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THE END OF SOLIDARITY: AMERICA'S POSTWAR TURN RIGHT AND THE DECLINE OF THE CIO AND NEW DEAL LIBERALISM

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ABSTRACT

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David Patrick Bruno

Postwar America saw one of the greatest economic expansions in American history. The wealth generated was distributed across all aspects of American society, resulting in less wealth inequality than any other time in America. Organized labor was at the pinnacle of its power, offering working class Americans the upward mobility that is promised in the American dream. Since the 1940s, the US has regressed in these areas. Wealth inequality has rapidly increased and organized labor's power has fallen, contributing to wage stagnation and less upward mobility. There is an abundance of reasons for these changes, and not one instance caused them. For this research, I examine the ways that the postwar political and social right-wing shift contributed to the changes. This includes the emergence of the Second Red Scare and its eventual domination over American life. Understanding how the Red Scare contributed to the decline of New Deal liberalism is emphasized. The Red Scare also put pressure on the CIO to do something about its communists. I look extensively at the CIO's divisions, why it expelled its communists and other far-left members, and what this did to the labor movement long-term.

The methodology used for this paper was to approach the topic from a political and labor perspective. For this subject, the politics of the era influenced the public, forcing labor leaders in the CIO to join the Red Scare or be a victim. Thus, the paper

looks heavily at political figures, their actions, and the reactions from CIO leaders on both the Left and mainstream.

The most discussed union is the United Electrical, Machine, and Radio workers of America (UE). There are a few reasons for this. One reason concerns the abundance of resources from the UE that are available. The University of Pittsburgh has a large digital archive of UE materials, including copies of its newspaper, *UE News*. Another reason is the simple fact that the UE was the third largest union in the CIO and the largest union on the CIO's Left. It had a plethora of influence and is tremendously important to the story.

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INTRODUCTION

Rising out of the ashes of the Second World War was a world that was unthinkable ten years prior. Traditional world powers were mere husks of themselves, ravaged by the war and struggling to rebuild. Once the backwater of Europe—Russia— then the Soviet Union, controlled the most powerful military on the continent. The USSR held strong during the bleak days of the Nazi invasion, eventually crushing the Axis invaders, and conquering nearly half of Europe in the process. While the Red Army subdued Eastern Europe, it was communism that conquered it. The Soviet Union was able to successfully install, in many instances through violence, friendly communist governments across Eastern Europe, effectively dividing the world between communists and non-communists. The other side of the world represented the ideological foe of communism—capitalism. Its leading nation was another unlikely superpower, the United States. Having a monopoly on atomic weapons, the US controlled arguably the most powerful military in the world. With power came fears of losing power; for leaders of both countries, consternation of power tilting towards their main geopolitical foe became an obsession. For Americans, this created a national and international climate that the relatively young nation had never experienced, altering nearly every aspect of American life. In the immediate years after the war, Americans sought to understand and reconcile with the rapidly changing world and their place in it. During these years the veneer of innocence was removed, and the country revealed itself to be more closely related to historical empires; jealously guarding its interests domestically and abroad. It was during these years that America's foreign policy shifted dramatically from its prewar isolationism to its more modern form—interventionism. This movement was predicated

on the belief that communism and its chief advocator, the Soviet Union, needed to be constrained. Between the years 1946-1955, fears and demagoguery of communism turned American politics right, leading to disastrous consequences on working Americans and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), creating a ripple effect that is still being felt today.

Communism has traditionally been the foil of US capitalism, the panic from the first Red Scare in the years succeeding the First World War is an example. However, during the turbulent decade of the Great Depression, communism saw perhaps its greatest popularity and acceptance. The American Communist Party (CP) was a functioning political organization—although still far behind the Democratic and Republican Parties—and communist newspapers such as the *Daily Worker* enjoyed a healthy circulation. Communists and other far-left individuals were prominent in the CIO, helping build the organization and running some of its most important unions. The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) was the largest Left-wing union in the CIO and the third largest union in the entire organization. With the Left-wing unions, the CIO brought great improvement to the lives of working Americans, helping them obtain higher wages, more benefits, and most importantly, opportunities. The CIO embraced black and women workers more than any labor movement before, offering an alternative to the traditionally bigoted American Federation of Labor (AFL).

It appeared that by the end of the war the labor movement was on the uptick, and if it defended the gains made during the war, it could snowball, putting all working Americans on an upward trajectory. While it is true that labor's influence and power was on the rise after the war, and it continued to rise during the subsequent decade, the reality

was that the postwar years devastated labor's long-term potential, essentially planting the seeds that grew into the kudzu vines that strangled the movement during latter decades of the twentieth century. It was a leisurely demise, one brought on by politicians, business leaders, and even the movement itself. The decline of New Deal liberalism and the rise of conservative ideology advanced the demise, as gains made by the New Deal were rolled back and wealth inequality increased—the first postwar Congress began the conservative project of reversing the New Deal. By the end of the twentieth century labor became a mere husk of its postwar self, almost appearing as a relic from a bygone era. The decisions made by the CIO, some that it was forced to make and some that it did so willingly, contributed greatly to the demise of the labor movement in America, leading to disastrous effects on working-class Americans.

CHAPTER 1: VISIONS OF A POSTWAR WORLD AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

At the end of the most destructive conflict in world history a hint of optimism streaked through the relatively unscathed terrain of America; the "bad guys" were vanquished, the United States was the most powerful country in the world, and the Great Depression finally abated. Like numerous Americans, the CIO saw an opportunity; with an apparent end of perpetual crisis, there was a chance that more resources could be allocated towards improving the lives of American workers and elevating their living standards. Karl Korstad, a business agent, organizer, and regional director for the left-wing Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers (FTA) explained progressive unionists' desires—which mostly overlapped with the CIO's goals— "the fulfillment of social programs of the New Deal, and end to colonialism, and the beginning of free independent nations worldwide."[1] The continuation and expansion of New Deal programs and New Deal liberalism was a near universal goal in the CIO. Its two main factions—the communists and other far-left progressives (the Left) and the more politically mainstream, including New Deal progressives, right leaning unionists, social democrats, and anticommunists—shared domestic goals, but clashed over foreign policy. This is an oversimplification of the divisions and factions within the CIO, which were numerous, however, for this research the focus will be on the Left and its conflict with the mainstream CIO.

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[1] Karl Korstad, "Black and White Together: Organizing in the South with the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural & Allied Workers Union (FTA-CIO), 1946-1952," *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 72.

CIO Factions

It will be important to briefly explain the factionalism within the CIO. Since its creation, there was always an uneasy alliance between the Left and mainstream. Specifically, due to the presence of communists. The founder and first president of the CIO, John L. Lewis, was an anticommunist, however, due to their organizational prowess, Lewis allowed them to operate in the CIO relatively unbothered. After Lewis stepped down in 1940, Philip Murray became president. Murray believed in a middle ground between socialism and unfettered capitalism, and that labor organization and collective bargaining were vital to obtaining social justice for workers.[2] His views aligned with the CIO's postwar plans, representing mainstream CIO positions. Despite both sharing similar goals, mainstream CIO leaders never completely trusted the communists or their sympathizers. Describing this mistrust, David Dubinsky, long-time president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and influential figure within the CIO, said, "But the more eager the Communist forces were to show their 'moderation,' the surer we were that their whole purpose was to draw us into an intolerable setup. We would provide a respectable front and they would quickly be running everything."[3] Despite the lack of trust, Murray allowed communists and communists controlled unions to operate until political disagreements and Red Scare politics ended the relationship. There were also right leaning factions in the CIO, but generally the organization favored left-wing politics. Other than political factions, the

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[2] Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, *Labor in America a History*, (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2017) 272.

[3] David Dubinsky and A. H. Raskin, *David Dubinsky: A Life with Labor*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1977), 274.

CIO had divisions based on race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. The CIO's Left worked extensively to minimize these divisions.

With the Cold War yet to emerge from the ashes of the Second World War, the all aspects of the CIO were essentially unified over their shared interest in a progressive postwar America, one that continued the New Deal legacy.[4] Korstad believed to achieve a progressive future, unions needed to increase their numbers and crystallize unity between all skilled and unskilled workers—black, white, women, men, all religions, and nationalities.[5] Leaders in the CIO also understood this, and they hoped to continue to expand the organization during the postwar years.[6]

Equality for All Workers and Maintaining War Gains

CIO needed to maintain gains made during the war before it could expand; the most significant were the advancements of black and women workers. During the war, unions were able to work towards tearing down sexist and racist barriers that had prevented women and African Americans from opportunity and economic stability. The industrial demand of the war, and lack of white men to fill it provided these two groups with employment opportunities they had never been allotted. Providing jobs to these traditionally marginalized groups distributed wealth to them and improved their economic standing. Labor leaders believed that it was important for these gains to be kept, as labor is stronger when everyone is on equal footing, and discrimination is typically used to break unity—left-wing and communist leaders in the UE were firm

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[4] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 215.
[5] Karl Korstad, "Black and White Together: Organizing in the South with the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural & Allied Workers Union (FTA-CIO), 1946-1952," *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 72.
[6] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 213.

believers in this. UE President of District Eight and open Communist, William Sentner, explains of discrimination "this is the outgrowth of a policy whereby anti-labor employers use Jim Crow to bust unions and maintain low wages."[7]

The Left-wing unions were typically the most aggressive in pursuing opportunities for black workers, even before the war. In 1940, the UE launched a program to work against black employment discrimination, the program was described by *The Pittsburgh Courier* as "one of the most far-reaching actions taken by any labor union in the country."[8] Other unions on the Left made comparable efforts. Describing the efforts of the Left and the impact of losing it, historian Philip Foner explains, "They were a 'major force' in building the black-white unity that distinguished the early CIO, and when they and others who were erroneously accused of being communist were expelled, much for the black-white unity also departed."[9] Thus, the Left was integral to racial unity in the CIO, and was vital to making gains and keeping them.

To understand the importance of the Left regarding racial unity, its efforts against systemic racism need to be addressed. In 1942, the UE challenged the St. Louis municipal softball league against its "Jim Crowism."[10] The Municipal Athletic Association of St. Louis passed a rule barring black players from participating in the league. This decision came after the UE's sports committee organized eight soft-ball teams, two of which were composed of black players. The UE sports and social committee protested this action. In a resolution the committee said:

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[7] "Jim Crow is Anti-Union Scheme, Sentner tells FEPC," *UE News*, August 12, 1944, 6.
[8] "Another Program South: CIO Electrical Union Seeks to Stop Industry's Discrimination Against Negro," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 2, 1940, 22.
[9] Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 292.
[10] "St. Louis UE Protests Firing of Negroes at Cartridge Plant," *UE News*, June 20, 1942, 9.

This action strikes at the heart of American sportsmanship and fair play and such an act is un-democratic and discriminates against a loyal and patriotic group of St. Louis citizens…Our Negro brothers work side by side with us making shells, bomber turrets and all the instruments of war needed for our country's fight to preserve out long cherished institutions of democracy and freedom. Working together and playing together, Negro and white strengthens the bons of relationship and cements the unity of the nation.[11]

The city supervisor of Municipal Athletics and assistant secretary-treasurer of the Athletic association did not agree with the UE, commenting that black players should organize their own athletic association and league, and that he was opposed to "mixed" contests.[12] Another example of the UE's censorious views on segregation comes in the instance of moving their annual convention out of Indianapolis due to discriminatory policies of the city's hotels.[13] Additionally, the union opposed poll taxes, supported anti-lynching legislation, and wanted the army desegrated. *UE News* was instrumental in transmitting the union's opposition to racism. Demonstrating its fierce objection to racism, during the Second World War, *UE News* chastised people for mocking Japanese people based on their race, calling those people ignorant and against what the Allies were fighting for.[14] The UE was not the only Left-wing union to work towards equality, the International Fur and Leather Workers Union (IFLWU) pushed extensively to remove discrimination in the union and American society. Union president, Ben Gold, was vocal in his disdain for racism of any kind. Both the IFLWU and UE placed people of color in leadership. Similar to UE leadership, Gold believed in solidarity above anything else.[15]

While in many instances war gains were lost, the CIO and its Left fought diligently to maintain what had been achieved. One instance comes from the UE. It attempted to compel companies to keep race in mind when making layoffs—black

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[11] "St. Louis UE Protests Firing of Negroes at Cartridge Plant," *UE News*, June 20, 1942, 9.
[12] "Protest Softball League Color Ban," *Chicago Defender*, June 20, 1942, 19.
[13] "CIO Union Quits Hotel Over Jim Crow Policies," *Chicago Defender*, August 22, 1942, 7.
[14] "Color is Not the Issue," *UE News*, January 10, 1942, 8.
[15] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York City, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 163-164.

workers were usually not high on the seniority list, thus they would be the first to be laid off when soldiers returned. Such an effort occurred at the largest war instrument manufacture in the country, and one of the largest war plants in the New York metropolitan area, Sperry Gyroscope Corp in Brooklyn. At the early stages of the war, Sperry refused to hire black workers. The UE focused on this issue, attempting to implement "a worker-supported reconversion plan that embodied principles of affirmative action."[16] Management rebuffed these attempts. A joint effort led by the Brooklyn NAACP, the National Negro Congress, the Brooklyn Communist Party, and UE local 450 succeeded in changing Sperry, and by 1945, 1,200 skilled and unskilled black workers were employed at the company.[17] This campaigned proved to be difficult, but according to some in the UE, it is one of the best examples of the union's anti-discrimination achievements.[18] When the soldiers returned home, Sperry became problematic again as it appeared the company planned to base postwar layoffs strictly on seniority. The union argued that racial mindfulness should be the main factor because the layoffs would disproportionately affect black workers. Unfortunately, management balked at the suggestion, and as anticipated, an excessive number of black workers lost their jobs.[19] As an organization, the CIO rejected adjusted seniority based on race, determining that it was "divisive."[20] Thus, postwar layoffs pushed African Americans back into the periphery, continuing cycles of poverty while also dividing labor by race.

[16] Martha Biondi, "Grassroots Affirmative Action: Black Workers and Organized Labor in Postwar New York City," *New Labor Forum*, no. 2 (1998): 63.
[17] Martha Biondi, "Grassroots Affirmative Action: Black Workers and Organized Labor in Postwar New York City," *New Labor Forum*, no. 2 (1998): 63.
[18] Carla J. Dubose-Simons, "The 'Silent Arrival': The Second Wave of the Great Migration and Its Affects on Black New York, 1940-1950," PhD diss., (City University of New York, 2013), 187.
[19] Martha Biondi, "Labor and the Fight for Racial Equality," *City of Workers, City of Struggle: How Labor Movements Changed New York*, edited by Joshua B. Freeman, 135, Columbia University Press, 2019.
[20] Martha Biondi, "Labor and the Fight for Racial Equality," *City of Workers, City of Struggle: How Labor Movements Changed New York*, edited by Joshua B. Freeman, 135, Columbia University Press, 2019.

The situation for black workers became worse during the decade to come due to political attacks on labor and the inner conflicts in the CIO.

During the war, women were also provided opportunities that had rarely been allotted to them. Historically Left unions were the most fervent in trying to end sexism in the workplace and obtain equal pay. The UE was pivotal, being one of the most progressive unions regarding women's rights: "CIO leaders largely ignored gender in attempting to respond to problems of postwar organizing. On the whole the ousted pro-Soviet unions (Left-wing unions), notably the UE and FTA, had done the best job among CIO affiliates in accommodating the special bargaining concerns of women workers and developing female leadership."[21] Along with pushing for equal wages, the UE elevated women within the organization. Ruth Young is an example. Young was an open member of the Communist Party and UE organizer who worked extensively for women and people of color, protesting discrimination on numerous occasions. Young became a full-time UE staffer in 1938. By 1940, Young became the highest-ranking women in labor, and in 1944, Young became the first woman on the UE national executive board. A desire for a normal middle-class life pushed Young away from the CP and UE during the mid-1950s.[22]

For women after the war, there were predictions as well as expectations that they would quietly leave the workplace and return to household duties.[23] The expectation was in many ways a hope for the male dominated society of postwar America, where working

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[21] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 349.
[22] Gerald Zahavi, Young (Jandreau), Ruth (1916-1986), Harvard Square Library.org, https://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/biographies/ruth-young-jandreau/.
[23] "Women at Work," *CIO News*, January 13, 1947, 13.

women were deemed a problem, and a women's place was in the home.[24] Thus there was social pressure to have women leave the workforce. Despite this, the Women's Bureau of Labor found that around seventy-five percent of women were determined to remain in the workforce after the war.[25] For many, this hope was never realized—by 1947 over a million fewer women were working—however the number of employed still outnumbered the prewar amount. During the war, unions fought for equal pay for equal work with minimal success.[26] In postwar America, changed tilted towards regression; women still vigorously pursed equal pay, but they struggled to keep their jobs, including in the unionized electrical industry.

Postwar strikes with Westinghouse, General Electric, and General Motors show how the UE worked diligently to achieve gender pay equality. The issue of job classifications based on gender first came up during the war. Because jobs for women paid less, companies reclassified men's jobs as women's, the UE fought against this, even arguing that regardless of circumstance all new jobs should be classified as male jobs.[27] A case regarding job classification issues against GE and Westinghouse was brought to the War Labor Board in 1945. A historian of the UE notes the historical context of their efforts:

> Far ahead of its time, the union put forward the comparable worth argument that jobs customarily performed by women were paid less, on a comparative job content basis, than those customarily performed by men. The UE attacked the widespread practice of making minor changes in men's jobs, reclassifying them as women's work, and reducing the rate of pay.[28]

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[24] "Working Women Called Problem," *New York Times*, January 29, 1945, 10.

[25] "Women Workers Aim to Keep On," *New York Times*, November 25, 1946, 34.

[26] "Women at Work," *CIO News*, January 13, 1947, 13.

[27] Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 80.

[28] Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 80-81.

Although the UE won the case, it proved to be mainly a moral victory. When the ruling came around the conclusion of the war, companies chose to ignore the soon to be disbanded War Labor Board. Determined to see material benefit from their victory, the UE advocated that women should receive equal pay. The War Labor Board's decision was used to support their position. GE and Westinghouse refused to acquiesce; the issues became a component in a collective bargaining dispute in 1946 that turned into a strike between GE, Westinghouse, and GM and the UE. The prime disagreement concerned the union's demand for a $2.00 wage increase.[29] To end the strike, the UE proposed an 18 ½ cent an hour wage increase to all employees, while extending the period of union contract for thirty days, and with all employees working, negotiate a new contract within the thirty days, with any remaining issues going to arbitration. The UE was able to end the strike and begin negotiating from these terms with GE, Westinghouse rejected the offer.[30] Westinghouse was the last of the companies to settle the dispute; GM was the first, taking a similar offer as the above proposal.[31] The Westinghouse case was particularly onerous. On March 19th of 1946, the company offered a wage cutting ultimatum. In addition, for a strike settlement, the company offered a one-cent raise to equalize women's rates, it should be noted that this was not an offer to raise women's rates, but to settle the previously mentioned WLB case, and for even less than the War Labor Board decided should be paid. UE members harshly criticized the offer, rejecting it completely. One local even had a formal ceremony burning the company's proposal, then sending the ashes to Westinghouse with a letter that said, "insolent proposals now purified by

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[29] Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 81.
[30] "Why Does Westinghouse Lie," *UE News*, March 30, 1946, 3.
[31] Tom Wright, "Workers Hair Victory at GM," *UE News*, February 16, 1946, 1.

flames."[32] Nearly two months later the UE won the battle with Westinghouse, gaining an eighteen cent an hour wage for all workers—men, women, salaried, and production— plus a full union contract that included union security and union protection of piece rates to the locals included in the strike.[33] Additionally, "The settlement provided an additional fund equaling a cent an hour for every employee, to be applied toward the equalization of women's rates throughout UE plants, and in the lamp division to be applied to the equalization of out-of-line rates for men as well as women."[34] This was a similar effort to the one made for black workers at Sperry, but in this case the outcome was in the worker's favor. These instances demonstrate the difficult task of holding on to war gains while simultaneously attempting to enhance them, they also show the importance of the CIO's Left.

