which had galvanized considerable public support for the Senator, this time McCarthy had crossed a line, causing a raft of resentment against him. The public tide was starting to turn against the Senator from Wisconsin, evident in the dwindling support he received from his Republican compatriots. Previously, they had rallied behind McCarthy's claims, as it served as a means of discrediting their political adversaries and increasing national support for the Republican Party. However, unlike before, McCarthy received no such support, as his criticisms of Marshall became an election issue with the Republican Presidential nominee General Eisenhower, a protégé of General Marshall, even planning to publicly chastise McCarthy, only to be advised against doing so by his various advisors.<sup>123</sup>

From that point onwards, McCarthy was constantly hounded by controversy, as both sides of the political aisle began to make his life difficult. In the four short years between 1950 and 1954, Senator McCarthy was subjected to five investigations by various Senate Committees, starting first with the subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, specifically created to substantiate the claims McCarthy had made in his Wheeling speech.<sup>124</sup> Although the report issued by the committee charged Senator McCarthy with having made charges and employed methods that constituted fraud and hoax,<sup>125</sup> McCarthy was able to claim that such accusations were an example of the lengths that the Eastern Establishment were going to, in an attempt to defeat him.<sup>126</sup> Initially, this ploy was effective,

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<sup>122</sup> Joseph McCarthy, *Major Speeches And Debates Of Senator Joe McCarthy: Delivered In The United States Senate 1950-1951* (Whitefish, Literary Licensing, 2012), 215.

<sup>123</sup> "McCarthy's Surge to National Prominence Sparked by Timely Attacks on Reds in '50," *The New York Times*, 14.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> "McCarthy's primary sweep is variously explained," *The New York Times*.

however, McCarthy's jarring antics began to diminish his public support. Unlike his conservative predecessor, Taft, who was first and foremost, a party man, McCarthy showed scant regard for party loyalty. Senator McCarthy had for some time been denouncing the Roosevelt-Truman Democratic Administrations as 'twenty years of treason.' On May 30, 1953, he referred to 'twenty-one years of treason' to include the first year of President Eisenhower's term of office.<sup>127</sup> As chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, in a bid to make life difficult for Eisenhower, McCarthy used his powers of being able to investigate the Executive of Branch of Government, with inquiries into reported spying and sabotage at the Army Signal Corps Installation at Fort Mammoth being established.<sup>128</sup> Such a manoeuvre proved to be fatal for McCarthy, as it led to a disastrous showdown between himself and the army. Leading McCarthy to once again be hauled before another committee to explain himself, however, this time he would be doing so for a television audience.

The hearings lasted for thirty-six days, with its finding being of little judicial significance, declaring that 'while both McCarthy and the Army had more or less being at fault, nobody had done anything very terrible.'<sup>129</sup> Politically, however, the ramifications of the hearing were to be of great significance. Alas for McCarthy, it was here that his luck eventually ran out, with him once again being the victim of his own calamity and misfortune. Television was not at all his medium. Heavy-bearded, jowly, and balding, he was ideally cast for the heavy. Add some mannerisms such as a menacing, mirthless, giggle and a wisp of hair that wouldn't stay in place as he sweated under hot floodlight, and the die was cast.<sup>130</sup> Perhaps, even more, damning for Senator McCarthy was the fact that this time he had no scapegoat. There was no political ploy for him to exploit, given that the television cameras objectively beamed the hearings to the millions of Americans who were eagerly watching at home. In front of a television audience, McCarthy's true nature was displayed, a sight which horrified the viewers at home, who saw him as nothing more than a dishonest bully. McCarthy's distasteful behaviour was further amplified by the Army's counsel, Joseph Welch, a kindly and gentle Boston Lawyer whose demeanour was the polar opposite to that

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<sup>127</sup> "McCarthy's Surge to National Prominence Sparked by Timely Attacks on Reds in '50," *The New York Times*, 14.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> William A. Gamson, *What's News: A Game Simulation of TV News : Participant's Manual* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984), 67.

of McCarthy.<sup>131</sup> The damage done to McCarthy by this foray onto national television was showcased by the dramatic drop in his popularity with a Gallup poll showing that only 34 percent of those polled found him favourable as opposed to the 50 percent rating he had prior.<sup>132</sup> As Welch began to gain the upper hand in the hearing, McCarthy resorted to the supposed advice of his childhood friend, Indian Charlie, whom apparently once told McCarthy that ‘when you get in a tight spot, the first thing you do is kick your enemy in the groin.’<sup>133</sup> Unfortunately for McCarthy, such advice was not the appropriate course of action to be performed in front of a large national television audience. In an attempt to get at Welch, McCarthy claimed that one of his young staff members was working on behalf of the Communist Party, resulting in Welch uttering these damning words ‘until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness... Let us not assassinate this lad further, senator. You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency?’<sup>134</sup>

With these words, McCarthy’s political career was brought to an end. The following day, a Republican Senator by the name of Ralph Flanders had McCarthy expelled from the key councils of the Senate, thus eroding him of his power base.<sup>135</sup> Three months later, another committee was created to look into whether allegations made by Senator McCarthy might warrant Senate censure. Senator Arthur V. Watkins, Utah Republican, was chairman of the Senate committee formed to study these charges, and he conducted the hearings without the confusion of the television and radio coverage that had characterized the prior subcommittee hearings.<sup>136</sup> The investigation was halted briefly to accommodate for a general election and a brief stint in the hospital for McCarthy whose ailment was bursitis in his right elbow, contracted when a too-hearty hand shaker banged the elbow down on a glass table.<sup>137</sup> On December 2, 1954, the Senate voted 67 to 22 to condemn the senator for his contempt of a Senate Elections subcommittee that investigated his conduct and financial affairs for abuse of its members, and for his insults to the Senate itself during the censure

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>134</sup> Robert D. Marcus and Anthony Marcus, *“On Trial: American History Through Court Proceedings and Hearings, Volume 2* (Brandywine Press, 1998), 149.

<sup>135</sup> “Flanders Moves in Senate To Strip McCarthy of Posts,” *The New York Times*, June 12, 1954, 1,

<https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/112910057/8E714047A17846D3PQ/1?accountid=13598> (Accessed August 4, 2017).

<sup>136</sup> “McCarthy’s Surge to National Prominence Sparked by Timely Attacks on Reds in ‘50,” *The New York Times*, 14.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

proceeding.<sup>138</sup> As McCarthy's political power crumbled, so too did his health, succumbing to his alcoholism.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In popular culture, history remembers Senator McCarthy for his reign of terror and his seemingly never-ending false anti-communist tirades before being thrown overboard by his fellow Senators. What is often forgotten, is the monumental impact that he had on the trajectory of the conservative movement. Under the tutelage of Taft, the conservative movement had united the Republican Party. His predecessor McCarthy had managed to divide the party once more, as evidenced by the forty-four Republican senators being evenly split on both sides of the censure vote.<sup>139</sup> Taft had brought conservatism into mainstream politics, McCarthy, however, had relegated it once more to the fringes of society. The era of McCarthyism provided plenty of ammunition for liberals in which they could berate their conservative counterparts, only further serving to strengthen the caricatures of conservative supporters as being the uninformed, the poorly educated, and the less intelligent.<sup>140</sup> As the vast majority turned their back on McCarthy, those that still supported him were the ardent supporters of the conservative cause. Often glossed over in history, McCarthy's biggest political legacy would be his small but devoted group of dogmatic supporters. In the short term, McCarthy had a negative impact on the conservative movement, all the great strides the movement had made under Taft, now seemed to be for nought. However, in the long term, whilst Taft may have created the conservative movement, McCarthy had a significant influence on the shaping of the movement. Under Taft, conservatism was bland, temperate and feckless, a result which rarely electrified the electorate.<sup>141</sup> Evidenced by the lack of a grassroots movement under Taft's reign and the dominance of the moderate Eastern Establishment with the Republican Party. McCarthy with his shoot from the hip approach, electrified not only the conservative movement but America itself Establishment Republicans, even conservatives, were disdainful of his tactics, but when those same

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"Republicans split," *The New York Times*, December 2, 1954, 1, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/113042964/A26D23FEB1144E0BPO/1?accountid=13598> (Accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 13.

<sup>141</sup> Gabler, Neal. "The GOP's McCarthy Gene." *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2008, <http://www.latimes.com/la-oe-gabler30-2008nov30-story.html> (accessed May 15, 2017).

conservatives saw the support he elicited from the grass-roots and the press attention he got, many of them were impressed.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, attempts by liberals and moderate Republicans to discredit McCarthy further emboldened his loyal supporters. These supporters were already disenfranchised by mainstream politics, following the Republican convention debacle in 1952, so the combination of McCarthy's paranoid rhetoric and the way in which he was deposed of, only further heightened their disdain. Among those supporters, was a senator from Arizona by the name of Barry Goldwater, who encapsulated the beliefs of McCarthy's supporters when once asked if he would stick up for McCarthy, he responded: 'Yes, I have always done it, and I intend to continue it. Those people who would like to do away with McCarthy are the type of people who would also like to coddle Communists.'<sup>143</sup> Whilst the majority of his colleagues turned their back on McCarthy, Goldwater stuck with him till the very end, being part of the contingent of twenty-two senators who voted against McCarthy's censure.<sup>144</sup> With McCarthy's censure and death, conservatism was on death's door, however, ardent supporters like Barry Goldwater, picked up the torch to ensure that the conservative light would not go out.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Clymer, Adam. "Barry Goldwater, Conservative and Individualist, Dies at 89." The New York Times, 29 May, 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/01/04/01/specials/goldwater-obit.html> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 3: The Radical Rebirth of Conservatism

This forthcoming Chapter will examine the influence, if any, that the extreme right sub-group elements of conservatism and Barry Goldwater, had on the wider movement. It will do so by looking at the direction that the conservative movement took, following the fallout of the controversial McCarthy tenure. Given that conservatism and McCarthyism were so intertwined, I will seek to explain how the conservative movement once again, was reborn from the ashes, even after such a controversial and polarising period. As a result, I will seek to explain who were the leading figures and organisations that helped galvanise a seemingly finished movement. Furthermore, I will also investigate what ideological changes, if any, did conservatism have during this time. As although Taft and McCarthy championed two very different political causes, Taft's being firm opposition to the expansion of government and McCarthy's being communism, they were united under the banner of conservatism. This union allowed for those who considered themselves to be conservative but were not politically active to have an impact on politics, as prior to McCarthy and Taft there was scantily any national influential politicians advocating for the conservative cause. Many of those who flocked to the fledgeling cause were executives of a small-to-medium-size business who abhorred the New Deal world spawned by American's response to the Great Depression.<sup>145</sup> The most prominent figure was the candy magnate Robert Welch, who capitalised on the new political avenues created by Taft and McCarthy. Initially, Welch's political input was limited to giving financial support to Taft and McCarthy, but as time went on, he became directly involved in the movement, becoming heavily involved in anti-communist pamphleteering.<sup>146</sup> In 1958, he had a seismic impact on the conservative movement, when he established the John Birch Society (JBS) in a bid to teach Americans the truth about communist subversion in the United States and provide them with the tools to fight it.<sup>147</sup> The name of the organisation was derived from the man that Welch regarded as the first American casualty of the Cold War, John Birch, who was a Baptist missionary and military-intelligence officer killed by Communist Chinese forces in 1945.<sup>148</sup> The group was an

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<sup>145</sup>David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 54.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>Sean Wilentz, "Confounding Fathers," *The New Yorker*, October 11, 2010, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/18/confounding-fathers> (accessed August 2, 2017).

embodiment of Welch's conspiratorial beliefs about the level of communist influence in America and was fuelled by his personal belief that both his great political heroes, Robert Taft and Joseph McCarthy, had been betrayed at crucial points in their careers by the Republican political establishment.<sup>149</sup>

### 3.1 The extreme conscience of conservatism

An untrue but widely quoted supposition, is that history repeats itself. Nowhere is this more evident than in the leadership of the conservative movement. Just as before when Senator McCarthy stepped in to fill the void left behind by Taft, Welch filled the void left behind by McCarthy. After Senator Joseph McCarthy's fall, in 1954, many of McCarthy's followers felt bereft of a voice, and Welch seemed to speak for them.<sup>150</sup> Whilst the rest of America was starting to move forward from the hysteria of McCarthyism, Welch opted to not only continue McCarthy's message but also increased the ferocity of the communist conspiracy and passed this onto his supporters. The John Birch Society preached the McCarthyite message with a vengeance: every communist victory abroad was produced by American communists at home, and those American communist subversives were everywhere. Welch taught that they controlled a panoply of the supposedly liberal organization. But Welch went much further. Even into the highest reaches of the federal government, a communist conspiracy had taken hold of the United States. President Eisenhower, he calmly observed, with a flat certainty, was 'a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy.'<sup>151</sup> What made Welch's message more potent, was the financial clout behind it. Previously, a constant handicap of the conservative movement was the lack of financial support it received. This had hamstrung Taft's chances of becoming President with many of those who would have supported Taft's limited government platform, either stupidly donating money to foundations which oppose his ideas or complacently waiting for his triumph at the polls.<sup>152</sup> Having the benefit of not being a politician, but instead being a successful industrialist, Welch had plenty of connections to vast financial resources to bankroll the organisation. Coupled with his own investments into the organisation and those of a committed group of western oilmen, Midwestern manufacturers, and southern

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<sup>149</sup> Thomas Mallon, "The Unlikely Poster Boy of the Radical Right," *The New Yorker*, January 4, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/11/a-view-from-the-fringe> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>150</sup> Sean Wilentz, "Confounding Fathers."

<sup>151</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 54.

