

“Conservative Mujahideen”

Young Americans for Freedom’s Crusade for Conservatism

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Abbreviations of Archival Collections

David Walter collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=David Walter Collection).

Group Research Inc. records, 1955–1996, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY (=Group Research Inc. Records).

Hall–Hoag collection of dissenting and extremist printed propaganda, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI (=Hall-Hoag Collection).

Herbert A. Philbrick papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (=Herbert A. Philbrick Papers).

Lawrence Samuels collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=Lawrence Samuels Collection).

Marvin Liebman papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=Marvin Liebman Papers).

Michael Sanera papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=Michael Sanera Papers).

Patrick Dowd Papers, 1968-1971, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=Patrick Dowd Papers).

University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-2018, bulk 1968-1972, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY (=Protest and Activism Collection).

Walter Henry Judd papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=Walter H. Judd Papers).

William A. Rusher papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (=William A. Rusher Papers).

William F. Buckley, Jr., papers, Manuscripts & Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT (=William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers).

Young Americans for Freedom records, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (=YAF Records).

Introduction

“The members of Young Americans for Freedom were never afraid to tell the truth. You were the shock-troops of the conservative revolution, the mujahadin [sic] of our movement.”¹

US Vice President Dan Quayle, who wrote these words in 1990 as a congratulatory note for the 30th anniversary of the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), should have known best. After all, he had been a member of the group while attending college in Indiana, partaking in the ‘Beer and Pizza Marching Society’ hosted by the staff of the conservative campus journal *The Alternative*.² And if that does not sound like guerilla warfare, what does, really?

On a more serious note, Quayle’s letter reveals much about the self-perception of the conservative movement. Just like the mujahideen in the Afghan countryside held out against overwhelming Soviet forces, the conservatives imagined, they had stemmed the onslaught of liberalism in the 1960s, halted its advance in the 1970s, and were now in the process of returning the nation to conservative government. “Suddenly,” Quayle quipped, “everyone is sounding like a YAfer.”³

In this narrative, YAF played a lead role. At its founding in 1960, it was the only conservative activist mass organization,⁴ and remained the premier youth organization on the Right for roughly 30 years. It turned its members into what historian Gregory SCHNEIDER calls “Cadres for Conservatism”,⁵ dedicated activists who had acquired organizational and leadership skills while rising through the ranks of the group. Although the group suffered from internecine factionalism in varying degrees throughout its existence, members, even former rivals, often remained lifelong friends or acquaintances, like alumni of fraternities, as Michael Thompson, national vice-chairman in the late 1960s and early 1970s, puts it.⁶

Those who had joined the organization in the early 1960s could tell all the great war stories of the Right: the Goldwater campaign of 1964; the battles with the New Left over Vietnam and who should control the campus; the treachery of ‘Tricky Dick’ Richard Nixon; the ups-and-downs of the battle for conservative control of the Republican Party in the 1970s; and finally, the Reagan Revolution in 1980 that had yielded Quayle his Senate seat. Quayle had then been the beneficiary of an independent expenditure campaign targeting his opponent, three-term

¹ Dan Quayle to Young Americans for Freedom, September 11, 1990. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 4. Emphasis original.

² LANTZER, Jason: *The Other Side of Campus*. Indiana University’s Student Right and the Rise of National Conservatism, in: *Indiana Magazine of History* Vol. 101/2 (2005), pp.153–178, here p.164.

³ Dan Quayle to Young Americans for Freedom, September 11, 1990. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 4.

⁴ The John Birch Society, which probably had a few thousand members then, operated with independent local chapters or ‘cells’ and thus lacked the mobilization potential of a true mass organization.

⁵ SCHNEIDER, Gregory: *Cadres for Conservatism*. Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right, New York, NY 1999.

⁶ Michael THOMPSON. Interview by Georg WOLFF, Alexandria, VA 08.10.2018.

incumbent Indiana Senator Birch Bayh, with attack ads. Such (only) formally independent negative campaigning had been pioneered and, in this case, executed by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), headed by YAF alumnus Terry Dolan.⁷

It would hardly have been the only time Quayle encountered one of his former comrades during his political career. Testimony to its successful movement-building, a whole host of YAF alumni ran conservative fundraising and publicity firms, edited conservative newspapers and journals—R. Emmett Tyrrell, founder of *The Alternative*, is still delivering hard-hitting editorials at the *American Spectator* (formerly *The Alternative: An American Spectator*)—held administration posts or worked as (Republican) political operatives.

Reason enough, then, to subject YAF's history to a detailed examination. At the heart of this study lies the question of YAF's role as breeding grounds of the conservative movement. How did young people define conservatism in theory and practice through the thirty years of the group's existence? When did their understanding change and why? And how did their activism contribute to the formation of a movement that is still one of the dominant forces in American politics? While this study is not an organizational history in the strict sense, it will also shine light on previously understudied areas of YAF's history: previous works neglected YAF's response to the Civil Rights Movement and much of its history in the 1970s, an era of soul-searching for the conservative movement.

American Conservatism in Historiography

In 1994, Leo RIBUFFO posed the following question to the readers of the *American Historical Review*: “Why is there so much conservatism in the United States and why do so few historians know anything about it?”⁸ RIBUFFO's answer perhaps proved disappointing. He seemed to argue that historians at the same time did and did not know anything about conservatism. On the one hand, he argued that previous generations of historians had produced quality scholarship (with certain inevitable deficiencies). On the other hand, he took up arms against an institutionalized Left supposedly dominating the historiography of conservatism in the early 1990s. Their “standard ‘synthesis’ of American history” celebrated groups when they served progressive goals and disregarded them when they did not. White ‘ethnic’ workers served as his example. Overstudied as New Deal supporters, they disappeared from scholarship in accounts of the Fifties, only to return with a vengeance as “backlash backdrop for the student radicals of the

⁷ Cf. ISAACSON, Walter: Running with the PACs, in: Time Magazine, October 25, 1982, online: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,953584-4,00.html> [20.04.2021].

⁸ RIBUFFO, Leo: Why Is There So Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything About It?, in: *The American Historical Review* Vol. 99/2 (1994), pp.438–449.

‘sixties.’”⁹ Such backlash narratives posited various progressive causes like union mobilization, the Civil Rights Movement, feminism, and cultural changes as the principal motivation behind the rise of the Right.¹⁰

RIBUFFO’s analysis was meant as a rejoinder to another and ultimately much more influential essay in the same issue, namely Alan BRINKLEY’s *The Problem of American Conservatism*.¹¹ BRINKLEY presented a general reckoning of previous scholarship, which, he claimed, had failed to understand conservatism on its own terms. Scholars had accorded conservatism its place in history based more on their political leanings than on critical analysis. Progressive historians had seen history as the history of class struggle. In this view, conservatives figured merely as reactionary defenders of economic and social inequality. Historians of the post-WW2 liberal consensus argued for a generally uniform set of American values manifested in the New Deal variety of liberalism. Conservatism therefore appeared to be a historical aberration telling more about the pathologies of its proponents than about American intellectual traditions.¹² Historians socialized in the New Left, who celebrated the masses as the engine of (leftist-progressive) social change, had an uneasy relationship with conservative grassroots organizations. The existence of such groups seemed to challenge their view of history in that the masses also mobilized for anti-leftist causes. Finally, proponents of the so-called organizational synthesis argued that the spread of bureaucratic organizations was the central element of modernity. Conservatism, then, was merely the ultimately futile resistance of individual groups against this development.¹³

Although RIBUFFO and BRINKLEY disagreed on the extent that previous historians had satisfyingly studied conservatism, they both fleshed out one central problem plaguing most of them: conservatism challenged their assumptions about modern America. As the surge of a fundamentalist Right showed, secularism, moral relativism and faith in scientific progress were

⁹ Ibid., pp.447–448.

¹⁰ Examples of works that subscribe to backlash narratives are CARTER, Dan: *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich. Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994*, Baton Rouge, LA ³2001; CARTER, Dan: *The Politics of Rage. George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, Baton Rouge, LA ²2000; EDSALL, Thomas/EDSALL, Mary: *Chain Reaction. The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*, New York, NY ²1991; FRANK, Thomas: *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*, New York, NY 2004; PERLSTEIN, Rick: *Before the Storm. Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, New York, NY 2001; PETCHESKY, Rosalind: *Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right*, in: *Feminist Studies Vol. 7/2* (1981), pp.206–246.

¹¹ BRINKLEY, Alan: *The Problem of American Conservatism*, in: *The American Historical Review Vol. 99/2* (1994), pp.409–429.

¹² An often-cited example is HOFSTADTER, Richard (Ed.): *The Paranoid Style in American Politics. And Other Essays*, New York, NY ²1966. Hofstadter himself wrote on the subject: “In using the expression ‘paranoid style’, I am not speaking in a clinical sense, but borrowing a clinical term for other purposes. I have neither the competence nor the desire to classify any figures of the past or present as certifiable lunatics [...] It is the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people that makes the phenomenon significant.” (pp.3–4).

¹³ Cf. BRINKLEY, *The Problem of American Conservatism*, pp.410–414.

not as deeply entrenched in American society as they had thought. Furthermore, essentially normative demands of religious conservatives were often couched in antistatist liberal language.¹⁴ This exacerbated the basic dilemma that both conservatives and liberals claimed liberty as their guiding principle, which blurred the distinction between the two. In 1960, for example, liberal, moderate, and conservative Republicans all advocated individual liberty but had very different opinions on which policies would advance its cause. BRINKLEY ended on a clarion call:

“Conservative traditions in America are diverse and inconsistent: both libertarian and normative, both elite and popular, both morally compelling and morally repellent. They fit neatly into no patterns of explanation with which most historians are comfortable. But scholars have redefined their categories and paradigms repeatedly in recent decades to help them understand areas of the past they had previously neglected. It may be time for us to do so again.”¹⁵

As historians responded to that call and produced new works on conservatism, they often relied on one particular “pattern of explanation”: George NASH’s *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*.¹⁶ NASH set out to explain what constituted intellectual conservatism “in America, in a particular period”, the roughly thirty years from the end of WWII to the publication of his book.¹⁷ Here, he found three dominant forces: classical liberals or libertarians that resisted state encroachment on the economy and the individual; new conservatives or traditionalists traumatized by the excesses of totalitarian, secular mass societies of the 1930s and 1940s that were looking for moral absolutes to combat the relativism that had so corrupted modern society; and anti-communist zealots, their intellectual leaders often ex-communists themselves, that warned of a “titanic” struggle between communism and the West that could end only with the extinction of one of the adversaries.¹⁸ While proponents of these sub-branches of conservatism often disagreed on the particulars of specific topics, they all recognized the need to unite and consolidate to challenge the dominance of liberalism. Through intellectual debates in various conservative journals, most prominently *National Review*, for which NASH himself wrote, they gradually ‘fused’ their convictions into one coherent conservative ideology.¹⁹

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.424–429.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.429.

¹⁶ NASH, George: *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, New York, NY 1976. For the influence of NASH, see PHILLIPS-FEIN, Kim: *Conservatism: A State of the Field*, in: *Journal of American History* Vol. 98/3 (2011), pp.723–743, here pp.729–730; RIBUFFO, Leo: *The Discovery and Rediscovery of American Conservatism Broadly Conceived*, in: *OAH Magazine of History* Vol. 17/2 (2003), pp.5–10; BURNS, Jennifer: *In Retrospect. George Nash’s “The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945”*, in: *Reviews in American History* Vol. 32/3 (2004), pp.447–462.

¹⁷ NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, p.xii. Emphasis original.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.xiii.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.131–185.

The post-Reagan and post-BRINKLEY scholarship took NASH's narrative about conservative intellectuals and applied it to grassroots movements. Whereas earlier historians had tried to define (and denigrate) conservatism, newer studies embraced NASH's approach to let conservatives define themselves.²⁰ An influential example of the resulting bottom-up studies is Lisa MCGIRR's *Suburban Warriors*.²¹ Focusing on activists in Orange County, California, MCGIRR showed that conservative movements were sustained by a "highly educated and thoroughly modern group of men and women." Theirs was not a crusade against modernity but "a gathering around principles that were found to be relevant in the most modern of communities."²² MCGIRR shunned earlier terms such as 'Radical Right', 'Far Right', and 'ultraconservatism.' She showed that the conservative movement, far from being composed of status-anxious, reactionary cranks at the fringes of American society, as the Consensus scholars had characterized it, was solidly middle-class with an outlook that combined traditionalism and modernity.

With this new approach came a fundamental reevaluation of the Sixties.²³ Historians showed that while the New Left and organizations like SDS had taken to the streets and captured the nation's attention (perhaps more in memory than practice), conservatives had organized as well, most visibly around the candidacy of Arizonan Senator Barry Goldwater.²⁴ The history of YAF supported this new narrative, and it is probably no coincidence that three publications of this period made uncovering it their task: John ANDREW's *The Other Side of the Sixties*, Rebecca KLATCH's *A Generation Divided* and Gregory SCHNEIDER's *Cadres for Conservatism*.²⁵ "The untold story of the 1960s," KLATCH claimed in the introduction to her book, "is about the New Right."²⁶ ANDREW agreed: as many previous studies had focused on the Left (especially

²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.xi–xiii.

²¹ MCGIRR, Lisa: *Suburban Warriors. The Origins of the New American Right*, Princeton, NJ 2001.

²² *Ibid.*, p.8.

²³ A highly readable contemporaneous account of the battle between "Young Turk" and old New Leftist interpretation of the Sixties is PERLSTEIN, Rick: *Who Owns The Sixties?*, in: *Lingua Franca* Vol. 6/4 (1996), online: <http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9605/sixties.html> [04/22/21]. See also GIFFORD, Laura Jane; WILLIAMS, Daniel (Edd.): *The Right Side of the Sixties. Reexamining Conservatism's Decade of Transformation*, Basingstoke 2012; FARBER, David; ROCHE, Jeff (Edd.): *The Conservative Sixties*, New York, NY 2003; HEALE, Michael: *The Sixties as History. A Review of the Political Historiography*, in: *Reviews in American History* Vol. 33/1 (2005), pp.133–152; HUIYA, James: *The Conservative 1960s*, in: *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 37/2 (2003), pp.201–227.

²⁴ BRENNAN, Mary: *Turning Right in the Sixties. The Conservative Capture of the GOP*, Chapel Hill, NC 1995; PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*.

²⁵ ANDREW, John A.: *The Other Side of the Sixties. Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*, New Brunswick, NJ 1997; KLATCH, Rebecca: *A Generation Divided. The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, Berkeley, CA 1999; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*.

²⁶ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.1.

its radicalization and self-destruction in the late Sixties), they had overlooked that the 1960s were “not so much a radical decade as a polarized one.”²⁷

As historians turned to YAF and other grassroots movements, they discovered that although the conservative leadership was male-dominated, women often formed the backbone of local activism.²⁸ Michelle NICKERSON explained their distinctive role in post-War conservative mobilization: “[Women] brought McCarthyism to ‘Main Street America’ by becoming vigilante ‘Red’ hunters in local politics and [...] expanded the base of the grassroots movement by becoming evangelizers of patriotism.”²⁹ In questions like the supposed communist influence on public education, women could market established gender roles by playing the part of mothers concerned about the well-being of their children. As traditional upholders of morality, they credibly attacked moral relativism, nihilism, and atheistic communism.³⁰ When feminists challenged these gender roles, networks of right-wing women were well-prepared to lead a countercharge, painting the ‘women’s libbers’ as dangerous radicals intent on destroying the American family.

The veritable outpouring of new scholarship continued. As syntheses, monographs on the history of libertarianism, neoconservatism, conservative Republicans, etc. flooded the libraries,³¹ Kimberly PHILLIPS-FEIN roughly fifteen years after BRINKLEY’s call for intensified engagement with conservatism, raised the question “whether there is anything left to study in the history of the Right.”³² The answer, perhaps unsurprisingly, was yes. The copious amount of knowledge historians had gathered now gave them “the opportunity to move beyond the

²⁷ ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.1–2.

²⁸ Prominent studies on female activism are KLATCH, Rebecca: *Women of the New Right*, Philadelphia, PA 1987; NICKERSON, Michelle: *Mothers of Conservatism. Women and the Postwar Right*, Princeton, NJ 2012; CRITCHLOW, Donald: *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism. A Woman's Crusade*, Princeton, NJ 2005.

²⁹ NICKERSON, Michelle: *Women, Domesticity, and Postwar Conservatism*, in: *OAH Magazine of History* Vol. 17/2 (2003), pp.17–21, here p.18.

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.19.

³¹ It is impossible to list each and every publication here. The following should be taken as a rough sketch. For general syntheses, see BJERRE-POULSEN, Niels: *Right Face. Organizing the American Conservative Movement 1945-65*, Copenhagen 2002; DIAMOND, Sara: *Roads to Dominion. Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*, New York, NY 1995; FARBER, David: *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism. A Short History*, Princeton, NJ 2010; SCHNEIDER, Gregory: *The Conservative Century. From Reaction to Revolution*, Lanham, MD 2009. The history of libertarianism is covered by BURNS, Jennifer: *Goddess of the Market. Ayn Rand and the American Right*, Oxford, New York, NY 2009; DOHERTY, Brian: *Radicals for Capitalism. A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement*, New York, NY 2007. Accounts of Neoconservatives are HEILBRUNN, Jacob: *They Knew They Were Right. The Rise of the Neocons*, New York, NY 2009; VAÏSSE, Justin: *Neoconservatism. The Biography of a Movement*, Cambridge, MA 2010 (translated by Arthur Goldhammer). Finally, the history of conservatism within the GOP is covered by BOWEN, Michael: *The Roots of Modern Conservatism. Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party*, Chapel Hill, NC 2011; CRITCHLOW, Donald: *The Conservative ascendancy. How the Republican Right Rose to Power in Modern America*, Lawrence, KS 2011.

³² PHILLIPS-FEIN, *Conservatism: A State of the Field*, p.723.

closely focused studies of movement history [...] and to reconsider our ideas about the relationship of the Right to the broader trends of American political history.”³³

As BRINKLEY’s essay was informed by the political events proceeding it, notably the Reagan Revolution and Administration, so did PHILLIPS-FEIN factor in recent developments. The rise of populist anti-statist movements like the Tea Party, and the proliferation of conspiracy theories like the claim that US President Barack Obama was not a natural-born US citizen raised questions about hitherto neglected parts of the story:

“Because so much of the recent work has been written with the condescending ideas of the consensus historians as a foil, there is a tendency to normalize the political world view of the Right, to treat even its most outlandish and radical ideas with patience. Scholars have, at times, felt the need to make the argument that conservatives are just ordinary citizens who happen to hold ideas that are different from those of liberals or leftists. While this is true, it also seems to be an overly defensive position. Historians who write about the Right should find ways to do so with a sense of the dignity of their subjects, but they should not hesitate to keep an eye out for the bizarre, the unusual, or the unsettling.”³⁴

PHILLIPS-FEIN also implicitly called for a reevaluation of NASH’s then 35-year-old master narrative of conservatism’s rise.³⁵ The text and its interpretation of conservatism had become authoritative because, as Jennifer BURNS explained in retrospect, NASH in 1976 had been “the first historian to cast aside the stale interpretative legacies of the 1950s” which BRINKLEY later vehemently criticized.³⁶ However, while NASH’s narrative might have been eye-opening for (mostly liberal and leftist) historians, movement conservatives were hardly shocked by its publication. Their magazines and newsletters had been abuzz with talks of ‘libs and trads’, of anti-communism and fusionism for years. In his review essay for YAF’s magazine, resident intellectual Robert Moffit had cautioned to take NASH’s somewhat triumphalist account *cum grano salis*:

“Philosophical difficulties and consequent differences of opinion have not been resolved, and for all the talk of “Fusionism”, these theoretical contradictions are probably irreconcilable. Only when men on the Right can forge a comprehensive metaphysical system that encompasses and harmonizes the reality of the subjective personality, sublime and beautiful to the libertarians, with the objective fact of human sociability, insisted upon by the traditionalists, will a coherent conservative philosophy come into its own. That is unlikely.”³⁷

Moffit had joined liberal historians who had criticized NASH for accepting conservatism’s claims of unity at face value.³⁸ The history of YAF, which both Moffit and NASH knew well, provides a compelling case for that critique. Far from gradually aligning with one another, young conservatives clashed over issues such as the inclusion of far-right groups, the Vietnam

³³ Ibid., p.724.

³⁴ Ibid., p.736.

³⁵ NASH had claimed that “while extremists of the Right were often energetic in the period covered by this study, their contribution to conservatism as an intellectual force was negligible.” NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, p.xi.

³⁶ BURNS, *In Retrospect*, p.447.

³⁷ MOFFIT, Robert: *Conservatives Become a Movement*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.30.

³⁸ Cf. BURNS, *In Retrospect*, p.454.

War, cultural issues, and the question whether the GOP was the appropriate vehicle for conservatism, to name some key issues. If anything, at the end of the Sixties, YAF appeared to be more divided than at their outset.

BURNS carved out a central deficiency of NASH's thesis: it implicitly accepted conservatives' version of their own history.³⁹ Was there really "no articulate, coordinated, self-consciously conservative intellectual force"⁴⁰ in the United States before 1945, as NASH claimed? PHILLIPS-FEIN's essay noted that scholarship on both liberalism and conservatism had shown that New Deal liberalism and its political base never were as solidly entrenched as such stories of the Right's rise from obscurity to the presidency in post-war America suggested.⁴¹ Additionally, conservatives even in the post-War years had distinct intellectual traditions to draw on, controlled regional strongholds, and commanded other resources like business associations, conservative newspapers etc. Rather than seeing liberalism as the dominant force against which conservatism successfully rebelled, some historians argued, it was perhaps more appropriate to see the New Deal era as an exceptional period that defied the general trend of conservative politics.⁴²

PHILLIPS-FEIN thus questioned the starting point of historiographical accounts of conservatism. Her colleague Matthew LASSITER challenged their implicit destination: "Too many books identified with the new political history have adopted a telescoping strategy in which almost anything that happened after about 1938 culminates in the Reagan revolution of the 1980s."⁴³ According to LASSITER, these works distorted broader trends of cultural and economic conflict to fit them into an "all-roads-lead-to-Reagan" scheme.⁴⁴

Finally, the election of Donald Trump to the presidency in 2016 raised further questions about scholars' treatment of the American Right. If Trump, whose aggressive populism did not fit NASH's or other more recent definitions of conservatism, was "the latest chapter of

³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.456–457.

⁴⁰ NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, p.xii.

⁴¹ For the influence of conservatism within the GOP during the New Deal and Modern Republicanism era, see BOWEN, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism*. For the fragility of New Deal coalitions in urban America, see FLAMM, Michael: *Law and Order. Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s*, New York, NY 2005; SUGRUE, Thomas: *The Origins of the Urban Crisis. Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, Princeton, NJ 2005. Finally, on the influence Southern conservatives had on the shaping of New Deal policy, see KATZNELSON, Ira: *Fear Itself. The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*, New York, NY 2013.

⁴² Cf. COWIE, Jefferson; SALVATORE, Nick: *The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History*, in: *International Labor and Working-Class History* Vol. 74/1 (2008), pp.3–32; COWIE, Jefferson: *The Great Exception. The New Deal & the Limits of American Politics*, Princeton, NJ, Oxford 2016; CRITCHLOW, Donald: *Rethinking American Conservatism: Toward a New Narrative*, in: *Journal of American History* Vol. 98/3 (2011), pp.752–755.

⁴³ LASSITER, Matthew: *Political History beyond the Red-Blue Divide*, in: *Journal of American History* Vol. 98/3 (2011), pp.760–764, here p.761.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

conservatism's story", Rick PERLSTEIN asked, "might historians have been telling that story wrong?"⁴⁵ Perhaps, he agreed with PHILLIPS-FEIN, they had been too credulous towards the Right's declared goals, too willing to dismiss more radical voices as fringe groups without much influence on conservatism's general direction. After all, most conservative voters had just embraced a man who championed extreme positions on any given question of the day and openly touted conspiracy theories.

Taking all these points into account, the scholarship of the last decade expanded its outlook to include groups and movements previously cast aside as outside the conservative mainstream.⁴⁶ Geoffrey KABASERVICE's narrative on the decline of moderate Republicanism explains how such movements supplanted the once dominant liberal Northeastern wing of the GOP, culminating in the Tea Party attacks on the Republican Establishment.⁴⁷ The Tea Party movement is also the subject of SKOCPOL and WILLIAMSON's study.⁴⁸ Although the authors are social scientists rather than historians, their work incorporates the trend in recent works to not only look at grassroots organizing but also at how elites influence the direction of conservatism, in this case the national (conservative) media and business executives.⁴⁹ Employing the tested method of studying conservative movements from the ground up, they argue that the Tea Party represents neither a genuinely anti-establishmentarian grassroots movement nor an outright attempt of 'Astroturfing' by elites, particularly the Koch brothers. Instead, despite their disagreements on some policies, business and Republican leaders formed a mutually beneficial albeit contentious coalition with various sub-branches of the Tea Party to rebrand Republican economic conservatism after the financial crisis of 2008.

The study is an excellent example of how scholars can study conservatism in an age where its adherents appear increasingly supportive of irrational, destructive forces in American society. Others, however, threaten to reverse the progress made during the last decades in understanding

⁴⁵ PERLSTEIN, Rick: I Thought I Understood the American Right. Trump Proved Me Wrong, in: *The New York Times Magazine*, 11.04.2017, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/11/magazine/i-thought-i-understood-the-american-right-trump-proved-me-wrong.html> [26.04.2021].

⁴⁶ Darren Mulloy, for example, presented a history of the John Birch Society in the 1960s and a synthesis on far-right movements in the US since the 1930s. MULLOY, Darren: *The World of the John Birch Society. Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War*, Nashville, TN 2014; MULLOY, Darren: *Enemies of the State. The Radical Right in America from FDR to Trump*, Lanham, MD et al. 2018

⁴⁷ KABASERVICE, Geoffrey: *Rule and Ruin. The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party*, New York, NY 2012.

⁴⁸ SKOCPOL, Theda/WILLIAMSON, Vanessa: *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, New York, NY, Oxford 2012.

⁴⁹ Other examples include PHILLIPS-FEIN, Kim: *Invisible Hands. The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*, New York, NY 2009; MACLEAN, Nancy: *Democracy in Chains. The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*, London 2017; HEMMER, Nicole: *Messengers of the Right. Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics*, Philadelphia, PA 2016. Older, yet still influential is FRANK, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, who studied how Republican Party leaders exploit cultural resentment to effect free-market legislation.

the history of conservatism. Corey ROBIN's 2011/2018 bestseller *The Reactionary Mind* is an alarming example.⁵⁰ The first paragraph almost reads like a parody (perhaps, an homage?) of Progressive scholarship:

“Since the modern era began, men and women in subordinate positions have marched against their superiors in the state, church, workplace, and other hierarchical institutions. They have gathered under different banners—the labor movement, feminism, abolition, socialism—and shouted different slogans: freedom, equality, rights, democracy, revolution. In virtually every instance, their superiors have resisted them, violently and nonviolently, legally and illegally, overtly and covertly. That march and demarche of democracy is the story of modern politics[.]”⁵¹

ROBIN reduces conservatism to the “theoretical voice [...] against the agency of the subordinate classes.”⁵² In this view, the people, in their search for equality, drive progress. Conservatives, then, are the opponents of history—the historiography of conservatism has come full circle. ROBIN attacks the notion that conservatism as a supposedly moderate and reasoned force got tainted in the new millennium by groups and figures such as the Tea Party or Donald Trump. This unites him with much of the recent scholarship. ROBIN's one-size-fits-all characterization of conservatism, however, detracts from his own work. It begs the question why “the lower orders”, as ROBIN calls them, join conservative-reactionary movements defending the privileged. He gives us the age-old mantra of false consciousness: misled by elites, rather than being motivated by genuine principles, “fending off a democratic movement from below [...] gives them a taste of lordly power they otherwise would not enjoy.”⁵³ While this notion is not entirely wrong, it leaves the popular base of conservatism, whose *genuine* interests ROBIN claims to know better than it itself does.

Another example of what I call the ‘pied piper narrative’ is MACLEAN's *Democracy in Chains*.⁵⁴ The author argues that Nobel Prize laureate and Public Choice economist James Buchanan's libertarian ideas formed the basis of a “Stealth Plan” to subvert American democracy, defined by MACLEAN as a strong welfare state committed to leftist policies. Her strongly politicized endeavor was initially defended by some leftist historians when it came under libertarian attack.⁵⁵ “Ultimately,” however, BURNS concluded in her review essay, evoking the spirit of BRINKLEY's 1994 essay, “it is not a book of scholarship, but

⁵⁰ ROBIN, Corey: *The Reactionary Mind*. Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin, New York, NY, Oxford 2011a; ROBIN, Corey: *The Reactionary Mind*. Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Donald Trump, New York, NY 2018b.

⁵¹ ROBIN, *The Reactionary Mind*, pp.1–2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁵³ LILLA, Mark/ROBIN, Corey: ‘The Reactionary Mind’: An Exchange [21.11.2015], online: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/02/23/reactionary-mind-exchange/> [26.04.2021].

⁵⁴ MACLEAN, *Democracy in Chains*.

⁵⁵ Cf. BURNS, Jennifer: Review of: *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* by Nancy MacLean, in: *History of Political Economy* Vol. 50/3 (2018), pp.640–648.

partisanship.”⁵⁶ Such (academic) works are still the exception, but it would not be surprising if the contemporary polarization of American society gives rise to similar narratives.

The history of YAF was subject of several studies, although some gaps remain. ANDREW did have access only to a small amount of archival collections that dealt explicitly with YAF in addition to material lent to him by a handful of YAFers. He made a virtue of this necessity, enhancing his narrative of the organization’s early years with detailed analyses of the rise of conservatism and its successes within the GOP. He also noted the Kennedy Administration’s interest in and response to a reinvigorated Right. Although he notes that after the Goldwater debacle in 1964 “the Right was just beginning to flex its muscles”,⁵⁷ he ends his account then and there. This is probably owed to his reliance on the William Rusher Papers, which most extensively cover YAF’s early history. Topics that feature prominently in that collection also feature prominently in *The Other Side of the Sixties*. At certain points, ANDREW’s history is visibly shaped by Rusher’s (and his *National Review* peers’) perspective, especially in his detailed account of YAF’s internecine battles in the early 1960s.

KLATCH’s work changed that perspective. Where ANDREW had focused on the national organization,⁵⁸ her goal was to tell the story of “two wings of one generation: their relationships, their tensions, their compatibilities, their fates.”⁵⁹ A sociologist by trade, she traced the life histories of thirty-eight YAF and thirty-six SDS activists, respectively, (ranging from local activists to national chairmen) from their upbringing to the late 20th century. As part of her research, she conducted extensive interviews with the individuals in question.⁶⁰ Their personal recollections of events gave life to the developments chronicled by ANDREW. KLATCH demonstrated that, despite being political adversaries, left- and right-wing activists shared similar backgrounds and convictions about the nature of their activism. She studied the organization’s history up until 1969, an indication of the greatest weakness of her approach. Because SDS self-destructed in the late Sixties and YAF also experienced factionalism, and because her goal was to present an account of just one generation of activists, she postulated that YAF experienced similar troubles.⁶¹ Her selection of interviewees overrepresented dissenting voices of self-defined (radical) libertarians, who make up roughly half of her sample,

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.648.

⁵⁷ ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.220.

⁵⁸ ANDREW argued that “the most important gap in the available materials” lay at the chapter and state level. Ibid., p.234.

⁵⁹ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.2.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid., pp.10–15.

⁶¹ See chapter 5.

while at the height of libertarianism's influence only about a quarter of YAF members identified with it. Of those, only a minority were radicals.

SCHNEIDER's *Cadres for Conservatism* thus was the first study that promised to tell the entire YAF story. Building on ANDREW, he extended the period of investigation to roughly 1986, when, he claimed, "YAF, for all practical purposes, collapsed."⁶² Nevertheless, he allocated merely one-fifth of his book to events after 1970, preferring to focus on the tumultuous Sixties once again. In addition to materials already used by ANDREW, he also scoured through the extensive personal collection of Jameson Campaigne, a long-time board member in the 1960s and first half of the 1970s.⁶³ Furthermore, he interviewed dozens of former YAF leaders and supporters to bridge gaps in the archives. His account remains the most influential YAF history to date.

Beyond this trinity of monographs, some publications shone light on smaller parts of the picture. As one of the few scholars of this period, SCHOENWALD in *A Time for Choosing* reevaluated the rise of the Right under labels of 'extremist' and 'responsible' conservatism.⁶⁴ His contribution to GILBERT's anthology on the Vietnam War traces the stories of libertarian activists throughout their involvement in YAF and libertarian (youth) groups.⁶⁵ In the same volume, ANDREW presented a detailed account of YAF's involvement in debates about the Vietnam War.⁶⁶ A few years later, LANTZER came forward with the first local study, a short history of conservative activism in the 1960s at the University of Indiana, Bloomington.⁶⁷ Ryan FLOYD delivered an extensive account of the events surrounding one of YAF's greatest achievements in this decade, the cancellation of American tire giant Firestone's plans to build a synthetic rubber plant in communist Romania.⁶⁸

A last strand of historiography that developed outside the academy deserves mentioning. Conservatives have written their own narratives of their movement's history, sometimes in dialogue with the existing academic works.⁶⁹ One example is Wayne THORBURN's 'house

⁶² SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.176.

⁶³ I contacted Campaigne for this study, but unfortunately received no reply.

⁶⁴ SCHOENWALD, Jonathan: *A Time for Choosing. The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, New York, NY 2001. For YAF especially, see pp.243–250.

⁶⁵ ID.: *No War, No Welfare, and No Damn Taxation. The Student Libertarian Movement, 1968-1972*, in: GILBERT, Marc (Ed.): *The Vietnam War on Campus. Other Voices, More Distant Drums*, Westport, CT 2001, pp.20–53.

⁶⁶ ANDREW, John A.: *Pro War and Anti-Draft. Young Americans for Freedom and the War in Vietnam.*, in: GILBERT, Marc (Ed.): *The Vietnam War on Campus. Other Voices, More Distant Drums*, Westport, CT 2001, pp.1–19.

⁶⁷ LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*.

⁶⁸ FLOYD, Ryan: *For Want of Rubber. Romania's Affair with Firestone in 1965*, in: *East European Quarterly* Vol. 38/4 (2004a), pp.485–518; FLOYD, Ryan: *For Want of Rubber. Romania's Affair with Firestone in 1965, Part II*, in: *East European Quarterly* Vol. 39/1 (2005b), pp.63–82.

⁶⁹ Examples cited in this book are EDWARDS, Lee: *Just Right. A Life in Pursuit of Liberty*, Wilmington, DE 2017; VIGUERIE, Richard/Franke, David: *America's Right Turn. How Conservatives Used New and Alternative Media*

history' of YAF, *A Generation Awakes*.⁷⁰ A chronicle rather than analysis, it presents detailed information on YAF's organizational history, its activism, and its internal clashes. The author is a YAF alumnus who has been active in national leadership positions. His privileged access to materials and other alumni enabled him to track down hundreds of former activists, many of which responded to survey questions or had mail exchanges with THORBURN.⁷¹ While he presents a thoroughly-researched account—occasional omissions of events that might cast YAF in an unfavorable light are perhaps to be expected in a work financed by the Young America's foundation, one of YAF's successors—academic scholarship has virtually ignored the book.⁷² Where, then, does the work at hand fit in the trajectory of historiography on American conservatism and YAF? First, YAF is probably the political organization most amenable to NASH's thesis. NASH himself was a member of YAF,⁷³ and it is likely that his time in the organization colored his understanding of conservatism. The organization's founding document, the Sharon Statement, clearly incorporates traditionalist, libertarian, and anti-communist thought. Most members were dedicated to that particular ideological mixture, but the extent to which they were willing to compromise their own views for the sake of fusionism varied between individuals and groups. Dissenters to the fusionist status quo came from both the libertarian and the traditionalist spectrum. For example, starting in the late Sixties, social libertarians got pushed out of YAF while in the 1980s, Christian groups made inroads and lobbied for strict enforcement of morality. At the latest since the national convention in 1967, where libertarians began to see themselves as an independent force within YAF, the fusionist core was under permanent pressure from both sides.

Nevertheless, fusionism was not simply a rhetorical tool, as NASH's contemporaries argued. Not only did YAF's leadership throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s strive to find common ground between different groups, in the organization's responses to topics like the Civil Rights Movement (Chapter 2) and the draft (Chapter 3), YAFers combined arguments grounded in traditionalist, libertarian, and anticommunist thinking to create a coherent (fusionist-)conservative argument. Even after clashes, the national board sponsored projects that the directors hoped would attract both traditionalist and libertarians (Chapters 6 and 7).

to Take Power, Chicago, IL, Los Angeles, CA 2004; RUSHER, William: *The Rise of the Right*, New York, NY 1984.

⁷⁰ THORBURN, Wayne: *A Generation Awakes*. Young Americans for Freedom and the Creation of the Conservative Movement, Ottawa, IL 2010.

⁷¹ Cf. FRANKE, David: *Rise and Fall of the Young Right* [27.04.2021], online: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/rise-and-fall-of-the-young-right/> [27.04.2021].

⁷² I have yet to find a single reference to it in academic works mentioning YAF.

⁷³ Cf. Ronald Docksai to William Buckley, May 20, 1977. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 127, Folder Docksai, Ron.

YAF material used the language of fusionism until the late 1970s. This lasting commitment cannot be explained by viewing fusionism merely as a temporary strategic alliance between otherwise incompatible or even hostile out-of-power-groups. Instead, most YAF activists were convinced that traditionalists and libertarians genuinely were natural allies and that their outlooks would enrich each other (Chapter 1). Perhaps youthful naïveté led its founders to underestimate the difficulties the organization would face in trying to keep conservatives aligned towards common goals.

Second, building on PHILLIPS-Fein, this work takes seriously dissenting voices and “the bizarre, the unusual, [and] the unsettling”.⁷⁴ YAF and its older advisors were intent on presenting a ‘respectable’ form of conservatism. Although labels such as ‘respectable’ and ‘extremist’ might seem dated, they are the framework under which YAF’s national leadership operated. Groups like the John Birch Society did overlap with YAF in membership and supporters, blurring the lines separating ‘respectable’ from ‘extreme’ conservatism. Occasional crises reveal a spectrum of opinion that the organization’s leaders needed to manage. Challenges to what they perceived as ‘respectable’ conservatism were a mainstay of YAF history and came from groups as diverse as anti-communist hardliners, segregationists, anarchists, Christian theocrats etc.

Third, I refrain from imposing a definition of conservatism on the subjects of this study. With NASH, I generally accept that people calling themselves conservatives are conservatives.⁷⁵ Radical libertarians, on the other hand, who rejected the label conservative for themselves, are not referred to as such. Similarly, for the purpose of this narrative I also accept YAFers’ claims of who is not part of their movement: thus, I do not treat Richard Nixon as a conservative, but a centrist; the same applies to Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter.

Fourth, this study generally accepts that conservatives believed what they preached, with some reservations. LASSITER urged historians to see conservative anti-statist rhetoric as a “political and cultural construct, a discursive fiction wielded as a form of power in the struggle to shape the nation’s political culture and its political economy.”⁷⁶ This is true in some regards: YAF generally had no problem supporting a national security state even though it could clash with individual freedoms. To a degree, this position was consistent with the legitimate functions of government laid out in its founding document. Especially in YAF’s later years, many members also wanted the state to uphold traditional moral norms. These demands, however, were sometimes couched in anti-statist rhetoric. Lastly, during the Reagan Administration, YAFers

⁷⁴ PHILLIPS-FEIN, *Conservatism: A State of the Field*, p.736.

⁷⁵ Cf. NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, p.xii.

⁷⁶ LASSITER, *Political History beyond the Red-Blue Divide*, p.764.

embraced state powers they previously rejected, i.e. deficit spending (subject, however, in conservative eyes, to the necessity of national defense).

Fifth, the study fills existing gaps in the historiography on YAF. It is the first to systematically explore YAF's response to the Civil Rights Movement. Their struggle to develop ostensibly color-blind arguments against (mandated) integration reveals the roots of modern conservative attitudes towards questions of race. With three chapters devoted to the 1970s, this book expands on THORBURN's chronicle of the era. I show how the national leadership struggled to keep the organization relevant in the face of falling membership and chapter numbers. The ensuing Culture Wars demonstrate both the longevity of the fusionist approach and its inherent fragility: members found ways to position essentially moral questions in an anti-statist framework, yet many libertarian members were not convinced. Finally, I complicate the picture of YAF's demise in the 1980s: I argue that an interplay of long- and short-term developments, of individual and structural deficits ultimately overwhelmed the group and its leadership.

YAF is clearly the focus of the narrative. While I broaden the context where it seems appropriate, I do not attempt to cover conservatism in all its facets. YAF's history is an integral part of the picture, and shines light on some important aspects of conservatism. The organization's most important legacy lies in its successful movement building, which directly contributed to many successes of the Right in the 1970s and beyond. By observing both contemporary debates and the careers of select YAF alumni, I show how young conservatives struggled against what they perceived as the discursive hegemony of liberalism and how they implemented their ideology once they achieved positions of power.

Primary Sources

In his seminal study on early YAF, ANDREW noted that “[u]nfortunately, there is no central manuscript archive for either YAF or the right wing.”⁷⁷ Fortunately, this is no longer the case. The Young Americans for Freedom records at the Hoover Institution Archives in Stanford, acquired in 2011, constitute the largest corpus of manuscript sources used in this work. The collection contains more than 80 boxes of material concerning mostly the period from 1968 onwards. It is comprised of internal and external correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, publications, press clippings, etc. Researchers beware, however: the contents are heavily disorganized! Many documents are in folders where they fit neither topically nor

⁷⁷ ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.233

chronologically. Patience and diligence, however, will pay off; the collection offers unmatched insights into the inner workings of YAF, its activism and its organization.

Moreover, the Hoover Institution Archives feature several other collections related to YAF: The Patrick Dowd and Michael Sanera Papers, as well as the David Walter and Lawrence Samuels Collections (all former YAF activists) provide a full account of radical libertarian influence in YAF in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The David Walter Collection also serves as an archive of *Commentary*, Pennsylvania YAF's official publication during the second half of the Sixties. It thus provides a unique insight into a YAF organization below the national level. Other collections that hold interesting documents are the papers of YAF advisors. For this study, I consulted those of Marvin Liebman, Walter H. Judd, and Henry Regnery.

The two archival sources that ANDREW used extensively are the William A. Rusher papers at the Library of Congress and the William F. Buckley, Jr., papers at the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale. Both Buckley and Rusher were instrumental in the formation of the group and remained influential elder statesmen throughout its existence. Their collections are of interest not only because of the correspondence between them and the organization (as well as individual members), but also because of the exchanges *about* YAF. Circles affiliated with Buckley and Rusher repeatedly intervened in YAF's affairs. Their memoranda bring out how movement grandees viewed YAF's development and where they saw its place in the movement. While the Buckley papers are largely focused on those interventions, Rusher's archive incorporates sizable amounts of material from throughout YAF's history. Most of the documents concerning its early years, however, are only available on microfilms, unindexed, dated by year, and sorted alphabetically. This makes it likely that parts of the material can still be unearthed, buried somewhere in between the thousands of letters the *National Review* publisher received every year. At the Library of Congress, there are also the papers of Herbert A. Philbrick. Philbrick was an FBI informer who had infiltrated the Communist Party of the USA and later served as witness of the prosecution in the Smith trials of the CPUSA leadership. His papers contain material pertaining to anticommunist activism and New Hampshire YAF, of which Philbrick was an advisor.

Lastly, there are those archives which originate from outside the conservative movement. Of note are the Group Research Inc. records at Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and the Gordon Hall and Grace Hoag Collection of dissenting and extremist printed propaganda at the John Hay Library, Brown University. Group Research was a non-government organization that monitored and publicized right-wing activity. Its reports are interesting because they highlight the numerous ties within the conservative movement, e.g. with respect

to the appointments of the Reagan Administration. While Group Research only monitored right-wing activity, Hall and Hoag collected material on all groups they deemed extremist, including both left- and right-wing dissenters. Both collections rely on publicly available materials like circulars, newsletters, and magazines. Another manuscript collection used here is the Protest and Activism Collection, also held by Columbia University. It contains materials surrounding the Columbia student strikes, the YAF-co-led Majority Coalition, and its various front groups. YAF's official magazine, *The New Guard* (later simply *New Guard*), constitutes the most important non-archival source for this study. Except for only a handful of issues, I was able to consult the issues from 1961 to 1985, when it ceased being a regular publication. During that time, its extent increased from 15 to at times 40 pages and more. Regular monthly runs had about 25–30 pages. Starting in 1963, a *The New Guard* subscription was included in national YAF membership, with a subscription option available to non-members as well.⁷⁸ *New Guard* not only informed about the activities of the organization, but also published articles pertaining to political and non-political topics of interest. Its issues thus tell us as much about the activism of YAF as about its philosophical foundations. The disadvantages of relying on a source so close to the organization are obvious: there is no coverage of failed operations; articles generally present YAF in the best light possible (apart from letters to the editor). They do not necessarily represent a majority opinion or that of the national leadership—although the latter at times intervened in the magazine's operations, demanding articles on a certain subject or imposing a moratorium on others. Wherever possible, other articles on the same subject as well as letters to the editor or archival sources contextualize the opinions printed in *New Guard*.

Where an outside perspective seemed appropriate, newspaper articles support the account. Because of easy digital accessibility, those are usually taken from the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

Layout

The chapters of this book are arranged both chronologically and topically. Each is designed to answer one particular sub-question as well as to advance the general narrative.

Chapter 1 deals with YAF's beginnings in 1959/1960 up to the Goldwater campaign in 1964. It examines both its organizational and intellectual origins and then turns to its early history. This first 'era' of the group was shaped by debates over its fundamental direction. Elder conservatives around *National Review* publisher William Rusher struggled for control of the board against a clique of young activists determined to chart their own course. Furthermore, the

⁷⁸ Cf. "Many, Many Thanks", in: *The New Guard*, December-January 1963, p.6.

issue of 'extremism' loomed large in those years. Far from merely a label thrown on far-right wing activists by the liberal media, several episodes demonstrate that YAF struggled to find a working relationship with groups like the John Birch Society that would acknowledge shared goals while preserving the image of 'responsible' conservatism the organization cultivated.

In the second chapter, I reevaluate the relationship of the burgeoning YAF towards the civil right issue during the 1960s. I contest earlier assertions that young movement conservatives generally neglected these issues. Civil rights also serve as an example of how the interplay between traditionalism, libertarianism, and communism could work in practice. Although each represented a different approach, they were united in their rejection of the Civil Rights Movement and most of its demands.

Chapter 3 chronicles YAF's response to the Vietnam War. Based on their view of the Cold War as a Manichean struggle that could only end in total victory or defeat, conservatives lobbied for rapid escalation to save Southeast Asia from communist domination. This was at odds with the Johnson Administration's gradualist approach. Although YAF favored an expansion of the war, they simultaneously fought the draft, rejecting it out of (libertarian) principle as well as pragmatic considerations. Therefore, rather than a rubber-stamp for the administration, the organization took on the role of a dissenting force.

The Vietnam War also fueled YAF's conflict with the emerging campus New Left, the subject of chapter 4. At the heart of these 'Campus Wars' lay the question of who would control the university and on what terms. Young conservatives appropriated leftist rhetoric to argue that 'student power' would lead to disorder, alienation of the majority of students, and the destruction of students' rights. When they failed to convince administrators to take harder line against student radicals, they took to the streets themselves, often allying with other anti-radical groups to reinforce their ranks and win new converts to conservatism.

The polarized atmosphere of the late Sixties gave birth to a radical libertarian faction within YAF. They embraced the countercultural lifestyle of leftists and their credo of 'all power to the people.' Furthermore, they argued that anti-communist crusades both at home and abroad were incompatible with the ideals of individual liberty and advocated active resistance to the draft. Chapter 5 examines how conflicts between them and the YAF majority culminated in the tumultuous 1969 national convention of in St. Louis, where radical libertarians and anarchists staged a walkout and left the organization, demonstrating the inherent instability of fusionist conservatism. Although only a small number of activists were actively expelled by the YAF leadership, St. Louis and the subsequent 'purges' became a major event in the autobiographies of the libertarian movement. Relying on such accounts, previous research overestimated the

immediate impact the defection of a rather small group of dissenters had on the organization. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of a gradual exodus of social libertarians from the organization.

If the late Sixties and early Seventies were the heyday of YAF activism, the larger part of the Nixon era embodied the hangover: as campus radicalism and the Vietnam War wended down, the national leadership struggled to find new flagship issues. Nixon himself drew the ire of conservatives by supposedly talking conservative and walking liberal. Chapter 6 argues that large projects like the Movement for Quality Education failed because even though they incorporated libertarian, traditionalist, and anti-communist critiques, they were overly intellectual, leaving unharnessed the potential of more activism-driven members. Membership numbers began to stagnate and eventually shrink, a trend that would not abate until the eventual demise of YAF in the early 1990s.

In a desperate attempt to consolidate the organization's finances, national leaders eventually embraced the prime fundraising issues of the early Seventies, including abortion. This decision, starting off chapter 7, marks YAF's plunge into the ensuing Culture Wars. While issues like desegregation busing and affirmative action once again united conservatives of all strands, others generated controversy: As the organization's members passed resolutions against abortion, debated the merits of Women's Liberation, and questioned whether 'victimless crimes' was the right label for practices such as drug (ab)use, homosexuality, and pornography, it became clear that the majority rejected the libertarian laissez-faire approach. Although some *New Guard* contributors managed to present these issues in the framework of government encroachment on the individual, and others couched their rejection of social change in libertarian language, the results of these discussions inevitably exposed the dominance of traditionalism and the surging religious conservatism within the organization.

While the second half of the Seventies did not reverse the trend of YAF's decay, it demonstrated the success of its movement building. In 1976, YAFers and YAF alumni were at the forefront of efforts both to anoint Ronald Reagan as the GOP presidential candidate and to form a new national conservative party that would unite populist reactionaries and movement conservatives, as shown in chapter 8. The leadership of the emerging New Right that showed its teeth in the debate about the future of the Panama Canal was comprised largely of former YAF members. Lastly, when Reagan did win the nomination and presidency in 1980, activists claimed posts in the new conservative administration.

The Reagan presidency could have propelled YAF to new national prominence. However, a major internecine fight alienated many longtime supporters. Individuals placed their own

ambitions over the long-term well-being of the organization, treating it more as a fundraising venture than a home for activists. Even when the situation on the board was stable, the national leadership struggled to define YAF's place in a conservative environment. In its role as conservative watchdog, it had to move rightward, giving way to more radical forms of conservatism. In its role as rubber-stamp for the Reagan administration, it finally abandoned the last vestiges of libertarianism when it endorsed the executive's actions in the Iran-Contra affair. Scarred by years of power struggles that left it without finances nor members, YAF finally died a quiet death in the early 1990s.

1. Beginnings

As Lee Edwards strode across the lawn of the Great Elm Estate in Sharon, Connecticut, on September 10, 1960, the meeting he came to visit was already well underway.⁷⁹ Sitting around one of the eponymous trees, young men and women were discussing who should be allowed to participate in the organization they were going to start. Long before students across the nation would advise their comrades to trust no one over 30, some wanted to set the maximum age at 27. In the end, they decided to set the cap at age 35, as not to exclude upcoming congressmen etc, spending the rest of the day debating the fundamental purpose of the organization and its name.⁸⁰ The next day, they passed a short statement encompassing the basic principles of the organization.⁸¹ When they departed for home, they were probably unaware of just how great the impact of that small convention would be. For the next decades, Young Americans for Freedom (YAF, as they called themselves most of the time), would espouse the principles of the Sharon Statement and serve as one of the pillars of the conservative movement that would transform American politics. Who were those young people and how did they find each other? A brief glance at the list of participants⁸² reveals that of the roughly 100 participants, 87 of them attended 44 different colleges. A quarter went to non-denominational private universities, with Northwestern being the most prominent. Another quarter studied at religious institutions, most of them catholic.⁸³ The numerically most represented geographical regions were the Northeast (yet another quarter attended Ivy League colleges) and Midwest, although attendees travelled from all over the country to participate. Despite the venture being nominally non-partisan, most of the group's early leadership had Republican backgrounds. For example, Edwards was the editor of the *Young Republican*, the publication of the Young Republican National Federation (YRNF); Douglas Caddy, who had called the meeting, had been YRNF state chairman in Washington, D.C.;⁸⁴ the elected chairman, Robert Schuchman, also was Connecticut chairman of the College Republicans (CR); David Franke, one of the key figures in bringing the young conservatives together, was editor of the *Campus Republican* etc.⁸⁵ The high representation of

⁷⁹ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.20.

⁸⁰ The agenda lists discussions such as "Why a Conservative Political Youth Organization is Needed" and "What are the best ways to project Conservatism on Campus." See Great Elm Conference Agenda, 1960. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 12, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1960).

⁸¹ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.21.

⁸² Sharon Conference Attendees List, 1960. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 5. The name of Jameson Campaigne, who also partook in the meeting, is missing.

⁸³ Cf. THORBURN, Wayne: *A Generation Awakes. Young Americans for Freedom and the Creation of the Conservative Movement*, Ottawa, IL 2010, p.26.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁸⁵ Cf. Douglas Caddy to William Buckley, October 19, 1960. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 12, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1960).

dedicated Republican activists among the Sharon participants is not surprising for a mostly Northern conservative organization representing traditional GOP strongholds in the Midwest and Northeast.⁸⁶

While all conference attendees are known, it is harder to establish which kinds of people joined YAF after its founding. The first reliable observations stem from a survey conducted by BRAUNGART amongst 215 YAFers in 1966/67.⁸⁷ The *ideal type* of a YAFer, according to his results, was male, white, of Anglo-German ancestry, either Protestant or Catholic, and of (lower) middle-class background. He came from a single-income household and had good or neutral relations with his parents, who were often Republicans and shared his conservative views. If he went to college, in half of all cases he was the first in his family to do so.⁸⁸

Rebecca KLATCH's qualitative study of YAF members who joined the group at different points in the 1960s largely corroborates these results and fleshes them out further: the fathers of female YAFers were more educated (typically college or higher) and mostly worked white-collar jobs compared to those of male members, who were less educated (typically high school diploma or less) and often worked blue-collar jobs. The mothers of both were by-and-large homemakers. Activists that later became radical libertarians had the most privileged background of all YAF members. They were also more likely to be Protestant or non-religious than the rest of the membership, which split roughly evenly between Protestants and (Irish) Catholics. While future radical libertarians typically belonged to families that could trace their American heritage to the 1700s, traditionalists often were first- or second-generation immigrants.⁸⁹

The results of BRAUNGART's studies may be somewhat biased because he only sampled members of college chapters and participants of the national convention of 1967. His finding, for example, that YAF was "overwhelmingly [...] composed of males"⁹⁰ could in part be explained by noting that women occupied with child-rearing were less likely to travel to

⁸⁶ The argument could be turned on its head: The Northeast and Midwest were strongly represented at Sharon because of the Republican tendencies of the attendees.

⁸⁷ BRAUNGART, Richard: SDS and YAF. A Comparison of Two Student Radical Groups in the Mid-1960s, in: *Youth and Society* Vol. 2/4 (1971), pp.441–457; BRAUNGART, Richard: Family Status, Socialization, and Student Politics: A Multivariate Analysis, in: *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 77/1 (1971), pp.108–130; BRAUNGART, Richard: Parental Identification and Student Politics, in: *Sociology of Education* Vol. 44/4 (1971), pp.463.

⁸⁸ Cf. BRAUNGART, SDS and YAF, p.453. That ratio seemed to have remained constant and is still observed in 1990 by SIGAL, Clancy: *Doing the Right Thing*, in: *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, April 29, 1990.

⁸⁹ On ethnicity, cf. KLATCH, Rebecca: *A Generation Divided. The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, Berkeley, CA 1999, pp.39–40; On parents' values, cf. *Ibid.*, p.41; 44–46; on religion, cf. *Ibid.*, pp.49–52; On class, cf. *Ibid.*, pp.38–39.

⁹⁰ BRAUNGART, SDS and YAF, p.447. The author does not cite any exact number.

national conventions. Women were also less likely to be in leadership positions,⁹¹ where they would have been expected to attend these events. However, in a sample gathered with the same methodology, YAF's leftist counterpart, the Students for a Democratic Society, still exhibited a female/male ratio of roughly 1 to 2.⁹² The only internal data is a YAF membership poll which was conducted at the national convention in 1971. Only roughly 15% of the respondents were women, suggesting that even when accounting for the above, they would have been a minority.⁹³ If women were underrepresented in YAF, so were African Americans. While a handful became prominent during the group's history,⁹⁴ BRAUNGART's sample has exactly 0 YAF respondents claiming African ancestry, while KLATCH's study incorporated one black conservative (out of 38 interviewees).⁹⁵

The makeup of YAF chapters varied throughout its history. Immediately after its founding, according to a later report, the majority of members were organized in community chapters of young professionals.⁹⁶ Sometime in the first half of the 1960s, mostly through the Goldwater campaign, college chapters became most common, followed by high school chapters while community chapters were least common. That balance shifted again in the mid-1970s, when community chapters reclaimed their status as largest group, followed closely by college chapters, and high school chapters became virtually extinct.⁹⁷

The prevalence of Republican activists at Sharon can also be explained by the circumstances leading up to the meeting. Two organizations (in hindsight) served as predecessors or pilot projects for YAF: Student Committee for the Loyalty Oath and Youth for Goldwater for Vice-President.

⁹¹ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.165. In two lists of state chairmen that KLATCH reviewed, there is only one woman serving in that function, respectively. The national board of directors throughout YAF's history usually had only one or two female members (out of ca. 15–25 board members in total).

⁹² Cf. BRAUNGART, *SDS and YAF*, p.446.

⁹³ Cf. *Partial Analysis of 1971 Membership Questionnaire*, February 4–6, 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5.. The organization did multiple such questionnaires during its lifetime, but this was the only one that asked respondents for their sex.

⁹⁴ I suspect that promising black conservatives were overrepresented in YAF's leadership compared to the general membership, because they counteracted its lily-white image. This means that any African American presence in the organization was negligible.

⁹⁵ BRAUNGART, *SDS and YAF*, p.454; KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.39.

⁹⁶ Cf. THORBURN, *Wayne: A Modest Proposal for the Total Reorganization of Young Americans for Freedom*, Undated (1974), p.2. YAF Records, Box 26, Folder 1.

⁹⁷ The differentiation of those chapter types is only found in reports dating from 1967 to 1980. For high school chapters losing relevancy, cf. *id.* to National Board, January 19, 1974, p.4. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1. The 'real' number of chapters is hard to determine, since a share existed basically on paper only to manipulate regional and national elections. This was especially true for community chapters, as they had no institutional affiliations and thus could be established easily, cf. Morton Blackwell to Thomas Winter, July 9, 1986. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 1; Wayne Thorburn to National Board, January 19, 1974, p.5. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

The loyalty oath was part of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), signed into law on September 2, 1958.⁹⁸ As the baby boomer generation moved into the nation's schools and would soon populate its universities in unprecedented numbers, politicians such as Alabama's Lister Hill and Carl Elliott became convinced that some sort of federal financial help to education was necessary. During the presidential election campaign in 1956, both candidates stressed federal scholarships as a necessary tool to remedy teacher shortages.⁹⁹ Because there was almost no constitutional precedent to such aid, however, the NDEA only grew into a political possibility in the wake of the Sputnik Shock. In hysteria over the perceived likelihood that the U.S. were falling behind their Soviet competitors in the realm of science, questions of education became central concerns of Cold War policy, and thus national security. In this changed environment, state and local governments were willing to accept a broader federal role in the funding of education.¹⁰⁰ Justifying education spending with national security interests came with side effects: Republican Senator Karl Mundt successfully introduced an amendment that would require recipients of student loans (the idea of scholarships or 'free rides', as detractors put it, got scrapped in the legislative process) under NDEA to testify that they were not involved in subversive activities and swear a loyalty oath to the United States. That particular provision generated some controversy in academia. Some colleges and universities did not partake in the loan program or withdrew, fearing a loss of academic freedom through political discrimination. Most educational institutions, however, either begrudgingly or freely accepted the loyalty oaths.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, a group spearheaded by Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy set out to repeal the provision, echoing concerns about narrowing students' outlook.¹⁰² "If we are to be faithful to our basic principles of freedom of thought [...] we must resist any attempt to force our students into a preconceived mold,"¹⁰³ Kennedy argued before Congress in 1959. He stressed that real subversives would simply lie in their oaths, while some of the brightest minds might forego funding out of principle. Other recipient of government benefits, opponents continued, needed not prove their allegiance to the United States in a similar manner.¹⁰⁴ The Senate was

⁹⁸ URBAN, Wayne: *More Than Science and Sputnik. The National Defense Education Act of 1958*, Tuscaloosa, AL 2015, p.2.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.75–77.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.80–81.