A Desire to Continue the New Deal Legacy

There is a cap for what unions can do for workers. The New Deal era showed that there are instances in which the power of the government is necessary to improving conditions for American workers—without government protections and regulations workers could not be free to organize; in the decades prior to the New Deal workers could be terminated for even considering organizing a union. The Roosevelt Administration passed more prolabor legislation and created more prolabor policy than any administration prior to it. The sudden burst of worker friendly laws forged a hopeful expectation within the CIO for the postwar years. The passing of Roosevelt proved to be a cataclysmic blow. Lacking Roosevelt's charisma and charm, his predecessor was not as

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[32] Bulletin, "Mediators Uphold UE Membership Spurns W'house Chiseling," *UE News*, March 30, 1946, 1.
[33] "Westinghouse Agrees to 18 Plus 1, Union Security and Full Contract," *UE News*, May 11, 1946, 5.
[34] "Westinghouse Agrees to 18 Plus 1, Union Security and Full Contract," *UE News*, May 11, 1946, 5.

adept at shepherding worker friendly legislation through the halls of Congress.

Advancing prolabor policy became just as difficult as maintaining gains. The CIO

lobbied extensively for an Economic Bill of Rights.[35] Introduced by President Roosevelt,

the concept was made to elevate the standard of living for Americans. Specifically:

> The right to useful and remunerative jobs in the industries, or shops or farms or mines of the nation. The right of every businessman, large or small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom and unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad. The right to every family to a decent home; the right to adequate medical care, and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health; the right to adequate protection from economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment; the right to a good education.[36]

This plan centered around the concept of creating a new world after the war, one

without the sins of the past, where all people were treated with dignity. With the obvious

benefits to its members, in the immediate aftermath of the war, the CIO and its affiliated

unions pushed for the proworker legislation derived the Roosevelt administration. They

believed that it offered a model for the postwar economic conversion.[37] The CIO stated,

"The foundation, upon which the American people desire to build their future, was laid

by President Roosevelt in his historic Economic Bill of Rights. This reflects the

aspiration of our people. Nothing less will suffice." All factions of the CIO were united

on this issue. The UE endorsed a statement by CIO president Philip Murray, in which

Murray fiercely denounced the Truman administration for only providing "lip service"

for prolabor action, while passing probusiness legislation, including an elimination of

excess taxes that allowed large profits to swell even more.[38] On the conservative side of

the political spectrum—one that grew in power during the postwar years—Republican

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[35] Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, (New York City, NY: The New Press, 2000), 61.

[36] Travis K. Hedrick, "The Washington Scene," *Montana Labor News*, May 31, 1945, 1, Chronicling America database.

[37] "V-J Statement of Policy Adopted by CIO Officers," *United Automobile Worker*, September 1, 1945, 6, Chronicling America database.

[38] "GEB Rallies Union to Fight for Security and Democracy," *UE News*, December 15, 1945, 3.

Senator Robert Taft criticized Truman's legislative program, calling it "communist," "left wing," and a "CIO-Pac program."[39] Taft's comments were made in 1946, and they previewed conservatives' efforts to bind labor and progressive politics to communism. This artificial conflation between the three was paramount in the CIO's break with the Left and ultimately, its shortcomings during the postwar decades, and the decline of New Deal liberalism.

An aspect of Truman's plan was to turn down the war machine and allocate more resources to Americans, including universal healthcare. The entire CIO understood that to enhance the lives of working Americans, social welfare programs would need to be expanded, they agreed that healthcare was paramount.[40] In the early days of Truman's first term, he called for action regarding healthcare. His request turned into the CIO and AFL endorsed Wagner-Marray-Dingle Bill.[41] UE president Albert Fitzgerald wrote a letter to Truman urging him to support the plan to "establish health insurance for all."[42] In repeat fashion, opponents called the bill communistic and its authors "fellow-travelers."[43] Again, Senator Taft spoke out with similar rhetoric, labeling it "a left-wing communist proposal."[44] The Economic Bill of Rights and the Marray-Dingle Bill both failed. During the early postwar years, the majority of the CIO was united in this effort to move resources to the people who won the war by working in the factories, shipping yards, and fighting battles across the world. Their hopes turned to disappointment, and by the late

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[39] "Truman Measures Assailed by Taft," *New York Times*, January 5, 1946, 2.
[40] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 322.
[41] Joseph A. Loftus, "Wider Social Security Plan to Include 15,000,000 More; Takes 4% of Worker's Pay," *New York Times*, May 25, 1945, 1.
[42] "UE Ask Action on Health Bill," *UE News*, November 17, 1945, 2.
[43] Bess Furman, "Health Insurance Urged by AFL, CIO," *New York Times*, July 11, 1947, 12.
[44] "Truman Measures Assailed by Taft," *New York Times*, January 5, 1946, 2.

1940s, the CIO's postwar vision not only went unfulfilled, but the shifting landscape of early Cold War politics dramatically weakens it.

The Re-emergence of Conservative Ideology

In the waning years of the war, an alternative vision of postwar America emerged, one that eventually dominated politics in America—free market with limited government. The concept of less government created fissures in the belief that government power in the style of New Deal bureaucracy and policies. Ignored during the 1930s—in part because such economic theories were blamed for the Depression— free-market advocates came roaring back into relevance during the postwar era. It began with *The Road to Serfdom*, written by economist Friedrich Hayek and published in 1944, the book became a seminal work for championing the power of the free market. It was highly popular during the postwar years and was pivotal in presenting a popular alternate vision for America.[45] Friedrich Hayek argued against central planning, explaining that it takes away individual freedom, he cited fascist Italy and Nazi Germany as examples of the fallacy of government planning.[46] *The Road to Serfdom* became a sensation within American business and intellectual circles; periodicals such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Reader's Digest* praised Hayek and his writing.[47] Hayek and his work provided validation and credibility to staunch anti-New Dealers and those who believed in "everyman for

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[45] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*, (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2009), 26-52.

[46] Henry Hazlitt, "An Economist's View of 'Planning,'" *New York Times*, September 24, 1944, 53, 3.

[47] Lowell Mellett, "On the Other Hand: Herr Hayek's The Road to Serfdom Most Exciting Thing Since Technocracy," *Evening Star*, April 12, 1945, A-13, Chronicling America database.

himself."[48] With a hint of sarcasm, but nonetheless prophetic, one writer wrote that those who subscribe to such ideas could

> lift sentences from the book and prove to their own satisfaction that any more TVAs, any further interference with stock market manipulations, any monkeying with wages and hours or the process of food and clothing and above all, any effort on the part of the government to produce full employment, will take us rapidly down the road to serfdom.[49]

The Road to Serfdom gave opponents of the New Deal an intellectual basis for their positions, one that they could build off. During the 1946 midterm elections, conservatives echoed Hayek's arguments, successfully convincing Americans of their vision. Once in power, the Republicans rejected all of Truman's Fair Deal initiatives, including compulsory national health insurance and extensive public housing.[50] Conservatives ramped up fears of communism during the Red Scare as a way to persuade the public to view New Deal liberalism with deep suspicion. Historian Kim Philips-Fein explains, "The free-market conservatives took the nightmarish fears inspired by anticommunism and turned them against the entire liberal state, making it seem as though the minimum wage and labor unions were about to usher in a new era of political enslavement."[51]

Hayek's work created new momentum for the concepts of individual freedom and self-reliance, but he did not introduce these ideas, rather they had been at the core of Republican Party ideology since the 1920s, and always integral to conserve values. Some conservatives argued that these concepts were the American tradition, one

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[48] Lowell Mellett, "On the Other Hand: Herr Hayek's The Road to Serfdom Most Exciting Thing Since Technocracy," *Evening Star*, April 12, 1945, A-13, Chronicling America database.

[49] Lowell Mellett, "On the Other Hand: Herr Hayek's The Road to Serfdom Most Exciting Thing Since Technocracy," *Evening Star*, April 12, 1945, A-13, Chronicling America database.

[50] Robert J. Donovan, *Joe Martin: My First Fifty Years in Politics*, (New York City, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), 190.

[51] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*, (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2009), 60.

economic analysis believed that the New Deal was antithetical to the Constitution and the American system, and that its concept paralleled dictatorships.[52] He pointed out that New Deal style policies destroyed the American identity, and the postwar plan should be to return to laissez-faire style capitalism, like the founders intended.[53] The battle cry of patriotism and tradition became an effective way for conservatives to thwart ideas or legislation that came into conflict with the supposed American tradition. People also began to associate welfare and other government assistance with indolence. Talking about communism, but against the concept of welfare, one letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Daily World* said, "Communism has a strong appeal to the lazy who always want someone else to feed them without work."[54] This notion of government support being for the idle and those who do not represent true American values such as self-reliance, built the foundation of the conservative order that eventually eclipsed New Deal liberalism. The eventual 1964 Republican presidential nominee, and influence figure in moving American politics right, Barry Goldwater said in 1956, "The inescapable and harmful by-products of such operations as relief, social security, collective bargaining and public housing has been the weakening of the individual personality and self-reliance."[55] This concept of self-reliance was embraced by anti-unionists—unions concern themselves with the collective rather than the individual. It is argued by historians Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore that individualism in America creates an obstacle to big government

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[52] Carl H. Wilken, "A Prosperous Post-War Era is Possible," 25, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Box 159, House of Representatives 1937-1949, folder Postwar Planning.

[53] Carl H. Wilken, "A Prosperous Post-War Era is Possible," 25-28, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Box 159, House of Representatives 1937-1949, folder Postwar Planning.

[54] James E. Clark, "Letter to the Editor: How to Stop the Growth of Communism," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 20, 1947, 6.

[55] Arthur Frommer, *Goldwater from A to Z: A Critical Handbook*, (New York, NY: Frommer/Pasmantier, 1964), 87.

policies. The concept of the individual in America, and how people see themselves—not as a class or part of a collective, but as individuals—has made the New Deal an aberration; people are not receptive to policies that will benefit the collective society.[56] The same can be said for policies benefiting labor and unions. Thus, an alternative vision of postwar America comes in the form of limited government intervention and less concern for the collective and more for the individual, concepts that are antithetical to the CIO's aspirations. The postwar Republican Party and conservative Democrats partnered with corporate America to push these ideas forward and to stop the continuation of New Deal policies. Their efforts succeeded, and the conservative vision eventually came to dominate American politics, moving American political discourse to the right, and threatening the existence of CIO, its successor, the AFL-CIO, and organized labor as a whole.

Conclusion

After the war, two opposite visions emerged: one hoped to continue the New Deal style legislation with prolabor policy and expansion of the welfare state. The other detested any proposition of greater government power, arguing that it would lead to economic devastation and totalitarian governance, while also encouraging laziness and inhibiting personal freedom. The conservative vision advocated for limited government, less power for labor, and more power for business. The rationale was that individuals living in a free-market society could elevate themselves without any government assistance—a more robust federal government created less wealth. Conservatives weaved

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[56] Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore, "The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 74 (2008), 24.

patriotism into their argument, calling their view the American way. Labor and business

found themselves at opposing ends of this dichotomy. However, as the Cold War ramped

up, and communism became the great national fear, CIO leadership began to adopt

positions that were averse to their original postwar vision, joining the domestic and

foreign crusade against communism.

CHAPTER 2: THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS AND THE RISE OF RED SCARE POLITICS

Perhaps it is a twist of irony that postwar America began to mirror fascist countries it had just defeated in the Second World War: politicians on all sides of the spectrum presented communism as the state's ultimate enemy, one that needed to be suppressed at all costs. During this era, the definition of communism was malleable—it could be used against anyone for political gain, regardless of if they were a communist. Legislation and policy were often attacked for being too communistic. The 1946 midterm elections influenced America's turn right, helping to the shift public opinion against communism and progressive policies. Seeking to retake power after over a decade in the wilderness, Republicans launched a barrage of redbaiting attacks, attempting to tie Democrats to Communists, even saying that Democrats can only offer "confusion, corruption, and communism."[1] The GOP also decried overbearing government intrusion, including New Deal policies, while championing individual freedom. When attempting to secure the Republican nomination, future Congressman Richard Nixon denounced the New Deal as "government control in regulating our lives" and championed the Republican position of "individual freedom and all that initiative can produce."[2] In the same speech, Nixon declared that returning veterans "want a respectable job in private industry where they will be recognized for what they produce, or they want the opportunity to start their own business."[3] Nixon's statements are consistent with the Republican Party's antigovernment and big business friendly platform, as well as its

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[1] Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years 1945-1950*, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1976) 225.
[2] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 35.
[3] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 35.

attitude regarding self-reliance. The entire GOP ran on this platform. Nixon won his election in part due to accusing his opponent—Congressman Jerry Voorhis—of being endorsed by a political action committee run by communist and fellow travelers.[4] Nixon's election reflects how Republicans made communism a central issue of the midterms. According to the *New York Times*, one of the three major factors in the landslide election of Governor Thomas Dewey and fellow Republican running mates in New York was "an increasing tide of anti-communism."[5] The communist issue led to the break of an alliance between the Communist associated Labor Party and the Democratic Party—an alliance that helped secure New York for President Roosevelt three times.[6] Democrat leaders believed that the alliance caused Democrat defections; they ended it, and took a more aggressive anticommunist position.[7] On a national stage the Republicans hammered the communist issue; B. Carroll Reece, the National Chairman of the party, labelled the election as a "fight basically between Communism and Republicanism."[8] This reasoning was ostensibly based on the CIO's Political Action Committees involvement in the election; Reece denounced the PAC, saying it directly threatened the American people and accused its leadership as being "infected with the virus of Communism."[9] According to Reece, this presented the Republican Party with its most important job since 1860.[10]

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[4] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 38-39.

[5] James A. Hagerty, "3 Big State Factors," *New York Times*, November 7, 1946, 1.

[6] James A. Hagerty, "3 Big State Factors," *New York Times*, November 7, 1946, 1.

[7] James A. Hagerty, "3 Big State Factors," *New York Times*, November 7, 1946, 1.

[8] "Reece declares election fight between communism, G.O.P.: Sees threat discusses P.A.C. 1946," *The Christian Science* Monitor, May 29, 1946, 18.

[9] "Reece declares election fight between communism, G.O.P.: Sees threat discusses P.A.C. 1946," *The Christian Science* Monitor, May 29, 1946, 18.

[10] "Reece declares election fight between communism, G.O.P.: Sees threat discusses P.A.C. 1946," *The Christian Science* Monitor, May 29, 1946, 18.

These attacks began to alter the public's opinion, along with the emerging Cold War. Edward Folliard of the *Washington Post* confirmed they were seeping into the minds of Americans—after visiting states around the country, he saw "hatred of communism rampant."[11] A Gallup poll found that in late September "foreign policy and relations with Russia" ranked as the most important issues in the minds of the voters.[12] The poll essentially confirmed that communism and concerns over it were pivotal issues to Americans. It is not to say that this was the first time that Americans concerned themselves with communism or the Soviet Union—since the Bolshevik Revolution these issues have permeated through the US its political discourse. This is the beginning of communism becoming an existential threat during the postwar years. Prior to the end of the war, the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union along with the relative popularity of the Communist Party in America, in part due to the turmoil of the Depression, made communism and communists something to view with some suspicion, but nothing to be hysterical about. The GOP's relentless offensive against Democrats, along with delays in bringing the troops home, winding down the war economy, and the housing shortage, propelled a congressional wipeout of Democrats.

In November of 1946, for first time in nearly two decades, Republicans won control of both houses of Congress. With the victory, New Deal rollbacks and business friendly legislation were on the horizon, placing the CIO's postwar aspirations in immediate jeopardy. In his first address to Congress, Speaker of the House Joseph Martin, said:

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[11] Quoted in Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years 1945-1950*, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1976), 227.
[12] Quoted in Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years 1945-1950*, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1976), 227.

> We must, after 17 long years, balance the budget, commence paying off the national debt, reduce taxes to free the money of the individual for achieving a higher national standard of living, provide the incentive for business expansion which will create more jobs, more wages, more Federal revenue, and at the same time adjust prices and quality on a sound basis.[13]

He continued the Party's redbaiting, warning:

> There is no room in the Government of the United States for any who prefer the communistic system, or any other form of absolutism, to our American system. Those who do not believe in the way of life which has made us the greatest nation of all time should not be permitted to occupy positions of trust or power in the American Government. They should be-they must be-removed.[14]

Projecting the battle ahead, the *CIO News* cautioned unionists, "Be on guard to protect your basic rights!"[15] Their concerns had merits: soon after the Congress convened, a blizzard of antilabor bills were proposed, the extreme elements of the Second Red Scare began to emerge, and labor quickly found itself on the defensive.

Other than Joseph McCarthy, no person or entity is more closely associated with the Second Red Scare than the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). The paranoia, accusations, and drama generated by the committee during the late 1940s was the equivalent of throwing an oversized tank of propane on a bonfire. While it is impossible to assign an entity credit for starting the Red Scare, if one were to attempt, HUAC would be the selection. Their influence in altering national attitudes and shifting the country right was immense. They did not only fear monger over clandestine Soviet spy rings or communists in Hollywood, but smeared left leaning policies, labor leaders, and New Dealers. Branding government solutions to issues and its advocates as socialistic, evil, and un-American had a profound effect, influencing how Americans viewed politics, and left-leaning individuals and groups. The extreme rhetoric permeated

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[13] Joseph Martin, 1947, Congressional Record-House, 37, https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1947/01/03/93/house-section/article/33-70?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22GPO-CRECB-1947-pt1-1-2%22%5D%7D&s=5&r=138.

[14] Joseph Martin, 1947, Congressional Record-House, 36, https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1947/01/03/93/house-section/article/33-70?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22GPO-CRECB-1947-pt1-1-2%22%5D%7D&s=5&r=138.

[15] "Congress Goes to Work," *CIO News*, January 6, 1947, 12.

through every aspect of American society, including the CIO, where it deepened the divide between the Left and the mainstream.