<sup>152</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 26.

industrialists who provided the society with plenty of funds with which to spread the JBS message, the John Birch Society was able to grow at a staggering rate.<sup>153</sup>

Welch designed the Birch Society roughly, if not explicitly, on the Marxist-Leninist model of a vanguard revolutionary party: a series of small cells that would work in secret to agitate the populace and elect right-thinking candidates to office. 'It isn't numbers we have to worry about,' Welch wrote, 'but the courage on the part of our followers to stick their necks out and play rough—the same as the Communists do.'<sup>154</sup> The purpose of the Society was laid out in *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. Welch believed that America was in the midst of an ideological war against Communists, which also included those of liberal leanings and those in government. In a call to arms in the Blue Book, Welch wrote 'You know, it hasn't come to a military conflict quite yet. We don't have to overthrow these guys with a violent revolution.'<sup>155</sup> To achieve the goal of combating the influx of communism, the primary objective of the John Birch Society was to influence local politics and that's what the John Birch Society was devoted to education and political action so that their people would get involved in local politics so the right people and the correct people would get elected to the school board, which was very important in deciding what kinds of books students would be reading in public schools. They wanted to make sure that the right kinds of people were running and getting elected.<sup>156</sup>

As successful as the organisation was in resuscitating conservatism, it was equally successful in dividing the movement a la Senator McCarthy whose policies they were inspired , they also divided the conservative movement. Having been ridiculed during the McCarthy debacle, many moderate conservatives sought to distance themselves from engaging in conspiratorial hypotheses, however, in doing so they found themselves in a proverbial catch-22. The more that mainstream conservatives downplayed the Birchers' influence, the more effectively liberal-minded media and politicians tended to overestimate it—and to condemn moderate conservatives for insufficiently distancing themselves from the society.<sup>157</sup> Moderate conservatives found themselves in a precarious position with regards to

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<sup>153</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 54.

<sup>154</sup> Sean Wilentz, "Confounding Fathers."

<sup>155</sup> "Glenn Beck: Drawing On 1950s Extremism?" NPR, October 13, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130534982> (accessed July 24, 2017).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Thomas Mallon, "The Unlikely Poster Boy of the Radical Right."

discrediting the Society, given that energetic conservatives willing to go out and do the hard work of taking back American politics and society from the liberal establishment were not seemingly, plentiful. The JBS foot soldiers, while not dependably rational in their analyses, were exuberantly committed to the conservative cause. They wrote letters to newspapers, petitioned politicians, held reading groups, proselytized among their neighbours, and, not insignificantly, subscribed to conservative publications.<sup>158</sup> For the first time, conservatism had a committed grass-roots movement that was providing a constant financial lubricant. Yet ironically, that same movement was driving conservatism further away from mainstream politics, once more relegating it to the fringes of society.

Conservatives of a more moderate disposition found themselves in a predicament, because attacking the John Birch society publicly would only reinforce liberal created stereotypes of the conservatives, yet not doing so would risk driving the movement towards the far right. Many of those actively involved in promoting conservatism, felt as if they had very little room to manoeuvre as any attempt to discredit the John Birch Society would risk alienating its members, whose influx of money into the movement ensured not only its revival but its continued survival. With moderate conservatives, still picking up the pieces from the fallout of Senator McCarthy, they were paralysed with inaction and indecision as how best to combat the ever-tightening grip that the far-right minority were having on the movement.

With the close of the nineteen fifties and the ushering in of a new decade, many intellectual liberals attempted to understand the belief of the far right and make them comprehensible to the liberal audience for whom the whole phenomenon seemed to be a manifestation of something wholly outside normal American politics.<sup>159</sup> As moderate conservatives attempted to find ways to tiptoe around the question as to how best separate the movement from the John Birch Society, a plucky Senator from Arizona, by the name of Barry Goldwater, helped bring to fruition the worst nightmare of moderate conservatives, which was the intersection between the political rise of Barry Goldwater and the ever-expanding John Birch Society. Goldwater was a blend between both Taft and McCarthy, linking his uncompromising, Taftian championing of economic liberty with the plight of

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<sup>158</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 55.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

mainly white Christian Americans, who felt angry that communist and communist supporters, as they saw it, were bedeviling their children's schools by forcing religion out and anti-American textbooks in.<sup>160</sup> The alarming growth of the John Birch Society and its new association with Barry Goldwater had many intellectual conservatives, worried about the future of the movement. William Rusher, the publisher of the leading conservative magazine, often regarded as the bible of the right,<sup>161</sup> *National Review*, worried that 'my own hunch is that we are in the early stages of a conservative trend which is going to grow and harden and quite possibly get out of hand as the scope and pace of the free world's collapse becomes apparent to the American people and desire for a scapegoat takes hold.'<sup>162</sup> Fearing a Schrodinger's cat scenario, in which publicly attacking the Birch Society would weaken the movement and not attacking it would also result in the same scenario, behind the scenes, attempts were made to get Goldwater to disavow his association. However, these attempts ended in nought with Goldwater admitting that he was sometimes embarrassed by the Birch Society's statements and actions, but he thought that there were both nice guys and kooks in the Society and that it would be unwise to denounce them publicly.<sup>163</sup> Ultimately, Goldwater was swayed by the financial power of the Society and much to the dismay of moderate conservatives who attempted to coax him into disavowing the Society, opted instead to take the line that Robert Welch was a crazy extremist, but that the Society itself was full of fine, upstanding citizens working hard and well for the cause of Americanism.<sup>164</sup>

Following the release of his book, *Conscience of a Conservative*, ghost-written by L. Brent Bozell, a senior editor at National Review, Goldwater's already growing popularity transcended new heights, with murmurings of him being a future potential presidential candidate.<sup>165</sup> *Conscience of a Conservative* was an instant success, within a couple of months of publication it had reached the number four spot in Time magazine bestseller list.<sup>166</sup> The book would establish him as not just the leader but the conscience of a political

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>161</sup> Robert D. McFadden, "William Rusher, Champion of Conservatism, Dies at 87," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/19/us/politics/19rusher.html> (accessed July 20, 2017).

<sup>162</sup> John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr., Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1988), 196.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 198.

<sup>164</sup> Thomas Mallon, "The Unlikely Poster Boy of the Radical Right."

<sup>165</sup> Godfrey Hodgson, "Obituary: Barry Goldwater," *The Independent*, May 29, 1998, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-barry-goldwater-1156920.html> (accessed January 20, 2017).

<sup>166</sup> Nicole Hoplin and Ron Robinson, *Funding Fathers: The Unsung Heroes of the Conservative Movement* (Washington, DC, Regnery Publishing, 2008), 113.

movement.<sup>167</sup> The book laid out his political philosophy, in which Goldwater boldly declared that 'I have little interest in streamlining government or making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them.'<sup>168</sup> Initially, the book's success failed to translate into political success, with Goldwater losing to Richard Nixon for the Republican nomination in 1960. Goldwater, however, was not dismayed by this defeat and in his concession speech he urged his fellow colleagues to 'grow up Conservatives. We want to take this party back, and I think someday we can. Let's get to work.'<sup>169</sup> Goldwater's popularity went from strength to strength, he no longer was a mere figure of the movement, he was the movement and was aptly given the moniker 'Mr. Conservative.'<sup>170</sup> Goldwater's political elevation resulted in *Time* musing that 'whether as candidate or merely as Republican conscience, Arizona's Barry Morris Goldwater GOP salesman supreme and political phenomenon of 1961- will have plenty to say about the tone and spirit of his party's next platform, and even more to say about who will be standing on it.'<sup>171</sup> Goldwater's meteoric rise was unprecedented, his newly acclaimed popularity brought conservatism from the political realm and brought Goldwater into the public sphere with publications offering glowing endorsements, next to President Kennedy, Mr Goldwater had become the most publicized political figure in the nation.<sup>172</sup>

However, as David Cassidy's 1975 album reminds us, the higher they climb the harder they fall and Barry Goldwater was no exception to this, with his political coup de grace being played out entirely in the public eye over the course of the 1964 general election. The modern reinterpretation of the events leading up to Goldwater claiming the Republican Presidential ticket casts Goldwater as a fringe candidate, who only got on the Republican ticket, because of the scandalous personal affairs of Nelson Rockefeller, his moderate adversary. However, that is not a true rendition of how things actually played out and

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>168</sup> Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, (Radford, Wilder Publications, 2009), 18.

<sup>169</sup> George Will, "The Cheerful Malcontent," May 31, 1998, C07, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/may98/will31.htm> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>170</sup> Jeff Jacob, "Goldwater Lost in a Landslide, but He Made Conservative Politics Mainstream," *The Boston Globe*, April 20, 2014, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2014/04/19/goldwater-lost-landslide-but-made-conservative-politics-mainstream/5OODYjoRD3GS0ENca2rKvN/story.html> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>171</sup> "Republicans: Salesman for a Cause," *Time*, June 23, 1961, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,894485,00.html> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>172</sup> Lee Edwards, *Goldwater: The Man Who Made a Revolution* (Washington, Regnery Pub, 1995),

glosses over the fanatic grass-root movement which managed to create an image that Goldwater was unstoppable.<sup>173</sup> Prior to the death of John F. Kennedy, Goldwater was widely regarded as the likely candidate in the fight against Kennedy. How then did Goldwater manage to capitulate in such a devastating fashion?

### 3.2 Conservatism's Watershed Moment

To get his place on the ticket, Goldwater first had to battle the same Eastern Establishment that Senator McCarthy had previously claimed were constantly conspiring against him.<sup>174</sup> In a bid to prevent the party from moving to the right, the northeastern wing of the Republican party frantically attempted to find any middle of the road candidate, evident with the entrance of William Scranton into the race as a latecomer in an attempt to prevent the GOP from falling into a narrow groove on the extreme right.<sup>175</sup> Aware that they stood little chance of collecting votes from the North Eastern board and capitalizing on the support he had from two unified and politicized grassroots activist base, in the form of the John Birch Society and William F. Buckley's Young Americans for Freedom, Goldwater and his advisors turned their attention to exploiting America's South, dubbed the 'Southern strategy.' The strategy consisted of countering Kennedy's strong appeal in the big cities and the North by forging the traditional Republican Midwest and northern New England with a candidate who could carry the south and the west.<sup>176</sup> Historically, since the reconstruction era following the aftermath of the American civil war, the South had been a bastion of strength for the Democratic party. This constant support base for the Democratic Party came about when white supremacist Democrats seized control of the South after the end of Reconstruction, the period that followed the Civil War. They instituted so-called Jim Crow laws disenfranchising African-American voters, who favoured Republicans, the party of Lincoln. The so-called Solid South all but unanimously supported Democrats for more than half a century, with states like South Carolina and Mississippi routinely offering Democrats more than 95 percent of the vote, even to losing presidential candidates.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> B. Ramesh Babu, "The Centre Versus the Fringe: The 1964 American Presidential Election," *International Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 1, 1964), 378, doi:10.1177/002088176400600402.

<sup>174</sup> "McCarthy's primary sweep is variously explained," *The New York Times*.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, 377.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 367.

<sup>177</sup> Nate Cohn, "Demise of the Southern Democrat Is Now Nearly Complete," *The New York Times*, December, 4 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/05/upshot/demise-of-the-southern-democrat-is-now-nearly-compete.html> (accessed May 20, 2017).

However, since the nineteen fifties, angst was building in these southern states. For years, the undercurrent of racism that lay dormant had yet to fully insert itself into the political realm, but by the end of the fifties, racial politics was now front and centre. In 1958, George Wallace in his first run at trying to become governor of Alabama, lost largely because of his failure to appreciate the deep racial division that permeated throughout the state. His opponent and fellow Democrat, Attorney State General Jim Patterson had developed quite a following, after he banned the NAACP in Alabama, resulting in him being embraced by the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>178</sup> Misjudging the views of electorate, Wallace publicly chastised Patterson. Unfortunately for Wallace, the predominately white voters were in no mood for moderation in the face of black Southerners challenges to white supremacy.<sup>179</sup> As often is the case in politics, the lines dividing political issues tend to become blurred, and this was very much the case with the supposed communist subversion in America. For white Southerners, communist subversion had much less to do with Soviet spying and much more to do with African American's quest for equality.<sup>180</sup> This belief was encapsulated in the following statement by a businessman in Alabama whom was asked why he supported Patterson over Wallace, he retorted 'I'd rather have Attorney General Patterson attacking the Communists in the NAACP than running down an organization [the KKK] devoted to maintaining our way of life.'<sup>181</sup> Learning from this episode, when Wallace reran for the governorship in 1962, he vowed that no one 'will ever out-nigger me again,' creating a winning platform based on a defence for the southern way of life.<sup>182</sup>

The changing face of politics in the South, created a conundrum for the Republican Party. Many of its leading conservative figures, such as Goldwater, had not entered politics for racial reasons but instead for their disdain of the ever-expanding state following the New Deal. Furthermore, the Republican Party was the party of Lincoln, and any engagement in racial politics would be to turn their back on the party's origins. However, many felt that if southern uproar over civil rights agitators and liberal national politicians could help Alabama Republicans and the conservative Republican in the South more generally, then so be it.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 74.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 2000), 95.

<sup>182</sup> Howell Raines, "George Wallace, Segregation Symbol, Dies at 79," *The New York Times*, September 14, 1998, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/14/us/george-wallace-segregation-symbol-dies-at-79.html> (accessed May 20, 2017).

<sup>183</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 74.

Whilst the liberal wing of the Republican Party was extremely resistant to the idea of adopting the anti-civil rights cause, those of conservative persuasion saw the results of the 1962 congressional elections, in which Southern Republicans nearly doubled their vote, as a sign for change, compounded further by the Kennedy administration's embrace of civil rights.<sup>184</sup> William Rusher, publisher of the leading conservative periodical *National Review*, was acutely aware of the new political opportunity that had now presented itself to the GOP, declaring that the 'Republican Party, like it or not, has a rendezvous with a brand new idea.'<sup>185</sup> Barry Goldwater further echoed the mindset of Conservatives, when he remarked in passing to White southern Republicans from Atlanta that: 'We're not going to get the Negro vote as a block in 1964 and 1968, so we ought to go hunting where the ducks are.'<sup>186</sup>

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, newly inaugurated President Lyndon Johnson urged the American people that the best way to honour JFK was through the passage of the national civil rights legislation was through the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought. 'We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the book of laws.'<sup>187</sup> By doing so, Johnson was about to create a schism that would forever change the face of American politics, with Southern Democrats trying to stop the passage of the Civil Rights Act. While Republican senators were torn between being the party of Lincoln, yet at the same time wary of the increased powers the act gave the federal government. Even within the conservative faction of the Republican Party, there was division over how to vote on the bill, with many conservatives torn between their political beliefs and their own personal convictions.