¹⁰¹ Cf. MAHER, Brent: *Divided by Loyalty: The Debate Regarding Loyalty Provisions in the National Defense Education Act of 1958*, in: *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 56/2 (2016), pp.301–330, here pp.302–303; 310–313.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.315–318.

¹⁰³ Cited according to *Ibid.*, p.318.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.318–320.

roughly evenly split on the question, and an amendment to repeal the disclaimer affidavit passed in 1960 by a narrow vote, but the bill died in committee in the House.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, the debates brought some students with entirely divergent views on the scene. Douglas Caddy, who got his start into politics when he set up a table gathering signatures for a petition supporting the embattled senator McCarthy during the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954,¹⁰⁶ partnered up with David Franke, editor of the national College Republican organ *The Campus Republican*. The two had met during a college journalism class sponsored by *Human Events*, one of the leading conservative publications (and de facto the newsletter of the conservative movement). To demonstrate that students, irrespective of the musings of their academic instructors, were overwhelmingly in favor of the loyalty provisions, they organized a national organization, Student Committee for the Loyalty Oath (SCLO). Caddy and Franke could draw on a network of contacts established as DC state chairman and editor of the CR and Intercollegiate Society of Individualists publications, respectively. Those contacts brought more activists to the fray. By 1960, its governing board already included students from thirty colleges and universities.¹⁰⁷ The young activists started petitions for retaining the loyalty oath and sent letters to their respective congressmen. Caddy even presented his case in the *Congressional Digest*.¹⁰⁸

He repeated his basic premises in later testimony to the Special Subcommittee on Education of the House Education and Labor Committee. Firstly, he stated, most universities had accepted the loyalty provisions. For 30 universities that did not participate or had withdrawn from the program, there were 1,357 participating, representing 87% of all American students.¹⁰⁹ Congress should not cave to a vocal minority.¹¹⁰ Secondly, he turned one of the arguments for repeal on his head. If anyone was discriminating, he claimed, it was college administrators who rejected the program for personal political reasons, thus denying their students their own decision. Everyone else, he continued, could simply opt out if they did not want to take the oath or sign the affidavit. How could this be termed discrimination?¹¹¹ Yet, Caddy's third and most

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.316–317.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.19.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.18.

¹⁰⁸ MAHER, *Divided by Loyalty: The Debate Regarding Loyalty Provisions in the National Defense Education Act of 1958*, p.314; ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.67.

¹⁰⁹ URBAN, *More Than Science and Sputnik*, p.187, lists 31 institutions not participating in NDEA, mostly Ivy League and West Coast colleges. MAHER, *Divided by Loyalty: The Debate Regarding Loyalty Provisions in the National Defense Education Act of 1958*, p.303, speaks of 148 colleges and universities that voiced objections to the program.

¹¹⁰ Cf. CADDY, Douglas: Statement before Special Subcommittee on Education of House Education and Labor Committee Regarding Proposed Repeal of Non-Subversive Affidavit from the National Defense Education Act of 1958, June 14, 1961, p.1. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 1.

¹¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.2.

emotionally charged argument did not address the topic directly. Citing NYU professor and *National Review* contributor Ernest van den Haag, he claimed that “repealing the requirement now would surely encourage the pressure group of ritualistic liberals and the confusion of democracy with the insane mixture of anarchy and statism which it promotes. Repeal would be a victory of the liberal cliché over logic and democratic principle.”¹¹² Caddy’s view was shared by conservatives in Congress, notably Strom Thurmond and Barry Goldwater, who would become some of YAF’s most important supporters.¹¹³ Despite their best efforts, the anti-subversive affidavit was finally repealed in 1962, although other measures to prevent supposed communists and subversives from benefiting from NDEA entitlements remained.¹¹⁴

Both conservative leaders and scholars have stressed the importance of SCLO as one of the building blocks of the modern conservative youth movement.¹¹⁵ Indeed, fighting for the loyalty provisions gave the students first-hand experience in lobbying Congress. Additionally, they had built a network for future activism:¹¹⁶ As Caddy recalled, “Franke and I were in touch with hundreds of like-thinking students around the country,”¹¹⁷ some of which would later participate at Sharon.

One of those contacts was Robert Croll, a YR leader in Illinois and an attendee of the April 1960 convention of the Midwestern Federation of Young Republican Clubs. Not only did the delegates vote for retaining the loyalty oath, but they also passed a resolution endorsing Arizonan senator Barry Goldwater for vice president. The resolution had been sponsored by John Kolbe, a fellow Illinoisian.¹¹⁸ Goldwater, a household name only for a select group of politicians,¹¹⁹ had impressed the youngsters with his program set forth in his eventually best-selling *The Conscience of a Conservative*.¹²⁰ According to the drafter of the Sharon Statement and movement conservative Stanton Evans, this “otherwise unnoted political gathering” in retrospect turned into a “reasonable historic moment” as it marked the first formal party statement supporting Goldwater for national office.¹²¹

This endorsement is significant as conservatives had not been the dominant faction of the Republican Party in quite a while. Ever since President Hoover’s landslide defeat against

¹¹² Ibid., p.3.

¹¹³ Cf. MAHER, *Divided by Loyalty: The Debate Regarding Loyalty Provisions in the National Defense Education Act of 1958*, pp.320–323.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Ibid., pp.323–325.

¹¹⁵ Cf. PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.69; VIGUERIE/FRANKE, *America’s Right Turn*, p.65.

¹¹⁶ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.23.

¹¹⁷ Cited according to THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.19.

¹¹⁸ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.27.

¹¹⁹ See PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, pp.26–42 for an overview of Goldwater’s early political activity.

¹²⁰ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.68–69; ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.24–25.

¹²¹ EVANS, *Stanton: An Introduction to The Conscience of a Conservative and Young Americans for Freedom*, Undated (1970), p.2. YAF Records, Box 58, Folder 4.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, the party ‘kingmakers’ of the Northeast saw a moderate liberalism as the road to success. The conservative ‘Old Guard’ centered around perennial primary candidate Robert Taft, US senator from Ohio. In one defeat after the other, it had to accept liberal Republicans such as Kansas Governor Alf Landon, former Democrat Wendell Willkie, and, worst of all, New York Governor Thomas Dewey (twice), leader of the moderates/liberals, as presidential nominees of their party. Increasingly, conservatives, who dominated the Republican congressional delegation, saw themselves as a distinct, yet powerless faction within their own party. When Eisenhower rode his war hero status to the White House, he also allied embraced moderation. His ‘Modern Republicanism’ appeared to conservatives as a mere continuation of the New Deal with only the faintest Republican touch.¹²² A Young Republican meeting endorsing an outspoken conservative, then, might have been an early sign of the conservative tide that would eventually sweep the party in 1964.

When Croll returned home, he organized Youth for Goldwater for Vice President to shore up support among his YR comrades and college students. For the steering committee he tapped into Caddy, Franke, and others that would play a leading role in the early days of YAF.¹²³ The group made its showing at the 1960 Republican Convention in Chicago. James Kolbe, younger brother of John, had recently been Goldwater’s page at the Senate and was tasked to guide Goldwater from one meeting with state delegations to another. His access to the convention floor made him a centerpiece of the Youth for Goldwater operation: he moonlighted forging convention credentials for his comrades.¹²⁴ During presidential nominations, the young activists cowered in the convention rows to remain out of sight until Arizona Governor Paul Fannin announced Goldwater’s nomination (as a favorite son). In concert, they then rose, presented placards and banners, and staged a major demonstration on behalf of their candidate.¹²⁵ Although their effort attested to the organizational skills and political savvy of young conservative activists, it ultimately remained unsuccessful. The anointed candidate, Vice President Richard Nixon, had cut a deal with the Northeastern liberal wing of the party prior to the convention. This included concessions on platform planks and the vice-presidential nomination for Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Conservatives fumed at the prospect of a liberal vice president and (rightfully) suspected their arch-nemesis, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, behind it. Goldwater, never one to mince words, called the agreement

¹²² For the clashes between moderates and conservatives between 1932 and 1964, cf. BOWEN, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism*.

¹²³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.19.

¹²⁴ 50th Anniversary of the Sharon Statement [22.03.2021], [24:15–29:15], online: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?295406-1/50th-anniversary-sharon-statement> [22.03.2021].

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.21.

“immoral politics [...] the Munich [Agreement, G.W.] of the Republican Party [...] in two senses, that it subordinated principle to expedience; and that it guaranteed precisely the evil it was designed to prevent—in this case a Republican defeat in November.”¹²⁶

A loyal party soldier throughout his political career, Goldwater still fell in line with Nixon, but not without addressing the protesting faithful in the same breath that he released his delegates for the VP:

“This country is too important for anyone’s feelings. This country, in its majesty, is too great for any man, be he conservative or liberal, to stay home and not work just because he doesn’t agree. Let’s grow up, conservatives. If we want to take this Party back, and I think we can someday, let’s get to work.”¹²⁷

The day after Goldwater’s statement, former New Jersey Governor Charles Edison invited the Senator’s youthful supporters to a luncheon. Besides a few older conservatives and other activists, the steering committee of Youth for Goldwater attended. Edison encouraged the youths to stay in contact and form a permanent group transcending single issues. Goldwater also had some encouraging words. Another of those present was William F. Buckley, Jr., who offered his Sharon, CT, estate as meeting place.¹²⁸ Caddy seized the initiative, and, with the help of conservative organizer Marvin Liebman, who had assisted in both the efforts to nominate Goldwater and congressman Walter Judd¹²⁹ for vice president, set up the Interim Committee For a National Conservative Youth Organization. Members included Caddy, Croll, Franke, James Kolbe, and other Youth for Goldwater leaders. But among the “120 outstanding youth leaders”¹³⁰ that Caddy would invite to Sharon were former competitors, too, for example Robert Bauman and Carol Dawson, who were leaders in the Youth for Nixon effort. Nixon and Goldwater supporters were divided less by the strength of their conservative convictions than their strategic approach. To the former, Nixon, although unsatisfactory on issues like the loyalty oath, provided a more viable alternative to liberal Republicans and Democrats than the relatively unknown Goldwater.¹³¹ To the invitees, Caddy pondered:

“America stands at the crossroads today. Will our Nation continue to follow the path towards socialism or will we turn towards Conservatism and freedom? The final answer to this question lies with America’s youth. Will our youth be more conservative or more liberal in future years? You can help determine the answer to this question.”¹³²

That close to 100 of the recipients of that letter showed up for the conference attests to the great importance the youths placed on the question of America’s future. Like the leftist students that

¹²⁶ Cited according to PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.85.

¹²⁷ Cited according to *Ibid.*, p.95.

¹²⁸ Cf. CADDY, *Douglas: Being There. Eye Witness To History*, Chicago, IL 2018, wo. p.

¹²⁹ Judd was known best as a staunch supporter of the Nationalist Chinese, see MAO, *Joyce: Asia First. China and the Making of Modern American Conservatism*, Chicago, IL 2015, pp.44–77. He keynoted the 1960 GOP convention.

¹³⁰ Douglas Caddy to William Rusher, August 16, 1960, p.1. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4

¹³¹ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.28.

¹³² Douglas Caddy to William Rusher, August 16, 1960, p.1. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

would make history at Port Huron two years later,¹³³ they too were dissatisfied with the liberal status quo and convinced that, as part of the largest generation in the nation's history, they had the capability and responsibility to shape its future.¹³⁴ The strategic goal of what became known as the Sharon Conference was not to prescribe specific solutions for the political questions of the day. Thus, the attendees also developed no specific political program or strategic goalposts for their new organization. Their main accomplishment was the Sharon Statement, in which they laid out the philosophical foundation for YAF.¹³⁵

Great Elm, Sharon, CT, the conference's venue, was the family home of the Buckley family. William F. Buckley, Sr., had made the family's fortune in the oil business. His wealth assured that his numerous children got a quality conservative education. It is thus hardly surprising that one of his sons, William F., Jr., found his subsequent studies at Yale severely lacking. Yet, when after his graduation, he wrote an entire book—*God and Man at Yale*—¹³⁶ at just about how doomed he thought the Ivy League institution was, he caused quite the uproar. In it, he charged that his liberal educators had replaced Yale's American protestant values with moral relativism and leftism. Instead of upright members of the social elite, it was turning the nation's best and brightest into atheistic communists, an accusation that, under battle cries like 'tenured radicals,' has lost none of its topicality in modern American political discourse.¹³⁷

Buckley naturally was neither the first nor the last to attack academia for teaching the wrong values.¹³⁸ Nor was his anti-communism particularly controversial in a society that would soon embrace the antics of Wisconsin senator Joe McCarthy.¹³⁹ Two factors, however, contributed to the spectacular success of his literary debut: firstly, Buckley's conviction that a strong America needed a solid religious foundation reflected the ecumenical *zeitgeist*. Buckley, an Irish catholic, encouraged his alma mater to return to its protestant roots. In contrast to many of his cultural pessimist predecessors, he espoused his Christianity without dabbling in anti-Semitism, which made him more palatable to the American mainstream.¹⁴⁰ Secondly, Buckley's youthful exuberance, his delight in debating his opponents and his patrician demeanor set him apart from most conservatives of his age. In a world populated by grey men as the somniferous 'Mr. Republican' Robert Taft, long-time leader of the Republican right

¹³³ See The Port Huron Statement [1962/1964], online: http://www.progressivefox.com/misc_documents/PortHuronStatement.pdf [05.03.2020].

¹³⁴ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.1–5.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹³⁶ BUCKLEY, William: *God and Man at Yale. The Superstitions of 'Academic Freedom'*, Chicago, IL 1951.

¹³⁷ Cf. FARBER, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism*, p.41.

¹³⁸ Cf. NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, pp.140–141.

¹³⁹ Cf. FARBER, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism*, p.45.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.47–51.

wing, on the one hand and fuming Southern reactionaries like the Dixiecrats on the other hand, the arrogant, yet delightful Buckley was a welcome change. “If Robert Taft was a Model T, ideologically functional but no fun at all,” David FARBER writes, “Bill Buckley was all chrome and tail fins with a big engine under the hood.”¹⁴¹

In 1955, Buckley started *National Review*, which he edited for the remainder of his life. Convinced that conservatism needed a new forum, and that one large journal could do the job better than several small ones, he included conservatives of many different stripes:¹⁴² Roman-Catholic traditionalists and intellectuals, ex-communists converted into conservative anti-communist hawks, and staunch libertarians were the most prominent groups.¹⁴³ In the magazine’s mission statement, Buckley famously condensed its purpose into standing “athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so”.¹⁴⁴ It was an anachronism, he continued, because it favored conservatism over “radical social experimentation”; because it espoused objective morality in a time of moral relativism; and because its contributors were “non-licensed nonconformists” in a liberal age of political and bureaucratic conformity.¹⁴⁵ Why, then, should one read the magazine? Buckley answered:

“[W]e offer, besides ourselves, a position that has not grown old under the weight of a gigantic, parasitic bureaucracy, a position untampered by the doctoral dissertations of a generation of Ph.D’s in social architecture, unattenuated by a thousand vulgar promises to a thousand different pressure groups, uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom. And that, ladies and gentlemen, leaves us just about the hottest thing in town.”¹⁴⁶

Clearly, Buckley’s words resonated with the conservative scene, and *National Review* quickly became the most influential conservative journal of opinion.¹⁴⁷ BJERRE-POULSEN stresses its importance in providing conservatives with a unified voice and in movement-building. According to him, the connections conservatives established through the magazine were invaluable for the movement’s development.¹⁴⁸

One of Buckley’s goals with *National Review* was to present a ‘respectable’ conservatism that could rid itself for example conspiratorial, anti-Semitic, and anarchist elements. In his editorials, he “excommunicated” various radicals on the Right. Historians have interpreted this

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.42.

¹⁴² BJERRE-POULSEN, *Right Face*, p.118. For the background of *National Review* and other similar attempts at founding conservative magazines in the 1950s, cf. NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, pp.141–148.

¹⁴³ Cf. Ibid., pp.148–149.

¹⁴⁴ BUCKLEY, William: *National Review. Credenda and Statement of Principles*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.201–205, here p.201.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.201–202.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.203.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, pp.151–153.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. BJERRE-POULSEN, *Right Face*, p.115.

as Buckley policing the boundaries of mainstream conservatism.¹⁴⁹ His success in that endeavor is questionable. As shown below, those boundaries remained rather porous.

The Sharon Statement embraces (social) traditionalism, classical liberalism/libertarianism, constitutionalism, and a unilateral, aggressively anti-communist foreign policy. It had been drafted en route to Sharon by Stanton Evans, the 26-year-old editor of the *Indianapolis News* and was only slightly modified at the conference.¹⁵⁰ Clearly, it was influenced by the work of *National Review* and its contributors. Not only did Evans incorporate much of their thinking, but the specific combination of traditionalism, classical liberalism or libertarianism, and anticommunism had been pioneered by the magazine, most notably Frank Meyer, who tirelessly promoted their complementary nature.¹⁵¹ This ideology subsequently became known as ‘fusionism’, an originally pejorative term coined by Buckley’s ultra-traditionalist brother-in-law Brent Bozell, Jr.¹⁵² The Sharon Statement is one of the core documents of this political ideology. To this date, the Heritage Foundation heralds it as “a succinct summary of the central ideas of modern American conservatism.”¹⁵³ Rather than advocating specific solutions to the pressing problems of the day, the Sharon Statement tried to frame the conservatism of the attendees, broadly conceived.

In a “time of moral and political crisis,” its preamble urges the youth of America to “affirm certain eternal truths.”¹⁵⁴ This is the reformulation of a central traditionalist tenet: that “[p]olitical problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems,”¹⁵⁵ as *National Review* contributor, philosopher, and writer Russell Kirk had argued in his doctoral dissertation. The same conviction reappears when the text proceeds that government regulation of the economy reduces the *moral* strength of the nation and that the welfare state erodes the moral autonomy of both the taxpayer (by reducing his incentive to voluntarily do good) and the beneficiary (by tarnishing his integrity).¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁹ PERLSTEIN, Rick: I Thought I Understood the American Right. Trump Proved Me Wrong, in: The New York Times Magazine, 11.04.2017, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/11/magazine/i-thought-i-understood-the-american-right-trump-proved-me-wrong.html> [26.04.2021].

¹⁵⁰ Cf. EVANS, Stanton: Recollections on the Sharon Statement, in: The New Guard, September 1970, pp.9–10.

¹⁵¹ Cf. NASH, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945, pp.154–185, esp. 172–185.

¹⁵² RUSHER, William: Freedom or Virtue?, Undated (1962), p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

¹⁵³ Primary Sources: The Sharon Statement [25.03.2021], online: <https://www.heritage.org/article/primary-sources> [26.03.2021].

¹⁵⁴ The Sharon Statement (1960), in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader, New York, NY 2003, pp.229–230, here p.229.

¹⁵⁵ KIRK, Russell: The Conservative Mind, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader, New York, NY 2003, pp.107–121, here p.110. YAF’s resident philosopher, Bob Moffit, later interpreted the opening of the statement to mean that “[a]t the root of every social problem, there is a moral problem.” MOFFIT, Robert: Reflections on the Sharon Statement, in: The New Guard, September 1970, p.23.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. The Sharon Statement (1960), p.230.

Foremost “among the transcendent values”, the core text of the statement opens, was “the individual’s use of his God-given free will.”¹⁵⁷ The incorporation of the phrase “God-given” incited heavy debate at the conference, especially by followers of Russian émigré, atheist, and libertarian philosopher Ayn Rand.¹⁵⁸ The altercation foreshadowed later conflicts about the role of religion in the organization and was narrowly decided in favor of the phrase’s proponents. The phrase marks another centerpiece of traditionalist thought in the text: by charging the concept of free will with divine intent, it establishes a moral foundation for the exercise of liberty. The young conservatives thus sought to correct what *National Review* contributor and YAF advisor Frank Meyer would later call the “fatal flaw [...] of 19th-century liberalism,” which “stood for individual freedom”, but “denied the validity of moral ends firmly based on the constitution of being.”¹⁵⁹ Freedom as an absolute value, Meyer argued, was meaningless because it could not tell free people *how* they should exercise their newfound liberty. In the traditionalist view, what could be known about the human Good (or the good/virtuous life) could only be known by turning to the past. “No single generation of men can of itself discover the proper ends of human existence,” Meyer argued.¹⁶⁰ By examining a nostalgic sense of loss felt towards a partially retrotopian past, men would gain an insight into what was worth preserving and restoring.¹⁶¹

The statement presented a classical liberal conception of the state: it posited the preservation of internal order, the provision of national defense, and the administration of justice as the only legitimate functions of government. Any expansion of the state apparatus beyond these narrow responsibilities would lead to the accumulation of “power which tends to diminish order and liberty.”¹⁶² Economic freedom, conservatives of all convictions claimed, was a prerequisite for political freedom—someone depending on government for his livelihood, for example, could never really be free as what is given might just as easily be taken away. Thus, they proposed free markets as the “single economic system compatible with the requirements of personal freedom and constitutional government.”¹⁶³ Underlying was a negative conception of freedom:

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.229.

¹⁵⁸ EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.21. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.34 See also chapter 5. For Ayn Rand, see BURNS, *Goddess of the Market*, specifically pp.202–203 for her followers at Sharon. For the relation of *National Review* intellectuals to Rand, see NASH, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, pp.156–158.

¹⁵⁹ MEYER, Frank: *A Rebel Finds His Tradition*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.171–179, here p.171.

¹⁶⁰ *Id.*: *Libertarianism or Libertinism?*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.259–261, here p.261.

¹⁶¹ Cf. HENRIE, Mark: *Understanding Traditionalist Conservatism*, in: BERKOWITZ, Peter (Ed.): *Varieties of Conservatism in America*, Stanford, CA 2004, pp.3–30, here pp.8–11.

¹⁶² *The Sharon Statement* (1960), p.229.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

the freest society, the Sharon Statement implicitly argued, was the one with minimal government interference, not the one where it strived to maximize opportunities for all citizens.¹⁶⁴

Traditionalism and classical liberalism/libertarianism were (and are) hardly natural allies. Too often, libertarians argued, the social conservative strove to turn society into a dictatorship of virtue; too tempting it was for the libertarian, traditionalists countered, to embrace cultural and political anarchism. The aforementioned Frank Meyer deserves credit for systematically ‘fusing’ the two ideologies. Where he excoriated liberalism for being devoid of direction, he accused 19th-century conservatives of much the same flaw: “[A]cceptance of the moral authority derived from transcendent criteria of truth and good must be voluntary if it is to have meaning.”¹⁶⁵ In Meyer’s thinking, traditionalism and liberalism (or its more radical form, libertarianism) were natural allies not despite but because of their antithetical nature; “not incompatible opposites, but complementary poles of a tension and balance.”¹⁶⁶ They would hedge each other, preventing both authoritarianism and anarchy.

While writers like Meyer provided the intellectual basis for an alliance of traditionalism and liberalism, one reagent especially catalyzed their fusion: anti-communism. “[P]eriods of freedom,” the statement read, “are rare, and can exist only when free citizens concertedly defend their rights against all enemies.”¹⁶⁷ At the present time, it continued, communism was the greatest enemy and the gravest threat to liberty. Both liberals and traditionalists could endorse that statement. For the former, communism embodied the most hellish form of state tyranny known to man. In their negative conception of freedom, the totalitarian pervasion of government into every sphere of life meant there was little, if any, personal freedom left even in theory—never mind the authoritarian nature of existing real socialist or communist regimes. The latter could justifiably see communism as the total negation of their *weltanschauung*. Gerhart Niemeyer, professor at Notre Dame and part of the inner *National Review* circle, argued that communists inverted traditionalists’ concept of history: “From the vantage point of the ultimate end [i.e. the communist society, GW],” they were “retrospecting the present from the future. The certainty of things to come furnishes the Communist point of view for all problems of the present.”¹⁶⁸ In contrast, the traditionalist view is defined by the *uncertainty* of the Human Good, which can only be discerned by looking towards the *past*. Furthermore, communism

¹⁶⁴ Cf. AKST, Daniel: A Manifesto at 50, in: *The Wilson Quarterly* Vol. 36/2 (2012), pp.38–42, here p.41.

¹⁶⁵ MEYER, A Rebel Finds His Tradition, p.172.

¹⁶⁶ MEYER, *Libertarianism or Libertinism?*, p.259.

¹⁶⁷ *The Sharon Statement* (1960), p.230.

¹⁶⁸ NIEMEYER, Gerhart: *The Communist Mind*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.149–160, here p.150.

denied the divine intent central to traditionalists' understanding of society, as laid out by Whittaker Chambers in his book *A Witness*, that was an inspiration to many young conservatives.¹⁶⁹ Therein, Hiss provided part autobiography of his renunciation of communism, part court reporting of his later role as witness against suspected communist subversives, part doomsaying. Lastly, *A Witness* was a treatise on communism, whose basic conviction Chambers called "man's second oldest faith. Its promise was whispered in the first days of the Creation under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: 'Ye shall be as gods.' [...] The Communist vision is the vision of Man without God."¹⁷⁰ As Niemeyer argued that the communist understanding of history deluded its followers into thinking they possessed powers proper to an omniscient god, so did Chambers suggest the elevation of man to the status of God was communism's principal allure. In short: The Cold War was not merely a conflict between two global superpowers; it was also a quasi-apocalyptic battle between the forces of Heaven and Hell.

Consequently, the young conservatives demanded that "the United States [...] stress victory over, rather than coexistence with" communism.¹⁷¹ Taking seriously Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's famous dictum "We will bury you!",¹⁷² meaning that at the end of history, communists would live to see the death of capitalism, they estimated that only one of the two could ultimately survive.

While the adopted statement was nearly identical with the draft and was, despite occasional attempts to rewrite or add passages, never modified, not all conservatives agreed with its contents. Two Sharon participants from the University of Chicago reviewed the statement in the Intercollegiate Society of Individualist's magazine. They hammered away at its anti-communism, claiming that the necessary rise in defense spending (and thus, taxes) and YAF's implicit support of government agencies' fight against internal subversion were detrimental to individual freedom.¹⁷³ Gerhart Niemeyer, on the other hand, arrived at the opposite conclusion. Calling the statement "metaphysically both false and contradictory"¹⁷⁴ he argued that it left "the individual standing alone before the state, powerless before the sole possessor of power, normless before the sole creator of norms, a self-centered pigmy before the leviathan of

¹⁶⁹ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.66–67.

¹⁷⁰ CHAMBERS, Whittaker: *A Witness*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.135–148, here p.141.

¹⁷¹ *The Sharon Statement* (1960), p.230.

¹⁷² *Foreign News: We Will Bury You!*, in: *Time Magazine*, November 26, 1956, online: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,867329,00.html> [25.03.2021].

¹⁷³ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.35.

¹⁷⁴ ? Signature Unreadable (Burnham, James) to William Buckley, March 17, 1962, p.4. William F. Buckley, Jr., *Papers*, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

government bureaucracy.”¹⁷⁵ This, to me, seems like a misreading of the statement. Although traditionalist themes are only briefly mentioned and remain underdeveloped in the text itself, given proper context, they color every facet of its arguments.¹⁷⁶ This was one of the points Stanton Evans himself made when he reflected on his work 10 years later.¹⁷⁷

Later critics, foremost among them John ANDREW, noted the statement’s deceptive conciseness. Its “failure to grapple with specific cases” and its preoccupation with broad philosophical sweeps “obscured some serious division among young conservatives,” ANDREW argued. This “failure [...] to recognize the complexity of political life,”¹⁷⁸ he proposes, ultimately resembles the failure of the document itself. Although the critique is valid, it misses the point of the Sharon Conference. As discussions about the name of the group show—Young Americans for Freedom was chosen to not alienate liberal anti-communists, Democrats, or centrists that might be repulsed by ‘conservative’ or ‘Republican’ showing up in the group’s name—¹⁷⁹ most participants wanted to make the group as inclusionary as possible by being rather vague about the organization’s philosophy as applied to the pressing issues of the day.

Here, the Sharon Statement is the opposite of the Port Huron Statement, the sometimes convoluted, meandering declaration of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) passed in 1962. SDS would eventually grow into one of YAF’s main opponents in the later Sixties.¹⁸⁰ SDS leader Tom Hayden had read the Sharon Statement and possibly included it in the reading list for the Port Huron Conference.¹⁸¹ As with YAF, the resulting statement is regarded as one of the founding documents of the group.

It perhaps seems natural to compare the two statements. However, the circumstances of their creation differ greatly: By 1962, SDS had already existed for roughly two years, and its parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, for several decades. Participants would have already known about the general philosophical outlook of the groups; their task was to substantiate this philosophy into a political program for the youth of America. The Port Huron Statement in its genesis is thus more comparable to the resolutions passed by YAF’s national conventions, although its reception and legacy vastly overshadow those of common resolutions. Furthermore, although the statement was detailed in its analysis of the political questions of the

¹⁷⁵ Cited according to SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.35.

¹⁷⁶ For a similar interpretation, see YAF’s own Bob Moffit: MOFFIT, Robert: *Reflections on the Sharon Statement*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1970, pp.23–25; MOFFIT, Robert: *Reflections on the Sharon Statement II*, in: *The New Guard*, November 1970, pp.22–24.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. EVANS, Stanton: *Recollections on the Sharon Statement*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1970, p.10.

¹⁷⁸ ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.58. See also BJERRE-POULSEN, *Right Face*, p.178.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.36; EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.22.

¹⁸⁰ AKST, *A Manifesto at 50*; KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.20–33.

¹⁸¹ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.25 with fn. 19.

day, it did not prevent a fracturing of the organization, as the critique of ANDREW suggests it might have.

1.1 YAFs and OAFs—YAF and the Conservative Movement

One factor especially separates the history of YAF and SDS. While the latter broke with its parent organization a few years after Port Huron and built a youth movement largely separate from older leftist groups,¹⁸² the former remained in good standing with older conservatives throughout most of its existence. The influence of Buckley and *National Review*, for example, is palpable. It is no coincidence that the Sharon Conference was held at Sharon, and not, say, at the mansion of Charles Edison or some anonymous convention center. The thrill alone of being able to meet *the* William F. Buckley might have attracted some participants who carried and styled themselves as miniature versions of their idol.

After YAF was established, its organization was handed over to Marvin Liebman Associates, a consulting firm for which Caddy had worked previously and which was known for its conservative clients, the most prominent of which was the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations.¹⁸³ Liebman had pioneered some of conservatives' most successful organizing tools, e.g. non-operating advisory boards composed of well-known conservatives that could be added to letterheads; single-issue front groups to attract new (non-conservative) supporters to various causes; chairmen that were chosen for their prominence (Representative Walter Judd, staunch supporter of the Republic of China, was chairman of the Committee of One Million); and executive committees doing the real work behind the scenes.¹⁸⁴ YAF inherited many of these attributes: its advisory board was composed of movement greats such as Buckley, conservative members of Congress like Barry Goldwater, and conservative public figures such as actors John Wayne and Ronald Reagan. Its first chairman, Robert Schuchman, was elected not only for his intellectual brilliance, but also because he attended the prestigious Yale Law School and because he was Jewish, thus offsetting anticipated criticism that YAF was a primarily Roman Catholic organization (or that conservatives, in general, were anti-Semitic).¹⁸⁵ Lastly, during its existence it spawned numerous single-issue front groups, some of which will appear in later chapters of this book.

¹⁸² ISSERMAN, Maurice/KAZIN, Michael: *America Divided. The Civil War of the 1960s*, New York, NY 2008, p.178.

¹⁸³ See MAO, Asia First, pp. 49; 64; 70; 144.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. BURKE, Kyle: *Revolutionaries for the Right. Anticommunist Internationalism and Paramilitary Warfare in the Cold War*, Chapel Hill, NC 2018, pp.15–18.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.36–37.

YAF was hierarchically organized. At the national level, there were two centers of power: the board of directors and the national office. The former consisted of elected members while the latter were employees of the corporation employed by the board. The composition of the board varied slightly during YAF's history, but generally speaking, there were about 25 seats on the board and three ways of becoming a member: convention seats, elected at the national conventions held every other year; regional seats, one for each region (number and makeup of the regions were subject to many changes over the years), elected at regional conferences; and senior seats elected by the directors themselves. Vacancies, too, were filled by board appointment. The national chairman also was a member of the board and was elected by the national convention. The remaining officers (vice-chairman, treasurer, and secretary) were selected from among the directors. The board also elected from its midst a policy committee that was tasked with preparing an agenda for YAF. Board meetings were held about four times a year at varying locations across the country.

Below the national level were state organizations, whose makeup resembled that of the national organization. State chairmen were appointed by the national chairman subject to board review. Finally, the local level had individual chapters represented by a chapter chairman. Acting mostly on their own initiative in YAF's early days, from the Vietnam era onwards, they increasingly looked towards the national office for programming, materials, and direction.

The national office handled YAF's day-to-day business, including administrative duties, developing programs and materials based on the policy set by the board, servicing chapters and encouraging their foundation, and communicating with members. It steadily grew during YAF's rise in the Sixties, and, by the end of the decade, was headed by the executive director, who oversaw a handful of specialized employees like state and chapter services director, college director, and publications director, that were joined by a general office staff. Although the executive director nominally was subject to board review, his widespread connections in the organization gave him enormous influence, which he could potentially use to get rid of hostile board members. Senior staff appointments thus were political as much as administrative questions. With few exceptions, they were only granted to YAF veterans like board members or state chairmen.

The *National Review* crowd remained in the picture after YAF's foundation: publisher William Rusher served as a political advisor to the group, while Meyer discussed philosophy with anyone having the leisure and courtesy to call him at night, where he was most active.¹⁸⁶ The organization was growing fast—ten months after its founding Caddy reported some 180

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.38–39.

chapters that had either affiliated with the organization or had been started as YAF groups—¹⁸⁷ and already had some successful events to show for.¹⁸⁸ Conflict, however, was on the horizon. More interesting than the particular actions of parties involved in YAF's early internecine battles are larger questions about the future of the organization that spawned the conflicts but took a back seat in times of sharpened rhetoric and behind-the-scenes politicking. The largest infighting took place between a faction around Caddy and William Rusher. Sometime during 1961, perhaps as early as March,¹⁸⁹ Caddy, who, as executive secretary of the organization managed its day-to-day affairs, came to believe that YAF would be better off without the services of Marvin Liebman, whom he accused of keeping his business afloat on YAF's back. Perhaps his motivation was purely economical and he wondered if YAF was wasting money on Liebman. Perhaps he wanted tighter control of the organization himself and felt that an established firm essentially handling most of the YAF operation threatened his position as de-facto-leader. Perhaps it was just the thrill of power: as an experienced Young Republican, where political fights were part of the fun, even if they served none but personal goals, Caddy was no stranger to power plays.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps, however, he believed that for a youth organization, older conservatives (or Old Americans for Freedom—in short OAFs) were exercising undue influence on his fellow activists.¹⁹¹ In any case, in the summer of 1961, he proposed to the board to sever the relations between YAF and Marvin Liebman's firm.¹⁹² Liebman, according to one of Caddy's allies, was a "pushover" in conflicts and thus enlisted the support of Rusher, a YR infighting veteran.¹⁹³ Liebman's call for help, then, seems to substantiate Caddy's criticism. If Liebman did not make money off YAF and was not influencing it in his direction it would have hardly made sense for him to put up a fight.

Rusher brought a new perspective to the altercation. The inner *National Review* circle believed it to be "an established law that a youth tendency must always be politically subordinate to an adult tendency."¹⁹⁴ Rusher drew two conclusions from this: first, any move by Caddy and his allies to move YAF away from the influence of the *National Review* group necessarily meant a move towards some other adult group (supposedly either Nelson Rockefeller's liberal Republicans or the far-right John Birch Society). Second, if his allies were to keep power, the

¹⁸⁷ Douglas Caddy to Members and Friends, June, 1961, pp.1–2. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

¹⁸⁸ See below.

¹⁸⁹ William Rusher to William Buckley et al., September 5, 1961, p.1. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.41, with fn. 51.

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.42–43.

¹⁹² Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.117.

¹⁹³ Cf. PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, pp.177–182.

¹⁹⁴ ? Signature Unreadable (Burnham, James) to William Buckley, March 17, 1962. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

influence of Caddy's faction needed to be permanently squelched. Rusher believed Liebman to be a pushover as well, who had spoiled the YAF kids like a rich uncle by providing them with offices, credit cards, etc. beyond the means of the young organization; it had been a mistake to leave the YAF operation solely to him.¹⁹⁵ From now on, he promised in a letter to Buckley and other *National Review* insiders, he would treat YAF in the "political mode." About Caddy and his allies, he reported to his peers: "I have a whole series of ideas to handle this gang."¹⁹⁶

His first major strategic move in the conflict was to bring Richard Viguerie into the equation. When Caddy had to serve in the Army for half a year, a close ally of his, William Cotter, took over his job as national secretary. Cotter, who had previously been organizational director, now spent most of his time on administrative duties instead of forming new chapters. Rusher exploited Caddy's absence and Cotter's new duties to propose the hiring of Viguerie under the title of executive secretary. This, Rusher argued, would free up Cotter to resume his organizational duties and facilitate YAF's further growth. Beyond that, it also strengthened the position of his side. Viguerie was to be an employee of Marvin Liebman, not of YAF. With Caddy away and Cotter touring the country to organize new chapters, he would de facto oversee YAF's office. Rusher also rightfully predicted that Viguerie would feel indebted towards him for bringing him on board.¹⁹⁷ In a letter to their fellow board members, Rusher's allies in the organization's leadership suggested that the proposed hiring of Viguerie was not meant as an attack on specific board members.¹⁹⁸ That they had to clarify proves at least that this was a somewhat widespread assumption. Nevertheless, the majority of the board agreed that the hiring would prove a net benefit for the organization.

With Viguerie in place and the Caddy faction's influence in the headquarters contained, Rusher and his allies on the board (whom the former graciously called "relatively weak and complaisant board members flown in from all over the U.S.")¹⁹⁹ managed to stave off the attempt to oust Liebman. Rusher, however, remained restless: "We have scotched the snakes, not killed them,"²⁰⁰ he cautioned Liebman. Because Caddy and his accomplices were ostensibly acting on behalf of outside groups, they would continue trying to wrest the reins of power from the loyal *National Review* supporters. Rusher suspected that two actors in particular were involved

¹⁹⁵ Cf. RUSHER, *The Rise of the Right*, pp.114–115.

¹⁹⁶ Id. to William Buckley et al., September 5, 1961. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.43.

¹⁹⁸ National Directors to Board of Directors, August 12, 1961. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

¹⁹⁹ William Rusher to William Buckley, March 12, 1962, p.1. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

²⁰⁰ Id. to William Buckley et al., September 5, 1961. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4. The same phrasing is used in id. to William Buckley, March 12, 1962, p.2. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

behind the scenes. The first was Nelson Rockefeller, New York governor, leader of the GOP liberals, and conservatives' arch-nemesis.

Rockefeller had hired Martin McKneally, recent president of the American Legion, as liaison to the conservative movement, who had invited a YAF delegation to speak with the governor in August 1961.²⁰¹ The meeting, however, did not produce the desired effect. "You have to remember [that] we hated Rockefeller the way we hated any communist," William Cotter later recalled.²⁰² Still, Rusher used the meeting to insinuate that Rockefeller had successfully courted Caddy and Cotter.²⁰³ What he conveniently left out is that the delegation was also comprised of *National Review* supporters like future chairman Bob Bauman and his wife Carol, whom Rusher never suspected of Rockefeller sympathies. Another evidence cited was Caddy's aversion to the Conservative Party of New York, a minor party originally founded by YAF as the Freedom Party, which was then turned over to older conservatives who successfully established it as a political vehicle, eventually turning into the state's third-largest party.²⁰⁴ Caddy had argued in YAF's magazine that the party threatened to siphon votes from the GOP, thus unwittingly ensuring the defeat of some of its most conservative congressmen. Was that a fair price to pay, he mused, to rid New York of Rockefeller, only for his successor to be "answerable only to Herbert Lehman [the former liberal senator from New York, G.W.] and Eleanor Roosevelt"?²⁰⁵ Rusher used that article to print an editorial in *National Review* inferring that Caddy had "turned his back on the most newsworthy conservative political development in New York state in years." Caddy replied in a letter to the editor restating his point that he believed that a third-party effort would ultimately be harmful to the conservative cause.²⁰⁶

While ANDREW followed Rusher's line of argument rather uncritically, SCHNEIDER concluded that "there seems to be little evidence to substantiate the charges that the Caddy faction was deliberately moving the organization toward the Rockefeller camp."²⁰⁷ Indeed, the basis of arguments Rusher and his allies brought to the table was rather flimsy. On the other hand, Caddy did later work for the Rockefeller administration, serving on the staff of Lieutenant Governor

²⁰¹ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.113–114.

²⁰² Cited according to SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.46.

²⁰³ Cf. William Rusher to William Buckley, March 12, 1962, p.2. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4.

²⁰⁴ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.56–57.

²⁰⁵ CADDY, Douglas: *The Conservative Dilemma at the Polls*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1962, p.31. The party's chairman responded to the first point by stating that the party had no intention to run candidates for the House, only for Senate and Governor. MAHONEY, Daniel: *Letter to the Editor*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1962, p.18

²⁰⁶ Douglas Caddy to William Buckley, April 18, 1962. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 19, Folder Caddy, Douglas (1962). Caddy cites the excerpt of the editorial attacking him. In the letter, which seems to have been prepared for print, a section attacking Governor Rockefeller was struck out by the editor.

²⁰⁷ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.47–48; ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.114–116.

Malcolm Wilson, “who was as conservative as Rockefeller was liberal”,²⁰⁸ as Caddy put it, even though he seldom publicly challenged his boss on policy.

The second outside group Rusher suspected of a YAF takeover was the John Birch Society (JBS), a conspiracy-prone radical anti-communist organization founded by candy manufacturer Robert Welch. In a privately circulated pamphlet called *The Politician*, he had, among others, labeled President Eisenhower a “dedicated, conscious agent” of the communist conspiracy taking over the U.S.²⁰⁹ It was exactly this type of conservative politics that the *National Review* circle wanted to rid the movement of, although it remains unclear just how much Welch’s beliefs resembled those of an ordinary Bircher.²¹⁰ Scott Stanley, Jr., a board member from Kansas and close ally of Caddy, was Rusher’s prime concern. Stanley had encountered the JBS leader after a meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers in December 1961. Some attendees recommended him to Welch, who, impressed with the young man, offered him a job as editor of the JBS’ magazine, *American Opinion*, which Stanley accepted.²¹¹ Stanley remained a key figure in the society until shortly after Robert Welch’s death in 1985.²¹² Although he denied being an active Bircher while in YAF, only having been introduced as honorary member in 1964,²¹³ SCHNEIDER’s conclusion that “there was no such [JBS, G.W.] member”²¹⁴ on the board is grossly misleading. In contrast to Caddy and Rockefeller, Stanley’s ties to the organization were well established. There is no hint, however, that Welch ever planned to take over YAF. It is hardly believable that the notoriously paranoid Welch, who limited membership in JBS chapters (or ‘cells’) to a handful each to prevent subversion²¹⁵ would have wanted to take over a mass organization whose majority was rather critical of his actions.

The John Birch Society, however, was one of the most important conservative organizations of the era and it would be surprising if there were no overlaps (both personal and substantial) between the two groups. As Albert Forrester, an early YAF activist who later rose to the positions of state chairman in Texas, member of the national board, and member of YAF’s national staff, remembered on a panel marking YAF’s 50th anniversary, “in the early days, there

²⁰⁸ CADDY, *Being There*, wo. p.

²⁰⁹ Cited according to MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, p.1.

²¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.3.

²¹¹ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.49.

²¹² Cf. MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, p.130; Gary Allen to Fellow Bircher, August 19, 1985, online: https://archive.org/details/JBS_CRITICS_INSIDE_JBS-1/page/n7/mode/2up [31.03.2021]. Allen had gained notoriety for his 1971 treatise *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*, wherein he attacked both Nixon and McGovern, who were supposedly deliberately furthering the communist agenda as part of a larger conspiracy of power elite insiders. He was a close ally and friend of Stanley since the 1960s.

²¹³ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p. 49, with fn. 95.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.51.

²¹⁵ Cf. MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, p.10.

were a good many Birchers in YAF.” The two groups sometimes even worked together on the local level (this revelation prompted Lee Edwards to shush his co-panelist: “Please don’t say that publicly, Al”).²¹⁶ Since national YAF kept its distance from the JBS, the extent of this cooperation varied. Groups like Boston College YAF were the exception. The chapter invited Robert Welch as a speaker and published articles attacking the fluoridization of the water supply as turning people into “cattle for the benefit of the elite,”²¹⁷ a classic JBS trope.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, individual Birchers joined the organization and some even occupied leadership positions throughout its history but remained a distinct minority.²¹⁹

YAF’s national leadership wanted to limit the influx of more extreme elements in the organization. In the March 1962 *New Guard*, Chairman Robert Schuchman chided right-wing fringe groups as a danger to the “political success and intellectual acceptance of conservatism.”²²⁰ Although he did not explicitly mention the Society, the reader would not have had any problem figuring it out: just a month prior, attacks on Welch (not the society itself) by Kirk and Buckley had appeared in *America*, a Roman Catholic publication, and *National Review*, respectively.²²¹ SCHNEIDER claims that these attacks were in fact motivated by Rusher’s concern that Welch planned to take over YAF.²²² That, however, is unlikely. By the time Buckley published his piece, Stanley had been sent into the field and thus did not pose an immediate threat. In private, Schuchman, who, as a follower of ultralibertarian Ayn Rand²²³

²¹⁶ 50th Anniversary of the Sharon Statement [22.03.2021], [1:10:23-1:11:40], online: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?295406-1/50th-anniversary-sharon-statement> [22.03.2021].

²¹⁷ MOSSCROP, Michael: Fluoridation, in: *The Campus Conservative* Vol. II, No. 3, Undated (Late 1962/Early 1963), p.7. Hall-Hoag Collection, Box Y-3, Folder Young Americans for Freedom 377C30.

²¹⁸ Cf. FIELD, Gregory: Flushing Poisons from the Body Politic. The Fluoride Controversy and American Political Culture, 1955–1965, in: HEIDEKING, Jürgen; et al. (Edd.): *The Sixties Revisited. Culture, Society, Politics*, Heidelberg 2001, pp.469–486. FIELD shows that resistance against fluoridation did not originate in right-wing conspiracy circles. It falls into the tradition of the Progressive Era to resist government encroachment on individual health. The first opponents were thus proponents of alternative diets etc. In the anti-communist hysteria of the Fifties, however, anti-communist zealots picked up the topic as an example of overreach. It was subsequently charged with conspiracy theories about other reagents mixed in with the fluoride to keep the population docile etc.

²¹⁹ Cf. DOCKSAI, Ronald: Annotated List of YAF’s Board of Directors, June 9, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7; David Adcock to Wayne Thorburn, Undated (1972/1973). YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 3; SIGAL, Clancy: Doing the Right Thing, in: *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, April 29, 1990, p.27; Gavin Goschinski to Paul Doell, November 4, 1994. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 4. In the only somewhat representative survey that enquired about dual memberships, of over 200 respondents in leadership positions, only 2 stated they had been members of the JBS before joining YAF. Results of the Spring 1970 Leadership Questionnaire. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

²²⁰ SCHUCHMAN, Robert: YAF and the New Conservatism, in: *The New Guard*, March 1962, p.5.

²²¹ Cf. PORTER, Russell: Catholic Editor Hits Birch Group, in: *The New York Times*, February 8, 1962, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/115631431/899614A1830D47F5PQ/1> [09.04.2021]; BUCKLEY, William: The Question of Robert Welch, in: *National Review*, February 13, 1962, pp.83–88.

²²² Cf. SCHNEIDER, Cadres for Conservatism, p.49.

²²³ Cf. BURNS, Goddess of the Market, pp.202–203.

was part of the anti-*National Review* faction, ridiculed the Society.²²⁴ Rusher and his allies would not have expected any action on behalf of Welch from him. If they did, his *New Guard* piece should have calmed them. Because Rusher already charged Caddy with working for the liberal Rockefeller, tying his faction to the ultraconservative John Birch Society would have undermined his previous allegations.

Buckley's editorial came in the wake of intensifying preparations for Barry Goldwater's presidential bid in 1964. Conservative leaders, including Buckley and Kirk, had met with Goldwater in January and discussed the problem of the Birchers. While the senator rejected Robert Welch's personal actions, he shied away from condemning JBS members, many of whom were loyal Goldwaterites. Buckley, who anticipated that Goldwater's candidacy might lose more from extremist support than it had to gain, intended to deflect charges of extremism by reading the John Birch Society out of the conservative (and, by extension, Goldwater) movement. As a compromise, he only attacked Welch.²²⁵ His concern, however, would be vindicated in 1964, when ultraconservative zealots embraced the label of Goldwater's as an 'extremist' candidacy.²²⁶ The editorial marks an important charge in the battle for control of the conservative movement's identity that Buckley and others waged in the 1960s. Would the conservative movement be controlled by paranoiacs like Welch that were easy targets for liberal pundits and academics? Or would the 'responsible conservatism' of Buckley and *National Review*, no less anti-communist but more restrained in rhetoric, triumph?

Rusher saw YAF as merely another battleground in this ongoing conflict. Treating the youth organization as a microcosm of adult conservative politics, he felt the need to keep it tightly wedded to *National Review* and its allies like Marvin Liebman. His opponents, on the other hand, embedded the conflict in a different framework. They wanted to establish YAF as an authentic youth organization, not a NR front group.²²⁷ Rather than pulling YAF away from the magazine's philosophy, they pushed for control of their own operation. It is, however, unlikely that they would have severed the bonds with older conservatives, NR circle or otherwise, on whom they depended for endorsement, financial support, and guidance.

While the factions hurled charges and countercharges at each other, Rusher proved to be the more seasoned infighter. He brought several previous neutralists on the board over to his side with promises of power and patronage. Caddy, driven into a corner, increasingly acted

²²⁴ Cf. William Rusher to William Buckley et al., September 5, 1961, pp.1–2. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 4; Robert Schuchman to William Buckley, April 27, 1961. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

²²⁵ Cf. MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, pp.77–82; PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, pp.154–156.

²²⁶ Cf. SCHOENWALD, *A Time for Choosing*, pp.136–138.

²²⁷ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.48.

erratically, and by the time the national membership convened in 1962 to elect a new chairman and new directors, he and his allies did not stand for reelection.²²⁸ Bob Bauman, the candidate secretly supported by Rusher and Buckley,²²⁹ succeeded Schuchman as national chair. Bauman would later join Congress as a representative from Maryland, and was known for his intimate knowledge of arcane parliamentary procedure, a skill which he could employ and polish while stabilizing the volatile situation on the YAF board.²³⁰

The victory of the pro-NR faction secured the influence of the magazine and its fusionist conservatism. Afterwards, Rusher took a backseat to YAF politics, and older conservatives only got heavily involved in internal YAF politics again in the Eighties.²³¹ This enabled YAF to become and present itself as an independent youth organization, for example in the Goldwater campaign. After all, as Buckley concluded, “[the] whole operation must have a young men’s flavor or it will merely look like the front operation of the senile class.”²³²

Another lasting impact of the altercation was the further concentration of power on the national level. The hiring of Viguerie had created the position of executive secretary (the post of executive director was added later, and, after Viguerie left, took over the duties of the executive secretary), who as head administrator managed YAF’s day-to-day operations. His enormous influence in the organization created a counterweight to the national board and chairman, which was the source of many future internal conflicts.

1.2 Rallying the Troops

Despite internal differences, YAF managed to draw considerable attention within two years after its inception. Two events especially demonstrated the strength of conservative sentiment among the nation’s youth: the rallies at the Manhattan Center on March 3, 1961, and at Madison Square Garden almost exactly one year later on March 7, 1962. Both events filled their respective venues and hosted a lineup of prominent conservatives, demonstrating YAF’s excellent ties to the conservative scene.

The first, entitled “first annual national Young Americans for Freedom awards for Conservatism”,²³³ drew some 3,200 spectators. Awards were presented among others to Russell

²²⁸ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.112–123; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.49–54; William Rusher to Barry Goldwater, October 1, 1962. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 16; Richard Viguerie to William Rusher, September 27, 1962. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 5. Viguerie had predicted that Caddy would stand for reelection, but rightfully reported on Rusher that most of his associates would not.

²²⁹ William Rusher to Robert Bauman, September 21, 1962. William A. Rusher Papers, Reel 3.

²³⁰ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.53.

²³¹ See chapter 9.

²³² William Buckley to Barry Goldwater, July 12, 1962. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 23, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1962).

²³³ YAF Press Release, Undated (Early 1961). William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

Kirk for education; to the ambassador of the Republic of China (ROC) for International Affairs, testifying the continued importance of China in the conservative vision;²³⁴ to YAF board member and Indiana College Republicans chairman James Abstine for youth leadership; to Eugene Pulliam, publisher of the *Indianapolis Star*, where Stanton Evans was an editor, for publishing; to Herbert V. Kohler, who had resisted union demands at his Sheboygan, Wisconsin, plant in the face of a sometimes violent strike for six years, becoming a hero for manufacturers all over the country in the process, and who had raised the funds necessary to sustain YAF's first few months of operation, for business;²³⁵ to William Buckley, for national affairs; and lastly, to the House Committee of Un-American Activities (HUAC), responsible for investigating subversive actions of citizens (among other notable events, Whittaker Chambers had his first bout with Alger Hiss, against whom he testified, at HUAC), then mostly supposed communists, for government.²³⁶

In their selection of awardees, YAF painted a concise picture of what it was all about: radical anti-communism at home (HUAC) and abroad (ROC); anti-unionism and economic deregulation (Kohler); and a philosophical outlook as presented in the pages of *National Review* (Buckley, Pulliam, Kirk). But perhaps none other represented their outlook better than the featured speaker: Barry Goldwater. To listen to their hero speak, thousands made their way to Manhattan, so many, that according to YAF, twice as many had to be turned away than were admitted. From the corner of 8th Avenue and W 34th Street, the admission line stretched "five abreast" all the way to 9th Avenue.²³⁷ The reporter from the *New York Times* witnessed a spectacle quite unlike other youth gatherings:

"A speaker mentioned the name of Herbert Hoover and the rafters shook. A reference to former President Dwight D. Eisenhower brought boos mixed with light applause. Former President Harry S. Truman's name slipped by in silence."²³⁸

However, most had come to hear Goldwater speak, as demonstrated by the reaction of the audience when their hero entered the stage:

"The crowd came to its feet as the Senator appeared. Hundreds of yellow, pink and blue balloons stamped with his name filled the air, their colors picked out by roving spotlights.

²³⁴ See chapters 3 and 6.

²³⁵ Cf. PHILLIPS-FEIN, *Invisible Hands*, pp.120–126; Robert Schuchman to Walter Judd, February 6, 1961. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 256, Folder 2.

²³⁶ Cf. YAF Press Release, Undated (Early 1961). William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

²³⁷ CONLEY, Robert: 3,200 at Rally Here Acclaim Goldwater, in: *The New York Times*, March 4, 1961, p.45, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/115405282/4566AB27FB51468EPQ/1?accountid=11359> [12.04.2021]. Lee Edwards remembers 6,000 demanding admission in total. Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.23.

²³⁸ CONLEY, Robert: 3,200 at Rally Here Acclaim Goldwater, in: *The New York Times*, March 4, 1961, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/115405282/4566AB27FB51468EPQ/1?accountid=11359> [12.04.2021].

‘We want Barry! We want Barry!’ the audience shouted, and the rhythm was picked up by a marching band in front of the stage. Huge placards with the Senator’s picture waved over their heads.”²³⁹

Rather than an award show, the atmosphere in the Manhattan Center was that of a campaign rally for a senator still reluctant to announce his candidacy. According to Lee Edwards, the event generated enormous public interest because YAF was the first permanent national political youth group. Adults wanted to know what the upcoming generation of the baby boomers’ political views were. Therefore, the media eagerly reported on the rally. Goldwater was *the* shooting star on the conservative, if not the political scene. A young people’s rally promoting him perhaps was a sign of things to come.²⁴⁰ It made front page in the *New York Times*²⁴¹ and was picked up by TV networks and “hundreds of newspaper articles” the following days.²⁴²

The rally also saw the birth of *The New Guard*, YAF’s official periodical. Originally published monthly, it was released ten times a year (the consolidated Summer and Winter Issues attest to YAF’s orientation towards college students) for most of its lifetime. In 1978, it was converted into a quarterly, with monthly newsletters interspersed. Amidst YAF’s general decay in the 80s, only occasional issues appeared. The original YAF published the last *New Guard* in 1989 after a hiatus of a few years.

The New Guard was newsletter, debate forum, and conservative news magazine in one.²⁴³ In that regard, it was modelled after *National Review*. To fit the needs of a youth organization, it also provided reports of successful action projects across the nation and occasionally discussed movies and books catering to a youthful audience. Young conservatives could hone their journalistic writing skills in its pages. For some, it was the start of a lifelong career in journalism and/or writing. Prominent guest writers like Russell Kirk, Frank Meyer, and Bill Buckley endowed the magazine with an aura of authority, and its high-quality glossy production (financed through advertisements, subscriptions, and YAF fundraising) did the rest to set it apart from the sea of mimeographed underground newspapers that would flood the nations during the decade.

In the opening editorial, Lee Edwards, who had been chosen as the magazine’s first editor, took inspiration from Buckley’s famous introduction to *National Review*. Both appealed to history

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.24.

²⁴¹ CONLEY, Robert: 3,200 at Rally Here Acclaim Goldwater, in: *The New York Times*, March 4, 1961, p.1, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/115405282/4566AB27FB51468EPQ/1?accountid=11359> [12.04.2021].

²⁴² EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.24.

²⁴³ Cf. MCENEANEY, Sinead: *Righting Women in the 1960s. Gender, Power and Conservatism in the Pages of The New Guard*, in: RITCHIE, Rachel et al. (Edd.): *Women in Magazines. Research, Representation, Production and Consumption* (Vol. 23), New York, NY 2016, pp.92–106, here p.93.

to explain the purpose of their magazine. If he had not started NR, Buckley pondered, “it seems altogether possible [...] that no one would have invented it. [...] It stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so[.]”²⁴⁴ Edwards, too, articulated the need to reverse the course of history. This time, however, there *were* plenty people ‘yelling Stop’:

“Ten years ago this magazine would not have been possible. Twenty years ago it would not have been dreamed of. Thirty-five years ago it would not have been necessary. Today, *The New Guard* is a reality, and it is needed by the youth of America to proclaim loudly and clearly: We are sick unto death of collectivism, socialism, statism and the other utopian isms which have poisoned the minds, weakened the wills and smothered the spirits of Americans for three decades and more.”²⁴⁵

Where Buckley stylized his magazine as temporally out of place, pitted against history yet arguing the fulfillment of man’s journey, Edwards took a different approach. *New Guard* “was a reality.” Young Americans for Freedom were not fighting history, they were making it. The name of the magazine, *New Guard*, hinted at the Republican Old Guard around Robert Taft, which had lost control of the party to Dewey’s and Eisenhower’s Modern Republicanism.²⁴⁶ Here were the new conservatives, honoring their predecessors’ philosophy and intent to win back the GOP, the name seemed to tell the reader. Buckley himself had observed a generational difference between his peers and the attendees at Sharon: “What is so striking in the students,” he recapped for *National Review*, “is their appetite for power. [...] we have talked about *educating* people to want to affect history. [...] They talk about *affecting* history.”²⁴⁷

In roughly the first year of *New Guard*’s publication, Edwards formulated the challenge ahead:

“[t]he struggle will be a continuing one for the next 20 years until the Conservative Establishment, the one certain vehicle to sustain a firm foreign policy and a competitive enterprise economy, has truly been established in this nation.”²⁴⁸

Not victories in congressional elections, not even the election of Goldwater to the presidency, Edwards argued one and a half years before Goldwater officially declared his candidacy, would bring salvation. Conservatives, he believed, needed to create strongholds in “television networks, in the universities, in corporations and companies and, perhaps most important of all, in the Federal government.”²⁴⁹ Starting in the Seventies, YAF alumni began to implement that plan as they occupied key positions in a conservative movement (labelled, just as Edwards had called YAF in the Sixties, the ‘New Right’) that built this conservative establishment.

YAFers distributed the first *New Guard* issue during the rally. “Written in February with full confidence in the outcome”, it even contained a recap of the rally itself, reporting more than

²⁴⁴ BUCKLEY, National Review, p.201.