HUAC can trace its roots to the mid-1930s. Chairman John McCormack kept the focus of the special committee's investigations on allegations of communist and Nazi subversion. Originally, the committee did its work in a non-sensationalist manner and recommended legislation, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which became law in 1938. That same year, the committee was remade and given to Congressman Martin Dies.[16] A burly Texan, who once supported the New Deal, Dies became a staunch opponent of progressive reform. Reaching congress as an elected official in 1930, Dies, like many elected officials, had tremendous ambitions; he hoped to chair his own committee. In 1938 his desires were fulfilled when he was given HUAC.

Referred as the Dies Committee, it took on a familiar form, one mostly associated with the more infamous versions. Dies focused on hunting subversive communist elements within government and American society, which for Dies meant an offensive against the New Deal and labor. Having a distaste for New Dealers, Dies remarked that they were, "idealist, dreamers, politicians, professional 'dogooders,' and just plain job hunters."[17] He was joined on the committee by a coalition of conservative southern Democrats and Republicans. They focused their investigations on communist fronts and communist activities in unions. Hollywood was a prominent target of the committee, in part due to its ability to create headlines. Dies once remarked, "The only thing that counts

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[16] Thomas Doherty, *Show Trial: Hollywood, HUAC, and the Birth of the Blacklist*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 16-17.
[17] Quoted in Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years 1945-1950*, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1976), 289.

in these investigations is what gets into the papers."[18] The committee often targeted the CIO, prompting the CIO's political action committee's chair, Sidney Hillman to call Dies "America's No. 1 smear master."[19] The Second World War altered the course of the committee. The alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States put communist hunters like Dies in a precarious position. Making it worse for Dies, the government worked extensively to rehabilitate the Soviet Union in the eyes of Americans. Unable to chase his white whale, Dies retired from Congress in 1944. Reflecting on his retirement Dies said, "I felt that the country had been given all of the facts it needed to defeat communism, and I asked myself, 'What more can I accomplish under a hostile Administration?' In May, sick, disgusted, and exhausted, I announced my retirement."[20] Gone, but certainly not forgotten, Dies left the blueprint for the more famous iterations of the committee, showing that the CIO was a lucrative target.

In the years after Dies' retirement, Representative John Rankin took control of the committee. Rankin was far-right conservative who disliked everyone different from him, expressing open contempt for Jews, African Americans, liberals, unionists, people who lived in cities, intellectuals, New Dealers, college professors, and foreigners.[21] His role in the history of the committee is significant due to an unorthodox move made by the Congressman to make HUAC a permanent committee with a broad investigatory scope.[22] Rankin's committee continued the tradition of attacking the CIO, alleging Soviet

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[18] Thomas Doherty, *Show Trial: Hollywood, HUAC, and the Birth of the Blacklist*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 17.

[19] "America's No. 1 Smear Master," *CIO news*, February 28, 1944, 6.

[20] Martin Dies, *Martin Dies' Story*, (New York City, NY: Bookmailer, 1963), 83.

[21] Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities,* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), 167.

[22] Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), 168.

influence and revolutionary aspirations.[23] This sort of rhetoric was the hallmark of the era

of high redbaiting—when the fervor reached a critical mass between 1947-1954,

producing widespread paranoia, fear, isolation, recklessness, and ruined lives.

The next iteration of HUAC was the most notorious and the one most closely

associated with the committee. It was pivotal in building the fervor of anxiety, mistrust,

and reactionary sentiments that were the cornerstones of Americans postwar right turn.

At the start of the Eightieth Congress, Committee Chair J. Parnell Thomas, announced

that HUAC planned to investigate subversive activity, he boasted: "I intend to make it the

most active year in the committee's history."[24] Thomas followed the established

playbook, going after typical targets: communists, communist sympathizers in the federal

government, communist activities in unions, the film industry, and education. The

committee also tried to educate the public on the dangers of communism.[25] The CIO was

a main target, as numerous union leaders were brought in front of the committee to testify

about Communists influence in labor. The pressure of these hearings, and the intense

hysteria within the country collapsed some unions and turned labor leaders against each

other, dividing the CIO.

Perhaps taking inspiration from ex-committee head, Dies, the Thomas committee

had a penchant for attention grabbing headlines—while discussing a Hollywood

communist probe, Freshman Congressman Richard Nixon boasted it "will be

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[23] Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), 187.

[24] Associated Press, "Unamerican Activities Committee to Be Active," *Nome Nugget*, January 22, 1947, 8, Chronicling America database.

[25] Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism*, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1970), 132.

sensational."[26] He further told reporters that, "We intend to name names and to produce witnesses who will testify they have seen some persons prominent in Hollywood at communist meetings and who will report what they said."[27] Nixon explained the importance of going after Hollywood, saying communist propaganda could be found in films, and that it was influencing public opinion. He said the committee wanted to demonstrate this so it could be stopped.[28] The Hollywood hearings were seminal—using American obsession with celebrity, HUAC dragged countless high-profile members of the film industry to the Capitol, moving communists hunting out of the realm of politics and into popular culture.[29] Among the notable figures put in front of the committee were: Gary Cooper, Walt Disney, and future president, Ronald Reagan, who at the time was President of the Screen Actors Guild. Reagan presented harrowing testimony on how communists worked to exploit people in the film industry.[30] The nature of these hearings galvanized Americans, and conflated patriotism with anticommunism and political conformity, ostracizing dissenters. In one instance, a movie going audience stoned a screen showing a Katharine Hepburn film—Hepburn was an outspoken opponent of the HUAC hearings.[31]

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[26] The Associated Press, "Hollywood Communist Probe to Be 'Sensational,' Prober Says," *Evening Star*, July 30, 1947, A-3, Chronicling America database.
[27] The Associated Press, "Hollywood Communist Probe to Be 'Sensational,' Prober Says," *Evening Star*, July 30, 1947, A-3, Chronicling America database.
[28] The Associated Press, "Hollywood Communist Probe to Be 'Sensational,' Prober Says," *Evening Star*, July 30, 1947, A-3, Chronicling America database.
[29] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 139.
[30] Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 75-76.
[31] Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 78.

Attempting to appease the conservatives leading HUAC, studios produced propaganda films on the dangers of communism and created a blacklist to bar communists and other far-left individuals from the film industry—the CIO would adopt a similar strategy of appeasement. HUAC did not rely on Hollywood to be the sole purveyor of anti-communist propaganda. They released their own, equally sensationalist, propaganda. Under the guise of education, the committee released questions and answers about communism. The answers were less than thorough and were basically made to illicit a dislike as well as a fear of communism and to demonstrate that communism was antithetical to American values—the values espoused by the committee were the more conservative values expressed by Hayek, such as limited government and individual freedom. For instance, can I own my own home, is answered with, "No. Under communism all real estate in the city as well as the country belongs to the government, which is in turn run by the communist."[32] Could I start up a business and hire people to work for me, is answered, "To do so would be a crime for which you would be severely punished."[33] Why isn't the Communist Party a political party just like the Democratic and Republican Parties, is answered "Because it takes its orders from Moscow."[34] The piece also discusses how communists and their "fellow travelers" are everywhere, and seek to overthrow the US government. There are instructions on how to find out if someone is a communist.[35] Essentially, American society was being told by their government that communists were surreptitiously everywhere, and they were working in conjunction with the Soviet government to take over the US, strip Americans of everything they cherished,

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[32] "Primer for Anti-Communists," *Evening Star*, June 18, 1948, 8, Chronicling America database.
[33] "Primer for Anti-Communists," *Evening Star*, June 18, 1948, 8, Chronicling America database.
[34] "Primer for Anti-Communists," *Evening Star*, June 18, 1948, 8, Chronicling America database.
[35] "Primer for Anti-Communists," *Evening Star*, June 18, 1948, 8, Chronicling America database.

and turn them into slaves. With this information being widely broadcasted, people receiving it naturally questioned why anyone would join the Communist Party. Historian Andrea Friedman explains the consequences of this, "The definition of Communism as voluntary slavery helped to legitimate myriad measures to abridge the citizenship rights of CP members, including state-level efforts to outlaw the party or deprive Communists of the right to run for political office, as well as federal initiatives such as the Taft-Hartley Act's ban on Communist labor officials."[36] Additionally, with nearly all progressive policies being lumped together with communism, conservative efforts narrowed American political discourse, moving the country away from New Deal style progressive legislation. More government power was being equated to losing rights, freedom, and America values. HUAC was rapidly escalating the war on communism, creating a chasm between leftists and everyone else. The widening of this chasm, along with a toxic cloud of paranoia and fear, is a significant factor in the splitting of the CIO, as it forced the organization to remove its communists like Hollywood or fall victim to the Red Scare.

Perhaps the most significant HUAC hearings of this era derived from the convoluted and strange case of Alger Hiss. It was an instance of the committee using its power to denigrate the New Deal and former New Dealers, and effectively harming further prolabor legislation. It was also an example of the committee presumably producing evidence for communist subversion within the State Department. Looking back nearly thirty years later Nixon reflected on the significance of the case:

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[36] Andrea Friedman, *Citizenship in Cold War America: The National Security State and the Possibilities of Dissent*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 42.

In the years 1946 to 1948 domestic communism was a peripheral issue. Until the Hiss case, it was generally not seen as a clear and present danger to our way of life. A poll in January 1948 for example found that forty percent of those questioned felt the American Communist Party posed no threat, while forty five percent believed that it posed a potential threat.[37]

The Hiss hearings propelled Nixon to national stardom, going from a little-known freshman Congressman to a protector of American democracy and capitalism—this was prior to the rise of Joseph McCarthy. Hiss was an influential figure during his time in government. As a high-ranking State Department employee, he was present at the Yalta Conference and assisted in the creation of the United Nations. The case traces its origins to Whittaker Chambers accusing Hiss of being a Communist and a member of a prewar group in Washington, DC that aspired to infiltrate the US government.[38] Chamber, an editor at *Times Magazine*, made his story seem like a spy thriller, claiming Hiss gave him government papers to send to Russia, and after leaving the spy ring he feared for his life. Hiss denied the accusations. Fueled by his insatiable ambitions, Nixon led the charge against Hiss, using the drama from the hearings and multiple trials to boost his profile. Nixon was among those who found the apparent case breaking evidence—microfilm inside of a hollowed-out pumpkin at Chambers' farm in Maryland.[39] After hearings and two trials, Hiss was found guilty of perjury and sentenced to five years in prison.

The Hiss case represented a new peak in the anticommunist hysteria of the postwar years, one that ostensibly connected Democrats and New Dealers to communist subversion.[40] Hiss was a person of significance, and the thought of a high-ranking government official working against the country created a disquieting feeling in the

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[37] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 47.
[38] The Associated Press, "Not Guilty Plea Offered by Hiss; $5,000 Bail Set," *Evening Star*, December 16, 1948, 1,5, Chronicling America database.
[39] Robert G. Whalen, "Hiss and Chambers: Strange Story of Two Men," *New York Times*, December 12, 1948, 138.
[40] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 146.

public. The situation is analogous to an organized crime leader turned government

informant. "Apprehension grew among the American people about the extent to which

subversive influences were at work within the government," explained a writer and

eventual aide to Lyndon Johnson, "This feeling of alarm was intensified by almost daily

stories about spies and communist cells within the most sensitive agencies."[41] In a

revealing moment, and a continuation of conflating the New Deal with communism,

Chairman Thomas said, "We have been unearthing your New Dealers for two years, and

for eight years before this."[42] While campaigning conservatives used the case to warn

Americans that nefarious elements are working within the government, more often than

not they were New Dealers. One anti-New Dealer suggested that those who supported the

New Deal are responsible for "the greatest peril since the Republic was founded,"

explaining that "We find communists, fellow travelers, pinkos and traitors to the

American way of life firmly entrenched in public positions of trust and power."[43] Those

traitors, he said, were giving atomic secrets away to hostile foreign powers.[44] Thus, the

most significant progressive and prolabor legislation ever produced by the US

government was being branded as communist influenced, with communism being

heralded as an ideology worse than Nazism and an existential threat to the country. The

Hiss case gave the conservatives in Congress legitimacy, now they had something to

show that communism subversion in the government was a threat, and it came from a

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[41] Booth Mooney, *The Politicians, 1945-1960*, (New York, NY: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970), 99.
[42] Quoted in Richard M. Fried*, Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective,* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 92.
[43] E. B Germany 25- ½ Highland Park Shopping Village, Dallas, Texas, August 25, 1948, the Lydon Baines Johnson Library, box 6, Pre-Presidential Confidential File, 1948 Campaign, folder Primary Campaign, Pre-Presidential Confidential File (1948 Campaign).
[44] E. B Germany 25- ½ Highland Park Shopping Village, Dallas, Texas, August 25, 1948, the Lydon Baines Johnson Library, box 6, Pre-Presidential Confidential File, 1948 Campaign, folder Primary Campaign, Pre-Presidential Confidential File (1948 Campaign).

New Dealer. Alger Hiss always maintained his innocence, denying he was ever a Communist. He thought the ordeal caused considerable harm, in his memoirs he said, "It facilitated Nixon's election to the presidency and the ongoing attacks on both the New Deal and Roosevelt's foreign policies."[45] The Hiss case compounded with other hearings and the anticommunist propaganda flowing from the committee making a continuation of New Deal policy, including prolabor policy, impossible during the postwar years and beyond.

It is no surprise that the rampant accusations and sensationalism achieved a blanket response to New Deal style legislation. An editorial from the Communist *Daily Worker* succinctly explains:

> Corporations are now denouncing trade union demand for an eighteen cent an hour increase as 'communism.' Real estate interest demanding a ten-cent fare call the five-cent fare 'communism.' Landlords call rent control 'communism.' A Catholic archbishop in New York denounces 'communisms' a bill to outlaw race discrimination in schools.[46]

Thus, with the public and politicians sufficiently afraid of communism, an effective catch-all term for why progressive policies should not be implemented was born. When reflecting, Karl Korstad of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Unions said, "At home anticommunist hysteria made progressive political action all but impossible."[47] The conservatives successfully stymied New Deal style legislation, reducing the possibility of the CIO's postwar vision, and laying the foundation for their vision to dominate American politics.

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[45] Alger Hiss, *Recollections of a Life*, (New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 1988), 160.

[46] "An Editorial," *Daily Worker*, March 5, 1947, 3.

[47] Karl Korstad, "Black and White Together: Organizing in the South with the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural & Allied Workers Union (FTA-CIO), 1946-1952," *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 94.

CHAPTER 3: THE CIO AND COMBATING THE ENEMY FROM WITHIN

Even before the Eightieth Congress focused on Hollywood, HUAC marched labor

leaders through the halls of Congress in an effort to bind labor to communist subversion.

In 1947, the first hearing devoted exclusively to communism in the UE was launched.[48]

The left-wing union was the ideal target for communist hunters—it was the third largest

in the CIO and featured a number of communists in leadership, as well as potential

communist, and communist adjacent members. Director of Organization for the UE,

James Matles, said of the postwar era:

> a cold war atmosphere was perfect weather for industry to resume full blast the offensive against
> the CIO which they had vainly conducted on two fronts: against the Wagner Act in the halls of
> Congress and against organization of the unorganized by propaganda use of redbaiting to divide
> and weaken CIO industrial unionism's advance.[49]

Matles was a key figure on the CIO's Left and one of the most vocal progressive

members of the CIO. Deriving from a small town in Romanian, the ethnically Jewish

Matles immigrated to America at nineteen, eventually becoming a citizen. He was active

in union organization, and vital to the formation of the UE. As a progressive union leader,

Matles was often the target of government investigations, harassment, and accusations. It

has been alleged that he was a member of the Communist Party, however, it is not

certain.

Other committees in Congress and state level politicians built off HUAC's

accusations, creating a cacophony of salacious accusations. In one instance, the governor

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[48] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 176.
[49] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 154.

of Michigan said leaders of the UAW "are captives of the Communist Party."[50] He also

accused a myriad of Michigan organizations as being communist dominated.[51] As early

as 1946, the public had an uneasy opinion on the CIO and its association with

communism; reflecting this was a Gallup poll that found the majority of Americans and

union members believe that there is a "great deal" or a "fair amount" of communism in

unions, they also considered communism to be a greater influence in the CIO than AFL.[52]

The mid-1940s public perception of the CIO was only enhanced during the HUAC

hearings, further making the public skeptical of the organization. The public's opinion

was paramount in the CIO's turn against its Left-wing.

HUAC hearings were melodramatic; some featured UE members claiming to be

former communists who identified UE leadership as party members. Their stories

included clandestine meetings, secret plans, and a host of other nefarious accusations.[53]

While appearing somewhat ridiculous, the hearings had a profound effect on unions, even

occasionally causing their demise. One instance involved the United Federal Workers of

America (UFWA)/the United Public Workers of America (UPWA), otherwise known as

the UFWA/UPWA. The UFWA/UPWA was a Left-wing union representing federal and

state government employees. It was accepting of African Americans and advocated for

social justice.[54] Union membership was made up of both communists and non-

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[50] "Red Hunt Hits All Labor," *CIO News*, April 7, 1947, 5.

[51] "Red Hunt Hits All Labor," *CIO News*, April 7, 1947, 5.

[52] George Gallup, "Public Sees Communist Influence with Unions," *Wilmington Morning Star*, July 5, 1946, 10, Chronicling America database.

[53] Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 103.

[54] Andrea Friedman*, Citizenship in Cold War America: The National Security State and the Possibilities of Dissent*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 91.

communists.[55] With little support from the CIO, and eventual expulsion, the

UFWA/UPWA was disemboweled by congressional investigations; members lost their

jobs, and some were even jailed, including its president and member of the Communist

Party, Abram Flaxer—HUAC demanded that Flaxer provide the union's membership list

to the committee, he refused, and was put in prison. In 1953, the union disintegrated, a

complete victory for HUAC.[56] In another hearing, former unionists of the interracial

Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural, and Allied Workers of America (FTA) said the union

was communist controlled, some former members even provided lists of union officials

who were communists.[57] To apply more pressure, HUAC held a hearing in Winston-

Salem, North Carolina home of FTA Local 22, one of the union's most significant locals.

The hearing focused on the Communist influence and Local 22's affinity for Soviet

polices.[58] There was also a strong racial element to this hearing; the FTA featured unity

between black and white workers in the South, and the union's president, Donald

Henderson, advocated for union militancy among black workers—a sharp contrast to

"The CIO's more cautious policy of reassuring white workers and community leaders

while quietly recruiting blacks."[59] During a strike in 1947, HUAC member Herbert

Bonner warned there could be race riots, presumably due to the union's interracial

makeup.[60] With an avalanche of anti-American accusations from HUAC, hostile

organizations, including the AFL and employers, went on the offensive, defeating the

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[55] Andrea Friedman, *Citizenship in Cold War America: The National Security State and the Possibilities of Dissent*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 91.
[56] Andrea Friedman, *Citizenship in Cold War America: The National Security State and the Possibilities of Dissent*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 91.
[57] "Reds Dominate Tobacco Union, House Group Told," *Afro-American*, August 2, 1947, 3.
[58] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 283.
[59] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 283.
[60] "Red Rule Charged in Tobacco Union," *New York Times*, July 24, 1947, 4.