### 3.3 The infamous 1964 election

It is my belief that, Barry Goldwater's calamity laden bid at becoming the President of America in 1964, was the most important juncture in the history of modern American conservatism, for several reasons. From a historical landmark perspective, this election was significant, as it was the first time that there would be a Presidential candidate, running

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>185</sup> David B. Frisk, *If Not Us, Who?: William Rusher, National Review, and the Conservative Movement* (New York, Open Road Media, 2014), 161.

<sup>186</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset and Jack Bass, *Emerging Coalitions in American Politics* (San Francisco, Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1978), 309.

<sup>187</sup> "Standing Ovation Greets President," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 1963, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/168427228/BE924DCD5EBD4901PQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed June 20, 2017).

solely on a conservative platform. Whilst this was a major step in the history of conservatism, unbeknownst to everyone at the time, the 1964 election would shape the direction of modern American conservatism, creating the modern-day iteration. This was a pivotal moment in the movement's history, outlining the events that led to such a momentous shift in the ideology.

Timing plays a significant part in politics and the decade of the nineteen sixties was one in which the timing was right for social change. The decade was ushered in by the momentous *Wind of Change* speech delivered by English Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan whom when visiting Africa noted that a 'wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.'<sup>188</sup> Across the continent in America, a similar change was occurring, when voting on a ballot to end the Southern filibuster of the bill, Senate Minority leader and a conservative in the mould of Taft, Everett Dickerson whom in letting go of his initial grievances with regards to the expansion of government, reminded his fellow peers that 'the time has come for equality of opportunity in sharing in government, in education, and in employment. It will not be stayed or denied. It is here.'<sup>189</sup> While some of his political peers were still in a state of flux over how they would vote, Goldwater remained as committed ever to his political values berating the Civil Rights Act as a loss of his God-given liberties and would make the federal government into a police state which would lead to the destruction of a free society.<sup>190</sup> Unfortunately for Goldwater, he had positioned himself on the wrong side of history, as the monumental 1964 Civil Rights Act unanimously passed the house. Although elated that the historic bill had passed, Johnson was acutely aware of the political ramifications that the bill would have, correctly prophesizing to his staff on the day he signed the bill into law, 'I think we just gave the South to the Republicans for your lifetime and mine.'<sup>191</sup>

Two weeks after Johnson had enacted the Civil Rights Act, the Republican Presidential Nomination Convention was opened in California, with Goldwater's nomination

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<sup>188</sup> "Excerpts From Macmillan's Talk to South African Parliament Members," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1960, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/115200800/7B5FFA2C0A194213PQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>189</sup> Wendy Wolff, *Senate, 1789-1989, V. 3: Classic Speeches, 1830-1993*. Civil Rights Bill (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1995), 704.

<sup>190</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 76.

<sup>191</sup> Michael Oreskes, "Civil Rights Act Leaves Deep Mark On the American Political Landscape," *The New York Times*, July 2, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/02/us/civil-rights-act-leaves-deep-mark-on-the-american-political-landscape.html> (accessed August 3, 2017).

all but guaranteed, given that in the primaries he had secured the delegate votes he needed for the nomination and a few to spare.<sup>192</sup> Behind the scenes, moderate Republicans frantically tried to find ways to derail the Goldwater train in a similar fashion to how they had managed to upstage Taft in Chicago twelve years prior. In large part due to the extraordinary efforts of grassroots volunteers motivated by high principle and organized by savvy political operatives who understood how the Republican Party and its presidential nominating process worked, this time there was to be no last-minute upset.<sup>193</sup> These enthusiastic Goldwater supporters had complete control of the Platform Committee and had no difficulty in writing a final draft tailor-made for the Senator from Arizona.<sup>194</sup> Not to be dismayed and in part inspired by the historic passing of the Civil Rights Act, Goldwater's moderate and liberal opponents decided to go ahead with their fight to amend the draft platform. They knew that there was no chance of persuading the convention to accept any of their proposals. But fearing the now certain prospect of Goldwater heading the ticket, their purpose was to have it put on record that they did fight for their principles.<sup>195</sup> With all political events, there are winners and losers. The 1964 Republican convention was an event in which neither side came out unscathed. From the get-go, Goldwater had followed a less than traditional political approach and his acceptance speech at the convention was another example of him deviating away from the political norms. Traditionally, the presidential nominees, even as they condemn those who oppose them and their policies, utilize the acceptance speech to bind the wounds, to soothe the hurt feelings and frustrations of the losers and to smooth all internecine controversy.<sup>196</sup> Goldwater instead opted to deliver an acceptance speech that not only polarised those within his party but would later become a death knell for his forthcoming Presidential campaign. Blinded by the exaltation of victory, his acceptance speech revitalized controversy and widened the ideological rift within the party. By choosing to follow to the bitter end what was essentially a pre-convention decision of not conceding anything- big or small- to his opponents within the party, he practically forced them to remain opposed to him even after he became the nominee. He offered no

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<sup>192</sup> Babu, "The Centre Versus the Fringe," 383.

<sup>193</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 77.

<sup>194</sup> Babu, "The Centre Versus the Fringe," 383.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 386.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 389.

honourable way back to the disgruntled.<sup>197</sup> As the speech came to a close, unwittingly Goldwater did irrevocable damage to his campaign with these damning words 'I would remind you that extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.'<sup>198</sup>

Goldwater's ascension to the top of the Republican ticket was a watershed moment for conservatism. With his victory, total control of the Republican Party passed into the hands of its most conservative elements.<sup>199</sup> Those who had followed Goldwater's political trajectory saw little out of character with his extremism lecture, in fact praising him for refusing to falter from his political beliefs. On the other side of the political spectrum, those of liberalist ilk balked at his uncompromising platform, with one reporter recoiling in horror, 'My god, he's going to run as Barry Goldwater.'<sup>200</sup> This historic moment in conservative history, was largely a result of the committed grass-roots movement comprising of the Birch Society and the Young Americans for Freedom, whose supporters were galvanised and drawn to Goldwater because of his highly charged political rhetoric. But ironically, due to his unwavering approach, Goldwater had self-sabotaged his own campaign, further compounded by his vitriolic speech which Richard Nixon was convinced lost Goldwater the presidency and made Nixon physically sick as he heard it.<sup>201</sup> Meanwhile, his Democratic adversary and incumbent President, Lyndon B. Johnson was relishing the opportunity to face Goldwater. It had been his life-long dream to become President of America, declaring at age twelve to his fellow classmates 'someday, I'm going to be President of the United States.'<sup>202</sup> Furthermore, Johnson did not just want to have the position bequeathed to him, he wanted to win by the largest landslide ever, eclipsing the historic victory of his political idol Franklin D. Roosevelt over the hapless Alf Landon in 1936.<sup>203</sup> Johnson set to work on creating a liberal political platform that was to be a complete polar opposite to Goldwater's. Whilst Goldwater lamented the continued expansion of the federal government, for Johnson New Deal liberalism was still the ticket,

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Tom Wicker, "Convention ends," *The New York Times*, July 17, 1964,

<https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/115567395/A51CA844A089474BPQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>199</sup> Elmo Roper, "The Meaning of San Francisco," *The Saturday Review*, August 22, 1964, 17

<sup>200</sup> Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 78.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> John, Whitcomb and Claire Whitcomb, *Real Life at the White House: Two Hundred Years of Daily Life at America's Most Famous Residence* (Hove, Psychology Press, 2000), 369.

<sup>203</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 50.

and Johnson meant to hammer home the risks Goldwater and his principled conservatism would bring to the Social Security system and to the widespread prosperity and stability that government safeguards had brought to the American people.<sup>204</sup>

On top of highlighting the contrasting ideologies and policies between the two candidates, Johnson's team set about exploiting Goldwater's extreme rhetoric, so that they could play on the fears of the electorate, casting a Goldwater's presidency as the sure-fire way to achieve nuclear Armageddon. Such a task was relatively straightforward, Goldwater had given a litany of public statements that lent themselves to political exploitation, delivering a gargantuan amount of speeches in the eleven-year period between taking his Senate seat in 1953 and the 1964 election. The number was widely tipped to be over 3,000, making him the second most sought-after speaker in country, second only to the president.<sup>205</sup> In a bid to capitalise on Goldwater's repeated calamities Johnson directed his aide Bill Moyers to 'remind people of what Barry Goldwater was before he was nominated for president' and began trying to emphasise the extremism that surrounded him all of his career.<sup>206</sup> Moyers passed the word to the Democrat's advertising agency, which disgorged one of the most negative ad campaigns in national politics. The most damaging spot was the *Daisy* commercial. The Daisy commercial had a profound impact on how future elections would be waged, as it was the first time the White House and the advertising agencies of Maddison Avenue would work together.<sup>207</sup> Although, it was not the first political attack advertisement, what made the Daisy commercial unique was the fact that it made emotions a staple of political spots, with many regarding it as the most controversial political commercial.<sup>208</sup> Whilst it only aired once and never mentioned Goldwater by name, it had a profound impact on the fears of the general public, fears that had previously been expressed by William Scranton prior to the Republican Convention who asked 'What does it mean to be

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<sup>204</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 83.

<sup>205</sup> Hedley Donovan, "The Difficulty of being fair to Goldwater," *Life Magazine*, October 9, 1964, 94.

<sup>206</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 50.

<sup>207</sup> Brendan Kiley, "New Play 'Daisy' Explores the Commercial That Changed U.S. Politics," *The Seattle Times*, July 3, 2016.

<http://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/theater/new-play-daisy-explores-the-commercial-that-changed-us-politics/> (accessed March 20, 2017).

<sup>208</sup> Robert Mann, "How the 'Daisy' Ad Changed Everything About Political Advertising," *Smithsonian*,

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-daisy-ad-changed-everything-about-political-advertising-180958741/> (accessed March 20, 2017).

conservative? Does it mean you must have a trigger-happy dreamer in a world that wants from America not slogans but sane leadership.’<sup>209</sup>

Rather than debate with Goldwater on policies, Johnson had decided to go straight for the jugular, realizing the importance of the nuclear issue, throughout his campaign, he constantly used words such as responsibility and restraint in his speeches, he didn’t have to directly reference Goldwater as everybody knew who and what he was talking about.<sup>210</sup> Johnson need not have even released the attack advertisement or made the nuclear issue the primary issue of the campaign, as Goldwater’s alienating *extremism in the defence of liberty* acceptance speech during the Republican convention, had solidified any prior portrayals of a Goldwater presidency being a trigger-happy president. Johnson’s campaign was further helped by Goldwater, who routinely handicapped himself throughout the campaign, such as when, in an attempt to stress that his views were no different to that of his fellow Americans, he adopted the campaign slogan of ‘In your heart, you know he’s right.’<sup>211</sup> The slogan backfired spectacularly, as it reinforced Goldwater’s political positioning on the far right and was easily exploited by Johnson supporters whom parodied it with slogans such as ‘in your gut’s, you know he’s nuts’ or ‘in your heart, you know he might,’ an overt reference to Goldwater’s potential to push the nuclear button.<sup>212</sup>

When it came time for the election, Goldwater was resoundingly trounced, suffering the humiliating fortune of carrying the Republican Party to one of the worst election defeats in American history.<sup>213</sup> His capitulation was further compounded by the fact that Lyndon B. Johnson received the largest percentage of the popular vote of any candidate in United States history. Perhaps an even more damning assessment of Goldwater’s presidential bid, was the narrow victory in his native Arizona, the only state he won outside the Deep South, where he barely managed to edge Johnson, winning by just 3,101 votes (50.3 percent).<sup>214</sup> With Goldwater’s resounding defeat, it seemed that conservatism, had gone as far as it

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<sup>209</sup> “Nation: The Fear & the Facts,” *Time*, 25 Sept 1964, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,876149,00.html> (accessed July 15, 2017).