²⁴⁵ EDWARDS, Lee: Why..., in: *The New Guard*, March 1961, p.3-

²⁴⁶ See BOWEN, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism*.

²⁴⁷ BUCKLEY, William: *The Young Americans for Freedom*, in: SCHNEIDER, Gregory (Ed.): *Conservatism in America Since 1930. A Reader*, New York, NY 2003, pp.226–228, here p.228.

²⁴⁸ EDWARDS, Lee: *The New Right. Its Face, Its Future*, in: *The New Guard*, July 1962, p.7.

²⁴⁹ ID.: *Needed: A Conservative Establishment*, in: *The New Guard*, June 1962, p.2.

3,000 attendees and enthusiastic reactions of the audience.²⁵⁰ Since that confidence was not misplaced, YAF set out to organize a second rally at the considerably larger Madison Square Garden one year after the first.

Briefly before the event, the outlook was dire. One of the proposed attendees proved to be especially troublesome for the organizers. Major General Edwin Walker had been recalled from his command of the 24th Infantry Division in West Germany after reports appeared that he had subjected his troops to an anti-communist indoctrination course entitled ‘Operation Pro-Blue.’²⁵¹ Predictably, conservatives rushed to the defense of Walker, briefly turning him into the cause célèbre of the American Right. *National Review* ran several articles in support and Strom Thurmond, conservative senator from South Carolina and former Dixiecrat presidential candidate, effected a “long, slow, and largely inconclusive” hearing on the matter before the Special Preparedness Subcommittee the Senate Armed Services Committee. “The problem was,” MULLOY concludes, “that despite Thurmond’s considerable efforts to present him in the best possible light, the general’s performance made him easy to categorize—and essentially dismiss—as conspirational, paranoid, and extremist.”²⁵² During the hearings Walker denied having used John Birch Society material in his course but implicitly defended the organization. As YAF’s rally neared, that hearing had not yet been conducted, still Walker was becoming a more controversial figure by the minute. For example, Goldwater, yet again the featured speaker, refused to appear on the same stage as the former general. The press indulged in reports tying YAF to Walker’s extremism.²⁵³ Simply rescinding the invitation, however, threatened to both prove those press reports right and to incite YAF’s most radical anti-communists. When Walker announced that he intended to run in the Democratic primary for Texas governor, YAF was finally presented with an easy way out: John Tower, first Republican senator from Texas since Reconstruction, staunch Goldwaterite and YAF supporter, threatened to withdraw his participation as appearing with Walker might be seen as an endorsement.²⁵⁴ The organization took up Tower’s argument, claimed that the invitation might create the impression that YAF was endorsing the former general, and subsequently canceled Walker’s award.²⁵⁵

It seems that the main drive behind the disinvitation, which coincided with Buckley’s attacks on Welch, were the revelations of Walker’s Birchite paranoia (during the campaign for

²⁵⁰ “We’ll Take Manhattan, the Bronx, and...”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1961, p.4.

²⁵¹ For a detailed report on the entire affair see MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, pp.49–72.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.52–55. Quotes on p. 55.

²⁵³ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.50.

²⁵⁴ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.75.

²⁵⁵ Cf. “Talk by Walker is Canceled Here”, in: *The New York Times*, February 13, 1962, p.16, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/115987451/10E12735DC7C499CPQ/1?accountid=11359> [13.04.2021].

governor he subsequently admitted having been a member of the JBS since 1959).²⁵⁶ Connecticut Representative Thomas Dodd, besides Walker the only Democrat on the roster, had informed YAF of his withdrawal only days before the general was disinvited, citing concerns that the rally was turning into “a partisan gathering with extremist coloration.”²⁵⁷ Walker’s candidacy, then, was merely a pretense. One member of the NR circle explicitly wrote that “[t]he Rally wholly reconfirmed the necessity of the anti-Welch move.”²⁵⁸ Disinviting the general spared the event of his diehard supporters, some of which picketed outside.²⁵⁹ Inside, a few youngsters tried to start a “We want Walker” chant that quickly died down for lack of audience participation.²⁶⁰

The Walker episode again demonstrates the tightrope that ‘respectable’ conservatives walked in the early 1960s. On the one hand, many YAF leaders thought that Walker had done the right thing in ‘educating’ the army in anti-communism. On the other, most did not entirely agree with his JBS worldviews, which were also subject to attacks by the press. If they wanted to keep YAF ‘respectable’, they thus had to sever the ties, even if it meant betraying an ally. Because none of the other speakers insisted on keeping Walker, there was not much to lose from disinviting him. Yet, as with Buckley and Welch, the affair revolved around one particularly controversial figure. The issue of extremist support would return with a vengeance once Goldwater needed mass support of ultra-conservatives in his 1964 presidential run.

The second issue troubling the rally was that many of the awardees could not make their appearance for various reasons: former President Herbert Hoover decided on short notice that he did not want to cancel a fishing trip; actor John Wayne had contractual obligations elsewhere; finally, Moïse Tshombé was denied a visa to enter the United States. Conservatives lionized the pro-Western leader of the secessionist Katanga province as an African bulwark against communism and the supposedly Soviet-backed regime in Leopoldville.²⁶¹ Tshombé, who catered to (neo)colonial mining interests, was backed by Belgium while the UN sent a peacekeeping force to assist the central government in keeping order. The Kennedy

²⁵⁶ Cf. MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, pp.71–72.

²⁵⁷ KIHSS, Peter: *Dodd Withdraws From Rally Here. Says Conservative Meeting Seems Partisan to Many*, in: *The New York Times*, February 15, 1962, p.10.

²⁵⁸ ? Signature Unreadable (Burnham, James) to William Buckley, March 17, 1962, p.2. William F. Buckley, Jr., *Papers*, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

²⁵⁹ Cf. KIHSS, Peter: *18,000 Rightists Rally at Garden*, in: *The New York Times*, March 8, 1962, p.21.

²⁶⁰ Cf. William Rusher to William Buckley, March 12, 1962, p.2. William A. Rusher *Papers*, Reel 4.

²⁶¹ Cf. BAUMAN, Carol: *U.N. Blackmail in the Congo*, in: *The New Guard*, October 1961, pp.11–12. KENT denies the validity of that claim: “As with many Cold War situations the actual threat to the Western socio-economic status quo presented by radical non-communist left-wing ideas and movements was best presented under the guise of a more extreme communist threat and if possible the expansionist goals of the Soviet state, however unrelated to the African reality the latter might be.” KENT, John: *The Neo-colonialism of Decolonisation: Katangan Secession and the Bringing of the Cold War to the Congo*, in: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 45/1 (2017), pp.93–130, here p.102.

administration wanted to maintain Congolese unity to prevent the young nation from falling into turmoil and, by extension, possibly the communist camp. The Congo thus became one of the battlegrounds of the African theater of the Cold War that emerged with decolonization.²⁶²

Given the circumstances, the administration understandably did not want the *persona non grata* Tshombé to enter the US. YAF unsuccessfully sued the State Department, arguing that, if Khrushchev, mortal enemy of the West, was invited to visit the States, it could hardly deny admission to a pro-Western African leader.²⁶³ Tshombé instead sent written remarks that were read at the rally and reprinted in *The New Guard*.²⁶⁴

Deprived of some of their most prominent speakers, YAF nevertheless pulled off a “spectacular” success, as front-page coverage in the *New York Times* reported.²⁶⁵ The auditorium was filled to the brim with about 18,000 conservatives. “The prime mark of success was,” one member of the *National Review Circle* explained, “the sheer quantitative fact that a political tendency, without any objectively given occasion, filled the Garden: everything else was subordinate to the fact, and everyone knew it.”²⁶⁶ The rally itself apparently was rather dull. In view of the heightened media exposure, the young conservatives kept their boos and hollers to a minimum and even applauded President Kennedy on one occasion. The speakers did the rest to lull the audience, and more than one paper plane could be spotted slowly descending on the elder conservatives in the front rows. Especially somniferous was Buckley’s brother-in-law Brent Bozell’s “rather abstract and eggheadish”²⁶⁷ speech (having ghostwritten *The Conscience of a Conservative*, he should have known how to work the crowd). Bozell, recently returned from Francoist Spain, warned his listeners of the “peril of agnosticism.”²⁶⁸ He did, however, get the money quote. Towards the end of his speech, the audience “awoke to hear him give his orders to the Executive.”²⁶⁹ These were:

“To the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Prepare for an immediate landing in Havana. To the Commander in Berlin: Tear Down the Wall. To our chief of mission in the Congo: Change sides. To the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission: Schedule testing of every nuclear weapon that could conceivably be of service to the military purposes of the West. [...]”²⁷⁰

²⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.109–115.

²⁶³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.74 with fn. 26.

²⁶⁴ TSHOMBÉ, Moïse: *Appeal to the People of the United States*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1962, p.13.

²⁶⁵ KIHSS, Peter: *18,000 Rightists Rally at Garden*, in: *The New York Times*, March 8, 1962, p.1.

²⁶⁶ ? Signature Unreadable (Burnham, James) to William Buckley, March 17, 1962, p.2. William F. Buckley, Jr., *Papers*, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁶⁸ KEMPTON, Murray: *The Young Americans* (Press Clipping), March 8, 1962. William F. Buckley, Jr. *Papers*, Box 23, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1962). A testimony to the lasting impression left by his speech, contrary to the reporter’s word, Bozell had actually attacked Gnosticism.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ BOZELL, Brent: *At the Threshold of Leadership*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1962, p.36.

The conservatives roared. Goldwater, however, who had been penned in in a backstage room lest his premature appearance exhaust the enthusiasm of the youngsters in the audience, disappointed. His remarks, delivered shortly before midnight, were technical and lacked the pathos of Bozell's closing statement.²⁷¹

Even though the supposedly central features of the rally turned out to be rather forgettable, the event itself was not. Richard Viguerie and David Franke later proclaimed it as the birthplace of the conservative movement.²⁷² For many young conservatives who often thought of themselves as mavericks in a herd of liberals,²⁷³ the experience of meeting thousands of like-minded peers from across the nation was electrifying. The rally demonstrated to them that conservatism, properly organized, could be turned into a powerful political force. Not least, it proved the efficacy of YAF's 'responsible conservatism' approach. The rally was picketed both by the usual suspects on the left like the Americans for Democratic Action and fringe groups like the Labor Negro Vanguard Conference, a communist front, and right-wing extremists of the American Renaissance Party, a neo-Nazi group, and the Nationalist party, which protested the removal of Walker.²⁷⁴ By drawing the anger of the extremist right, YAF could present itself as a more reasoned voice.

Even though spectacular events like the rallies demonstrated the strength of conservative sentiment among the nation's youth, they were, by definition, singular. In its first years, YAF lacked an overarching direction or truly national programming, surviving by the sole fact that it was the only group for young conservatives to coalesce around. That all changed when their hero from Arizona finally announced that he was running for president.

1.3 AuH2O

On January 3rd, 1964, Senator Barry Goldwater hobbled out on his patio (he was still recovering from a recent surgery) to announce to the assembled press that he was running for president and that he planned on offering to the American people "a choice, not an echo."²⁷⁵ When asked what had brought him to this point, he stated that "more than any other one factor", it had been the support of students.²⁷⁶ Their reaction might have been similar to that of the office girls of the Draft Goldwater operation, who indulged in champagne-fueled celebrations. Their

²⁷¹ Cf. ? Signature Unreadable (Burnham, James) to William Buckley, March 17, 1962, p.3. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 20, Folder Inter-Office Memos (1962).

²⁷² Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, 78.

²⁷³ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.35.

²⁷⁴ Cf. KIHSS, Peter: 18,000 Rightists Rally at Garden, in: *The New York Times*, March 8, 1962, p.21.

²⁷⁵ Cited according to PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.260.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

boss, Clifton White, was notably uncheerful.²⁷⁷ Perhaps he already knew what many others would learn in the coming months: that the Goldwater campaign had been doomed from the start.

The reasons for Goldwater's defeat are complex, nevertheless, three strands emerge as non-exclusive main hypotheses: staff incompetence, Goldwater's personal deficits as politician and candidate, and extremism both of Goldwater and his supporters. The first two can already be observed in the announcement, the third had plagued the Right for years, as demonstrated above. Goldwater chose to announce his candidacy on a Friday, against the counsel of his advisors.²⁷⁸ A Sunday announcement would have secured him a prime position in the Monday morning papers. Yet the senator, seldom one to change his plans for mere political expediency, simply threatened to withdraw his candidacy if he did not get his way. After declaring his intention to run, the freshly minted candidate then announced his core campaign team, all Arizonans. He had to spell out their names to the press, because most had never heard of them. None of them had ever managed a national campaign.²⁷⁹ Clearly, Goldwater valued personal loyalty more than intimate knowledge of party rules and the corridors of power, the domain of White and his Draft Goldwater crew from 'Suite 3505'. Named for the plaque on their office door, the group included Goldwater's former Senate campaign manager Stephen Shadegg and William Rusher. In the official campaign, White was relegated to a second-row position under the new field manager, Richard Kleindienst.

Especially Goldwater's campaign manager Denison Kitchel drew the ire of the Eastern-based experienced operatives. He was often disinterested in what they had to say, kept their memorandums and advice from reaching Goldwater and did not know the key figures in local and state party politics. "The trouble", PERLSTEIN argues, "was rooted in a culture clash."

"Hess [Goldwater's speechwriter, GW] and the Arizonans' conservatism was rooted in contempt for fast-talking Easterners and their wily ways; to their mind Goldwater's choice of a bunch of hip-shooting cowboys to run his campaign *was* practically the message of the campaign. That couldn't have been further from what made Clifton White and his boys tick. To them, the thrill of politics was operating in the midst of the Establishmentarians, drinking with them—then stealing their party out from under their noses. To the Arizonans, Clif White looked like just one more *operative* [...] a grasping, condescending ass; they kept talking about 'Eastern lawyers' as if they were an occupying army."²⁸⁰

When the conflict escalated to a point where it endangered the continuance of the campaign, Goldwater finally compromised: White would handle most of the caucuses and conventions, while Kleindienst's main task were the primaries.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.261.

²⁷⁸ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.52.

²⁷⁹ Cf. PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.260.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.315. Emphasis original.

²⁸¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.315–316.

The only YAFer who joined the campaign's senior staff was Lee Edwards as acting director of information.²⁸² He remembers Goldwater as one who would or could not adapt to the requirements of a national campaign:

“In Arizona, his profanity was dry-cleaned and his bloopers rewritten by reporters who worked for friendly newspapers like the *Arizona Republic*. But in the first primary of a presidential campaign, everything mattered—a careless phrase, a puzzled look, a fit of anger. Everything was disseminated by the national press—SEND IN THE MARINES, SENATOR URGES—and exploited by opponents. The adjustment to a national campaign would have been difficult under the best of circumstances, but Goldwater was still looking back at the campaign that might have been.”²⁸³

The senator, for example, made statements during the New Hampshire primary that could be interpreted as calls for abolishing Social Security and handing over the control of nuclear weapons to NATO field commanders.²⁸⁴ Such gaffes made it easy for opponents and unsympathetic press alike to paint Goldwater as a trigger-happy radical.

None of this mattered to Goldwater's diehard supporters like YAF. They chose to ignore early warnings that Goldwater might not stand a chance against the election-savvy President Johnson. Their focus was less on practical politics than the fact that their hero was running *as a conservative*.²⁸⁵ As Schuchman explained:

“The great appeal of Barry Goldwater to our generation is that he represents the America of the future in which we want to live. He symbolizes a nation and a world in which the individual is free, free to make his own way without the government punishing him for his successes and rewarding him for his failures. [...] Creativity and progress can only thrive under freedom and Barry Goldwater has undertaken the task of restoring and preserving that freedom.”²⁸⁶

His candidacy was the fruit of the hard labor they had put in since 1960. They were not going to let their determination waver now in the face of “nasty” attacks and the “usual misstatements” by the press. Their task was to prove that Goldwater could win the election as a national candidate “who can mobilize a personal following that is both larger in number and more fervent in loyalty than that of any other contender.”²⁸⁷

Since most local YAFers were not experienced politicians, *The New Guard* ran an article detailing how everyone could do their part. Written by Marilyn Manion, daughter of Dean Clarence Manion, conservative radio host and one of the masterminds behind the Draft Goldwater effort, it advised readers to start small: “Nobody can do everything and don't *you* try.”²⁸⁸ Simple enthusiasm, on the other hand, would not suffice either. Young activists should not feel above the grunt work of stuffing envelopes, mimeographing sheets etc. “You may think that these dull tasks aren't enough challenge for your marvelous imagination but this is Goldwater's campaign,

²⁸² Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.53.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.58.

²⁸⁴ Cf. GOULD, Lewis: *The Republicans. A History of the Grand Old Party*, New York, NY 2015, pp.251–252.

²⁸⁵ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.77.

²⁸⁶ EDWARDS, Lee: *BMG and YAF: Which Came First?*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1975, p.12.

²⁸⁷ “Here We Go”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1964, p.4.

²⁸⁸ MANION, Marilyn: *What You Can Do in '64*, in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, p.13.

remember, not yours.”²⁸⁹ Where young people could really make an impact was in joining local Goldwater clubs and recruiting more volunteers. If there were none around, they could even start their own with the help of Goldwater state operations. Once a club had enough members, Manion’s proposed activities were college mock conventions and straw polls, letter-writing campaigns, etc.²⁹⁰

YAFers could expect to run into familiar faces when joining Youth for Goldwater efforts. The group, ANDREW contends, “was basically a YAF-run organization.”²⁹¹ James Harff, YAFer from Northwestern University and former CR chair, was its national leader, Carol Bauman (formerly Dawson) its executive secretary. Only one member of the board was *not* a YAFer.²⁹² This fact, however, should not be stretched too far because, as shown above, many who were active primarily in YAF played an active part in YR or CR politics and vice versa. To name an example from the context of the Goldwater campaign, Ohioan Donald ‘Buz’ Lukens was elected chair of the YRNF in June 1963 and thus could use its resources to support Goldwater.²⁹³ Lukens was a YAF member²⁹⁴ (and YAF supported him in his race against a liberal challenger), but he was never very active in the organization. He did, however, support the group throughout his later career in the House of Representatives and the Ohio State Senate.

Thousands picked up Manion’s advice and devoted their time and energy to the campaign. Wherever the senator went, young activists were there to greet him at the airport cheering and presenting signs reading ‘YAF backs Barry.’²⁹⁵ Some groups got creative in their support: University of Iowa YAF built a homecoming parade float before the local football derby against Indiana. Shaped like a ship, its sides read “Drown the Hoosiers in Goldwater.”²⁹⁶ They were not the only ones employing puns on the candidate’s name: advertisements in *The New Guard* enticed readers to buy ‘Goldwater’ both as a soft drink and cologne.²⁹⁷ Omnipresent were sweatshirts and buttons reading AuH₂O—the name Goldwater in chemical symbols. Efforts went down to the individual level: one member from Alabama sold bumper stickers out of his station wagon (“Tap Horn, I’ll Stop”).²⁹⁸ Such operations expressed the youthful enthusiasm of

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Ibid., pp.13/15.

²⁹¹ ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.192.

²⁹² Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.74.

²⁹³ Ibid., pp.75–76.

²⁹⁴ Cf. “YAF Alumni in Forefront of Conservative Movement in America”, in: *Dialogue on Liberty* Vol. II, No. 2, Summer 1972, p.7.

²⁹⁵ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.121.

²⁹⁶ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.78.

²⁹⁷ Goldwater Cologne Advertisement, in: *The New Guard*, November-December 1963, p.19.

²⁹⁸ “Tap Horn, I’ll Stop” (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, January 1964, p.17.

YAFers. They also fulfilled a real purpose, demonstrating the candidate's support among young people across the nation and raising funds for the campaign.

YAF support was especially crucial in the hotly contested primary in California. Both Goldwater and Nelson Rockefeller, his main opponent for the Republican nomination, banked on securing the large delegation of the Golden State. Conservative activism was especially strong in Southern California, where a booming defense industry had nurtured a strong anti-communist sentiment in the population, many of them migrants from the South and the Midwest, who had come during the Great Depression looking for work and had brought their conservative values and churches with them.²⁹⁹ Their settlements had often been built by private investors, further enforcing a frontier mentality that valued economic freedom and individual initiative. It was in areas such as Orange County where groups like YAF and the more radical JBS prospered.³⁰⁰

Both supported the successful candidacy of Robert Gaston to California state chairman of the Young Republicans.³⁰¹ The *New York Times* reported that Gaston, who denied being a member of the JBS, had recently announced that “the old labels of Republican and Democrat were ‘no longer honest.’ From now on, he said, [the election] would be a contest between conservatives and Socialists.”³⁰² Such rhetoric rallied the faithful but did little to make amends to moderates, who left the California YRs in numbers. It also did little to alleviate fears that right-wing radicals would use the influence gained for delivering California to Goldwater to push their brand of conservatism. After heavy use of parliamentary procedure, Gaston was appointed to a vacancy on the YAF board of directors on February 1st, 1964, suggesting both that YAF was still open to more radical members in leadership positions but also that at least some board members were opposed to the idea.³⁰³

With the help of major Republican organizations controlled by people like Gaston and a pamphlet by then little-known activist Phyllis Schlafly³⁰⁴ entitled *A Choice, not an Echo*, Goldwater managed to take California and remove the last doubts that he was the front runner for the nomination. The senator however, shot himself in the foot again by delivering statements suggesting that he favored using low-yield atomic weapons to defoliate the Vietnamese

²⁹⁹ See DOCHUK, Darren: *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt. Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*, New York, NY 2011.

³⁰⁰ Cf. MCGIRR, *Suburban Warriors*, pp.20–53.

³⁰¹ Cf. SCHUPARRA, Kurt: *Barry Goldwater and Southern California Conservatism. Ideology, Image and Myth in the 1964 Republican Presidential Primary*, in: *Southern California Quarterly* Vol. 74/3 (1992), pp.277–298, here p.281.

³⁰² “Right Wing Gains in Coast G.O.P. Organizations”, in: *The New York Times*, May 3, 1964, p.64.

³⁰³ Cf. *Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 1–2, 1964*, p.3. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

³⁰⁴ See chapter 7.

jungle—most Americans were not even aware of the extent of American involvement in the Indochina conflict—and accepted the possibility of war with Red China as a consequence. The press thus increasingly painted an image of the Arizonan as extremist or even insane.³⁰⁵

When the GOP convened in July at the Cow Palace just south of San Francisco to anoint their candidate, Goldwater had the nomination locked up. In addition to primary victories in the Midwest, his ticket had captured most of the state and county convention delegates. Because White had often targeted such counties with previously low Republican organization that would be easy to convert for Goldwater, the campaign had set the whole party on a course toward conservatism.³⁰⁶ After securing the nomination on the first ballot, former Vice President Nixon introduced the candidate and the crowd went wild. Among the cheering audience was a sizable contingent of YAFers. Youth for Goldwater had chartered a train (the ‘Freedom Special’) that brought young conservatives from across the country to the Bay.³⁰⁷ A smaller group around executive director David Jones and Jack Cox, board member from California, had arrived earlier. While Jones oversaw YAF’s tremendous growth in the mid-Sixties and later served as YRNF vice chairman and executive director of the Tennessee GOP, Cox became chief of staff for Goldwater’s son, Representative Barry Goldwater, Jr. They prepared the infrastructure, “stockpiling literally thousands of signs with wood handles along with buttons and literature.”³⁰⁸ They also sent local YAFers around in rented station wagons to appear at events such as Rockefeller’s arrival at San Francisco Airport, where young activists greeted him with the ubiquitous ‘YAF backs Barry’ signs. About 4,000 of those awaited Goldwater when he stepped out of his plane on July 11th. Of the thousands of volunteers, only five were delegates to the RNC.³⁰⁹ The rest demonstrated their commitment to the cause by attending the convention or volunteering in operations around it. They brought with them a fervor that sometimes proved damaging to Goldwater: when ex-President Eisenhower attacked the supposedly liberal media during his speech, they, who had been denigrated as extremists daily, let loose their pent-up resentment; when Rockefeller proposed a resolution denouncing extremism—a move that could only have been designed to provoke more outbursts—they

³⁰⁵ For a detailed account of the California primary see PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, pp.335–355.

³⁰⁶ BUSCH, Andrew: In Defense of the “Mixed” System. *The Goldwater Campaign & the Role of Popular Movements in the Pre-Reform Presidential Nomination Process*, in: *Polity* Vol. 24/4 (1992), pp.527–549, here pp.531–534; 537–539.

³⁰⁷ For a complete overview of YAF activities at the convention, see “A Generation Arrives”. YAF at San Francisco, in: *The New Guard*, August 1964, pp.13–18.

³⁰⁸ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.122.

³⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.123.

booed him.³¹⁰ The anger of some attendees about constantly being regarded as extremists might have been justified, but their reactions only served to reinforce that image.

The platform constituted a compromise between conservatives and liberals. It called for less federal intervention and a smaller government, while vowing to strengthen social security, establish medical care for the elderly and to execute civil rights legislation faithfully.³¹¹ Perhaps some therefore expected Goldwater to appeal to party unity when he took the podium—as acceptance speeches usually do. And indeed, at the outset of his speech he called on his fellow Republicans to go forward “united and determined.”³¹² Those, however, were not the words that were etched into the memory of the audience. Reaching the climax towards the end of the speech, the senator exclaimed: “Anyone who joins us in all sincerity, we welcome. Those who do not care for our cause, we don't expect to enter our ranks in any case.” Directly addressing the issue of extremism that had been hovering over the conference, Goldwater added:

“And let our Republicanism, so focused and so dedicated, not be made fuzzy and futile by unthinking and stupid labels.

I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.”³¹³

Goldwater’s attack on the terminology of his opponents was received as an all-out defense of extremism. While the conservative faithful cheered for over half a minute over extremism being no vice (the most applause any statement of the speech got), moderates like Nixon could only manage a forced smile and some polite applause.³¹⁴ The slim chances Goldwater had of winning the election died then and there.³¹⁵ Edwards remembered: “I saw my hero, deeply tanned and silver-haired, ensure his defeat with his acceptance speech.”³¹⁶ Clif White, from the campaign trailer, remarked to those around him: “I wonder if they realize out there on the floor that they are hailing disaster and defeat.”³¹⁷

It appears most YAFers were not. While the senator was busy building his campaign team out of loyalists, for example nominating Dean Burch instead of White, who would have died for

³¹⁰ Cf. GOULD, *The Republicans*, pp.254–255; EDWARDS, *Just Right*, pp.93–94.

³¹¹ Cf. Republican Party Platform [1964], online: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-party-platform-1964> [19.04.2021].

³¹² Goldwater’s Acceptance Speech [1964], online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/may98/goldwaterspeech.htm> [16.01.2020].

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ Reel America: Barry Goldwater’s Acceptance Speech [1964], online: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?320250-1/reel-america-barry-goldwaters-1964-acceptance-speech> [19.04.2021] Audience reactions can be observed following [44:00].

³¹⁵ Cf. PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, pp.390–394. In one of his typical gaffes, Goldwater had already explained to German news magazine *Der Spiegel* that, after Kennedy’s assassination, no Republican stood a chance to win anyway. Cf. „Deutschland hätte beide Kriege gewinnen können“. SPIEGEL-Gespräch mit dem republikanischen Präsidentschaftsbewerber, Senator Barry Goldwater, in: *Der Spiegel*, 28/1964, p.58.

³¹⁶ EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.98.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.100.

the opportunity, as chairman of the RNC, *The New Guard* declared “total victory” in San Francisco and, in the face of liberal Republican attacks on Goldwater, reprinted his statement of only welcoming sincere support.³¹⁸ Yet, the editors also cautioned the readers to not grow too optimistic in the face of an uphill battle. The resurgence of conservatism would continue with or without victory.

One who would not indulge in illusions of triumph was William Buckley. Preparing a speech for the upcoming YAF national convention, he persuaded National Chairman Bob Bauman to let him speak on the topic of Goldwater’s impending defeat.³¹⁹ Fearing that an unexpected reversal at the polls would do more damage to YAF than a breaking of morale, he set out to prepare the youngsters for things to come:

“Our morale is high, and we are marching. But the morale of the army on the march is that of an army that has been promised victory. But it is wrong to assume that we shall overcome; and therefore it is right to reason to the necessity of guarding against the utter disarray that sometimes follows a stunning defeat.”³²⁰

A Goldwater victory would necessitate a change of public opinion. Right now, only a “fiery little body of dissenters, of which you are a shining meteor” were genuine conservatives. Yet, Buckley continued, victory was not at all what the campaign was about:

“The Goldwater movement is in the nature of an attempted prison-break. It is supremely urgent that the effort be made, gloriously encouraging that we are mobilized to make the attempt: but direfully boring to proceed on the assumption that we will succeed, or to reason that if we do not, the attempt to reach safety cannot ever succeed.”³²¹

Buckley lauded Goldwater for “sacrificing his career” to give conservatism a few months in the national limelight. Conservatives should not let this opportunity go to waste:

“The point of the present occasion is to win recruits whose attention we might never have attracted but for Barry Goldwater; to win them not only for November the third, but for future Novembers: to infuse the conservative spirit in enough people to entitle us to look about us, on November 4th, not at the ashes of defeat, but at the well-planted seeds of hope, which will flower on a great November day in the future [...]”³²²

YAF did win those recruits. Even though Goldwater eventually went down in a landslide, the organization added thousands of new members that had been attracted to conservative activism through volunteering for Goldwater or observing the campaign.

Goldwater’s defeat once again raised the issue of extremism that had plagued the campaign and its supporters. In his inaugural address, Tom Charles Huston, elected chairman in 1965, attacked those conservatives who “abuse the truth, who resort to violence and engage in slander.”³²³ These words were later interpreted as a “read[ing] out” of the John Birch Society

³¹⁸ “Total Victory!”/“The ‘Moderates’ Wail”, in: *The New Guard*, August 1964, p.4.

³¹⁹ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.85–86.

³²⁰ BUCKLEY, William: *We, Too, Will Continue*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1964, p.11.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ Cited according to PERLSTEIN, Rick: ‘I Didn’t Like Nixon Until Watergate’. *The Conservative Movement Now* [2005], online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/i-didnt-like-nixon-until-_b_11735 [06.08.2020].

by YAFers.³²⁴ On the initiative of Frank Meyer, YAF and other conservatives founded the American Conservative Union to give older conservatives and YAF ‘graduates’ an alternative to the John Birch Society.³²⁵ During its ongoing history, YAF alumni have played key roles as executive directors, chairman, and board members.³²⁶

There were more takeaways from the campaign: After the November debacle, Richard Viguerie copied the names and addresses of contributors from both internal and publicly available material by hand on index cards. He then stored the information on magnetic tapes and used it to generate mass mailings asking for small contributions from donors all around the country. Thus, direct mail fundraising was born. With the advent of computer technology, fundraising requests could easily be personalized and rolled out to millions of potential donors. This liberated organizations like YAF from their dependence on individual wealthy contributors and provided them with a steady stream of income. Viguerie’s company later raised funds for almost all the big organizations associated with the New Right.³²⁷ Without the opportunity and knowledge acquired during his time as YAF administrator, it is doubtful that the young man “interested in a career in politics”³²⁸ would have grown into one of the key players of modern American conservatism.

With Goldwater’s defeat, a new star rose on the conservative horizon. Actor Ronald Reagan, who had joined YAF’s advisory board in 1962,³²⁹ captured the hearts and minds of conservatives with a televised address entitled *A Time for Choosing*.³³⁰ California YAF rallied to the support of Reagan when he ran for governor in 1966. Both the Goldwater and Reagan campaigns became crucial places of remembrance for conservatives, especially YAFers who partook in them during formative periods.³³¹ Rick PERLSTEIN aptly called the 1964 Republican National Convention the “Conservative Woodstock,”³³² and stories of battles fought and lost were recounted in anniversary editions of *New Guard* or alumni meetings.

³²⁴ Randal Teague to National Board, November 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Minutes of meetings, 1970.

³²⁵ Cf. MEYER, Frank: Proposal for a National Conservative Organization, Undated (2nd half of 1964). William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 30, Folder Iter-Office Memos, Aug 1964-Dec 1964, n.d. THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, p.132, states that Bob Bauman initiated the actual process of founding ACU.

³²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.133.

³²⁷ Cf. PHILLIPS-FEIN, *Invisible Hands*, pp.213–221.

³²⁸ Resume of Richard Viguerie, Undated (1961), p.2. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 17, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1961).

³²⁹ Historical Timeline of the Young America’s Foundation [Undated], online: <https://www.yaf.org/about/history/> [19.04.2021].

³³⁰ Ronald Reagan: A Time for Choosing Speech [1964], online: <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/reagans/ronald-reagan/time-choosing-speech-october-27-1964> [19.04.2021].

³³¹ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.81–86.

³³² PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.372.

Sporting a record number of members on its roll, YAF was well-prepared for the rest of the decade that saw continued and new activism on the fronts of civil rights, Vietnam, and leftist campus radicalism.

2. Civil Rights and Civil Wrongs³³³

Early historians of modern American conservatism explained the conservative ascendancy and the fracturing of the New Deal coalition in terms of a racial backlash.³³⁴ According to this interpretation, the demands for an end to legal racial segregation in the South and for more political and societal participation by black Americans provoked a white backlash against the liberal state. While liberals extolled the achievements of racial reform, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Republican operatives successfully exploited white resentment by employing a ‘Southern Strategy,’ wooing disaffected former Democratic voters by making covert racial appeals, often termed ‘dog-whistle politics,’³³⁵ that evaded the stigma of the old-fashioned race baiter while still getting the message across. In the wake of the Long, Hot Summers³³⁶ of the 1960s and the Black Power movement towards the end of the decade, racial appeals under the guise of Law and Order found fertile ground in the urban centers of the North and West.³³⁷ The South no longer appeared exceptional in its attitude toward the race question. In fact, the whole of American politics had become ‘southernized.’³³⁸ More recent scholarship partially refuted this thesis. While its adherents acknowledge the role race played in the rise of conservatism, they reject the claim that a specifically Southern problem became nationalized.³³⁹ Focusing on the South and the question of legal integration, they argue, earlier historians had created a myth of Northern innocence, following the idea that the rest of the United States was more akin to a “non-South” than to the realities of the North.³⁴⁰ They repudiate the distinction between *de iure* segregation in the South, upheld by the law and enforced by the state, and *de facto* segregation in the North, where segregated housing patterns

³³³ The title of this chapter alludes to a talk held at a YAF training event, cf. YAF Student Leadership Conference Schedule, 1966. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 41, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF).

³³⁴ The seminal study is CARTER, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich*.

³³⁵ “[U]sing a dog whistle simply means speaking in a code to a target audience.” In the context of race, this means “coded talk centered on race [...] racial dog whistle politics diverges from the more general practice because the hidden message it seeks to transmit violates a strong moral consensus. The impetus to speak in code reflects more than the concern that many voters do not embrace the target audience’s passions. Rather, the substance of the appeal runs counter to national values supporting equality and opposing racism. Those blowing a racial dog whistle know full well that they would be broadly condemned if understood as appealing for racial solidarity among whites.” HANEY LÓPEZ, Ian: *Dog Whistle Politics. How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, New York, NY 2014, p.4.

³³⁶ Although only the summer of 1967 is conventionally known as ‘Long, Hot Summer,’ in this chapter I will use the term to refer to the summers of 1965-68 that were characterized by a high amount of racial tensions and riots.

³³⁷ Cf. FLAMM, *Law and Order*, pp.67–82.

³³⁸ See CARTER, *The Politics of Rage*.

³³⁹ The pathbreaking studies of this school are KRUSE, Kevin: *White Flight. Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Princeton, NJ 2005; LASSITER, Matthew: *The Silent Majority. Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*, Princeton, NJ 2007; CRESPIANO, Joseph: *In Search of Another Country. Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*, Princeton, NJ 2007.

³⁴⁰ Cf. LASSITER, Matthew; CRESPIANO, Joseph: *The End of Southern History*, in: LASSITER, Matthew; CRESPIANO, Joseph (Edd.): *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford et al. 2010, pp.3–22, here pp.8–12.

ostensibly resulted from individual decisions in a free market. By showing the manifold ways in which government agencies directly or indirectly contributed to *de facto* segregation,³⁴¹ they support their claim that segregation had been a national problem even before *Brown v. Board of Education*.³⁴² Although contemporary actors might have spoken of ‘Southern Strategies,’ the new racial conservatism had a fundamentally different base than that of the Dixiecrats. While the latter had their strongholds in the rural Black Belt of the Deep South, the former particularly appealed to white voters on the sub- and exurban edges of metropolitan areas.³⁴³ It did not make much difference whether the metropolitan center was Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, or Los Angeles. The ‘Southern Strategy,’ then, was a suburban strategy.³⁴⁴

Common to both approaches is the assumption that race played a key role in the political success of conservatism. It is thus surprising that no extensive historiographical work has been done on Young Americans for Freedom’s stance towards the Civil Rights Movement of the Sixties, especially since former YAF members and associates played influential roles in events that figure prominently in dog-whistle and backlash narratives.

For example, the George Bush Sr. campaign for the presidency in 1988 infamously featured an advertisement about a black convict that had been furloughed during Bush opponent Michael Dukakis’ tenure as governor of Massachusetts. During one of these furloughs, he escaped and assaulted a couple, raping the woman while stabbing and beating her fiancé. The TV advertisement, which was produced by a group nominally independent of the Bush campaign, attacked Dukakis for being soft on crime. By featuring unflattering pictures of Horton, it referenced the old segregationist trope of a supposedly subhuman³⁴⁵ black man raping an innocent white woman. This (wrongfully) made the black rapist emblematic of the crime wave that plagued the nation in the 1980s and 90s. Responsible for the advertisement was the Americans for Bush branch of the National Security Political Action Committee, headed by former YAF board member Floyd Brown.³⁴⁶ Lee Atwater, who managed the Bush campaign

³⁴¹ SUGRUE’s classic study of Detroit is exceptional in working out the interplay between citizens, local, state and federal authorities in keeping neighborhoods *de facto* segregated, cf. SUGRUE, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, esp. pp.34–55; 181–258.

³⁴² Cf. LASSITER, Matthew: *De Jure/De Facto Segregation. The Long Shadow of a National Myth*, in: LASSITER, Matthew; CRESPIANO, Joseph (Edd.): *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford et al. 2010, pp.25–48.

³⁴³ Cf. CRESPIANO, Joseph: *Mississippi as Metaphor. Civil Rights, the South, and the Nation in the Historical Imagination*, in: LASSITER, Matthew; CRESPIANO, Joseph (Edd.): *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford et al. 2010, pp.99–120, here p.107.

³⁴⁴ Cf. KRUSE, *White Flight*, pp.251–258.

³⁴⁵ Larry McCarthy, who produced and edited the advertisement, claimed that Horton looked “like an animal” in his mugshot. SCHRAM, Martin: *The Making of Willie Horton*, in: *The New Republic*, May 28, 1990, p.17.

³⁴⁶ Cf. KROHN, Jonathan: *From Willie Horton to Western Journalism: Floyd Brown's Career in Media Manipulation*, in: *Newsweek*, December 6, 2016, online: <https://www.newsweek.com/2016/12/16/floyd-brown-maestro-media-manipulation-528591.html> [27.05.2020].

and pushed the use of the Willie Horton case to attack Dukakis,³⁴⁷ had long been associated with former YAF activist Charlie Black, who furthered his career.³⁴⁸

In the light of stories such as these, it is imperative to uncover the roots of YAF's civil rights policy, which previous researchers have neglected. SCHNEIDER, for example, concludes that civil rights were "of little concern"³⁴⁹ to the group, since their strongholds in the early 1960s were in the North. The ethnic Catholics who made up a large part of the YAF base there had no connection to the tradition of civil disobedience, and thus no immediate sympathies for either the Southern Civil Rights Movement or their Massive Resistance³⁵⁰ counterparts. Based on an interview with former Southern Regional Director Randal Teague, SCHNEIDER reports that Southern members had joined the organization not to combat the Civil Rights Movement but were driven by anti-communist commitment. Both explanations do not suffice: as shown above, racial questions agitated Northerners as well. Support for segregation and anti-communism often went hand-in-hand,³⁵¹ for example when the JBS and other conservatives widely publicized a photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr. at a convention of Tennessee's Highlander Folk School,³⁵² supposedly proof of his communist indoctrination.³⁵³

ANDREW cites civil rights only twice in his book, once to claim that they were important for several (Southern) actors in the Goldwater campaign in 1964,³⁵⁴ not so much for YAF; another time he stresses that while the campaign might have received the support of many old-fashioned racists because of Goldwater's opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, YAFers were more concerned with constitutional than racial questions.³⁵⁵ THORBURN, in his 'house history' of the organization, avoids mentioning the topic altogether,³⁵⁶ either because he deemed it unimportant or unflattering for the organization.

³⁴⁷ Cf. SIMON, Roger: The GOP and Willie Horton: Together Again, in: Politico, May 19, 2015, online: <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/jeb-bush-willie-horton-118061>.

³⁴⁸ Cf. ZERNIKE, Kate: 'Steady Hand' for the G.O.P. Guides McCain on a New Path, in: The New York Times, 13.4.2008, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/13/us/politics/13black.html> [27.05.2020].

³⁴⁹ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.58.

³⁵⁰ On how Massive Resistance against desegregation became the leading Southern ideology, see KLARMAN, Michael: *Why Massive Resistance?*, in: WEBB, Clive (Ed.): *Massive Resistance. Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction*, New York, NY 2005, pp.21–38.

³⁵¹ Cf. WOODS, Jeff: *Black Struggle, Red Scare. Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948–1968*, Baton Rouge, LA 2004, pp.4–5.

³⁵² Established in 1932, Highlander was a training school for labor and civil rights leaders. It had been barraged with anti-communist accusations since the 50s, cf. *Ibid.*, pp.103–111; "Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School" [1957], online: <https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/highlander/efhf003.pdf> [28.05.2020].

³⁵³ Cf. MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, pp.126–128.

³⁵⁴ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.191.

³⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.209.

³⁵⁶ The text mentions events such as the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., but omits the organization's response, cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.196; 212.

KLATCH remarks that the Civil Rights Movement was an important catalyst for the political involvement of young people that (later) joined SDS, but of considerably less importance for future YAFers. About half of her interviewees recalled that they were hostile or apathetic towards the movement, while the other half claimed to have had sympathies. Of the latter, however, only a fraction got involved because they rejected the solutions put forward by black activists. Opposition to the Civil Rights Movement, according to KLATCH, came primarily from Southern YAF chapters. National chairman Tom Huston even received “threats of bodily harm” when he called for African American equality in the mid-Sixties.³⁵⁷

SCHNEIDER speaks of only a few articles concerned with civil rights that made it into the pages of *The New Guard*,³⁵⁸ but there is quite a substantial number that tackled the topic directly or indirectly. Furthermore, several resolutions, meeting minutes, and some correspondence attests to the relevance of the civil rights question to YAF leaders and members in the 1960s. Speaking in practical terms, a matter that repeatedly captured the nation’s attention during the Sixties was unlikely to evoke apathy among youthful political activists, regardless of political couleur. For example, the *New Guard* editors heralded the debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as “a battle of even greater importance for the survival of the United States” than the Battle of Gettysburg.³⁵⁹

YAF employed different argumentation strategies that roughly corresponded with the three ideological pillars of fusionism. Indeed, as all three subbranches rejected the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, the conservative response should be seen as a prototypical example for fusionism in political practice.

Firstly, conservative anti-communists used associations of civil rights leaders with figures and institutions of the communist movement as a red herring to suggest that the Civil Rights Movement as a whole had been duped or subverted by communists or was a communist front entirely. While some such accusations proved to be well-founded,³⁶⁰ they were not meant to encourage ridding the black struggle of red elements but rather to discredit the movement per se.

Secondly, conservatives brought forth several constitutional concerns targeted not at the movement itself but the legal process of integration. In libertarian tradition, conservatives such as Barry Goldwater feared that by intervening in the civil rights question, the federal government might expand its powers to the detriment of most citizens. Concepts such as

³⁵⁷ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.77–78.

³⁵⁸ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.58.

³⁵⁹ “... To Uphold the Constitution, not Destroy it”, in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, p.5.

³⁶⁰ Cf. WOODS, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*, p.8; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.58.

‘property rights,’ ‘freedom of association,’ and ‘states’ rights’ were defined as protected by law, pitted against the demands of civil rights activists, and employed to question the constitutionality of civil rights legislation.

Thirdly, traditionalist conservatives argued toward the second half of the decade, when Long, Hot Summers repeatedly shook the nation, that leaders of the Civil Rights Movement had, by employing civil disobedience tactics, created a disregard for law and order in African Americans. Furthermore, those leaders had spread an entitlement mentality, disregarding traditional values such as hard labor and individual aspiration in favor of government handouts. YAFers shied away from openly racist arguments in their opposition to the civil rights movement. In fact, at the end of the decade the organization distanced itself from racist justifications for segregation.

2.1 “Behind the Civil Rights Mask” – Red-Baiting of Civil Rights Activists

In the mid-twentieth century, but especially since *Brown v. Board of Education*, racism as justification for segregation had been discredited. Segregationists needed to find new arguments that ostensibly avoided race as an analytical category.

Seeking to appeal to a broader, national audience, segregationists were happy to frame their resistance to integration in anti-communist terms. With the Second Red Scare in full swing, such arguments fell on fertile soil.³⁶¹ As the anti-communist weltanschauung defined communism as diametrically opposed to a vaguely defined American way of life, everything that remotely resembled the former had to be rejected. Thus, if segregationists managed to paint civil rights activists red, they could effectively delegitimize integrationist politics without ever directly engaging the issues put forward by African American movement activists. They could avoid talking about racially charged topics like integration while still damaging the civil rights cause.³⁶² Old-fashioned segregationists and race baiters were still around and had their audiences. Anti-communist arguments, however, helped draw people into the fold that might have otherwise supported the Civil Rights Movement.

The 1960s were not the 1950s, but many conservatives, especially in the South, had never truly left the Red Scare legacy behind. As KATAGIRI argues,

“after the Supreme Court’s *Brown* decision, which coincided with the demise of McCarthyism (or, more accurately, the demise of [...] Joe McCarthy), some northern anti-Communists suddenly found the South

³⁶¹ LEWIS, George: *White South, Red Nation: Massive Resistance and the Cold War*, in: WEBB, Clive (Ed.): *Massive Resistance. Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction*, New York, NY 2005, pp.117–135, here pp.117–119.

³⁶² ROLPH, Stefanie: *Courting Conservatism. White Resistance and Ideology of Race in the 1960s*, in: GIFFORD, Laura; WILLIAMS, Daniel (Edd.): *The Right Side of the Sixties. Reexamining Conservatism’s Decade of Transformation*, Basingstoke 2012, pp.21–39, here pp.23–24.

to be an unexplored, fertile, and promising ground, where their knowledge and expertise could be fully appreciated.”³⁶³

YAF activists of the 1960s had been socialized during the height of McCarthyism.³⁶⁴ If anything, the infamous Army-McCarthy hearings and his eventual censure in December 1954 strengthened their anti-communist resolve.³⁶⁵ Here their hero had been beaten into submission by the establishment. Even before his censure, Buckley and Bozell published a lengthy volume defending McCarthy.³⁶⁶ Sharon Statement author Stanton Evans delivered a defense of McCarthy as recently as 2006.³⁶⁷ In a retrospective for the *New Guard*, conservative philosopher Willmoore Kendall argued that McCarthyism had been the struggle to suppress questions on “matters so basic to the consensus that the society would, in declaring them open, abolish itself, commit suicide, terminate its existence as the kind of society it has hitherto understood itself to be.”³⁶⁸ Clearly, conservatives’ resolve against communist subversion had not wavered.

Indeed, most people alleging communist subversion of the Civil Rights Movement held genuine convictions.³⁶⁹ Their charges were also not completely unjustified: the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) was committed to the advancement of civil rights. It furthermore hoped to instrumentalize the race issue to sow the seeds of revolution in the South as it saw the African American freedom struggle as an anti-colonial struggle within.³⁷⁰ However, so-called ‘anti-Red-Laws’ in the South often targeted civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), indeed more so than the CPUSA itself,³⁷¹ thus betraying the real intentions of their framers.

The pages of *The New Guard* show how such red-baiting of civil rights activists worked in practice: Antoni Gollan, a contributor from Florida, who later wrote for *National Review*, reported that he, being friends with several African Americans, harbored natural sympathies toward the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), one of the leading civil rights groups of the time.³⁷² However, after he had contributed a small sum to the organization, he noticed that he

³⁶³ KATAGIRI, Yasuhiro: *Black Freedom, White Resistance, and Red Menace. Civil Rights and Anticommunism in the Jim Crow South*, Baton Rouge, LA 2014, p.xv. See also *Ibid.*, pp.23–58.

³⁶⁴ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.41–42; 60.

³⁶⁵ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, pp.8–10.

³⁶⁶ BUCKLEY, William/BOZELL, Brent: *McCarthy and His Enemies. The Record and Its Meaning*, Chicago 1954.

³⁶⁷ EVANS, Stanton: *Blacklisted by History. The Untold Story of Senator Joe McCarthy and His Fight Against America’s Enemies*, New York, NY 2007.

³⁶⁸ KENDALL, Willmoore: *McCarthyism. What Was It All About?*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1963, pp.10–11; 19.

³⁶⁹ Cf. LEWIS, *White South, Red Nation: Massive Resistance and the Cold War*.

³⁷⁰ Cf. WILLIAMS, Matt: *When Communism Became Black* [2019], online: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/40161/when-communism-became-black> [29.04.2021].

³⁷¹ Cf. WOODS, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*, p.49; 52.

³⁷² On CORE see MEIER, August/RUDWICK, Elliott M.: *CORE. A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*, New York, NY 1973.

received advertisements from several communist groups. In an ‘experiment,’ he then set up a post box account under a different name with which he subscribed to *The Worker*, the party magazine of the CPUSA. He subsequently noticed that he was receiving CORE fund raising appeals in that post box.

As if really it should be a foregone conclusion, Gollan cautions the reader that “this hardly shows that CORE is communist [...] but it does show that it [CORE] [...] and *The Worker* at least believe that they appeal to the same people and exchange mailing lists.”³⁷³ Although he did not establish any definite link between CORE and CPUSA, he heavily implied it. Such guilt-by-association rhetoric was characteristic for the red-baiting of civil rights activists. It enabled authors to question the motivations of activists: “Why an organization *honestly* interested in the problems of Negro citizens should conduct business in that manner, I don’t know. Frankly, I’m wondering just what sort of organization CORE is.”³⁷⁴ By exchanging mailing lists with communists, Gollan argues, the organization appeared not to be working to alleviate the plight of black people, but to further some communist agenda. Gollan needed not remind his readership that those goals were mutually exclusive, since communism would presumably result in the elimination of all civil rights and liberties.

To buttress the claim that CORE had been subverted by communists, Gollan turned to the Freedom Rides. These were political campaigns where black and white civil rights activists traveled via interstate busses to challenge local segregation ordinances in the South. The Interstate Commerce Commission had banned the segregation of busses traveling across state lines in its 1955 landmark decision in the *Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach Company* case, but the ruling had never been enforced.³⁷⁵ Starting in the North, where busses were integrated, the participants travelled to the South and were often subject to mob violence and police repression once they arrived.

Gollan is less interested in the details of the campaign. Instead, he cites one (African-American) participant claiming that “[t]hey [the communists] are making fools of some negroes’, adding ‘the Negro is being used as a political football by the communists.’”³⁷⁶ Building on that statement, the author goes on to link various members of CORE’s advisory committee to leftist and communist organizations.³⁷⁷ He concludes: “CORE, as a survey of its advisory committee illustrates, clearly is not the group for the job. Sponsored by veteran communist-fronters and

³⁷³ GOLLAN, Antoni: At the CORE of Racial Tension, in: *The New Guard*, August 1961, p.13.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

³⁷⁵ For the Freedom Rides see ARSENAULT, Raymond: *Freedom Riders. 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, Oxford, New York, NY 2006; MEIER/RUDWICK, CORE, pp.135–158.

³⁷⁶ GOLLAN, Antoni: At the CORE of Racial Tension, in: *The New Guard*, August 1961, p.13.

³⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.13–14; 17.

agitators, its provocative measures are warmly lauded by *The Worker*, which has little more than cold disdain for quiet settlements of racial problems, regarding them as ‘surrender to racism.’”³⁷⁸ Instead, African-Americans should turn to wiser leaders such as the NAACP, whose legal activism did not threaten to let the Civil Rights Movement get out of hand.

Gollan might have made that judgement because the NAACP had distanced itself from communism during the Second Red Scare.³⁷⁹ Most leaders of the organization could be described as liberal anti-communists. However, CORE itself had enacted similar anti-communist measures in the past.³⁸⁰ More likely, Gollan rejected the radical methods of CORE and its Freedom Riders that interfered with Southern everyday life and provoked a violent backlash.

A manifesto attesting to the prevalence of such anti-radical thinking is Lee Edwards’ and Terry Catchpole’s *Behind the Civil Rights Mask*.³⁸¹ While not a YAF publication per se, both Edwards and Catchpole were YAF members and had been involved with *The New Guard* as editor and contributor, respectively. It is therefore likely that they articulated an attitude shared by other YAFers. *National Review* columnist John Chamberlain wrote the foreword. Having done the same for Buckley’s *God and Man at Yale*, his contribution signified that mainstream conservatives would be open to the arguments presented in the book.

Encouraged by its successes in the field and Congress, the authors argued, the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders had departed from their original demands of “just civil rights.” Their new goal, which “far exceed[ed] their initial concern with equal rights” was “social and economic revolution.” They were forming a new political bloc consisting of “minority groups, organized labor and the intelligentsia.” Since the civil rights issue had worked well for them in the past, movement leaders were hiding behind that mask, thus “deceiving white Americans.”³⁸² The civil rights movement, the authors warned, ran the risk of becoming the labor movement of the 60s, that is to become infiltrated by large numbers of communists. The only viable defense against such infiltration would be a widespread purge of communists.³⁸³

All that Edwards and Catchpole thought was needed to prove their thesis was a collection of quotes by seven civil rights leaders. An eighth, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary/director of the NAACP, served as a

³⁷⁸ Ibid., p.17.

³⁷⁹ Cf. BERG, Manfred: Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism. The NAACP in the Early Cold War, in: *Journal of American History* Vol. 94/1 (2007), pp.75–96.

³⁸⁰ Cf. MEIER/RUDWICK, CORE, pp.63–71.

³⁸¹ EDWARDS, Lee/CATCHPOLE, Terry: *Behind the Civil Rights Mask*, Washington, D.C. 1965. I thank Rick Perlstein for providing me with his copy for this dissertation.

³⁸² Ibid., p.VI Emphasis added.

³⁸³ Cf. Ibid., p.VIII.

counterexample, the “wiser negro leader”³⁸⁴ Gollan had spoken of. The editors claimed that there was “no editorializing or interpretation of the statements, other than to place them in meaningful sequence and, where necessary, describe the situation in which they were made.”³⁸⁵ However, this does not hold up to scrutiny.

Every chapter began with a short biographical introduction of the respective movement leader. A footnote reminded the reader that “according to the files of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, [the leader] has been associated with the following Communist-front organizations.”³⁸⁶ Interspersed throughout the book were quotes, mostly by conservative columnists, either buttressing the editors’ statements, contradicting the quotes of civil rights leaders, or highlighting their communist ties. Edwards and Catchpole began and framed each section of quotes with a suggestive (interpretative) statement.

For example, they introduced Martin Luther King’s remark that activists of the 1963 Birmingham campaign had managed “literally to fill the jails” as indication of “[t]he fact that Dr. King does seek ‘demonstrations for the sake of demonstrations.’”³⁸⁷ The context of the quote, however, was missing. There, King claimed that not only was the filling of an entire jail proof of the determination of the activists, but it also signified the extent of the injustice experienced by African Americans “before the conscience of the local and national community.”³⁸⁸ Contrary to the introducing statement, King thus framed the filling of the jails in the context of the larger civil rights struggle and does not see it as an end in itself.

Some of the anticommunist accusations of *Behind the Civil Rights Mask* rested on circular logic. Since the authors treated the communist infiltration of the movement as a given, they saw statements to the contrary as movement leaders downplaying the extent of subversion. These statements were thus further proof of the imminent danger of a communist takeover, as they supposedly showed that the respective leaders were either complicit in or unwilling to take a stand against communist subversion.

Such undeclared presuppositions about the movement also colored the editors’ interpretation of the quotes. This becomes apparent in the enlistment of Roy Wilkins as a contrasting, positive example. The authors heralded Wilkins’ claim that “[t]here can be no cooling-off period in the

³⁸⁴ GOLLAN, Antoni: At the CORE of Racial Tension, in: *The New Guard*, August 1961, p.17.

³⁸⁵ EDWARDS/CATCHPOLE, *Behind the Civil Rights Mask*, p.VII. Edwards, who claims to have been sympathetic to the goals of the Civil Rights Movement, if not their methods, (cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.78; EDWARDS, *Just Right*, pp.36–37), “stand[s] by the accuracy of every quotation in the booklet” (EDWARDS, *Just Right*, p.147) but does not position himself regarding the editors’ statements. He would, however, if given the choice, not coauthor it again, if only for the fact that “as a conservative, I was automatically suspect on the subject of civil rights” (Ibid., p.148).

³⁸⁶ E.g. EDWARDS/CATCHPOLE, *Behind the Civil Rights Mask*, p.10.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.11–12.

³⁸⁸ “Fill the Jails” (1963) [2013], online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urtJv9gxFSM> [22.06.2020].

effort to obtain one’s citizenship rights” as rational, “without resorting to ‘blackmail’ threats of violence.” At the same time, they rap Martin Luther King’s prediction that “[t]here will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights” as “relentles[s]” blackmail and a “threat of violence.”³⁸⁹

Another recurring topic of the pamphlet was a potential alliance between civil rights and other forces to form a political powerhouse within the US. While the editors acknowledged the right to speak out on issues such as Vietnam or the “socialization” of America, they rejected their “cloaking [...] in the honorable mantle of civil rights.”³⁹⁰ In practice, however, they criticized movement leaders who spoke out e.g. for federal economic assistance to poor Americans.³⁹¹ The editors seemed to take for granted that civil rights activists may *only* take positions on narrowly defined civil rights issues lest they abuse their position.

This was a modified version of an older anti-communist trope employed against civil rights: the denial of agency to black activists.³⁹² If they had not been stirred up by ‘professional’ agitators, the narrative goes, African Americans would live in peace and racial harmony with their white neighbors. Anti-communists thus attributed the legitimate grievances voiced by local civil rights groups to ‘outside agitators.’ African Americans, the argument assumes, could not aspire to civil rights and increased political participation independently from whites.

One affair in which YAF used such an argument was the registration of James Meredith, who became the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Meredith himself was not associated with any civil rights organization, although the NAACP supported his quest. The Federal Justice Department under Attorney General Robert Kennedy pressured Mississippi authorities to admit Meredith. Yet Governor Ross Barnett repeatedly called Meredith’s attempts to register at Ole Miss a ploy of the “communist” NAACP to stir up racial hatred.³⁹³ After he had (unlawfully) turned down Meredith’s enrollment attempts several times, using every legal trick in his arsenal,³⁹⁴ the latter was finally brought to campus on September 30, 1962 under (federalized) National Guard and Army protection. Still, when the State Highway Police withdrew from campus, a full-blown race riot (the ‘Ole Miss Riot’) by students and (perhaps ironically) outsiders from Oxford and adjacent areas broke out in which two people were killed

³⁸⁹ EDWARDS/CATCHPOLE, *Behind the Civil Rights Mask*, p.54; 15.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

³⁹¹ Cf. e.g. *Ibid.*, pp.22–23.

³⁹² Cf. ROLPH, *Courting Conservatism*, p.26.

³⁹³ EAGLES, *Charles: The Price of Defiance. James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss*, Chapel Hill NC 2009, p.319.

³⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.299–339.

and several hundred injured. Meredith, who remained unscathed hidden away in a dorm room, enrolled at the university.³⁹⁵

Writing for the *New Guard*, Lee Edwards challenged the new student’s motivation behind enrolling. His immediate actions appeared to be not those “of a student seeking education but of a professional agitator searching for publicity.”³⁹⁶ Edwards acknowledged that if Meredith was searching for an education, he should not have to face any barriers in enrolling. He also condemned the violent rioters. However, he added, if Meredith was “a ‘tool’ of the NAACP, he [was] a charlatan of the worst stripe.” He also attacked the federal government’s handling of the crisis. The feelings of “many Americans,” he claimed, were summed up by a satirist who mused that “[t]he federal Government sent so many paratroops into Mississippi that if they’d overshoot by a few miles, they might have taken Cuba by accident.” By also invoking states’ rights later in the article, he rejected federal intervention in the states’ handling of integration. The reference to Cuba implies that federal troops might be used better for anti-communist purposes abroad than to protect supposed (communist?) agitators at home. Finally, Edwards predicted that instead of rioting, segregationists (i.e. people who rejected *Brown v. Board of Education*) would “continue to plead their case in the courts and in the United States Congress with reason and logic.”