FTA in 1950, ending a union presence within the R. J. Reynolds company.[61] The redbaiting onslaught harmed racial unity within the union; prior to 1947, communists in the union were accepted in the black community, however, by 1950, it became more difficult for the black community to work with the FTA due to the hysteria.[62] This is another instance of HUAC breaking a union and damaging racial unity in the labor movement. Each case was used against the entirety of the CIO; to the public, a communist led CIO union confirmed suspicions of the CIO and its Soviet sympathies. CIO hearings continued through the 1950s, long after the Left-wing unions were expelled, with communists being named along with grand conspiracies, and orders being taken directly from Moscow.

The CIO was cognizant of what HUAC wanted to do; the *CIO News* argued that the committee was "lumping all liberals and progressives with [communists]."[63] The same article accused the committee of numerous misgivings and violations of the Bill of Rights.[64] However, telegraphing the CIO's concern over public opinion, the same article stated that by grouping all left leaning unions and individuals together the committee was actually helping communists. Additionally, the article pushed for the FBI to deal with spies, and allow the Judiciary Committee to handle legislation, implying that communism was an issue.[65] This was a trend that became more prevalent as the decade advanced as the CIO sought to break away from any supposed or real communist influence. Leading

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[61] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 283-284.

[62] Karl Korstad, "Black and White Together: Organizing in the South with the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural & Allied Workers Union (FTA-CIO), 1946-1952," *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 87.

[63] "House UnAmerican Committee Helps Reds," *CIO News*, January 17, 1949, 4.

[64] "House UnAmerican Committee Helps Reds," *CIO News*, January 17, 1949, 4.

[65] "House UnAmerican Committee Helps Reds," *CIO News*, January 17, 1949, 4.

the crusade against communism was Walter Reuther. Elected president of the United

Auto Workers Union (UAW) in 1946, the endlessly ambitious Reuther staunchly

advocated for the CIO's vision of postwar America. He was raised in a socialist

household. Reuther's father, Valentine Reuther, was a labor activist and a great admirer

of Eugene Debs. At a young age, Reuther and his father visited Debs while he was in

prison, leaving an impression on the young Reuther.[66] Embracing his socialist roots,

Reuther, dreamed of achieving the CIO's postwar goals through social democracy. He

shared many views with the further Left unionists. For instance, "He understood, as so

many did not, that for labor's voice to carry real weight he had to reshape the

consciousness of millions of industrial workers, making them disciplined trade unionists,

militant social democrats, and racial egalitarians.[67] This opinion is similar to rival, James

Matles', the UE's Director of Organization. Regardless, Reuther was one of the most

fervent anticommunists leaders in the CIO during the 1940s. Even before the era of high

redbaiting, he believed it was in the best interest of the CIO to expel communist

members—he thought it would prove that conservative accusations were false and unite

workers under shared values and political beliefs.[68] Reuther proposed this to the CIO in

1946, it was not received the way he hoped, resulting in unilateral action the following

year.

HUAC applied the pressure on the CIO to remove its communists, while a

component of the most significant piece of labor legislation of the postwar era, Taft-

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[66] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor*, (New York, NY: Basic books, 1995), 5-7.
[67] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor*, (New York, NY: Basic books, 1995), 300.
[68] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 165.

Hartley, provided an opening for anticommunists in the CIO to go on an all-out blitz against its communists and other Left-wing elements. Red Scare politics, including HUAC's efforts influenced an aspect of the Taft-Hartley bill known as the communist affidavit. Taft-Hartley was a conservative reaction to curb the gains made by labor during the 1930s. When explaining the purpose of the legislation, one of its authors, Congressman Fred Hartley, said that Americans wanted new labor law and they needed it, and that the future of his party and the country, "lay in the speedy enactment of legislation designed to equalize the positions of management and labor."[69] Speaking on the problematic character of unions, he stated, "Out on the west coast, labor unions had grown big, bad and tough. When they wanted something, they got it, or rather they did until the Taft-Hartley bill became law."[70] Boiling the law down to its basics, Hartley said, "In our work we planned to salvage what was good in the labor movement by rewarding the good elements or organized labor; the bad we planned to eliminate."[71] Taft-Hartley presented a myriad of problems to labor, restricting rules on strikes and legalizing of right to work laws—which sent many factories to antilabor states in the South, harming organized labor and beginning the painful decline of American industry. The legislation also took away much of labor's leverage, forbidding secondary boycotts, which involved unions putting pressure on an employer by boycotting a third party that does business with the employer. One historian notes, "The act was a turning point in the postwar labor-management relationship: it cast a spotlight on the rising political power of capital, and

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[69] Fred A. Hartley Jr, *Our New National Labor Policy: The Taft-Hartley Act and the Next Steps*, (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnallis Co., 1948) 1.

[70] Fred A. Hartley Jr, *Our New National Labor Policy: The Taft-Hartley Act and the Next Steps*. (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnallis Co., 1948), 43.

[71] Fred A. Hartley Jr, *Our New National Labor Policy: The Taft-Hartley Act and the Next Steps*, (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnallis Co., 1948), quoted in Warren Moscow, "Mr. Hartley Explains," *New York Times*, October 3, 1948, 31.

its enactment would ultimately prove harmful to labor movement throughout the rest of the century and beyond."[72] Taft-Hartley's importance cannot be overstated; it was a major step back for the CIO, forcing it to react. Seeing its power erode as opposed to expanding, the CIO did everything it could to abolish the law.

Conservative bombs in the form of communist allegiances and subversive activities meant that something had to be done to curb the supposed dangers. In the early days of the Eightieth Congress, proposals to ban communists from employment were prevalent. Head of the Motion Picture Association, Eric Johnston, asked the House Labor Committee to amend the Wagner Act to allow employers to terminate employees for being communist without it being cited as an unfair labor practice.[73] The committee, chaired by Fred Hartley (R), took this into consideration, finding a way to work it into legislation.[74] For the ostensive purpose of hindering communist subversion, Taft-Hartley required all union officers to sign an affidavit that says: "I am not a member of the Communist Party or affiliated with such party. I do not believe in an I am not a member of or support any organization that believes in or teaches the overthrow of the United States Government by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods."[75] Failure to comply stripped unions of NLRB services, including NLRB elections.[76] Next to some of the other components, the communist affidavit could appear quaint, almost an inconvenience. Yet it became a highly controversial aspect of the legislation, drastically widening historic cracks between communists and anticommunists in the CIO. The CIO

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[72] Henry Himes, "The United Steelworkers of America's Path to Private Security: The Postwar Retiree Crisis, Politics, and Communism, 1946-1949," *Labor Studies in Working-Class History*, volume 19, no. 2, (2022): 54.

[73] "Ask Law for Bosses to Fire Communists," *Daily Worker*, March 5, 1947, 3.

[74] "Ask Law for Bosses to Fire Communists," *Daily Worker*, March 5, 1947, 3.

[75] Louis Stark, "Loyalty Test Form Issued by Denham," *New York Times*, August 20, 1947, 13.

[76] Louis Stark, "Loyalty Test Form Issued by Denham," *New York Times*, August 20, 1947, 13.

was originally united in opposition to the requirement, there was a concern among communists that they could perjure themselves, but most of the outrage came from resentment over the humiliation of having to file an affidavit affirming loyalty to the United States.[77] CIO president Murray, had a particular distain for the affidavit, and refused to sign it.[78] He laid out his opinion in the CIO's newspaper:

> I stated that I was unwilling to file an affidavit that I was not a Communist. I do not know why the Congress of the U.S. should require me to do that, that as a citizen. I think the Congress is very presumptuous, because I think if they could do that to me about this question of communism, they could do it with any other citizen about any other kind of issue. Why did not this Congress incorporate in this legislation a provision asking a member of a union holding office if he is a member of the Ku Klux Klan? They did not do it…the Congress had in mind a diabolical piece of work, extremely discriminatory nature, revolting to a citizen who believes in decency and in justice and in freedom.[79]

CIO leadership was in agreement over the affidavit—it was unnecessary and demeaning, and it was best to refuse to comply. However, after only sixty days, a number of CIO unions signed the affidavit.[80] AFL unions also began complying. These unions had a clear advantage, and opportunists exploited it. Seizing his chance to move against the communists was UAW's newly elected leader—elected over a Communists supported candidate—Walter Reuther. Since his assent to the top position of the UAW, Reuther began moving against Communists in labor. He put in the UAW constitution that Communists were barred from holding office.[81] Reuther was a polarizing figure on all sides of the political spectrum. He favored progressive legislation, was a staunch advocate for workers' rights, and a highly successful leader of the UAW, attracting conservative criticism. His foreign policy positions were hawkish; being an

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[77] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 251.

[78] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 251.

[79] Gloria Caplan, "'We Dedicate Our Organization to Work Unceasingly in Political Field Against T-H,'" *CIO News*, October 20, 1947, 4.

[80] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 168.

[81] Dave Miller, A Conversation with Dave Miller, Daniel Brooks, Wayne State University, January 4, 1972, 57, https://rs4.reuther.wayne.edu/OralHistories/Individual/LOH002062_OH_001.pdf.

anticommunist, he favored Cold War intervention, bringing progressive ire. Reuther was

an enigmatic character, who was calculating, and possessed keen political awareness. He

seemed to move in the direction of public opinion, even as it was being pushed right by

conservative politicians. This differed from those on the Left, who typically took

uncompromising positions. Reuther reacted in ways that benefited him or his union.

Explaining Reuther's turn against communists, a former associate said, "Walter was a

shrewd guy. He did it in the face of public opinion, which prior to and during the days of

Joe McCarthy."[82] UAW officials signed the communist affidavit and began raids on the

Left. Others followed, creating an end to CIO solidarity and the beginning of a contested

divorce between the Left and the mainstream.

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[82] Dave Miller, A Conversation with Dave Miller, Daniel Brooks, Wayne State University, January 4, 1972, 57, https://rs4.reuther.wayne.edu/OralHistories/Individual/LOH002062_OH_001.pdf.

CHAPTER 4: AMERICA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CIO'S REACTION

The domestic frenzy over communism was influenced by Soviet actions in Eastern Europe and America's emerging role in world affairs. By 1947, the Cold War was quickly taking shape and affecting all aspects of America society, including the CIO. In some instances, the CIO was forced into the Cold War discourse through Red Scare politics, such as HUAC hearings, other times it was a willing participate. The CIO's leadership wanted to refute the Soviet Union's claims that it was the government of the working people. The anticommunists in the CIO, such as Reuther, were also hawkish towards the USSR and the spread of communism, supporting intervention, a robust peacetime military, foreign aid, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Korean War, and initiatives in the Third World—positions more in line with public opinion.[1] Jobs from the Cold War military buildup also provided incentive for CIO membership to be more hawkish. The CIO's Left diverged from this, advocating for isolation and friendly co-existence with the Soviet Union. Additionally, the Left viewed the Cold War with a more Marxist perspective, seeing it as a conflict driven by profiteers, pulling resources away from prolabor polices and social programs. They considered the conflict antithetical to the CIO's postwar vision and working-class values. This contrast in foreign policy, and more broadly communism, contributed to the CIO's break with the Left. For organized labor largely, there was direct correlation between its decline and the Cold War, as well as the failure to enact CIO's postwar policy initiatives.

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[1] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 328.

Historiography on origins of the Cold War is as dense as it is complicated, for this research a more general coverage of the topic will be provided. Shortly after the end of the war in the Pacific, and people all over the world saw the unparalleled destruction caused by atomic weapons, it was apparent that for the first time in its history, the United States was the most powerful country on the planet. Not far behind was the Soviet Union. Both nations saw an opportunity to spread influence across a world shattered by the Second World War. The USSR established communist governments in Nazi liberated Eastern European countries—in many instances through fraudulent elections and violence, breaking promises it made to the Allies. Seeing the East absorbed into the Soviet sphere, the US jumped into the center of world affairs aiming to curb Soviet influence and expand its own. Speaker of the House Joe Martin explained: "We had to carry the burden of leadership, costly as it was. There was no other practical choice."[2] Continuing his thoughts on the subject, Martin revealed his fears of communism, and why it was necessary for the United States to take on an active role in world affairs, stating, "To us the communist menace looked more alarming than had the Hitler menace, dangerous though the latter was."[3] Concerns of Soviet influence spreading was shared by the American public. A 1946 Gallup poll found that in late September "foreign policy and relations with Russia" ranked as the most important issues in the minds of the voters.[4] Consternation over the spread of Soviet influence was especially prominent

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[2] Robert J. Donovan, *Joe Martin: My First Fifty Years in Politics*, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), 193.
[3] Robert J. Donovan, *Joe Martin: My First Fifty Years in Politics*, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), 193.
[4] Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years 1945-1950*, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1976), 227.

among ethnic Americans from countries in the Soviet sphere with Polish Americans being among the most vocal.[5]

Truman did much to influence the transition from World War to Cold War. His actions contributed to the Red Scare fervor, using the threat of communism to scare Americans into supporting his foreign policy agenda.

> He spoke at times in alarmist terms, predicting dire results if a certain policy were not carried out. He appealed to patriotism to rally Americans to his banner, often recalling the sacrifices of World War II. He created awesome images of foreign adversary that frightened. He sketched pictures of political enemies like [Henry] Wallace which suggest that "Reds" might someday roam the corridors of the White House.[6]

Hyperbolic rhetoric being amplified from the White House concerning an existential threat that was both domestic and abroad, with no gray area—freedom against oppression—shaped public opinion.[7] CIO leadership was forced to react; they considered public opinion and the opinion of its rank and file when determining forging policy positions. As the Cold War developed, the CIO's foreign policy positions paralleled public opinion, both being influenced by political rhetoric.

While is impossible to choose a starting date for the Cold War, considered by some as the symbolic starting point was Winton Churchill's 1946 Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri. The case shows the evolution of public opinion regarding communism and the USSR during the postwar years, and its relationship to the CIO. Churchill was convinced that Soviet aggression in the east was tantamount to prewar Nazi aggression. He warned his former wartime allies in the president's home state, famously describing

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[5] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 133.

[6] Thomas Paterson, "Presidential Foreign Policy, Public Opinion, and Congress: The Truman Years," Diplomatic History 3, no. 1 (1979): 8, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24909952.

[7] Thomas Paterson, "Presidential Foreign Policy, Public Opinion, and Congress: The Truman Years," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 1 (1979): 9, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24909952.

Soviet occupation in the east as an "iron curtain." Interestingly enough, while the speech was seen as a turning point between friendly American and Soviet relations, many Americans disapproved of it. Forty percent were against Churchill's incendiary remarks, as well as his suggestion of a "Fraternal Association" between the US and British Empire. However, this did not mean that isolation was more favorable: Americans wanted their government to be firm with the Soviet Union, but also to work and negotiate with the communist country.[8] Skepticism of Churchill and his country's intentions relating to the US was high; both were accused of trying to use America power to hold on to their empire.[9] Additionally, the harsh rhetoric by Churchill rubbed some the wrong way, they feared destabilizing relations with the Soviet Union, the beginning of an arms race, and more conflict.[10] For context, the speech was given less than a year after the Second World War ended, thus, Americans were not interested in more conflict. However, they reconsidered their position on the Soviet Union as other factors emerged, including the sensationalism of the Red Scare.[11]

Many in the CIO agreed with the public's stance, demonstrating the CIO's conformity with the mainstream. On a trip to Moscow, a notorious anticommunist, CIO secretary Treasurer James Carey, "commented that he had noticed no visible evidence of the so-called 'Iron Curtain'"[12] Like most in the US, during the early postwar days many in the CIO were optimistic for peaceful coexistence with the USSR. The CIO's Left was

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[8] RJ Reinhart, "Gallup Vault: Americans' Views as the Iron Curtain Descended," Gallup Vault. Com, Gallup, Inc., March 2, 2021, https://news.gallup.com/vault/330926/gallup-vault-americans-views-iron-curtain-descended.aspx.
[9] Max Lerner, "Churchill's Anti-Comintern Pact," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 16, 1946, 7.
[10] "A British-American Peace?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 6, 1946, 20.
[11] RJ Reinhart, "Gallup Vault: Americans' Views as the Iron Curtain Descended," Gallup Vault. Com, Gallup, Inc., March 2, 2021, https://news.gallup.com/vault/330926/gallup-vault-americans-views-iron-curtain-descended.aspx
[12] "Labor's World," *CIO News*, August 5, 1946, 5.

quick to condemn Churchill and his speech; he was called a warmonger by many on the Left. Churchill's call for unity between the US and Great Britain caused considerable ire, echoing American concerns, the UE accused him of wanting US military power "to hold his rotting imperialist fabric together."[13] The UE called for working Americans to let it be known that they will not fight a war for British imperialism, or US imperialist aspirations.[14] UE locals and districts protested the speech, having rallies for peace, and urging a return to Roosevelt's foreign policies, termed, "Big Three Unity."[15] Some locals sent letters to Truman, asking him to repudiate Churchill and make more of an effort for peace.[16] At one rally, it was suspected that war could break out due to agitation by the "Wall Street monopolists." Fearing Churchill's words could lead to atomic war, one district passed a resolution asking the US to give the United Nations control of all atomic weapon and to seize further production on them.[17] Other aspects of the CIO were not keen on Churchill's speech either. They did not attack Churchill in the same visceral way as the UE, but it seems that like many in America in March of 1946, before the communist panic, and less than a year after the war, the CIO could not endorse the formation of a British American alliance against the USSR. Many on both sides of the CIO agreed, but as the Cold War developed this began to change.