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> Robert Wilson, Norman J. Glickman, and Laurence E. Lynn Jr., *LBJ’s Neglected Legacy: How Lyndon Johnson Reshaped Domestic Policy and Government* (University of Texas Press, 2015), 24.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Jacob Javits, “The Road Back For the G.O.P.: The Road Back for the G.O.P.,” *The New York Times*, November 15, 1964, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/115520201/5C6B0F25BA3C46E1PQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>214</sup> “Unofficial tally gives Johnson 61%: Percentage of Popular Vote Is Highest in History,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1964, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/115956409/E5427D72234B4E9DPQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 3, 2017).

could and would now once again return to the fringes, having been comprehensively rejected by the electorate. The moderate element of the Republican Party were convinced that the conservatives had had their time in the sun and it was now time to step aside and hand the Republican party back to the moderates.<sup>215</sup> Before the election, many mused that it was not simply a presidential election, but Americans would also be voting on the future direction of the Republican Party, with Stewart Alsop writing in *Life* magazine two months before the election that;

If Goldwater runs a respectable race, then the Goldwaterites will almost certainly keep their tight grip on the party power structure, and Goldwater himself could well be the candidate again in 1968. But if Goldwater loses in a landslide, then it is absolutely predictable that the moderates of the Hated Eastern Establishment will stage a counterrevolution, and it is highly probable that it will succeed, with the nomination in 1968 of William Scranton or someone like him.<sup>216</sup>

In the initial aftermath of Goldwater's disastrous election bid, moderate Republicans felt vindicated and immediately sought to have control of the party rightfully returned to them. The anti-Goldwater forces argued that the G.O.P. had been captured by a minority faction that did not represent the majority of Republicans, but only its extreme right wing. They believed that this party image-with its racist overtones-was decisively repudiated in the election. Therefore, they felt that the party's only hope of ever returning to power lied in returning toward the broad, moderate consensus in which the majority of the electorate was located.<sup>217</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it had been eighteen years since Robert Taft had given his speech to the 1946 Republican State convention in Ohio, where he noted in his closing remarks that the American people could find a 'united Republican party whose leaders represent no faction and take orders from no minority group, who are inspired solely by a desire to restore America to the forward path of progress so long interrupted and the ideals so long

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<sup>215</sup>Gary Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah: The Presidential Campaign of 1964* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 302.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>217</sup> "After the Vote," *The New York Times*, November 15, 1961, E1,

<https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/115533499/29D2D00EBE5B4BDDPQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 3, 2017).

distorted, by war, depression and New Dealism.<sup>218</sup> Nearly two decades later, the Republican party was no longer that same united front, but instead divided into the two opposing ideologies who viciously vied for control of the party. Under Taft, conservatism had brought the party together, demonstrated by the fact that Taft was popularly dubbed *Mr Republican*,<sup>219</sup> unlike his predecessor Goldwater whose moniker *Mr Conservative*<sup>220</sup> embodied the fragmentation of the Republican Party. Many political journalists, such as Richard Rovere pondered the question of the Republican party surviving such a lopsided election result, reporting that there were few Republicans, 'who think it can never be done, and not very many who think they will have more than half a party by 1968.'<sup>221</sup> With James Reston declaring that Goldwater had 'wrecked his party for a long time to come.'<sup>222</sup> While such a belief pervaded throughout the moderate camp, from a conservative standpoint, such claims were hyperbolic, as Goldwater's defeat invigorated rather than discouraged supporters of the new conservatism.<sup>223</sup> Unbeknownst to the moderate element of the Republican Party, Goldwater's defeat was to have little effect on controlling dominance that conservatives wielded over the party. Following his victory during the primary, Goldwater immediately restructured the RNC to ensure that the party remained in conservative hands no matter what happened in the election. This meant replacing key RNC personnel with people who agreed with his philosophy.<sup>224</sup> To some this alone may account for the present day political leanings of the Republican party, in the wider context of the national rejection of the conservative platform that Goldwater offered, it does not explain the present-day dominance of conservatism and the fact that modern conservatism differs greatly from that proposed by Goldwater. Following the fall-out of the 1964 election, conservatism seemed once again to be moribund, having had its moment in the sun before once again being reduced to kooky fringes of society.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Clarence E. Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 183.

<sup>219</sup> John G. Taft, "Opinion | The Cry of the True Republican," *The New York Times*, October 22, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/23/opinion/the-cry-of-the-true-republican.html> (accessed July 14, 2017).

<sup>220</sup> Jeff Jacoby, "Goldwater Lost in a Landslide, but He Made Conservative Politics Mainstream," *The Boston Globe*, April 4, 2014, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2014/04/19/goldwater-lost-landslide-but-made-conservative-politics-mainstream/50ODYjoRD3GS0ENca2rKvN/story.html> (accessed July 20, 2017).

<sup>221</sup> Louis Menand, "He Knew He Was Right," *The New Yorker*, March 19, 2001, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/03/26/he-knew-he-was-right> (accessed March 20, 2017).

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> John M. Murrin, Pekka Hämäläinen, Paul E. Johnson, Denver Brunson, and James M. McPherson, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People, Volume 2: Since 1863* (Boston, Cengage Learning, 2015), 688.

<sup>224</sup> Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right*, 92.

<sup>225</sup> Babu, "The Centre Versus the Fringe," 69.

## Chapter 4: A United Conservatism

In the previous chapters, I have discussed at great length the main political figures who helped shaped the conservative movement. However, ideologies such as conservatism are not just limited to the arena of politics, instead they have a far greater reach, touching all aspects of life. It is for that reason, in the forthcoming chapters, I turn my attention to William F. Buckley Jr, a man who operated in the intellectual sphere. It was he who had a profound impact in shaping the ideals of conservatism, transforming it from the ideology of crack-pots that could be easily tarred with wild accusations into a formidable intellectual force. However, before this transformation could occur, several issues existing within the movement had to be rectified first. As has been demonstrated in the earlier chapters, the conservative movement experienced multiple false dawns, in which it would ascend to a new, unprecedented height before its inevitable self-implosion. It seemed as if, following Goldwater's defeat, the movement could go no further. The usual scapegoat of blaming the collusion of the Eastern Establishment could no longer be utilised, as this time it was the electorate and not the Republican Party whom had rejected conservatism. Yet, just like the phoenix that rises from the ashes, conservatism was to be given a new lease of life by its most outspoken and ardent follower, William F. Buckley. Buckley was a well know figure both in conservative and non-conservative circles, having catapulted into the public limelight following the publication of his first book in 1951, *God and Man at Yale*, with leading Conservative Historian, Lee Edwards citing the book as the foundation from which modern Conservative movement was born.<sup>226</sup> *God and Man at Yale* was spawned out of Buckley's experiences as an undergraduate student in Yale and the book challenged Yale's political, religious and educational liberalism.<sup>227</sup> Although masquerading as a critique of Yale, it was predominately about the changing face of American politics. In the book, Buckley claimed that Yale was a hotbed of atheism and collectivism, with his central thesis being that 'first, Yale is currently anti-Christian and anti-capitalist; and second, that Yale alumni have a right and duty to insist that it teach Christianity and individualism.'<sup>228</sup> Conservatives who were

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Peter Viereck, "Conservatism Under the Elms," , *The New York Times*, November 4, 1951, <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/112091081/41127CF21727436CPQ/1?accountid=13598> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>228</sup> McGeorge Bundy, "The Attack on Yale," *The Atlantic*, November 1951, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1951/11/the-attack-on-yale/306724/> (accessed March 16, 2017).

looking for direction and leadership, Buckley had got their attention, through the full-blown attack on liberalism and his declaration that ‘there was a conservative tradition- not only at Yale, but in the nation founded on a belief in God, a trust in free enterprise, and a reliance on the individual.’<sup>229</sup> These conservatives were further emboldened by Buckley’s call for the conservative majority to rise up and overthrow the liberal elite.<sup>230</sup>

The book was greeted with a great deal of scorn from those of a liberal disposition, such as McGeorge Bundy who would go on to serve as National Security Advisor under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In a review of the book, Bundy wrote that ‘as a believer in God, a Republican, and a Yale graduate, I find the book is dishonest in its use of facts, false in its theory, and a discredit to its author and the writer of its introduction’ before making the ill-fated prediction that the book was unlikely to do much lasting damage.<sup>231</sup> Ironically, the reaction from *God and Man at Yale* from liberal America, further increased Buckley’s standing in Conservative circles, as the extraordinarily vicious attacks in prominent magazines of literature and culture would only stimulate further interest in the book.<sup>232</sup> Conservatives viewed these attacks on the young Bill Buckley to be evidence of the hubris and perfidy of the Eastern Establishment. Buckley had challenged one of the Establishment’s favoured institutions Yale and its one true faith liberalism, and the Establishment responded with a concerted program of character assassination.<sup>233</sup> In their vehement critique of Buckley, those who championed the liberalist cause had fallen into a trap, particularly McGeorge Bundy whose seething article in *The Atlantic*, Buckley would later claim was adopted unofficially by Yale as its showcase defence.<sup>234</sup> Rather than attacking Buckley on the substance of his arguments, Bundy instead opted to attack Buckley on the basis of his religion, citing that Buckley’s grievances with the relationship between religion and Yale stemmed from the fact that Buckley was a Catholic and therefore not attuned to Yale’s Protestant history and Yale’s religious tradition.<sup>235</sup> Had Bundy refuted the contradictions present in Buckley’s attempts to merge individualism with Catholicism, the impact of the book may have been curtailed. Instead, in their rush to defend the honour of

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<sup>229</sup> Lee Edwards, “God and Man at Yale, Now,” *National Review*, November 10, 2011, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/282763/god-and-man-yale-now-nro-symposium> (accessed March 20, 2017).

<sup>230</sup> John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 86.

<sup>231</sup> Bundy, “The Attack on Yale.”

<sup>232</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 88.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> William F. Buckley, *Miles Gone By: A Literary Autobiography* (Washington D.C., Regnery Publishing, 2005), 63.

<sup>235</sup> Bundy, “The Attack on Yale.”

Yale, those from the liberal orthodoxy because of their personal attacks on Buckley and not on the premise of his arguments, unwittingly increased his following. This forthcoming chapter explores how Buckley was able to overcome various contradictions that existed within the conservative movement and unite them into one cohesive whole. It will examine, how he first addressed his conflicting internal beliefs, and merged them together, before later supplanting the differences inside conservatism.

#### 4.1 The Catholic Conversion of Conservatism

From a historical standpoint, *God and Man at Yale* serves to show how Buckley blended the two contrasting beliefs that he held dear to his heart, political individualism and Christianity. Up until this point, liberalism had long been associated with Christianity, whereas the tenets of conservatism were viewed as being incompatible with the religion. Buckley set about changing that by drawing from the writings of Albert Jay Nock who was a leading libertarian figure at the time and a personal friend of Buckley's father.<sup>236</sup> Nock provided the anchoring point for Buckley's belief in individualism. Nock laid out his beliefs in his book *Our Enemy the State* in which he articulated that because 'all government action required public resources, and public resources meant taxation- a form of institutionalized theft- all state action was necessarily immoral and the government, by its very nature, was an enemy to human society.'<sup>237</sup> Nock would later write, 'in proportion as you give the state power to do things for you, you give it power to do things to you.'<sup>238</sup> Nock believed that individual moral action could only exist when one had individual political freedom, something which could only be provided by a limited state, given that the government is a moral arbiter and forces morality according to a predetermined code.<sup>239</sup> Therefore it directly interferes with one's ability to be able to exercise their own divine free will. However, Nock's writings were primarily focused on the oppression of the individual by the state and Nock himself was an atheist, so to merge individualism with Christianity, Buckley had to reframe Nock's argument. Building on Nock's stance that the state was immoral because of its infringement on individual freedom, Buckley pushed this a step further and asked the

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<sup>236</sup> Hodgson, "Obituary."

<sup>237</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralising the Right: William F. Buckley Jr., Whittaker Chambers, Will Herberg and the Transformation of Intellectual Conservatism, 1945-1964* (University of Southern California, 2007), 30.

<sup>238</sup> Albert Jay Nock, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* (Alabama, Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1964)

<sup>239</sup> Albert Jay Nock, "Radical Individualism: The State as Enemy," in *Conservatism in America, since 1930*, ed. Gregory L. Schneider (New York, NYU Press, 2003), 31.

metaphysical question of why society should value the freedoms of the individual at all, why should individual volition remain the primary political concern rather than utility maximization or the demands of the collective? 'Without religion, said Buckley, one finds no answer.'<sup>240</sup> However, from a Christian standpoint, humans are inherently free by virtue of the divine spark within them, which made their volition sacred. Buckley believed that this religious view of human freedom naturally translated into a political system that would hold the preservation of individual liberty as its primary goal, but the welfare state was willing to tax and regulate the individual in the name of the public good.<sup>241</sup> Buckley's interpretation was that religious freedom was intertwined with political freedom and that the ever-expanding statism promoted by the New Dealers was a violation of God's gifts. In the final pages of his book, *Up from Liberalism*, Buckley wrote that 'I will not cede more power to the state. I mean to live my life an obedient man, but obedient to God, subservient to the wisdom of my ancestors; never to the authority of political truths arrived at yesterday at the voting booth.'<sup>242</sup>

Spanning from Bundy's scathing review of *God and Man at Yale*, many early critics of Buckley attacked him because of his Catholic faith.<sup>243</sup> Buckley countered these critiques, citing that when writing the book, he saw nothing in the least distinctively Catholic about the points he made.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, as pointed out by political journalist Dwight McDonald, that while Buckley is indeed a Catholic, and an ardent one, using this line of reason as a critique was irrelevant since his book defines Christianity in Protestant terms, and his economics are Calvinist rather than Catholic. One of the wryest twists in the whole comedy was that the Catholic press has almost unanimously damned Buckley's economic views.<sup>245</sup> Buckley for the most part had downplayed his Catholic faith, as a means of furthering his appeal to conservatives, given at that time it predominately featured Protestant libertarians, who answered to no papal encyclicals and who also wore the label 'individualist' as a badge of honour.<sup>246</sup> In his attempts to appeal to not just Catholics and instead the wider base of religious traditions, Buckley showcased his astute ability to merge beliefs and ideologies that

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<sup>240</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralizing the Right*, 35.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> William F. Buckley, *Up From Liberalism* (Eastford, Martino Fine Books, 2016), 176.

<sup>243</sup> William F. Buckley, *Miles Gone By: A Literary Autobiography* (Washington D.C., Regnery Publishing, 2005), 69.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>246</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralizing the Right*, 40.

although descended from the same tree were in opposition to each other, he would do so once again later when he reunited conservatism's various fragmented strands (such as neo-conservatism, libertarianism and traditional conservatism). As a conservative Catholic, Buckley was somewhat of an outlier. Prior to 1960, virtually all Catholic intellectuals and clergymen of the time themselves agreed that the social teachings of their faith demanded support for the liberal politics embodied in Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. In order for Catholic intellectuals to assume their position as major players on the Right, the liberal monopoly on Catholic social thought in America would have to be broken.<sup>247</sup> American Catholics justified their entwinement with liberalism, in particular, the New Deal policies, on the basis of the papal encyclicals delivered by Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI. Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) gave birth to modern Catholic social teaching by proclaiming the rights of workers to organize and receive just wages, as well as the need for the state to promote the interests of the poor and provide for the welfare and comfort of the working classes. On the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno*, which reaffirmed the principles outlined in *Rerum* and made them more relevant to the conditions of the worldwide depression.<sup>248</sup> However, Buckley was not disheartened in how intertwined Catholicism and liberalism had become in America, seeking to, just as he had done with Nock's individualism, find another means of reframing the contradictions into a more favourable manner.