Historians have debated whether anti-communist pressure during the Second Red Scare seriously damaged the Civil Rights Movement. Civil rights organizations like the NAACP took an anti-communist stance to shield themselves from red-baiting. Thus, LIEBERMAN and LANG argue that civil rights opponents successfully effected the purging of radical elements, narrowing the focus of activism from a “global struggle for human rights encompassing anticolonialism and economic justice” to a movement concerned only with civil rights and legal integration.³⁹⁷ Their work focuses on radical black intellectuals, who were indeed marginalized by anti-communist hysteria. However, they neglect that evidence of radical-left chapters of civil rights organizations which would have signified a broad acceptance of such positions seems more anecdotal than representative.

In contrast, BERG argued with a focus on the national leadership of the NAACP that the organization acted opportunistically by embracing liberal anti-communism. It did not have to give up its core ideology in the process. Indeed, doing so shielded the group from further attacks, safeguarded its political legitimacy and thus enabled much of the successes of the 50s

³⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.340–370.

³⁹⁶ EDWARDS, Lee: Meredith at Mississippi, in: *The New Guard*, November 1962, p.4.

³⁹⁷ LIEBERMAN, Robbie; LANG, Clarence: Introduction, in: LIEBERMAN, Robbie; LANG, Clarence (Edd.): *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement. Another Side of the Story*, New York, NY 2009, pp.1–15, here pp.2–8.

and 60s.³⁹⁸ The excerpts presented above support this thesis, as YAFers did hail the NAACP as the positive exception among civil rights groups.

2.2 Civil Rights v. Civil Liberties – Constitutional Arguments

The constitutional arguments of YAF and other conservatives were, in contrast to the anti-communist red-baiting, no *ad hominem* attacks on civil rights activists, nor were they targeted directly at their demands. Instead, conservatives questioned the constitutionality of legislation meant to remedy African American inequality and segregation.

YAF presented two major arguments against such legislation: firstly, laws designed to enforce civil rights for minorities supposedly were an attack on states' and individual rights. (Federal) legislative intervention on behalf of minority groups would by default lead to the discrimination of other groups. Conservatives thus tried to redirect the civil rights question away from African Americans gaining equal civil rights. Instead, they cited traditional (implicitly white) rights that would be infringed by civil rights laws. By shifting the center of debate, conservatives could hope to shore up opposition to new legislation.³⁹⁹ In the process, they appropriated the rights rhetoric of their opponents; a strategy that political theorist Corey ROBIN has argued to be characteristic for (American) right-wing movements.⁴⁰⁰

Secondly, conservatives argued on libertarian grounds that government institutions might exploit the civil rights question to expand their power and responsibilities without legitimate constitutional foundation. In the long run, this would be detrimental to all citizens, including those *prima facie* benefiting from the legislation.

Common to both arguments is a 'color-blind' approach. Ostensibly, constitutional concerns lead to the rejection of civil rights legislation regardless of the fact that it was *civil rights* legislation.⁴⁰¹ Alan MacKay, who later became YAF chairman, predicted in the 1964 election that the American public would recognize the difference between their and the segregationists' approach:

“Democrats will seek to appeal to the Negro vote by trying to paint Goldwater as a segregationist; but as the Senator gets the wider television and news coverage that must go to a Presidential candidate, his true views will be known, and the consistency of his defense of the Constitution will be appreciated.”⁴⁰²

³⁹⁸ Cf. BERG, *Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism*, pp.95–96.

³⁹⁹ FREEMAN, Margaret: 'Inequality for All and Mint Juleps, Too'. *White Social Sororities and 'Freedom of Association' in the United States*, in: GIFFORD, Laura; WILLIAMS, Daniel (Edd.): *The Right Side of the Sixties. Reexamining Conservatism's Decade of Transformation*, Basingstoke 2012, pp.41–59, here p.46.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. ROBIN, *The Reactionary Mind*, pp.97–108.

⁴⁰¹ BARTLEY already showed in the 1960s that using constitutional argument was a deliberate strategy to secure “the more defensible ‘higher ground’ of state sovereignty.” BARTLEY, Numan: *The Rise of Massive Resistance. Race and Politics in the South during the 1950's*, Baton Rouge, LA 1997 (1969), p.127.

⁴⁰² MACKAY, Alan: *The Issue is Freedom*, in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, p.12.

The oldest version of the first argument is the appeal to states' rights. Almost as old as the US itself, usage of states' rights to resist federal encroachment or unconstitutional measures harks back to the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and the Nullification Crisis of the 1830s. In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a renaissance of such arguments ensued.⁴⁰³

At the core lies the assumption that the constitution of the United States is little more than a compact between sovereign states. Therefore, the states as creator of the union retained the right to intervene should the federal government overstep its constitutional boundaries. For example, the Sharon Statement hailed as the “genius of the constitution” that it reserved primacy to the “states, or to the people, in those spheres not *specifically* delegated to the Federal Government[.]”⁴⁰⁴ Although opponents pointed out that the very first words of the constitution, “We the People” already contradict the assumption of a compact between states,⁴⁰⁵ and the Supreme Court in *McCulloch v. Maryland* decided in 1819 that “the government proceeds directly from the people[.]”⁴⁰⁶ such arguments still gave resistance against *Brown* some legitimacy.

The specific shape compact theory took in the mid-1950s is called interposition. The states could, supporters argued, *interpose* themselves between the federal government and the states' citizens and institutions if they deemed the actions of the former unconstitutional. For example, they could protect school districts from integration lawsuits.⁴⁰⁷ By 1960, when YAF was founded, however, this argument had already proven unsuccessful in preventing the advance of integration, and most constitutional arguments used other avenues of attack.⁴⁰⁸ Thus, YAF mainly used the states' rights argument in its early years.

For example, when YAF co-founder Douglas Caddy was asked about YAF's position on segregation in a 1961 NBC broadcast, he cautioned: “I don't think you can make it that simple [to outright reject segregation]. There is a great issue here of states' rights.”⁴⁰⁹ In the editorial about James Meredith cited above, Edwards remarked that “[a]s conservatives, we understand

⁴⁰³ Cf. WILHOIT, Francis: *The Politics of Massive Resistance*, New York, NY 1973, p.53.

⁴⁰⁴ The Sharon Statement (1960), p.229.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. WILHOIT, *The Politics of Massive Resistance*, p.63.

⁴⁰⁶ *McCulloch v. Maryland* [1819], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/17/316/> [19.06.2020].

⁴⁰⁷ For a detailed account of the rise and fall of the interposition argument, see BARTLEY, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp.126–149 DAY, John Kyle.: *The Southern Manifesto. Massive Resistance and the Fight to Preserve Segregation*, Jackson, MS 2014, pp.11–25.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. LEWIS, George: *Massive Resistance. The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement*, London 2006, pp.64–65.

⁴⁰⁹ GRANT, Joanne: “Right-Wing Youth Groups Look to Elders for Advice”, in: *The National Guardian*, May 15, 1961, p.7 An article in the pro-Communist *Guardian* about YAF must be taken with a grain of salt. There is, however, no reason to doubt the accuracy of the quote.

and support the theory of states' rights"⁴¹⁰ but still rejected civil disobedience as part of Massive Resistance.

He thus argued that African American activists presented reasonable demands but had no right to look toward the federal government for their enforcement. If the executive, as in the case of Meredith, forced states to uphold civil rights law (or court decisions), it took a giant step towards a "police nation."⁴¹¹

As they did with movement leaders, conservatives attacked core institutions of the federal government for ostensibly exploiting civil rights questions to further their own interests. In this view, not only the administration, but also the Supreme Court was bent on unhinging the traditional separation of powers. The latter's verdicts on desegregation were at odds with long-standing precedents rooted in the *Roberts v. City of Boston* and *Plessy v. Ferguson* rulings.⁴¹² In reaction to *Brown v. Board of Education*, *The Southern Manifesto*, a declaration signed by senators and congressmen from eleven Southern states, insinuated that the Supreme Court was de facto usurping legislative power:

"Though there has been no constitutional amendment or act of Congress changing this established legal principle [i.e. the Separate-but-Equal Doctrine], the Supreme Court of the United States, with no legal basis for such action, undertook to exercise their naked judicial power and substituted their personal political and social ideas for the established law of the land."⁴¹³

The authors rejected the doctrine of a living constitution subject to changing societal circumstances, and, implicitly, of judicial review.⁴¹⁴ The Supreme Court, in this view, had by no means the right to declare state laws void because of a changing constitutional interpretation.⁴¹⁵ Although the call for states' rights might be seen as a shibboleth for white supremacy, movement conservatives were consistent in defending them in other areas such as unionization, economic regulation, taxation and social issues.

For YAF, the appeal to states' rights was less important than a purported conflict between civil rights in the sense of the movement and other civil liberties. YAF's actions and rhetoric regarding the (forced) integration of fraternities and sororities demonstrate this distinction.

⁴¹⁰ EDWARDS, Lee: Meredith at Mississippi, in: *The New Guard*, November 1962, p.4.

⁴¹¹ THURMOND, Strom et al.: "Platform of the States' Rights Democratic Party" (1948), in: STORY, Ronald; LAURIE, Bruce (Edd.): *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945–2000. A Brief History with Documents*, Boston, MA 2008, pp.38–40, here p.39.

⁴¹² "The Southern Manifesto" (March 12, 1956), in: WALDO, Martin (Ed.): *Brown v. Board of Education. A Brief History with Documents*, Boston, MA 1998, pp.220–223, here pp.220–221; Sarah C. Roberts v. The City of Boston [1849], online: <http://law.howard.edu/brownat50/brownCases/19thCenturyCases/RobertsBoston1849.pdf> [29.04.2021]; *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 [1896], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/163/537/> [29.04.2021].

⁴¹³ "The Southern Manifesto" (March 12, 1956), p.221.

⁴¹⁴ Ironically, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, was based on a living constitution approach, cf. WILHOIT, *The Politics of Massive Resistance*, pp.65–66.

⁴¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of the entire document, cf. DAY, *The Southern Manifesto*, pp.84–107.

As young, tradition-oriented Americans, many YAFers were also fraternity or sorority members. By the early 1960s, those Greek letter associations had come under increasing pressure to revise their constitutions and abolish provisions that disqualified applicants based on race. Both fellow students and university administrations lobbied for this change. The latter wielded considerable influence over fraternities and sororities as part of campus and university life. Administrators could therefore be held responsible for the policies of student associations and had to carefully weigh how much open discrimination they could tolerate vis-a-vis federal law, which prevented grants to segregated institutions.

Unwilling to integrate, fraternities and sororities needed supporters to preserve their exclusionary practices. Because Greek letter societies had espoused the “‘All-American’ values of individual freedom, private property rights, free enterprise, and adherence to the Christian faith”⁴¹⁶ since World War II, conservatives made natural allies. YAF, with its fraternity and sorority members, influential alumni and advisors, and strong presence on campus, was congenial to their cause.

The key concept opponents of forced integration employed was ‘freedom of association.’⁴¹⁷ The YAF board of directors argued in a 1962 resolution that the right to freely choose one’s associates was “inherent in the American ideal of personal liberty.” Any infringement on it would be “destructive of [fraternities’ and sororities’] constitutional guarantee of freedom of assembly.”⁴¹⁸ Around the same time, Lee Edwards attacked the concept of “1962 discrimination, that is, of being anti-Negro” in the pages of *The New Guard*. Accepting African Americans as members just to “prove that [one] is not anti-Negro” would destroy the integrity of the organizations.⁴¹⁹ Two resolutions opposing forced integration passed at the YAF annual meeting of 1964 and the national convention at 1965, respectively, corroborate that a majority of YAF members held such opinions.⁴²⁰

Basis of the attacks against fraternities was a case of Orwellian “Newspeak”, then national vice chairman Tom Huston argued: “Unquestionably the most widely misunderstood phrase is ‘civil rights,’” which was not employed for the rights guaranteed by the constitution, but rather the “anti-Constitutional drive for equalitarianism.”⁴²¹ In this view, the option of African Americans

⁴¹⁶ FREEMAN, ‘Inequality for All and Mint Juleps, Too’, p.43.

⁴¹⁷ The platform of the States’ Rights Democratic Party already demanded the preservation of “the constitutional right to choose one’s associates” in 1948, explicitly referencing segregation. THURMOND, “Platform of the States’ Rights Democratic Party” (1948).

⁴¹⁸ Resolution on Fraternities, November 1962. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁴¹⁹ EDWARDS, Lee: Target: Fraternities, in: *The New Guard*, August 1962, pp.6–7.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Resolution on Fraternities, September 11, 1964. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2; Resolution on Freedom of Association and College Fraternities, August 1965. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁴²¹ HUSTON, Tom: ‘Operation Greek.’ The Attempt to Destroy the American Fraternity System, in: *The New Guard*, February 1965, p.8.

to join previously all-white fraternities and sororities was not a gain of individual freedom, but an infringement on established traditions and liberties. Segregation, not participation, became the paramount individual right.⁴²²

The alliance between YAF and the Greeks scored one of the few conservative successes in the legislative civil rights battles of the 1960s. Through their contacts with Ohioan congressman John Ashbrook, they introduced an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (H.R. 7152, Title V, Sec.104 (6))⁴²³ reading

“Nothing in this or [any] other Act shall be construed as authorizing the Commission [on Civil Rights], its Advisory Committees, or any person under its supervision or control to inquire into or investigate any membership practices or internal operations of any fraternal organization, any college or university fraternity or sorority, any private club or any religious organization.”⁴²⁴

Conservatives thus managed to cement racially exclusionary policies. Fraternities and sororities began to officially abolish them in the late 1960s, but their legacy survived the creation of ‘multicultural’ Greek letter societies in the 80s and is still tangible today.

Despite this limited success, YAFers minced no words when rejecting the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in total: “Only one phrase can describe H.R. 7152 and that is one that the Southerners constantly used in the House debate—‘legislative monstrosity,’”⁴²⁵ a *The New Guard* editorial proclaimed. In the House debate, proponents of the Act had “obscured the real issues, submerged themselves in a morass of social moralisms, and crushed all opposition, reasoned or otherwise.”⁴²⁶ Opponents thus presented the law as an amalgam of reasonable, unreasonable, and unconstitutional measures.

For example, the editors acknowledged that a “sound constitutional argument” could be made in favor of Title I of the law, which struck down some of the voter registration requirements meant to exclude African Americans from election participation. They warned, however, of the powers granted to the Justice Department for enforcement. The policy committee, deciding YAF’s official position on the matter, thus gave only qualified approval to these measures.⁴²⁷ It also partly accepted Title IV, which enabled the Attorney General to bring suits to enforce school desegregation, and parts of Title III, which barred public facilities connected to state governments from discrimination.

The policy committee criticized other provisions as attacks on individual liberty. Title II outlawed discrimination in places of ‘public’ accommodation engaged in interstate commerce,

⁴²² Cf. FREEMAN, ‘Inequality for All and Mint Juleps, Too’, p.48.

⁴²³ Cf. Beverly Robinson to Robert Bauman, February 27, 1964. YAF Records, Box 5, Folder 11.

⁴²⁴ Civil Rights Act of 1964 [1964], online: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/88/hr7152/text> [23.06.2020] Substituted “[any]” for “RHJ” in the original transcription.

⁴²⁵ “... To Uphold the Constitution, not Destroy it”, in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, p.5.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ Cf. Minutes of YAF Policy Committee Meeting, March 22, 1964. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

such as hotels, theaters or restaurants, and enabled the Attorney General to penalize them for non-compliance. To the committee, this was an infringement on the “right of property, one of the basic rights under natural law”, which Congress had supplanted by the supposedly “‘democratic right’ to be free from discrimination”.⁴²⁸ The YAF leaders made the same argument for Title VII, which prohibited employers to discriminate in the hiring process.

Another basic right was the right to due process. In the eyes of YAFers, Title III of the bill denied exactly that to public officials allegedly involved in discrimination (although Title XI explicitly entitled any defendants to a trial by jury except when in contempt of court orders). It empowered the Attorney General to take action in federal district courts against public facilities engaging in discrimination. Conservatives decried this as “typical of the double standard of discrimination-in-reverse”⁴²⁹ put forward by the bill. The editors noted that although disadvantaged groups benefitted from the law, it would create new discrimination for groups like public officials, who were now at the mercy of the Attorney General. While they viewed the former as minorities seeking ‘special rights,’ they held the latter to be representative of the majority of the American people. Libertarian-minded YAFers in Pennsylvania drafted entire lists of rights and liberties that Americans had supposedly lost in this manner during the early 60s.⁴³⁰

YAF had presented similar arguments in a resolution passed by the 1963 national convention. Therein, the membership opposed “any legislation which would interfere with individual liberties in order to benefit any race, class, or group of individuals.”⁴³¹ That the convention took this preemptive stance against civil rights legislation again underlines the importance of the issue for the organization.

YAF’s position was well integrated into the conservative mainstream, whose standard bearer Barry Goldwater put forward similar arguments against the Civil Rights Act.⁴³² During the Senate debate, he argued, also focusing on Titles II and VII, that there was no constitutional basis on which the federal government could make such drastic intervention into private business relations.⁴³³ At their annual meeting of 1964, YAF delegates passed a resolution commending Goldwater “for his defense of human rights” and applauding him for voting

⁴²⁸ “... To Uphold the Constitution, not Destroy it”, in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, pp.5–6.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴³⁰ Cf. CALLAWAY, Howard: “Rights?”, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, October 1965, p.4. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12; WALTER, David: *What Liberties Have You Lost?*, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, September 1967, p.3. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁴³¹ *Resolution on Civil Rights*, November 1963. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁴³² See GOLDWATER, Barry: *Where I Stand*, New York, NY 1964, pp.39–40; 94–97.

⁴³³ Cf. “A Conservative Opposes the Civil Rights Act of 1964”. Senator Barry Goldwater, *Congressional Record* (June 1964), in: CRITCHLOW, Donald; MACLEAN, Nancy (Edd.): *Debating the American Conservative Movement. 1945 to the Present*, Lanham 2009, pp.83–86, here pp.84–85.

against the Civil Rights Act “to preserve and extend the boundaries of personal freedom.”⁴³⁴ To shield the senator and presidential hopeful from claims of racism, the YAF resolution referenced his former NAACP membership and commitment to voluntary integration in Arizona. Goldwater, however, had long since shied away from the civil rights organization, claiming that it was “beholden to every socialistic cause in America.”⁴³⁵

Conservatives were able to find an audience for claims suggesting that the federal government was looking to expand its powers at the expense of the majority of American citizens. Such accusations fit well into the image painted of the Johnson administration. YAF attacked Great Society programs (even if not denounced as anti-constitutional, albeit contrary to American values) in a similar way.

The constitutional arguments brought forth against the Civil Rights Act or on behalf of states’ rights at best rested on shaky grounds. The employment of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* precedence implicitly acknowledged the principle of judicial review that segregationists attacked in *Brown*. Furthermore, supporters of civil rights legislation pointed out that the 14th and 15th constitutional amendments allowed Congress to intervene on behalf of discriminated African Americans. The union between the states was final, their sovereignty limited, and the federal government directly represented the American people. Institutions such as the Supreme Court and the Attorney General were thus merely carrying out their legitimate duties in enforcing integration, the law of the land.

2.3 “Civil Rights and Civil Riots” – Conservative Civil Rights Strategies

“The civil rights movement of the Fifties has become the civil riots movement of the Sixties.”⁴³⁶
- Jarret Wollstein, 1968

In the end, the legislative process steamrolled YAF and other conservatives’ doubts about the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act. Nevertheless, arguments such as the ones explained above remained a cornerstone of conservative thinking in the civil rights battles of the following decades such as the Equal Rights Amendment, Busing, and Affirmative Action.⁴³⁷

Towards the end of the 1960s, the organization had accepted the reality of the historical oppression of African Americans, but still rejected federal intervention. Any momentum to improve the situation, its spokesmen argued, had to originate not from the state, but from the

⁴³⁴ Resolution Commending Senator Goldwater for his Defense of Human Rights, September 11, 1964. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁴³⁵ Cited according to CRESPINO, Joseph: Strom Thurmond's America, New York, NY 2012, p.137.

⁴³⁶ WOLLSTEIN, Jarret: Civil Rights and Civil Riots, in: The New Guard, April 1968, p.11.

⁴³⁷ See chapter 7.

black community itself. Jarret Wollstein put it in a nutshell: “Legislation cannot make the Negro equal: only the Negro can make himself equal.”⁴³⁸

The government might change laws, YAFers like Wollstein suggested, yet it could not regulate “the relations between an individual and his fellow men,” as a resolution passed at the 1967 national convention and supported by 90% of the YAF chapters read.⁴³⁹ In this view, any legislative attempt to eradicate discrimination was bound to fail, indeed, to exacerbate racial tensions because it would fuel an entitlement mentality among African Americans. The high hopes new legislation created could not measure up to reality, conservatives argued, because it neglected factors particular to the black community that could not be solved by increased welfare or anti-discrimination statutes.⁴⁴⁰ Supposedly frustrated by this cognitive dissonance, some urban African American populations then vented their anger on the white majority.

One *New Guard* article compared the situation of African Americans with those of different immigrant groups, namely Jews, Irishmen, and Italians. These groups had managed to not only achieve economic success “through their own industry and perseverance,” but also to fully integrate themselves into American society. “No amount of bigotry” could account for African Americans failing to do the same.⁴⁴¹ This, of course, is an outlandish claim. Groups (mostly) voluntarily immigrating to the United States were hardly comparable to those imported to America for slave labor. The legal discrimination faced by ‘ethnic’ groups, while undoubtedly oppressive, was dwarfed by the Jim Crow systems of the South and de-facto segregation in the North.

Nevertheless, the author maintained that not prejudice and discrimination were the problem, but rather the gap between (white) American and alleged African American values:

“American society holds productivity as a value—but many poor Negroes are demanding larger handouts. American society values personal initiative and responsibility—most Negroes are demanding that the government see to it that they have jobs and social acceptance.”⁴⁴²

However dubious these claims, after the preceding Long, Hot Summers of 1965 to 1967, they found sympathetic ears. Conservatives drew different conclusions from them. While

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ “YAF and the Issues”, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1968, pp.3–4.

⁴⁴⁰ One document on which YAFers might have based such claims is ‘The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,’ better known by its eponymous author as the ‘Moynihan Report,’ in which Daniel Patrick Moynihan (later US senator from New York) blamed a pathological family structure for the continuing plight of many African Americans. Black fathers got emasculated by not being able to provide for their families, leaving mothers to be the family breadwinners. This “matrifocal” system left children either fatherless, or with the wrong role models and perpetuated a cycle of poverty and crime. See MOYNIHAN, Daniel: *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* [1965], online: <https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/webid-moynihan> [25.06.2020].

⁴⁴¹ WOLLSTEIN, Jarret: *Civil Rights and Civil Riots*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1968, p.12.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

libertarians promoted ‘black capitalism’ as a panacea to African American inequality, traditionalists traced riots back to the Civil Rights Movement.

By intentionally disregarding laws its members claimed to be discriminating, the movement had presumably created an atmosphere of unruliness, ever-so-slightly shrinking the borders of accepted laws. To frame it in Common Law terms, the civil disobedience tactics of leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. had set a precedent for the rioters.⁴⁴³ A *New Guard* editorial written on the occasion of King’s assassination and the ensuing riots claims:

“When the Negroes looted stores in cities across the nation, it was said that this was a poor tribute to Dr. King’s memory. The sad fact, as has been pointed out in articles in this magazine, is that [...] King provided the rationale: that society owes the Negro, that income should be redistributed, and that private property need not be respected, in theory, law, or practice.”⁴⁴⁴

Ostensibly working to achieve legal equality of African Americans, King, in effect, confronted the “authority” of American values and institutions. “Perhaps”, the authors mused, “his motives were sincere, but the results of Dr. King’s years of lawlessness were skepticism and disregard for the law among many Negroes.” The editors concluded their ‘eulogy’ with the cynical observation that “Dr. King rests in peace, unlike the American city.”⁴⁴⁵

Libertarians were interested less in the causes of racial unrest than in potential solutions. African Americans could only achieve full social equality, they predicted, if they reached economic equality first. Their solution was not wealth redistribution but only so-called ‘black capitalism.’ The task at hand, as Chicago School economist and future Nobel Prize laureate George Stigler summed up in *The New Guard*, was to “make the Negro discontented with himself, not with the white man.”⁴⁴⁶ David Walter, later chairman of the Libertarian Party, concurred: “The Negro is in a second class position because he deserves to be in a second class position. The racial barriers are not insurmountable; the legal barriers no longer exist.”⁴⁴⁷ As African Americans prevented their own advancement by a lack of educational and entrepreneurial aspirations,⁴⁴⁸ the state could not simply “use its bayonets to make the Negro a true first class citizen.”⁴⁴⁹

Black-owned businesses should serve as role models for the community, not the “Great White Father in Washington” who would handout “some pittance” in exchange for domestic tranquility. Conservatives needed to convince African American leaders to renounce their anti-

⁴⁴³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.10–11.

⁴⁴⁴ “Martin Luther King Jr., RIP”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1968, p.4.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ STIGLER, George: *The Problem of the Negro*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1965, p.11.

⁴⁴⁷ WALTER, David: *Freedom Isn’t Free*, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, October 1966, p.9. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. STIGLER, George: *The Problem of the Negro*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1965, pp.11–12.

⁴⁴⁹ WALTER, David: *Freedom Isn’t Free*, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, October 1966, p.9. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

capitalist critiques and instead to urge their followers to see that capitalism was their only reliable way out of misery. “Education, industry, perseverance are more important than marches and riots. Teach the Negro this and he will have not only the rights but opportunities that whites have *earned*.”⁴⁵⁰

The strong focus on empowerment through individual initiative was consistent with capitalist logic but it was also employed to promote a credible alternative to the (collectivist) Black Power philosophy espoused by the Black Panthers and other groups.⁴⁵¹ “True” black power, libertarians argued, could only be achieved individually.⁴⁵² Expressing hope based on the Panther’s rejection of liberal welfare programs, YAFer Howard Callaway argued that if Black Power movements could shed their collectivist outlook, a “Black Burgoise [sic]” was possible.⁴⁵³

While the YAF national board urged local chapters to encourage local businesses to hire more African Americans as a first positive step towards emancipation,⁴⁵⁴ and the YAF national convention of 1969 passed two resolutions stressing the importance of the independent sector for achieving equality,⁴⁵⁵ not much seems to have come out of this rhetoric. A report on New York YAF mentions planned “tutorial teams” that would teach ghetto children the virtues of capitalism, but it is unclear whether they were ever established.⁴⁵⁶

2.4 Racism and Paternalism

Although YAF consistently opposed the civil rights movement in its different facets, the arguments they used were ostensibly ‘color-blind.’ Nevertheless, the organization had to confront racism throughout the 1960s, be it to shield itself from charges of racism by opponents or in dealing with racist members. Furthermore, when YAFers spoke about topics outside the American context, they betrayed patterns of racist and paternalist thinking.

The basic argument YAF presented to their critics is that conservatism and racism were, by definition, mutually exclusive. Because racism stressed traits collectively shared by members of certain races, it ran contrary to the conservative, American value of individualism.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵¹ WEEMS, Robert; RANDOLPH, Lewis: The National Response to Richard M. Nixon’s Black Capitalism Initiative. The Success of Domestic Detente, in: *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 32/1 (2001), pp.66–83, here p.81.

⁴⁵² Cf. THOMAS, Bob: True Black Power, in: *Mother!*, Undated (1969), pp.1–4. Michael Sanera Papers.

⁴⁵³ CALLAWAY, Howard: The Possibilities of a Black Burgoise, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, June 1968, pp.6–7.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 21–22, 1968. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 2.

⁴⁵⁵ Resolution on Race Relations, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers; Resolution on the Role of the Independent Sector, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

⁴⁵⁶ HORTON, Kenneth: Report on YAF, November 3, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF – Attorney General’s report on.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. FEDER, Donald: America, the Racist?, in: *Counterpoint*, Summer 1970, p.1. YAF Records, Box 71, Folder 3.

Conservatives also claimed to be naturally sympathetic to minority rights, because they supported “the rights of the smallest of minorities, the individual.”⁴⁵⁸ Thus, a resolution proposed to the board of directors condemning American society as racist did not receive a second, although it was discussed.⁴⁵⁹ One *New Guard* article went so far as to explain racism in the South as “more-or-less justifiable bitterness” stemming from the “barbaric policy” of Reconstruction.⁴⁶⁰

Despite this definitional exercise, the situation in practice allowed for many shades of gray, and some conservatives—no true Scotsman arguments notwithstanding—were not only racist, but also affiliated with YAF. The most prominent example is Strom Thurmond, former governor and perennial senator from South Carolina.⁴⁶¹ Thurmond had been presidential candidate of the Dixiecrats (officially States’ Rights Democratic Party), a 1948 break-off from the national Democratic Party, and one of the co-authors of the *Southern Manifesto*.⁴⁶² He was also an early member of YAF’s national advisory board. That hardly means that YAF embraced Thurmond’s segregationist views, although they did honor him at their 1962 rally for his “contributions to the Nation and its government through a promotion of the basic traditions and principles of the Republic” and praised his position as “an adamant ‘States’ Righter.”⁴⁶³ In the early Sixties, the implication of the epithet was understood to include a defense of white supremacy. Thurmond spoke about communism, as the context of the award rally dictated.⁴⁶⁴ As shown above, however, anti-communism and opposition to the civil rights movement were firmly intertwined.⁴⁶⁵

Thurmond remained a YAF favorite and vice versa for the years to come. One of the first actions the senator took after having switched from the Democratic to the Republican Party during the Goldwater campaign in 1964 was to reclaim his seat on the advisory board, which he previously had had to relinquish for party reasons. The close relation is also attested by anecdotal evidence: Lee Edwards was the ghostwriter for Thurmond’s *The Faith We Have not Kept*.⁴⁶⁶ And in 1968, when such a thing was totally unrealistic, 20 percent of the Westmoreland YAF chapter in

⁴⁵⁸ WALTER, David: On Racism, in: Commentary on Liberty, October 1965, p.3. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, April 20-21, 1968. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3.

⁴⁶⁰ MURPHEY, Dwight: A View of “Racism in America”, in: The New Guard, March 1970, pp.16–17.

⁴⁶¹ For a new, extensive biography see CRESPIANO, Strom Thurmond’s America.

⁴⁶² While acknowledging the role played by Thurmond, DAY stresses that the Southern Manifesto was as much a collaborative effort of the Southern congressional delegation and their intellectual and political environment as it was the work of single authors, where he sees Georgia Senator Richard Russell as most responsible for the final wording of the document. Cf. DAY, The Southern Manifesto, pp.63–83.

⁴⁶³ Introduction to THURMOND, Strom: To be Fair, Factual and Unrelenting, in: The New Guard, March 1962, p.9.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. SCHNEIDER, Cadres for Conservatism, p.52.

⁴⁶⁵ See above. For Thurmond’s conflation of communism and opposition to civil rights specifically, see CARTER, The Politics of Rage, p.328.

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. CRESPIANO, Strom Thurmond’s America, pp.197–199.

Latrobe, Pennsylvania (51 members) claimed the South Carolinian senator as their favorite for the presidency.⁴⁶⁷ In return for their loyal support, Thurmond repeatedly defended YAF against attacks in the senate.⁴⁶⁸

The case of Thurmond implies that YAF did not shy away from cooperating with racists if they had adapted their rhetoric to something more akin to the group's own arguments. Less amicable were the relations to the standard bearer of old-style racial populism, Governor George Wallace of Alabama.⁴⁶⁹ The Democrat had spearheaded the resistance against integration of his states' schools and universities. This had made him an icon of Massive Resistance and federal defiance, which was precisely the variety of (racial) conservatism YAF, as a 'responsible' organization, rejected. At the same time, Wallace had a stronghold in the Deep South, enabling him to run for the presidency four times (although he would only run outside the primaries in 1968) with some strong showings in the primaries of Northern industrial states. Open hostility towards Wallace, then, perhaps was unwise for a conservative youth group.

In a first attempt to reconcile Wallace with YAF's brand of conservatism, a *New Guard* editorial framed the governor's position in the context of constitutional arguments against civil right legislation. He remained a "symbol of defiance of Federal law." In his 1964 primary run for the Democratic nomination, however, he presented himself to Northern voters as "a champion of another political cause – that of rebellion to growing intrusion by the Federal government into private lives and local communities. Wallace's campaign was *not* geared to segregation vs. integration, but to state and individual rights vs. the 'central government.'"⁴⁷⁰ While the editors rejected his "adamant and unreasonable" position towards school integration, they could get behind his crusade against statism. Perhaps they hoped that this balancing act would please both Wallace supporters and opponents.

The former, however, were outraged and bombarded the magazine with letters to the editor.⁴⁷¹ Invoking interposition and the compact theory, they claimed that the Governor had not broken the law whilst trying to preserve segregated schools. They did not differentiate between the "unreasonable" position scorned by the editors and his appearances in the North. Although few editorials ever provoked such a response, it is likely that Wallace supporters were only a vocal minority. A poll of roughly 3000 YAF members, in which only 128 (or 4.2% of all respondents)

⁴⁶⁷ "Around and About", in: *The New Guard*, March 1967, p.24.

⁴⁶⁸ E.g. in the question of trade with communist nations, cf. "Trading with the Enemy: A Statement of Policy", in: *The New Guard*, August 1965, p.5. See also chapter 3.

⁴⁶⁹ For Wallace see CARTER, *The Politics of Rage*.

⁴⁷⁰ "The Wallace Vote", in: *The New Guard*, May 1964, p.5 Emphasis original.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. CARNAHAN, Patrick: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, June 1964, p.18; MURPHY, Larry: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, July 1964, p.22; SKELTON, R. B.: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, July 1964, p.22; SHAW, Diana: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, August 1964, p.2.

preferred Wallace in the 1968 presidential race, substantiates this.⁴⁷² With Nixon having won the presidency and being a disappointment to conservatives, Wallace, over time, gained a considerable boost. In 1969, 6% of YAF members stated that they identified with the Alabamian.⁴⁷³ A 1972 poll of the local and national leadership found that while only (a substantial) 9% favored Wallace as their first choice, a whopping 44% would “vote for Wallace as a Third Party candidate” with Nixon as the Republican nominee.⁴⁷⁴

This stood in sharp contrast to official YAF policy which (maybe in reaction to the *New Guard* responses) had grown hostile towards the governor (at least until the mid-Seventies).⁴⁷⁵ “Wallace’s folksiness and studied vulgarity” only appealed to rural voters in the Deep South’s Black Belt, the pages of *The New Guard* read. “Every time three Alabamians die, George Wallace loses two votes, and every time three citizens come of voting age, [his] opposition gains two votes.”⁴⁷⁶ With the growing influence of metropolises and their suburbs, Wallace’s “Old South” would inevitably give way to a “New South.”

While the earlier article cited above downplayed the Alabamian’s segregationist legacy, phrases such as “Old South” only served to reinforce the popular image of the race-baiter, thus making Wallace less appealing to the readership. *New Guard* authors also began pointing out that he, rather than being a genuine ally, was the “Pied Piper of pseudo-conservatism.”⁴⁷⁷ He had, for years, supported the welfare state and advocated enlarging federal programs as long as they benefitted Alabama.⁴⁷⁸ Much more congenial to his racism, they argue, Wallace, after all, was a collectivist.⁴⁷⁹

The national YAF leadership, to which continued Wallace support among the membership was an “embarrassment,” and who allegedly referred to him as a “‘populist demagogue’ who exacerbates racial prejudice for personal gain,”⁴⁸⁰ refused to allow advertisements for a pro-Wallace youth group in *The New Guard*. This led to the break-off of some Wallace supporters, who founded a competing group, the National Youth Alliance (NYA).⁴⁸¹ Randal Teague later

⁴⁷² Confidential and Incomplete Survey Questionnaire, June 14, 1968. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3.

⁴⁷³ THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, p.166.

⁴⁷⁴ YAF Leadership Poll, Undated, June 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5.

⁴⁷⁵ See chapter 8.

⁴⁷⁶ SCHUETTINGER, Robert: Wallace and Grenier: The Old South and the New South, in: *The New Guard*, September 1966, pp.24–25.

⁴⁷⁷ MACKAY, Alan: Prospects for '68, in: *The New Guard*, January 1968, p.6.

⁴⁷⁸ “The Not-So-Conservative Wallace”, in: *The New Guard*, June 1972, p.2.

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. DOCKSAI, Ronald: A Conservative’s Guide to George Corley Wallace, 1968. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Sep-Dec.

⁴⁸⁰ “YAF: A Philosophical and Political Profile”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1970, p.22.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. KLATCH, A Generation Divided, p.78, fn.7.

interpreted this event as a ‘reading out’ of the “Wallacites,”⁴⁸² although the stable levels of support cited above paint a somewhat different picture.

YAF denounced the new organization and vice versa.⁴⁸³ Doing so, the national leadership argued, was no threat to “‘conservative unity’, because racists are, by *definition*, not conservatives.”⁴⁸⁴ As Dennis McMahon, leader of the YAF defectors recalled, the NYA quickly was subverted by extreme right-wing activist Willis Carto and his Liberty Lobby.⁴⁸⁵ By 1970, William Luther Pierce III, formerly of the National Socialist White People’s Party, was its leader. This might have drawn some of the original defectors back into YAF.

The Wallace/NYA episode shows that YAF leaders had no problem excluding members who might damage the organization’s reputation and had little to contribute to its success. Throughout the group’s history, the board would occasionally expel people for charges of racism, for example an association known as “Black Druids” from New York.⁴⁸⁶ However, as the minutes from the very same board meeting attest, if the persons still held value to the organization and YAF could plausibly dispute charges of racism, it would retain and protect its members.

At the meeting, the board discussed the happenings around the so-called ‘Rat Fink Scandal’ in the New Jersey Young Republican National Federation (YRNF). The Rat Finks were the conservative wing of the NJ-YRNF and had adopted their name from a slur by their liberal opponents, who in turn called themselves the ‘Exterminators.’ The YRNF had been a conservative stronghold during the Goldwater nomination process and was a thorn in the side of the party hierarchy that after the debacle of 1964 wanted to promote party unity and moderation.⁴⁸⁷ Following the YR national convention in 1965, members of the Rat Finks were accused of having sung a tune that liberal Republicans regarded as anti-Semitic.⁴⁸⁸

YAF got involved because Rat Fink leader and NJ-YRNF chairman Richard Plechner also was a member of the YAF board of directors and because several Rat Finks were leading NJ-YAF members. In a passage later struck out of the minutes, it was suggested that the organization “make use of contacts and coordinate efforts of conservatives so that the YR’s [sic] won’t be

⁴⁸² Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, November 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Minutes of meetings, 1970.

⁴⁸³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.167; *The Shreveport Movement*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October 1968. YAF Records, Box 58, Folder 5.

⁴⁸⁴ “Racist Groups Exploit Campus Unrest”, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1969, p.3 Emphasis original.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. Dennis McMahon to The New Guard Editor, July 14, 1969. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, July 30, 1966. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 2.

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. BRENNAN, *Turning Right in the Sixties*, p.113.

⁴⁸⁸ The lyrics to the song were (to the tune of Jingle Bells): “Riding through the Reich/in a Mercedes Benz/shooting all the kikes,/saving all my friends./Rat tat-tat-tat-tat,/mow the bastard’s down!/Oh, what fun it is to have/the Nazis back in town.” Apparently, this was supposed to poke fun at the image liberal Republicans were painting of conservatives, cf. Special Report: Rat Finks and Rat-Baiters, in: *The New Guard*, September 1966, p.15.

taken over” by moderate elements.⁴⁸⁹ As the Rat Finks were vital in this process, *The New Guard* printed a lengthy rebuttal of the charges made against them.⁴⁹⁰ The authors framed the accusations as a liberal ploy and pointed out that it could never be conclusively proven that the song had actually been sung by the Rat Finks—although the veracity of a Rat Fink songbook containing numerous, albeit not anti-Semitic, such tunes was not disputed.⁴⁹¹ The episode shows that YAF generally handled accusations of racism according to political expediency.

Another article by then Southern regional director Randal Teague, who later became executive director of the organization, also shows that racist or paternalist attitudes were not necessarily an impediment to a YAF career. Therein, he defended the regime of South African prime minister Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, one of the architects of the system of racial apartheid. South Africa, he argued, was an important cornerstone in the Cold War battle for Africa, and, as the only anti-Communist bastion left in an increasingly post-colonial world had to be shielded from unjust criticism.

Teague claimed that white South Africans and Americans shared “Western European derived cultural and spiritual origin with associated values.” He implicitly expected the country’s blacks to assimilate to this leading culture. That it was the “white man,” who had civilized and developed America and South Africa, was “a mere statement of history.”⁴⁹² However, the starting position in South Africa was decidedly unequal:

“Negroes in South Africa are still rooted in the soil and most are only one generation removed from the barbarism of the bush; whereas, the American Negro has been in close contact with the white man and his culture for a century and a half and has, in varying degrees, assimilated his culture and his values into his way of life.”⁴⁹³

According to Teague, contact with “the white man” had led to a higher degree of civilization among American blacks. In this prototypically paternalistic argument, the ‘white man’s burden’ was to lead blacks step by step into civilization. Teague argued that a system of racial separation would perform this task better than immediate integration: “Only an egalitarian radical, acting without knowledge of the customs and culture of the black man, would demand that the black culture be *suddenly* brought directly into line with the white one.”⁴⁹⁴ This can also be read as a historical legitimization for segregation in the American South.

Teague considered three possibilities for the future of the apartheid system. The first was its abolition and consequent integration. This, however, would lead to instability during a time

⁴⁸⁹ Draft of the Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, July 30, 1966. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 8.

⁴⁹⁰ Special Report: Rat Finks and Rat-Baiters, in: *The New Guard*, September 1966.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. KABASERVICE, *Rule and Ruin*, pp.161–165.

⁴⁹² TEAGUE, Randal: In Defense of South Africa, in: *The New Guard*, January 1965, p.8

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

where peace and prosperity were paramount. Quite possibly, the YAFer was alluding to the racial unrest occurring in the United States in the wake of Massive Resistance towards integration. The second option was to “allow the black culture to prevail, thus, returning to customs and a culture close to paganism,” which would probably lead to a government unfriendly to the West. This likely was a jab at black nationalists like Malcolm X. The third, and sensible approach would be to “allow the white man to continue his present rule while gradually mingling the two races⁴⁹⁵ to ensure future progress through cooperative efforts with the black man gradually assuming greater economic and political participation in the government and society.”⁴⁹⁶

While the article ostensibly reported mainly about South Africa, by reading between the lines, readers could draw numerous conclusions about race relations in the United States. This ambiguity might have been intentional: although *The New Guard*, and, by extension, YAF, avoided to take a position unequivocally pro (legal) segregation, which might have turned off some moderate conservatives, segregationists could feel their views vindicated by the article. Such a strategy would have enabled YAF to preserve its responsible image while still securing the support of activists outside of those boundaries. If that, indeed, was YAF's intention, the clashes between Wallace supporters and opponents enumerated above demonstrate its limited success.

2.5 YAF's Civil Rights Activism

Perhaps the question whether YAF as an organization pursued a racist policy or tolerated racists in their own ranks is of secondary importance. For example, Nancy MACLEAN declines calling Goldwater, who shared most positions with YAF, a segregationist.⁴⁹⁷ However, that alone does not tell us anything about the consequences of his or YAF's actions. Whenever the group did take a stand, it was, regardless of changing circumstances and justifications, opposed to the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, although national YAF did not take part in the Massive Resistance of other civil rights opponents.

Hints to any activities related to civil rights are few and far between. YAF chapters sometimes took part in debates about the topic.⁴⁹⁸ At the University of Virginia, in 1961 a YAF chapter

⁴⁹⁵ It is unclear whether Teague means integration in the American sense or biological mixing. In my opinion, the former is more likely.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. Another *The New Guard* article arrives at the same conclusion, cf. BOCKLET, Richard: Rhodesia and South Africa Prosper, in: *The New Guard*, November 1968, p.7.

⁴⁹⁷ MACLEAN, Nancy: Neo-Confederacy versus the New Deal. *The Regional Utopia of the Modern American Right*, in: LASSITER, Matthew; CRESPIANO, Joseph (Edd.): *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford et al. 2010, pp.308–329, here p.319 See also PERLSTEIN, *Before the Storm*, p.363, who reports that the senator was shaken the day of his vote against the 1964 Civil Rights Act, but believed the Constitution mandated it.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. “YAF Around the Nation”, in: *The New Guard*, July 1964, p.23.

picketed businesses that had, after initial resistance, agreed to integrate.⁴⁹⁹ Furthermore, Bob Rackleff, formerly a speechwriter for Jimmy Carter, recalled in the late Eighties:

“In the early 1960s I was a rarity, a Nixon-supporting Republican on a southern college campus. That was in Tallahassee, where I helped found Florida State University's first Young Republicans Club. I soon watched in despair, however, as a contingent of students from the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) drifted into our club. They outvoted me and a few others and passed resolutions supporting massive southern resistance, which included violence and police repression, and opposing school desegregation and civil-rights legislation.”⁵⁰⁰

On the other hand, California YAF led a counterdemonstration against a Ku-Klux-Klan rally.⁵⁰¹ Michael Thompson also recalls having to find the “biggest guy he knew” to get rid of Klan members and other racist groups at a mid-1960 YAF convention.⁵⁰²

It is likely that both the pro-Massive Resistance actions and demonstrations in favor of civil rights were singular events. The organization explicitly criticized civil disobedience and mob violence, which were rejected by the majority of the American people north of the Mason-Dixon line and by a growing number of the Southern population.⁵⁰³ Possibly, YAF members rejected violent resistance as a hindrance to their cause. Not least, YAF accused their leftist opponents on campus of employing violence and coercion in the pursuit of their goals.⁵⁰⁴ Condoning it in other places would have undermined YAF's credibility as the voice of moderation.

Some YAFers later expressed regrets for their organization's rejection of the civil rights movement.⁵⁰⁵ However, supporting African Americans' demands was never a realistic option for the movement. Not only were members convinced these demands conflicted with the constitution and the Sharon Statement, it also would have been political suicide for the group in the South.

While the popular American self-image has vindicated the Civil Rights Movement (an ongoing legacy of racial discrimination notwithstanding), exemplified by this conservative regret, the legacy of another topic that similarly polarized the nation in the Sixties, the Vietnam War, is still subject of heavy disagreement.

⁴⁹⁹ MACLEAN, *Democracy in Chains*, pp.93–94, with fn. 26.

⁵⁰⁰ RACKLEFF, Robert: *GOP's Southern Strategy Led to David Duke*, in: *St. Petersburg Times*, March 1, 1989. YAF Records, Box 60, Folder 5.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. “YAF Around the Nation”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1966, p.38 The organizers cited as motivation the argument explained above that racism was merely a form of collectivism.

⁵⁰² Michael THOMPSON. Interview by Georg WOLFF, Alexandria, VA 08.10.2018.

⁵⁰³ BERG, Manfred: *Popular Justice. A History of Lynching in America*, Chicago, IL 2011, pp.178–181.

⁵⁰⁴ See chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁵ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.78.

3. Why not Victory? YAF and the Vietnam War

“[T]he forces of international Communism are, at present, the greatest single threat to [our] liberties.”⁵⁰⁶

- The Sharon Statement, 1960

Tom WELLS famously characterized the domestic dispute about the Vietnam War as a conflict between “ordinary citizens, armed mainly with only their bodies and minds” and “America’s top government officials, commanders of the most powerful military machine on the face of the earth.”⁵⁰⁷ This narrative made a powerful impact on the legacy of ‘America’s Longest War’,⁵⁰⁸ but

obscures several important facets of the debate.

Firstly, neither the American public nor the governing elites were monolithic entities. While anti-war movements drew significant grassroots support, most of the populace supported American involvement for a large part of the war. Only during later years would a majority favor the timely withdrawal of American troops.⁵⁰⁹ In the same vein, governing elites were divided on the Vietnam question. It is true that members of the Johnson administration supported the war for various reasons (Under Secretary of State George Ball being a notable exception).⁵¹⁰ They did not, however, present a united front with Washington elites. The classical bipolar metaphor of congressional pacifist Doves and warmongering Hawks belies a spectrum of opinion (even most Doves generally supported the anti-communist foreign policy consensus), yet it clearly shows that top-level politicians were by no means unified on the question of Vietnam.

Secondly, while WELLS explains pro-war demonstrations with government encouragement,⁵¹¹ quite to the contrary, those movements often expressed dissatisfaction with administration policy. Indeed, Frank NINKOVICH argues that Johnson painfully avoided shoring up public support for the war in fear of triggering a wave of blind patriotism or anti-communist

⁵⁰⁶ The Sharon Statement (1960).

⁵⁰⁷ WELLS, Tom: *The War Within. America's Battle over Vietnam*, Berkeley, CA et al. 1994, p.1.

⁵⁰⁸ Expression taken from HERRING, George: *America’s Longest War. The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975*, New York, NY 1979.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. LUNCH, William; SPERLICH, Peter: *American Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam*, in: *The Western Political Quarterly* Vol. 32/1 (1979), pp.21–44, here pp.25–28. In July 1967, the portion of poll respondents who thought that going into Vietnam had *not* been a mistake fell below 50% for the first time. This need not mean, however, that those respondents did not support the Vietnam War. Indeed, when asked about Vietnam *policy* in May/November 1967 respectively, only 6/10% of respondents favored withdrawal, while 47/55% demanded escalation of the war. Only toward the end of 1970, when withdrawal had already begun, did a majority favor that option.

⁵¹⁰ Even Ball believed in the policy of containment but rejected its application to Vietnam. See DiLEO, David: *George Ball, Vietnam, and the Rethinking of Containment*, Chapel Hill, NC 1991.

⁵¹¹ Cf. WELLS, *The War Within*, pp.56–57.

hysteria.⁵¹² Whereas some parts of the populace may have supported the war *and* administration policy (partly as a knee-jerk reaction to New Left criticism),⁵¹³ conservatives embedded the Vietnam War into a grand geopolitical strategy and developed policies which were often at odds with government actions.

As debates about the war fanned the flames of already heated domestic disputes, they transformed the conservative movement.⁵¹⁴ YAF was at the center of these developments: a youth organization with a large portion of college members, YAF experienced direct challenges to the war earlier than other conservative groups.⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, the young age of many of its members probably contributed to YAF's anti-draft stance, which united them in goal, if not reasoning,⁵¹⁶ with organizations on the New Left.

For most YAFers, Vietnam had not been the central Cold War battleground in the early 1960s. Of greater importance loomed the divided Berlin, Cuba and so-called 'Red China.'⁵¹⁷ Generally, YAF's efforts during these years focused on organization-building and domestic politics. Opposition to communist regimes was a matter of principle and sparked few national activities.

Its first major plunge into foreign policy realm came with the secession of Katanga, a former province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁵¹⁸ The Congo, as one of the largest African countries with important and rich natural resource deposits, would, in the eyes of conservatives, serve as an example for other decolonizing nations to follow. YAF and the conservative movement considered Katangan leader Moïse Tshombé a solid anti-communist, in contrast to his centralist opponent in Leopoldville, Patrice Lumumba. In turn, they vehemently supported the independence of Katanga.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹² Cf. NINKOVICH, Frank: *Modernity and Power. A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*, Chicago, IL 1994, p.308.

⁵¹³ SCANLON, Sandra: *The Pro-War Movement. Domestic Support for the Vietnam War and the Making of Modern American Conservatism (Culture, Politics, and the Cold War)*, Amherst, MA 2013, p.5.

⁵¹⁴ OFFENBACH, Seth: *The Other Side of Vietnam. The Conservative Movement and the Vietnam War*, Stony Brook University, NY 2010 (unp. Diss.), p.6.

⁵¹⁵ SCANLON, *The Pro-War Movement*, p.243.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. ANDREW, *Pro War and Anti-Draft*, pp.8–9.

⁵¹⁷ The first *New Guard*, March 1961, featured demonstrators carrying signs reading "Cuba – Si! Castro – No!" and "Remember Hungary." For signed articles in *The New Guard*, see also THOMPSON, Kenneth: *The Berlin Lesson*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1961, pp.5; CHAMBERLIN, William Henry: *America's Stake in a Free Berlin*, in: *The New Guard*, August 1961, pp.7–8; EDWARDS, Lee: *Where the Iron Curtain Begins*, in: *The New Guard*, October 1961, pp.2; THOMPSON, Kenneth: *Fidel's Punch and Judy Show*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1961, pp.4; RYSKIND, Allan: *The Red China Lobby*, in: *The New Guard*, July 1961, pp.8–9. With the exception of Berlin, articles nominally concerned with foreign policy often focused on supporters of communist regimes within the US.

⁵¹⁸ See chapter 1. For an overview of YAF's stance in the Katanga question, cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.72–74.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. BAUMAN, Carol: *U.N. Blackmail in the Congo*, in: *The New Guard*, October 1961, pp.11–12.

The province, they maintained, had the right to secede because the Congo was not, as its supporters argued, a unified nation, but rather an artificial construct devised by outsiders “paying little heed to ethnological, economic and geographic considerations.”⁵²⁰ According to *New Guard* contributor (and future Representative) Fred Eckert, “[t]he people of the Congo come from varied backgrounds, are divided into over two hundred tribes, some of them still at war with one another, and speak over four hundred dialects.” Most importantly, “[t]he borders of the former Belgian Congo are by no means sacrosanct; they do not enclose one nation indivisible.”⁵²¹ And while the Congo depended on the resource deposits in Katanga, this did not grant the central government claims on its territory. The United Nations, Eckert advised, should not support the Lubumba regime out of an ill-conceived ‘Robin Hood’ notion.

Indeed, since Katanga would have no reason to attack the Congo, U.N. intervention on behalf of the latter would be like trying to “prevent civil war by attacking the potential victim at the request of the potential aggressor.”⁵²² To Eckert, it seemed more likely that powerful economic interests were at stake: some of the central decision-makers behind the intervention were connected to the copper industry. Should Katanga be eliminated as a large producer, he suggested, they stood to benefit personally.⁵²³

In 1962, Tshombé had been prevented from accepting a YAF award at the YAF rally at Madison Square Garden. In January 1963, about 75 members demonstrated for the independence of Katanga in front of the National Gallery of Art, where top government officials, including the president and his wife, had gathered to celebrate the beginning of the *Mona Lisa* exhibition.⁵²⁴ Despite the eventual defeat and subsequent re-integration of the province, YAF continued to back Tshombé and the idea of an independent Katanga. U.N. intervention, they argued, had not secured stability but rather exacerbated tensions within the Congo.⁵²⁵ When Tshombé reentered the country after a brief period of exile to become the head of a coalition government, YAF heralded his return as “a milestone marking the resurgence of freedom under law, and the return of Western cooperation in Africa.”⁵²⁶

The Katanga episode showed that YAF was willing to actively back foreign regimes of questionable democratic legitimacy even against official US government policy, provided they

⁵²⁰ ECKERT, Fred: More U.N. ‘Peacekeeping’ in Katanga?, in: *The New Guard*, September 1962, p.9.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Cf. What's Really Behind Our Congo Policy, in: *The New Guard*, October 1962, pp.3–4 Ironically, the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, a Belgian mining company, was one of the driving forces behind secession.

⁵²⁴ RUSSELL, Gary: *Mona Lisa Picketed as ‘A Generation Awakes’* (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, February 1963, p.14.

⁵²⁵ Cf. ECKERT, Fred: Making the World Safe for Hypocrisy, in: *The New Guard*, March 1963, pp.11–12.

⁵²⁶ Tshombe is Back, in: *The New Guard*, August 1964, pp.5, p.5.

appeared sufficiently anti-communist. This is a thread that runs through the organization’s history and can be seen in the defense of the governments of South Africa and Rhodesia well into the 80s, Pinochet’s Chile in the 70s,⁵²⁷ but most importantly during heightened American engagement in Vietnam from the mid-60s onwards. Although YAF members did not shy away from criticizing regimes they assessed as insufficiently supportive of individual liberty, they often argued that the alternative—communism or socialism in their various forms—would be much worse. Support of these regimes therefore was of critical importance in the Cold War.

3.1 Justifying Vietnam – “The Berlin of Asia”

“South Vietnam [...] The Berlin of Asia; The battle we must win lest we lose all of Asia.”⁵²⁸

- Robert Harley, 1962

The Vietnam War gained larger prominence within YAF circles in the wake of the Goldwater campaign. By 1964, the United States had gradually involved itself in the Vietnam War(s). At first, it had (halfheartedly) supported the French in the desperate attempt to preserve their colonial empire in Indochina. Subsequently, it provided financial and military backing to the South Vietnamese government, which had been established after the 1954 Geneva Conference that ended the First Indochina War. Although by 1964, a five-digit number of American military personnel (euphemized as ‘advisers’) was fighting alongside the South Vietnamese regime against insurgents of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the American public remained largely ignorant or indifferent of the conflict.⁵²⁹

Goldwater’s opponent Lyndon B. Johnson intended to keep the Vietnam War out of public sight. Intensifying the American commitment before Election Day would have diverted attention from Johnson’s Great Society program, which lay at the heart of his imagined presidency. Goldwater, however, saw Vietnam as one of the crucial issues of the time. Accepting his nomination in San Francisco’s Cow Palace, he evoked still fresh memories of the country’s last Asian venture:

“Yesterday it was Korea. Tonight it is Vietnam. Make no bones of this. Don’t try to sweep this under the rug. We are at war in Vietnam. And yet the President, who is Commander-in-Chief of our forces, refuses to say—refuses to say, mind you, whether or not the objective over there is victory. And his Secretary of Defense continues to mislead and misinform the American people, and enough of it has gone by.”⁵³⁰

⁵²⁷ On Rhodesia and South Africa, see for example TEAGUE, Randal: In Defense of South Africa, in: *The New Guard*, January 1965; Resolution on South Africa, Undated (1977). YAF Records, Box 11, Folder 3; YAF Press Release, October 14, 1986. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 4. On Chile, see YAF Platform 1978-1979. YAF Records, Box 11, Folder 3.

⁵²⁸ HARLEY, Robert: South Viet Nam: Asian Battleground, in: *The New Guard*, January 1962, p.12.

⁵²⁹ Cf. LUNCH/SPELICH, American Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam, pp.21–22.

⁵³⁰ Goldwater’s Acceptance Speech [1964], online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/may98/goldwaterspeech.htm> [16.01.2020].

Goldwater insisted that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was only legitimate so long as policymakers ultimately aimed for victory. Korea, he and his supporters argued, had turned into a bloody stalemate that ended (mostly) in a restoration of the status quo ante because American leaders had refused to provide the necessary support of the war. However, the nation should still involve itself in Asia, albeit with a new strategic outlook.

Viewing South Vietnam as an important ‘domino’ in the greater Cold War struggle, Lee Edwards argued that

“a Communist victory there [Vietnam] will immeasurably boost the Reds’ chances throughout Southeast Asia [...] If the Communists win South Viet Nam, Laos will fall, and the rest of Southeast Asia with it, and the Soviets will have a direct route from Berlin to Singapore. Should they succeed in this, the Communists will have little difficulty in taking so-called neutralist Indonesia and India.”⁵³¹

The Domino Theory was also propagated by administration circles.⁵³² However, whereas for liberal cold warriors the Vietnam War was, in a sense, “never really ‘about’ Vietnam”,⁵³³ but rather a symbolic commitment aimed at Western Europe, YAFers assigned a greater importance to Asia itself. Where the Johnson administration saw Vietnam as the defense of Berlin *in* Asia,⁵³⁴ Robert Harley argued in the pages of *The New Guard* that it was indeed “[t]he Berlin of Asia; The battle we *must* win lest we lose all of Asia. [...] For the *Asian* people, South Viet Nam is the test.”⁵³⁵ Much as the United States had demonstrated its commitment to its German, and, by proxy, Western European allies during the Berlin Blockade of 1948/49, it needed to stand firm behind its friends in Vietnam. Anything less would signal to Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China, and other American allies in Asia that the U.S. was not willing to assume the concomitant responsibilities of its leadership role.

While such considerations also factored into liberal calculations,⁵³⁶ Asia had loomed much larger in conservatives’ geopolitical thinking since World War II. In its immediate aftermath, conservatives had struggled to reinvent their foreign policy outlook. Non-interventionism, a traditional mainstay of the Old Right, embodied by Ohioan Senator and ‘Mr. Republican’ Robert Taft, had not spared the United States from war and had proven ineffective at deterring foreign aggression. However, the liberal internationalism of Presidents FDR and Truman had been no satisfactory alternative for conservatives, who feared that membership in the United Nations would curtail American sovereignty and entangle the U.S. in conflicts all over the world where no immediate national interests were at stake.