The actions of the Truman administration proved to be more consequential to Cold War escalation than anything Churchill did. They were a monumental factor in permanently altering public opinion and US foreign policy—Truman essentially

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[13] "Churchill Calls for War," *UE News*, March 16, 1946, 3.
[14] "Churchill Calls for War," *UE News*, March 16, 1946, 3.
[15] "Members Ask Big 3 Unity," *UE News*, April 6, 1946, 2.
[16] "Members Ask Big 3 Unity," *UE News*, April 6, 1946, 2.
[17] "Members Ask Big 3 Unity," *UE News*, April 6, 1946, 2.

established American Cold War foreign policy. Concerned with the expansion of communism abroad, Truman looked at ways to curb it. Truman began to consider the USSR a threat to world safety when it refused to abide by promises it made to allow self-determination in Eastern Europe. Seeing half of the continent turn red relatively fast, with communism rising in popularity in the other half, Truman took a hands-on approach. Communism became appealing in war-torn Western European countries such as France and Italy. The war's destruction was so thorough that many countries lacked any sort of infrastructure, making even eating a question. Truman believed that an isolated America gave the USSR a green light to spread communism and absorb more countries into its sphere. With this in mind, he looked at ways to galvanize a reticent American public into action.[18]

The first major effort by Truman was procuring aid for Greece and Turkey. The struggling economies and weak governments of both countries provoked communist insurgencies; neither had the resources to hold the rebels back. The British government asked as early as 1945 for American assistance in Greece. Truman wanted to get involved; he believed in something of a domino theory between Greece and Turkey due to their proximity to each other and Soviet occupied countries.[19] Americans needed to be persuaded that action was necessary. Truman chose to present the problems in Greece and Turkey as pernicious threats to American safety, warranting intervention. Articulating his position, Truman addressed Congress. Prior to the speech Senator Arthur Vandenberg advised Truman: "Mr. President, the only way you are ever going to get this

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[18] Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two,* (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company Inc., 1956), 102.
[19] Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two,* (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company Inc., 1956), 100.

is to make a speech and scare the hell out of the country."[20] Broadcasted on the radio,

The President introduced the Truman Doctrine, explaining to that: "it must be the policy

of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by

armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to

work out their own destinies in their own way."[21] The *New York Times* believed the

speech was tremendously important, comparing it to the Monroe Doctrine, and

explaining that it "was a statement to the world that the United States was ready to play a

much bolder role of leadership; second, it was a warning to Russia that the United States

now prepared to 'contain' Russian expansion."[22] Truman won widespread support from

the public.[23] Naturally, there was some congressional skepticism—some worried about

the where Truman's policy would lead the country, and how it would affect relations with

Russia and the United Nations. Additionally, conservatives had trepidation over the cost

of providing aid. Truman exerted pressure by continuing to sensationalize the threat of

communism—nine days after his speech, he implemented the first federal peacetime

loyalty order in American history.[24]

Some historians argue that the loyalty order undercut the individual and economic

rights of Americans and was more impactful than congressional hearings. Thousands of

federal workers, contractors, and corporate employees—including CIO members—were

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[20] E.J. Dionne Jr., "Inevitably, the Politics of Terror," *Washington Post*, May 25, 2005.
[21] Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two,* (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company Inc., 1956), 106.
[22] "Truman Doctrine," *New York Times*, March 16, 1947, 1, 119, 120.
[23] "The Truman Doctrine," *New York Times*, March 16, 1947, 126.
[24] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 56-57.

harassed, spied on, and lost their jobs due to the loyalty order.[25] The UE was especially

targeted, as members were barred from facilities and denied access to classified

materials.[26] Black workers were also disproportionately targeted, including those who

spoke out against Jim Crow.[27] Progressive and communist unionists most consistently

spoke out against Jim Crow, thus, the loyalty order contributed to the reversal of the war

gains, restricting black opportunities in the CIO.

Due in part to pressures of the Red Scare—including the loyalty order—the

Truman Doctrine was overwhelmingly approved by Congress, and $400,000,000 in

military and economic aid was given to Greek and Turkey.[28] Americans agreed that

involvement in the affairs of the two countries was needed, however, they were less

certain about military aid: fifty-six percent favored aid to Greece, while only forty-nine

percent wanted it for Turkey. Overall, there was little consternation over the Truman

Doctrine, the president's approval rating even rose fifteen percent.[29] Americans did not

misunderstand the enormity of the Truman Doctrine, many saw it as a preemptive move

to avoid more conflict, something that should have been done by Roosevelt in the 1930s

to prevent Nazi aggression. Editorials around the country pragmatically endorsed

Truman's efforts to curb what they considered totalitarianism and spread the American

way of government. Criticisms largely focused on the need for more details, however, the

[25] Andrea Friedman*, Citizenship in Cold War America: The National Security State and the Possibilities of Dissent*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 84.

[26] Ronald L. Filippelli and Mark D. McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 130.

[27] Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 286.

[28] Alex Singleton, "Greek-Turkish Aid Bill Passes," *Nome Nugget,* May 12, 1947, 7, Chronicling America database.

[29] Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: Truman's Doctrine Earned Him Public Kudos," Gallup Vault.com, Gallup, Inc., March 9, 2017, https://news.gallup.com/vault/205742/gallup-vault-truman-doctrine-earned-public-kudos.aspx.

country appeared to sympathize with Truman's position and rational.[30] The Truman Doctrine's impact has reverberated through history foreign policy and American politics. Writing in the early 1970s, Senator J. William Fulbright said, "More by far than any other factor the anticommunism of the Truman Doctrine has been the guiding spirit of American Foreign policy since World War II."[31] Therefore the Truman Doctrine played a significant role in shifting American attitudes and building the Cold War consensus of anticommunism and intervention, while also contributing to solidifying the move away from progressive policies.

Factions within the CIO differed in their response to the Truman Doctrine, creating one of the more significant postwar policy disagreements. The Left was weary of provoking the Soviet Union or splitting the world into two factions. They thought such aggressive policies could even start a third world war. UE locals sent letters to Truman assailing his aid plan—accusing it of undermining the peoples of both countries the ability to choose their own government, as well as undercutting the UN. Others accused the plan of being imperialistic. One of the more consistent criticisms was that the US was sending military aid, as opposed to food, clothing, or other necessities.[32] Other Left-wing unions echoed these concerns—the Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union condemned Truman and the Eightieth Congress at the union's seventh biennial convention in 1947, saying the two were conducting a "wild red-baiting campaign," and interfering in Greece.[33] The union brushed off threats of communism or the Soviet Union,

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[30] "Extracts From American Editorial Comment on President Truman's Message," *New York Times*, March 13, 1947, 4.
[31] Quoted in Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 49.
[32] "Oppose Aid to Greek Monarch," *UE News*, March 29, 1947, 9.
[33] Morris Watson, "CIO Longshoremen Warn 'The Danger is Reaction,'" *CIO News*, April 14, 1947, 13.

explaining that, "The real threat stems directly from the greed and the desire for imperialist control by American trust and monopolies."[34] The more moderate to right leaning side of the CIO disagreed—in a statement, Murray declared the CIO's support for aid to Greece, really emphasizing the position, mostly as a way to counter the criticism coming from the Left-wing unions.[35] While the CIO supported Truman's aid plan, it did not vociferously defend the plan in the way it did for the Marshall Plan. The Truman Doctrine impacted the way dissenters such as those on the CIO's Left were viewed. Similar to the fervor created by HUAC, it labeled threats or issues within Western governments as communist inspired, rather than flaws in the system or critiques of it, making opposition difficult.[36] The outspoken Left of the CIO fell victim to this perception.

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[34] Morris Watson, "CIO Longshoremen Warn 'The Danger is Reaction,'" *CIO News*, April 14, 1947, 13.
[35] "Labor Endorses Greece Aid Plan," *New York Times*, August 6, 1947, 3.
[36] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 58.

CHAPTER 5: BEGINNING OF THE RAIDS

The seismic wave of anticommunism that gripped American society, presented the CIO's anticommunists with the opportunity they needed. Politics and the public were on their side, making the move more feasible than it might have been years earlier—especially during the Depression when the Communists Party was relatively popular. Using the communist affidavit in Taft-Hartley, anticommunists began raids on Left-wing unions. The raids were not universally accepted within the CIO's leadership, however, as politics moved further right, the raids grew more acceptable, eventually being seen as necessary for the survival of the CIO.

Around the same time that Truman outlined the Truman Doctrine, the UAW board covertly endorsed raids on the UE.[1] Other CIO unions mimicked the UAW and began raiding Left-wing unions that did not sign the affidavit. The UAW raids were particularly spiteful—the UE endorsed Reuther's opponent in the union's presidential election in 1946, giving Reuther a desire for revenge, he was also bitter over a UE and UAW strike at GM. During the strike, neither union formed a cohesive strategy nor worked together, eventually seeing each other as competitors. When the UE settled, UAW leadership was indignant, even saying the UE stabbed them in the back.[2] The UAW also raided the Farm Equipment and Metal Workers of America (FE) and Mine Mill locals. Reuther wanted to consolidate workers and build a powerful metal and

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[1] Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, (New York, NY: The New Press, 2000), 78.
[2] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 221-224.

vehicle union.[3] UAW organizers justified the raids by arguing that if they did not do it, the AFL would, so they were doing what was best for the CIO.[4] Not surprisingly, fellow CIO leaders were not thrilled by what they saw as perfidious actions by the UAW. UE leadership took their grievances to CIO president Phillip Murray, telling him that they did not want to pay dues to the CIO if they continued to allow the raids. Matles bluntly said, "It would be plain foolishness to finance their own union's destruction."[5] Murray assured the UE that he would do anything in his power to stop the raids, including disciplining any CIO staff person or anyone on a CIO payroll who participated in them. The assurances proved to be hollow: the raids not only continued but grew worse with other unions joining the UAW.[6] The apparent betrayal by the CIO was a major factor in the UE's exit from the organization in 1949. Others raided left-wing unions, including the International Fur and Leather Workers (IFLWU), who were led by open Communist Ben Gold. A member of the US Communist Party's national committee, Gold was among the most ardent Communist in the CIO as well as a popular figure.[7] Similar to Matles, Gold derived from a European Jewish background, immigrating from Russia at the age of twelve in 1910. He grew up with a father who was active in left-wing politics, not unlike Reuther. His father was a member of was head of the Jewish self-defense corps in Bessarabia, an organization dedicated to protecting Jews from pogroms.[8] Gold learned an important lesson from the Jewish self-defense corps. Years later, he said, "For one thing,

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[3] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 280.

[4] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 280.

[5] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 193.

[6] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 193-194.

[7] "Gerald Zahavi, "Fighting Left-Wing Unionism," *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 160.

[8] Philip Sterling, "Ben Gold, Red Candidate for President of Board of Aldermen Has Record of Over Fifteen Years of Ceaseless Struggle for the Needle Workers: Part 1," *Daily Worker*, October 4, 1933, 5.

the Jewish self-defense corps enlisted in their ranks Russian, non-Jewish workers. That example of solidarity was not lost on me in later years."[9] Filled with passion and energy, Gold was an ardent supporter of workers' rights, who was more focused on his union than anything else. Looking at organized labor from a Marxist perspective, Gold said of his career, "Day and night, I was involved in the struggles of the exploited workers."[10] He could be stubborn and combative; openly clashing with Murray and Reuther during the postwar years.

One of the more notable raids against the IFLWU comes from an eight-month strike against leather tanneries in Gloversville, New York. During the ordeal, the AFL and CIO attempted to establish strike-breaking unions to replace the IFLWU. The employers, AFL, and CIO campaigned against the Left-wing union, calling it communist. Neither the AFL or CIO succeeded in replacing the IFLWU—the workers voted for no union, a small victory for the IFLWU, which could not be on the ballot due to Gold's refusal to sign the communist affidavit.[11] Gold believed it to be an important moment, however, for the IFLWU the Red Scare and the raids precipitated its downfall.

Naturally employers used the affidavit to their advantage—the Tanners Association of Fulton Country refused to negotiate with the IFLWU, arguing that they wanted their people to be represented by a "responsible union," not a communist union, and until the Taft-Hartley affidavit was signed, they would not negotiate. The dispute led

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[9] Philip Sterling, "Ben Gold, Red Candidate for President of Board of Aldermen Has Record of Over Fifteen Years of Ceaseless Struggle for the Needle Workers: Part 1," *Daily Worker*, October 4, 1933, 5.
[10] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 197.
[11] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 174-175.

to a lockout.[12] The affidavit allowed employers an opportunity to refuse to negotiate with unions, Left-wing unions were traditionally the more effective organizers, thus, workers were deprived of their best representatives, enhancing employer's power. Furthermore, fighting between the unions during raids benefited employers, incentivizing them to encourage disputes and turf wars among unions. Intentionally or not, the communist affidavit contributed greatly to moving the balance of power to employers.

There was little public support for unions refusing to sign the affidavit. Gallup polls from the era show that Americans considered the threat of communism at home to be one of the most significant issues facing the country.[13] From the public's perspective it seemed more than fair for notoriously communists filled unions to prove their loyalty. In response to a *New York Times* editorial, arguing that the affidavit was meaningless because communists will sign it anyway to advance their own agenda, a resident of Queens instead argued in favor of keeping the oath, believing it was important to make labor leaders pledge their loyalty, while contending that the law was justified because communists and their sympathizers "should be expelled from official positions in labor unions," and there should be "a severe penalty" for those who lie on the affidavit.[14] Another writer for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* argued that only non-legitimate unions had been destroyed, and those are the ones in which the officers refused to sign the "I-am-not-a-traitor" oath.[15] It seems that by 1949, the only ones negatively affected by the

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[12] Gerald Zahavi, "Fighting Left-Wing Unionism," Lydon Maider, oral history, *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, edited by Steve Rosswurm, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 165.

[13] Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, "The Cold War Consensus: Did It Exist?," *Polity* 22, no. 4 (1990): 630, https://doi.org/10.2307/3234822.

[14] J.W. Cooper, "Affidavits Upheld: Requirement Under Labor Law Denying Communism Believed Justified," *New York Times*, September 19, 1947, 22.

[15] Philip Porter, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 14, 1948, quoted in "T-H Law is Depression Club," *The Potters Herald*, September 16, 1948, 4, Chronicling America database.

Communist affidavit was CIO's Left. They too eventually had to relent, otherwise their unions ran the risk of evaporating due to raids. Matles said, "It was a bitter pill to swallow."[16]

The communist affidavit provided the opportunity and excuse to raid, but during 1947 and most of 1948, it was not supported by everyone. Murray did not condone the actions taken by Reuther and other raiders, however, he found himself in the difficult position of being suck in the middle of the anticommunists and the Left. He tried to keep the CIO together, mediating and working with both sides. But disagreements between Murray and the Left regarding the Marshall Plan and the 1948 presidential election altered his opinion, leading him to join the anticommunist.

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[16] James Matles and James Higgins, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 194.

CHAPTER 6: THE MARSHALL PLAN AND WORKING WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Truman Doctrine represented a new style of American foreign policy, but it was the Marshall Plan or the European Recover Program (ERP) that crystallized American's bond with Western Europe, contributing to the distinct spires of Soviet and American influence. Outlined during a commencement speech by Secretary of State, George Marshall, the plan injected much needed funds and resources into war ravaged European countries; many that were on the verge of total collapse, sparking an elevated interest in communism. There was an almost simplistic belief among American leadership that communist control or influence in any country equated to Russian control. While this was certainly true for many Eastern European counties, largely due to the looming presence of the Red Army, it is less certain for a country such as France, which of course was not occupied by the Soviet Union. Still, a communist government in any form meant less influence and allies for America, thus, the country was faced with a decision to either assist Western Europe or neglect it, risking it to communism.

There was trepidation in the American public about getting involved in European affairs through aid; Greek and Turkish aid was barely approved of by the general public, and America's emerging role in the world was less certain with the public. Many Americans did not believe the crisis in Europe was their problem; viewing the situation in this way led many to question why their resources should be sent abroad. One group of conservatives referred to aid programs as "dangerously unworkable and profoundly

inflationary foreign policy."[1] Sensing some discontent over his marque policies and with

an election on the horizon, Truman and his administration enlisted the CIO to help

convince Americans of the merits of the ERP—Truman and his advisors believed that the

CIO was crucial to gaining public support for foreign policy initiatives.[2]

This was not the first time that the CIO and the Democratic Party worked

together. During the 1930s, Roosevelt's prolabor policies incentivized CIO support and,

at times, the administration worked with the CIO. The war years accelerated this bond;

many labor leaders spent the war among the Washington elite of politicians and industrial

leaders, slowly getting absorbed into the corporate political system, leading to a more

docile collection of labor leaders who were less militant and more analogous to pragmatic

political actors. The aroma of status and power changed CIO leaders, disconnecting them

from their roots as well as the men and women they ostensibly represented.[3] James

Matles termed them "labor statesmen."[4] He describes a moment when he knew CIO

leaders were losing touch with the working class. It was during the 1946 CIO convention

in Atlantic City:

> A luxurious hotel suite occupied by the president of one of the smaller of the new unions was the
> setting for a caucus of a number of leaders, called to discuss the grave questions facing the CIO
> and how best to preserve it as a militant industrial union movement. The three UE officers arrived,
> sat down, and waited. There seemed to be some delay. All at once the doors to the suite were flung
> open, a white-jacketed bartender rolled in a mobile unit and proceeded to set up shop, offering
> from the store of booze just about anything that could be desired in that line. While the party got
> going, two waiters wheeled carts loaded with fancy food delicacies into the room. No such scene

[1] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 48.
[2] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 275.
[3] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 164.
[4] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 164.

could possibly have taken place at the 1938 CIO founding convention in Pittsburgh. Obviously, great changes had occurred, seriously undermining the defenses of militant industrial unionism.[5]

The CIO began a transition during the postwar years, as the era of battles in the streets between employees and strike-breakers waned. The softening of labor leaders and their conversion into political actors within the orbit of the Democratic Party brought much consternation to the Left. This change meant less rank-and-file militancy, and more trading favors, giving concessions, and expecting something in return—the CIO's relationship with Truman is an example. The Left was not inclined to do this, they wanted to operate independent of the two parties, strictly working for the interests of labor and the working class. When their demands were not sufficiently met, instead of operating within the system, the Left became vocal dissenters. Losing confidence in Truman as early as 1947, Lew Goldstein, representing the International Fur and Leather Workers Union (IFLWU), asserted that "if President Truman continues failing to live up to his promise of backing the Roosevelt policy and if he is supported by reactionaries of both parties…we will look elsewhere for political expression."[6] Truman did not give the Left what they wanted, and his loyalty order and foreign policy decisions only put further distance between the more pragmatic faction of the CIO and the Left.

Viewing its relationship with the Truman administration through the lens of pragmatic politics, the CIO worked with Truman, and spent considerable time and effort convincing laborites of the merits of the Marshall Plan. Within the ranks of the working class in Europe and in the United States, there were suspicions that the Marshall Plan was nothing more than a way for US banks and investors to control Europe's economy, or that

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[5] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 164-165.

[6] Ted Cox, "Chicago Rally Urges Veto, 1,000 Cars Hit Washington," *Chicago Star*, June 21, 1947, 3, Chronicling America database.

it was a simple transfer of wealth to European capitalist, depriving the truly needy of

resources. CIO leadership was in favor of the plan, lobbying extensively on its behalf.