Buckley was aware that he would have little to no success if he tried to convert all American Catholics from liberalism to conservatism. Such a feat was simply unfeasible, given the complete mainstream dominance of Catholic liberalism. Furthermore, many leading Catholic figures had attacked him for his economic views, which given the complete contrast to that of the Catholic teachings, bordered on heresy. According to Catholic journalist Kevin Lynch, Buckley, as one who advocated political individualism and attacked the very idea of the welfare state, stood 'in clear contradiction to Catholic moral teaching on social doctrine.'<sup>249</sup> Some even speculated that Buckley was able to hold such beliefs in defiance to Catholic teaching, because he had compartmentalized his varying beliefs, with Father

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<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

Christopher Fullman writing in his negative review of *God and Man at Yale* that ‘Buckley’s religious notions have no bearing whatsoever on his economic convictions’ and that his views on religion and economics were held in ‘separate and airtight compartments.’<sup>250</sup>

Rather than running the risk of alienating Catholics even further by challenging the papal teaching, Buckley instead opted to find justification for his economics views in his own interpretation of the papal encyclicals. Buckley wondered that perhaps certain areas in the encyclicals had been overlooked. Asking the question of whether one could be so sure ‘that there is a consensus among theologians on the true nature of the state? Are the writers of the *Commonweal*, *America* and the *Catholic World* right in telling me, as so many of them are fond of doing, what to think?’<sup>251</sup> Amidst the haunting spectre of communism, Buckley decided to manipulate the Catholic opposition to socialism as a justification for his promotion of individualism. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic thinkers and clergy had consistently opposed socialism on the grounds that it tended to conceive of life in economic rather than spiritual terms. Socialism, they claimed, centred humans on the here and now, rather than their spiritual destiny, and thus gave predominance to the material aspects of life. The Church had a long tradition of defending the necessity and sanctity of private property, which socialism undermined by its very nature.<sup>252</sup> Under this premise, Buckley was able to place his version of politics within Catholicism. Whereas before, Catholic liberals had interpreted the encyclicals as giving credence to the Welfare state, Buckley now argued that not only was he following the teachings of both popes, but his views were in accordance with that Catholic tradition, writing that the popes had condemned socialism with unecclesiastical ferocity. The Holy Father had also emphasized the importance of the institution of private property, insisting that the right to possess property is derived from nature.<sup>253</sup> It was through this rationale, that Buckley was able to undermine the liberalist argument, citing that if anything, it was they and not him in defiance of Catholic teachings.

It was here that once again that the influence of Nock on Buckley was apparent. As mentioned earlier, it was Nock’s belief that since all state action necessarily infringed upon

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<sup>250</sup> Christopher E. Fullman, “God and Man and Mr. Buckley,” *Catholic World*, May 1952, 107.

<sup>251</sup> William F. Buckley Jr., “The Catholic in the Modern View | Conservative vs. Liberal,” *Commonweal*, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/catholic-modern-view-conservative-vs-liberal> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>252</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralizing the Right*, 45.

<sup>253</sup> William F. Buckley and Linda Bridges, *Athwart History: Half a Century of Polemics, Animadversions, and Illuminations : A William F. Buckley, Jr., Omnibus* (New York, Encounter Books, 2010), 166.

property rights, then the more actions governments took, the more private property rights they would violate.<sup>254</sup> From this position, Buckley sought to prove that it was liberalism that was in defiance with Catholic teaching, citing that since God-given property rights constituted the ‘metaphysical limitations of government action’, there existed a logical connection between property rights and limited government.<sup>255</sup> Using *Quadragesimo Anno*, Buckley argued that Catholic liberals through their support of New Deal which promoted the increasing expansion of the state, were in direct defiance of papal teaching, given the papal denunciation of government centralization; in which it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish. So too, was it an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies.<sup>256</sup> Firing on all cylinders, Buckley levelled the charge that given our own internal ‘divine spark’ the welfare state was an infringement on one’s own individual freedom. On the grounds that Catholicism demanded that the individual conscience remain free to make moral choices, Buckley opposed the welfare state as a form of ‘compulsory virtue’ which robbed individuals of their right to freely chose charitable giving.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, it was not Buckley with his lambasting of the welfare state that was immoral. Rather, on the contrary, those Catholics who supported the New Deal policies were delusional, equating forced acts of charity with a higher sense of morality.

Even in his assailing of mainstream Catholic politic thought, Buckley was wise enough to not reject it outright and risk further alienating Catholics from the conservative cause. Instead, he merely challenged the liberal interpretations of Catholic teaching, suggesting that one could interpret multiple differing means from the same text, as opposed to the singular tunnel vision view. Buckley sought to have his opinions placed within the dominant, mainstream Catholic discourse, citing the many overlaps between his view on private property and that of the popes. Buckley’s ability to present what were considered un-Catholic economics in Catholic terms was one manifestation of his greatest strength. Buckley’s ability to synthesize competing ideas and make the difference appear insignificant compared to surface similarities. Buckley could effectively locate and exploit the overlap and

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<sup>254</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralizing the Right*, 46.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* 47

<sup>256</sup> Buckley and Bridges, *Athwart History*, 166.

<sup>257</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralizing the Right*, 50.

points of commonality, however superficial, between multifarious and often-contradictory currents of thought (including anti-statism and Catholicism) and thus bring persons of many views, temperaments, and persuasions into his movement.<sup>258</sup> This was to be an invaluable skill for Buckley, especially when it later came time to bring the fractured factions of conservatism together. But perhaps, even more importantly, in challenging the liberal monopoly of Catholic thought, Buckley had created a previously unthinkable pathway for Catholics to join the right. Furthermore, many regarded Buckley to be the arch-spokesman for Catholic conservatism.<sup>259</sup> With conservative Catholics considering Buckley to be the best they have to offer in this country,<sup>260</sup> Buckley was the perfect spokesman to offer not only conservatism to Catholics but also Catholicism to conservatives. It could be argued that prominent conservative figures such as Russell Kirk, who did not convert to Catholicism until 1964,<sup>261</sup> would not have done so if Buckley had not created a space within the Catholic mainstream for anti-statist thinking.<sup>262</sup>

#### 4.2 National Review and the Revival of Conservatism

While *God and Man at Yale* developed a name and following for Buckley and his rather different approach to conservatism, it was not until he founded *National Review* in 1955 that he began to have a real impact on the conservative movement. The importance and impact that *National Review* would have not only on the conservative movement but also on America itself, cannot be overstated. Prior to *National Review*, the direction in which conservative movement was headed, was one of significant regression and potentially even leading to extinction. The general consensus towards the conservative movement was summed up by Lionel Trilling's, who at the time felt that conservatism expressed itself only in 'irritable mental gestures.'<sup>263</sup> William F. Buckley Jr. began the most far-reaching adventure of his life- the creation of a conservative journal that would challenge the liberal zeitgeist and, more than any other institution, mould a national movement that would dominate American politics in the 1980s and beyond. With *National Review*, Buckley took an elitist approach to the magazine being marketed towards conservative intellectuals rather

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>260</sup> "Week by week," *Commonweal*, December 16, 1960, 304, <http://www.unz.com/Pub/Commonweal-1960dec16/> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>261</sup> Ross Douthat, "The Long Sneer," *The Atlantic*, July 10, 2007, <https://www.theatlantic.com/personal/archive/2007/07/the-long-sneer/54545/> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>262</sup> Hyrum Smith Lewis, *Sacralising the Right*, 65.

<sup>263</sup> Lee Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr: The Maker of a Movement*, (Delaware, ISI Books, 2010), 54.

than the grassroots populace with the aim of creating a conservative movement culture separate from political party or single cause, that could ground conservative politics in a loosely defined set of ideals based on traditional religious beliefs, anti-communism, anti-statism, and freewheeling capitalism. Under Buckley's leadership, the *National Review* aimed to create conversations and debates among conservatives and to entice young readers in search of lively political discourse, rather than to lay down any narrow orthodoxy. The *National Review* was more than a magazine; it was an institutional beachhead on which conservative political activists could sort out their worldviews and organize their campaigns to take on what they perceived as an establishmentarian liberal consensus.<sup>264</sup> This forthcoming chapter will investigate the impact that Buckley's conservative periodical had on shaping the future direction of the conservative movement. Detailing how Buckley used it to merge the various differing strands of conservatism together and create a homogenous organisation, that would no longer be engaged in an internal strife. Furthermore, I will also examine how Buckley used *National Review* and the leading conservative thinkers who wrote for it, to purge out any dissenting voice or figure that he believed could be potentially detrimental to conservatism.

The genesis of *National Review* had come from the failure of Buckley and his brother-in-law, Brent Bozell's book, *McCarthy and his enemies*, which had been released the year prior. The book was a defence both of Senator McCarthy and McCarthyism in which the pair's aim was to set down the facts upon which a responsible judgement could be made of the issues McCarthy raised, and rode, through the years that made him prominent.<sup>265</sup> Due to the radical approach adopted by the pair, the book read like a legal brief.<sup>266</sup> They wrote not as reporters who had followed the blow-by-blow contests, but rather as 'historians' who have studied the 'historical' documents.<sup>267</sup> Unfortunately them, as luck would have it, the book was released just as public support for McCarthy was beginning to turn negative. To compound their woes, on the same month that the book was released CBS began broadcasting a series of devastating investigative reports about McCarthy by Edward R. Murrow on Murrow's TV programme *See It Now*.<sup>268</sup> Whilst the book did not have

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<sup>264</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 36.

<sup>265</sup> William F. Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and His Enemies: The Record and Its Meaning* (Washington D.C. Regnery Co., 1954), xii.

<sup>266</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 99.

<sup>267</sup> William S. White, "What the McCarthy Method Seeks to Establish," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1954, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/07/16/specials/buckley-enemies.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

<sup>268</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 101.

commercial success and due to their defence of McCarthy at time when McCarthy's support was going the opposite direction, it failed to get the same national mainstream attention that *God and Man at Yale* had garnered. It did, however cement Buckley's reputation as an enfant terrible of the right. He was not someone who shirked difficult questions, nor was he reluctant to take hard-edged positions, or offend the Establishment.<sup>269</sup> Witnessing the relentless tirade that McCarthy was forced to endure by the liberal mainstream press, Buckley sought to respond by starting a conservative magazine. He knew that during the New Deal, the *Nation* and the *New Republic* played important roles in developing and defining liberalism. Conservatives needed the same thing, but both *American Mercury* and the *Freeman* were too troubled to be useful.<sup>270</sup>

At first, Buckley attempted to buy several pre-existing conservative outlets, however when that failed, he was forced to look elsewhere. Buckley found an ideal partner to achieve this vision in the form of Willi Schlamm, the man whom Buckley had hired to edit *McCarthy and His Enemies*, also wanted to start a conservative magazine. Schlamm, then fifty, had experience. He had edited left-wing magazines in Austria and Czechoslovakia before fleeing to the United States to escape Hitler's invading armies. He had written for the *New Leader*, worked for Henry Luce at *Time* and was then writing a column for the *Freeman*.<sup>271</sup> Although Schlamm, had a wealth of experience in the print industry, he was lacking in material wealth to accomplish such a venture. Luckily for Schlamm, Buckley hailed from a family that possessed considerable wealth. Once again, the contradictions that seemed to follow Buckley at every turn, reappeared, this time with regards to his support of laissez-faire economics and the need to raise capital to start up the magazine. His father, whom instilled rigid economic, religious and political principles in Buckley Junior, provided the first \$100,000, however even such a large sum was not sufficient. They estimated that the magazine would need \$550,000 to sustain itself until it went into the black.<sup>272</sup> To raise such a sum, Buckley would have to begrudgingly go begging to supporters. Fortunately, aside from his disdain, this was a task in which Buckley excelled. However, his charm and wit could only take the cause so far and even with support of the Vice President of General Electric, Lemuel

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 107.

R. Boulware, who personally contributed to the founding,<sup>273</sup> Buckley was dismayed as he was \$100,000 short.<sup>274</sup> He considered postponing the venture further, but Willi Schlamm urged proceeding anyway, telling Buckley “that once the magazine acquired twenty-five thousand readers, its subscribers would not let it fail- a prediction that turned out to be correct.”<sup>275</sup> On the cusp of realising his ambition of owning a conservative periodical to challenge the liberal orthodoxy, Buckley now turned his focus away from the loathsome duties of seeking finance and towards the selection of the editors and writers who would represent *National Review*.

Such a task was no small matter, the magazine would rise or fall on the prominence and talent of the people it published, and the trajectory of the new conservatism would be determined by the people Buckley selected.<sup>276</sup> The first figure Buckley set his sights on was the notorious Whittaker Chambers. Chambers was something of a maverick, having formerly been a communist, before famously turning anti-communist, providing the damning testimony in the Alger-Hiss case. More importantly, from Buckley’s perspective, Chambers was viewed as an intellectual leader of the conservative movement after the publication of his autobiography *Witness*, in which he argued that Liberalism was a form of watered down communism. It had a significant impact on conservatism, as noted in a column by Pulitzer-prize winning conservative journalist, George Will, *Witness* became a canonical text of conservatism.<sup>277</sup> Initially, Chambers was willing to write for *National Review* before then abruptly having a change of heart, with Buckley and Schlamm trying in vain but to no avail to get Chambers back on board. Chambers was beginning to become alarmed with the direction the conservatism was heading. To the extent that a modern American conservative- and a Republican, for that matter, had to celebrate capitalism, Chambers was only grudgingly a modern conservative. ‘I am a man of the Right,’ Chambers wrote in a letter to Schlamm, ‘because I mean to uphold capitalism in its American version. But I claim that capitalism is not, and by its very nature cannot conceivably be, conservative.’ This was no

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<sup>273</sup> James Hoopes, *Corporate Dreams: Big Business in American Democracy from the Great Depression to the Great Recession* (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2011), 82.