⁵³¹ EDWARDS, Lee: It's Now or Never, in: *The New Guard*, April 1962, pp.4–5.

⁵³² NINKOVICH, *Modernity and Power*, pp.271–272.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, p.302.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.293.

⁵³⁵ HARLEY, Robert: South Viet Nam: Asian Battleground, in: *The New Guard*, January 1962, pp.14–15. Emphasis added.

⁵³⁶ NINKOVICH, *Modernity and Power*, p.292.

Further complicating matters had been the lingering foreign policy consensus, a relic of World War II, which had made it difficult for members of the opposition to stray from Truman’s policies without appearing extremist. The civil war in China had provided a way out of this quandary: contrary to its commitments in Western Europe, the Democratic administration had not been willing to carry its support of the Nationalist Chiang regime to extremes. Conservatives had seized upon this allegedly lackadaisical stance. In their minds, the United States owed China for the failed appeasement of Japan prior to its invasion in 1937. Instead, at Yalta, by allowing the Soviet Union to occupy Manchuria, which the Soviets would turn over to the Communists toward the end of the war,⁵³⁷ it had effectively sold out Chiang. Thus, the US, specifically the Democrats, were responsible for the ‘Loss of China’ to communism.

Unconditional support for the Republic of China and Chiang Kai-Shek remained a cornerstone of conservative foreign policy well into the Seventies.⁵³⁸ This had become apparent in the Korean War, during which conservatives had lamented the reluctance of Truman to go all out for victory, which included venturing beyond the Yalu River and into Chinese territory as favored by General MacArthur. They had also lamented that Truman carefully avoided accepting volunteers from the Republic of China. If only Chiang would be ‘unleashed,’ they had mused, defeating North Korea and her Chinese ally was only a matter of time. Truman’s position prevailed, and the Korean War had turned into a bloody stalemate after the People’s Republic of China had intervened. Conservatives had learned their lesson: should the US intervene in another Asian conflict, it would have to be ‘in it to win it.’

Not all conservatives, however, were convinced that Vietnam was the right war to fight. Members of the John Birch Society argued that it was Roosevelt’s support for anticolonialism and complicity with Stalin that had led to the quagmire in the first place. The U.S. should not now fight a battle to solve a problem it had brought upon itself.⁵³⁹ For example, in 1958 the society’s Vietnam ‘expert’ Hilaire duBerrier had attacked the deeply corrupt Diem regime in a piece for the JBS’s journal *American Opinion*,⁵⁴⁰ while its leader Robert Welch had questioned whether Vietnam was an important Cold War battleground after all.⁵⁴¹

For most conservatives in the Goldwater campaign however, it was, and victory therefore crucial. Their victory-at-all-costs stance played into Johnson’s hand in 1964. So long as Vietnam appeared to be only a minor engagement in a far-away Asian country, he could easily label conservative demands for escalation ‘outlandish’ and ‘extremist’.

⁵³⁷ MAO, *Asia First*, pp.26–27.

⁵³⁸ See *Ibid.*, Chapters 2 to 5.

⁵³⁹ MULLOY, *The World of the John Birch Society*, pp.160–161.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. DUBERRIER, Hilaire: About South Vietnam, in: *American Opinion*, February 1958, pp.7–12.

⁵⁴¹ SCANLON, *The Pro-War Movement*, pp.55–56.

For example, Goldwater stated in an interview that one possibility for ebbing the flow of supplies from North Vietnam into the South was using low-yield atomic weapons to defoliate the forests along the Ho Chi Minh trail, a logistic network running from North Vietnam through the jungles of Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam.⁵⁴² This earned him the reputation of being a trigger-happy warmonger. Johnson stoked the fires:

“For 19 peril-filled years no nation has loosed the atom against another. To do so now is a political decision of the highest order. And it would lead U.S. down an uncertain path of blows and counterblows whose outcome none may know. No President of the United States can divest himself of the responsibility for such a decision.

Any man who shares control of such enormous power must remember that ‘He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.’”⁵⁴³

Scoffers turned Goldwater’s slogan “In your heart, you know he’s right” into ‘In your heart, you know he might’ and, more pointedly, into “In your guts, you know he’s nuts.”⁵⁴⁴ Most infamous was the so-called ‘Daisy Ad’ that depicted a girl counting daisy flower petals. When she reached 9, her voice was replaced by a male voice, imitating a nuclear countdown. After a nuclear explosion, Johnson’s calm voice reminded the viewer that “[t]hese are the stakes [...]”⁵⁴⁵ in the upcoming election.

Vietnam was not the only issue on which Goldwater was attacked for radicalism, but his extremist foreign policy image contributed to his landslide defeat. If anything, however, YAF, who had enthusiastically supported Goldwater and gained countless new members that would shape the path of the organization until the Seventies, grew more convinced that the freedom of the West needed to be defended in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

3.2 “Should Freedom Take the Offensive?” – YAF and the Johnson Administration

“[A] war and revolution half way around the world in a small Southeast Asian country called Vietnam symbolizes, indeed, manifestly magnifies for the West, its failure, or rather the failure of contemporary American Liberalism, to deal with the pervasive and intransigent forces of international communism.”⁵⁴⁶

- Mark Stewart, 1964

YAF had already adopted a resolution concerning Vietnam at its national convention in 1963. The resolution was largely concerned with the American involvement in Diem’s assassination. Taking a distinctively Wilsonian outlook, the convention participants claimed that democracy

⁵⁴² Cf. G.O.P. Nominee’s Views, in His Own Words, on Major Issues of Campaign, in: The New York Times, July 18, 1964, p.6.

⁵⁴³ Remarks in Cadillac Square, Detroit, September 7, 1964: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963–1964, pp.1049–1052, here p.1051. The quote is from Proverbs 16,32. For the differing approaches of Johnson and Goldwater, see also TANNENWALD, Nina: Nuclear Weapons and the Vietnam War, in: Journal of Strategic Studies Vol. 29/4 (2006), pp.675–722.

⁵⁴⁴ PERLSTEIN, Before the Storm, p.444.

⁵⁴⁵ Daisy Ad [1964], online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commercial-LBJ1964Election_AdDaisyGirl.ogv [05.09.2018].

⁵⁴⁶ STEWART, Mark: That War in Vietnam, in: The New Guard, January 1964, p.7.

had been a “sacred principle in [U.S.] foreign policy dealings” which had been betrayed by the involvement in the overthrow of the “democratically elect Viet Nameese government.” An especially grave offense, since, according to the YAF members, the administration at the same time courted “communist satellites” such as Poland and Yugoslavia, and had failed to overthrow the communist Cuban government.⁵⁴⁷

But the resolution also took note of the larger role of South Vietnam, which was heralded as a cornerstone in the fight against international communism. The authors demanded continued efforts to repel the “communist-led [...] Vietcong”⁵⁴⁸ and that the administration follow a policy of victory in its war effort. Although YAF thus voiced its support of the Republic of Vietnam, it took no significant steps to make this support known. The first major actions followed only in 1965. A milestone on YAF’s path towards a more active role in the discussion about the war was the election of Tom Charles Huston to the post of national chairman at the national convention of 1965.⁵⁴⁹

Born into a family of Democrats, the Hoosier native transformed into a conservative after reading Goldwater’s *Conscience of a Conservative*.⁵⁵⁰ During his time at Indiana University, Huston founded the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists’ Conservative League and joined Young Americans for Freedom, serving as CL president and YAF chapter chairman alongside notables such as Phil Crane, future Congressman from Illinois, Emmett Tyrrell, founder of the *American Spectator*, and Robert F. Turner, who would become White House council during the Reagan administration and YAF’s leading Vietnam expert in the late Sixties/early Seventies.⁵⁵¹ Additionally he was elected to the student senate, later becoming majority leader and president pro tempore.⁵⁵² Huston expanded the membership of the local YAF chapter, where he put a special emphasis on anticommunist activities. The reason for his zeal might well have been personal: one of his uncles was killed by communist Chinese during the civil war.⁵⁵³ After becoming a director and Midwestern regional chairman for YAF in 1962,⁵⁵⁴ he campaigned

⁵⁴⁷ Resolution on Viet Nam, November 8-10, 1963. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.. In a recent article about Hanoi’s diplomatic strategy during the war, ASSELIN demonstrates that such characterizations were somewhat justified. Contrary to leftist narratives (and the accounts of scholars who followed in their traditions), the NLF leadership was tightly controlled by the communists in Hanoi and had very limited leeway in directing its own policy. He therefore argues that it should be seen as a communist front. ASSELIN, Pierre: *Forgotten Front: The NLF in Hanoi’s Diplomatic Struggle, 1965–67*, in: *Diplomatic History* Vol. 45/2 (2021), pp.330–355, here pp.334–338.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.97.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. SAUNDERS, Christopher: *How We Got Here. The Education of Tom Charles Huston* [2019], online: <https://the-avocado.org/2019/06/08/how-we-got-here-the-education-of-tom-charles-huston/> [13.02.2020].

⁵⁵¹ Cf. LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, p.157.

⁵⁵² Cf. “Hoosier Conservative”, in: *The New Guard*, July 1963, p.15.

⁵⁵³ LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, p.160.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. “Hoosier Conservative”, in: *The New Guard*, July 1963, p.15.

heavily for Goldwater in 1964. His national activities centered around YAF’s STOP-NSA campaign, as his contributions to *The New Guard* demonstrate.⁵⁵⁵

At the same session that they elected Huston, the YAF delegates also passed a resolution on Vietnam. They affirmed a moral duty of the United States to aid its Southeast Asian ally. In contrast to the 1963 resolution, they tried to downplay the authoritarian character of the South Vietnamese regime by emphasizing the lack of alternatives. While they acknowledged that it “failed to measure up to the full standards of freedom to which we in this country have become accustomed,” they were nevertheless convinced that it would, given the time, more likely spawn “truly liberal institutions than would a communist regime.”⁵⁵⁶ The resolution also presented a strategic framework with which YAF confronted the administration in the coming years. Under the headline that “the war must be won on the ground,” YAFers demanded a manpower increase for the ground troops, air raids against missile sites in North Vietnam, naval and aerial bombardments and blockades of industrial centers, and a strong stance towards the People’s Republic of China.⁵⁵⁷

Although YAF and the Kennedy/Johnson administrations ostensibly had the same goal in Vietnam, namely an independent, non-communist South, such demands for escalation ran contrary to their policy of gradualism. The presidents were reluctant to target the North directly, as that might have invited retaliation from the Republic of China. Drawing their own lessons from Korea, they hoped to avoid another large-scale war by only gradually increasing American presence according to the current needs of the military. Conservatives interpreted the strategy differently: since North Vietnamese military officers could be sure to never be confronted with a vastly superior force, they mused, they could take the time to acquire better equipment and subject recruits to comprehensive training while only having to resist some punitive expeditions. Thus, with gradualism, the U.S. government would “den[y] our own military the strength and decisiveness the circumstances [...] required.”⁵⁵⁸

One *New Guard* editorial thus denounced gradualism as “spineless, lackadaisical.”⁵⁵⁹ For Edwards, its author, the apparent indecisiveness of Johnson and Kennedy summoned the specter of another Korea. Administration policy, another contributor lamented, did not permit strikes

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. HUSTON, Tom: Revolt Ahead in NSA?, in: *The New Guard*, August 1962, 9, 12; HUSTON, Tom: The Rise and Fall of NSA, Part 1, in: *The New Guard*, April 1964, pp.9–11; HUSTON, Tom: Student Leaders Form New Alliance, in: *The New Guard*, June 1964, pp.10–12; HUSTON, Tom: You, Too, Can Stop NSA!, in: *The New Guard*, September 1964, pp.11–12; HUSTON, Tom: Can’t NSA Tell the Truth?, in: *The New Guard*, September 1965, pp.19–20.

⁵⁵⁶ Resolution on South Viet Nam, August 1965. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ “Gradualism: Fuel of Wars”, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1968, p.18.

⁵⁵⁹ EDWARDS, Lee: It’s Now or Never, in: *The New Guard*, April 1962, p.4.

against NLF sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia, the “‘Yalus’ of the rebels.”⁵⁶⁰ YAFers attributed the lack of success in Vietnam to the failure of liberalism, which, they claimed, pretended to be able to gradually wither every domestic and international problem away. But, according to *The New Guard* contributor Mark Stewart, “an 8 a.m.-to-8 p.m., five-day-a-week U.S. offensive will not bring freedom to the Vietnamese people. It can only prolong what appears now to be an eventual communist victory in South Vietnam.”⁵⁶¹ The administration, he elaborated, had the illusion that technological and financial support or even negotiations could bring the war to a satisfying end.⁵⁶² “Events have shown that this is not and can never be a feasible solution to [...] Vietnam. This nation must first commit itself to total victory,”⁵⁶³ Stewart retorted. Therefore, the US should make use of the entirety of its arsenal, including the mining of the border of South Vietnam with Cambodia to cut off NLF supply routes. Even then, Stewart cautioned, the war would not be won in “weeks or months”: uprooting a guerilla force was a task much more intricate than defeating an enemy army in the traditional sense.

For this reason, YAF advocated the use of guerilla forces by the US army and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). The central role of guerilla warfare for the war, they claimed, had thus far been neglected by their conservative peers.⁵⁶⁴ They maintained that guerrilla warfare was “a two-edged sword which can be used either by the Communists or against them”.⁵⁶⁵ Additionally, it would conserve American resources: everything that was required were instructors for local guerilla troops (they could perhaps even be trained on U.S. soil) and support in the form of combat materiel and logistics. Contrary to U.S. troops, YAFers suggested, which were held back from entering the North for diplomatic reasons, Vietnamese guerillas could infiltrate the North. Once they were there, *New Guard* correspondent Anthony Quinn projected, they would enjoy popular support both in the cities and the countryside, fueled by the weak political system in the North, that supposedly thrived only on corruption and oppression.⁵⁶⁶ In any case, the American strategy had to account for “the oldest weapon of all, the infantryman,”⁵⁶⁷ who would have to learn to detect enemy guerilla and counter their tactics.

⁵⁶⁰ RYSKIND, Allan: That Fog in Foggy Bottom, in: *The New Guard*, January 1962, p.15 The Yalu is a river running along the border of North Korea and mainland China, across which The Korean People’s Army was supported by the PRC. The U.S. government declined to attack supply depots on the Chinese side, although General MacArthur pressed for such a strike.

⁵⁶¹ STEWART, Mark: That War in Vietnam, in: *The New Guard*, January 1964, p.7.

⁵⁶² Cf. ANDREW, Pro War and Anti-Draft, p.5.

⁵⁶³ STEWART, Mark: That War in Vietnam, in: *The New Guard*, January 1964, p.7.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. QUINN, Anthony: Plea for a Conservative Foreign Policy, in: *The New Guard*, April 1964, p.7 SCHNEIDER, Cadres for Conservatism, p.96 These demands anticipated the Reagan Doctrine of the 80s, in the formulation of which some YAF alumni participated.

⁵⁶⁵ DERHAM, Richard: Should Freedom Take the Offensive?, in: *The New Guard*, September 1964, p.14.

⁵⁶⁶ QUINN, Anthony: Thou Shalt Not Cross the 17th, in: *The New Guard*, June 1964, p.9.

⁵⁶⁷ DERHAM, Richard: Should Freedom Take the Offensive?, in: *The New Guard*, September 1964, p.13.

Discussions over the intricacies of jungle warfare, however, appeared moot to many YAFers, since Johnson seemed to lack a strategical concept into which suggestions like the training of (counter-)guerilla could be included. For example, when Johnson ordered the bombardment of the North after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, conservatives reacted favorably. Nevertheless, they cautioned, that it was “just [...] a response—an incident, not a program or a new policy; a tactical reaction, not a new winning strategy.”⁵⁶⁸ The measures taken by the purportedly fickle commander-in-chief Johnson seemed arbitrary. One commentator even went so far as to ask:

“Who can guess what LBJ will do next? Will it depend on what he has for breakfast? It is senseless to ask what is our policy, for the only apparent aspect of the situation is that we have no policy.”⁵⁶⁹

While such attacks on Johnson were commonplace, when the president took decisions in favor of YAF’s strategic vision, they did not hesitate to commend him.⁵⁷⁰ Thus, Johnson’s speech of April 7th, 1965, was heralded as a “masterful stroke of foreign policy.”⁵⁷¹ Therein, Johnson had characterized the war as an attack by the North, warned the audience against the threat of Communist China, confirmed that the goal in Vietnam was an independent South and the US was willing to use the full extent of its power for that purpose.⁵⁷² The passage that would have animated YAF members the most is the following:

“Let no one think for a moment that retreat from Viet-Nam would bring an end to conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next. We must say in southeast Asia—as we did in Europe—in the words of the Bible: ‘Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.’ [...] We will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement.”⁵⁷³

Of course, Johnson also promised to secure peace by negotiation and to send foreign aid to Vietnam to facilitate rebuilding the nation after the war.⁵⁷⁴ However, YAF seemed willing to overlook such concessions to anti-war forces or ‘doves’, if it only meant that the effort itself was shaped in conservatives’ image.⁵⁷⁵ Which, according to *The New Guard* editors, it was: “Since the President’s speech [...] our day-to-day actions have demonstrated our intention of winning the war.”⁵⁷⁶ It should be noted, however, that Johnson carefully avoided any mention

⁵⁶⁸ LAMBRO, Donald: Why America Can't Stand Four More Years of Johnson, in: *The New Guard*, September 1964, p.16 Actually, Johnson had sent the ships into the gulf with the intent to provoke an attack that would, in turn, legitimize the American response, cf. ELY, John: *War and Responsibility. Constitutional Lessons of Vietnam and its Aftermath*, Princeton, NJ 1995, pp.19–20.

⁵⁶⁹ “Does Anyone Know What's Happening in Vietnam?”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1965, p.4.

⁵⁷⁰ ANDREW, Pro War and Anti-Draft, p.16.

⁵⁷¹ “Vietnam: The President’s Speech”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1965, p.4.

⁵⁷² Cf. Address at Johns Hopkins University: “Peace Without Conquest.” April 7, 1965: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965*, Washington, D.C. 1966, pp.394–399, here pp.394–396.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.395–396 The quote is from Job 38: 11.

⁵⁷⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.396–398.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. “Vietnam: The President’s Speech”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1965, p.4; OFFENBACH, *The Other Side of Vietnam*, pp.38–39; YURAVLIVKER, Dror: ‘Peace without Conquest’: Lyndon Johnson’s Speech of April 7, 1965, in: *Presidential Studies Quarterly* Vol. 36/3 (2006), pp.457–481, here p.474 The latter argues that the president’s speech was successful especially because he managed to appeal to both war supporters and enemies.

⁵⁷⁶ “Vietnam: The Action”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1965, p.4.

of ‘victory’ in Vietnam, and also announced that U.S. power would only be employed prudently. In this light, the enthusiasm of the editors seems a bit excessive.

No wonder, then, that only a month later the complaints started rolling in again.⁵⁷⁷ Apparently, the editors lamented, the administration still struggled to draw the right conclusions from the Korean War. Johnson had criticized the flow of goods from the North to the South in his speech, they recalled, yet the sanctuaries of communist guerillas remained untouched since the president prevented the Army from entering neighboring countries to destroy them.⁵⁷⁸ American lives were wasted, they argued, because the administration aimed at negotiations with, not the overthrow of Ho.⁵⁷⁹ In their view, accepting the communist regime of the North as rightful negotiating partner such talks would only serve to cement the enemy regime in power.⁵⁸⁰

Facing this malaise, YAFers saw but two options: either redirect all American efforts towards victory or withdraw. Johnson, they claimed, had explored a middle ground between the two options but had failed spectacularly. In 1968, after several years of gradualism, victory seemed almost impossible.⁵⁸¹ While 90% of YAF members still supported a policy of victory in Vietnam, only 2% expressed support for the administration’s current policy. In absence of a radical turnaround in strategy, 50.9% of the respondents of a YAF survey advocated withdrawal instead of continuation of the war.⁵⁸²

3.3 The International Youth Crusade for Freedom

A few months after his election to the post of chairman, Tom Huston’s first major Vietnam project, the “International Youth Crusade for Freedom in Vietnam”, was well underway. In what shaped up to be “the biggest YAF project ever,”⁵⁸³ the organization would sponsor pro-war rallies in several major American cities.⁵⁸⁴ At the same time, anti-communist organizations in Asia would also organize such events. Huston himself would travel abroad and address audiences in Southeast Asia, including a rally in Vietnam on Christmas Eve.⁵⁸⁵ With this coordinated event, YAF wanted to express “overwhelming moral backing for those of our

⁵⁷⁷ Cf. “Around and About”, in: *The New Guard*, June 1965, pp.3–4.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. “No More Koreas!”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1966, p.4; FRANK, Stephen: *Thoughts of a Citizen-Soldier*, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1968, p.20.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. OFFENBACH, *The Other Side of Vietnam*, p.46.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. “No More Koreas!”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1966, p.4.

⁵⁸¹ KESLER, Bruce: *Vietnam: What Went Wrong?*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1968, p.19.

⁵⁸² “What YAF Members Think”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1968, p.3.

⁵⁸³ YAF National Office to All YAF Leaders and Members of YAF Advisory Board, December 17, 1965. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 3, p.1.

⁵⁸⁴ Those cities were New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Houston, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and Cleveland.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2.

generation who are carrying the torch of freedom for all of us”.⁵⁸⁶ The project also set out to wipe clean the “stain on the national conscience” that actions of anti-war activists (“a small minority of American youth who are actively aiding and abetting the enemy”) had caused.⁵⁸⁷ Lee Edwards, by then public relations consultant for YAF, provides a detailed account of the rallies taking place on January 8th, 1966 in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Not shying away from grand gestures, the local chapters coordinated the events so that a Torch of Freedom could be lit at the Statue of Liberty in New York, and, in the fashion of the Olympics, would be carried from there to the Independence Hall in Philadelphia (of course, the long distance between the cities and the narrow timeframe mandated that the runner be supported by a motor vehicle for most of the way). From there, it would travel to the Constitution Hall in Washington.⁵⁸⁸ By having the mother of a fallen American officer carrying out the lighting,⁵⁸⁹ YAF underlined the relation they saw between the sacrifices of American lives in Indochina and the preservation of freedom at home. Despite the freezing temperatures in the Northeast, about 150 activists turned out for the ceremony at the Statue of Liberty, and Edwards claims more than 2,500 attendants at Constitution Hall.⁵⁹⁰ By enlisting local celebrities and politicians (for example, in St. Louis, MO, the speakers included *A Choice, Not an Echo* author Phyllis Schlafly, decorated WWII veteran and outspoken Vietnam supporter Major General Thomas A. Lane, and actor James Drury;⁵⁹¹ in New York, Dianna Lynn Batts, Miss USA World 1965, and later announcer for the show *The Price is Right*, participated⁵⁹²) as speakers or participants for the rallies across the country, the organizers could not only ensure a better audience turnout, but also broad press coverage, which supported their original goal of demonstrating that there were indeed young people out there in support of the war. This first Youth Crusade for Freedom project not only succeeded in its domestic goals. Huston’s travels to Asia also laid the groundwork for the transformation of the ‘International Youth Crusade for Freedom in Vietnam’. Huston cited the response to the January project as “tremendously encouraging” and observed that “there was a tremendous desire on the part of existing anti-Communist youth groups to work in a coordinated international program”.⁵⁹³ He was convinced that a truly international anti-communist organization was now within reach and

⁵⁸⁶ Young Americans for Freedom to YAF National Advisory Board, November 19, 1965, p.2. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 3.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. EDWARDS, *Just Right*, pp.138–139.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.140–141.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.141.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.97.

⁵⁹² Cf. “Freedom Rally To Light Torch”, in: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 5, 1966 Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 219, Folder 7.

⁵⁹³ WYCF Report & Prospectus, Undated (1966), p.2. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 255, Folder 3.

founded the ‘World Youth Crusade for Freedom’ (WYCF).⁵⁹⁴ Despite its internationalist pretensions, the organization was dominated by Americans. The American Secretariat took care of the fundraising, and the initial (“pilot”) run of the only major proposed project, the “International Freedom Corps”, would only feature US participants.⁵⁹⁵

In this program, ten young Americans (not all, but most of them ‘for Freedom’) were sent to various Asian countries to

“inform young people [...] of American policy as it affects the anti-Communist struggle and [...] let them know that the ‘peacenik’ apparatus represents only a small minority of American youth[;] [...] to learn as much as possible about the local scene with particular reference to Communist infiltration [...] and the extent and effectiveness of anti-Communist activity.”⁵⁹⁶

They met with local leaders and got a first-hand insight into regional activities and challenges. YAF saw this as an opportunity to counter similar activities of leftist organizations, who had for a long time sent activists to socialist countries such as Cuba and North Vietnam, and, to some degree, the Peace Corps, whose volunteers they suspected of harboring and spreading anti-American sentiments abroad.⁵⁹⁷ The Asian participants of the WYCF provided local schedules and meeting opportunities with anti-communist leaders.⁵⁹⁸ The competitive application process for the volunteers included a week-long seminar at Yale, where the selection of participants was finalized.

In the end, nine participants were selected. Kim Combs and James Elkjer, who spoke Mandarin, would spend their time in Taiwan and Hong Kong. David Keene and Richard Wright of the University of Wisconsin’s conservative journal *Insight and Outlook* would be sent to Vietnam. Robert van Leeuwen, son of a Singapore businessman, would travel to Singapore and Indonesia. Furthermore, one participant each would visit Australia, India, the Philippines, and Japan (the latter changed largely to Taiwan after WYCF could not raise enough money to sustain a prolonged presence in Japan).⁵⁹⁹

In a report submitted after approximately half of their stay, the activists experienced some problems irrespective of their target country. Firstly, they found that they could not take the lead in organizing anti-communist groups as to not appear as “agents of U.S. imperialism.”⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.3–4; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.98, notes that the organization had already been established by the fall of 1965, which, however, is the founding date of the International Youth Crusade for Freedom in Vietnam, cf. Tom Huston to Senior American Advisory Council of WYCF et al., November 18, 1966, p.1. Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 37, Folder N. It is debatable whether the WYCF, although formally a different organization, was a genuinely new force.

⁵⁹⁵ WYCF Report & Prospectus, Undated (1966), pp.5–8. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 255, Folder 3.

⁵⁹⁶ Tom Huston to All Freedom Corps Fellows, June 20, 1966, p.1. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 2.

⁵⁹⁷ WYCF Report & Prospectus, Undated (1966), p.9. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 255, Folder 3.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.98–99.

⁵⁹⁹ “Nine Young Volunteers Chosen to Represent Freedom Corps in Asia”, in: WYCF Report, July 1966, p.2. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 2.

⁶⁰⁰ Interim Report on the Activities of the International Freedom Corps Volunteers, July 29, 1966, p.4. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 2.

However, most seemed optimistic that they had found suitable local leadership to take up the mantle. Secondly, while most volunteers observed strong anti-communist sentiments among youths, they often found them to be indifferent to either communist philosophy or concrete action. This especially concerned the volunteers in Vietnam. They found

“a complete awareness of the Communist threat but [...] an ignorance to Communist philosophy and strategy. All were dedicated to the anti-Communist struggle, but not all were prepared to take an active part. [...] Many use every means possible to stay out of the armed services of their country.”⁶⁰¹

However, once Keene and Wright left Saigon, they found a different picture. “People fear it [Communism] and are prepared to fight to the death against it. This is true not only of the farmers but of the Vietnamese soldiers as well.”⁶⁰²

Thirdly, when the participants met other young Americans during their trips, they were invariably hostile to their cause. In Taiwan, one Peace Corps volunteer denounced YAF’s anti-communist arguments as “Fascist trash.”⁶⁰³ At a house party in Manila, “several Americans were present who were more outspokenly [sic] anti-American than their Filipino hosts.” Yet Huston saw the silver lining: “Obviously, it is a new experience for the professional ‘peaceniks’ to find themselves challenged in these Asian countries by articulate, patriotic young Americans”.⁶⁰⁴

These problems as well as the low number of participants led Kyle BURKE to characterize the Freedom Corps project as an “expensive charade.”⁶⁰⁵ He bases this claim on statements by Marvin Liebman, original fundraiser of the group, who quickly got frustrated with WYCF and considered the project fruitless. Indeed, the expectations raised by the pilot run could not be met by the WYCF. Huston remarked that the project had “fulfilled our expectations”,⁶⁰⁶ yet he questioned the self-sustainability of the Asian anti-communist youth projects the volunteers had initiated. According to Huston, they “look[ed] to the United States for leadership and for [...] financial support.” Furthermore, the recommendations of the Freedom Corps participants for future projects “required far more extensive financing than the WYCF had in hand or in prospect.”⁶⁰⁷ Although the Freedom Corps was not scrapped (it had another run in 1967 and the WYCF sponsored additional overseas tours in the future⁶⁰⁸), Huston advocated a “realistic” program overseas. With the backing of the Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League, WYCF

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., p.5.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., p.1.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., p.4.

⁶⁰⁵ BURKE, *Revolutionaries for the Right*, p.42.

⁶⁰⁶ Tom Huston to Senior American Advisory Council of WYCF et al., November 18, 1966, p.3. Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 37, Folder N.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., p.4.

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. “The 1970 WYCF China Tour” (Advertisement), in: *The New Guard*, April 1970, p.27; “1972 WYCF Summer Asian Tour” (Advertisement), in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1972, p.33.

should establish an Asian secretariat. The 1967 Freedom Corps should be expanded in size, and, in addition to the American volunteers during summer, feature five Chinese students touring American campuses in spring.⁶⁰⁹

For now, the American section of the WYCF would concentrate on the threat of Red China (one of the concerns the participants had carved out as shared by youths in all the countries visited)⁶¹⁰ by establishing the 'Student Committee for a Free China'. Freedom Corps participant David Keene became chairman of the new group. Participation in the WYCF project and this subsequent appointment kindled his life-long career in conservatism, which led him not only to the YAF chairmanship,⁶¹¹ but also to more than two decades at the top of the American Conservative Union, one term as chair of the National Rifle Association, and top advisory posts in several Republican bids for the presidency.⁶¹²

In the eyes of leading YAFers, the Freedom Corps was vindicated by the opportunities it presented for the organization as a whole. After returning to the United States, the participants published their accounts not only in the WYCF newsletter,⁶¹³ but also in a special issue of *Insight and Outlook*, one of the most influential conservative student publications, in which they related their experience with (anti-)communist youth in their respective host countries. For example, James Elkjer claimed that through the trip to Hong Kong "I have been able to appreciate the complex psychology of the Chinese people as it applies to their daily life and new situations even if I have not always been able to completely understand it."⁶¹⁴ Publicizing the specialized knowledge the activists had acquired enabled them to claim expertise in their respective domains. YAF subsequently employed them as speakers for debates about Vietnam and/or communism. According to Huston, by the end of 1966, the nine participants had given a combined 450 speeches, not including debate participations. Planning to expand on this success, Huston suggested that future applicants should among other qualifications be chosen according to their "oratorical ability."⁶¹⁵

The work of the WYCF did not only reach YAF and other conservative circles. In October 1966, former Vice-President Richard Nixon commended the WYCF for the Freedom Corps. He especially praised the way in which the program gave "young men first-hand knowledge of

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. Tom Huston to Senior American Advisory Council of WYCF et al., November 18, 1966, p.5. Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 37, Folder N.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. SCFC Press Release, October 13, 1966. Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 108, Folder 609.

⁶¹¹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.99.

⁶¹² See Biography of David A. Keene [Undated], online: <https://davidakeene.com/content/biography> [10.05.2021].

⁶¹³ WYCF Report, November 1966. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 255, Folder 3.

⁶¹⁴ ELKJEN, James: Port of Hope, in: *Insight and Outlook*, December-January 1966-1967, p.17. Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 36 (No Folder) Surname is "Elkjen" in the original.

⁶¹⁵ WYCF Report & Prospectus, Undated (1966), p.9. Walter H. Judd Papers, Box 255, Folder 3.

the dangers that Communist China represents.”⁶¹⁶ By emphasizing this threat from China, whose “ultimate objective remains the defeat of the United States,” the exchange stood in stark contrast to the years of the Nixon administration, when YAF attacked Nixon for his allegedly lackadaisical stance towards the PRC.

3.4 Building Bridges or One-Way Streets? The Problem of East-West Trade

“The struggle between freedom and Communism is total, not by our choice, but by the nature of our adversary, and encompasses all means of competition, including military, political, and economic. [...] The administration has adopted a policy described as “building bridges to the East,” which are in reality one-way avenues carrying benefit to the Communist nations with no benefit to the Free World.”⁶¹⁷

YAF Resolution, 1965 (Emphasis added)

While the Freedom Corps enabled a handful of YAFers to study the Vietnam War and its effects on Asia *in situ*, most members were concerned with what they could do at home in support of the American effort.⁶¹⁸ Some activities were designed to directly support the troops abroad or the South Vietnamese populace: for example, when it became known that soap was lacking in Vietnam, leading to deficient hygiene and the spread of infectious diseases, some chapters initiated ‘Operation Wash Up’ and collected soap donations.⁶¹⁹ One single chapter amassed the impressive amount of over 10,000 pounds of soap.⁶²⁰ Similar actions include the collection of clothing, shoes, and blankets for Vietnamese refugees and war orphans in Manhattan,⁶²¹ and a “Bleed-In” by Indiana University YAF, which managed to gather 1,276 units of blood for soldiers abroad.⁶²² At several times, YAF engaged in letter writing campaigns to GIs in Vietnam meant to bolster morale among the troops by demonstrating support at home.⁶²³

While such genuinely supportive efforts were publicized by YAF and used for fundraising,⁶²⁴ the more important contribution of the group was to counter efforts of other U.S. actors that would have purportedly strengthened the enemy. This could already be observed in the motivation for establishing the Freedom Corps above, but the two most salient issues in this

⁶¹⁶ Richard Nixon to Tom Huston, October 21, 1966. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 2.

⁶¹⁷ “Young Americans for Freedom and East-West Trade: A Compilation of YAF Policies and Positions on Trade with Communists”, Undated (late 60s/early 70s), p.1. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁶¹⁸ Parts of this section have appeared in a contribution to the HCA Graduate Blog. See WOLFF, Georg: “You Can’t Put a Price Tag on Freedom”. Challenging East-West Trade Policy in the 1960s [2020], online: <https://hccgrads.hypotheses.org/2938> [10.05.2021].

⁶¹⁹ Cf. “YAF Around the Nation”, in: *The New Guard*, November 1965, p.23.

⁶²⁰ Cf. “10,800 Pounds of Soap” (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, March 1966, p.26.

⁶²¹ Cf. “The YAF Scene”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1966, p.27.

⁶²² LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, p.161 After debates with the local SDS chapter, it was agreed that the donors would choose whether their blood would be sent to Vietnam. About 1,000 of the collected units were sent there in the end.

⁶²³ Cf. E.g. “Operation Support” (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, December 1965, p.22.

⁶²⁴ Cf. “Because You Care” (YAF-Flyer), Undated (Early 70s). Hall-Hoag Collection, Box Y-3, Folder Young Americans for Freedom 659.

regard are the ‘Campus Wars’ with the New Left⁶²⁵ and YAF’s campaigns against East-West trade.

As the quote at the start of this section shows, conservatives thought that the conflict with the Eastern Bloc was by no means limited to military altercations. Instead, they considered economic struggles a vital part of the Cold War, which thus also was a *trade war* subject to their hawkish anti-communist thinking. Three thought patterns are important to consider when observing YAF’s responses to East-West trade initiatives: firstly, YAFers had a monolithic view of the Eastern bloc. Neglecting internal tensions within the communist camp, such as the Sino-Soviet split, they claimed that each individual gain of any communist nation would be a gain for the “world communist enterprise.”⁶²⁶

Secondly, they thought that every trade deal that would strengthen a communist economy would help “cementing shaky Communist leaders in power.”⁶²⁷ YAFers chastise the State Department and other actors for believing increased trade would spread Western values among the populace of communist nations. Their error was, the young conservatives argued, that they dealt “with Communist governments as if they were ‘of the people’ ... never extracting confessions from them for their peoples.”⁶²⁸ Since deals didn’t contain specific stipulations as to domestic reforms the partners had to take in return—which would have, for all practical purposes, been unenforceable anyway—and no hopes for liberalization could be placed in the communist trading partners themselves, YAFers deemed it foolish to hope for any positive effect for the ‘suppressed’ population.

Thirdly, and most importantly, in YAF’s anti-communist *Weltanschauung*, competition between East and West was fundamentally a zero-sum game. If trading with the West was beneficial for a communist country, it was therefore necessarily detrimental to American interests.

YAF’s campaigns against ‘Red Trade’ started with small, uncoordinated local protests against the sale of goods imported from Eastern Bloc countries. For example, YAF chapters picketed the car lot of a car dealership selling Škoda automobiles and a department store that had several goods in stock that were produced in various communist countries.⁶²⁹ Such sales of imported

⁶²⁵ See next chapter.

⁶²⁶ “Young Americans for Freedom and East-West Trade: A Compilation of YAF Policies and Positions on Trade with Communists”, Undated (late 60s/early 70s), p.iii. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., p.iv.

⁶²⁹ Cf. DURNIL, Gordon: Communist Cars and Polish Hams, in: The New Guard, December 1961, p.13; RUSSELL, Wayne: Dade County High School YAF Sets Example for the Nation (YAF Roundup), in: The New Guard, March 1963, p.15.

goods were harmful for the domestic industry, as well as American workers *and* Eastern “slave” laborers, YAFer Jack Malone argued.⁶³⁰ Income from the export of merchandise to the US, another activist predicted, would be used to crack down on opposition at home and to “strengthen the very war machine that has promised to destroy us.” It was therefore “suicidal.”⁶³¹

While such activities temporarily excited single chapters, they were by design focused on the single shops where the products were sold. Trade protests only became a national phenomenon when the national organization started criticizing U.S. exports into communist countries, beginning with the Kennedy administration’s wheat deal with the Soviet Union.⁶³² Shipping “vitaly-needed electronic and industrial equipment”⁶³³ to the US’ “potential and proven enemies”⁶³⁴ was, in the eyes of conservatives, even more dangerous than the mere cashflow produced by imports. While the items in question might appear to be outdated and suitable only for civilian use, YAF cautioned against looking at the matter from too much of a Western perspective: firstly, what seemed old technology to the West, might actually be superior to the technology available to the Soviets.⁶³⁵ Secondly, the idea of a ‘private’ or ‘civilian’ sector was totally foreign to countries with a state-directed economy. What was marketed as civilian use might as well be employed militarily. And even if there was no direct military use, YAFers feared that importing the goods would free up industrial capacities that could then be “employed to further military objectives.”⁶³⁶

Unperturbed by such concerns, the State Department had started advancing trade relations with the Eastern Bloc during the ‘Khrushchev Thaw’. Its actors hoped to abuse a period of decaying Soviet prestige within the communist camp in the aftermath of Khrushchev’s anti-Stalinist reforms and the Cuban Missile Crisis. By intensifying trade relations between the US and Soviet satellites, they intended to drive a wedge between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In a May 1964 speech honoring the legacy of George Marshall (of the Marshall Plan), President Lyndon B. Johnson argued that “[t]here is no longer a single Iron Curtain. There are many. Each differs in strength and thickness[.]” The US, Johnson suggested, would continue to “build

⁶³⁰ “Intelligent and Gifted Beyond Previous Generations” (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, April 1963, p.12.

⁶³¹ DURNIL, Gordon: *Communist Cars and Polish Hams*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1961, p.13.

⁶³² Cf. “Bob Bauman Re-Elected National Chairman”, in: *The New Guard*, November/December 1963, p.16; “Boston Young Americans for Freedom Protest ‘Wheat Deal’”, February 15, 1964. Hall-Hoag Collection, Box Y-2, Folder Young Americans for Freedom 310B:155; New Hampshire YAF Press Release, October 4, 1963. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 219, Folder 10; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.101.

⁶³³ BOCKLET, Richard: *Trading with the Enemy: An Indictment*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1963, p.7.

⁶³⁴ “Bob Bauman Re-Elected National Chairman”, in: *The New Guard*, November/December 1963, p.16.

⁶³⁵ BOCKLET, Richard: *East-West Trade: Coup for the East, Danger to the West*, in: *The New Guard*, February 1965, p.14.

⁶³⁶ ID.: *Trading with the Enemy: An Indictment*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1963, p.7.

bridges [...] of increased trade” to further independence aspirations, spread Western values, encourage “legitimate national pride” and “demonstrate that identity of interest and the prospects of progress for Eastern Europe lie in a wider relationship with the West.”⁶³⁷ Romania, where Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had ruled with an iron fist since 1947, was a case in point. In the wake of the Khrushchev Thaw, the dictator looked to increase Romania’s independence from the Soviet Union and enhance the reputation of his own regime by shoring up nationalism. Thus, some old national heroes, hitherto degraded as ‘bourgeois’, were rehabilitated and mandatory Russian classes dropped. A rapid expansion of Romanian heavy industry was meant to inspire national pride. However, Romania was dependent on natural resource imports, among them rubber. One of its top priorities therefore was to acquire synthetic rubber technology that could utilize the vast oil reserves of the country.⁶³⁸

Negotiations between Romanian and US officials resulted in a list of 15 industrial plants that Romania could potentially buy from US companies, including two different synthetic rubber plants. Multiple companies submitted bids for the projects, hoping to develop new markets previously dominated by their (Western) European competitors, but by the end of the year, Firestone remained the only viable alternative.⁶³⁹

It was then that Firestone competitor Goodyear published an article entitled “An Order Goodyear Didn’t Take” in its newsletter *The Wingfoot Clan*, claiming they had rejected a state department offer to build a rubber plant in Romania out of political concerns. The article attacked Firestone for not doing the same. It closed with an emotional appeal: “Even to a dedicated profit-making organization, some things are more important than dollars. Take the best interests of the United States and the Free World, for example. You can’t put a price tag on freedom.”⁶⁴⁰ The story was picked up by conservative newspapers and periodicals, among them *Human Events*, via which it reached David Walter, then treasurer of the Philadelphia County chapter of YAF. While praising Goodyear’s “steadfast refusal” to build the plant, the chapter subsequently picketed the Firestone offices in downtown Philadelphia and spread the news to its parent organization, which turned the protests into a nation-wide campaign.⁶⁴¹ What the activists did not know was that Goodyear had actually submitted a bid for the plant that had been rejected. The company now tried to turn the situation into a marketing advantage.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ Remarks in Lexington at the Dedication of the George C. Marshall Research Library, May 23, 1964: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963–1964, pp.708–710.

⁶³⁸ FLOYD, For Want of Rubber, pp.487–488.

⁶³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.496–501.

⁶⁴⁰ Cited according to *Ibid.*, p.502.

⁶⁴¹ “YAF Chapters Support Goodyear, Picket Firestone” (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, May 1965, p.21.

⁶⁴² Cf. FLOYD, For Want of Rubber, pp.501–506.

YAF's concerns regarding potentially strategic trade were intensified by the escalating Vietnam War. YAFers feared that the synthetic rubber plant in Romania would indirectly, yet tangibly contribute to the enemy's war effort: Romania provided China with heavy-duty trucks that might use tires built with the synthetic rubber in question; China, in turn was the main supplier of North Vietnam and, consequently, the NLF.⁶⁴³ American technology would be used against the boys abroad—this was the scenario YAF had long warned against. The following weeks, local chapter demonstrated the Firestone offices in Brooklyn, Cleveland, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia, among others, thus bringing the matter in the national limelight.⁶⁴⁴ Talks between the activists and the president of Firestone were to no avail.⁶⁴⁵

YAF threatened to protest at the 'Indianapolis 500' race, one of the largest racing, indeed sports events worldwide and the most important advertising opportunity for rubber companies, who attributed the impressive performances of the daredevil racers to the quality of their top-of-the-line tires. YAF planned to not only distribute about 500,000 flyers, but also to rent an airplane carrying a banner reading "The Vietcong Rides on Firestone",⁶⁴⁶ a persiflage of Firestone's marketing slogan, that would circle the track during the race.⁶⁴⁷ Though it remains doubtful whether YAF would have had the financial resources or technical know-how for such an operation, the threat alone was effective enough: Firestone had already lost some loyal customers through YAF's negative campaigning,⁶⁴⁸ and announced to YAF on April 22nd 1965 that they had backed off from their Romanian plans.⁶⁴⁹

State department officials and their congressional supporters were less than enthused about YAF's supposed "coup".⁶⁵⁰ Arkansas Senator William Fulbright in particular denounced the conservatives' (a "minor vigilante group") campaign as "nuisance activities" and decried the allegedly illegitimate interference of private groups into US government policy.⁶⁵¹ Indeed, after the failure of the Firestone deal, the Romanians became increasingly skeptical whether the US was a reliable partner for its economic strategy. By 1966, only one of the originally planned 15 plants had been purchased.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴³ Cf. "YAF Chapters Support Goodyear, Picket Firestone" (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, May 1965, p.21.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.101.

⁶⁴⁵ FLOYD, *For Want of Rubber*, pp.507–508.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.510.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.175.

⁶⁴⁸ FLOYD, *For Want of Rubber*, p.508.

⁶⁴⁹ FLOYD, *For Want of Rubber*, p.67.

⁶⁵⁰ "Firestone Calls Off Deal with Reds" (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, June 1965, p.21.

⁶⁵¹ FULBRIGHT, William: *Public and Private Responsibility in the Conduct of Foreign Relations*, in: *Congressional Record* Vol. 111, No. 135 (July 26, 1965). J. William Fulbright Papers, Series 71, Box 30, Folder 21. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. Cited according to FLOYD, *For Want of Rubber*, p.70.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p.69.

Both SCHNEIDER and FLOYD interpreted the backlash to the ‘Firestone Affair’ as a trigger for subsequent YAF backpedaling on the matter of East-West trade.⁶⁵³ The sorcerer’s apprentice had lost control of his summon, their narrative goes, and now tried to institute safeguards against future abuses. The opposite is true. The backing down of Firestone was the organizations biggest success to this date.⁶⁵⁴ Though press reactions were “mixed,”⁶⁵⁵ they brought national attention on the organization. And in the conservative press, where it really mattered, the response was enthusiastic.⁶⁵⁶ Most importantly, the affair had shown activists across the nation that with enough determination they could score wins even against such seemingly overwhelming foes as a rubber giant.

When YAF’s policy committee formulated official guidelines for “future [...] action on proposed trade deals with communist nations”,⁶⁵⁷ it was therefore not performing damage control but it was trying to capitalize on the success of the Firestone campaign. Indeed, the same statement affirmed that “we must oppose the stand our government has taken and its official designation of what is ‘strategic.’” To be fair, they also announced that they would only agitate against such deals “which plainly give aid and comfort to the Communist enemy by building up their military power”, but the passage above shows that this was decisively not a very narrow definition.⁶⁵⁸ YAF had earlier argued that, in fact, *any* trade was strategic *in principle*, since it freed up economic capabilities that could then be used for military purposes.

The statement of the policy committee was corroborated by the membership at the national conventions of 1965 and 1967⁶⁵⁹ and protests against plans of companies willing to trade with the Eastern Bloc remained a cornerstone of YAF activism.

When in late 1966 William Pickett, vice president of the American Motors Corporation (AMC), announced that he was “going to Russia [...] to sell some cars,”⁶⁶⁰ YAF was fully prepared to replicate its 1965 success. Again, local chapters took the lead, urging the national office to organize a nation-wide effort against the plans.⁶⁶¹ Executive Director Jones drafted an extensive memorandum for the YAF chapters, and on January 7, 1967, the national board approved the

⁶⁵³ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.102; FLOYD, *For Want of Rubber*, pp.74–75.

⁶⁵⁴ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: *The Conservative Movement: R.I.P.?*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1966, p.13.

⁶⁵⁵ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.102.

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. “Big Conservative Win”, in: *Human Events*, Undated (1965), in: “YAF Stops Aid to Reds: Setback for State Dept.”, May 17, 1965. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 3.

⁶⁵⁷ “Trading with the Enemy: A Statement of Policy”, in: *The New Guard*, August 1965, p.5.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁹ Cf. “Young Americans for Freedom and East-West Trade: A Compilation of YAF Policies and Positions on Trade with Communists”, Undated (late 60s/early 70s), pp.1–2. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁶⁶⁰ “Am. Motors Hopes to Sell Cars to Reds”, in: *Chicago Tribune*, November 27, 1966.

⁶⁶¹ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.178.

project.⁶⁶² YAF leaders had sent out a telegram to AMC urging them to clarify their plans, but after the company had, in their eyes, “provided only doubletalk which could easily mean that AMC might indeed deal with the Communists,”⁶⁶³ they saw a large campaign as their only option to make the corporation state their policy plainly. Jones made it clear that YAF could “do the same thing now with American Motors”⁶⁶⁴ that they had done with Firestone in 1965, namely force them to cancel their plans, but he also showed that YAF as an institution had learned from the backlash to their actions in 1965. Activists should absolutely make clear that theirs was purely an informational, not a boycott campaign. They were told to “expect a great deal of pressure from the U.S. State Department, American Motors, and the Liberal press against what [you] are planning to do.”⁶⁶⁵ Every picket should be cleared with the police first, no signs with slogans “in bad taste” should be used, and the legality of every action assured beforehand. YAF also urged politicians to involve themselves in the matter. For example, in a letter to the former AMC head George Romney, Tom Huston urged the governor of Michigan to use his influence to stop a deal that would allegedly strengthen America’s enemies.⁶⁶⁶ Other members called or wrote to their local representatives demanding that they take a stand.

After about a week of picketing, AMC boss William Pickett sent a wire telegram to the YAF national office stating that “at this stage, we have no intention or plans to trade with communist nations.”⁶⁶⁷ The protests had drawn the attention of rubber dealers in Wisconsin, seat of the AMC’s headquarters, as well as the local United Auto Workers chapter, who were both critical of the plans. Owing to Jones’ preparation, this time, YAF experienced no prominent criticism for their actions.⁶⁶⁸ However, it was also the last time for about a decade that the organization would have a major impact in challenging a company’s trade plans.

The longest and most creative activity against East-West trade was the STOP-IBM campaign of 1967/68, protesting sales of data processing systems to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria.⁶⁶⁹ In contrast to Firestone or AMC, IBM dealt mostly with corporate, not individual customers, which necessitated a change of tactics for the protestors. While local pickets still were the backbone of the campaign, they could hardly impact IBM’s business

⁶⁶² Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, January 7, 1967, p.5. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 2.

⁶⁶³ David Jones to National Board of Directors et al., January 11, 1967, p.2. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 5.

⁶⁶⁴ Id. to YAF National Advisory Board et al., January 3, 1967, p.1. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 4.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., p.2.

⁶⁶⁶ “YAF Exposes, Halts Company’s Plans to Trade with the Enemy”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1967, p.5.

⁶⁶⁷ David Jones to YAF National Advisory Board et al., January 19, 1967, p.1. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 5.

⁶⁶⁸ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.179.

⁶⁶⁹ For a detailed description of local activities in conjunction with this campaign see Ibid., pp.179–180.

directly. What they did achieve is to put pressure on the company's corporate customers. Marketing Research pioneer Arthur Nielsen, for example, remarked in a letter to IBM executive Thomas Watson that his office was being "bombarded with literature" critical of IBM's policy and urged the company to reconsider trading with communist countries.⁶⁷⁰

Although such inquiries put IBM under some pressure,⁶⁷¹ the company had one significant advantage in comparison to Firestone or AMC. The State Department repeatedly assured the company and Members of Congress of its continued support in the matter.⁶⁷² This enabled IBM to employ a more 'elastic' defense. After YAF had targeted the IBM SHARE conference on February 26th to March 1st, 1968, amongst other things by distributing so-called 'IBM World Trade Reports' and picketing the event location,⁶⁷³ the company's management was intent on wresting the initiative from the activists. YAF had bought IBM stocks to be able to attend and address the stockholder meeting in April. To prevent a PR disaster, IBM proactively invited executive director Randy Teague and national chairman Alan MacKay to meet with company executives several weeks in advance, where it was agreed that MacKay would be given 10 minutes to address the stockholders.⁶⁷⁴ After the YAF chairman had completed his remarks, IBM countered by emphasizing the non-strategic nature of their trade and the fact that they were following State Department policy. In the end, the stockholders did not favor reverting the company's course.

Arnold Steinberg afterwards called the efficiency with which IBM had handled the protest "truly frightening."⁶⁷⁵ Yet IBM's superior defense strategy was not the only reason for YAF's failure. The whole case rested on shaky grounds. Even MacKay admitted in correspondence to Senator William Proxmire that "[b]ased on information I have recently acquired, it is a fair statement to say that IBM's current sales probably [...] will have no adverse impact on national security[.]"⁶⁷⁶ IBM also was not the only company trading computer equipment with the Eastern

⁶⁷⁰ Arthur Nielsen to Thomas Watson, April 11, 1968, p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan–Aug.

⁶⁷¹ *The New Guard* editor Arnold Steinberg, in his letters to William F. Buckley, refers twice to statements made by IBM communications department member William von Dreele, that IBM's image was "vulnerable," and previous conservative action had been "effective." Arnold Steinberg to William Buckley, Undated (1968). William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan–Aug [referencing two distinct letters with the same attributes].

⁶⁷² Cf. Paul Warnke to Thomas Watson, April 10, 1968. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan–Aug; H. Torbert to William Proxmire, April 16, 1968. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan–Aug For the half-hearted supported of the State Department during the Firestone Affair, see FLOYD, For Want of Rubber.

⁶⁷³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.180.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.106 SCHNEIDER confuses two separate YAF meetings with IBM executives, but his account is substantially correct.

⁶⁷⁵ Cited according to *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁶ Alan MacKay to William Proxmire, April 23, 1968, p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan–Aug.

Bloc, not even the one with the biggest market share. However, according to MacKay it was “the best target company most conducive to our general case on East-West trade.”⁶⁷⁷ YAF wanted to set a precedent for what should be considered unacceptable behavior for a company. But they had bitten off more than they could chew. IBM was the highest-valued American corporation. It simply had more resources to defend itself than previous targets. Furthermore, the lack of direct customer interaction stifled YAF’s grassroots approach, because for individual citizens, it was harder to assess how they could influence the company’s policy. Coupled with a weak case for strategic importance in contrast to rubber or trucks, where a possible military use could easily be established, the effort was bound to fail from the beginning.

The failure of the campaign was not the end of YAF’s East-West trade activities. In 1969, East-West Trade remained one of several key components of the organizations “Freedom Offensive.”⁶⁷⁸ Indeed, the organization would protest IBM again (this time, successfully)⁶⁷⁹ in the mid-Seventies under the slogan “Sell Kissinger, not Computers!”⁶⁸⁰ Before that, there were activities against the Ford Motor Company and Mack Truck in 1970/71 respectively.⁶⁸¹ Although the companies cancelled their plans to build automobile factories in Russia, this was less due to YAF’s activities than because of Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, who was a decided opponent of both undertakings.⁶⁸²

Like many anti-communist imperatives, the rejection of trade with communist nations conflicted with conservative free market rhetoric. Normally, a consensual trade agreement would be seen as beneficial to all partners. Indeed, in the *Sharon Statement*, free markets were hailed as “the single economic system compatible with the requirements of personal freedom and constitutional government.” Any governmental interference like trade restrictions would “ten[d] to reduce the moral and physical strength of the nation.”⁶⁸³ While in the mid-Sixties most conservatives agreed that trade restrictions were a necessary evil in the context of the Cold War, towards the end of the decade, libertarian members grew increasingly wary of such measures that threatened to permanently expand governmental authority.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., p.1.

⁶⁷⁸ Alan MacKay/Randal Teague to YAF Leaders, January 21, 1969, pp.11–13. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. ALEXANDER, Holmes: Pro-Growth vs. No-Growth, in: YAF in the News, Fall 1976. YAF Records, Box 71, Folder 12.

⁶⁸⁰ “Sell Kissinger, not Computers!”-Advertisement, Undated (1975). YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 8.

⁶⁸¹ Cf. THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, pp.182–184.

⁶⁸² Cf. “Mack Trucks Drops Plans To Build a Russian Plant”, in: The New York Times, September 16, 1971, pp.61, online: <https://search.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/119180740/2BC0676BF88840E2PQ/1> [26.02.2020].

⁶⁸³ The Sharon Statement (1960).

Ironically, Pennsylvania YAF, where David Walter, one of the initiators of the Firestone protests, had ascended to state chairman, was again at the forefront of a movement towards a positive view of East-West trade. In an article in *Commentary on Liberty*, a magazine edited by Walter, one author argued that “[t]o speak of a ‘surplus value’ [for the communists] determined by some mystical process completely outside of the market context is [...] totally ridiculous [sic].”⁶⁸⁴ Communist regimes, he predicted, would not be strengthened by trade in the long run. On the contrary, “creeping capitalism” would hollow out their systems from the inside. However, libertarians did not condemn the use of ‘free market’ techniques such as boycotts of firms trading with Communist nations, but only demanded that government restrictions be lifted.⁶⁸⁵ The libertarians, however, were in the minority. In a 1968 survey among all YAF members (ca. 3,000 responses), 61% rejected any trade with any communist nation, while 18% favored non-strategic trade with any country except the Soviet Union (An additional 16% included the USSR). Only about 5% were open to the idea of strategic trade with communist nations either including or excluding the Soviet Union.⁶⁸⁶

3.5 “End the Draft!”

While libertarians contested YAF activities against East-West trade, they were the driving force behind another conspicuous policy of the organization, namely the drive for abolition of the military draft and establishment of an all-volunteer military. This position set YAF apart from other organizations supporting the war, even most other conservatives.⁶⁸⁷

During its March 19th, 1967 session, the national board passed a resolution against the draft.⁶⁸⁸ The composition of the resolution suggests that the board members were aware they were taking an unusual position for a conservative organization.⁶⁸⁹ It started with the phrase “we, as young conservatives who support a policy of total victory against communism, particularly in the war in Vietnam”.⁶⁹⁰ At a time when student organizations of the New Left (actively) resisted the draft, it was important for YAF’s leaders to stress that their stand would decidedly not compromise their general position on the Vietnam War. The resolution, then, was also very moderate in its objective: it demanded a voluntary system of military service as a “goal”, with “as many specific steps” taken in that direction “as are possible at this time.”⁶⁹¹ Thus, the board

⁶⁸⁴ MULLEN, Patrick: The Trader, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, January 1969, p.4. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁶⁸⁶ Cf. Confidential and Incomplete Survey Questionnaire, June 14, 1968, p.1. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3.

⁶⁸⁷ Cf. OFFENBACH, *The Other Side of Vietnam*, p.103.

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, March 18–19, 1967, p.4. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 2.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.161.

⁶⁹⁰ Appendix IV to the YAF Board Meeting on March 18–19, 1967. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 9.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.* Emphasis original.

did not demand immediate radical action on the matter. It acknowledged that conscription “may well be necessary” in times of national emergencies. However, apart from this duty to defend one’s homeland, the resolution clearly rejected any concept of mandatory civil or military service, the idea “that a person owes a certain number of years of his life to the government.” The board decided that funds should be made available to *The New Guard* to take action to publicize and develop YAF’s position. The magazine accommodated that request by dedicating its May 1967 almost entirely to the topic of the draft. Again, the editors employed some finesse in framing the matter positively by entitling the issue “The Case For A Voluntary Army.” A negative ‘rejection-of-the-draft’ framing would probably have turned away some members and other conservatives. The editors also managed to reel in quite an impressive lineup of guest editors. Three conservative luminaries delivered their arguments for an all-volunteer force: Russel Kirk, whose *Conservative Mind* was a crucial formative influence on YAF’s ideology, former Republican presidential nominee (and, perhaps, *the* YAF hero) Barry Goldwater, and University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman, future Nobel Prize laureate in Economics. Thus, three of the major strands of YAF’s conservatism were represented. Kirk stood for a traditionalist, Friedman for a libertarian approach, while Goldwater embodied the fusionist credo that most YAFers subscribed to. They were joined by David Franke, *The New Guard* editor, who provided a distinctively young American perspective to the problem in his reprinted testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Kirk, in his essay, emphasized the strategic superiority a professional army would enjoy over a conscripted force. The “armed horde”⁶⁹² of mass infantry had died both literally and as a concept in the trenches of the Great War. Military innovations during World War II had been the last nail in the coffin for this doctrine. Elite professional forces were the way of the future. If massed infantry would be needed for whatever reason, Kirk argued, allied countries should be the one supplying it.⁶⁹³ Professionalizing the military would boost soldiers’ morale. Finally, even if the US were to hold on to conscription, they could never reach the same levels of manpower that the USSR or mainland China could put out if needed.