The CIO even worked with Congress, helping provide signatures for petitions asking

lawmakers to support the plan. A letter from the CIO's Secretary Treasurer, James Carey,

to all CIO affiliates said, "the CIO is playing an important role in the campaign to

rehabilitate war-devastated nations so they can become self-supporting."[7] Carey also

spoke glowingly of the plan to the World Federation of Trade Unions, doing much to try

to convince European works that they would benefit from the plan, and to dismiss

concerns such as the ones above.[8] Recording a radio show for the State Department,

Murray addressed European workers, telling them the merits of the recovery plan. When

asked why labor supports the ERP, Murray explained that American workers want a

"world of good neighbors."[9] Sending aid to alleviate suffering and instability in Europe

was the right thing to do. Murray addressed accusations of Wall Street influence in the

ERP, saying they were false, explaining that the ERP derived from the will of the people

and their government. American labor unions were against Wall Street financial groups

having influence over the ERP.[10] He added that "We know that only the people can

secure a people's peace."[11] David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers

Union believed the ERP and the Truman Doctrine were necessary to prevent "Soviet

imperialism."[12] There was something of a tradeoff for the CIO. Truman needed labor's

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[7] "Give Details in U.S. Aid Program," *CIO News*, January 19, 1948, 8.
[8] Rev. George G. Higgins, "'Carey Did More to Promote ERP Than a Week of Marshall Talks,'" *CIO News*, January 12, 1948, 5.
[9] "Murray Tells Europe: U.S. Labor 100% For Marshall Plan," *CIO News*, December 15, 1947, 10.
[10] "Murray Tells Europe: U.S. Labor 100% For Marshall Plan," *CIO News*, December 15, 1947, 10.
[11] "Murray Tells Europe: U.S. Labor 100% For Marshall Plan," *CIO News*, December 15, 1947, 10.
[12] David Dubinsky and A. H. Raskin, *David Dubinsky: A Life with Labor*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1977), 277.

support in the 1948 election. He vetoed Taft-Hartley despite having no issues with the law, and actually believing it was needed. Truman surmised his veto would be overruled by Congress—he was right—but his action gave him labor's support, including for initiatives such as the ERP—he was right again.[13] The CIO saw working with Truman and his party as a means towards desired legislation. There was, however, a sincere belief in the CIO's leadership that the ERP was the best course of action for the crisis in Europe.[14]

While the CIO influenced public opinion on the ERP, it was also shaped by elected officials. They tended to be more negative than the CIO, warning of dire consequences if communism were to spread. Rallying support for the ERP in his district, Nixon said that his experiences abroad convinced him that economic assistance was imperative "to save Europe from the twin specters of starvation and communism."[15] The efforts were effective, as by the time the ERP was being realized, the American public was receptive of the concept. When asked if they were willing to pay for the Marshall Plan, some Americans believed it was the right thing to do for countries in need, even those who were unsure of the Marshall Plan believed that the US should do something to aid Europe.[16] A bartender in New York said, "people in Europe need help and we're the only ones that can give that help. They were unfortunately led in the last war. I'd vote

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[13] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 275-276.

[14] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 275-276.

[15] Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon Volume One,* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1978), 51.

[16] "Public Opinion Sample Indicates Uncertainty Over Marshall Plan," *Evening Star*, November 28, 1947, B-16, Chronicling America database.

yes."[17] A letter to the editor in the *New York Times* argued that it was essentially an investment for peace, like many Americans they conflated Nazi aggression in the late 1930s with Soviet aggression and communist popularity in Europe. They thought that the United States should have been more combative with Hitler and were concerned the same mistake could be made with Stalin.[18] As more information became available, and the public began to better understand the ERP and its nuances, support increased. A Gallup poll found those who were familiar with the plan favored it three to one.[19] The AFL was also supportive; it announced its endorsement with a dire warning that if the plan were not to be enacted, the communists could take over Western Europe and America would soon find itself at war.[20] This thinking was consistent with others who were having flashbacks to 1938. ERP support, along with the disquieting rhetoric coming from some of its advocates, put those who were against it, such as the CIO's Left, in a precarious position.

The CIO's Left was not against the concept of aid, rather they disapproved of the way it would be distributed. At the UE's 1947 convention the union endorsed sending food and other non-military equipment to war torn countries, they stipulated that aid should not be "an instrument of political and economic domination but because men, women and children are hungry, and war devastated nations need rebuilding."[21] The FTA echoed similar statements, arguing that that "Not one pound of food has been sent to the

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[17] "Public Opinion Sample Indicates Uncertainty Over Marshall Plan," *Evening Star*, November 28, 1947, B-16, Chronicling America database.

[18] "Communism or Marshall Plan," *New York Times*, October 15, 1947, 26.

[19] George Gallup, "Marshall Plan Gains Public Support as Understanding of it is Increased," *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 2, 1947, 6-A, Chronicling America database.

[20] Special to the *New York Times*, "AFL Urges Passage of Marshall Plan," *New York Times*, December 6, 1947, 8.

[21] "Congress Gets NAM Blueprint For Action at Special Session, *UE News*, November 15, 1947, 2.

victims of Fascism under its (Marshall) provisions."[22] In a statement by the FTA

executive board, the Marshall plan was described as "A scheme of the big business trust,

responsible for the Taft-Hartley slave law, to extend their dominion over the economic

and political life of other nations."[23] FTA president, Ben Gold, was vociferously against

the ERP; his position was somewhat extreme. Finding nothing good in the ERP, he

explained, "And I am convinced that the Marshall Plan is not aimed at helping the needy,

but rather to rebuild the ruined industries of the capitalists. I am opposed to the United

States sending billions of dollars to the Nazi capitalists in Germany to help them build

their trusts and their monopolies."[24] The Left's ignition was similar to is disapproval of

Greek and Turkish aid. In many regards, it seems they simply did not trust the

government, or that they did not favor any aid going to industry, but for all of it to go

towards resources such as food. Attempting to find a detailed reason to reject the ERP

proves somewhat difficult. One of the more concrete statements comes out of the 1948

UE convention. In a resolution, the union said that the ERP was conceived and managed

by big business, making it a "fraud" that does not help recovery but "helps fatten

profiteers."[25] In support of its position, the UE argued: "if the ERP were in fact a program

directed to raising people's standards of living, instead of an effort to dominate the

internal political and economic affairs of other countries, the US would not be saddled

with a $20 billion armaments program and a war economy to enforce ERP."[26] Not to be

misconstrued, the UE declared in the statement that it supported helping other countries

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[22] "Give Details in U.S. Aid Program," *CIO News*, January 19, 1948, 8.

[23] Special to the *New York Times*, "Union Board Opposes the Marshall Plan," *New York Times*, November 22, 1947, 4.

[24] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 179.

[25] "Convention Delegates Map Fighting Program," *UE News,* September 18,1948, 1,4.

[26] "Convention Delegates Map Fighting Program," *UE News,* September 18,1948, 1,4.

in the form of aid.[27] The Left's understanding of the Marshall Plan is somewhat convoluted and its objections were not very specific. They had legitimate concerns over where the money was going but did not offer a lot of other tangible objections. There is the possibility that in the aftermath of Taft-Hartley, Truman's loyalty order, and congressional communists witch hunts, the typically anti-establishment Left, simply did not trust anything from the government, and under most circumstances would have disavowed any aid plan proposed by the US government. The FTA's statement somewhat reflects this. The position is consistent with the nature of the CIO's Left— when taking what they considered a moral position, they would rarely compromise or change their stance. While the other side of the CIO was able to alter their positions to do what they felt was best for the organization. The Left was not interested in compromising their political positions—distain for Truman and an uncompromising desire for progressive policies were factors in the Left backing former Vice President, Henry Wallace in the 1948 presidential election.

Both sides of the CIO could not have differed more in their interpretation of the ERP. Each considered their position to be morally above the other's. Mainstream CIO leadership viewed the dissenters as a liability, a group of radicals that put the entire organization into jeopardy. Aspects of this were correct—public opinion and the harsh realities of the era of high redbaiting indicated that the Left's position was problematic for the CIO. The public's favorability towards the ERP and the growing distrust of those

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[27] "Convention Delegates Map Fighting Program," *UE News,* September 18,1948, 1,4.

on the Left compelled the CIO to take action or the organization could be red baited out

of existence.[28]

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[28] George Gallup, "The Case for the Public Opinion Polls," *New York Times*, February 27, 1949, 180, 221, 223.

CHAPTER 7: THE 1948 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE CIO'S PURGE

The Eightieth Congress, especially after the passage of Taft-Hartley, forced the CIO into political action. Believing its best chances of obtaining a favorable congress and president, the mainstream CIO stridently backed Truman in the 1948 presidential election. It was presumed that if Truman were re-elected then Taft-Hartley could be repealed and Fair Deal policies, such as universal healthcare, could become law. The AFL and other labor organizations made the same calculation. Organized labor's decision to endorse Truman cemented the marriage between labor and the post-Roosevelt Democrats. This also contributed to the CIO's transition from a more militant organization to an establishment piece working within the political system.

The 1948 presidential election saw both sides of the CIO clash in a race that featured two candidates whose history and positions were reflective of each side of the CIO. On one side was Progressive third-party candidate, Henry Wallace. Wallace was Roosevelt's Vice President for one term before being replaced by Truman and demoted to Secretary of Commerce—he was considered to be too far left for conservative Democrats, especially Southern Democrats. The former Vice President served in his successor's cabinet until he was forced to resign after giving a foreign policy speech that was antithetical to Truman's policies. Wallace shared the Left's position on the ERP. The exclusion of the USSR and countries within the Soviet sphere was a sore point for him and CIO's Left. It should be noted that the State Department may have sabotaged efforts to include the USSR in the ERP. They wanted access to Soviet economic records, something that the USSR was not willing to do. The exclusion may have been done to

lower the cost of the ERP, as USSR inclusion would elevate the cost, minimizing the chances of congressional approval. The political and public reaction of aiding a communist country was also a factor.[1] Nations in the Soviet sphere were promised aid through the Soviet Molotov Plan. This split between the East and West caused Wallace to reject the Marshall Plan, favoring aid from the UN to avoid further corrosion to the relationship between the United States and Soviet Union.[2] Like the Left, Wallace was also opposed to the Truman Doctrine. The cornerstone of the Wallace campaign was a rejection of Truman's foreign policy.

The CIO's mainstream was of course for Truman, their leadership openly denounced Wallace, his supporters, and his positions. While it did agree with many of Truman's positions, CIO leadership considered its backing of Truman as a good political move for what it wanted. Leadership also saw that Wallace had little chance of winning, and coming out against a far-left campaign could improve the CIO's radical image. For these reasons, they believed it was in the best interests of the entire CIO to support Truman and the Democratic Party. A statement by CIO officers and its Executive Board explained that support for a third party would split the progressive vote, allowing labor's enemies to benefit. They championed unity and voting for Democrats, as it was the best way to ensure a labor friendly government.[3] The Left remained stubborn, seeing Wallace as the only candidate that could end the Cold War and bring peace. Some left-wing unionists even worked for Wallace's campaign.

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[1] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 59.

[2] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 62.

[3] "CIO Opposes 3d Party Sets Legislative Goal," *CIO News*, January 28, 1948, 1.

Similar to accusations made against Left-wing unions, political opponents charged that the Wallace campaign was secretly run by communists. Believing that Wallace was not a bad guy, but simply naïve, Truman explained his concerns:

> There was, however, a sinister aspect to the Wallace movement. It provided a front for the Communists to infiltrate the political life of the nation and spread confusion. Without the conscious knowledge of many members of the new Progressive party, the reds were working swiftly and skillfully to gain control of the nominating convention and to dominate party committees and the platform.[4]

Wallace was susceptible to these types of accusations in part due to his desire to have a peaceful coexistence with the USSR and his position that Truman was too hard on the Soviets; in some ways he was an apologist for Stalin. The communist allegations against Wallace were not unfounded, they most certainly lacked the Truman cinematic characterization, but it is true that Wallace's coalition of supporters included communists. Predictably, opponents redbaited Wallace and his campaign. He was usually taunted during speeches—people called him a traitor, or a communist. Truman participated in these attacks, warning in a speech that "communist are guiding and using" Wallace's Progressive party, and this "shows that this party does not represent American ideals."[5] While Truman's redbaiting during the campaign was expected, it contributed to drawing a fine line between left-wing Americans and everyone else. It also assisted conservative efforts to define left-wing ideologies and policies as un-American, further eroding faith in New Deal liberalism. Suspicions of the Wallace campaign were so great that HUAC and the FBI closely monitored it. HUAC doing so for political purposes, while the FBI's inquiries came from Director J. Edgar Hoover's lifelong obsession with stopping communist subversion.

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[4] Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company, Inc., 1956), 185.

[5] W. H. Lawrence, "Communists Guide Wallace's Party, Truman Declares," *New York Times*, September 24, 1948, 1,19.

Wallace's critique of Truman's foreign policy is what made him popular on the

CIO's Left, but what were the details of Wallace's plans, and how did they differ from

both major parties? The Republicans and other conservatives mostly agreed with

Truman's aggressive approach to the USSR and communism around the world, leaving

Wallace as the best choice for those wanting the country to change its foreign policy

direction. Many in the CIO's Left wanted a return to what they described as the foreign

policies of President Roosevelt, perhaps this included an aspect of Roosevelt nostalgia.

They believed that Truman abandoned Roosevelt's postwar peace plans, including a

strong UN. There was, as Truman described an aspect of credulity to Wallace and his

policy proposals. In the weeks leading up to the election, Wallace gave a speech outlining

what he thought was a solution to the crisis in Berlin, believing that his idea could

strengthen the UN and put the US and USSR on a path to peace, Wallace proposed that

the US, UK, and USSR remove all of their troops from Germany, and allow the country

to be occupied and policed by France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Poland,

and Czechoslovakia.[6] He rationalized that these countries were the smallest countries

with the most interests in what happens in Germany, explaining:

> In each of these (smaller) countries, the people are really scared of Germany. Let Germany be occupied by the sons and grandsons of these who have suffered most from repeated German aggression. We can depend on them to do a first-class job of keeping Germany from again becoming a threat to world peace.[7]

Championing his chosen countries and their non-truculent nature, Wallace said,

"I am encouraged to make this proposal because I have seen the splendid way in which

the smaller powers have been striving to make the United Nations again an instrument of

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[6] Charles Grutzner, "Wallace Proposes New German Plan," *New York Times*, October 25, 1948, 18.
[7] Charles Grutzner, "Wallace Proposes New German Plan," *New York Times*, October 25, 1948, 18.

peace."[8] There are various objective reasons why Wallace's plan is impractical, one of the more glaring holes being that his chosen countries had all been so thoroughly devastated by the war that they could barely government themselves, let along conduct a major occupation of an even more devastated neighboring country. Many of Wallace's foreign policy proposals and ideas were similar to this, a blend of overly simplistic with a dash of credulity. Despite his idealism, the CIO's Left considered Wallace to be the one who could realize Roosevelt's vision for postwar peace—the Left considered friendly relations with the USSR and less intervention in favor of diplomacy through the United Nations as key components of Roosevelt's peace plans.

CIO leadership and its executive board used their position to compel the Left to support Truman, even instructing all unions that support was mandatory. Murray considered this to be the end of the discussion. Disagreeing, the UE felt that they should be allowed to make their own political choices.[9] Murray sharply retorted that "the third party does not and cannot command the allegiance and support of laboring men and women and their organizations."[10] The UE and other Left-wing unions ignored Murray and the CIO's mandate. The *CIO News* worked extensively to convince unionists of the futility and potential harm of Wallace's campaign. The Director of the CIO's PAC, Jack Kroll, explained in one article, "For any political party to be successful, there must be a substantial organized base and Mr. Wallace's movement does not have that…Wallace is a certain loser."[11] On the day before the election, the *CIO News* printed a scathing article

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[8] Charles Grutzner, "Wallace Proposes New German Plan," *New York Times*, October 25, 1948, 18.
[9] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 188.
[10] Mel Fiske, "CIO to OK Truman Aug. 30," *Daily Worker*, August 20, 1948, 2.
[11] "PAC Pushing Legislative 'Platform,'" *CIO News*, February 2, 1948, 3

about Wallace and his campaign. The writer highlighted Wallace's lack of substantial support within labor, calling the campaign a "Don Quixote campaign" that "grew more ridiculous as the final days wore on."[12] The article described Wallace as "the most rapidly declining 'major' candidate ever to run for the Presidency."[13] In what could have been an attempt to speak to those on the Left that believed Wallace was the heir to Roosevelt, the writer pointed out that Roosevelt must have preferred Truman to Wallace because he chose the former to be his running mate in 1944. The writer also seemed gleeful when describing the Wallace campaign getting eggs and tomatoes thrown at it in the South.[14] Mainstream unions also worked to dissuade their members from supporting Wallace. The UAW provided pamphlets to its workers describing Wallace as no ally of organized labor or minority groups and calling him "Russia's candidate" based on his foreign policy agenda.[15] The Truman administration joined the CIO in criticizing dissenters. Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin, praised CIO leaders for their "political wisdom," while also promising that they will be rewarded for they loyalty in the form of economic and political power.[16] At the same time, he chastised the UE, redbaiting the organization and denouncing it for its refusal to back the Democratic Party in 1948.[17]

As with every major third party of the twentieth century, Wallace went down in flames. Taunting Wallace, the *CIO News* described the loss as "colossal and humiliating."[18] Only garnering a little over a million votes and zero Electoral College

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[12] Arthur Riordan, "It Certainly Was a Campaign!" *CIO News*, November 1, 1948, 6.
[13] Arthur Riordan, "It Certainly Was a Campaign!" *CIO News*, November 1, 1948, 6.
[14] Arthur Riordan, "It Certainly Was a Campaign!" *CIO News*, November 1, 1948, 6.
[15] "Wallace Welched on Labor and Minorities—UAW," *Potters Herald*, October 14, 1948, 3, Chronicling America database.
[16] "Politicians Promise Payoff," *UE News*, December 12, 1949, 5.
[17] "Politicians Promise Payoff," *UE News*, December 12, 1949, 5.
[18] "Getting A (Party) Line on Results of Election," *CIO News*, November 15, 1948, 9.

votes. Wallace's decisive defeat and Trumans surprise victory empowered CIO

leadership and their conviction that they were making the best decisions for the

organization. Seeing the Left as incongruent with the goals of the organization as well as

a liability, the CIO began exploring ways to purge it.

Since the election, Murray had grown increasingly indignant over the refusal of

the Left to abide by the CIO's policy regarding politics. The disagreements between the

two main factions persisted after the election, despite CIO policy requiring unions to

adopt positions and policies endorsed by leadership—in 1949 CIO endorsed the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while the Left refused. A CIO spokesperson said

Murray was "disgusted with the situation in which some Left-wing unions flout policy."[19]

A pivotal moment came in 1949, during the annual CIO convention in Portland,

Oregon.[20] At the convention, Murray spoke out against communists, and relayed fears of

the Communist Party controlling unions and the CIO—it appears that his frustrations led

him to anticommunist rhetoric and positions.[21] Finally, later that same year at the CIO

convention the purges formally began. The CIO made Communists ineligible for

executive office, and mandated expulsion by two-thirds vote for any affiliate that follows

the Communists Party line.[22] By 1949, Communists, communists sympathizers, and other

left-leaning individuals lacked any legal or societal protections, and were routinely

expelled from society, "The Democratic administration, after all, had legitimized the use

of political test with its loyalty program, and its redbaiting of the Wallace Campaign had

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[19] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 286.
[20] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 278.
[21] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 278.
[22] Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, *Labor in America a History*, (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 314.

invited those to its right to resort to similar tactics."[23] Americans saw the removal of

communists from society as objectively good.[24] Thus, with as much fervor as one could

muster during the era of high redbaiting, the CIO joined the rest of American and purged

its Left.

Between 1949 to 1950, the CIO lost eleven unions, 900,000 members (almost

one-fifth of total membership), and many of its most effective organizers, creating a

fragmented labor movement that never recovered. Expelled unions included the United

Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, International Longshoremen's and

Warehousemen's Union, and International Fur & Leather Workers Union.[25] There are

different versions of the story. Some unions on the Left said that they broke from the CIO

on their own volition. UE leadership said the raids were the primary reason for their

departure. The other side maintained that they were expelled. Writing a few years after

the event, Reuther claimed that "We put our own house in order many years ago by

expelling those unions which, after a full and fair trial, were found to follow the

Communist Party line."[26] Regardless, the split was a major moment in American labor

history.