<sup>274</sup> Bogus, William F. Buckley, 107.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> George Will, “Opinion | Conservatism Is Soiled by Scowling Primitives,” *The Washington Post*, May 31, 2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/conservatism-is-soiled-by-scowling-primitives/2017/05/31/786317a8-4559-11e7-a196-a1bb629f64cb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/conservatism-is-soiled-by-scowling-primitives/2017/05/31/786317a8-4559-11e7-a196-a1bb629f64cb_story.html) (accessed August 2, 2017).

small dilemma, Chambers was discouraged by the many confusions of modern conservatism, not just by the tension between conservatism and capitalism. He perceived a sense of unreality and pessimism on the Right, running off into all manner of crackpotism.<sup>278</sup> Chambers was acutely aware that both he and Buckley were at two different ends of the conservative spectrum, he realized that Buckley and his co-editors were not traditional conservatives but radicals who wanted to repeal the New Deal. For better or worse, the New Deal had been widely accepted and was now woven into the national fabric. Chambers believed that a responsible conservative would not now seek to rip the fabric apart.<sup>279</sup> Try as they might, they failed to get Chambers to be part of the fledgeling magazine. It was not until two years after its inception, that he was finally willing to write, perhaps because he did not find *National Review* as extreme as he feared.<sup>280</sup> However, his working association with the magazine was brief, resigning permanently less than two years after he had first started writing.

Yet in that short time span, Chambers acted as Buckley's hired gun, most famously discrediting Ayn Rand in the December 1957 edition of *National Review*. At that time within libertarian circles, Rand had amassed a considerable degree of support and influence following the publication of her Objectivist best seller *Atlas Shrugged*. Buckley and Rand had somewhat of a tumultuous relationship, with Rand informing Buckley on their first encounter that he was 'too intelligent to believe in God.'<sup>281</sup> In a sense, they were competing against each other, as they both had a crossover following within young conservatives, due to their promotion of individualism, although much to Buckley's chagrin, Rand championed atheism. Buckley saw Rand as a threat to his conservative vision, later explaining her exclusion from his conservative movement because of her desiccated philosophy's conclusive incompatibility with the conservative's emphasis on transcendence, intellectual and moral.<sup>282</sup> Even if he had wished to include her in his fledgling movement, she would have refused to after Chamber's scathing review, in which he declared that the book was preposterous and that 'out of a lifetime of reading, I can recall no other book in which a tone

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<sup>278</sup> Michael Kimmage, *The Conservative Turn*, 241.

<sup>279</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 109.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> John B Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.*, 88.

<sup>282</sup> William F. Buckley, *American Conservative Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2011), xxi.

of overriding arrogance was so implacably sustained.<sup>283</sup> Buckley shared Chambers sentiments, later recalling that he flogged himself to get through *Atlas Shrugged*.<sup>284</sup> Although Chambers duration at *National Review* was brief, Buckley used him to full effect, by writing Rand out of the conservative movement.<sup>285</sup> Thus ensuring that it was Buckley's religious entwined individualism, not Rand's atheist based, adopted by conservatism.

William Buckley's uncanny ability to merge two conflicting ideas, as he had done so previously with his religious and political beliefs, was further displayed in his recruitment of Russell Kirk to *National Review*. Kirk was another formidable intellectual force in the conservative movement, regarded as being the intellectual heir to the founder of the conservative ideology, Edmund Burke.<sup>286</sup> Kirk had amassed a conservative following, after the publication of his doctoral dissertation *The Conservative Mind*, in which he traced the development of conservative thought in the Anglo-American tradition, but more importantly from Buckley's standpoint, *The Conservative Mind* successfully launched an intellectual challenge to post-war liberalism.<sup>287</sup> In outlining the objectives of *National Review*, Buckley wrote that it was 'to revitalize the conservative position' and 'influence the opinion-makers' of the nation. Buckley's use of the word conservative rather than individualist, the term he preferred in *God and Man at Yale*, underlines the profound impact of Russell Kirks *The Conservative Mind*. Kirk's book gave the conservative movement its name and Buckley a cause to which he could rally conservatives of many different colours.<sup>288</sup> However, the capture of Kirk was made more complicated than needed, by a case of misadventure on Buckley's part. Four months before *National Review* published its first issue, Buckley reviewed a new book by Russell Kirk titled *Academic Freedom* for the *Freeman* magazine. If Buckley wanted to develop a professional relationship with Kirk, this was an assignment Buckley should have declined: Kirk favoured academic freedom, and as we know from *God and Man at Yale*, Buckley did not. At least, Buckley should have written a respectful review.

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<sup>283</sup> Whittaker Chambers, "Big Sister is Watching You," *National Review*, December 28, 1957, 594-596

<sup>284</sup> "Charlie Rose – An Hour with William F. Buckley Jr.," Charlie Rose, filmed on June 9, 2004, <https://charlierose.com/videos/18124> (accessed March 12, 2017).

<sup>285</sup> Peter Wehner, "Objectively, Ayn Rand Was a Nut," *National Review*, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/190110/objectively-ayn-rand-was-nut-peter-wehner> (accessed August 3, 2017).

<sup>286</sup> David Brooks "Opinion | The Conservative Mind." *The New York Times*, September 24, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/opinion/brooks-the-conservative-mind.html> (accessed August 2, 2017).

<sup>287</sup> Christopher Caldwell, "'Russell Kirk: American Conservative,' by Bradley J. Birzer," *The New York Times*, January 22, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/24/books/review/russell-kirk-american-conservative-by-bradley-j-birzer.html> (accessed July 20, 2017).

<sup>288</sup> Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr.*, 64.

But in fact, Buckley's review was blistering.<sup>289</sup> Even more, damning for Buckley, was the fact that in the very same issue of the *Freeman*, there was an attack on Russell Kirk by Frank Meyer, a libertarian whom Buckley had also recruited for *National Review*. Meyer's piece was an attack on Burkeans, who were then being called the 'new conservatives.' Meyer identified Kirk as the most significant member of that group and targeting him especially.<sup>290</sup> From an outside perspective, it appeared that the two articles attacking Kirk were part of a coordinated assault. Buckley's calamity was further compounded when someone sent copies of the *Freeman* issue containing both pieces to a group who were considering funding a new journal to be edited by Kirk.<sup>291</sup> It was not Buckley's intention to directly attack Kirk and if he was guilty of anything it was of poor timing. Fortunately for Buckley, Kirk was not convinced that Buckley was otherwise a conspirator in an anti-Kirk plot.<sup>292</sup> Buckley was able to persuade Kirk to write for *National Review*, but only after Buckley made a personal visit to Kirk's home to convince him.

Although Kirk agreed to be a regular contributor for *National Review*, it came with a slight catch as he refused to be listed on the magazine's masthead.<sup>293</sup> Try as he might, Buckley could not convince Kirk to do so, with Kirk citing the same figures he believed to be behind the prior anti-Kirk plot as the reason for his refusal. 'Though I may manage to endure appearing between the same covers with Chodorov and Meyer, I won't be cheek by jowl with them on the masthead.'<sup>294</sup> While he may have been unsuccessful in getting both Kirk and Chambers to be editors of the fledgling journal, Buckley's coup of getting Kirk to write for the magazine was quite significant. Within the spectrum of conservatism, Buckley and Kirk were located at two completely opposite ends. As he had done countless times before, Buckley was able to bring the two contradictory viewpoints together and use it to his advantage, a recurring theme in Buckley's life. If Kirk had not joined the magazine, he would likely have been an opponent. In many ways, he would have been a formidable adversary.

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<sup>289</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 109.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> Letter from Russell Kirk to William F. Buckley, September 1, 1955, <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/mssa:ms.0576/PDF>

<sup>293</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 110.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

He was erudite, thoughtful, and an excellent writer, he moved readers. His regular column for *National Review* probably generated more letters than any other. By bringing Kirk within the *National Review* family, Buckley turned a potential adversary into an ally.<sup>295</sup>

By attaining the services of Kirk, *National Review* was providing a forum for not just one strain of conservatism but for all its iterations, with the Buckley's end goal being the reconciliation and consolidation of the conservative movement. Both men saw conservatism in two completely different lights, with the Burkean Kirk believing that Buckley's individualism was a social atomism, whereas for him at the core of conservatism was a community of spirit.<sup>296</sup> Buckley on the other hand, believed the reverse. He felt that society depended on the individual. Kirk's views on the symbiotic relationship between need for the individual to be supported by the community was outlined *The Conservative Mind*; 'Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to all which society, with all its combinations and skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things.'<sup>297</sup> It was from this standpoint, that the pair had two diverging views on the relationship between capitalism and conservatism. Buckley as a libertarian, championed the capitalist cause, seeing it as unquestionably intertwined with conservative values, declaring that 'it is a part of the conservative intuition that economic freedom is the most precious temporal freedom, for the reason that it alone gives each one of us, in our comings and goings in our complex society, sovereignty.'<sup>298</sup> Kirk viewed such a standpoint with contempt, writing that 'The old laissez-faire, was founded upon a misapprehension of human nature, an exaltation of individuality to the condition of a political dogma, which destroyed the spirit of community.'<sup>299</sup> Instead Kirk proposed a new style of laissez-faire in which the community would be the central root, and would commence not with the abstract economic man or citizen, but instead recognize the basic social unit the group: the family, the local community, the trade union, the church, the college, the profession. It would seek diversity of culture, plurality of association, and division of responsibility.<sup>300</sup> Kirk's economic stance

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>296</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology* (University of Missouri Press, 2004), 140.

<sup>297</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Elliot* (Washington D.C., Gateway Editions, 2001), 54.

<sup>298</sup> William F. Buckley, *Up From Liberalism*, 207.

<sup>299</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 115.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid, 116.

was more in line with Taft who rejected a pure laissez-fair approach and advocated for government regulation to prevent monopolies, unfair competition and other injustices that may result from a completely free market.<sup>301</sup> One area in which they could find common ground was the issue of religion. Religion was an integral part of each of their respective political philosophy's. Buckley believed that one could not be both a conservative and an atheist, writing in the preface of *God and Man at Yale* 'that the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world.'<sup>302</sup> Like Buckley, Kirk had come to see Christianity as part of the bedrock of Western civilization, and thus integral to conservatism. The first canon of conservative thought, he declared, was a belief in 'a transcendent order, or a body of natural law. Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems.'<sup>303</sup>

The fact that the only true common ground that Buckley and Kirk shared on conservatism was religion and they still agreed to work together in shaping the direction of conservatism, highlights the importance of both *National Review* and William F. Buckley. At the time, the conservative movement was in disarray, widely ridiculed by the majority of society and as noted by Buckley who wrote in *Up From Liberalism* 'there is no commonly-acknowledged conservative position today.'<sup>304</sup> While Buckley had developed a notoriety from his controversial books, Kirk was listed in *Time* as one of America's leading intellectuals with *Newsweek* regarding him as one of the foremost intellectual spokesmen for the conservative position.<sup>305</sup> Yet, even though it seemed that Kirk was in pole position to control the direction in which conservatism was headed, he ceded it to Buckley. Kirk was acutely aware that by not being part of *National Review's* constellation, he ran the risk of having others outshine him, as well as the additional benefit of the increasing popularity of the magazine. As *National Review's* circulation grew, the reputation of regular contributors, including Kirk, grew too.<sup>306</sup> For Buckley, the benefit of having Kirk were even greater, with Kirk regarded as being the premier conservative intellect, having him write for *National Review* gave it an increased standing, but even more importantly Kirk's regular column, *From the Academy*, was to be principally about educational policy, a subject near to Kirk's heart

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale: The Superstitions Of "academic Freedom* (Washington D.C., Gateway Editions, 1986), xviii.

<sup>303</sup> Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, 8.

<sup>304</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 122.

<sup>305</sup> Wesley McDonald, *Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology*, 2.

<sup>306</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 123.

but not a topic that would decide the future of conservatism.<sup>307</sup> Intentionally or not, Buckley in his recruitment of Kirk, displayed a textbook example of Machiavellianism, with Kirk working for *National Review*, he ensured that the greatest conservative mind worked for him and not against him. In doing so, he prevented Kirk's services from being obtained by the self-branded new conservatives who wished to promote the spread of Burkean conservatism, in contrast to Buckley's more libertarian-leaning version. Before his competition could develop any momentum, Buckley had taken the wind out of their sails and ensured that it would be him and not they in control of the future direction of conservatism. Buckley was also wise enough to realise that he alone could not topple both the liberal ascendancy and the other competing conservative figures. Displaying his leadership capabilities with a divide and conquer approach, Buckley where possible sought to bolster his ranks, while his competitors acted as individuals.

It could be argued that the conservative movement, as we know it today, was conceived on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 1955, one week before William F. Buckley Jr. turned thirty, as it was on this day that *National Review* released its first issue. Buckley wrote in a memorandum to his investors, that *National Review* 'was a formative journal that would change the nation's intellectual and political climate just as the *Nation* and the *New Republic* helped usher in the New Deal Revolution.'<sup>308</sup> In the premiere issue, Buckley and his editors laid out the objective and principles of *National Review*; The editors declared themselves to be irrevocably at war with 'satanic' communism- victory, not accommodation, must be the goal. They were unapologetically libertarian in the battle against the growth of government. They announced themselves to be conservative in the struggle between 'the Social Engineers,' who try to adjust mankind to scientific utopias, and 'the disciples of Truth', who defend the organic moral order.<sup>309</sup> The final sentence of the opening paragraph of the Mission Statement would forever be enshrined in the conservative movement, with Buckley infamously declaring that *National Review* 'stands athwart history yelling stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so or to have much patience with those who so urge it.'<sup>310</sup> Buckley was signalling to his readership, that *National Review* was to be more than just a

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>308</sup> Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr.*, 65.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> William F. Buckley, "Our Mission Statement," *National Review*, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/223549/our-mission-statement-william-f-buckley-jr> (accessed August 3, 2017).

magazine. It was going to be the driving force in the ideological battle for the future of America. This a war was not only against liberalism, it was also against other conservatives, with Buckley seeking to appropriate the term. Conservatives would no longer include people who sought to conserve and improve upon the then-existing American model.<sup>311</sup> Instead, Buckley declared that ‘conservatives in this country- at least those who have not made their peace with the New Deal, and there is a serious question whether there are others- are non-licensed nonconformists.’<sup>312</sup> Buckley was attempting to write his version of conservatism into history and the more centrist versions, which would have compromised of Robert Taft had he been alive, out of history. The magazine was slated by its liberal peers, which just like before with *God and Man at Yale*, the criticism only served to increase its popularity rather than diminish it. No one expected liberals to be objective critics, and hard-core conservatives relished getting under liberal skins. ‘Besides, if *National Review* was so maladroit and tedious, why bother writing-in each case, at some length about it?’<sup>313</sup>

#### 4.3 Conclusion

Within the opening issue of *National Review*, the foundations of modern conservatism were laid. At the time, conservatism was in a great deal of disarray, with people divided into two camps, Burkean traditional conservatives or the more radical, libertarian wing. Presently, conservatism is a mixture of three groupings, libertarians, neoconservatives and social conservatives, with the latter two not existing before *National Review* made its mark.<sup>314</sup> The genesis of these three groups and with them the future coalition of the modern conservative movement can be found in the statement of principles in the first issue. The first principle began: ‘It is the job of centralized government (in peacetime) to protect its citizen’s lives, liberty and property All other activities of government tend to diminish freedom and hamper progress.’<sup>315</sup> This is a classic statement of libertarian doctrine, which holds that government should be limited to three functions: protecting citizens against violence or fraud, providing a justice system to resolve disputes, and protecting the nation against foreign invasion. Another one of the *National Review* principles stated: ‘We consider coexistence with communism neither desirable nor possible,

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<sup>311</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 140.