Goldwater argued that while conservatives might agree with the goals of the draft, they should harbor a strong aversion for this particular method: “The conservative position is based solidly upon the notion that man’s most fundamental right and responsibility is to live his own life.” The draft, Goldwater argued, denied this right to recruits. He concurred with Kirk in viewing the establishment of a professional army as the right response to the changing conditions of

⁶⁹² KIRK, Russell: Our Archaic Draft, in: *The New Guard*, May 1967, p.11.

⁶⁹³ Kirk, however, did not ponder the question how such a system would work if the US’ allies, too, would turn away from conscripted armies.

war. Goldwater anticipated and rejected claims that, in contrast to the ideal of the citizen-soldier, a professional soldier would deteriorate to be a mere mercenary. Was a doctor not some kind of mercenary too? The concept of universal mercenary service, the senator suggested, lay at the heart of a free society, whereas authoritarian systems were based on the notion that coercion in service of society was justified.⁶⁹⁴

Friedman criticized that historically, the threat of conscription had been employed by governments to suppress freedom of association and speech.⁶⁹⁵ True to his profession, the lion’s share of his analysis was concerned with economic aspects. He argued, for example, that a voluntary army would reduce turnover rates and thus cut back on man hours that would otherwise be needed to train new recruits. Those could be put towards other efforts like raising the training standards. Fewer recruits would also mean that costlier equipment could be used for the smaller force.⁶⁹⁶ According to Friedman, economic benefits were, however, not limited to the armed forces itself. Colleges would be able to concentrate on their *higher* educational duties because the flood of students primarily enrolling to escape the draft would be curtailed. These allegedly unproductive college students could then join the workforce. In the same vein, the problem of “unwise marriages contracted at least partly under the whip of the draft” would be solved.⁶⁹⁷ Of course, for that to happen, the pay and benefits of the soldiers would need to drastically improve, so that a military career could compete with other options.⁶⁹⁸ The lower number of recruits, however, would force the military administration to sensibly plan with the remaining personnel, making such a pay increase affordable. By increasing incentives even further than necessary to get the needed amount of manpower, the military would be flexible enough to react if additional soldiers were needed.⁶⁹⁹ Friedman brushed away concerns that a professional army could potentially threaten democracy or political freedom: historically, it had always been the officer corps that initiated coups or repressions; yet officers in the US had always been professional soldiers.⁷⁰⁰

Parts of this argumentation carried the individualistic-capitalistic logic of libertarian-influenced conservatism to extremes: presumably, individuals with comparable or better career options would not join the army. Thus, only those people whose most marketable asset was their life itself would make up the ranks of the armed forces.⁷⁰¹ One *The New Guard* contributor even

⁶⁹⁴ GOLDWATER, Barry: End the Draft!, in: *The New Guard*, May 1967, p.10.

⁶⁹⁵ FRIEDMAN, Milton: The Case for a Voluntary Army, in: *The New Guard*, May 1967, p.13.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁶⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.16.

⁷⁰¹ Cf. ANDREW, Pro War and Anti-Draft, p.16.

proposed a system similar to the one in place during the Civil War (though principally favoring the complete abolition of the draft): it had been possible then to evade conscription by providing a substitute, leading to wealthy citizens simply paying less fortunate to serve in their stead. This system had long been gone by the 1960s, but those volunteering themselves would be preferably drafted. The author proposed however that neighborhoods should band together to raise funds for bounties going to everyone volunteering themselves. Thus, he argued, a voluntary system could be established without *de jure* touching the Selective Service System.⁷⁰²

In contrast to Kirk, Goldwater, and Friedman, who emphasized either the positive impact an all-volunteer force would have on the military itself or the beneficial consequences for those who would not need to serve, and, in turn, society, David Franke argued that the *secondary* effects of abolishing the draft would be immediately beneficial. Many young people, he argued, only rejected the American effort in Vietnam because of the draft. If it was suspended, then, the war itself would enjoy broader public support.⁷⁰³ According to Franke, there were three major groups among the American youth: the majority, who were apathetic to the war itself, as long as it did not concern them directly, and could probably be swayed to support the war once the draft was gone; conservatives such as YAF, who fully supported the war, but rejected the draft for philosophical reasons; and the Left, who would normally support mandatory public service, but wanted to abolish the draft simply to weaken the American war effort.⁷⁰⁴

One thing that did indeed set YAF and the New Left apart, was that the former entirely rejected any active draft resistance, be it the burning of draft cards, fleeing to Canada etc. To establish this difference right away, the four articles in the draft issue of *The New Guard* were followed by a satire poking fun at draft dodgers.⁷⁰⁵ The campus chapters condemned those of their fellow students that burned draft cards or tried to evade service by other illegal means.⁷⁰⁶

By only providing articles favoring an end of the draft in the respective *The New Guard* issue, the organization painted the picture of a unified response against this form of conscription. Prior research has followed this image.⁷⁰⁷ However, when actually asked about the policy a year after the organization had officially taken a stand against the draft, only 60% of YAF members

⁷⁰² Cf. COBB, J.: Abolish the Draft in Your Neighborhood, in: *The New Guard*, December 1969, pp.7–8.

⁷⁰³ Cf. FRANKE, David: Conscription in a Free Society, in: *The New Guard*, May 1967, p.5.

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.4; ANDREW, Pro War and Anti-Draft, pp.7–8.

⁷⁰⁵ SHEPHERD, Charles: The Dilemma of the Delicate Draft Dodger, in: *The New Guard*, May 1967, 17, 26.

⁷⁰⁶ Cf. “YAF Around the Nation”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1968, p.22.

⁷⁰⁷ KLATCH, A Generation Divided, p.121, remarks that some traditionalists within YAF were against the draft in principle, but willing to support such measures as necessary in the context of the Vietnam War. ANDREW, Pro War and Anti-Draft, OFFENBACH, The Other Side of Vietnam and SCANLON, The Pro-War Movement don’t mention any dissent, but observe that there could be ulterior motives behind the rejection of the draft. Offenbach in particular emphasizes that traditionalists as well as libertarians supported YAF’s position, cf. OFFENBACH, The Other Side of Vietnam, p.104.

avored a volunteer army, a surprisingly low number given that other policies were supported by figures as high as 95% (e.g., victory in Vietnam). The next lowest approval rating was given to YAF’s position on the minimum wage, which was still supported by 82% of the membership.⁷⁰⁸

If the board in 1967 still decided to take an unequivocal position—mind you that it was not a convention resolution passed by delegates representing the membership—against the draft, which was subsequently confirmed multiple times,⁷⁰⁹ there must have been strategic reasons for doing so. When the resolution was passed, YAF was embroiled in an escalating struggle with New Left movements on campus. It was also the year of the national convention in Pittsburgh, where libertarians began to articulate themselves as a distinct faction within the organization.⁷¹⁰ Until then, an occasional article had appeared in the *New Guard*, but there was no coherent line of argument.⁷¹¹ Leaders of the organization probably felt forced to take a stand because the issue was vitally important to many students.⁷¹² By default, conservatives were identified with the draft because of their activism in support of the Vietnam War. In contrast, many moderates and most leftists rejected the draft. Perhaps the board thought that those students could be won for the conservative cause if YAF took a stand against the specter of conscription.

The draft could easily be framed as part of a larger development towards a stronger governmental authority at the expense of individual freedom. If YAF could manage to convert skepticism towards conscription into general mistrust of government, they could build a bridgehead for more conservative convictions.⁷¹³ As will be shown in the next chapter, YAF depended on the support of moderates in their battle against the left. Not only would a pro-draft stance have put off those groups, but it also reduced the appeal of the Left if it was not the sole representative of activists protesting the draft.

Within YAF, the libertarian wing had gained strength in 1967. A pro-draft resolution would have offended its various subgroups and risked estranging them from the organization. Rejecting the measure, however, presented libertarians with an incentive to remain in YAF, especially because most of the rhetoric used in flyers, resolutions, etc. was libertarian.⁷¹⁴ At the

⁷⁰⁸ “What YAF Members Think”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1968, p.3.

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. MACKAY, Alan: Volunteer Military, in: *The New Guard*, March 1969, p.22; “Statement on the Draft”, in: *The New Guard*, November 1969, pp.6–7 During the 1969 National Convention, the membership also passed a rather moderate resolution against the draft.

⁷¹⁰ See chapter 5.

⁷¹¹ TROHAN, Walter: Are We Free?, in: *The New Guard*, November 1961, p.6; “Attention: Young Americans”, in: *The New Guard Vol. November 1964*; “Around and About”, in: *The New Guard*, June 1966, p.4.

⁷¹² LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, p.156.

⁷¹³ ANDREW, *Pro War and Anti-Draft*, p.10.

⁷¹⁴ OFFENBACH, *The Other Side of Vietnam*, p.105.

same time, anti-communists would not feel intimidated by the board’s decision, because the way the resolution was worded, it did not threaten the American effort in Vietnam. Reactions like the one of an outraged *The New Guard* subscriber who called the May issue “the most disgusting piece of anti-draft literature I have ever read”, were the exception.⁷¹⁵ Testimony to the fact that the approach of the board worked, the “demand for the [*New Guard* draft] issue was so great that YAF reprinted it many times.”⁷¹⁶

Another explanation brought forth in the historiography is that YAF members simply acted out of selfishness. Since many, if not most, members were eligible for the draft, they simply wanted to prevent being conscripted themselves.⁷¹⁷ While some YAFers did serve in Vietnam, and others entered the ROTC to serve after finishing their studies,⁷¹⁸ such a motivation on first glance appears likely. However, as a rejection of the draft was readily compatible with YAF’s principles,⁷¹⁹ and support of a war does not obligate the people supporting it to fight it themselves, such a hypothesis eventually becomes unprovable. More importantly, the 1967 resolution was so moderately worded, that, even if it had become policy overnight, it would not necessarily have meant that the draft would have been abolished while the Vietnam War was still going on. For the campus however, it was enough that YAF could claim to reject the draft in principle, even if the concrete policy would have no major immediate effect. That this approach worked can be seen in a survey conducted among YAF’s college chapters by the organization’s college director in 1968 (response rate about 25%), where slightly over half of the chapters claimed that the draft had been the “most useful” issue on their campus.⁷²⁰

Not only the draft, but the whole Vietnam War issue was intertwined with YAF’s activities on the nation’s campuses. Vietnam was the central bone of contention between young conservatives and the New Left, represented most prominently by the Students for a Democratic Society. In a rapidly escalating conflict (I will borrow Kenneth Heineman’s term “Campus Wars”,⁷²¹ this time applied to disputes between conservatives and leftists), YAF adapted to the tactics of the Left, and would employ an array of mostly legal, sometimes extralegal measures to stop the advancement of what they saw as radical ideas.

⁷¹⁵ DUNCAN, James: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, September 1967, p.28 The same issue contained no other negative, but four positive replies to the issue.

⁷¹⁶ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.161.

⁷¹⁷ SCANLON, *The Pro-War Movement*, p.264; OFFENBACH, *The Other Side of Vietnam*, pp.104–105, incl. fn. 33, argues that such a motivation is likely, but ultimately unprovable.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. “Students Organize for Free Vietnam, Free China”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1966, pp.6–7.

⁷¹⁹ Cf. ANDREW, *Pro War and Anti-Draft*, p.16.

⁷²⁰ Jerry Norton to Board of Directors, October 30, 1968, p.2. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 6.

⁷²¹ HEINEMAN, Kenneth: *Campus Wars. The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era*, New York, NY 1993.

Active YAFers were by no means the only ones involved in this battle. Tom Huston, who had resigned from the YAF chairmanship in 1967,⁷²² had joined the Nixon administration in 1968. During his time as presidential aide, he often lobbied Nixon’s chief of staff H. R. Haldeman to increase efforts against the New Left on campus and to cooperate with YAF for that purpose. However, Nixon rejected such proposals claiming that YAF was “about as nutty as the militants.”⁷²³ In 1970, Huston was assigned the post of White House liaison to the Interagency Committee on Intelligence, which had been established to increase cooperation between the various domestic intelligence agencies (namely NSA, DIA, CIA, FBI) in their effort to gather information on “new left and subversive groups” engaged in “directing dissident activities in the United States.”⁷²⁴ In this capacity, he worked out a report that became known as the “Huston Plan.”⁷²⁵ The committee reported on several New Left and ‘Black Militant’ groups, assessed their threat to national security and made recommendations for better inter-agency cooperation. However, the part that became most famous was concerned with existing restrictions on domestic intelligence, how they could be modified and what the advantages/disadvantages would be. These included “Electronic Surveillances and Penetrations” (‘wiretapping’), “Mail Coverage”, “Surreptitious Entry” (so-called ‘black-bag jobs’), and the “Development of Campus Sources” (meaning infiltration of campus groups by informers).⁷²⁶ While the report itself simply mentioned those options, Huston sent a memorandum through Haldeman, in which he recommended certain options. In almost every point, he favored lifting existing restrictions, although he stressed that, for example, surreptitious entry would be “clearly illegal.”⁷²⁷ Huston later claimed that he was merely relating the favored options of the agencies.⁷²⁸ Under the threat assessed by the report this was, in his view, “the reasonable thing to do”,⁷²⁹ because that would assure cooperation of the domestic intelligence actors and thus leave the tools in the

⁷²² Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, March 18–19, 1967.

⁷²³ Cited according to SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.21.

⁷²⁴ “Origin and Disposition of the Huston Plan” [Undated], p.1, online: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B01034R000700230008-6.pdf> [02.03.2020].

⁷²⁵ Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Volume 2, Huston Plan, September 23, 24, and 25, 1975 [1976], online: <https://archive.org/details/Church-Committee-Hearings-Volume2-Huston-Plan/mode/2up> [03.03.2020].

⁷²⁶ Special Report. Interagency Committee on Intelligence (Ad Hoc) 1970, in: Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Volume 2, Huston Plan, September 23, 24, and 25, 1975 [1976], online: <https://archive.org/details/Church-Committee-Hearings-Volume2-Huston-Plan/mode/2up> [03.03.2020].

⁷²⁷ Tom Huston to Harry Haldeman, July 1970, p.3, in: Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Volume 2, Huston Plan, September 23, 24, and 25, 1975 [1976], online: <https://archive.org/details/Church-Committee-Hearings-Volume2-Huston-Plan/mode/2up> [03.03.2020].

⁷²⁸ Cf. Tom Charles Huston Interview Transcription [2008], p.24, online: <https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/virtuallibrary/documents/histories/huston-2008-04-30.pdf> [03.03.2020].

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

hands of professionals.⁷³⁰ Regarding the possible violation of civil liberties, he stated: “[M]y view is that the people that I knew were on the receiving end, you know, I wasn’t worried about it. I mean, these were people that were involved in acts of violence and against the people of this country, and so I didn’t have any problem with that.”⁷³¹

Huston’s recommendations were approved by the president,⁷³² but the implementation of the plan failed because of resistance by J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director, who deemed the measures to risky and apparently feared that closer inter-agency cooperation would curtail the area of responsibility of the FBI. However, the Nixon administration still went ahead with some of the recommendations, which provided the basis for some of the power abuses now known as the ‘White House horrors.’

⁷³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.28–29.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁷³² Harry Haldeman to Tom Huston, July 14, 1970, in: *Hearings Before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Volume 2, Huston Plan, September 23, 24, and 25, 1975 [1976]*, online: <https://archive.org/details/Church-Committee-Hearings-Volume2-Huston-Plan/mode/2up> [03.03.2020].

4. The Campus Wars

“YAF’s survivability was sorely tested in the latter 1960s, and the organization met the test. When others were fleeing headlong before the legions of the new left, YAF was at the center of resistance; on campus after campus, indeed, it *was* that resistance. It was thanks in no small part to YAF that the wilder frenzies of the leftists were rebuked and a semblance of campus order was restored. And when the smoke of battle and clouds of media publicity about those interesting leftist ‘kids’ had lifted, YAF remained in place, stronger and more determined than ever.”

- Stanton Evans, 1975⁷³³

When YAF and SDS held their Sharon and Port Huron conferences, respectively,⁷³⁴ the groups differed in their response to the pressing problems of the day but shared a disdain for liberalism and its embrace of the status quo which they saw as devoid of any moral compass.⁷³⁵ They also both rejected the rationalization of man by the polity and demanded a retreat of government from the individual’s life. In that sense, there was, at least in the beginning of the decade, a sense of shared mission⁷³⁶ among the opposing camps as they struggled to convince an apathetic (campus) population of their goals and values.⁷³⁷

Already divided by their response to the Civil Rights Movement, a mix of occasional issue-based cooperation and determined, yet mostly respectful antagonism on most other matters turned into irreconcilable hostility when campuses across the nation became embroiled in ever-greater turmoil fueled by the escalation of the Vietnam War. YAF was at the forefront of organized grassroots resistance against student radicals⁷³⁸ on campus. By appropriating the language and tactics of the New Left, conservative activists were able to score some victories, although they were often limited in scope, time, and place. In forming anti-radical coalitions with moderate or even liberal students, YAF increased counterrevolutionary firepower, but at the same time diluted its influence on campus.

YAF’s engagements with the Left had a significant impact on the development of the organization. On the one hand, the group’s determined stand against radicals caused an influx of new members rivaled only by the Goldwater campaign of 1964. Since these new members were college students, the organization as a whole became even more college-oriented. On the other hand, by concentrating much of its resources on countering the Left, an effort that was bound to ultimately be unsuccessful, YAF wedded itself to the fate of their enemies. As the Left

⁷³³ EVANS, Stanton: *The First Fifteen Years Are the Hardest*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1975, p.7.

⁷³⁴ See chapter 1.

⁷³⁵ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.5–6.

⁷³⁶ Cf. Michael THOMPSON. Interview by Georg WOLFF, Alexandria, VA 08.10.2018.

⁷³⁷ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.17–36, esp. 34.

⁷³⁸ The term radicalism is used exclusively for the Left here because YAF, no less steadfast in their convictions, generally advocated reform instead of revolution, as would groups on the political left in the later 1960s.

waned on campus in the early 70s, YAF's national leadership would struggle to capitalize on gains made in the Campus Wars.

4.1 NSA and FSM – A Campus War Prelude

“The students who went to Mississippi, and will go again, to fight for an end to racial barriers and those who went to San Francisco to acclaim the candidacy of Barry Goldwater are really products of the same circumstances, just as all members of a generation have their particular rendezvous with destiny, and with history.”⁷³⁹

- Allan Brownfeld, 1965

The foundations to YAF's anti-leftist campus activities were laid early in the organization's history. On the basis of a confidential report by Carol Dawson (later Bauman) on the national congress of the National Student Association (NSA), a governing body of student governments across the nation, the board decided at its November 1960 meeting (only two months after YAF's inception) to oppose the organization from within.⁷⁴⁰ They questioned its self-image as the representative of all American students, even though only a fraction of the nation's campuses were members of it.⁷⁴¹ BJERRE-POULSEN goes so far as to argue that YAF was founded specifically to counter NSA,⁷⁴² but this claim must be rejected. While combatting NSA was an important *activity* for the organization, only few members were directly involved with it, and the *reasons* for founding YAF were more diverse.⁷⁴³

YAF's critique focused on two major points: they claimed that firstly, the output of the organization in resolutions etc. was, contrary to NSA claims, not representative of the average student's thinking. YAFers argued that students needed an organization dedicated to providing campus services and tackling narrowly defined student issues more than another liberal/leftist front group. Secondly, they characterized the structure of the organization as undemocratic and top-heavy, ensuring easy control by a radical minority.⁷⁴⁴ Resolving the second issue would also resolve the first, and thus YAF's initial effort focused on organizational reform. Since conservatives could not hope that the entrenched NSA 'bureaucracy' could be convinced to give up its power,⁷⁴⁵ they repeatedly tried to use the organization's annual congresses to present

⁷³⁹ BROWNFELD, Allan: Student Rebels, in: The New Guard, March 1965, p.17.

⁷⁴⁰ Cf. THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, pp.46–47; DAWSON, Carol: Preliminary Report on the 13th Annual Congress of NSA, Undated, Fall 1960. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 12, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (1960).

⁷⁴¹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, Cadres for Conservatism, pp.62–64 He most poignantly argues on p.64 that “In some small way, YAF's opposition to the leadership of NSA represented the first shot fired in the 1960s campus wars between Left and Right.”

⁷⁴² BJERRE-POULSEN, Right Face, p.13.

⁷⁴³ See chapter 1.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: The Challenge, in: The New Guard, August 1961, p.3; WONDERLIC, Kay: It's Time NSA Takes the Stand, in: The New Guard, August 1961, p.10; PHILLIPS, Howard: The Isolated Elite of NSA, in: The New Guard, August 1961, pp.11–12.

⁷⁴⁵ PHILLIPS, Howard: Inside NSA, in: The New Guard, April 1961, p.12.

their demands. In the first such instance, board member Howard Phillips established the Committee for a Responsible National Student Organization (CRNSO) in preparation for the 14th (1961) NSA national congress in Madison, Wisconsin and, where possible, conservative activists got themselves (s)elected as delegates from their respective campuses.⁷⁴⁶ The CRNSO vowed to dedicate itself to organizational reform, or, if this could not be achieved, to set up an alternative national student organization.⁷⁴⁷

Looking back on the 1961 national congress two years later, YAF board member Fulton Lewis III characterized conservative efforts as “completely unsuccessful.”⁷⁴⁸ Only a handful of activists had even made it to Wisconsin by appointment or election. Those that did, however, were used to employing convention tactics commonplace at YAF or Young Republicans gatherings. But methods such as secret caucusing, the use of floor managers, and walkie-talkies that were ubiquitous there were new to NSA and appalled the other delegates. This included moderates and non-YAF-affiliated conservatives, who probably would otherwise have been susceptible to reform proposals such as budget cuts, tighter control of the national executive and wresting control of the organization from so-called ‘professional’ students. This made it easy for opposing groups to paint YAF members as political hacks and fan fear of a supposed conservative ‘takeover.’⁷⁴⁹

Thus, the organization changed its approach for the 15th (1962) national congress. Again, only a few YAF delegates were present then, but with Robert Schuchman and Tom Huston the current and a future chairman were among them. The operation to rehabilitate YAF’s image was somewhat successful, and, even though they were not able to influence any controversial resolutions, they managed to change the opening statement of the NSA constitution from “We, the students of the U[SA]” to “We, the members of the national union of students of the U[SA].”⁷⁵⁰ This was a symbolic victory more than anything else, but it showed that conservatives could win votes if they managed not to scare off potential moderate allies. The YAF national convention of the same year thus passed a resolution that still criticized NSA as being dominated by “ultraliberal groups such as the campus Americans for Democratic Action

⁷⁴⁶ For a detailed overview of YAF’s earliest anti-NSA activities, see ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.91–100.

⁷⁴⁷ Cf. CRNSO Mailing, Undated 1961. YAF Records, Box 64, Folder 10.

⁷⁴⁸ Confidential Report on the 16th Annual Congress of the N.S.A., Undated, September 1963, p.1. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, pp.94–96.

⁷⁵⁰ Confidential Report on the 16th Annual Congress of the N.S.A., Undated, September 1963, p.1. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

and the Students for a Democratic Society” but acknowledged that the 15th congress had shown that conservatives could yet hope for reform and should stay engaged with NSA.⁷⁵¹

In contrast to the general membership, the national board took a much more radical stand and encouraged YAF college chapters to work on disassociating their respective campuses from the “undemocratic” NSA structure.⁷⁵² This two-pronged approach of working inside the organization for reform while trying to weaken it by eroding its membership base became characteristic for YAF’s further handling of the matter.⁷⁵³ Later resolutions confirmed this policy but suggested that YAF might support the organization after serious reform.⁷⁵⁴ In 1964, the board initiated the STOP-NSA (Students to Oppose Participation in the NSA) front group to bundle activities under one committee and enable other groups such as the Young Republicans to participate in the effort.⁷⁵⁵ By 1966, in part through the work of YAF and its front, the number of campuses that were represented by NSA had dropped by 20% compared to 1961.⁷⁵⁶ Also in 1964, conservative students finally formed their organizational response to NSA—the Associated Student Governments of the USA. By prohibiting any political action on part of the organization in its constitution, Tom Huston and other organizers hoped that it would not be seen as a mere “conservative NSA”, but rather a true alternative for student government organizing.⁷⁵⁷

While combatting NSA remained an important activity for YAFers even in the second half of the decade,⁷⁵⁸ the issue lost momentum for several possible reasons. THORBURN argues that YAF’s previous efforts were simply seen as fruitless and further activity relegated to STOP-NSA.⁷⁵⁹ Then, in 1967 it was revealed through research of the leftist magazine *Ramparts* that NSA had for over a decade received funding from the CIA. This damaged its reputation slightly, but, after the organizations severed their ties, NSA continued.⁷⁶⁰ More importantly, conservatives felt that in the second half of the 1960s, the organization grew virtually

⁷⁵¹ Resolution on the National Student Association, November 1962. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁷⁵² “Tower Speaks to YAF at National Board Meeting”, in: *The New Guard*, December-January 1963, p.13; Confidential Report on the 16th Annual Congress of the N.S.A., Undated, September 1963, p.2. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

⁷⁵³ See also THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.82.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. Resolution: YAF Opposes N.S.A., November 8-10, 1963. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2; Resolution on the National Student Association, August 1965. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 2.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Tom Huston to YAF Policy Committee, April 1964. YAF Records, Box 26, Folder 6.

⁷⁵⁶ Cf. “NSA: Leftists Still in Control”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1966, p.5.

⁷⁵⁷ HUSTON, Tom: Student Leaders Form New Alliance, in: *The New Guard*, June 1964, pp.10–12.

⁷⁵⁸ *The New Guard* would continue to report on NSA-related topics, especially the CIA involvement and some of the annual national congresses. During the 70s, the topic lost its relevance for YAF, cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.87–88.

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁷⁶⁰ Cf. VRIES, Tity de: The 1967 Central Intelligence Agency Scandal. Catalyst in a Transforming Relationship between State and People, in: *Journal of American History* Vol. 98/4 (2012), pp.1075–1092, here pp.1087–1088.

indistinguishable from a host of other leftist student groups, notably the Students for a Democratic Society.⁷⁶¹ This movement became known as the (campus) New Left. The difference between other groups and NSA was that they were often decentrally organized and, similar to YAF, had a local chapter structure. On the one hand, this gave them a much stronger presence on campus. On the other hand, the leftist ‘threat’ was thus made much more tangible for conservative students, who became involved in opposing those groups in far greater numbers than they had ever been involved with reforming or combatting NSA.

When in 1964 students protested the ban of political proselytizing on a spot just outside the premises of the University of California, Berkeley,⁷⁶² the local YAF chapter at first sympathized with the goals of the activists. Some members even joined the activities of the protest group that later became known as the Free Speech Movement (FSM). Although divided by their political orientation—the movement had been sparked by the attempted arrest of Jack Weinberg, a graduate student who had been involved in the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and then manned a recruitment table for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)—participants agreed that, as responsible citizens, they should be allowed to organize among students, unhindered by the university.⁷⁶³

Soon after the protests began, the movement expanded its position towards the university administration from a mere rejection of the ban on political activity to a more general critique of the modern university. In an essay entitled “An End to History,” Mario Savio, a graduate student who had emerged as one of the leaders of FSM, railed against what he experienced as a “depersonalized, unresponsive bureaucracy.”⁷⁶⁴ The university, Savio argued, had relinquished its role as a facilitator of individual development and critical thinking. Whereas for the students, it was “the place where people begin seriously to question the conditions of their existence and raise the issue of whether they can be committed to the society they have been born into,”⁷⁶⁵ university president Clark Kerr, supposedly the embodiment of the status quo-oriented bureaucrat, had turned it into “a factory that turns out a certain product needed by

⁷⁶¹ Cf. “NSA=SDS=More of the Same”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1965, p.6; “NSA: Leftists Still in Control”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1966, pp.4–5; “Report: Student Power Congress”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1968, p.4; DOCKSAI, Ronald: *The Siege of El Paso*, in: *The New Guard*, October 1969, pp.18–23.

⁷⁶² All political activity was prohibited on property of the State of California, which meant that student groups that wanted to recruit new members or espouse their political views would have to settle for spots that would be frequented by students but were technically off-campus.

⁷⁶³ Cf. RORABAUGH, William: *Berkeley at War. The 1960s*, New York, NY 1990, p.21. The Free Speech Movement is extensively covered on pp.17–47.

⁷⁶⁴ SAVIO, Mario: *An End to History* (1964), in: WARD, Brian (Ed.): *The 1960s. A Documentary Reader*, Malden, MA 2010, pp.95–99, here p.96.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.97.

industry or government.”⁷⁶⁶ According to Savio, this dissonance between expectations on the university and the cold, dehumanizing reality had alienated large parts of the student body.

The issue originally raised by the protestors could be addressed easily enough (and was finally resolved in favor of FSM in December 1964⁷⁶⁷), but the second, more abstract critique challenged the very self-conception of the university. Incited by a lack of response to its grievances, the FSM resorted to tactics that some of its participants had become acquainted with in their work for the Civil Rights Movement in the South, including sit-ins and other forms of civil disobedience. Through these more radical tactics that threatened to infringe on everyday campus life, activists hoped to increase their leverage against the university.⁷⁶⁸ By putting their “bodies on the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus,”⁷⁶⁹ as Savio famously put it, they intended to bring the university machine to a grinding halt.

At this point, most conservatives had put the movement behind, content with protesting against the ban on political activity and discouraged by the movement’s embrace of civil disobedience. Not all YAFers, however, rejected the radicals’ analysis. In a piece for *The New Guard*, Allan Brownfeld argued that students both on the Left and the Right were products of the “same circumstances.”⁷⁷⁰ Both sides of the spectrum needed political activity to feel alive and to experience the present. They thus replaced the “silent generation” of 1950s students, who, the article argued, “[had] never really lived in the sense of a total involvement with their time.”⁷⁷¹ Individual (political) expression was key, and thus observers should not be surprised to find students with opposing political views closing ranks.

Brownfeld, who was not a student at Berkeley, also wholeheartedly agreed with Savio’s analysis of the “modern multiversity” too occupied with handling masses of students, research grant applications, and teaching loads to pay heed to names, faces, or personalities, replacing them with numbers for faster processing. This, he continued, was a trend not limited to the university, but of society in general:

“[The FSM] is a revolt not only [against] the IBM cards of the university but also against the social security numbers which will be given them [the students], together with their Zip Code number, standardized IQ test, psychological test for employment, and all of the other forces in modern America which in the name of bettering the lives of people are eliminating their personalities.”⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., p.98.

⁷⁶⁷ Cf. RORABAUGH, Berkeley at War, pp.35–37.

⁷⁶⁸ Cf. COHEN, Robert: Freedom’s Orator. Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s, New York, NY 2009, p.155.

⁷⁶⁹ SAVIO, Mario: Speech Before the FSM Sit-In, December 3, 1964, online: http://www.fsm-a.org/stacks/mario/mario_speech.html [06.03.2020].

⁷⁷⁰ BROWNFIELD, Allan: Student Rebels, in: *The New Guard*, March 1965, p.17.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

This broader implication of the protests was what kept Brownfeld's spirit up. He rejected knee-jerk responses of other conservatives who tried to frame the movement as a resurgence of communist activity in the United States. While communist elements did play a part in the protests,⁷⁷³ and it was the Left that brought civil disobedience with them, at the end of the day, for Brownfeld "this protest was an alienation with total authority[;] [...] with power, even against the kind of power exerted 'for your own good.'"⁷⁷⁴ Thus, there was hope even with the "bearded young men at Berkeley," who would, he predicted, learn to appreciate the true individualism of conservatism instead of the thinly veiled conformism of the Left.

Brownfeld, who painted an idealistic, perhaps naïve picture of the protests, was by no means the only YAFer preoccupied with the happenings at Berkeley. Other commentators, however, took a much more critical stance towards the movement. Richard Wheeler, who had covered the FSM for the *Oakland Tribune*, and M.M.Morton, according to *The New Guard* an intelligence operative writing under a pseudonym, took issue with Savio's claim that the university had alienated the students:

"While it is true that the multiversity is exasperatingly impersonal, the campus environment was about as responsible for the revolt as the Dallas environment was responsible for goading Lee Harvey Oswald to pull the trigger."⁷⁷⁵

They claimed that *only* the ban on political proselytizing had motivated most of the original participants of the Free Speech Movement. Indeed, the protests only went on for so long because the administration seemed duplicitous in reasoning for banning tables even outside campus, which exacerbated the tensions between student body and university. However, according to these commentators, the 'university machine' aspect only became relevant as soon as the movement had been "captured by extreme leftists. [...] Up until then it hadn't dawned on most of the participants that they were alienated."⁷⁷⁶ Wheeler and Morton felt that if some conservatives still took part in the demonstrations, it was only because of an inadequate understanding of communist tactics. Communists, they explained, used manufactured issue to foment trouble and thus create a revolutionary atmosphere. Their ultimate goal was to transfer power within the university from the board of regents, answerable to the citizens of California, who as taxpayers funded the university, to the students themselves, supposedly answerable to nobody. Thus, the authors argued, the radicals wanted to establish a sanctuary for dissenting students from which they could operate to spread their revolution.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷³ Cf. RORABAUGH, Berkeley at War, pp.23–24.

⁷⁷⁴ BROWNFIELD, Allan: Student Rebels, in: *The New Guard*, March 1965, p.18.

⁷⁷⁵ WHEELER, Richard; MORTON, M. M.: Rebellion at Berkeley, in: *The New Guard*, September 1965, p.10.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Ibid., p.8.

In an editorial, the *New Guard* editors concurred: “[I]t seems to us that what the ‘Free Speech’ advocates are really demanding is that the administration allow students to run the university.”⁷⁷⁸ That this, rather than Brownfeld’s romanticized picture, was the more widely held view, is substantiated by a resolution of the 1965 YAF National Congress, “deploring the abuse of academic freedom by elements such as the ‘Free Speech Movement’ at Berkeley.”⁷⁷⁹ The Free Speech Movement is an intriguing case in the relationship between YAF and campus radicals not only in the sense that it was the first organized protest action outside the South where YAFers encountered civil disobedience tactics and were thus confronted with a new quality of activism,⁷⁸⁰ but also because some of the characteristics of YAF’s later responses to the Left can already be observed.

In his *Reactionary Mind*, Corey ROBIN argues that the Right often appropriates leftist rhetoric, twisting its meaning in trying to secure support from groups that may have otherwise supported the Left. For example, during the Civil Rights Movement, ‘freedom of association’ (meaning the freedom *not* to associate) was pitted against the freedom to access desired education.⁷⁸¹ In this sense, the radicals were not the only ones that had learned their lesson from the desegregation struggles. Conservatives had learned to employ leftist rhetoric to convince fellow students of their goals more easily. FSM activists posited a student’s right to be recognized as an individual, which, if denied by the administration, ultimately needed to be enforced through civil disobedience. Conservatives countered that such tactics infringed on “the progress of education, which, after all, is why students enroll at the university.”⁷⁸² Later in the decade, YAF board member Jerry Norton would elaborate on that concept. In a letter to a committee at Columbia studying the causes for student unrest, he set out to resolve the “confusion” that the usage of the term ‘student rights’ had caused.⁷⁸³ In a nutshell, he argued, “the one paramount student right and the *raison d’être* of University [...] is the right to carry on, in an orderly and undisturbed manner, his [the student’s] academic education.”⁷⁸⁴ Everything else, Norton argued, should better be characterized as ‘privilege’ rather than ‘right.’ By this argument, disturbances caused by civil disobedience, even if in the name of purported student rights, actually abridged the one fundamental right of the student to his education. The importance of

⁷⁷⁸ “‘Free Speech’ at U.C., Berkeley”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1965, p.6.

⁷⁷⁹ “‘Therefore Be It Resolved...’”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1965, p.20.

⁷⁸⁰ Cf. RORABAUGH, *Berkeley at War*, pp.30–32.

⁷⁸¹ Cf. ROBIN, *The Reactionary Mind*, pp.97–108. See chapter 2.

⁷⁸² “‘Free Speech’ at U.C., Berkeley”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1965, p.6.

⁷⁸³ Jerry Norton to Michael Weinberg, September 3, 1968, p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 57, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Sep-Dec.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

this reasoning would only grow as leftist protest threatened to (and did) shut down entire campuses for indefinite periods of time.

The second important characteristic visible for the first time in YAF’s response to the Free Speech Movement is that the group criticized not only its immediate opponents on the Left, but also the response of the university administration, whose cautious response supposedly fueled the protests. When the board of regents caved in to some of the movement’s demands, namely allowing students to politically organize on parts of the campus, Wheeler and Morton argued that “the screw was given another turn.”⁷⁸⁵ In their view, instead of taking the wind out of the movement’s sails, the administrators’ action had buttressed the position of the radicals, as it “vested the FSM with an aura of righteousness.”⁷⁸⁶ Since the students allegedly suffered from a too permissive upbringing, the authors urged administrators to stand fast: every giving way would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and would tempt the students to further try and extend the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

4.2 “Against the Wall” – Counterrevolutionary Strategies

YAFers debated the merits of the Free Speech Movement and observantly followed its development. Most ultimately condemned it, yet they did not actively challenge it on site. This would change during the second half of the decade, when the escalation of the Vietnam War radicalized the campus left in ideology and strategy. Increasingly frustrated by a lack of response to their demands on part of the establishment, many groups, including SDS, concluded that revolution rather than reform was the path to redemption for the United States.⁷⁸⁷ University administrations often responded cautiously as to not provoke further outrage: police action, for example, was incredibly unpopular on campus. YAFers thus felt that students themselves should take up the mantle of resistance. Their main strategist in the ensuing ‘Campus Wars’ was Phillip Abbott Luce.

When YAF was founded at the Sharon Conference, Luce was not in attendance. Then, Luce was a leftist, more precisely a Maoist, and joined the Progressive Labor Movement, later renamed Progressive Labor Party (PLP) roughly one year after Sharon. He quickly reached the upper echelons, becoming editor of the party’s journal. In 1963, he also organized a trip of some 60 students to Cuba, then subject to a travel ban by the State Department.⁷⁸⁸ Once there, for about two months they debated the “road to revolutionary success” with Fidel Castro and Che

⁷⁸⁵ WHEELER, Richard; MORTON, M. M.: Rebellion at Berkeley, in: *The New Guard*, September 1965, p.8.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. ISSERMAN/KAZIN, *America Divided*, pp.178–182.

⁷⁸⁸ Cf. Phillip Abbott Luce Profile, Undated (ca. 1969). Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF/Calif. State Chapter - Advisory Board Meetings.

Guevara, but also learned about the inner workings of a communist regime firsthand.⁷⁸⁹ Upon his return, he and some other participants of the trip were arrested and subpoenaed to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Determined to ridicule the committee and to not reveal any useful information, the PLP activists tried to undermine the dignity of the session by heckling the committee members, ignoring pleas for order and resisting their subsequent removal from the courtroom by the police. This behavior drew sharp criticism from YAF. In a *New Guard* report of the proceedings, Luce was simply described as a “mustached young man,” a “communist front” member, who “refused to cooperate with the committee.”⁷⁹⁰

Little did this young man or his clean-shaven adversaries know that he would leave behind the New Left just about one and a half years later. Disillusioned by PLP’s role in smuggling arms within the U.S. and inciting violence during the Harlem Riot in 1964, Luce and other defectors broke off from the group to form the May Second Movement.⁷⁹¹ Even there, however, he could not shake the notion that the societal designs of his comrades reeked of authoritarianism and would ultimately do more harm than good. He left the group in February 1965 and later recalled: “I defected not because I was reconciled to the injustices of American society as I saw them, but because I realized that Communism would bring infinitely worse justice.”⁷⁹² YAF and its allies, Luce came to understand, had the better answer to those injustices: “The rebellion of the New Right is a rebellion based on a sense of order. The rebellion of the Left is based on nihilism and slavery.”⁷⁹³ He thus converted to conservatism, taking a path treaded before by notables such as *National Review* contributors Whittaker Chambers, Frank Meyer, and James Burnham, conservative organizer Marvin Liebman or a whole host of personalities associated with the “First Age” of neoconservatism.⁷⁹⁴

Not unlike those older converts, he used his experience with the Progressive Labor Party to claim authoritative knowledge of the New Left and its tactics. He joined YAF and became a regular contributor to *The New Guard*, finally getting his own monthly column entitled “Against the Wall”⁷⁹⁵ in the September 1968 issue. Therein, he reported on the activities of campus

⁷⁸⁹ PERRY, Paul: ‘In the New Left There Has Been Only One Phillip Abbott Luce’, in: YAF in the News, December 1973.

⁷⁹⁰ SCHULZ, William: Leftists Disrupt HUAC Again, in: *The New Guard*, October 1963, p.12.

⁷⁹¹ Cf. PERRY, Paul: ‘In the New Left There Has Been Only One Phillip Abbott Luce’, in: YAF in the News, December 1973. The name of the group refers to the major student protests against the war in Vietnam on May 2, 1964.

⁷⁹² “YAF to Sponsor Luce in Tresidder”, in: *Stanford Daily*, April 16, 1968.

⁷⁹³ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Rebels and Revolutionaries, in: *The New Guard*, September 1966, p.29.

⁷⁹⁴ VAÏSSE, Neoconservatism, pp.21–27.

⁷⁹⁵ The name is a reference to the New Left slogan “Up against the wall, motherfucker”, which had gained prominence after SDS leader Mark Rudd used it in a letter to Columbia President Grayson Kirk. Cf. BRADLEY, Stefan: Harlem vs. Columbia University. Black Student Power in the Late 1960s, Urbana, IL 2012, p.63.

radicals and advised readers on counterrevolutionary strategies. Of the various organizations making up the New Left, he focused especially on SDS, firstly, because it was the largest group with chapters across the country, secondly, because he felt it ran the risk of committing the same mistake as other leftist groups of the 20th century: building a united front with communists. At its outset, Luce argued, SDS and YAF had shared roughly the same goals. Although the Port Huron Statement used different jargon than the Sharon Statement, both acknowledged that the liberal state encumbered individual growth and repressed freedom.⁷⁹⁶ According to Luce, the key difference was the means to achieve this goal: whereas YAF promoted the independent sector and containment of government by democratic means, SDS had turned to revolution as its *modus operandi*. As they recognized that their original goals and the idea of change through revolution were irreconcilable, Luce argued, “what started as a search for freedom has deteriorated into a hope for anarchy.”⁷⁹⁷ The organization dropped its communist exclusion policy at the national convention of 1965 and afterwards severed ties with its parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy.⁷⁹⁸ Ever since, Luce remarked, “SDS tend[ed] to vacilate [sic] between the rational and irrational as if it were a living Marxist dialectic.”⁷⁹⁹ He predicted that given enough time, the influx of communist agitators would either destroy the organization or turn it communist.⁸⁰⁰

In any case, while Luce acknowledged that SDS remained the “only national left wing group with which it has ever been possible to carry on any kind of dialogue,”⁸⁰¹ he still urged his fellow YAFers to oppose them. Firstly, he claimed, they believed in free speech only for themselves and were completely intolerant to differing viewpoints. Secondly, SDS would try to educate more students in their totalitarian political philosophy. This would also exacerbate the danger of a communist takeover. Thus, Luce called upon YAFers to “get your hands dirty;”⁸⁰² to challenge the Left in debates and politicize potential allies: “The left-wing is trying to sell students a concept of ‘destruction equals betterment.’ We have to show our fellow students that we advocate change through democratic means.”⁸⁰³ He also referred to the Sharon Statement, which contended that “periods of freedom are rare, and can exist only when free

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Yes, S.C. There Really Is an SDS, in: *The New Guard*, December 1967, p.10.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ Cf. ISSERMAN/KAZIN, *America Divided*, p.178.

⁷⁹⁹ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Yes, S.C. There Really Is an SDS, in: *The New Guard*, December 1967, p.10.

⁸⁰⁰ Indeed, it was, among others, Luce’s own former Progressive Labor Party that would foment a split at the 1969 national convention which virtually destroyed SDS. Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.207–209.

⁸⁰¹ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Yes, S.C. There Really Is an SDS, in: *The New Guard*, December 1967, p.13.

⁸⁰² *Id.*: *Against the Wall*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1968, p.6.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.7.

citizens concertedly defend their rights against all enemies.”⁸⁰⁴ The campuses of the late Sixties, he concluded, mandated such a concerted defense.

While the national board was split on the question whether YAF should devote its resources to counterrevolution on the campus or rather try to build a base of intellectually sound conservatives,⁸⁰⁵ local chapters responded enthusiastically to Luce’s appeal. In contrast to educational work, combatting the Left was exciting and rewarded determined activists with tangible success, even if by far not every battle was won. Not least, it also provided an outlet for frustrations nurtured by campuses hostile or indifferent to conservative ideas, left-wing self-righteousness, and a press that seemed to favor the political enemy as representatives of the college generation. SCHNEIDER argues that developments in Vietnam also played a role in this turn to more radical action: when conservatives realized that they could not do much to influence policy abroad, they turned to combating dissenters within.⁸⁰⁶

Additionally, YAFers felt that they could not rely on university administrations to protect their interests. Luce stoked the fires: the basis for much of the New Left’s success, he argued, was a fundamental misunderstanding of the “theory of confrontation” which radicals followed:⁸⁰⁷ First, they would find or “manufacture” an issue that could potentially appeal to a broad number of “idealistic” students. Then, they would direct “outrageous” demands at the administration that could never realistically be accepted. When those demands were inevitably rejected, the Left could claim that the democratic process had now been exhausted by administration intransigence and call on its supporters to employ civil disobedience tactics like the occupation of a building, a student strike etc.⁸⁰⁸ Should the university then call in the police to break up the crowds, the radicals would have justification for further violence or could stylize themselves as martyrs.⁸⁰⁹ Since according to Luce most campus administrations could be counted on to “fall into the confrontation trap,” someone else, namely YAFers, had to intervene. Luce even argued that it was not the administration’s job to handle “left-wing threat[s] of campus anarchy” in the first place: “It is a student job to handle student problems.”⁸¹⁰

While most YAF members agreed that students were better equipped to handle the New Left, the organization’s official stand was that administrators, in fact, *were* responsible to keep order on campus, and a determined stand could often nip violence and disorder in the bud. Looking

⁸⁰⁴ The Sharon Statement (1960).

⁸⁰⁵ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.112–113.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁸⁰⁷ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: *Against the Wall*, in: *The New Guard*, November 1968, p.18.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. LEO, N. N.: *Understanding Radicals*, in: *Creative Californian*, January 1969, p.2.

⁸⁰⁹ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: *Against the Wall*, in: *The New Guard*, November 1968, pp.18–19.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.19.

back at the developments of the second half of the Sixties and early Seventies, YAF chairman David Keene testified before the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest (also known as Scranton Commission):

“The violence that plagues our campuses today results from administrative failures, and [...] timidity, or else indifference to responsibility, over a period of at least six or seven years. The trend has been clear since the days of the ‘Filthy Speech’ Movement at Berkeley, but administrators, faculty members and students alike have tried to ignore it in the hope that it would miraculously reverse itself.”⁸¹¹

Keene used his own alma mater, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, one of the hotbeds of leftist activity in the US, as an example. The university president and chancellor had turned a blind eye on mild rule infringements to avoid trouble with the student body. In Keene’s words, they were “more concerned about peace in their time than about preserving the educational institutions which had been given into their hands.” Leftists had thus learned, Keene suggests, that they need not fear punishment and had subsequently broken more and major rules. “He [Chancellor Fleming] became a joke, a ‘paper tiger.’” When the university later had called upon the police to break up a protest against the recruitment of students by Dow Chemical, a company which manufactured a defoliant known as ‘Agent Orange’ that was used in Vietnam, it had faced harsh criticism by some student groups. Keene reported that students asked, “how they could be expected to think the police were serious when no one had ever resisted student mobs in the past.”⁸¹² Keene was convinced that Madison was representative for many of the nation’s campuses and that, had the administration taken a firm stand from the beginning, the turmoils of 1967 to 1970 could have been averted. Only a month after Keene’s testimony, the bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center at the Madison campus left one physicist dead and three other persons wounded.

Once YAF chapters saw themselves confronted with campus unrest, concerns about lackadaisical administrations were water over the dam. The majority of students, they felt, had to take action to protect their campus and interests. The most basic way in which they could do so was to show that they were, in fact, the majority. When a coalition of left-wing groups including the Third World Liberation Front (A coalition of African American, Latino, and Asian American groups), the SDS, and the Black Panthers initiated a student strike at San Francisco State College to demand the introduction of an Ethnic Studies program, they encountered determined resistance by acting president Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa, recently appointed by the Reagan administration. Hayakawa simultaneously became a symbol of resistance for the Right and the embodiment of institutional repression (“Hayakawa

⁸¹¹ Testimony of David A. Keene, Chairman, Young Americans for Freedom, before the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, July 24, 1970, pp.1–2. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁸¹² Ibid., pp.2–3.

Eichmann”) on the Left when during a protest on December 2, 1968, he climbed upon a protestors’ truck and tried to disconnect the sound speakers.⁸¹³

While the university president earned the scorn of leftists across the nation, YAF members quickly organized a show of support. In a memorandum sent out less than a week after the sound truck incident, California state chairman Bill Steel urged every chapter and activists to wear a blue armband the coming week to protest against campus unrest and show support for Hayakawa.⁸¹⁴ Out of this incident grew a large-scale YAF campaign.⁸¹⁵ The original armbands were replaced by blue buttons, more convenient for everyday use, but the message stayed the same. The goal was to “enlist all the liberty-minded citizens, young and old, to claim freedom will prevail on the campus and that Fascist Pig Demonstrators [i.e. SDS and other groups, G.W.] will no longer be tolerated. [...] [They] will no longer be able to claim that the populous [sic] supports their Fascist actions in demanding anarchy.”⁸¹⁶

Hundreds of thousands of such buttons were produced and shipped in 1969 and 1970.⁸¹⁷ While the original blue armbands were worn only by conservative student activists, the blue buttons were also distributed widely among non-politicos and non-students.⁸¹⁸ YAF thus aimed to show that there was a broad societal consensus against campus unrest and that students themselves were only one facet of it. It was also meant to signify that many people outside campus were able to distinguish between the minority of protestors and the majority of students that did not take part in such actions.

The project was successful in that YAF not only distributed large quantities of buttons, but also were able to enlist prominent support, and thus press coverage. Especially iconic was the photograph of Dennis Clarke of Hawaii YAF showering Hayakawa himself with leis and pinning an orchid boutonniere on the university president’s lapel.⁸¹⁹ Another prominent supporter was Ronald Reagan, who accepted a blue button at a meeting with California

⁸¹³ The San Francisco State College Strike Collection. Chronology of Events [Undated], online: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150510140936/http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/collections/strike/chronology.html> [06.05.2020].

⁸¹⁴ William Steel/Ron Kimberling to All College Chapter Chairmen, December 8, 1968. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

⁸¹⁵ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.231, cites California YAF executive director Allen Brandstater, who relates that it was Luce who originally came up with the idea of the blue button campaign. It is plausible that Brandstater, who was one of the leaders of a rivaling faction of Steel, wanted to diminish the influence of the latter in coming up with the project. More likely is that Luce saw the success and thought that the project could work across the nation.

⁸¹⁶ “Blue Button”, in: *Creative Californian*, January 1969. YAF Records, Box 5, Folder 5.

⁸¹⁷ Cf. Jerry Norton to National Board, October 15, 1970. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 2.

⁸¹⁸ Cf. “The Blue Button: Support Peace on Campus” (Leaflet), Undated 1968/69. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

⁸¹⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.231; YAF in the News, March 1969. Herbert Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 7. The press articles do not actually state that the orchid boutonniere was blue, but for symbolic effect, it is likely.

YAFers.⁸²⁰ This success inspired other YAF chapters, and the project was turned into a nationwide campaign in 1970.⁸²¹ Ultimately, however, even the resolute Hayakawa ultimately surrendered to the demands of radical students after the student strike had lasted for 134 days. This did not, however, harm his popularity with conservatives, whose support enabled him to successfully run for the Senate as a Republican in 1976. In an irony of history, his Democratic opponent was being challenged in the primary by former SDS leader Tom Hayden, forcing him to run further leftward. Hayakawa could therefore make full use of the credentials he had gained in the late Sixties.

The blue button campaign fulfilled an important symbolic function, but some YAF chapters were drawn to a more direct approach. Many of the ensuing conflicts that those activists involved themselves in were sparked by the Vietnam War. In the Madison example above, the cause of conflict was Dow Chemical’s production of combat agents, but leftist protests also turned against recruitment by the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), university institutions involved in military research, and speeches by administration officials or war supporters. In the latter case, YAFers saw their suspicions that the New Left rejected free speech for anyone but themselves confirmed.⁸²² When in 1968, Columbia SDS initiated a referendum on the question of ‘open’ recruiting on campus, the overwhelming majority (about 70 per cent) voted in favor of open recruitment.⁸²³ A *New Guard* editorial claimed that

“Free speech would be an issue even if SDS duped a majority of students into voting away their rights. The rights of a minority are either preserved or society forfeits its claim to guaranteeing a system of rights.”⁸²⁴

The university, the editors argued, had to guarantee the right to recruitment regardless of the outcome of such a referendum, because minority rights trumped the democratic process.⁸²⁵ What’s interesting is that this is precisely the line of argument YAF had rejected when it was used by the Civil Rights Movement.⁸²⁶ To avert accusations of promoting a double standard, YAF, as shown above, framed the term ‘rights’ in a way that it would apply to conservative demands, but not to those of the New Left/Civil Rights Movement. In general, YAF appeals to free speech appear hypocritical. YAFers shed crocodile tears when the Left picketed speeches

⁸²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.232.

⁸²¹ Cf. “YAF & The Right Scene”, in: *The New Guard*, November 1970, pp.32–33.

⁸²² Cf. “‘Free Speech’ On The Left”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1967, p.6.

⁸²³ Cf. DOWNS, Donald Alexander/MURTAZASHVILI, Ilia: *Arms and the University. Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-Military Students*, Cambridge 2012, pp.146–147.

⁸²⁴ “Free Speech on SDS Terms”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1968, p.3.

⁸²⁵ Of course, YAF would mostly argue that students favoring open recruitment were actually the majority (as seen in the referendum), whose rights were infringed by a minority. For example, when leftists protested against CIA recruitment at Purdue, *The New Guard* commented: “Purdue YAF pointed out that a small minority had used force to violate the rights of the majority.” “Purdue YAF Counters Left” (*YAF Around the Nation*), in: *The New Guard*, December 1968, p.24.

⁸²⁶ See chapter 2.

of war supporters but occupied the front row when it came to protesting the appearance of leftist speakers.⁸²⁷ Had YAF had the resources, the organization likely would have tried to suppress free speech of their adversaries much in the same way that the Left did.

The question of free speech was not the only one in which YAF adapted the tactics of their counterparts. The embrace of measures such as sit-ins, blockades, and occupations conflicted to a certain degree with YAF’s self-image as the force of order on campus. Some activists felt “properly reluctant” to resort to disruptive activities that relied on (implied) violence and coercion, according to national secretary Ronald Docksai.⁸²⁸ But Luce would have none of it: he chided “These good folks always are careful to remain good gentlemen even as they are being battered over the head.”⁸²⁹ If students were to suffer under leftist actions, he proposed, they should at least respond in kind.

And so, many chapters took up arms and faced SDS and its allies head-on. Some groups occupied the offices of leftist organizations. They took advantage of the letter of the law, which only recognized trespassing as such once the residents informed the police. SCANLON characterized those endeavors as “violent,”⁸³⁰ but they were originally planned as satirical imitations of left-wing actions. When YAF occupied the “SDS Communique Center” in Greenwich Village, New York, for example, they only stayed from 9 to 11:30 am.⁸³¹ In their communication with the press, YAF stressed the duplicity of SDS, who proclaimed occupations as a legitimate strategy on the one hand and lamented their breaking up as authoritarian, repressive measures, but on the other hand called the police when YAF was the occupier. There were neither clashes with SDS members themselves, since, except for a secretary, the office was empty, nor with the police. While vacating the premises, YAF told reporters that, as conservatives, they rejected attacks on private property as a political tactic.⁸³² No violence ensued either when YAF occupied a New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (‘New Mobe’, one of the leading anti-war organizations) headquarter, which they left after about half a day.⁸³³ In a press conference held during the short-lived occupation of the ‘Resistance’ (an organization devoted to active draft evasion) headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts YAF State Chairman Don Feder summarized his organization’s position:

⁸²⁷ For example, when Jerry Rubin visited Penn State, the local YAF chapter protested and distributed leaflets with Jerry Rubin quotations, that were however, preceded by fake questions the activists had made up to make the answers sound more ridiculous. “YAF Around the Nation”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1969, p.18.

⁸²⁸ “YAF Declares Legal War on Campus Disrupters, in: *The New Guard*, November 1969, p.4.

⁸²⁹ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: *Against the Wall*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1969, p.15.

⁸³⁰ SCANLON, *The Pro-War Movement*, p.247.

⁸³¹ ““New York YAF Liberates SDS Office” (YAF Around the Nation), in: *The New Guard*, December 1968, p.25.

⁸³² THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.224.

⁸³³ Cf. “NY YAF Liberates Student Mobilization Headquarters”, in: *The New Guard*, October 1968, p.22.

“Because we respect property rights as fundamental in a democracy, no attempt will be made to hold this building for an extended period of time. But we want to make it clear to the Left that though we abhor its tactics of abrogating the rights of others in order to make a point, we, too, could do the same thing. It’s just that as *responsible* citizens, we respect the rights of others and prefer to express our protests through proper channels.”⁸³⁴

Such rhetoric was one thing, but in reality, YAF’s actions at least “blurred the line between mocking the anti-war movement and confronting it directly.”⁸³⁵ An illustrative case is the occupation of the offices of Women Strike for Peace (WSP) in New York, an anti-war organization that was associated neither primarily with students nor the New Left. In a note left by the six invading YAF members, they acknowledged that “maybe it isn’t you particular folks, but most of your side stubbornly and obnoxiously refuses to recognise that there is indeed another side to the story.”⁸³⁶ That apparently was justification enough for defacing posters on the wall and vandalizing other parts of the office. The WSP activists noted that the damage caused during YAF’s invasion had exacerbated an already critical financial situation.⁸³⁷ Yet the occupations were not YAF’s only actions where conservatives and their enemies became increasingly indistinguishable from one another.

For example, when about 130 protestors planned to occupy a gymnasium at St. John’s University in New York to protest ROTC recruiting⁸³⁸ which operated out of the gym building, “YAFers with blue armbands, loudspeakers and a decorated Mercedes-Benz carrying “SAVE ROTC” signs were guarding the front entrance.”⁸³⁹ During some pushing and shoving between the groups, Rev. Casey, dean of student affairs, apparently was knocked to the ground by one of the leftists. As YAF board member Ronald Docksai, who became the organization’s longest-serving chairman in the Seventies, relates the story, at this moment several hundred conservative reinforcements were on their way to the gym. “Seeing the situation, as any rational mob will, they or someone yelled ‘Charge!’”⁸⁴⁰ A brawl broke out in front of the building and in a nearby cafeteria. The original protestors were escorted into the gym by the campus police, where they held their sit-in and lay under siege by the YAFers and their allies outside.

⁸³⁴ “Massachusetts YAF Liberates Resistance Office” (YAF Around the Nation), in: *The New Guard*, January 1969, p.22 (Emphasis in the original) In turn, the Massachusetts YAF office in Boston was attacked by arsonists the next year, cf. “YAF in the U.S.A.”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1970, p.4.

⁸³⁵ SWIFT, Ethan: *Young Americans for Freedom and the Anti-War Movement. Pro-War Encounters with the New Left at the Height of the Vietnam War*, New Haven, CT 2019, p.32, online: https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/mssa_collections/19/ [12.03.2020].

⁸³⁶ Cited according to COBURN, Jon: *Making a Difference. The History and Memory of ‘Women Strike for Peace’*, 2015 (Diss. Northumbria University), p.143.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.142–143.

⁸³⁸ PUGH, Thomas; HAND, Judson: *Conservative Students Rout St. John’s Protesters*, in: *Daily News*, April 26, 1969, B3 Ronald Docksai, one of the conservative activists, speaks of only 30 to 40 protestors.