After the expulsions, raids increased exponentially. Raiding might seem

somewhat unethical; however, CIO leadership deemed them as an appropriate way to

oust the Left. During the UE's 1948 convention, a resolution against raiding was rejected

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[23] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 161.

[24] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 161-162.

[25] Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, *Labor in America a History*, (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2017) 314.

[26] "CIO Stands for Civil Liberties," *CIO News*, January 4, 1954, 5.

by a minority group led by CIO secretary-treasurer James Carey, arguing that they were justified because the UE refused to endorse Truman or the Marshall Plan, a move that indicated the eventual position of CIO leadership.[27] Fully embracing the politics of the Red Scare, the CIO, once opposed to the communist affidavit in Taft-Hartley, argued that it was too weak to be effective against communists. Future Supreme Court Justice, then general counsel for the CIO, Arthur Goldberg, wrote an article in the *CIO News* expressing frustration over the legislation's failure to remove communists and fellow travelers from the CIO. Goldberg believed that communists and fellow travelers signed the affidavit anyway due to "the poorly draft language of the act."[28] He championed the CIO's efforts against communists, calling its purge an "effective action" and one that removed all communist influence by expelling unions "whose leaders were under communist domination."[29] Goldberg added that the CIO did a far better job eradicating communist than the communist affidavit.[30] With raids in full effect, the CIO worked with the government to out communists and harm Left-wing unions. Former UE president, James Carey, led the charge against communists in his former union, calling it a "Communist front."[31] Once deemed "labor's boy wonder," Carey was influential in the formation of the UE and was its first president. Politically more in line with mainstream CIO leadership, Carey, like others in the 1930s, was tolerant of far-left individuals. While president of the UE, he dismissed any notion that communists should be excluded from the organizing or were any sort of threat to America. Instead, he viewed the issue as a

[27] "Convention to CIO: Fight for Members," *UE News*, September 11, 1948, 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
[28] Arthur Goldberg, "What the CIO Finds Wrong with Taft-Hartley," *CIO News*, October 23, 1950, 3.
[29] Arthur Goldberg, "What the CIO Finds Wrong with Taft-Hartley," *CIO News*, October 23, 1950, 3.
[30] Arthur Goldberg, "What the CIO Finds Wrong with Taft-Hartley," *CIO News*, October 23, 1950, 3.
[31] Joseph Loftus, "Electrical Union a Russian Front, Says Carey of CIO," *New York Times*, September 3, 1948, 1, 4.

wedge to divide labor.[32] Carey was voted out of office in 1941 in favor of Albert

Fitzgerald. UE rivals asserted that Carey was neglecting his duties in favor of his position

as secretary-treasurer of the CIO and, thus, was no longer an effective president. Carey

claimed that he was forced out over a power struggle between him and the union's

communists. Similar to Walter Reuther, Carey harbored resentment towards UE

leadership, and sought to undermine it. He even worked with the FBI to out communists

in the union. After expelling the UE, the CIO chartered a replacement, the International

Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) and Carey was given control of the union.

With the CIO working with the government and showing its commitment to

anticommunism, there is evidence to suggest that government investigators stopped

harassing union leaders who left the UE for the IEU. One example comes from president

and business agent of Local 301, Leo Jandreau, and his decision to defect from the UE to

the IUE, bringing the 20,000 member Schenectady local with him. Days prior Jandreau's

defection, Senator McCarthy brought his subcommittee to investigate the local. UE

leaders accused Jandreau of switching sides to save himself, which had merits due to

Jandreau's fortune of not being harassed by McCarthy.[33] They maintained that there was

a quid-pro-quo between the two sides, explaining, "By an underground deal with GE and

McCarthy, Jandreau accepted GE's blacklist policy, escaped being called before

McCarthy and now, in payoff, is leading a move to hand Schenectady GE workers over

to the IUE."[34] Jandreau was called a coward and a betrayer, however, he saved himself

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[32] Ronald Filippelli and Mark McColloch, *Cold War in the Working Class: The Rise and Decline of the United Electrical Workers*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 27.
[33] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 229-230.
[34] Editorial, "Jandreau Runs, But Not the Membership," *UE News*, March 8, 1954, 10.

and his local by joining the IEU, while the UE once again found itself on the losing end of the Red Scare.

The CIO was content over its decision to purge the Left, believing it was the right move politically and for their workers—some leaders felt that the communists were isolated from the rank-and-file due to their political positions.[35] Others believed the Red Scare narrative that those on the Left-wing were not loyal Americans and opposed to the American way of life. Conflating the two perceptions, some unionists questioned the Left-wing's ability to lead working class Americans. Echoing this sentiment, in a speech at the CIO's 1949 convention Murry said, "The interests of the communist minority in the CIO are the interests of the Soviet Government. What do they care about trade unionism?"[36] In a congressional hearing, Carey criticized communists' ability to work for the union, saying managers preferred to work with communist shop stewards because they were "afraid to prosecute a grievance vigorously."[37] Carey warned that this was dangerous for employers as it shows them working with communists.[38] It is clear that Carey is trying to tell unionists that communists do not have their best interest, he also seems to be threatening employers who tolerate Left-wing unions.[39] Others attacked the morality of the leftists—a common Cold War trope was that communist were immoral people. Despite potentially not believing his words, Reuther voiced these concerns: "They are the phony Left, they are the corrupted Left, and they are the morally

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[35] Victor Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther and the Story of the UAW: A Memoir*, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 268.

[36] "Unified CIO, Cleansed of CP Minority, Ready to do Better Job for Workers," *United Automobile Worker*, November 1, 1949, 3, Chronicling America database.

[37] Joseph Loftus, "Electrical Union a Russian Front, Says Carey of CIO," *New York Times*, September 3, 1948, 1, 4.

[38] Joseph Loftus, "Electrical Union a Russian Front, Says Carey of CIO," *New York Times*, September 3, 1948, 1, 4.

[39] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 285.

degenerate Left."[40] By joining the patriotic movement against communism and anything

Soviet related, the CIO hoped to win the public's favor and end political attacks against

them. Similar to the decisions made by executives in Hollywood, the CIO was most

likely more concerned about public perception, and made their decisions based on how

the organization was being perceived externally. Additionally, they thought removing the

communists would ensure a more cohesive organization, one with more potential to

expand and organize the unorganized. Perhaps the validity of the accusations made

against the Left-wing did not matter, but it is nevertheless notable that when the CIO

joined the Red Scare fervor, it effectively maimed its long-term goals for a threat that was

nonexistent— since the Soviet archives have been opened, there has been no evidence to

this point that indicates the Communist Party in America and the KGB attempted

mobilize unions in any industry for espionage.[41]

     The Left was flummoxed by the CIO's actions. In 1949, both sides still had

congruent aspirations, leading many on the Left to decry what the CIO was doing,

arguing that instead of setting up the labor movement for long-term success, the CIO had

mortally wounded it. Ben Gold thought the CIO was attacking the wrong people. In a

conversation with Murray he said, "And President Murray, instead of fighting against

communists and left-wingers in the unions, the CIO should be fighting against Taft-

Hartley, against the wild wave of reaction that is sweeping the country and for higher

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[40] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor, (New York, NY: Basic books, 1995*), 309.
[41] Jennifer Luff, *Commonsense Anticommunism: Labor and Civil Liberties Between the World Wars*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 183.

wages for the workers. That is the duty of the leaders of the CIO!"[42] When the Fur and

Leather Worker's decided to leave the CIO, they issued the following statement:

> The final act, the expulsions of the progressive trade unions, is nothing but an active demonstration by Phil Murray and his lieutenants of their readiness and willingness to silence the voice of progressive trade unionism and to crush resistance on the part of progressive labor against the efforts of reaction to force upon labor and the people its war program an war preparations, That is being done by Murray and his lieutenants with the full knowledge that it weakens labor and strengthens the reactionary offensive.[43]

Taking a moral high ground and protecting its own interests, but presumably

trying to strengthen the labor movement, after the UE left the CIO, it offered to sign a

non-raid agreement between the two, feeling that such an agreement was necessary to

advance the interests of workers, the CIO rejected the offer.[44] Describing how the Left

felt about the CIO and its political positions, Matles labelled the CIO's establishment as a

"junior partner in the Truman-Dulles Cold War program."[45] On its way out of the CIO,

the IFLWU harshly criticized the organization, saying, "The chief activities of these CIO

leaders are redbaiting, raiding and wrecking other unions."[46]

By 1950, a consensus among most voters suggested that Americans supported the

objectives of the Red Scare. A Gallup poll from 1949 even found that 68 percent of

Americans were in favor of banning the Communist Party.[47] The conservatives were

successful in altering the public discourse and dramatically changing the national

climate—they convinced the public that people who were once normal Americans were

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[42] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 179.

[43] "Fur Workers Quit CIO On Trial Eve," *CIO News*, May 29, 1950, 7.

[44] "UE No-Raid Agreement Rejected by CIO," *UE News*, November 14, 1949, 5.

[45] James Higgins and James Matles, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), 191.

[46] "Fur Workers Quite CIO On Trial Eve," *CIO News*, May 29, 1950, 7.

[47] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 147.

now threats to national security.[48] In many ways, it forced the CIO to take action, otherwise the organization was in jeopardy of collapsing under a barrage of redbaiting. CIO leaders thought they were working in the best interest of their members and the labor movement by using the troubling atmosphere to raid Left-wing unions. However, breaking solidarity and pitting unions against each other posed a major threat to the entire labor movement. As time progressed, the labor movement disintegrates, turning into specks of dust on the ash heap of history, showing that the decision to raid their own was akin to a snake eating itself to survive.

At the same time the CIO was purging its Left-wing, the Truman Administration was jumping into the first proxy war of the Cold War era. Communist controlled North Korea invaded the South, launching a brutal three-year conflict, that is technically still ongoing. Confirming the fears of the Left, the beginning of the war brought a drastic cut to welfare programs, federal housing aid was cut, and more was to come, as Truman recommended non-military agencies to "curtail or slow down those projects which do not directly contribute to defense."[49] Truman's decision to fight in Korea solidified America's new role in the world—an interventionist power that is willing and capable to fight all over the world against communism. It also cemented the anticommunist consensus, extending the Red Scare, and paving the way for McCarthyism.[50] The long-term implications of this erased any chances for the CIO's postwar vision and were crucial to the emergence of the conservative postwar vision.

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[48] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 166.

[49] "Prices, Taxes Going up—Housing, Welfare down," *UE News*, July 24, 1950, 6.

[50] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within 1830-1970*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 155.

CHAPTER 8: THE BEST IS OVER FOR THE LABOR MOVEMENT: SHORT- AND LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF AMERICA'S RIGHT-WING SHIFT

"Here in my memoirs, I want to describe a few tragic facts which further prove that the traitorous leaders who dominate the trade unions constitute a tragedy for the American working class and the American people."[1] —Ben Gold

Cold War Escalation and Politics

The expeditious rise of the Cold War and the CIO's support provided the organization with some benefit. Truman's second term saw the entrenchment of the military industrial complex and an increase in US foreign intervention. Believing that a conflict with the Soviet Union was inevitable, Truman focused extensively on transforming American military and defense capabilities. After his time in office, he said, "One of the strongest convictions which I brought to the office of President was that the antiquated defense setup of the United States had to be reorganized quick as a step toward ensuring our future safety and preserving world peace."[2] Truman strengthened the military through a wartime economy. The CIO typically supported his initiatives, rarely objecting. In the short-term, a full-time war economy presented benefits for the CIO, labor leaders recognized this and encouraged it, Walter Reuther even said that a reduction in military spending was out of the question.[3] In 1949, Truman further solidified America's commitment to Western Europe and substantial military spending with the

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[1] Ben Gold, *Ben Gold Memoirs*, (New York, NY: William Howard Publishers, 1985), 174.
[2] Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company, Inc., 1956), 46.
[3] Robert Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 306.

formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a peacetime defense

alliance between Western countries, including, the US, UK, France, and Italy. In a sharp

turn from its 1946 position regarding Western alliances, the American public was in favor

of NATO. Even before the treaty was signed, a significant portion of the public believed

that the countries participating in the Marshall Plan and the US should form a military

alliance.[4] CIO leadership agreed with the public, seeing NATO as a "a necessary

defensive measure against the aggressive threats of communism."[5] Congress

overwhelmingly approved of the treaty, and eventually the $1.5 billion needed for

European military aid or Mutual Defense Assistance (MDA).[6] With the public and the

CIO's support, by the end of the 1940s, America was a major participant on the world

stage with resources and politics focusing extensively on foreign policy.

The UE denounced military spending, complaining that American families were

having to pay military expenses, while Congress cut Social Security workers, did not

move forward on housing legislation, and declined to increase minimum wage.[7] They

believed that "The benefits of the Cold war were already being harvested by the handful

of large corporations who received ninety-three percent of army supply contracts in the

first few months of 1948."[8] The Left-wing unions were also concerned that NATO was

less of a defensive security blanket and more of a hindrance to world peace.[9] UE District

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[4] Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: Americans Bought Into NATO From the Get-Go," Gallup Vault.com, Gallup, Inc., April 1, 2016, https://news.gallup.com/vault/190412/gallup-vault-americans-bought-nato.aspx.

[5] *The CIO: What it is and What it Does,* Congress of Industrial Organizations Department of Research and Education, 1949, 8, https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735047449172/viewer#page/1/mode/2up.

[6] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1984 Fifth Edition*, (New York City, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 84.

[7] "The Cost of the Cold War," *UE News*, August 21, 1948, 8.

[8] "The Cost of the Cold War," *UE News*, August 21, 1948, 8.

[9] "UE's Roosevelt Memorial Program," *UE News*, May 2, 1949, 14.

Six passed a resolution listing its objections to NATO. They alleged that it "divides the world into hostile camps and can only lead to war," and that it gave billions of dollars of taxpayer's money to arm foreign governments when resources and legislative efforts should focus on creating affordable housing, jobs programs, increasing old age benefits, healthcare, and other progressive policies.[10] The mainstream CIO had a much different outlook—military buildup meant more jobs, and going against popular consent during the era of high redbaiting was never ideal. Reuther, and others, did not see military spending as a deterrent to progressive policies, but rather a facilitator of jobs and power. Military buildup proved to be beneficial in the short-term with the jobs it brought, but the Cold War and military industrial complex eventually came back to harm the CIO's successor, the AFL-CIO.

Red Scare Politics

The CIO was less successful in its other short-term goals after the purge. The gains from expelling the Left were relatively small. The expulsions did little to dispel public suspicions or political attacks, they actually grew worse. Shortly after the purges, Senator Joseph McCarthy began his outlandish attacks on supposed communist infiltration in the US, causing more of a disturbance than even HUAC, and further spiraling America into a pit of fear and paranoia. Speaking in the mid-1950s, one labor leader described the atmosphere of anxiety and distrust, saying, "Being a labor leader, there are things I might say which could be misconstrued and used against myself and my

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[10] "Dist. 6 Resolution Hits Atlantic Pact," *UE News*, June 13, 1949, 14.

organization."[11] Despite the CIO's best efforts, the public was growing more distrustful of it and organized labor.

Even after Walter Reuther became president of the CIO, scrutiny did not subside. To dismiss any notion of communist sympathy, the CIO excessively supported the fight against communism at home and abroad. Replying to an editorial disapproving of the CIO for a convention resolution that criticized federal loyalty programs for ineffectualness and harm to civil liberties, Reuther responded in an overcompensated manner, he highlighted the CIO's success in removing communists from the organization, explaining that they believed the federal loyalty program was not effective, and wanted a better way to remove communists. Reuther stressed the CIO's advocacy for American foreign policy, including the Marshall Plan and Greek and Turkish aid. He also reaffirmed the CIO program for fighting communism which calls for a strong military force, aid to free people struggling against communism, professional spy-catching, and interestingly enough, free speech for all Americans, even those whose views the CIO disagrees with, including communists.[12] Despite these attempts, the CIO was not able to adequately distance itself from radical presumptions. Even five years after the purges, the cloud of suspicion continued to hover around the CIO as well as the entirety of organized labor. Aspects of the public's anxiety centered around a concern that communists could sabotage US industry. Expressing this, an accountant from Texas said, "Seems like they (communist) have a hand in some of our big strikes which stop defense production."[13] A

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[11] Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company, Inc., 1955), 81.

[12] "CIO Stands for Civil Liberties," *CIO News*, January 4, 1954, 5.

[13] Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day and Company, Inc., 1955), 158.

Secretary from Florida shared these concerns, "The communists cause strikes in our factories and they might use bombs."[14] Although communists sabotage was not the top concern of Americans, these fears, brought on by excessive trials, hearings, accusations, and redbaiting, still lingered strong in the minds of Americans, and they continued to hurt organized labor's image putting it at a disadvantage, especially as the Cold War escalated. The CIO specifically being called a communist organization persisted well into the 1950s. Aggravated by the accusations, the Oil Workers International Union of the CIO published an article in their newspaper, the *Oil Worker*, calling these claims spurious, saying "They talk about 'communists' in the labor movement, though they know that both CIO and AFL are completely free of communist influence and are in fact among the most effective anticommunist organizations in the nation."[15] The article complained that the US Chamber of Commerce listed the CIO as pro-communist, despite the CIO expelling its communists unions and members.[16] Unable to shed its radical image, the CIO was perpetually on the defensive, even after its merger with the AFL in 1955.

Political Short-term Gains and Conclusion

While the CIO was not able to win back the public's trust after the dramatic expulsions, were there political aspects of its decision that paid off in the short-term? What did it get from Truman and the Democrats for its loyalty? Unfortunately for the

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[14] Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day and Company, Inc., 1955), 159.

[15] "Butler Bill Would Destroy Free and Bona Fide Union," *Românul American*, February 13, 1954, 4, Reprinted from the *Oil Worker*, Publication of the Oil Workers International Union, Chronicling America database.

[16] "Butler Bill Would Destroy Free and Bona Fide Union," *Românul American*, February 13, 1954, 4, Reprinted from the *Oil Worker*, Publication of the Oil Workers International Union, Chronicling America database.

organization, not much was gained during Truman's second term—little of Truman's

progressive Fair Deal program was able to pass, in part due to the conflation of large

government policies with communism. Conservatives "used the shadow of the

Communists danger to bolster their case that dismantling the welfare state was a crusade

for freedom."[17] The 1949 National Housing Act might be the most significant piece of

Fair Deal legislation, however, "it led primarily to the building of low-cost urban housing

projects, which soon turned into slums."[18] Most importantly for the CIO was Taft-

Hartley, the law that essentially broke the organization, did Truman make the CIO's

gambit worth it? No. Truman was not able to repeal the law. Essentially, the political

short-term gains for the CIO's purge were infinitesimal.