<sup>312</sup> “Our Mission Statement.”

<sup>313</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 145.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*, 140.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, 141.

nor honourable, we find ourselves irrevocably at war with communism—and shall oppose any substitute for victory.’<sup>316</sup> This reflects the neoconservative view that accommodations with ruthless adversaries provide false security. There is ultimately only victory or defeat. Social conservatives can find a key sentiment of their philosophy in the principle warning of the ‘cultural menace’ from ‘intellectual cliques which, in education as well as the arts are out to impose upon the nation their modish fads and fallacies.’<sup>317</sup> The history of the conservative movement after 1955, is the history of individuals associated with the magazine William F. Buckley Jr. founded, and as noted by conservative historian George Nash, if *National Review* had not been founded, ‘there would probably have been no cohesive intellectual force on the Right in the 1960s and 1970s.’<sup>318</sup> The publication of *National Review* is the most important rupture in conservative history, one in which was missed at the time by Liberals and Buckley’s conservative adversary, whom deemed its proposals to be unconservative. They had failed to realise that Buckley was instead redefining the movement, creating modern-day conservatism as we know it. Liberals could no longer decry conservatism as being the ideology of kooks and quacks but instead, their future critiques would have to contain some intellectual substance and in doing so, would have to enter a domain where Buckley excelled.

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr.*, 67.

## Chapter 5: Solidifying the Conservative Brand

With the establishment of *National Review*, Buckley created a platform upon which he could launch his conservative vision, this chapter seek to answer the question, the extent at which William F. Buckley is responsible for the modern conservative movement. Having hampered the capabilities of his intellectual competitor's by recruiting the finest conservative minds to work both with and for him, Buckley now turned his attention to the grassroots. Whilst the John Birch Society had been extremely successful in galvanising conservative support, Buckley was beginning to feel that the organisation and its figurehead, Robert Welch, had overstayed their welcome, now doing more harm, than good. Due to the weak state conservatism was in, the conspiratorial laden rhetoric of the John Birch society had gone unchecked and now this rhetoric was not only damaging the society itself, but it also threatened to bring the conservative movement down with it. However, as the old adage goes Buckley had to be careful of biting the hand that feeds, as *National Review*, itself, had received funds from the successful candy man.<sup>319</sup> The predicament that Buckley found himself in was further compounded by the fact, that energetic and conservative committed Birchers, were also readers of conservative publications. Something that had not gone unnoticed by the prominent figures at *National Review*, such as publisher, William Rusher who urged Buckley to publicly dissociate *National Review* from Welch. He, however, was also mindful of the fact that great bulk of its readership, support, was derived from the 'organized Right, and large segments of that Right are more simplistic than we are, or than we can perhaps in time bring them to be, and also far more closely tied to the John Birch Society than we are or, if the truth were known, than they would probably at this moment themselves prefer to be.'<sup>320</sup> Any outright attack on the Birch Society would be a fatal mistake, as it would alienate *National Review's* most fervent supporters. This chapter will examine how William F. Buckley was able to remove the extremist far-right fringes from the conservative movement, creating an ideological platform that was far more palatable to the general population, which was the final stepping stone in the transition of the conservatism from the fringes of American politics into mainstream discourse.

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<sup>319</sup> David Farber, *The Rise and Fall*, 55.

<sup>320</sup> John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1997), 103.

## 5.1 Pruning the conservative garden

Buckley's disdain for the John Birch Society was not motivated solely on the altruistic basis of the future health of the conservative movement. Even though he had previously stated that '*National Review* was not founded to make practical politics. Our job is to think, and write.'<sup>321</sup> Buckley decided to become involved in 'practical politics' on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1960, when a hundred conservative students, descended upon Buckley's home and together they founded of Young Americans for Freedom.<sup>322</sup> The group's manifesto had Buckley's fingerprint all over it and would later become known as the Sharon Statement, an overt nod to the grounds of its inception, Buckley's family estate located in Sharon, Connecticut. The manifesto proclaimed that 'in this time of moral and political crises, it is the responsibility of the youth of America to affirm certain eternal truths.'<sup>323</sup> YAF further reflected the rhetoric espoused by Buckley and *National Review* in its affirmation of the importance of limited government, the efficacy of the free market, and the need to seek victory over rather than coexistence with Communism' - the very issues Buckley had made the focus of *National Review*.<sup>324</sup> Unlike Buckley's previous public ventures, YAF was the first time in which he was not the enfant terrible, as such a position was occupied by Welch and his Birchers. While both groups, shared similar visions in that they both wanted to counter the supposed ever expanding subversive communism threat, there were vast differences in how each group planned to tackle the said threat. Buckley was a patrician and a conservative; the John Birchers were the advance guard of the New Right populism. The *National Review* crowd, like their proteges in Young Americans for freedom, sought to reform the American body politic by cutting away the cancer of statism. But their emphasis was more on reform than on structural change. The Birchers, on the other hand, seemed to argue that the entire structure of the governing system was rotten to the core and needed a radical overhaul.<sup>325</sup> The less extreme rhetoric used by YAF made its proposals more palatable to those outside of conservative circles, who had been left shocked by the deranged conspiratorial nature of the Birchers. Within conservatism, through the creation of the more moderate YAF, Buckley was

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<sup>321</sup> National Review and the 1960 Elections, National Review, 22 October 1960, 234.

<sup>322</sup> "History - Young America's Foundation," Young Americans for Freedom, Accessed August 3, 2017. <http://www.yaf.org/about/history/>.

<sup>323</sup> "The Sharon Statement: A Timeless Declaration of Conservative Principles - Young America's Foundation" Young Americans for Freedom, Accessed August 3, 2017. <http://www.yaf.org/news/the-sharon-statement/>.

<sup>324</sup> Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr.*, 75.

<sup>325</sup> Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 103.

discreetly creating an Us vs Them scenario, further pushing the polarising far-right elements of conservatism to the fringes of the movement.

With the establishment of YAF, Buckley was attempting to wean conservatives off the far right, however, to completely erode the power of John Birch society, Buckley would have to navigate through more treacherous water. To directly disavow or criticize the Society by *National Review* would be to cause significant financial damage to the fledgeling journal as many of its subscribers identified as Birchers. Even more problematic for Buckley, it would provide ample ammunition for liberals, with any attack on the Birch Society by another conservative group, likely be big news.<sup>326</sup> Due to the above reasons, Buckley initially made very little explicit effort to topple the John Birch Society, instead offering a place for all conservatives, both moderate and radical, to coexist and together help grow the conservative movement. This attempt last until Buckley's hand was forced following the 1964 Presidential election, in which Barry Goldwater claimed the Republican ticket. Goldwater's success was largely a result of the platform created by grassroots movement, in which both Buckley's and Welch's organisations were integral components. While both organisations played a vital role in Goldwater's rise, YAF had a greater initial impact and played a greater role in shaping conservatism after Goldwater's electoral capitulation. It could be argued that without YAF, Goldwater would not have become the 1964 Republican Presidential candidate, due to his initial refusal to entertain the idea of being a candidate. However, the YAF members played a crucial role in some of the activities of the national draft Goldwater committee and after witnessing its success although Goldwater did not initially support the effort to draft him for the GOP nomination, he did little to stand in the way of the organisers.<sup>327</sup> The energy and exuberance of these young committed conservatives helped to make Barry Goldwater a national political figure and then the Republican nominee for President in 1964.<sup>328</sup> Their activities on behalf of the senator, which involved attending campaign rallies, organizing crowds at airports when Goldwater was due to arrive, and the door-to-door grunt work of canvassing, were extremely important for the success of the Goldwater campaign.<sup>329</sup> Once Goldwater had attained the Republican ticket, Goldwater turned away from the YAF which had helped him achieve his remarkable victory

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>327</sup> Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 74.

<sup>328</sup> Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (University of California Press, 1999), 86.

<sup>329</sup> Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 75.

and began to solicit the support of the more extreme elements of the conservative movement, much to his detriment.

Buckley, who had long been a political admirer of Goldwater, earnestly attempted to defend the rapidly increasing extremist allegations that were being levelled against Goldwater. After liberal Republican, Jacob Javits, launched a scathing attack on Goldwater for his promotion of the radical right, it was Buckley who rushed to Goldwater's defence writing in *National Review* that; 'The truth is this, that Senator Goldwater has never been a member of the [Birch] Society, that he scarcely knows its leader Mr Welch, that he has consistently repudiated Mr Welch's spectacular theses, that Mr Welch has no hold on him whatever, and that on several occasions he has called upon Mr Welch to resign his leadership as the result of his manifest disqualifications as a political analyst.'<sup>330</sup> In his repudiation of Goldwater, Buckley was forced to overly differentiate between the mainstream and extreme elements of conservatism, but defending Goldwater helped to minimise any negative repercussions from the radical right. However, as the campaign progressed, it became harder and harder for Buckley to keep on defending Goldwater, whose speeches were increasingly pandering to the extremist fringes of the conservative movement. Controversy over Goldwater's ties to extremism came to a head after the Republican National Convention in July 1964, where, in his speech accepting the party's nomination, Goldwater issued a ringing defence of what he saw as the proper sorts of extremism. 'I would remind you that extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice!' Goldwater famously declared. 'And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!'<sup>331</sup> In the weeks after the convention, as he increasingly came under fire from Democrats and liberal Republicans who had interpreted his words as an endorsement of the Birch Society and its Americanist allies. Goldwater's controversial acceptance speech, practically made it impossible for Buckley to denounce Goldwater's ties to the radical right. As a result, having already been forced to attack the John Birch Society during the election, Buckley sought to further vilify the society, seeing it as the last stumbling block in making conservatism the dominant ideology in America.

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<sup>330</sup> Laura Gifford, *The Right Side of the Sixties – Re-examining* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 94.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

Many in the Republican Party, primarily the moderates, had assumed that because Goldwater was conservatism personified, his landslide defeat also signalled the end of conservatism. Fortunately for the movement, Buckley had envisaged such an occurrence and had already put measures in place to prevent the decimation of the conservative movement. Towards the end of the campaign, Buckley had begun to realise that Goldwater was destined to lose and as the unofficial guardian of the movement sought to avert a crisis for the ideology as a whole.<sup>332</sup> He did so by delivering two campaign speeches which at the time seemed grossly out of place. The first speech was delivered at the annual convention of Young Americans for Freedom, in which the YAF leaders expected Buckley to deliver a motivational speech that would fire up their members. Instead, Buckley talked about Goldwater's impending defeat. As young men and women openly wept, Buckley explained that Goldwater's election would 'pre-suppose a sea change in American public opinion' but the tide was still going in the other liberal direction. The point of the campaign, he insisted, was 'not to gain victory on November 3<sup>rd</sup> but to win recruits for future Novembers.'<sup>333</sup> He then followed his speech up at another annual dinner, this time for the Conservative party, in which he barely mentioned Goldwater but devoted himself to discussing conservatism's future. He confessed his surprise that the movement, confronted as it was by the contrary tug of history had advanced as far as it had. But he said, 'there was a growing spirit of resistance to the fruits of liberalism.'<sup>334</sup> Both speeches were so shocking to those in attendance, that the transcripts were not published until after the election. Once the election results came in, Buckley's words were no longer seen as shocking but instead prophetic. Having laid the groundwork for his next offence, Buckley applied the final touches to his conservative vision. His assault on the far right was aided by the fact that in the wake of Goldwater's devastating electoral defeat in November 1964, *National Review* conservatives increasingly identified the presence of extremists in the conservative movement as a cause of Republican weakness.<sup>335</sup> Having previously been cautious about potentially creating a civil war amongst conservatives which would have helped the liberal cause, Buckley was now emboldened by Goldwater's result. He had come to realise that by

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<sup>332</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 54.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> Gifford, *The Right Side of the Sixties*, 94.

allowing the extreme elements of conservatism to exist unfettered would be detrimental to the movement's future growth.

From 1965 onwards, Buckley and *National Review* went on the offensive and began separating Welch, the John Birch Society, along with other far-right groups from the conservative movement. Soon after the appearance of a 1965 edition of *American Opinion* in which Welch and the society claimed that the United States was now 60% to 80% under Communist control, for example, Buckley published several syndicated columns in which he implied that the continued existence of the John Birch Society was a danger to conservatism.<sup>336</sup> These damning articles featured in the October issue of *National Review*, stating that although the founding principles of the organisation were a worthy cause, the organisation had now forgotten them and had transformed into something toxic, *National Review* editor Frank S. Meyer writing; 'However worthy the original motivations of those who have joined [the JBS], it is time for them to recognize that the John Birch Society is rapidly losing whatever it had in common with patriotism and conservatism- and to do it before their own minds become warped by adherence to its unrolling psychosis of conspiracy.'<sup>337</sup> Meyer's article was followed up by fellow editor, James Burnham, who delivered the fatal, discrediting blow for the John Birch Society, 'Responsible conservatives have long tried to believe that the JBS, though misguided, was going in the same direction, and therefore an ally, but unfortunately, under the years of brainwashing.. the Society as a collective body.. had become a suitable ally only for confusion and sterility.'<sup>338</sup> Buckley had patiently waited for years to discredit the Society, now having his time moment, he sounded its death knell. These articles were pivotal in transforming the landscape of conservatism, with Richard Nixon later remarking that 'Buckley's articles cost the Birchers their respectability with conservatives, I couldn't have accomplished that. Liberals couldn't either.'<sup>339</sup> Through the combination of the heavy negative exposure that the far right had experienced during the 1964 election and the October 1965 issue of *National Review* in which they were depicted as dangerous extremists, the majority of mainstream conservatives began to turn their back on the John Birch Society. Ironically, because of the

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>337</sup> Frank S. Meyer, "The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement," *National Review*, October 19, 1965, 914.