⁸³⁹ Ronald Docksai to Arnold Steinberg, April 26, 1969, p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 67, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Mar-Sep.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

When the leftists, in turn, called in reinforcements, conservative students effectively closed off the campus, granting access only to people with a St. John's student ID. Some SDS members tried to enter the campus regardless but were, in the words of Docksai, "reminded [...] of their mortality" by the 'guards.'⁸⁴¹ About four hours after the first confrontation, the counterrevolutionaries dispersed, and the campus returned the order. The report of Ronald Docksai conveys some of the excitement such clashes generated:

"It was the greatest thing I have ever seen. The left will never make a foothold on St. John's, and I think the campus YAF chapter was excellent for its organisation [sic] [...] and its brilliant tactical strategy that morning."⁸⁴²

However, not all reactions were positive. Fellow YAFer Herb Stupp distanced himself from the actions of his peers because they did nothing to alleviate campus unrest. In his eyes, they only reversed the relation between aggressor and defender.⁸⁴³ For example, at one point, the leftists demanded for the police to be called in to protect them, which the university administration in a show of even-handedness refused. Even Docksai himself invoked Edmund Burke and his reservations against the passions of an angry mob.⁸⁴⁴

While the success of counterrevolutionary tactics in this episode is remarkable, St. John's is a special case: the university itself was very conservative, which means that leftist strength on campus was somewhat limited in the first place. Even then, the few hundred that came to YAF's aid were not YAFers themselves, but mostly ROTC and fraternity members. On its own, YAF would probably not have had enough manpower to entirely shut down even this rather small group of demonstrators. Instead, they had formed a so-called 'majority coalition,' an organizing concept that had become popular during the altercations at Columbia University the year before.

4.3 Majority Coalitions

"The overriding issue on the college campus today is whether the radical demands and tactics of the New Left will be victorious or the vast majority of responsible students will arise from their lethargy and constructively oppose these radical demands and tactics"⁸⁴⁵

- Alan MacKay and Randal Teague, 1969

Whenever YAF wanted to directly prevent leftist actions like the occupation at St. John's, they needed to bolster their own numbers by allying with other, not necessarily explicitly conservative, groups. This way, they were able to compensate for the numerical superiority of groups like SDS. YAF chapters relied on the assumption that most students detested violent

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., p.2.

⁸⁴² Ibid., p.2.

⁸⁴³ Herbert STUPP. Interview by Georg WOLFF, New York, NY 27.10.2018.

⁸⁴⁴ Ronald Docksai to Arnold Steinberg, April 26, 1969, p.2. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 67, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Mar-Sep.

⁸⁴⁵ Alan MacKay/Randal Teague to YAF Leaders, January 21, 1969, pp.10–11. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

leftist tactics that infringed on their everyday campus life. In YAF's eyes, this turned them into natural members of their anti-radical coalitions.⁸⁴⁶ Even liberals were welcome in the alliances.⁸⁴⁷ In the medium term, YAF planned to gain recognition by those groups as the most steadfast opponent of the New Left and win them for their own organization and conservatism.⁸⁴⁸

The best example of a majority coalition in practice are the student strikes of 1968 at Columbia University, New York. The Majority Coalition there was temporarily successful and served as inspiration and namesake for the national YAF program.⁸⁴⁹ Its origin lies in the recruitment referendum cited above, when a coalition with the name "Students for a Free Campus" (SFC) was formed by proponents of open recruiting. SDS rejected the result of the referendum (the majority voted for open recruiting) and protested, amongst others, against the university-affiliated Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA).⁸⁵⁰ Six of the ringleaders were arrested while demonstrating inside Low Library, an administration building (indoors demonstrations were prohibited), and were placed on disciplinary probation by the university on March 27, 1968.

About a month later, April 23, 1968, SDS planned on holding a demonstration in the same building to protest the probation decision. In response, SFC called upon students to form a human line around the entrance. They did manage to organize enough people to have a sit-in four rows deep on the steps to the entrance and thus successfully blocked SDS and its allies from entering.⁸⁵¹ The leftists then turned to Hamilton Hall, a classroom building, which they occupied and where they held the Dean of College of Columbia hostage. They were joined by the Student Afro-American Society (SAS), who were concerned with the construction of a new gymnasium on the border between the Columbia campus and Harlem.⁸⁵² Not only would the project require the rededication of parts of nearby Morningside Park (frequented mostly by African Americans and Puerto Ricans),⁸⁵³ since the campus was approximately 30m above the park grounds, the proposed building would also be split up into two parts: the upper floor, accessible from Columbia, would be a gymnasium, while the lower floor was entered through Harlem and would feature a community center. This smacked of segregation and yielded the project the nickname 'Gym Crow.'⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁴⁶ Cf. MACKAY, Alan: *Majority Coalitions*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1969, p.24.

⁸⁴⁷ Cf. Jerry Norton to College Chapter Chairmen et al., August 26, 1968, p.2. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 5.

⁸⁴⁸ THORBURN, Wayne: *Chapter Report*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1969, p.23.

⁸⁴⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.216.

⁸⁵⁰ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.113.

⁸⁵¹ Cf. MEYER, John: *What Happened at Columbia (and why)*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1968, p.15.

⁸⁵² Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.113.

⁸⁵³ Cf. "What We Want" (SDS/SAS), Undated (1968). *University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 41.*

⁸⁵⁴ On the origins of the conflict see BRADLEY, *Harlem vs. Columbia University*, pp.39–62.

The next morning, SAS kicked SDS out of Hamilton Hall. The black students feared that vandalism and destruction of property by SDS would reinforce negative stereotypes of black protestors. Furthermore, while the white radicals tried to mobilize the students against the university in general, black activists were, in this specific instance, concerned only with the gymnasium. Black protestors had serious reason to believe white radicals only used the gym issue to further their own agenda. Indeed, Columbia SDS leader Mark Rudd later admitted to a Harvard audience that

“[w]e manufactured the issues. The Institute for Defense Analysis is nothing at Columbia. Just three professors. And the gym issue is bull. It doesn’t mean anything to anybody. I had never been to the gym site before the demonstrations began. I didn’t even know how to get there.”

Instead, according to Rudd. SDS wanted to incite students against the Vietnam War and “the university system as a furtherance of the ruling class structure” in general.⁸⁵⁵

Since Martin Luther King, Jr., had been assassinated only a few weeks prior to the protests, the SAS hoped that police would go soft on an African American group to prevent further riots like the ones immediately after the assassination.

After the falling out, SDS occupied Low Library, now unprotected. The radicals then occupied building after building (up to five simultaneously) and called for a student strike.⁸⁵⁶ Because the university administration and police appeared incapable of bringing the situation under control, moderates and conservatives, among them the former SFC members, formed a new group, the ‘Majority Coalition.’⁸⁵⁷ Also among the members were people that sympathized with SDS’ goals, but “deplor[ed] the tactics used by the demonstrators.”⁸⁵⁸ Their first action was to hold a referendum on campus, in which the actions of SDS were condemned by a vote of 4142 to 1325. In response, the demonstrators called the referendum “irrelevant,” because the people of Harlem and Vietnam, for which they ostensibly spoke (despite them not being consulted by the (white) protestors either), had not been eligible to vote.⁸⁵⁹ Although there was a debate about whether such action would extend anarchy on campus, the Majority Coalition then decided to actively challenge the radicals⁸⁶⁰ and erected a blockade around Low Library.⁸⁶¹ They managed

⁸⁵⁵ “A Campus Rebel’s Confession”, in: *The Boston Globe*, October 1, 1968, p.14, online: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/366805460?accountid=11359> [11.05.2021].

⁸⁵⁶ Cf. “S.D.S. and the Strike Coordinating Committee”, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 41 Unsurprisingly, SDS chairman Mark Rudd was named chair of the Strike Coordinating Committee “without a vote.”

⁸⁵⁷ Cf. MEYER, John: What Happened at Columbia (and why), in: *The New Guard*, September 1968, pp.15–16.

⁸⁵⁸ “What the Majority Coalition Stands For”, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 13.

⁸⁵⁹ “The Referendum is Irrelevant”, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 41.

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. Majority Coalition Statement, April 28, 1968. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 13.

⁸⁶¹ Cf. “Silent Vigil” Flyer, Majority Coalition, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 13.

to effectively entrap SDS in the occupied building. Three conservative ‘guerillas’ even entered the university tunnel system, located the fuse box and turned off the electricity.⁸⁶² The counterrevolutionaries, however, stressed that they would cease their activity as soon as the university administration or the police began to effectively combat the leftists. While the demonstrators claimed that the Majority Coalition, also simply referred to as “jocks”⁸⁶³ was misrepresenting the numbers and their actions were “against the interests of the overwhelming majority of students on campus,”⁸⁶⁴ few came to the help of the radicals. SDSers from other occupied buildings gathered to form a relief force, but their efforts failed because of the numerical superiority of the besiegers. Later, about fifty blockade runners tried to break through by throwing ammonia into the group outside but were quickly pushed back.

Fearing that the situation would go completely out of hands, the administration ordered the police to form a block between the two opposed camps and finally asked them to clear the building. At this point, the blockade had been in place for 33 hours.⁸⁶⁵ John Meyer, member of the local YAF chapter and son of conservative philosopher Frank Meyer, remarked that while SFC had been composed primarily of campus politicians, the Majority Coalition’s members were mostly former apolitical students. Only by mobilizing people that were normally apathetic to such happenings did it get the numbers needed for success.⁸⁶⁶

However, the police operation on campus was as immensely unpopular as YAF strategists had long feared. The Majority Coalition tried to argue that “the blood of many students injured in this necessary eviction [...] lies squarely upon those who broke the law and those who urged and organized them to do so; SDS.”⁸⁶⁷ Consequently, they continued their push against amnesty for the protestors. But the Left could successfully claim the role of victim after the police used violence to clear Low Library. Afterwards, they were able to regain some sympathies and enforce their goals vis-à-vis the university administration in the following year.⁸⁶⁸

Although the success of the group was thus temporarily limited, YAF leaders felt encouraged by the fact that it had managed to stave off leftist action at all. Consequently, they turned the majority coalition approach into one of six cornerstones of the 1969 ‘Young America’s Freedom Offensive,’ an “all-encompassing, umbrella program approach” that was designed to

⁸⁶² Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.213–214.

⁸⁶³ “Latest News”, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 41.

⁸⁶⁴ “Low Library”, Undated (1968). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 41.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. MEYER, John: *What Happened at Columbia (and why)*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1968, p.16.

⁸⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁸⁶⁷ “Defend Peace; Defeat SDS!”, May 6, 1968. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958–1999, Series VIII: Students, Groups, 1966–1975, Box 11, Folder 13.

⁸⁶⁸ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.114.

streamline chapter programming for the year.⁸⁶⁹ Other such cornerstones were the campaigns against East-West trade, the voluntary military,⁸⁷⁰ or the involvement of youth in political campaigns. This underlines the high expectations YAF leaders placed in the concept. They hoped that it could be a panacea against the Left, a strategy that could be implemented by chapters all over the country. Alan MacKay, YAF national chairman from 1967 to 1969, admitted in an accompanying *New Guard* article that countering the New Left “may be the most difficult objective of Young America’s Freedom Offensive, but I believe we must defeat these contemporary fascists.”⁸⁷¹ To support chapters in starting their own groups, the national organization provided an ‘Majority Coalition Campus Action Kit,’ which included a manual of the same name,⁸⁷² the ‘Student Subversion’ issue of U.S.A. magazine, a booklet containing an assortment of quotes by New Left leaders, a collection of reprinted articles mostly from *The New Guard*,⁸⁷³ and copies of YAF’s latest thematic flyer.⁸⁷⁴ The organization manual provided eager chapters with recommendations on forming a hard core of committed activists to do the leg work, which groups of students to target as members for the coalition, as well as exemplary names for coalitions. This information was accompanied by reports of already existing majority coalitions and suggested activities. The other booklets, in contrast, were meant to provide an understanding of the campus Left, its goals and organizational strategies. It is notable that YAF prescribed a proactive strategy to its chapters. They should not wait until New Left action had already begun but organize coalitions independently.⁸⁷⁵ The second type of material served that purpose.

After a few months’ runtime, YAF college director Wayne Thorburn had mixed feelings about the success of the program. On the one hand, he could point to numerous examples where majority coalitions had had successes, e.g. at Harvard or American University, on the other, he worried that chapters might forget about long-term benefits for the national organization. If YAF members did all the work, he argued, they should make sure that YAF was credited by the press.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁶⁹ Alan MacKay/Randal Teague to YAF Leaders, January 21, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

⁸⁷⁰ See chapter 3.

⁸⁷¹ MACKAY, Alan: Majority Coalitions, in: *The New Guard*, March 1969, p.25.

⁸⁷² “Majority Coalition Campus Action Manual”, Undated (1969). Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 219, Folder 4.

⁸⁷³ “Help! Understand and Defeat the Left-Wing”, Undated (1969). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 3, Folder 5.

⁸⁷⁴ “Student Subversion – The Majority Replies”, YAF-Flyer, Undated (1969). Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 219, Folder 4.

⁸⁷⁵ Cf. Jerry Norton to College Chapter Chairmen et al., August 26, 1968, p.1. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 5.

⁸⁷⁶ Cf. Wayne Thorburn to Chapter Chairmen et al., Undated (1969). Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda + circulars.

Others were even less satisfied with the program, however. For example, where the national organization was in search of a “silent majority” of students to organize into a coalition, New York state chairman James Farley only saw a “chicken majority [...] [W]e didn’t succeed because the type of people working for us were [sic] interested in getting good grades, and were unprepared to fight SDS.”⁸⁷⁷ Perhaps more importantly, even when people joined and were ready to fight, not all YAF members were convinced that those were the people the organization should attract. David Brudnoy, a YAF member from Boston who later became a successful talk show host, reflected on the “dilemma” he recognized after observing a demonstration by conservatives in Boston:

“Can YAF enlist the vital support of bright collegiate disaffecteds without also unavoidably drawing people who aren’t conservatives, who don’t know or care about the issues, but who merely want to foul up the ‘peace’ people? If it gathers the latter, despite its desires, will YAF go the SDS route—into violence, know-nothingism, cynicism, repressiveness—thus losing its intellectual support?”⁸⁷⁸

Brudnoy feared that such action could easily turn into a “mindless backlash,” which would ultimately hurt YAF as an organization and present a danger to American society.

Ultimately, the program was scrapped less because of concerns such as Brudnoy’s, although they would turn out to be well-founded,⁸⁷⁹ but because the organization’s leaders realized that the goal of presenting YAF as *the* campus alternative to radicals and disorder was actually hindered by the “united-front” approach, because it obscured the organization’s contribution. In their updated version of the booklet now called ‘Campus Action Manual,’⁸⁸⁰ local chapters were encouraged to take the lead “in the struggle against the tyranny of the left-wing” and should only in special cases form broader alliances.

4.4 Confronting Leftist Ideology

“If the Left will be there, with its legions of Sin,
On me it’s incumbent to bring Truth to the kin.”

- Robert Schuchman, 1960s⁸⁸¹

While direct confrontations with the New Left were the most spectacular part of the Campus Wars and attracted plenty of press attention, YAF also tried to wage a war of ideas against their campus opponents. Conservative proselytizing on campus had been a core mission of the organization since its outset, and they managed to embed the conflict into an ideological framework. Individual acts of aggression, a YAF leaflet argued, were the “physical

⁸⁷⁷ GUTSTEIN, Linda: Students on the Right Get Ready for Battle, in: Parade, October 5, 1969, p.4.

⁸⁷⁸ BRUDNOY, David: This Time, Our Side in Boston Common, in: YAF in the News, February 1970. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 8.

⁸⁷⁹ See chapter 6.

⁸⁸⁰ “Campus Action Manual”, Undated (1970). YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 2.

⁸⁸¹ “Robert Schuchman – As His Friends Remember Him”, in: The New Guard, April 1966, p.7.

manifestations of their [leftists'] philosophy.”⁸⁸² As such, the Campus Wars were only the tangible side of a conflict that was primarily a war of ideas between (conservative) individualism and (leftist) collectivism. As collectivists, the flyer argued, groups like SDS rejected the idea of individual rights, which enabled them to pursue their goals at the expense of their fellow students, whose orderly education was disrupted.

Consequently, in their ideational response to the New Left, YAF focused on the issue of student power. In their eyes, granting too much power to the minority of radical students would divest the majority of students of the opportunity to pursue their chosen education and render them helpless in the face of an all-powerful student mob. However, YAFers acknowledged that radical students should have the opportunity to seek out a university providing the kind of education they felt lacking at US campuses. Cries for student power, however, were the wrong way to do it. If their demands had merit, libertarian-leaning David Walter of Pennsylvania YAF argued, they could have chosen a university more congenial to their ideas. Should such an institution not exist, the free market would surely be able to provide one. Were the leftists really the majority of students as they argued, he added, there would be no lack of demand for such an enterprise.⁸⁸³

Allan Brownfeld, who was cited above as an enthusiastic responder to the Free Speech Movement, presented a different argument. In testimony before the House Education and Labor Committee, he argued that the questioning of the bureaucratization of modern universities was good, and indeed necessary. With educational institutions orienting themselves further and further towards acquiring research grants, teaching became less important and students rightfully challenged that. Brownfeld also concurred that there was a definite generation gap between students on the one, and professors and administrators on the other hand. The experience of the Great Depression and World War II had left the latter “frozen” in their ideology.⁸⁸⁴ Yet such legitimate concerns were overshadowed by the student power issue.

Brownfeld suggested distinguishing clearly between questions of university reform and student power. The second, he argued, was promoted largely by the leaders (“the Tom Haydens, the Jerry Rubins,” etc.) of the movement, who, suffering from a generation gap of their own, were mostly about ten years older than the young activists themselves. Those leaders planned ‘spontaneous’ demonstrations months in advance and, if necessary, manufactured the issues to

⁸⁸² “New Left Violence: the Method to their Madness” (YAF-Flyer), Undated. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

⁸⁸³ WALTER, David: The Mad, Mad World of Student Power, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, June 1968, pp.9–12. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁸⁸⁴ Summary of the Remarks of Allan C. Brownfeld before the House Education and Labor Committee, May 15, 1969, p.1. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 5.

ignite them. Brownfeld speculated that leftist leaders saw universities as testing grounds for how much power they could achieve for their collectivist ideas. If a major university could be taken over within days, “no institution of society was secure.”⁸⁸⁵

Although Brownfeld did not explicate it in his statement, he ascribed an individualist mindset to the younger, the ‘true’ activists: they were concerned with the depersonalization of the university and the disappearance of an education which sought to bring forth the potential of the individual (in contrast to the standardized ‘education factories’ of the 60s). In contrast, he claimed that New Left leaders disregarded individual activists and their campuses and saw them only as cogs in the wheels of the revolution.

When YAFers encountered supposedly manufactured issues in the wild, they employed satire to mock the arbitrariness of the presented grievances or self-serving demands of the protestors. Luce argued in one of his monthly *New Guard* column that “ridicule and humor really bug the left wing”,⁸⁸⁶ and satire must have seemed to be the perfect tool for youthful conservatives on campus, who could make use of their creativity (and, for those who were not beyond it, their smugness).⁸⁸⁷

Once again, the Columbia strike may serve as an example. Students who rejected the demands and actions of the protestors produced numerous satirical pieces, mainly flyers.⁸⁸⁸ These leaflets poked fun both at white and black protestors. They were supposedly political messages by groups whose acronyms resembled those of leading actors during the strike, e.g. the Students Demanding Sex (SDS), the Independent Destructionist Association (IDA), or the Columbia Italian-Americans (CIA). In the text, conservative activists made a mockery of their opponents’ demands. They adopted language and stylistic elements, e.g. lists of demands and crude drawings, from their counterparts. The ‘CIA’ for example decried the Columbia administration’s (“the racist motherfuckers in Low Library”) involvement with the “British British” in the “Rape of Anguilla”,⁸⁸⁹ and therefore demanded that the portrait of the British king be removed from the stairwell in Butler Library.⁸⁹⁰ By pointing to an absurd example such

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid., p.2.

⁸⁸⁶ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Against the Wall, in: *The New Guard*, December 1968, p.17.

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.223–225.

⁸⁸⁸ While not all of those can be directly attributed to YAF, at least one flyer by the ‘Sons of Gael’ was made by YAFers, cf. Ronald Docksai to William Buckley, April 3, 1969. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 67, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Mar-Sep. The demands on this flyer and the ‘Sons of Gael’ themselves are referenced by multiple others that thus were probably also produced by YAF members.

⁸⁸⁹ A tiny Caribbean island nation, who had recently declared independence from St. Kitts and Nevis. As former colonial overlord, the British government had sent a few hundred troops to keep things from escalating. The island was then (after the events of 1969) allowed to secede. The author does not claim any knowledge about actual involvement on the part of Columbia University.

⁸⁹⁰ “Andy’s Pigs Rape Anguilla”, March 25, 1969. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 1.

as a minor disorder in a Caribbean island nation that was supposedly also being steered from Columbia, the authors meant to show that it was sovereign nations, not universities, that began and pursued conflicts. They thus questioned the protestors' view of Columbia as a tool for US imperialism.

Another piece by the 'IDA' criticized the use of violence and disorder as an end itself. Their demands were that the spring semester be declared "a period of unlimited destruction (it is the fact that already; we just want to make it de jure)",⁸⁹¹ that the School for International Affairs be closed (because it might train diplomats), that Peace Corps and Vista recruiters be denied access to the campus, and that amnesty be granted to all activists. The group apparently had no goals other than a continuation of violence and disorder. It thus held up a mirror to the Left, some of whose prominent demands during the Columbia Strike were not concerned with the issues that were ostensibly being protested, but with amnesty and rehabilitation of those involved.⁸⁹² With respect to the Civil Rights Movement, YAF had warned in the past that proponents of civil disobedience needed to be willing to accept the legal consequences of their actions, lest they promote violence and disorder instead of their stated goals.⁸⁹³ The Independent Destructionists' Association also vouched to begin negotiation only when the demands of the Columbia Italian-Americans and the Sons of Gael had already been granted. The latter two groups, in turn, referenced each other as allies in a struggle for minority rights and presented their respective demands as non-negotiable.⁸⁹⁴ Thus, the groups de facto claimed that negotiations would only be possible once all of their demands had already been granted.

Especially the Sons of Gael, purportedly an organization of Scottish students at Columbia, attacked the (what became later known as) identity politics of the black protestors. By demanding a "Caledonian [S]tudies program including a Gaelic language course and a course in the gentle art of Whiskey distilling (to fulfill the math science requirements)"⁸⁹⁵ they tried to call into question whether university curriculars were really catered to white students, as blacks argued. Presenting courses geared towards a *particular* white ethnicity (that were not offered

⁸⁹¹ "Time to Destroy", Undated 1969. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 1.

⁸⁹² E.g., the most prominent version of the 1968 protestors' demands featured four distinct points, of which two were concerned with avoiding disciplinary consequences for the activists, cf. Black Students of Hamilton Hall to Grayson Kirk, May 22, 1968. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 21 Another resolution called full amnesty "a necessary precondition to any settlement of demands." Resolution Passed by Acclamation by the Students Occupying the Liberated Hall of Avery, Undated 1968. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 21.

⁸⁹³ See chapter 2.

⁸⁹⁴ Cf. "Strike for Anguilla", Undated (1969). University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 1.

⁸⁹⁵ "Minority Students Demand Their Rights", Undated 1969. University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999: Series VIII: Students: Groups, 1966-1975, Box 11, Folder 1.

by Columbia), they implied that the existing curriculum was genuinely American, which supposedly included Afro-Americans. However, the call for “permission to graze sheep on South Field,” once a football/baseball field, then an array of lawns on campus, can be interpreted to mean that allowing black (or any particular ethnic’s) cultural traditions to take place on campus would be damaging for the university image or disruptive of students’ everyday life.

All in all, while certainly entertaining, the political potency of such pieces was probably limited. They spoke inwards to the circle of counterrevolutionary activists, and while uncommitted students might have appreciated them for their wit, it is hardly believable that they attracted many new members for YAF or the Majority Coalition. Although the smugness of the writing must have angered leftist activists, they were not thought-provoking enough to affect any political conversions.

Another more successful and lasting YAF publishing operation was the establishment of conservative underground newspapers. MCMILLIAN has argued that revolutions in printing technology that made the production of newspapers affordable even for smaller activist groups were one of the main drives behind the spread of the 1960s New Left and its “contrapuntal expressions of furious anger and joyful bliss.”⁸⁹⁶ While YAF’s monthly in-house publication *The New Guard* through its glossy cover and clean, professional layout was, perhaps intentionally, the opposite of the prototypical underground newspaper, the advent of self-published leftist newspapers on many campuses required that the organization add another facet to its communication strategy. The “New Left propaganda rags”,⁸⁹⁷ as a YAF handbook called them, reached readers through their brevity and humor (and, not least, their pornographic content), something *New Guard* was not poised to imitate. Establishing a network of individual independent underground presses also had the advantage that newspapers could concentrate on their respective local developments, because they did not need to appeal to a national audience. They would also broaden the scope from a conservative to a general audience. In the words of the YAF chapter services director, the organization had “moved from the era of chapter newsletters, circulated among all YAF members, to that of campus-wide publications.”⁸⁹⁸

Conservatives and radicals shared some motivations in founding their own publications. Leftists were frustrated by the lack of coverage the youth movements of Left had received in the early Sixties. They detested the mainstream journalism of their time, which, concentrated

⁸⁹⁶ MCMILLIAN, John: *Smoking Typewriters. The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, New York, NY 2011, pp.4–5.

⁸⁹⁷ “Do It! Or Publishing a Conservative Underground Newspaper”, Undated, p.1. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 5.

⁸⁹⁸ Cf. Director of Chapter Services’ Report, Undated, June 1969. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 5.

in the hands of a few powerful owners, rejected ideologically charged reporting in favor of “increasingly bland, cautious, and professionally balanced journalism.”⁸⁹⁹ Conservatives agreed that the mainstream media did not accurately cover their movement (although they would probably have characterized it as liberal-leaning, not devoid of ideology). However, they also posited a second distinct media establishment on campus. In their eyes, traditional campus publications were dominated by leftists. Underground newspapers, then, were merely the other side of the coin and actually a continuation of that establishment. While conservative publications actively tried to undermine that second establishment, they also fulfilled a function in confronting the first: Lee Edwards had demanded early on that conservatives needed to train young people to be part of a coming *conservative* establishment including media,⁹⁰⁰ and underground newspapers provided the perfect training grounds.⁹⁰¹

In newspaper publishing, YAF could employ both the strength of the national organization as well as the individual chapters. While the latter carried out the brunt of the legwork, the former published an organizing manual called “Do It! Or Publishing A Conservative Underground Newspaper.”⁹⁰² Additionally, the national organization had its own counterpart to the left-wing Liberation News Service, which provided individual papers with news, essays, and caricatures for reprinting, the Free Campus News Service (FCNS), established in 1969, while Pennsylvania YAF members were involved in forming the Libertarian Press Association.⁹⁰³ The FCNS quickly gained pace, and at its peak boasted over 100 independent newspapers as subscribers.⁹⁰⁴ An FCNS offshoot, Free Campus News, that focused exclusively on news, was established for a short period in the early Seventies.

The names of the underground newspapers that were part of the FCNS network convey their self-conception: there was *The Alternative* in Indiana (which later became *The American Spectator*, an important right-wing publication still today), *Counterpoint* in Massachusetts, or the *Free Trojan* in Southern California. Others chose names more directly appealing to their conservative stance such as *Captain America*, *The Capitalist*, *Right-On*, or *Conservative Review*. The quality and release schedules were diverse: while e.g. the *Stanford Arena* and *The Alternative* were professionally typeset and printed, with the former appearing bi-weekly, many others were mimeographed sheets appearing only once a term.

⁸⁹⁹ McMILLIAN, *Smoking Typewriters*, p.5.

⁹⁰⁰ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: *Needed: A Conservative Establishment*, in: *The New Guard*, June 1962, p.2.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. “Do It! Or Publishing a Conservative Underground Newspaper”, Undated, p.4. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 5.

⁹⁰² The title being a jab at Jerry Rubin’s *Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution*.

⁹⁰³ Cf. “The YAF Story”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1969, p.7; Arnold Steinberg to Board of Directors, March 1, 1969. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 4.

⁹⁰⁴ Cf. Chapter Services Board Report, February 1971. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 2.

Executive director Randal Teague deemed the underground newspaper program a success, and, when YAF reevaluated its focus on countering the New Left, explicitly mentioned the FCNS as one of the sustainable achievements of the Campus Wars programs.⁹⁰⁵ The publication ran well into the mid-Seventies, when financial problems mandated its scrapping, but underground/conservative newspapers remained a part of YAF's communication strategy even after that.

4.5 Institutional Approaches

Wherever possible, YAF used established institutional procedures to fight the New Left on campus. Two such institutions are especially important: student government and the courts. Student governments seemed a promising avenue to conservative activists, because capturing them could wrest the control over funds from the control of liberals/leftists and would enable them to reverse the oftentimes symbolic positions on national issues.⁹⁰⁶ Additionally, chances of succeeding were better than elsewhere, since student issues often trumped larger issues like the Vietnam War,⁹⁰⁷ and races were often decided less on political grounds, but by popularity and appeal.

A case in point is the Bloomington campus of Indiana University. Two established parties, *Action* and *Tyrus*, had long taken turns controlling the student government. But in 1966, the campus SDS chairman organized a third party, the Progressive Reform Party (PRP). By splitting the moderate and conservative votes between the two older parties, in 1967 PRP was able to get its candidate for student body president, Guy Loftman, elected, contributing to a trend of SDS student body presidents across the nation.⁹⁰⁸

Conservatives quickly mobilized against the new president, using the pages of the underground paper *The Alternative*, run by YAFer R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., for constant attacks on the man and his policies. The local YAF chapter and its allies seized on Loftman's opposition to the construction of a new basketball arena, ultimately convincing the university to go forward with the project and thus striking a serious blow to Loftman's presidency.⁹⁰⁹ The two established parties then merged to found a new one, *Impact*, which enjoyed YAF and *The Alternative* support. By instituting a membership fee, its funds outmatched that of PRP by far. After selecting two moderates as candidates for president and vice-president, *Impact* successfully

⁹⁰⁵Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, May 15, 1970. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 2; id. to National Board, May 14, 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

⁹⁰⁶ Cf. NORTON, Jerry: YAF and Student Government Politics, in: *The New Guard*, February 1971, pp.13–14.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, p.166.

⁹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.167–169.

⁹⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.170.

recaptured the student body presidency in 1968. Furthermore, the party secured a sweeping victory down the ballot, taking all but one senate seat from PRP, an event that was presented as a model for the nation's campuses and celebrated in *The New Guard*.⁹¹⁰ However, as with the majority coalitions, YAFers soon recognized that strength in numbers was not the end-all of student politics. The new moderate president seemed to continuously move to the left, thus making him untenable for conservatives. In 1969, the YAF chapter chairman got selected as *Impact* candidate for the student body presidency, leading to an exodus of moderates and the former vice-president now running as an independent. With the left-wing vote split because of internal dissent, and the Right not being strong enough to seriously challenge the independent candidate, the latter won easily, and YAF was effectively shut out from power. *Impact* faltered soon afterwards.⁹¹¹ The episode shows that on the one hand, conservatives could not expect to assert their demands in larger coalitions. On the other hand, they lacked the support to win elections on their own.

Therefore some of YAF's victories against the New Left were scored not on the campuses itself, but in the nation's courtrooms, where numbers of supporters did not matter. Legal actions completed YAF's multifaceted approach. They were included as a cornerstone of the board's attempt to introduce a more institution-centered approach towards the New Left on campus in preparation for the 1969 national convention.⁹¹² After the convention, YAF held press conferences in 57 cities to announce their upcoming 'legal offensive' against student radicals.⁹¹³ This 'legal offensive', however, was directed more at university administrations than campus activists, as the latter's disruptions were already subject to police and universities' disciplinary action. A paper prepared for YAF, for example explores potential legal avenues against college administrations on 34 pages, possible action against "Disruptive Students" was laid out on only 7. The most promising approaches seemed to be to sue for breach of contract or neglect of fiduciary responsibility on part of the university.⁹¹⁴

When entering the university, the author of the paper argued, each student had entered into a(n implied) contract with his respective alma mater. This contract obligated the student to submit himself to the disciplinary procedures of the school and its customs. In return, the university

⁹¹⁰ TYRRELL, Emmett: The Demise of the Politics of Emptiness, in: *The New Guard*, September 1968, pp.18–19.

⁹¹¹ Cf. LANTZER, *The Other Side of Campus*, pp.172–173.

⁹¹² Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 20–22, 1969, p.7. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 5; DEAR, Ronald: *Young America's Freedom Offensive: A 1969 Report*, in: *The New Guard*, January 1970, pp.12–13.

⁹¹³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.234.

⁹¹⁴ "Legal Responses to Campus Disorders", Undated 1969. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 2. I dated the memorandum into 1969 because it is probably the product of YAF's earlier hiring of a law student to compile material for campus lawsuits over the summer, cf. David Keene to Board of Directors, June 20, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, Political action programs THORBURN, p.234 incl. fn.160, dates it September 1969.

agreed to treat the student impartially and provide him with educational instruction.⁹¹⁵ If universities shut down over campus disorders, preventing students from attending their classes, the author argued, they thus breached this contract. Possible remedies for students included suing for damages, e.g. tuition fees or room and board fees that were paid only in relation to the student's expectation of attending classes at the university. However, if students received credits for semesters in which they could not attend classes, they might even try to sue for less tangible damages.⁹¹⁶ Students might also petition for an injunction or mandamus to force universities to reopen.⁹¹⁷ If courts should not follow these arguments, the author even recommended taking action under the Civil Rights Act. For example, a student who was prevented from entering campus buildings in order to attend classes supposedly was denied the freedom of lawful assembly, while someone being shouted down in class lost his freedom of speech.⁹¹⁸ It required some chutzpah to invoke the civil rights law that YAF had lobbied hard against, and all actual lawsuits known to me concentrated on the first two arguments.

At Penn State in 1968, YAFers argued that "by accepting our tuition, this university has entered into a contract with us ... If the actions of a belligerent minority deny us our rights by interrupting classes, we will bring suit, if necessary to have the university live up to its contractual obligations."⁹¹⁹ The suit which followed in the next spring semester was successful in attaining an injunction against New Left protests regarding on-campus recruiting. The concise summary of the broader legal argument used in the statement above was adopted in a modified way for the YAF campus action manuals.⁹²⁰

Such individual successes were encouraging, but the national organization cautioned against blind threats of legal action—activists should be willing to follow through and prepare accordingly. The latter included waiting for precedent to be established. Once again, Columbia University was the testing ground, as the conditions in the wake of the student strike seemed optimal to test out the efficacy of YAF's legal arguments.⁹²¹ Twelve students, including John Meyer, who had reported the events of the strike and the Majority Coalition for *The New Guard*, and other YAF members had sued the board of trustees of Columbia for breach of contract in

⁹¹⁵ Cf. "Legal Responses to Campus Disorders", Undated 1969, pp.5–6. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 2.

⁹¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.12–16.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.16–21.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.28–34, especially p.33.

⁹¹⁹ Cited according to THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.220.

⁹²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*; "Campus Action Manual", Undated (1970), pp.16–17. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 2 A direct adoption of that quote can for example be seen in "Mount YAF Unit Warns It May Sue", in: *The Gettysburg Times*, May 13, 1970, p.5. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, Newsletter, YAF in the News.

⁹²¹ Cf. "Campus Action Manual", Undated (1970), p.17. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 2.

January 1969. They estimated that their chances of winning the case were low, but that it would bring pressure to act upon the administration anyway.⁹²²

Despite the national office's warnings, most appeals to possible legal action remained empty threats. Following through was tedious work and "unexciting for students who may have joined antiradical coalitions solely for the thrill of confronting student radicals."⁹²³ Nevertheless, those that did follow through were sometimes successful in attaining injunctions.⁹²⁴ Perhaps more importantly, those suits laid the groundwork for YAF legal action on campus during the next decade, most of which however focused on the appropriation of student fees by supposedly leftist student governments.

4.6 The Deterioration of the New Left

When YAF leaders looked back on the last few tumultuous years in the early Seventies, it dawned on them that people like Brudnoy, who was cited above warning against a mindless backlash directed at the Left, had had a point. SDS self-destructed during its infamous 1969 national convention.⁹²⁵ Although the campus Left was by no means limited to that group, it became harder for YAF to pinpoint a national enemy that they could strategize against. Additionally, while campus unrest was still present in 1970—the Kent State Shootings on May 4, when the Ohio National Guard shot at protestors against the Cambodian incursion and killed four students, sparked the biggest nationwide student strike to this date, involving millions of participants—the situation quieted down during the beginning of the new decade thanks to the demise of many leading groups, the introduction of the draft lottery and the gradual American retreat out of Vietnam.

The Kent State Shootings chastened Luce, who now condemned "violence on our campuses no matter who is responsible for its instigation."⁹²⁶ While this was still directed mostly at the Left who tried to "reap [...] martyrdom" for a situation they had themselves created, Luce also stressed that positive alternatives had to be created "both to the Indo-China War and the senseless killing of the students at Kent State."⁹²⁷ This implicates that conservatives needed to acknowledge that the anger and frustration caused by the Vietnam War was real and justified and needed to be addressed constructively rather than through mere opposition or defamation.

⁹²² Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.217.

⁹²³ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.120.

⁹²⁴ Cf. New York State YAF Academic Year Report, 1970–1971, p.3. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 6.

⁹²⁵ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.207–209.

⁹²⁶ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: *The Violence Must Stop*, May 6, 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*

YAF, however, was not prepared to lose their most beloved enemy so quickly. A major part of its programming was geared towards combatting the campus Left. Yet, the organization almost exclusively *reacted* to radicals' actions.⁹²⁸ SCANLON argues that YAF neglected to formulate a genuinely conservative program to bring into play as a valid alternative to the vision of the Left.⁹²⁹ In fact, YAF had the resources to develop such a program and did so in the early Seventies with the Movement for Quality Education.⁹³⁰ During the Sixties, however, the national board adopted a passive role, convinced that local chapters were better equipped to handle matters on their own campuses. Contrary to earlier issues, where they had prescribed certain strategies to the chapters,⁹³¹ they wanted local members to be relatively flexible in their approach and gave support only in the form of organizing tips and the like.⁹³² Since the campus Left's organizations tended to have weak national structures, this seemed more sensible than a grand national strategy. However, this led, in Luce's words, to "wind mill chasing,"⁹³³ to YAF being in the defensive across the nation. Local chapters simply lacked the manpower and resources to go into the offensive. When the campus Left vanished, then, so did those campus projects designed to counter it and with them many of the members YAF had attracted through them, because, as Executive Director Randal Teague realized, "other than the New Left", YAF had "given [its] troops insufficient targets to 'hate.'"⁹³⁴

Additionally, the board had agreed to continue the "Student Crisis approach to fund raising [...] as long as possible."⁹³⁵ When the crisis seemed under control, it yielded YAF some grave financial problems.⁹³⁶ Donors probably felt that YAF had succeeded at its goal, since the organization had presented itself to them almost exclusively as the conservative campus alternative. Therefore, they would have felt that further financial support was not necessary. The years following the campus wars, then, were shaped by questions of how and where to direct YAF efforts to maintain and ignite continued activism.

⁹²⁸ Cf. SCANLON, *The Pro-War Movement*, p.250.

⁹²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.249.

⁹³⁰ See chapter 6.

⁹³¹ Cf. SCHOENWALD, *No War, No Welfare, and No Damn Taxation*, p.27.

⁹³² SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.110, in contrast, argues that the national board was only slow to respond and lacked a coherent strategy.

⁹³³ Phillip Luce to All Chapter Chairmen, September 26, 1969. Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 218, Folder 7.

⁹³⁴ Randal Teague to National Board, May 14, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

⁹³⁵ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 20–22, 1969. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 5.

⁹³⁶ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 5-7, 1971. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3.

5. “Young Authoritarians” and “Lazy Fairies” – The Revolt of the Libertarians

The fusionist alliance of libertarians and traditionalists had carried YAF through most of the 1960s. Although there had been contested issues, a sense of shared mission kept conflicts at bay. This changed towards the end of the decade when a libertarian faction challenged YAF’s direction. Disillusioned by U.S. foreign policy and radicalized through encounters with the New Left, they developed a fundamental critique of conservative anticommunism. The humid heat of the Southeast-Asian jungles dissolved the glue that had bound right-wing activism together for almost a decade.

5.1 1969 – A Year for Choosing

“The conservative movement is dying of stagnation. Its doom is sealed by its longing for tradition rather than value, by status quo rather than radicalism. Young Americans for Freedom was part of the conservative movement because we found ourselves common foes of the drift towards statism and economic interventionism. We unfortunately became part of the anti-communist crusade. [...] Upon the grave of the conservative reaction is growing the New Right—the Libertarian and freedom seeking Right.”⁹³⁷

- Donald Ernsberger, 1968

Until 1967, Dana Rohrabacher’s story had been the same that was shared by thousands of YAF activists across the country. In 1963, he read Barry Goldwater’s *Conscience of a Conservative* and “got turned on” to conservatism.⁹³⁸ He started organizing a Youth for Goldwater club at his high school, turning it into the largest in the state of California. Afterwards, he stayed active in politics. He joined YAF in 1964 in the aftermath of the Goldwater debacle and worked his way through the local ranks until he became (co-)state chairman of California YAF with William (Shawn) Steel in 1967. During that time, he was active in the leadership of the 1966 Youth for Reagan campaign where he “survived all of the purges and got some insights into what politics was really like.”⁹³⁹ Then came ‘Nam.

In 1967, Rohrabacher participated in a World Youth Crusade for Freedom sponsored trip to Vietnam. Experiencing the reality of the conflict sobered him up: “I couldn’t stomach the Viet Cong and still can’t. But I also noticed there was a great deal of corruption among South Vietnamese and especially American officials.”⁹⁴⁰ He subsequently investigated how American companies cooperated with those officials to establish monopoly markets for their products: “It was really a lesson in how monopolies were formed.”⁹⁴¹ When he returned to California, he noticed that the “straight conservative line”, YAF’s arguments for the war, would get “ripped

⁹³⁷ ERNSBERGER, Donald: YAF and the New Right, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, March 1968, p.2. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁹³⁸ BOCK, Alan: *Tripping on Freedom*, in: *RAP Magazine*, Fall 1970, p.6.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

apart” in discussions.⁹⁴² Step by step, he began taking a more libertarian stance on issues and came to the conclusion that the libertarian and authoritarian impulses of fusionism irreconcilable.

Also in 1967, the foundation for a new libertarian movement was laid when “Randists, Miseists, and elements of the old ‘radical right’ from all over the country got together and established an embryonic network of organization and communication” at the YAF national convention in Pittsburgh.⁹⁴³ Until then, libertarian efforts had lacked a sense of shared mission or were subsumed under the mantle of fusionism.

Nevertheless, there had been a significant libertarian presence in the organization since its very beginning. The name “Young Americans for Freedom” was chosen over “Young Conservatives of America” specifically to not exclude libertarians (and liberal anti-communists, for that matter).⁹⁴⁴ At the Sharon Conference, it was debated whether the reference to a “God-given free will”⁹⁴⁵ should be included in the statement or not. In the end, the more radical libertarians, adhering to the Objectivist ideology of writer and philosopher Ayn Rand lost out to the traditionalists in a narrow vote and the reference stayed.⁹⁴⁶ Rand stressed empiricism and reason as the only sources of knowledge. Because the highest objectivist virtue is rationality, for an objectivist to act morally means to act in his own rational self-interest. Objectivism can therefore be described as rational egotism.

Ayn Rand and her (atheistic) philosophy was the bone of contention in one of the “greatest disturbance[s] of peace” during the early years of YAF and its *The New Guard* magazine. Carol Bauman, who had been Associate Editor of the publication since its inception, noted that “there is a hardy band of Ayn Rand supporters among our subscribers. Just as many, however, are anti-Ayn Rand, so there you are.”⁹⁴⁷

It all had started when YAF member Robert Thornton reviewed Rand’s *For the New Intellectual* in the June 1961 edition. Calling Rand “one of the most able opponents of the statist philosophy”, he nevertheless criticized her lack of understanding of “the Mystics. [...] Man, and not God, is the center of her universe. Yet, paradoxically, she speaks of an objective moral

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ NOLAN, David: The Case for a Libertarian Political Party, in: *The Individualist*, July-Aug. 1971, p.24; WALTER, David: The Activist Origins of the New Libertarian Movement, in: *New Libertarian Notes*, November 1974, p.7.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: *Rebels With a Cause*, January 1978, p.5. YAF Records, Box 63, Folder 1.

⁹⁴⁵ The Sharon Statement (1960) The Sharon Statement was also included in most YAF material like flyers, *The New Guard* magazine etc.

⁹⁴⁶ Cf. EDWARDS, Just Right, p.21 SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.34.

⁹⁴⁷ BAUMAN, Carol: “Those Were Brave Words... And We Meant Them.”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1964, p.15. According to Bauman, libertarians and traditionalists often debated various issues during the evening staff meetings, but the most heated debates were about the layout and makeup of the magazine. The most controversial piece published was a review of *Sex and the Single Girl*.

code and of an objective absolute and these concepts imply belief in the existence of a being far and beyond man.”⁹⁴⁸ Rand supporters denied that a deity was necessary for objective morality,⁹⁴⁹ and the conflict simmered for a while.

Rhetoric on both sides escalated when *The New Guard* published another critique of Objectivism in 1962, with the author calling it “basically incompatible with conservatism.”⁹⁵⁰ Soon after, angry replies arrived at the *New Guard* office. One disgruntled Rand supporter wrote: “It is interesting that your criteria will exclude any Objectivist and will, instead, admit a rolling-on-the-floor Bircher, be he a froth-mouthed paranoiac.” The letter-writer also criticized that YAF purportedly stood “for Freedom”, but instead merely promoted Conservatism, which marks the first time a purported conflict between the two terms was brought up in the organization.⁹⁵¹ On the other side of the debate, religious YAFers went as far as to demand the removal of objectivists from the movement: “We do not want people like Ayn Rand who profess atheism on our side. When we do not profess our faith in God, the Communists will start to take over.”⁹⁵² However, most responders, while acknowledging their ideological differences, stressed the need for continued cooperation in working toward shared goals.⁹⁵³ There also was no organizational vehicle which the Randians could have used to push their agenda within the YAF structure.

During the following years, YAF offered a platform for young libertarians primarily through the pages of *The New Guard*,⁹⁵⁴ which slanted libertarian under the editorship of Arnold Steinberg since 1967.⁹⁵⁵ A regular column entitled “the radical” was written by David Friedman, son of Economics luminary and libertarian icon Milton Friedman. It ran from the January 1968 issue well into the early 1970s. Here, Friedman presented libertarian ideas to topics ranging from marijuana criminalization to proposals for metropolitan area governments.⁹⁵⁶ While libertarians held formal organizational power only in a few states,⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁴⁸ THORNTON, Robert: Too Intellectual, in: *The New Guard*, June 1961, p.17.

⁹⁴⁹ Cf. Letters to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, August 1961, p.19.

⁹⁵⁰ SIMMONS, Eliza: Who's an Objectivist?, in: *The New Guard*, May 1962, p.22.

⁹⁵¹ Letters to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, August 1962, p.15.

⁹⁵² Letters to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, December-January 1962/63, p.2.

⁹⁵³ Cf. BARR, Charles: How ‘Objective’ is Ayn Rand?, in: *The New Guard*, May 1962, p.10; Letters to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, October 1962, p.15; Letters to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, December-January 1962/63, p.2.

⁹⁵⁴ Cf. TUCCILLE, Jerome: The Revolution Comes to YAF, in: *The Libertartarian Forum* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 15, 1969, p.1.

⁹⁵⁵ THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, p.251.

⁹⁵⁶ Additionally, the magazine would run libertarian-leaning articles. There were no comparable traditionalist columns, but most of the articles would still represent the YAF mainstream, fusionist position.

⁹⁵⁷ It is complicated to assess the definite formal power libertarians held, because prior to the formation of the Libertarian Caucus and the 1969 convention (and for non libertarian radicals even after that), there was no need to follow sharply defined labels such as ‘libertarian’ or ‘traditionalist.’

their prominence in YAF's magazine assured that their positions could be prominently displayed to the membership.⁹⁵⁸

One state where the libertarians were in a position of power at the eve of the '69 convention was Pennsylvania. Both state chairman David Walter and executive director Donald Ernsberger strongly identified as libertarians. As such, they were concerned about the direction in which national leadership was taking YAF. While libertarians as well as traditionalists opposed communism, what Ernsberger referred to as “the anti-communist crusade”⁹⁵⁹ describes on a domestic level the suppression of leftist dissent, on an international level the American engagement in Vietnam, which libertarians had come to see as an imperialist venture that undermined the freedom of the Vietnamese people.⁹⁶⁰ By supporting government policy regarding conduct of the war⁹⁶¹ as well as the government's measures taken against internal dissent, Ernsberger claimed, YAF was losing its cutting edge in the battle against an authoritarian state and became complicit with the administration.

Others went further, the most outspoken among them Karl Hess. Hess had taken much of the same path as many of the YAF libertarians. In 1960 and 1964, he had been the leading author of the Republican Party's national platforms. During the Goldwater campaign, he was the Arizonan's speechwriter (and continued, although occasionally, in this position until 1968), remembered mostly for the ‘extremism’ climax to the candidate's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention.

Seeing the Goldwaterites like himself shunned by the party elites after the election, he dropped out of organized politics for a while. As with Rohrabacher, it was Vietnam that turned him over to libertarianism:

“Conservatives like me had spent our lives arguing against Federal power—with one exception. We trusted Washington with enormous powers to fight global Communism. We were wrong [...] We forgot our old axiom that power always corrupts the possessor. Now we have killed a million and a half helpless peasants in Vietnam [...] for reasons of state interest, erroneous reasons so expendable that the Government never mentioned them now and won't defend them. Vietnam should remind all conservatives that whenever you put your faith in big government for any reason, sooner or later you wind up as an apologist for mass murder.”⁹⁶²

⁹⁵⁸ In this regard, libertarians were similar to women, who also often communicated their role in the organization through *The New Guard*, cf. MCENEANEY, *Righting Women in the 1960s*.

⁹⁵⁹ ERNSBERGER, Donald: YAF and the New Right, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, March 1968, p.2. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁹⁶⁰ Even though libertarians generally became more critical of the war, in 1968 there still were some that supported it, cf. WALTER, David: Who's Right on Vietnam Morality, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, March 1968, p.5. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁹⁶¹ Although YAF did support many government initiatives, they often demanded action far beyond, see chapter 3.

⁹⁶² BOYD, Tames: From Far Right to Far Left—and Farther—With Karl Hess, in: *The New York Times Magazine*, December 6, 1970, p.49.

Conservatives, Hess argued, had been foolish to think that the South Vietnamese (or, by implication, any other nation) could achieve freedom by being forced into any set system of government. (By then ex-)YAFer Ron Kimberling argued later that the war had transformed the US government into “Big Brother” nationally and internationally. Because it was depriving another people of “the right to self-determination and to voluntary association” by forcing its political system on South Vietnam, he labelled US foreign policy a form of “extra-nationalist imperialist statism.”⁹⁶³

It had been even more naïve to suggest that government could be entrusted with enormous powers in conducting the Cold War without repercussions for the domestic sphere. Kimberling argued that the Selective Service System that accompanied the war had turned the nation “fascist.”⁹⁶⁴ Hess added that by deferring freedom from coercion such as the draft “as long as a hot war or the Cold War ha[d] to be fought,” conservatives had essentially abandoned it. Their supposed justification that “freedom is so fragile that it must be continuously protected by giving it up”, he elaborated, could under various imperatives be continued virtually indefinitely.⁹⁶⁵ This meant that for Hess, there seemed to be no point in the conservative (and YAFs) proposal for draft reform *after* the end of the war. Hess instead implicitly called for draft resistance when he suggested that men might be “ingenious enough to defend themselves against violence without themselves becoming violent.”⁹⁶⁶

As libertarians grew disillusioned with the American engagement, they began to participate in anti-war demonstrations, organized underground draft resistance circles, and faced police repression. This not only further radicalized them, but also brought them closer to other anti-war groups.⁹⁶⁷ Some libertarians argued that whereas anticommunism had brought libertarians and traditionalists together before, now *antiauthoritarianism* would build bridges between Right and Left. In his *The New Guard* column, David Friedman suggested that while YAF could not learn how to solve the problems facing the nation from the Left, it could at least learn how to spot them.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶³ KIMBERLING, Ron: Vietnam. A Libertarian View, in: 49er, October 15, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File, YAF - National Board - Printed matter and reports.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁵ HESS, Karl: The Death of Politics, in: Playboy, March 1969, online: <http://fare.tunes.org/books/Hess/dop.html> [08.08.2019].

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Cf. KLATCH, A Generation Divided, pp.121–124. A major difference to the argumentation of the New Left is that the libertarians never supported the Hanoi regime (Cf. OFFENBACH, The Other Side of Vietnam, p.66), which they viewed as just as oppressive as the US-backed South. Some employed the Democratic Peace theory to argue that North as well as South Vietnamese people would, if given the choice, prefer not to wage any war at all, cf. KUHNS, Grant: Our Search for PEACE, in: The New Guard, October 1967, 18-19/26.

⁹⁶⁸ Cf. FRIEDMAN, David: The Radical: Left and Right, in: The New Guard, January 1968, p.11.

Having departed from conservatism, Hess looked for new allies—and he, too, found them in the New Left. “[I]t is only on the New Left today that I find serious concern with the principles of anti-statist individualism.” In contrast to conservatives, Hess argued, “[t]he New Left is prepared to change the world—and wants to.”⁹⁶⁹

The Vietnam War was not the only issue on which libertarians on the Right and leftist groups converged. To some extent, all YAFers were part of the youth culture of the Sixties that is often referred to as ‘Counterculture.’⁹⁷⁰ They recognized the political potential of cultural products like folk music and envied the comprehensive scene on the Left. In an early *The New Guard* article, Elizabeth Foster urged the production of a canon of conservative songs to rival leftist songbooks.⁹⁷¹ A few years later, YAF could claim their first cultural ‘superstars.’ Four YAF members from Nashville joined together in a folk band to support their hero, Barry Goldwater. As a first example of their creative genius, they named themselves ‘The Goldwaters’.⁹⁷² Their debut album, ‘The Goldwaters Sing Folk Songs to Bug the Liberals’ quickly became a hit (not only among YAFers) and sold over 200,000 copies.⁹⁷³ But even though the blurb promised that the LP might be used to convert liberals,⁹⁷⁴ it remains doubtful whether the songs, most of the time using known tunes set to new lyrics, had any appeal beyond the Goldwater faithful. The lyrics lacked the poignancy and thoughtful critique that would later elevate other musicians to icons of their generation.⁹⁷⁵ Their humor was one-dimensional, riddled with allusions to political processes that made them hard to understand for political outsiders. An example of one of their songs reads:

“Oh what have you done, left wing, left wing?
Oh what have you done for our country?
Well, we’ve raised the national debt.
Yeah, it’s going higher yet.”

⁹⁶⁹ HESS, Karl: In Defense of Hess, in: *The New Guard*, April 1969, p.16.

⁹⁷⁰ The origins of the term lie in JINGERS, Milton: *Contraculture and Subculture*, in: *American Sociological Review* Vol. 25/5 (1960), pp.625–635.

⁹⁷¹ Cf. FOSTER, Elizabeth: *Must the Devil Have the Best Songs?*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1961, 13/18-19. Such ideas would continue at least until the Seventies, when national board member Harold Herring prepared an extensive memorandum on how YAF could use pop culture to transport its conservative message. He proposed to form an advisory board composed of conservative “big names in leisure living” and have conservative artists as Johnny Cash or Tony Dolan (not to be confused with Tony Dolan of later Atomkraft fame) cooperate with YAF. Cf. Harold Herring to Randal Teague, February 14, 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

⁹⁷² Cf. TAYLOR, Richard: *And Now, Presenting ... The Goldwaters!*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1964, p.14.

⁹⁷³ Cf. *Atomic Platters: The Goldwaters Sing Folksongs to Bug the Liberals* [1964], online: http://www.conelrad.com/media/atomicmusic/sh_boom.php?platter=25 [10.04.2017]. Originally entitled ‘The Goldwaters Sing Folk Songs to Bug the New Frontier,’ it was renamed after the Kennedy assassination because the old title was now deemed offensive. In an ironic note that might have been overlooked by the producers, the word ‘Liberals’ on the cover was printed on the background of a pink color gradient to signify the closeness to socialism/communism. However, the musicians themselves wore red sweaters (with AuH₂O prints) on the front cover.

⁹⁷⁴ Cf. *The Goldwaters: The Goldwaters Sing Folksongs to Bug the Liberals*, Nashville, TN 1964.

⁹⁷⁵ Cf. ANDREW, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, p.192; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.79.

Oh look, what you've done to our country!
 Do you want to go to work on a job, on a job?
 Will you do anything for yourself?
We don't have to, what the heck,
we get our unemployment check,
let our friends and our neighbors support us.”⁹⁷⁶

The Goldwaters made numerous campaign trail appearances in their signature AuH₂O-print outfits (they had suspended their college education for this national tour) and even found some groupies with the ‘Goldwater Girls.’ But their second single, ‘I’m no Communist,’⁹⁷⁷ flopped, and after Goldwater’s defeat, they disbanded.⁹⁷⁸

The New Guard repeatedly picked up popcultural trends and tried to present them in a conservative light.⁹⁷⁹ But as much as the editors made an effort to find a place for conservatives in Sixties’ culture, some of its aspects were vehemently rejected by traditionalists. With Homeric pertinacity, leftist activists were given epithets such as “bearded,” “sandal-shod,” “unshaven” etc.⁹⁸⁰ The most commonly advertised products in the pages of *The New Guard* were razor blades of different manufacturers. Libertarians resisted such blatant moves of discrimination by appearance: “If conservatism is truly individualism, then don’t ridicule individualists!” was their demand. They could identify with the style of clothing and the long hairs of the Left, which they often fashioned themselves.⁹⁸¹

Traditionalists wanted to keep ‘hard’ drugs criminalized, warning of potentially destructive side effects of marijuana consumption⁹⁸² while libertarians not only advocated its legalization but consumed it themselves. Hess argued that criminalization of marijuana was “a prime example of the use of political power.”⁹⁸³ He cautioned that once the power of the community was used to enforce moral norms, it would become impossible to draw a line to permit further

⁹⁷⁶ What Have You Done: The Goldwaters Sing Folksongs to Bug the Liberals, Nashville, TN 1964, A-Side [00:45–01:25].

⁹⁷⁷ The Goldwaters: I’m No Communist, Nashville, TN 1964.

⁹⁷⁸ Cf. Atomic Platters: The Goldwaters Sing Folksongs to Bug the Liberals [1964] , online: http://www.conelrad.com/media/atomicmusic/sh_boom.php?platter=25 [10.04.2017].

⁹⁷⁹ Cf. MEIER, T. K.: James Bond – Conservative Agent?, in: *The New Guard*, March 1965, pp.19–20, in which James Bond is described as getting ever more conservative. Another article examined the purportedly conservative worldview of Marvel Comics, which were marked by their clear-cut Good (freedom) vs. Bad (Totalitarianism) pattern, cf. NOLAN, David: Bigger Than Batman, in: *The New Guard*, June 1966, 19/22. Popstars such as Dylan, the Beatles or John Lennon were subject to numerous reviews in the magazine’s pages.

⁹⁸⁰ Cf. among others SCHULZ, William: They Spur College ‘Peace’ Move, in: *The New Guard*, September 1963, p.12; BROWNFELD, Allan: Student Rebels, in: *The New Guard*, March 1965, p.18; SCHUCHMAN, Robert: A Spree de Corps, in: *The New Guard*, May 1961, p.9; President Receives Strong YAF Support on Vietnam, Dominican Republic Intervention (YAF Roundup), in: *The New Guard*, June 1965, p.24.

⁹⁸¹ Cf. KLATCH, A Generation Divided, p.148.

⁹⁸² Cf. HAMILTON, Basil: Observations on the Weed, in: *The Alternative* [University of Maryland YAF], February 1970, p.1. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 2..

⁹⁸³ HESS, Karl: The Death of Politics, in: *Playboy*, March 1969, online: <http://fare.tunes.org/books/Hess/dop.html> [08.08.2019].

governmental encroachment into personal liberty.⁹⁸⁴ David Friedman even attacked YAF icon William F. Buckley Jr. for his claim that drug usage was a “contagious disease.” It was up to the individual to use or not. A contagious disease, on the other hand, was not subject to the individual’s free choice.⁹⁸⁵ Buckley countered that Friedman’s libertarianism, much like the disputes of medieval theologians, was a jolly intellectual pursuit, but went straight past reality.⁹⁸⁶

Differences between libertarians and traditionalists became more pronounced at the same time that a libertarian consciousness was developing in the aftermath of the 1967 YAF national convention. It became clear that in order to push their agenda within the organization, libertarians needed to establish some organizational framework. Thus, Donald Ernsberger began organizing a Libertarian Caucus within the organization during the spring of 1969 to “develop dialogue between the libertarian elementsof [sic] YAF to discuss issues problems and ideas [sic].⁹⁸⁷” The aims of the Caucus were to influence the policy of the organization in a direction “of consisant [sic] dedication to freedom.” In their self-conception, libertarians were the most dynamic group within YAF, the next big thing after the loss of the “traditionalist” Goldwater and his Goldwater-YAFers, who had led the organization to record membership in the mid-60s.⁹⁸⁸ Thus reckoning themselves in the majority among local chapters and state organizations, they demanded that every national board seat be elected among the membership so that traditionalist dominance at the top would give way to a perceived local libertarian dominance.⁹⁸⁹ They also urged the organization to drop programs that were “inconsistant [sic] with freedom” (such as the Freedom v. Communism high school course program) and to make basic changes to the Sharon Statement like adding “domestic statism” to “communism” as the biggest threat to freedom. Some also advocated striking the phrase “God-given free will,” bringing back memories of the very first libertarian-traditionalist dispute.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁵ Cf. FRIEDMAN, David: Is William F. Buckley a Contagious Disease?, in: *The New Guard*, April 1969, pp.12–13.