Workers' Rights and Power

Workers lost power in the short-term, mostly due to the CIO's war against the

Left. These issues represent a substantial long-term problem, but they also had immediate

short-term implications Raiding did not go as smoothly as CIO leaders expected, instead

of building a unified labor movement, they resulted in entrenched labor warfare,

providing little benefits to the workers. With the advantage of hindsight, it is clear that

CIO leadership made a grave miscalculation in expelling the Left—the separation played

right into the hands of employers; instead of concentrating on obtaining the best deal for

workers, unions fought amongst each other, effectively allowing themselves to be divided

and conquered. It also created chaos and disunity in labor, some factories were organized

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[17] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*, (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2009), 60.

[18] Nelson Lichtenstein, Susan Strasser, and Roy Rosenzweig, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society Volume Two Since 1877*, (New York, NY: Worth Publishers, 2000), 562.

by numerous competing unions, and the cohesion in those unions was lacking. These issues resulted in a loss of rights and opportunities for black and women workers.

Black and Women Workers

The purges and the disunity disproportionately harmed black and women workers. After the purges, most of the CIO's strongest advocates for worker solidarity regardless of race or sex, were no longer associated with the organization, many were blacklisted or out of organized labor all together. The CIO, and its successor the AFL-CIO, failed to pursue civil rights and equal opportunity with the same vigor as their left-wing peers, further reversing the gains made by the two groups during the war. Even prior to the ouster of the Left-wing, CIO leaders did not do as much to enhance opportunities for minority workers. In 1947, Reuther said during a Senate hearing about black workers and issues gaining employment that it was not the CIO's priority, "until the community moves through law to guarantee basic freedoms."[19] Raids also negatively affected minority workers. Black men and women from the UE; the United Packinghouse Workers; the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Union; the International Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers; and the International Fur and Leather Workers denounced the raids on their unions by redbaiting leaders of the CIO and AFL, and government witch hunts. They emphasized that black workers were feeling the effects of these attacks in the weakening of their hard-won rights in shops and factories, mines, and mills.[20]

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[19] Quoted in Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 274.

[20] Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 298.

The CIO did little to combat social racism in labor, allowing meetings in segregated locations in the South, even permitting Jim Crow in unions halls in South Carolina.[21] In some instances, the CIO's anticommunist rhetoric came back to haunt it. During a Steel worker meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, segregation was strictly enforced in the union hall and even in the street outside of the union hall. The CIO's publicity director objected to this overly racist display. He was rebuffed by accusations that he was "talking like a communist."[22] The merger with the AFL did not improve the situation. AFL-CIO leadership was more worried about communism than segregation or Jim Crow. In 1956, there were even efforts to establish a Klan-oriented labor organization in the South comprised of AFL-CIO affiliates. The organization aimed to fight integration in the South.[23]

Women were also disadvantaged in the short-term. The UE's CIO successor did not have the same committed to elevating women as the UE. For instance, in 1954, the IEU agreed to clauses in their contracts allowing married women to be the first to be laid off regardless of seniority.[24] During the era, it was common for married women to be laid off or the first to be laid off due to their marital status and belief that they were expendable because of it. The UE, however, was able to add protections for married

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[21] Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 291-292.

[22] Quoted in Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 292.

[23] Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor & the Black Worker 1619-1981*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 1981), 317.

[24] "Facts to Combat Job Discrimination," 2nd UE National Conference on Problem of Working Women, May 15-16, 1954, 6, Found at New York University Special Collections, Box 1, PE 007, United Electrical Radio, and Machine Workers of America, Folder Conferences, National Conference on Problems of Working Women, 1954.

women in their contracts.[25] But as the IEU expanded through the 1950s, absorbing UE locals, women experienced a loss of opportunities and protections. Historian Joshua Freeman explains the effects of the purge on women, "The defeat of the old left retarded the advance of women in the labor movement while allowing a profound seism to accompany the growth of the new left not so many years later."[26]

Consequences of a Divided Labor Movement

The disastrous short-term effects of the purge can be seen with electrical workers. After expelling the UE, the CIO charted a replacement, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), led by James Carey. Historian Ronald Schatz argues that "Conflict among unionists solidified management's position," he explains, "The two unions which emerged from that conflict were so weakened and so concerned with defeating each other that GE and Westinghouse were, for the first time in the postwar era, able to deny their employees and collective wage increases whatsoever in 1949."[27] Divided labor gave employers the upper hand. Furthermore, some new unions created by the CIO to replace the purged ones were less competent than their predecessors, accepting bad terms and failing to expand organized labor. The expelled unions struggled to survive, losing much of their power and effectiveness. The UE was in such a diminished state by the early 1950s that according to one historian, "Acutely aware of their organization's weakness and vulnerability to raids form other unions, UE leaders

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[25] Agreement between the Charles Parker Company and Local No. 230 of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, June 11, 1950, Article XII "Equal Pay for Equal Work," 15, found at New York University Special Collections, Box 1, PE 007, United Electrical Radio, and Machine Workers of America, Folder Speeches and Statements 1957-1970.

[26] Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, (New York, NY: The New Press, 2000), 93.

[27] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 160.

tended throughout the 1950s to grasp at any acceptable terms offered by General Electric and Westinghouse."[28] The UE's capitulation to employers, a stark change from its pre-1950s iteration, caused critics such as James Carey, to refer to the union as a "red company union."[29] Juxtaposed, the situation was not much better for the UE's CIO successor. For UE locals absorbed into Carey's IUE, workers experienced numerous setbacks. The IUE did not form organically, rather it was a union created by the CIO for the purpose of opposing the UE. IUE leadership was unified through a surface level mutual dislike of the UE, causing the union to lack any sort of cohesion or singular vision. Competing interests in the union hampered its ability to negotiate and organize.[30] One example comes from an effort in 1950 by Carey to obtain a better contract than the one given to the UE at General Electric (GE). He called for rolling strikes, one local refused to go along with Carey, killing the effort. In 1952, Carey threatened GE with a nationwide strike, he was again rebuffed by local leaders, failing for the second time to obtain a better contract than the UE.[31] Bridging the gap between short- and long-term consequences while signaling the steady erosion of labor's power, Carey called for a nationwide GE strike in 1960. Motivated by the union's previous failures, Carey made policy and administrative arrangements to ensure that his demand could not be refused by a rogue local. Prior to the strike, the union went on a publicity blitz, trying to counter GE's own efforts: "the IUE churned out professional-quality films, pamphlets, and

[28] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 232.

[29] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 232.

[30] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 226-227.

[31] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 227.

travelling exhibits aimed at persuading workers, customers, and even stockholders of the reasonableness of its proposals."[32] The strike resulted in a cataclysmic defeat. The union's lack of cohesion and organization condemned Carey's plan. Some workers did not want to strike, and seeing an opportunity, GE kept factories open for those who wanted to work—with the full benefits of the company's offer before the strike—the maneuver worked, and employees quickly returned to their jobs, some even on the first day of the strike.[33] The defeat had a pernicious effect on organized labor in the America, being called by a *New York Times* labor writer as "the worst setback any union has received in a nationwide strike since World War II."[34] The UE shared the sentiment, criticizing the failure as well as the IUE's botched negotiations with Westinghouse, saying, "IUE's wretched fiasco in GE and Westinghouse this year has paved the way for a get-though approach by the major corporations in all industries and its ill effects will be felt far outside the electrical industry."[35] The era of labor was coming to an end.

Long-term Consequences

The long-term consequences of America's postwar turn right and the CIO's embrace of it produced consequences that have echoed through history and are still impacting current American life. The CIO's gambit was in essence a complete failure. The further time has advanced from the purges, the more organized labor's power began to wane. With swift changes in the world from automation, trade agreements, and

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[32] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 227.

[33] Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 227-228.

[34] A. H. Raskin, *New York Times,* quoted in Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse 1923-60*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 227.

[35] "UE Reaches Settlements in GE and Westinghouse," *UE News*, November 7, 1960, 1, 3.

international competition, all contributing to deindustrialization, along with divisions in the labor movement, unionists went from a junior partner with the Democratic Party to an associate to forgotten. The postwar policies advocated by both sides of the CIO went unfulfilled, and Taft-Hartley is still law. Reflecting labor's diminished power and its failed partnership with the Democratic Party, when America was reeling from another financial collapse—the Great Recession—Democrats won control of the legislature, including sixty senators, and the executive branch—President Obama. With overwhelming control, Taft-Hartley remained untouched, and the New Deal style policies stayed in the past. Currently, Taft-Hartley continues to be a significant crippling force for labor, putting an overwhelming amount of power into the hands of employers, while the CIO's postwar vision is still nothing more than a dream.

The Cold War and Policy

The CIO's desired policies failed to materialize long-term. Truman's Cold War initiatives and military buildup—supported by the CIO—was a factor in the rise in the conservative order that contributed to the demise of organized labor in America. During the near half a century of conflict, military spending and American interventionism increased, taking resources away from progressive initiatives that the CIO pined for during the postwar years. It was American foreign policy that facilitated the demise of New Deal liberalism. Nearly thirty years after the end of the New Deal, President Johnson was poised to continue Roosevelt influenced legislation, launching the Great Society. Legislation that the CIO hoped for was passed, such as Medicare and Medicaid, however, Johnson's programs were stunted by America's war against communism in Vietnam. As more resources poured into South Asia, less focus and resources were

allocated towards the Great Society. Reflecting on the debacle, and the apparent end of reform, Victor Reuther said:

> Johnson's obsession with the Vietnam War, and the failure of Humphrey to dissociate himself from the military escalation, were largely responsible for the Democratic Party's losing the confidence of the American people, and brought to an end many of the constructive domestic programs that the Johnson administration had initiated.[36]

Continuing the partnership with the Democratic Party, the AFL-CIO—including Walter Reuther—supported the Vietnam War. Analyzing war from a political science perspective, Wilson Carey McWilliams explained, "It shattered not only the Great Society but also our capacity for common dreams, activating both extremes, the Right and the Left, and escalating the distrust of public authority toward a kind of madness."[37] The war sharply divided the nation and brought down not only the Johnson administration but the New Deal political order, proving to be a potential permanent end to New Deal style legislation and labor friendly reform. The AFL-CIO bears responsibility for supporting the Vietnam War, however, the CIO's unwavering embrace of Truman's foreign policy may be the more unforgivable sin, as it helped normalize American interventionism and their expulsion of those who disagreed silenced any criticism, contributing to less opposition to the Cold War and greater deference being given to presidential administrations, placing America on the path to Vietnam.

Cold War rhetoric and rampant anticommunism was another factor in the waning of New Deal liberalism. Beyond the postwar years, conservatives were able to successfully bind large government policies such as universal healthcare and regulations

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[36] Victor Reuther, *The Brothers Reuther and the Story of the UAW: A Memoir*, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 457.

[37] Wilson Carey McWilliams, "Great Societies and Great Empires: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam," *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, edited by Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur, 217, University of Massachusetts Press, 2005, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vk5wz.10.

to the horrors of Soviet communism and socialism. Historian Kim Philips-Fein states,
"Years after McCarthy had been repudiated, they [conservatives], continued to fight for
the market using the tropes they had developed when anticommunism was at its zenith."[38]
This was helpful for deregulation and moving the American economy back to its pre-
1930s oversight, or lack thereof. Prolabor and welfare policy failed to pass Congress and
existing policies and regulations were removed. By the 1990s, Americans, both in politics
and in the public, viewed the private sector with more reverence, as it symbolized
freedom and individuality, while the public sector was seen as restrictive, unreasonably
burdensome, and even at times oppressive. This contributed to the balance of power
moving overwhelmingly into the employer's side, further crippling organized labor and
devastating working-class America by the turn of the 20th century.

Black and Women Workers

The long-term implications of losing racial and gender solidarity were nearly as
dramatic. Noted labor historians Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, they said,
"Instead of coalescing to lobby for policies beneficial to working people regardless of
race or gender, the AFL-CIO often resisted affirmative action and racial and gender
preferences, leaving control of policies to the advocates of freer markets, deregulation
and anti-union policies."[39] Not only were rights lost, but the break in worker solidarity
allowed divisions to persist, causing a wedge to between workers, one that put the entire
labor movement at a disadvantage. Beginning around the 1960s, these racial divisions

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[38] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*, (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2009), 60.
[39] Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph McCartin, *Labor in America a History*, (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 352.

were exploited by conservative politicians—this also contributed to the end of New Deal liberalism. The presidential campaigns of George Wallace and Richard Nixon established the template for white male grievance politics over gains made by African Americans and women. Voting for societal status over self-interest, white male unionists supported antilabor leaders, including the most significant, Ronald Reagan. It is impossible to say what could have happened if the CIO did not choose to join the Red Scare, but it is certain that expelling its strongest advocates for racial and gender solidarity was a fatal mistake, as when racial and gender resentment grew, labor's power and cohesion fell.

The Rise of the Conservative Order and the Fall of the Labor Movement

Racial and gender resentment, redbaiting, along with Johnson's disastrous administration were key factors in the collapse of New Deal liberalism and the rise of the conservative postwar vision—free market and limited government intervention, otherwise known as neoliberalism and the Neoliberal Order. Conservative ideology went from one growing in popularity after the war to the dominant ideology in America during the 1990s. The man who ushered in the Neoliberal Order was President Ronald Reagan. The Reagan era featured widespread popularity of the conservative postwar ideals, moving the country away from New Deal liberalism, widening wealth-inequality and weakening organized labor.

Reagan's time in office proved the Left-wing unions correct in their critique of military spending. Economists have debated the concept that military spending takes away from welfare spending, this debate is often referred to as guns v. butter. While definitive conclusions are difficult to determine, there are scholars that contend military

spending takes resources away from welfare during military buildups. One scholar

explains, "Although the research is mixed on a few issues, scholars have found that there

is a budgetary trade-off between defense and welfare spending, particularly in eras of

substantial military build ups (e.g., Kamlet, Mowery, and Su 1988; Mintz 1989)."[40]

There is some agreement among scholars that the Reagan presidency featured a direct

correlation between decreased welfare spending and a rise in the military budget:

> Previous studies on the trade-off between defense expenditures and social welfare spending have
> reported that budgetary trade-offs during the Reagan administration, defense spending went up
> more than fifty percent (see Mintz 1989, 1290) while significant cuts in federal support for health
> and education were made (Russett 1982, 776).[41]

The Reagan administration's cuts to welfare compounded with its antilabor

policies facilitating an expanding wealth gap and widening inequality in America.

The Reagan era featured numerous catastrophes for labor—Reagan was an ardent

opponent of organized labor, and he used the power of the presidency to weaken it,

including a salacious moment in labor's history that rivals the CIO's expulsion of its Left,

when Reagan fired over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers. In the ways that Roosevelt

was supportive of labor, Reagan proved to be the opposite, with aggressive union busting

policies and general disdain for organized labor. Since Reagan, unions have experienced

a precipitous decline, losing nearly all of their power and prestige, contributing to wage

stagnation and less wealth for everyday Americans. The decline of organized labor has

further increased wealth and income disparity in America. Neoliberal policies, such as tax

cuts and deregulation have also widened the wealth gap. Reagan's, and subsequent

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[40] Laron K. Williams, "Guns Yield Butter? An Exploration of Defense Spending Preferences," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 5 (2019): 1210, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48597359.

[41] Uk Heo and John Bohte, "Who Pays for National Defense? Financing Defense Programs in the United States, 1947—2007," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 3 (2012): 422, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23248794.

president's cut taxes for the wealthy, a policy that was advocated by Republicans in the Eightieth Congress, generating more wealth to the top, with limited ostensive flow downward. The Eightieth Congress began the conservative project of trying to undo the New Deal, and while this has yet to be fully achieved, conservatives have been wildly successful in returning the majority of American wealth to the wealthy—during the 1940s, income inequality was at its lowest point of the twentieth century, in 2021, it was the worse it had been since the 1920s.[42]

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[42] Gary Gerstle, "America's Neoliberal Order," *Beyond the New Deal Order: U.S. Politics from the Great Depression to the Great Recession*, ed. Gary Gerstle, Nelson Lichtenstein, and Alice O'Connor, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 260.

CONCLUSION

Ronald Reagan ushered in the neoliberalism order in the 1980s, however, it was
President Clinton in the 1990s, the first Democratic president of the Neoliberal Order,
who through his embrace, solidified it as the dominant political ideology in America. Tax
cuts, austerity, and greater deference to the private sector has been a hallmark of
American politics since the 1980s. Even when healthcare reforms were proposed in the
1990s and late 2000s by Democratic presidents, both were right of the universal
healthcare policy proposed during the postwar years. They relied heavily on insurance
companies and did not offer universal coverage, furthering a reliance on employers for
healthcare—putting employees at a significant disadvantage. The 1990s Clinton
healthcare reform was killed in part by insurance companies. The other proposal, the
Affordable Care Act (ACA), had key aspects that originated from Republican healthcare
plans.[1] Despite this, the ACA was called "communist" and "socialist". Its passing led to
the election of a right-wing Congress. Paralleling the 1947 midterm elections, Democrats
were rebaited in the 2010 midterm elections, losing a large number of seats in the House
of Representatives and the Senate. This recent example shows how the shadow of the
Red Scare continues to darken the American political landscape, almost like a permanent
eclipse, the same rhetoric and divisiveness is used for political gain, to prevent reforms,
and to keep rising wealth inequality static.

There is no doubt that the CIO has a complicated legacy, one that is not black and
white—most things in history are not—but when looking at the organization prior to the

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[1] Ezra Klein, "Unpopular Mandate: Why do Politicians Reverse their Positions?" *The New Yorker*, June 18,
2012, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/25/unpopular-mandate.

Red Scare, it was able to achieve a lot. The entire organization, not just the Left, was far ahead of its time regarding many social and political issues. It diligently fought for worker's rights, many of the same rights that are still being trampled on today and many that have been lost. Perhaps that is what makes the CIO's participant in communist hysteria so tragic—that if the Left-wing unions remained, with their communist members, the labor movement could have been stronger, maybe even strong enough to make dreams such as equal pay for equal work, civil rights for all, and universal healthcare a reality, or at the very least, a unified CIO could have given organized labor in America more resilience. It could have been a voice for workers, perhaps one to counter divisive rhetoric from Richard Nixon and George Wallace, or one better equipped to fight the rise of neoliberalism. A unified CIO, one that never merges with the AFL, may have also found itself more relevant and powerful during the political and societal turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s, including during the Civil Rights movement and Second-wave feminism. Contemplating a world without the purges, James Matles in his retirement speech in 1975 said:

> If the CIO was not split, if that CIO was not wrecked by the corporations and their flunkies in Congress, and if the labor leadership did not cave in and crawl on its bellies, this country would be in a different shape today. For one thing, what we would have had, we would have had by this time, a labor party in America.[2]

While it is impossible to know if what Matles said was correct, it is certain that the CIO and the labor movement as a whole was severely weakened by the purges, and as time moved further from them, the more apparent this became. Thus, a significant aspect

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[2] James Matles, "A View of the Future: James Matles Retirement Speech," 1975, "Remembering Jim Matles and the Legacy He Left UE," Alan Hart, UE Union.org, July 1, 2015, https://www.ueunion.org/ue-news-feature/2015/remembering-jim-matles-and-the-legacy-he-left-ue.

of the CIO's legacy, and the story of the purges, is an important lesson—the politics of

fear can be a harmful weapon against progress.

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