<sup>338</sup> James Burnham, "Principles and heresies: The Birch Malady," *National Review*, October 19, 1965, 919–20.

<sup>339</sup> Dan D. Nimmo and Chevelle Newsome, *Political Commentators in the United States in the 20th Century: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook* (Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 26.

departure of its moderate members, the John Birch Society was solely occupied by its minority extremists, “thus leaving only the actual extremists to make policy decisions for Americanist organizations.”<sup>340</sup> With his triumph over Robert Welch’s organisation, Buckley was now the top dog in American conservatism. He had created a conservative empire of which he was the de-facto leader, hell bent on suppressing any person or organisation that threatened to undermine his conservative vision. He had taken conservatism from the jaws of death and riddled it of all its unpleasant elements, creating a movement that would go forth in his vision and go on to completely transform both American society and politics.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Jawaharlal Nehru once famously quipped that “History is almost always written by the victors and conquerors and gives their view. Or, at any rate, the victor’s version is given prominence and holds the field.”<sup>341</sup> While one must be careful of generalising all of history with such an adage, such a quote does go a long way in explaining modern day conservatism and the impact that William F. Buckley Jr., had on the movement. Prior to the establishment of *National Review*, the future prospects of the conservative movement were quite grim. Robert Taft was dead, Joe McCarthy had been censured, the Democrats had once again retaken Congress and President Eisenhower was becoming increasingly liberal.<sup>342</sup> Conservatism was well and truly the laughing stock of American politics. While for the rest of America, the grip of the Red Scare loosened, conservatives were increasingly alienating themselves as they flocked to the conspiracy-laden *John Birch Society*. From a superficial perspective, it looked as if Barry Goldwater had been the catalyst that had galvanised the movement, taking it to the seemingly unprecedented level of Republican Presidential nominee. But appearances can be deceiving, Barry Goldwater was not some political maverick who had some great plan or vision for the conservative movement. Rather, he was a figure who was initially reluctant to the proposal of being President and it was only after the groundwork had been done by William F Buckley’s *Young Americans for Freedom*, that Goldwater came on board with the idea. Furthermore, once there, Goldwater put the interests of the movement behind his own interests, opting to run solely for his own

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<sup>340</sup> Gifford, *The Right Side of the Sixties*, 96.

<sup>341</sup> Martin Deming Lewis, *The British In India: Imperialism or Trusteeship* (Lexington, D.C. Heath and Company, 1965), 12.

<sup>342</sup> Lee Edwards, William F. Buckley Jr., 53.

personal interests.<sup>343</sup> It had seemed that following Goldwater's heavy and humiliating defeat, that this time there would be no survival. Yet, over fifty years later the ideology of conservatism is the number one ideology in America.<sup>344</sup>

The influence that Buckley had on American society is evidenced by the fact that since 1964, every single Republican President has been conservative. With William F. Buckley's influence being a pivotal factor on the conversion of conservative and Republican icon, Ronald Reagan from liberalism to conservatism. Whilst doing TV work for *General Electric*, Ronald Reagan began to read conservative periodicals, particularly *National Review*. Buckley's uncanny ability to fuse conflicting ideas together, facilitated Reagans conversion from New Deal liberal to conservatism,<sup>345</sup> as it "allowed Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and innumerable other politicians to embrace free-market capitalism, traditional morality, and anti-Communism simultaneously."<sup>346</sup> A direct line can be traced from Ronald Reagans election to the mind of William F. Buckley, as showcased by *National Review* columnist George Will whom wrote; "And before there was Ronald Reagan there was Barry Goldwater, and before there was Barry Goldwater there was *National Review*, and before there was *National Review*, there was Bill Buckley with a spark in his mind."<sup>347</sup> Before William F. Buckley came on the scene, the conservative movement was in an infinite loop. Each time the movement began to gain momentum, inching closer towards mainstream politics, it would then experience a cataclysmic event that would banish the movement back into the political doldrums. This is seen in the story of Taft, who laid the foundations for the conservative movement but failed three times in his attempts to get nominated as Republican Presidential candidate. Furthermore, any positive legacy he may have had, was tarnished by his successor Joe McCarthy who electrified committed conservatives into creating a grass-roots movement, but in doing so polarised everyone else, making conservatism unpalatable for the mainstream public. Barry Goldwater, did the seemingly unthinkable, by becoming the 1964 Republican candidate for President. However, his own personal success came at the expense of the conservative movement, with his heavy defeat being seen as an outright rejection of conservatism. All three of these men, are merely

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<sup>343</sup> Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right*, 78.

<sup>344</sup> Saad, "U.S. Conservatives."

<sup>345</sup> Bogus, *William F. Buckley*, 326.

<sup>346</sup> Edward M. Yager, *Ronald Reagan's Journey: Democrat to Republican* (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006),97.

<sup>347</sup> Nicole Hoplin and Ron Robinson, *Funding Fathers*, 57.

footnotes in the history of conservatism, as they all failed to cement their legacy and influence on the future of the movement.

It is because of the work and vision of William F. Buckley, that conservatism not only obtained a standing in American society to rival, liberalism but to go one step further, toppling liberalism's political ascendancy. Not only did Buckley help elevate conservatism to new heights, he made sure that it was his version of conservatism. When we look at modern-day conservatism and the rhetoric that is espoused by its leading present day figures, the language used has striking similarities to that used by Buckley. When Steve Bannon speaks of the need for capitalism to rest on a Judeo-Christian foundation,<sup>348</sup> it echoes the mantra espoused by a young William F. Buckley Jr., whom in *God and Man at Yale* chastised the university for failing to indoctrinate students in *laissez-faire* economics and Christianity. Even outside the Trump administration, one can clearly see Buckley's conservative vision in-action. Leading Republican Libertarian, Senator Rand Paul, describes himself as an "outspoken champion for constitutional liberties and fiscal responsibility" and a "fierce advocate against government overreach."<sup>349</sup> One could argue that Rand is guilty of political plagiarism, given the overlap with *National Review's* mission statement which declared that its first conviction was that "The growth of government must be fought relentlessly. Perhaps the most important and readily demonstrable lesson of history is that freedom goes hand in hand with a state of political decentralization."<sup>350</sup> Knowingly or unknowingly, those who wave the modern-conservative flag, are ensuring the solidification of the ideals of William F. Buckley Jr. Perhaps best summarised by Historian George H. Nash who wrote, "'The history of reflective conservatism in America after 1955 is the history of the individuals who collaborated in- or were discovered by- the magazine William F. Buckley Jr. founded."<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Caldwell, "What does Steve Bannon Want."

<sup>349</sup> "About Rand," Rand Paul, accessed August 3, 2017, <https://www.paul.senate.gov/about-rand/meet>.

<sup>350</sup> Buckley, "Mission Statement."

<sup>351</sup> Lee Edwards, *A Brief History*, 52.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The story of America is one that is saturated with painful ironies, seemingly never-ending contradictions and the constant opposition to some form of an ideology. This so-called land of the free, became so only after the original native inhabitants had everything stripped from them, even at one point being officially recognized by the American government as ‘resident foreign nations.’<sup>352</sup> Furthermore, the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln who emancipated the slaves in America, is now the party of Donald Trump, a man whom once tweeted that a statue of Confederate hero and Lincoln’s adversary during the civil war, Robert E Lee, was ‘beautiful’ and that it would be greatly ‘missed and never comparably replaced.’<sup>353</sup> It should come as no surprise then, that America’s most popular and dominant ideology, is one that is fraught with contradictions. It seems that almost every single aspect of modern conservatism has an element that is disputed by both those within and outside the ideology, from the various narratives on each of the supposed father-figures of the movement, who all supposedly acted alone to single handily transform conservatism into its current iteration. Even at the most basic level, there are conflicting views as to what conservatism actually is, a problem that is further exacerbated by the fact that many of the leading figures in the movement, espouse the idea that run in direct contradiction to each other.

It is only natural, for one to be slightly perplexed with the ascendant position within the societal framework of America, given the ambiguous nature of the ideology. However, it is this mercurial nature that allows conservatism to be so dominant. The respective fingerprints of Taft, McCarthy, Goldwater and Buckley can be seen on each of the strands of modern day conservatism. For example, of the four, Goldwater best encapsulates the ideals of libertarianism but also could be considered a social conservative, ignoring his later change of political heart.<sup>354</sup> It could also be argued that given his contempt of big government, that

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<sup>352</sup> Jane Burbank & Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2011), 263.

<sup>353</sup> Matthew Yglesias, “The huge problem with Trump comparing Robert E. Lee to George Washington,” updated August 17, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/8/16/16154738/lee-davis-washington-jefferson>.

<sup>354</sup> Llyod Grove, “Barry Goldwater’s Left Turn,” *The Washington Post*, July 28, 1994, C01,

Taft was also a libertarian, but both the beliefs of Taft and McCarthy, align more closely with social conservatism than libertarianism. Buckley is perhaps the biggest anomaly of the four, as his beliefs intersect with social conservatism, neo-conservatism and libertarianism. Thus, given the ideological overlap, it is no surprise, that all four have individually been accredited with the foundation of the modern conservative movement. However, it would be an inaccurate portrayal of modern conservatism, to give all the credit to one man. Whilst from a superficial level, it would appear that Buckley was the most instrumental in forming the movement, he would not have been able to do so if it had not been for the groundwork laid down by the three men that came before him.

In truth, the story of the transformation of the conservative movement has many allegorical parallels to that of the history of the American state. Both contain many glossed over contradictory elements that have played an important part in shaping what we have today. Depending on which political spectrum you fall under, the main figures in both the history of America and that of conservatism will differ. But perhaps more importantly, the story of both is one in which a small neglected force transformed itself into dominant super-power, from the results of not one single architect but rather a collective of successive individuals united by the same beliefs.

While it is important to note the intertwined nature of conservatism and the United States, it does not solve the primary objective of this thesis, answering the research question; How did the conservative movement transform itself from fringe ideology into its present-day ascendancy?

As this thesis has demonstrated, there is no single definitive answer to this question, aside from taking a reductive approach and simply declaring “multiple reasons.” Whilst during the initial post-war years, it is true that the ideology itself was in a dire state, it would be wrong to suggest that it was incapacitated, given the popularity of Senator Taft. Even at one of its lowest points, conservatism was able to achieve significant political victories such as the passing of conservative budget during the 80<sup>th</sup> congress, slashing \$2.8 billion from the federal budget. However, in the grand scheme of things, conservatism had done little to

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/may98/goldwater072894.htm>

(After later changing his stance on same-sex marriage, many conservatives argued that Goldwater had turned his back on the ideology.)

appeal to those who did not subscribe to the ideology, as evidenced by Taft's successive failings in trying to clinch the Republican Presidential nomination.

Conservatism's inability to attract a following from those outside of its small circle vehement supporters, continued under the stewardship of Senator McCarthy and Barry Goldwater. If anything, the negative connotations of conservatism were further cemented under their respective tenures. Under Taft, conservative supporters could point to his diligent work to disprove notions that the ideology was only home to 'extreme far-right crackpots.' However, during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, such previously fringe parts of the movement, took front and centre stage. It is quite difficult for an organisation to garner support from moderates on the fence, when the public figures of the conservative movement are embarrassing themselves on live television in the Senate, raving about communist subversion or Goldwater overtly suggesting the use of atomic weapons in the Vietnam War.<sup>355</sup>

It is true, that under Taft, McCarthy and Goldwater, that conservatism was able to increase in popularity. However, it did so at considerable expense, as for every forward advancement it made, it seemed to alienate more people from the movement. This is largely because, for these three men, conservatism came second and their political careers came first. For a politician, there is very little solace to be found if you don't get elected but the movement you represent grows.

This brings us to impact of William F. Buckley, a man who's entire focus was not on getting elected but rather on growing conservatism. A man who following his death, current American Vice President noted that "in the battle over ideas, the conservative movement has lost its commander in chief."<sup>356</sup> While those before him only stoked divisions within conservatism, Buckley helped to unite them. More importantly, through the use of *National Review*, he forced opponents of conservatism to take the movement seriously. No longer could they trot out the same wide-sweeping attacks of declaring that all conservatives were 'crackpots.' They were forced to enter into Buckley's domain of the political intellectualism,

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<sup>355</sup> Ronald B. Frankum Jr., *Historical Dictionary of the War in Vietnam*, (Washington, Scarecrow Press, 2011), 181.

<sup>356</sup> "Washington remembers Buckley." *Washington Examiner*, February 27, 2008. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-remembers-buckley/article/128805> (accessed February 12, 2018).

and in the process of being trampled by Buckley, they unwittingly had further bolstered the legitimacy of the movement.

However, Buckley had benefitted from work undertaken by his conservative predecessors, who helped laid the foundation. It was through their failings and the movements shortcomings, that Buckley was able to see the solution needed to elevate conservatism into ascendancy. Had Goldwater and McCarthy's public capitulations not occurred, the extreme elements of conservatism may still have control of the movement and not its current position at the fringe. Buckley was the first to combine all the loose elements, such as the grass-roots support, conservative media and fragmented ideology together into one united, powerful force. Through his magazine, his TV show, his newspaper column, his books and his lectures, Buckley 'taught' modern conservative thought to millions of other Americans.

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