⁹⁸⁶ Cf. BUCKLEY, William: In Defense of Friedman?, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1969, pp.16–17. Buckley would change his stand on marijuana only a few years later, advocating for decriminalization of its consumption, cf. FOWLER, Glenn: Buckley Shifts Marijuana Stand, in: *The New York Times*, November 29, 1972, p.27; MARKHAM, James: New Support For Making It Legal, in: *The New York Times*, December 3, 1972, p.2.

⁹⁸⁷ Libertarian Caucus Leaflet, Undated 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6. Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.258.

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. CATCHPOLE, Terry: What, If Anything, Is the New Right? In: *Rapport* (Undated), pp.14–17. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 3, Folder 6.

⁹⁸⁹ This was a gross miscalculation. While there were libertarians in most YAF state organizations, the only ones with a significant/dominant libertarian presence were California, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

⁹⁹⁰ Libertarian Caucus Leaflet, Undated, 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6. Another view is expressed in *California Libertarian Report*, 1969, p.2. Michael Sanera Papers. Here the authors deny that this is the plan and write: “The fact is that most libertarians do believe in God and don’t really support this move.”

The leadership at the national office viewed such moves with great suspicion. David Keene, who had been chosen to run as designated successor to chairman Alan MacKay at the 1969 national convention, acknowledged the right of the Libertarian Caucus to organize and slate candidates for the convention. Yet, he added, such “potentially divisive [sic]” activities were inappropriate at a time when YAF was fighting a bitter fight against the New Left on the nations’ campuses.⁹⁹¹ He accused Ernsberger of trying to “foment a split” within the organization along imagined sectarian lines.⁹⁹² In reality, Keene argued, it was simply impossible to “conveniently divid[e]” YAF into “ideological factions” that “can be easily classified as traditionalist or libertarian.”⁹⁹³

Randal Teague, YAF executive director, and his allies in the national leadership sensed a libertarian power play and reacted accordingly. David Walter recollected that he was prompted to fire Donald Ernsberger, and, after he refused to do so, was relieved of the position of state chairman and replaced by Jay Parker, a traditionalist.⁹⁹⁴ Traditionalists, on the other hand, maintained that Walter had pursued a divisive leadership style, antagonizing the traditionalist faction in western Pennsylvania by holding leadership meetings exclusively in the (libertarian dominated) East.⁹⁹⁵ His chairmanship, they claimed, had thus been ineffective,⁹⁹⁶ and, while Walter increased membership in his loyal eastern libertarian chapters, he did nothing to encourage activism anywhere else and actually led to a net loss of 16 chapters.⁹⁹⁷ Whatever the reason for the removal, the national leadership obviously benefitted from seizing control over one of the larger state at-large delegations just a few months before the national convention. Parker also did nothing to fight the impression of a power move: he suspended publication of the libertarian *Commentary on Liberty* magazine and discharged the entire state board and replaced them with traditionalists.⁹⁹⁸

The Pennsylvania move came at a time when relations between libertarians and traditionalists within YAF had already been deteriorating. On March 9, 1969, the California YAF state board adopted in an 8-6 vote a resolution to urge the national chairman to remove Dana Rohrabacher and William Steel from their positions as co-chairmen of the organization.⁹⁹⁹ They cited

⁹⁹¹ David Keene to Donald Ernsberger, June 26, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

⁹⁹² Id. to Ralph Fucetola III, August 4, 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6.

⁹⁹³ Id. to YAF Leaders, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

⁹⁹⁴ Cf. WALTER, David: Anatomy of a Purge, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, July 1969, pp.7–10. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁹⁹⁵ Cf. Daniel Arico to Wayne Thorburn, Undated 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6.

⁹⁹⁶ Throughout the history of YAF, “ineffective” was often a shibboleth for “politically untenable.”

⁹⁹⁷ Cf. Randal Teague to David Keene, August 18, 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6.

⁹⁹⁸ Cf. WALTER, David: Anatomy of a Purge, in: *Commentary on Liberty*, July 1969, pp.7–10. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

⁹⁹⁹ Cf. Patrick Dowd to California YAF Chapter Chairmen, March 12, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

“philosophical differences and other incompatibilities with members of the board” as their motives.¹⁰⁰⁰ Their replacement, Patrick Dowd, continued the libertarian course of his predecessors and proved unable to suppress what Philipp Abbott Luce had dubbed the “politics of the playground” going on in the state.¹⁰⁰¹ Indeed, he too got embroiled in the power plays going on between traditionalists, represented by executive director Allen Brandstater, and libertarians.¹⁰⁰² When he brought the state board to fire Brandstater, the national office reacted by dismissing Dowd as well as the whole state board and placing it in limbo until after the national convention.¹⁰⁰³

5.2 “Meet Them in St. Louis” – The 1969 National Convention

“It was just out of this world [...] In one corner of the hall you had one group carrying ‘Wallace in ‘72’ signs and in another there were guys burning their draft cards.”¹⁰⁰⁴

- Delegate to the YAF National Convention, 1969

In August 1969, about a thousand delegates poured into St. Louis for the YAF National Convention. Though not unlike previous conferences regarding its program and speakers, the tension in the convention hall was palpable right from the start. How could those radically different right-wing groups find common purpose and continue their alliance into the Seventies? It turned out they could not.

Participants were greeted with a pamphlet by self-styled Old Rightist Murray Rothbard entitled “Listen, YAF.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Framed as an open letter to the libertarian delegates, Rothbard urged them to recollect what YAF had ever done for them. They had defied the free market by their stance on drug criminalization and their support of the “state-monopoly military-industrial complex.” The only project, Rothbard argued, YAF ever undertook in the realm of the free market were boycott campaigns against trade with communist nations. Similarly, regarding individual liberty, the right-wing support of Chicago Mayor Daley, who had used police power to suppress dissent at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, and the actions at People’s Park (an unofficial New Left gathering place at Berkeley that was cleared by police on Governor Reagan’s orders) should tell the libertarians everything they needed to know.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰¹ Phillip Luce to California YAF, February 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰⁰² Cf. Andrea Graham to Patrick Dowd, July 21, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰⁰³ A Nationwide Mailing to Leaders of Young Americans for Freedom, Undated 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰⁰⁴ “Up With Wallace,” “Down With Draft”, in: Redwood City [California] Tribune, September 19, 1969, p.8. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 3, Folder 6.

¹⁰⁰⁵ ROTHBARD, Murray: “Listen, YAF”, in: The Libertartarian Forum Vol. 1, No. X, August 15, 1969, pp.1–2.

¹⁰⁰⁶ YAF did not actually support mayor Daley. Rothbard also somewhat twisted YAFs stance on the draft, cf. SCHNEIDER, Cadres for Conservatism, p.133, incl. fn.36.

Why, then, had the libertarians stayed in the organization? Rothbard claimed that the fusionists had successfully appropriated the term “freedom” and fooled the libertarians into thinking they could “join a united front under their aegis.” Thus, the fusionists, not the “open worshippers of the Crown of St. Wenceslas” (aka the traditionalists), were the real enemy.¹⁰⁰⁷ In conclusion, the pamphlet stated “that the precious word freedom came to be used as an Orwellian cloak for its very opposite. Why don’t you leave YAF now and let the ‘F’ stand for what it has secretly stood for all along—‘fascism’?”¹⁰⁰⁸

Rothbard was preaching to the choir. His goal was not to win any *new* followers to libertarianism, but rather to widen the wedge between the factions, splitting the libertarians from the organization for good and driving them into the arms of his newly set up *Radical Libertarian Alliance* (RLA).¹⁰⁰⁹ The next volley followed when libertarians announced that Karl Hess, who had not been included in the official convention program, would travel to St. Louis to speak at the Gateway Arch the first night of the conference. Hess had joined with Rothbard in founding the RLA and it is probable that his appearance outside of the convention was meant to physically separate libertarians from the rest of the convention and thereby raise libertarian consciousness. The plan, however, miscarried. Although up to three hundred libertarians, anarchists, and rubbernecks showed up¹⁰¹⁰ and debated Hess’ proposed left-right alliance until deep into the night, most delegates rejected the alliance, including the Libertarian Caucus. They preferred to either continue working within YAF or to build their own *right-wing* libertarian institutions. Only the small Anarchist Caucus wholeheartedly supported the proposal.¹⁰¹¹ This group, although containing at maximum only roughly 50 members, had submitted the most comprehensive plan for organizational reform before the convention, the *Tranquil Statement*, named after Karl Hess’ houseboat, where it was written.¹⁰¹²

The question that loomed over the events of day one was to what extent delegates were willing to compromise for the sake of organizational politics. The actions of Rothbard and Hess had done more to aggravate the national leadership and the traditionalist-fusionist majority of the delegates than to further radicalize libertarians. The Libertarian Caucus continued to place its

¹⁰⁰⁷ ROTHBARD, Murray: “Listen, YAF”, in: *The Libertartarian Forum* Vol. 1, No. X, August 15, 1969, p.1.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Cf. TUCCILLE, Jerome: *It Usually Begins With Ayn Rand*, Baltimore, MD 2012, pp.82–84.

¹⁰¹⁰ The actual number of participants remains unknown. Libertarian sources tend to put the number at above two hundred. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.135, follows TUCCILLE, Jerome: *Radical Libertarianism. A Right Wing Alternative*, Indianapolis, IN 1970, pp.96–97 at over 300 delegates. While THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.265 speaks of as low as 50 members, the source he cites refers to a meeting of the Anarchist Caucus, not the speech by Hess itself, cf. “Arch No Place for Anarchists”, in: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 28, 1969, 2A.

¹⁰¹¹ Cf. TUCCILLE, Jerome: *The Revolution Comes to YAF*, in: *The Libertartarian Forum* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 15, 1969, pp.2–3.

¹⁰¹² Cf. *The Tranquil Statement*, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

hope in the election of some of its members to the board and the adaptation of their suggestions for the national platform. The second day of the conference proceedings contained the voting sessions for these matters. They were preceded by cries of foul play from the libertarians, who complained about the “packing of the Credentials Committee.”¹⁰¹³ The national board had selected three traditionalists to supervise the credentializing process. Libertarians feared that they would abuse their powers to unseat libertarian delegates and replace them with traditionalists, thus leading to “vote fixing.”¹⁰¹⁴ Some libertarians later recalled that seats rightfully belonging to their chapters were handed over to traditionalist chapters or that chapter delegates would be replaced by people unknown to the chapter members.¹⁰¹⁵ Although the YAF organizational structure virtually guaranteed that whoever was in control of the board would also win the contested votes at the national conference,¹⁰¹⁶ the traditionalist leadership did not take any chances.

When the votes came in, the libertarians were resoundingly defeated. Not one of their nine candidates could gather enough votes to seriously challenge any member of the national slate. William Steel and Dana Rohrabacher, the former co-chairmen of California YAF, were the strongest libertarian candidates with 184 and 165 votes respectively, while the weakest member of the national slate attracted 429 votes.¹⁰¹⁷ Not only had they (as probably expected) lost the overall vote, but they had also failed to win over the delegations of the purported libertarian stronghold states of California and Pennsylvania. Only the New Jersey and Virginia delegations, who did not make up a sizable contingent of the total vote, gave the libertarians 54% and 62% of their votes, respectively.¹⁰¹⁸ The libertarian resolutions and platform planks were also voted down or stopped by parliamentary procedure.¹⁰¹⁹

When the convention decided to vote against active draft resistance, the levee finally broke. It was then that delegate Lee Houfman¹⁰²⁰ took his draft card,¹⁰²¹ lit it on fire and, in imitation of

¹⁰¹³ Report of the Libertarian Caucus, Number 1, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf. Libertarian Caucus Memorandum, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰¹⁵ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, 224; 227-228.

¹⁰¹⁶ The national chairman could choose the state chairmen, subject to the review of the board, who would then be able to select delegates for the state at-large delegations, who made up a sizable part of the vote.

¹⁰¹⁷ Theoretically, the highest possible vote tally for any single candidate would have been 720, but even the best performing candidates received ‘only’ about 550. The national slate received about 78% of the total vote.

¹⁰¹⁸ 1969 National Convention Results, Undated. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹⁰¹⁹ YAF 1969 National Convention Resolutions. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰²⁰ Different people claimed over time to have been the delegate with this sparking idea. Houffmann’s name appears both in a YAF resolution as well as in a press report, cf. YAF Conservatives Prevail As Convention Ends Here, in: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 1, 1969, p.12A. The other name that most prominently appears is Dave Schumacher, who made the claim himself in KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.230, followed by DOHERTY, *Radicals for Capitalism*, pp.356–357, and THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.269–270.

¹⁰²¹ According to *Ibid.*, p.269, it was actually a photocopied draft card of another YAF member, not Houfman’s own.

both the Statue of Liberty and the YAF torch of liberty symbol, held it aloft. There was a brief moment of tension-filled silence, as the delegates processed what had just happened.¹⁰²²

Then, from one corner of the room someone shouted, “Kill the Commies!” and a sizable altercation broke loose. Immediately after the fisticuffs had been stopped, delegates exchanged chants of “Laissez Faire!” and “Sock it to the Left!” (the unofficial convention motto), which the libertarians turned into “Sock it to the state!” Although physical violence were quickly quelled, hostilities between the camps continued until deep in the night.¹⁰²³ According to TUCCILLE, squads of traditionalists roamed the floors of the Inn, shouting “Kill the Libertarians!” Those Libertarians, in turn, banded together to come out as “enemies of the state.” Dana Rohrabacher led a band of about 150 delegates in a “Laissez Faire!”-chant, which traditionalists countered with “Lazy Fairies!”¹⁰²⁴ The factions seemed irrevocably turned against each other.

Why were traditionalists unwilling to compromise with libertarians? There appear to be three main reasons: firstly, the Rothbard-Hess maneuvers were somewhat successful—less in actively slicing off libertarian delegates, but more so in conflating anarchist and libertarian rhetoric. Because the Anarchist and Libertarian Caucuses were often confounded for one another, and Hess and Rothbard were seen as representative of their thinking, the libertarians appeared even more radical, which was successfully exploited by enemies of *all* radical libertarians, such as Teague.¹⁰²⁵ Secondly, the widespread perception was that the Libertarian Caucus was engaged in a “rule or ruin” effort.¹⁰²⁶ If a libertarian YAF wouldn’t have a place for traditionalists, why bother compromising if libertarians would leave unless they got all of their demands through?

The Libertarian Caucus tried to counteract both these developments in its releases. Claiming that “[t]he Libertarian Caucus was formed by responsible libertarian leadership within [YAF]”, Ernsberger in a letter to David Keene remarked that libertarians were not willing to accept the “image of Rothbard type radicals” in which they were painted by some elements of the national leadership.¹⁰²⁷ He also stressed in a memorandum that he released soon afterward that the

¹⁰²² Ibid., 270, fn.78 cites Richard Derham, the chairman of the platform committee at St. Louis, who claims that the card burning and its aftermath happened “toward the rear of the convention” and most people in the front would not even have been aware of the events.

¹⁰²³ Cf. TUCCILLE, Jerome: *The Revolution Comes to YAF*, in: *The Libertartarian Forum* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 15, 1969, p.3.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid., pp.3–4.

¹⁰²⁵ Cf. Patrick Dowd to Robert LeFevre, October 27, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters sent, 1969–1970; Robert LeFevre to id., October 30, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters sent, 1969–1970.

¹⁰²⁶ Cf. Donald Feder to Donald Ernsberger et al., July 17, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters Received, 1968–1969.

¹⁰²⁷ Donald Ernsberger to David Keene, July 15, 1969. YAF Records, Box 34, Folder 6.

Libertarian Caucus aimed to be an inclusive enterprise and was decidedly not a “rule or ruin” group.¹⁰²⁸ Ernsberger even formulated a reply to Rothbard’s “hyper-invective” “Listen, YAF” and criticized YAF members who tried to lump anarchists and libertarians together: “Setting up straw bogeymen is a favorite tactic for hurting those you cannot beat with ideas.”¹⁰²⁹

On the other hand, libertarians could not credibly present how traditionalists would fit into a libertarian controlled YAF. It was up to traditionalists to give up their positions to accommodate libertarians while libertarians were not willing to compromise on anything to make libertarianism more amenable to other YAFers. Their constant attacks on the national leadership and traditionalism as a belief system undermined their cooperation rhetoric. For example, David Walter wrote in an article entitled “On Splitting”:

“We have for too long [...] [been] wagging our tails gleefully whenever the trad leadership magnanimously tossed us meager concessions [...] Never before has the impotence, both ethical and tactical of traditionalism been threatened with the revealing light of ideological confrontation. [...] [Trads] should [...] remember that libertarians have never been devoted to YAF and that YAF has never been devoted to anything, except the egotism of its leaders.”¹⁰³⁰

The growing paranoia of libertarians on the eve of the St. Louis convention also contributed to their “rule or ruin” image. Among others, a rumor spread that the traditionalist leadership had a McCarthy-style list of about forty leading libertarians that would be purged after St. Louis, apparently irrespective of developments at the convention.¹⁰³¹ If such purges, however, were a foregone conclusion, there would have been no need for libertarians to strive for compromise with the traditionalists. Calls to abandon the prevailing “shock therapy” approach that relied mainly on provocation and to cater rhetoric towards traditionalists by using *their* terminology and hence signaling a willingness to compromise fell on deaf ears.¹⁰³² Thus, libertarians often came across as self-righteous. For example, while presenting the results of a poll that tried to gauge the ideological makeup of Pennsylvania YAFs membership, the libertarian editors of its magazine could not refrain from commenting the ‘right’ answers below the questions, sometimes even chastising those who answered ‘wrongly.’¹⁰³³

Finally, libertarians increasingly spoke into their own circles and failed to reach out to other YAFers. The *Tranquil Statement* of the Anarchist Caucus is especially illustrative. In its

¹⁰²⁸ Libertarian Caucus Memo #6, July 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰²⁹ Report of the Libertarian Caucus, Number 2, Undated 1969. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

¹⁰³⁰ WALTER, David: On Splitting, in: Commentary on Liberty, June 1969, p.2. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12.

¹⁰³¹ Cf. California Libertarian Report #1, July 18, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰³² Cf. Dennis Turner to Libertarian YAF Leaders, Undated. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰³³ Cf. The Poll, in: Commentary on Liberty, February 1967, pp.5–9. David Walter Papers, Box 6, Folder 12. The Poll also showed that a combined 57% of the membership were either traditionalists or fusionists, while only 34% identified as randist or libertarian. The editorial policy, however, did not reflect that makeup.

analysis, the Anarchist Caucus pointedly worked out what separated its attitude from the prevailing YAF line:

“Most YAF literature is not leveled at today's alienated and anti-authoritarian youth, but rather at middle-aged businessmen who contribute generously to anti-SDS and “law and order” campaigns.

As a result, today YAF is neither young in spirit, American in revolutionary zeal, nor for freedom.”¹⁰³⁴

Wholeheartedly solidarizing with the youth movements of the New Left, they embraced campus protest and non-interventionism, and, most importantly, urged YAF to become a “truly revolutionary force in the cause of freedom for all mankind.”¹⁰³⁵ Should YAF refuse, anarchists suggested, the organization should rename itself to “Young Conservatives of America”, one of the original proposals at Sharon.¹⁰³⁶

Although the *Tranquil Statement* could be viewed as an honest effort to change the policy of the organization, it is more likely that the Anarchist Caucus, led by Karl Hess IV, the son of Karl Hess, was part of the larger effort to slice of libertarians from the organization.¹⁰³⁷ The *Tranquil Statement*, then, meant to appeal to YAF members already toying with anarchist thoughts. Calls for campus unrest and revolution, mixed with a “New Left revisionist view of American Power”¹⁰³⁸ made the statement virtually undistinguishable from an SDS pamphlet.¹⁰³⁹ The demands could not be seriously considered by the delegates, in part because some of the analysis above was true: YAF leaders would have been hard-pressed to explain to YAF donors, primarily older generations, who had supported YAF because of their, as the anarchists put it, “youth for Christ image,”¹⁰⁴⁰ how their view had taken such a radical turn. Yet, financial backing from older donors was crucial for the survival of YAF as a professionally staffed, national organization.¹⁰⁴¹

The *Tranquil Statement* thus also showed how the target audiences of libertarian and traditionalist-fusionist elements had diverged. Libertarians aimed to attract people that shared their anti-authoritarian views on individual liberty and social issues but could not arrange themselves with the collectivism nor the radical and coercive strategies of New Left organizations. Traditionalists, in contrast, targeted the campus/young professional version of the Silent Majority, the people, as David Friedman put it, “who wear ties, people who live in suburbia, people who live in the South—people who, however much they object to certain

¹⁰³⁴ The *Tranquil Statement*, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.3–6.

¹⁰³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁰³⁷ Cf. The Bavarian Illuminati Post-Dispatch, Undated 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰³⁸ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.134.

¹⁰³⁹ See also ROCHE, George, III: What’s in a Name?, in: *The New Guard*, November 1970, pp.17–19.

¹⁰⁴⁰ The *Tranquil Statement*, Undated 1969, p.9. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰⁴¹ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.224–225.

elements of present-day America, basically identify with it.”¹⁰⁴² But their audience was also the conservative establishment and existing as well as potential donors. While, for example, libertarians favored educational work and spreading their libertarian gospel, they disregarded YAF’s engagements with campus radicals as “unimpressive ‘Beat Up the Lefties’”¹⁰⁴³ activities. Traditionalists, however, did not merely aim to physically counteract their enemies. Though short-term gains on campuses were the nominal target of such actions, ‘proving themselves in combat’ on an individual level also provided them with credentials beneficial to their further advancement within the conservative movement. YAF used such clashes in their fundraising and PR to lend credibility to the claim that they were the only organization standing between radicals and their takeover of the Campus.¹⁰⁴⁴

The YAF leadership, then, had very pragmatic reasons to block most of the demands of the Libertarian Caucus and all of those of the *Tranquil Statement*. During the convention, the national board removed Lee Houffmann from the organization and declared that simultaneous membership in YAF and SDS would lead to automatic expulsion.¹⁰⁴⁵ Soon after, they also declared anarchism as “inconsistent with the Sharon Statement” as it would “put the people of the United States at the mercy of the criminal element within and alien totalitarians without the United States.”¹⁰⁴⁶

5.3 The Great Purge of '69

“I want a purge, just like the purge, that California had.
It was a splurge, and the only purge that Randy ever had.
A good old-fashioned purge with lots of blood.
One that covered the libertarians with mud.
Oh, I want a purge, just like [the] purge, that California had.”¹⁰⁴⁷

-YAF Songbook, late Seventies.

On October 23, roughly two months after the tumultuous events of St. Louis, Dana Rohrabacher and several other leading California YAF libertarians held a press conference at the Greater Los Angeles Press Club. There, they announced their departure from the conservative movement and the formation of a new group, the Student Libertarian Alliance.¹⁰⁴⁸ Libertarian YAF

¹⁰⁴² FRIEDMAN, David: What Are We Fighting Over?, Undated. Personal Papers of Jameson Campaigne, Jr., Ottawa, IL, cited according to THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, p.254.

¹⁰⁴³ Report of the Libertarian Caucus, Number 2, Undated 1969. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

¹⁰⁴⁴ For a critique of the libertarian position on educational activism, see Ronald Dear to Various YAF Leaders, September 17, 1969. William Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 5.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, September 19, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File, YAF - National Board - Printed matter and reports.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, October 3-5, 1969. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ “I Want a Purge” [song to the tune of “I want a girl”], in: The YAF Songbook, Undated, Late 70s, p.5. YAF Records, Box 28, Folder 5.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Cf. The New Libertarian, Vol. 1 #1, October 28, 1969, p.1. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 67, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Oct-Dec.

members, they reported, had been “harassed, threatened and purged by a mindless and confused national leadership,” proving once again that politics “offers only one reward to its participants—power.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Proclaiming that their “revolution will not be won by bullets— or their paper substitutes, ballots,”¹⁰⁵⁰ they rejected both YAF’s institution-centered approach as well as the New Left’s tactics of civil disobedience. Instead, they wanted to spread their message via underground newspapers, “experimental classes in libertarian theory” and other educational enterprises. They did, however, advocate active resistance to the draft, the 1970 census, or taxation.

The reaction of the National Office was swift. The next day, Randal Teague sent around a memorandum to the national board members, reporting that the membership of the press conference participants had been suspended. Furthermore, the chairman had seen fit to temporarily rescind the active status of some 20 YAF chapters in California of whom the libertarians had claimed that they wanted to transfer to the new organization. Some of the chapter chairmen, Teague claimed, had been unaware that their names and chapters had been included in the press statement and the national office wanted to communicate with all the chapter leaders before taking further action.¹⁰⁵¹

One of the libertarian leaders, William Steel, appealed his suspension before the national board. In a letter to the new national chairman David Keene, he argued that the press conference merely represented an attempt to withdraw from the “conservative establishment,” but not from YAF itself.¹⁰⁵² He further claimed to still be in line with the Sharon Statement “in spirit,” and that he would continue working for libertarian goals within YAF as long as the organization would be able to tolerate deviationism.¹⁰⁵³ After he failed to appear before the board meeting that would discuss his suspension, the board upheld the chairman’s decision with only three dissenting votes. In the discussion, one board member stressed that Steel had “wavered between being and not being a YAF member following the 1969 YAF National Convention.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Previous recklessness on Steel’s part might have been a product of bitterness following St. Louis. Another member countered that while certain actions could be vindicated, Steel had “broken

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.1–2.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2. This might be a reference to Malcolm X: The Ballot or the Bullet, in: WARD, Brian (Ed.): *The 1960s. A Documentary Reader*, Malden, MA 2010, pp.75–79.

¹⁰⁵¹ Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, October 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File, YAF - National Board - Printed matter and reports.

¹⁰⁵² William Steel to David Keene, November 12, 1969. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 284, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Dec 1969.

¹⁰⁵³ *Id.* to Richard Derham, January 5, 1970. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 284, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), Jan 1970.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 6–8, 1970, p.1. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 8.

good faith” and become a liability for the organization. The board agreed that its action was “no purge,” but implicitly anticipated that it might be taken as such.¹⁰⁵⁵

The episode above is illustrative of libertarian-traditionalist interactions in the aftermath of St. Louis. Though the national board had suspended a handful of members immediately after the convention, its aim was to contain the organizational damage as much as possible. In most cases, the national leadership adopted a wait-and-see attitude and only intervened when it seemed necessary to distance the organization from certain chapters or persons that would damage its reputation.

Some chapters left on their own accord. The Penn State chapter pulled out of YAF to join Don Ernsberger’s and Dave Walter’s new Society for Individual Liberty which would soon merge with ex-YAFer Jarret Wollstein’s Society for Rational Individualism. But such active separations from YAF were rather rare. Thus, David Keene could claim a few months after St. Louis that less than 1% of YAF members were affected by the split and only California had lost a significant amount of chapters during that time.¹⁰⁵⁶ However, most individuals and chapters that left YAF simply let their membership expire or their chapter charters lapse and did not actively resign from the organization, so the actual number of departures was probably much higher.

Regardless of the modus of separation, the aftermath of St. Louis became part of YAF lore as one of the greatest purges the organization ever experienced. Scholarly research has largely followed this narrative. For example, SCHNEIDER proposes that St. Louis and its aftermath “almost destroyed the organization.”¹⁰⁵⁷ SCHOENWALD reports that “[b]y the summer [of ‘69], the national YAF was busy purging their libertarian members across the country.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Both are influenced by a radical libertarian perspective that dominates the historiography of the convention.

To begin with, related developments in SDS contributed to the overemphasis of ideological polarization. According to SCHOENWALD, “[w]hen comparing the libertarians within YAF to the New Left’s plunge into radicalism, striking similarities quickly become apparent.”¹⁰⁵⁹ KLATCH similarly tells “a story about two wings of *one* generation.”¹⁰⁶⁰ She stresses the similar origins and developments of the two movements. If, then, the New Left faced a devastating

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Cf. Confidential Report to National YAF Leadership, January 16, 1970. William Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 11.

¹⁰⁵⁷ SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.126.

¹⁰⁵⁸ SCHOENWALD, *No War, No Welfare, and No Damn Taxation*, p.29.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁰ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.2 (Emphasis added).

split in 1969, it is tempting to argue that the self-styled “New Right”¹⁰⁶¹ experienced analogous events.¹⁰⁶² But this is an over-simplification. In contrast to SDS, YAF survived its split relatively unscathed. While some libertarians asserted that they stood for YAF’s original ideals, none claimed that the new libertarian organizations were the ‘real’ or ‘legitimate’ YAF.

More importantly, the fledgling libertarian movement of the early 1970s was largely molded by ex-YAFers, who viewed St. Louis as the hour in which their movement came into being. Having attended St. Louis or having been ‘purged’ afterwards became a “badge of honor” among libertarians.¹⁰⁶³ Accordingly, there exist many recollections of the events from a libertarian perspective, while, to my knowledge, no traditionalist has published a personal account.¹⁰⁶⁴ Those recollections sharply distinguish between purportedly polarized factions because it was necessary for the new libertarian movement to clearly separate itself from YAF. Whereas they paint a black-and-white picture, most YAFers’ ideologies would have been some shade of grey. Moreover, while libertarians would claim that there was a definite split, the moderate majority of libertarians actually remained with YAF.¹⁰⁶⁵ Their perspective has been lacking in the historiography.

KLATCH’s work is especially indicative here. She classified the former YAF activists she interviewed for her study into Traditionalists and Libertarians. The dominant fusionist position does not appear, nor is its absence reflected.¹⁰⁶⁶ All of the interviewed libertarians left YAF in the aftermath of St. Louis one way or another. This classification is looking at 1969 in hindsight and thus anticipates the results of the study. If the defining feature of a libertarian is a break with the organization, and everyone else is a traditionalist, the statement that the national office “purged all libertarians from YAF”¹⁰⁶⁷ becomes mere circular reasoning.

Libertarians had been able to lend credibility to this narrative because they presented, in part, some legitimate grievances against the national leadership. For example, during a board meeting at the St. Louis convention, David Keene had promised to visit California after the convention, where the state board was still in limbo.¹⁰⁶⁸ As a “show of faith”, the board elected

¹⁰⁶¹ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: *The New Right. Its Face, Its Future*, in: *The New Guard*, July 1962, p.7.

¹⁰⁶² The prominent position of 1969 in the historiography of the New Left is problematic in itself. Many seminal studies have been produced by former SDS members, who tend to overstate the importance of the organization for the New Left as a whole. Cf. GOSSE, Van: *A Movement of Movements. The Definition and Periodization of the New Left*, in: AGNEW, Jean-Christophe; ROSENZWEIG, Roy (Edd.): *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, Oxford 2006, pp.277–302, here p.278.

¹⁰⁶³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, 274, fn.99.

¹⁰⁶⁴ E.g., the *New Libertarian Notes* entitled its November 1974 issue “Anarchist Graffiti. Where Were You in '69?” It contained several accounts of libertarian ex-YAFers. Cf. TUCCILLE, Jerome: *The Revolution Comes to YAF*, in: *The Libertartarian Forum* Vol. 1, No. 2, September 15, 1969, pp.1–4.

¹⁰⁶⁵ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.274–279.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, 10–11, incl. fn.31.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Cf. *Minutes of YAF Board Meeting*, August 31, 1969, p.2. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 6.

William Saracino to serve alongside Patrick Dowd of California to its ranks, so that both factions would be represented in the national leadership.¹⁰⁶⁹ The plan was to work out an equitable settlement, which would have had the establishment of a compromise candidate for state chairmanship at its core. The national office had previously argued that there was no suitable candidate available and used this as reason to suspend the board.¹⁰⁷⁰ A newly established committee, headed by Keene and Luce, would speak to individual chapter leaders to find someone acceptable to both sides. The factions acted cooperatively. Patrick Dowd, the previous chairman, though he ostensibly placed low hopes in the committee, prepped the California chapters on seven points he wanted to make to the national office.¹⁰⁷¹

However, when the time for the trip came, neither Keene nor Luce showed up. While Keene, embroiled in a vicious campaign for the state senate of Wisconsin,¹⁰⁷² excused himself because of bad weather, Luce feared that he might be instrumentalized by the libertarian faction.¹⁰⁷³

Instead, the national leadership sent Richard Derham, a Washington lawyer associated with the traditionalist faction, who spent one and a half days at a crisis meeting with several chapter leaders. This half-hearted implementation of the original plan dismayed even some traditionalist board members.¹⁰⁷⁴ Dowd and some of his allies boycotted the meeting.¹⁰⁷⁵

Derham recommended Harvey Hukari, the moderate libertarian leader of Stanford YAF, which recently won the Outstanding Chapter-Award at St. Louis, for chairman.¹⁰⁷⁶

Hukari, however, wanted to wait until sometime after the 1970 Reagan Campaign before resolving the situation. Yet the national leadership was unwilling to tolerate the volatility any longer. Already, important YAF supporters like honorary chairman Ronald Reagan showed concern over a libertarian attempt “to destroy YAF as an effective and powerful force among

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid. Patrick Dowd, in contrast, argued, that the election of Saracino would only “serve to alienate [his] faction, which he labeled as the larger faction.”

¹⁰⁷⁰ Cf. Randal Teague to California and National YAF leaders, August 20, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers.

¹⁰⁷¹ Cf. Patrick Dowd to California YAF Chapter Chairmen and State Board of Directors, October 8, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Subject File, YAF - Calif. State Chapter - Memoranda + circulars.

¹⁰⁷² Cf. STEINBERG, Arnold: Liberal Smears Defeat A Good Conservative, in: Human Events, November 29, 1969, pp.9/14; STEINBERG, Arnold: McKenna’s Gold Comes from Mud, in: The New Guard, January 1970. Among other tactics, Keene’s opponent Dale McKenna ordered a member of his campaign staff to pose as a volunteer to the Keene campaign. Once there, she began to date Keene’s campaign manager, Arnold Steinberg (the former libertarian editor of *The New Guard*), to get access to sensitive campaign information. Cf. “Keene Senate Campaign Infiltrated”; “Over Pizza and Coke, Yvonne Ferreted Out Keene’s ‘Secrets’”. Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 3, Folder 6 Despite Intervention by influential YAF alumni Tom Huston and Patrick Buchanan, Keene lost by a slim margin.

¹⁰⁷³ Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, Undated 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File, YAF - National Board - Printed matter and reports.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Cf. Wayne Thorburn to Patrick Dowd, October 18, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters Received, 1969–1970.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Richard Derham to Patrick Dowd, November 5, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters Received, 1969–1970.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Cf. Patrick Dowd to Wayne Thorburn, October 23, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters sent, 1969–1970.

our young people.”¹⁰⁷⁷ Reagan’s message was clear: if YAF could not contain radical libertarians and their antics, he would have to disassociate from the organization. The board needed to show some initiative to appease their backers.

Thus, they instituted the traditionalist faction leader Saracino as new state chairman, who, in turn, appointed a new state board on the basis that “the potential member have my trust and confidence,” which ostensibly included former supporters as well as adversaries.¹⁰⁷⁸ Indeed, Reagan soon after sent a letter remarking that he was pleased how “quickly and correctly”¹⁰⁷⁹ the situation had been resolved. Promising that there would be no “faltering on the part of us”, he closed with the assurance: “We’re with you.”

Libertarians, however, were understandably outraged. Some chapters followed Rohrabacher et al. and left the organization. Even the moderate Hukari held a press conference at which he disaffiliated the Stanford chapter from national YAF. Afterwards, he and some other chapter members held “a brief ceremony in which [they] burned their Y.A.F. membership cards, then ceremoniously placed the ashes and two plaques of recognition into a white coffin.”¹⁰⁸⁰

Such extravagant orchestrations of separation were commonplace among YAF dissidents in ’69 and ’70. As the California episode shows, the national leadership was too apathetic to strive for real compromise with radical libertarians. Nor were they willing to mass-purge libertarians to award them their “badge of honor.” Trained in garnering press attention through YAF’s various leadership seminars and instruction brochures, libertarians turned to another method: provoking the national office into action by such grand gestures as the card-burning or by public criticism of YAF officials. This forced the hand of national YAF, which, as in Steel’s case, had to distance itself from individuals who might damage its reputation. Such actions were inevitably labeled as “purges” and again brought to the attention of the media.

Not only did this bring much-needed attention to fledgling libertarian organizations. Being important enough to become subject of a “purge” also boosted libertarians’ egos.¹⁰⁸¹ Critics argued that libertarians did not primarily work to further their beliefs, but simply relished the press attention. James Minarik of YAF’s national board complained to Patrick Dowd:

“I think the only thing that really aggravates most Board members in the current pother is that some people in YAF, handing themselves the libertarian label and then going off on an ego trip, decide that their differences are what the whole world is breathlessly waiting to hear about. Now the loudest of all of these

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ronald Reagan to David Keene, October 8, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹⁰⁷⁸ William Saracino to National Board, Undated 1969, p.2. William Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 5.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ronald Reagan to id., December 19, 1969. William Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 5.

¹⁰⁸⁰ SHARKEY, Fred; THOMPSON, Buzz: YAF Leaves National, Blasts Reactionaries, in: Stanford Daily Vol. 156, No. 31, p.1.

¹⁰⁸¹ Cf. Berl Hubbell to Patrick Dowd, January 21, 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters Received, 1969–1970.

have been going on for about half a year to date, and in all that time I still haven't figured out just what good running to the media has accomplished.”¹⁰⁸²

Indeed, splits and fights sometimes seemed to be motivated by individual pride as much as ideological difference. Hukari pulled Stanford YAF out once it was clear that he would not be named state chairman.¹⁰⁸³ Doing so did more to preserve his own status in his group than to influence YAF policy. Some ideological battles really had “the philosophical depth of a Square poster,”¹⁰⁸⁴ as Ronald Docksai reflected. “Attempted definitions of libertarian versus traditionalist were irrelevant to the actual conduct of the political proceedings where candidates were voted for because of political backing, articulation, personality, incidental characteristics and friendship.” It just so happened that the ‘ins’ were mainly traditionalists, while most libertarians were the ‘outs.’

5.4 Where Have the Libertarians Gone?

“YAF needs libertarians, the reasonable sort who abide by the economics of freedom, understand it and are not beclouded with psychological hangups about “the state” and “Amerika” hate that turn their economic message into alien sedition.”¹⁰⁸⁵

- Ronald Docksai, 1972

The conflict simmered well into 1970, but gradually faded out after most of the outspoken dissidents had left the organization. Although there had been bitter fighting and harsh words on both sides, the stall tactics of the national leadership worked out quite well. Nevertheless, SCHNEIDER sees St. Louis and its aftermath as a turning point in the organization’s history. He claims that YAFs membership declined from roundabout 50,000 in 1969 to below 30,000 in 1971.¹⁰⁸⁶ He uses the publication filings of *The New Guard* with the U.S. Postal Service to claim further that membership sank to 9,000 in 1974.¹⁰⁸⁷ However, *The New Guards* subscription policy changed over the years and neither was a subscription necessarily indicative of a YAF membership nor did every YAF member subscribe to the magazine.¹⁰⁸⁸ The numbers from the official membership rolls probably reflect the membership more accurately. The number of nationally paid memberships was usually inflated at a 3:1 ratio, which became the ‘official’ membership number. Randal Teague claimed that a scientific study conducted in the

¹⁰⁸² James Minarik to Patrick Dowd, January 21, 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence, Letters Received, 1969–1970.

¹⁰⁸³ Cf. Richard Derham to Harvey Hukari, November 4, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ronald Docksai to William Steel, September 3, 1969. Michael Sanera Papers. The Squares were a small organization actively promoting a counter-countercultural lifestyle.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Id. to Phillip Luce, September 1, 1972. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.151.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 157; 228, fn.39.

¹⁰⁸⁸ YAF membership was available both with a subscription included or without. According to *The New Guard* editor Jerry Norton, in 1972 there were thousands of members not subscribed to the magazine, cf. NORTON, Jerry: *Communicating Conservatism*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1973, p.20.

mid-Sixties had found this ratio to be accurate, because not all local chapter members would pay dues to the national office.¹⁰⁸⁹ That is also how the 50,000 members pre-St. Louis came about. If we use this method to gauge membership numbers, we are left with about 45,000 members after St. Louis.¹⁰⁹⁰ Such a decline, however, is typical for the period after national conventions and not necessarily indicative of a major split. It then remained on this level, until it climbed to 66,500 in 1971,¹⁰⁹¹ but this number was inflated by a new drop system, which places the comparable membership count closer to 50,000.¹⁰⁹²

Even though, as shown, the conflicts did not have any *immediate* effect on membership numbers, they nevertheless presented the YAF leadership with a long-term problem, namely how the organization would continue to attract libertarians when a separate libertarian youth movement vied with YAF for the same recruits.

In 1972, the whole philosophy of libertarianism seemed to be on the decline. There were no upcoming libertarian leaders and even the heroes of old like Goldwater were voting for an expansion of Social Security programs. In a letter to Phillip Luce, Ronald Docksai, David Keene's successor, posed the question: "Where have the libertarians gone?"¹⁰⁹³ Whereas in 1968/69, 27% of new YAF members had claimed they joined out of interest for economic questions, in 1972 only 8% did so. Even among those self-identifying as libertarians, Docksai recognized a severe lack of knowledge of libertarian classics. He asked for Luce's advice on how to attract "authentic libertarian-conservative young people [...] rather than the Nut-variety which I contend were in circulation at '69's St. Louis" who had "set back the cause of intellectual freedom among the young twenty years."¹⁰⁹⁴

YAF would find no satisfying answer to this question but encouraged libertarians to join until the mid-1970s, when they tried to frame the upcoming social issues in a way that aimed to appeal to both traditionalists and libertarians. In the 1970s, as YAFers took part in the Tax Revolt, worked for tuition tax credits and school vouchers, or drafted resolutions against abortion, Zero Government Growth became the wisdom of the day.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Cf. Randal Teague to Robert Heckman, May 28, 1980. YAF Records, Box 33, Folder 1.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Cf. id. to National Board, October 30, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File, YAF - National Board - Printed matter and reports.

¹⁰⁹¹ Cf. id. to National Board, April 15, 1971. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹⁰⁹² Cf. YAF Membership Report, April 1973. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 4.

¹⁰⁹³ Ronald Docksai to Phillip Luce, September 1, 1972, p.1. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.4-5.

6. A Conservative Malaise? YAF in the Nixon Era

On Saturday, September 4th, 1971, the delegates to the YAF national convention voted to “suspend [their] support of the Nixon administration.”¹⁰⁹⁵ This move was nearly unprecedented. Normally YAF conventions would pass topical resolutions on the nation’s most pressing matters. Only once in the organization’s history had the delegates approved a similar resolution—urging Barry Goldwater to run for president in 1963. However, as resolutions committee chairman Richard Derham noted, the situation at hand was of “extreme importance.”¹⁰⁹⁶ The quandary the delegates faced was that on the one hand, YAF and other conservatives had helped Nixon get elected in 1968 and were generally counted among his most loyal supporters. On the other hand, the hopes of YAF “that substantial headway would be made to reorient the country’s policies”¹⁰⁹⁷ had quickly evaporated. Nixon therefore had lost his base among young conservatives: in 1968, about 46% of respondents in a YAF survey had named Nixon as their preferred presidential choice. Even though, unsurprisingly, slightly more members favored YAF honorary chairman Ronald Reagan, it is likely that for many Nixon, who garnered a whopping 87% of all remaining votes, was their second choice.¹⁰⁹⁸ At the national convention in 1971, support had dropped to a meager 14%.¹⁰⁹⁹

The convention delegates cited a number of reasons for their falling out with Nixon. On the domestic scene, he had failed to curb inflation, unemployment, “excessive” taxation and the expansion of the welfare state.¹¹⁰⁰ Yet even worse were his failures in foreign policy, where he had not stood up to Soviet expansionism and arms buildup, accepted German *Ostpolitik*, and, worst of all, begun a policy of rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China, thus threatening the United States’ commitment to the Republic of China on Taiwan.¹¹⁰¹

Conservatives would have criticized those policies regardless of who resided in the White House. Nixon’s actions, however, especially incurred their wrath, because it was assumed that he had won the presidency by the support of conservatives on a conservative platform.¹¹⁰² In

¹⁰⁹⁵ Cf. Minutes of YAF National Convention, September 2-5, 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1; A Declaration Relating to Richard Nixon, September 4, 1971. YAF Records, Box 31, Folder 1.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Richard Derham to National Board, September 25, 1971. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 5.

¹⁰⁹⁷ A Declaration Relating to Richard Nixon, September 4, 1971. YAF Records, Box 31, Folder 1.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Confidential and Incomplete Survey Questionnaire, June 14, 1968. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3 Of interest is a letter by Ronald Docksai, who was YAF chairman through most of the Nixon years, urging his fellow New Yorkers to not repeat the mistakes of 1960, that is, to support Nixon over Reagan, cf. Ronald Docksai to Fellow New Yorkers, Undated (1968). Marvin Liebman Papers, Box 37, Folder Young Americans for Freedom – Misc.

¹⁰⁹⁹ YAF National Convention Polling Results, September 2-5, 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹¹⁰⁰ A Declaration Relating to Richard Nixon, September 4, 1971. YAF Records, Box 31, Folder 1.

¹¹⁰¹ For the historical background on the importance of China in conservative foreign policy thinking, see chapter 3.

¹¹⁰² Cf. MERGEL, Sarah: *Conservative Intellectuals and Richard Nixon. Rethinking the Rise of the Right*, New York, NY 2010, pp.2; 23–25.

the crucial three-way races in the states of the upper and border South, movement conservatives claimed that they gave Nixon the edge over Wallace and Humphrey.¹¹⁰³ Yet, as chairman Docksai put it, he seemed “to be carrying out the program of Hubert Humphrey. Young conservatives are not kids who can be satisfied with an occasional lollipop from the Administration.”¹¹⁰⁴ Their expectations had probably not been too high regarding domestic policy. After all, Nixon had been Vice President under the detested Eisenhower Administration. In foreign policy, however, his anti-communist, hawkish credentials were impeccable.¹¹⁰⁵

The break with Nixon coincides with a period of soul-searching within YAF. After the end of the tumultuous campus wars era, the national leadership sought a new purpose for YAF. An image of administration rubberstamps would probably have hurt YAF's chances to attract new recruits. With their resolution, the delegates more clearly defined what set their organization apart from the Young Republicans and other partisan organizations. In the end, as I will show in this chapter, attempts at reorienting YAF enjoyed only limited success as membership, chapter, and fundraising numbers started to decline.

6.1 Tricky Dick's Betrayal

After the new President had been in office for only a few months, the YAF national board for already felt the need to remind Nixon of his campaign pledges to defeat Communism and stop the expansion of the federal government.¹¹⁰⁶ While Nixon had attacked Democrats for the excesses of the liberal welfare state in his 1968 presidential campaign, his administration continued domestic spending programs in the New Deal and War on Poverty tradition. A thorn in the side of conservatives was the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) that was introduced by the administration in 1969.¹¹⁰⁷ Under the plan, family households with working parents would have been eligible for a negative income tax. Nixon had long rejected the idea of a guaranteed annual income, yet FAP, which would have replaced other welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, would in effect have amounted to just that. Although the President used the term ‘workfare,’ meant to appeal to conservatives, for the program, YAFers were having none of it.¹¹⁰⁸

¹¹⁰³ Cf. “Houston: Making It Perfectly Clear”, in: *The New Guard*, November 1971, p.2.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹¹⁰⁵ SCANLON, Sandra: *The Conservative Lobby and Nixon's “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam*, in: *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 43/2 (2009), pp.255–276, here pp.268–269.

¹¹⁰⁶ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 20–22, 1969, Resolution #1; Resolution #5. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 5.

¹¹⁰⁷ For a history of the Family Assistance Plan and a reassessment of the debates between conservatives and liberals surrounding it drawing on insights from later welfare reform attempts, see WADDAN, Alex: *A Liberal in Wolf's Clothing. Nixon's Family Assistance Plan in the Light of 1990s Welfare Reform*, in: *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 32/2 (1998), pp.203–218.

¹¹⁰⁸ Cf. EVANS, Bradley: *Impeachable Sources. Eureka! (Maybe)*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1970, p.6.

“Mr. Nixon’s proposal will administer the *coup de grace* to the original concept of ‘relief,’”¹¹⁰⁹ worried Bradley Warren Evans. By institutionalizing a guaranteed income, he argued, the government would assume an obligation to financially provide for groups characterized as poor. No longer would welfare present a means to relieve persons or families from temporary economic distress, it would go much further and become a permanent institution for wealth redistribution “for the sake of a theoretical economic equality.” Such redistribution, according to the Sharon Statement, disincentivized the pursuit of economic success, destroyed the integrity of assistance recipients, and “the moral autonomy of both” taxpayer and assisted.¹¹¹⁰ If Evans already was irate about the content of FAP, he fumed thinking about who was behind it: “[War on Poverty architect and Democrat, G.W.] Pat Moynihan makes no secret of his satisfaction in having convinced a Republican President to recommend a far more liberal welfare program than any Democrat ever dared,” he complained. It was “conservative gullibility”, Evans claimed, that had allowed such a program to come through. Enchanted by the term ‘workfare,’ conservatives had let Nixon surround himself by men that would make welfare “more comfortable when it should be less comfortable,” more of a right when it should be less so, and increased the number of potential recipients.¹¹¹¹ The 1971 YAF national convention delegates rejected the FAP by a vote of 24 to 383.¹¹¹² In the end, the plan failed through the opposition of conservative Republicans and some liberal Democrats who thought the proposal might not reach far enough—ironically, they might have been turned off by the requirements implied by ‘workfare.’¹¹¹³

Another area that drew sharp conservative criticism was Nixon’s handling of the economy. To combat the grim economic situation with soaring unemployment and inflation rates, the administration had introduced wage-price controls (the first since World War II). To alleviate international pressure resulting from a sharply overvalued Dollar, Nixon suspended the international convertibility of the currency into gold and floated the exchange rate,¹¹¹⁴ thus *de facto* ending the Bretton Woods system of fixed currency exchange rates. Attempting to ensure

¹¹⁰⁹ ID.: Impeachable Sources. Welfare, Workfare, and Eyewash, in: The New Guard, February 1970, p.18.

¹¹¹⁰ The Sharon Statement (1960), p.230.

¹¹¹¹ EVANS, Bradley: Impeachable Sources. Welfare, Workfare, and Eyewash, in: The New Guard, February 1970, p.19.

¹¹¹² YAF National Convention Polling Results, September 2-5, 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹¹¹³ Cf. WADDAN, A Liberal in Wolf’s Clothing, pp.212–214.

¹¹¹⁴ Foreign governments had begun withdrawing from the Bretton Woods System and converting their Dollar reserves into gold, which brought the American gold reserves under enormous pressure, cf. GRAY, William: Floating the System. Germany, the United States, and the Breakdown of Bretton Woods, 1969-1973, in: Diplomatic History Vol. 31/2 (2007), pp.295–323, here pp.307–312. For a detailed analysis of the ‘Nixon Shock’ that followed the president’s decision, see MATUSOW, Allen: Nixon’s Economy. Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes, Lawrence, KS 1998, pp.141–178.

the competitiveness of American industry in the face of possibly highly volatile exchange rates, he also introduced a 10 percent import tariff.

L.A. Smith, supposedly a “government economist” writing for the *New Guard* under a pseudonym, criticized the “straight-jacket” of controls and the barriers erected to free international trade. “Economic freedom,” he remarked, “has suffered a historic blow.”¹¹¹⁵ Wage-price regulations, a YAF flyer concurred, would only beget more regulations and so forth.¹¹¹⁶ “Somehow,” was the dire conclusion drawn by Smith, “1984 seems at least a couple years closer than it did in July.”¹¹¹⁷

While conservatives rejected what they called Nixon’s ‘New Economic Policy,’ they were even more incensed by his promise to “bring about a full generation of peace.”¹¹¹⁸ Cornerstones of the foreign policy devised by the President and his national security adviser Henry Kissinger were détente with the Soviet Union, including the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT),¹¹¹⁹ rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China, and a “peace with honor”¹¹²⁰ in Vietnam. Since all these goals mandated compromises on American interests, YAFers feared that Nixon was maneuvering the U.S. into a position of weakness.¹¹²¹ Kissinger and his deals, YAFer Herb Stupp analyzed, had “little regard for the foreign policy principles or even the international framework that until now have kept the United States free and sovereign.”¹¹²²

Any compromise with the communists, a fellow contributor to the *New Guard* argued, would be short-lived, any agreement an illusion. “A favorite card in the Soviet’s grab-bag of tricks,” she warned, was “peaceful coexistence.”¹¹²³ The Soviet elite would never compromise away their “Marxist teleology,” their desire for the inevitable victory of communism over

¹¹¹⁵ SMITH, L. A.: Nixonomics, in: *The New Guard*, November 1971, p.14.

¹¹¹⁶ Cf. Wage and Price Controls (YAF-Flyer), Undated (1971/72). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

¹¹¹⁷ SMITH, L. A.: Nixonomics, in: *The New Guard*, November 1971, p.14.

¹¹¹⁸ Address to the Nation Outlining a New Economic Policy: “The Challenge of Peace.” August 15, 1971: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Richard Nixon, 1971, Washington, D.C. 1972, pp.886–891, here p.886.

¹¹¹⁹ Nixon and Kissinger planned to use arms control to achieve goals in other areas such as Vietnam or the Berlin question. Through the concept of ‘linkage,’ they would try not to negotiate issue by issue, but to negotiate e.g. nuclear disarmament alongside other questions of foreign policy, cf. TAL, David: “Absolutes” and “Stages” in the Making and Application of Nixon’s SALT Policy, in: *Diplomatic History* Vol. 37/5 (2013), pp.1090–1116, here pp.1090–1091.

¹¹²⁰ Address to the Nation Announcing Conclusion of an Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam. January 23, 1973: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Richard Nixon, 1973, Washington, D.C. 1975, pp.18–20, here p.18.

¹¹²¹ COHEN, Michael: *American Maelstrom. The 1968 Election and the Politics of Division* (Pivotal moments in American history), New York, NY 2016, p.337, argues to the contrary that the backlash against Nixon among conservatives would have been even greater if not for his “tough” stance on Vietnam. As will be shown below, while YAF generally supported Nixon’s strategic initiatives, the organization was not entirely comfortable with being identified with administration policy.

¹¹²² STUPP, Herbert: What Price, Dr. Kissinger?, in: *The New Guard*, April 1974, p.22.

¹¹²³ PAUL, Ellen: A Full Generation...??. in: *The New Guard*, November 1971, p.17.

capitalism.¹¹²⁴ Traditionally, conservatives had attacked liberal leaders for failing to accept this enduring truth and instead responding with naïveté and goodwill towards Soviet aggression. The SALT negotiations, they now claimed, were the perfect example for this: anti-communist hawks feared that the agreement would freeze all those areas in which the Soviets already were superior while leaving open for catch-up those where the Americans were in front, thus formalizing what they perceived as U.S. inferiority.¹¹²⁵ This would aggravate the decline of American military capabilities already apparent under Nixon, whose slashing of the defense budget had led to gaps in the ICBM, strategic air, and nuclear submarine forces.¹¹²⁶ To curb further 'excesses' of détente, YAF, among other means, supported a legislative initiative by Democratic senator Henry Jackson (later becoming the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1964) to deny the Soviet Union most favored nation status for trade relations.¹¹²⁷

Conservatives also rejected another pillar of Nixon foreign policy: the concept of devolution, i.e., the transfer of defense responsibilities from the U.S. ('center') to its regional allies ('periphery'). While the prototypical application of the concept, Vietnamization, at least earned mixed responses,¹¹²⁸ critics accused Nixon of quitting the field in favor of American adversaries. A *New Guard* editorial suggested there had been "'good reason' (faith in the President as an anti-Communist) to believe Nixon was talking to a domestic political audience to allay their exaggerated fears that American presence around the world *per se* meant more Vietnams."¹¹²⁹ Such hopes, however, had been wishful thinking, as the new policy was leading to the "*vacuumization* of East Asian Politics." The People's Republic of China, in this view, had been given free hand to fill the "Nixon-created vacuum."¹¹³⁰

The decisive step in this development, and the final straw that broke the camel's back in Nixon's relation to YAF was the rapprochement towards 'Red' China. While Nixon had commended then-chairman Tom Huston (who by 1971 had become a special assistant to the President) in 1966 for spreading "knowledge of the dangers that Communist China represents,"¹¹³¹ he seemed to have all but forgotten his earlier position. YAFers were concerned by the 'Ping-pong' diplomacy of spring 1971. During the 31st World Table Tennis Championship, the U.S. table

¹¹²⁴ Ibid., p.18.

¹¹²⁵ Cf. SARGENT, Daniel: *A Superpower Transformed. The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*, New York, NY 2015, pp.213–214. Supporters of the treaty, on the other hand, would point out that looking at the raw numbers of missiles neglected American technological superiority.

¹¹²⁶ *Countdown to Destruction – The Nixon Defense Policy (YAF-Flyer)*, Undated (1971). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

¹¹²⁷ Cf. YAF State Chairman's Memo, Undated (1972/73). YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 2 For YAF's arguments against intensified trade relations with communist countries, see chapter 3.

¹¹²⁸ See below.

¹¹²⁹ "Nixon to Peking: The Unleashing of Mao", in: *The New Guard*, September 1971, p.3.

¹¹³⁰ Ibid. Emphasis original.

¹¹³¹ Richard Nixon to Tom Huston, October 21, 1966. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 2.

tennis team had received an invitation to mainland China, which they visited in April 1971. This had been the first U.S. 'delegation' to go to Peking since before the Korean War.

The symbolic move was rightly interpreted by YAF as the opening salvo of an attempt to normalize Sino-American relations in favor of the PRC. The national office quickly organized a major project in support of the Republic of China on Taiwan, the highlight of which, 'Free China Week,' was carried out in mid-July. Featured activities were prayer services for China, lobbying on behalf of the Nationalists with congressmen and senators and participation in congressional hearings.¹¹³² Some YAF activists held ping-pong exhibition matches in front of the White House while another group challenged the President to a game, during which they would explain their position to him.¹¹³³ Nixon, however, was unmoved and within days of the conclusion of Free China Week announced an upcoming visit to the People's Republic.¹¹³⁴

In response, the September YAF convention passed the resolution cited at the beginning of this chapter. Another resolution concerned China specifically. The Nixon visit to the "de facto" Beijing regime, it argued, was "a threat to the present alliance of the free and civilized peoples in Asia [... and] to the national sovereignty of the United States" because the Asian alliance "represent[ed] the front line of defense of the Western border of the Americas."¹¹³⁵ Delegates voted 42 to 368 against admitting the PRC to the United Nations.¹¹³⁶ In a last ditch effort, YAF sponsored 'Free China Day' to protest this admission and demonstrate continuing American support to the Republic of China.¹¹³⁷

On October 25, 1971, however, the PRC was finally admitted to the UN while the representatives of the Chinese nationalists were expelled. The U.S. proposal to seat both delegations was narrowly rejected.¹¹³⁸ For the YAF board, this proved "beyond any reasonable doubt that the United Nations is morally bankrupt." The board members resolved that the U.S.

¹¹³² Cf. FORRESTER, Albert: *China, Trucks and Politics*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1972, p.17.

¹¹³³ Cf. "Protestors Ask Nixon to Game of Ping Pong", in: *YAF in the News*, July 1971.

¹¹³⁴ Cf. "Free China Week Torpedoed by Nixon" (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, September 1971, pp.29–30 Nixon and his advisers had predicted that the move would incense conservatives. The President had advised Henry Kissinger to "handle" key figures like Buckley and Reagan, i.e. to assure them of continued support of the ROC and to appeal to party/administration loyalty, cf. TUDDA, Chris: *A Cold War Turning Point. Nixon and China, 1969–1972*, Baton Rouge, LA 2012, pp.97–100.

¹¹³⁵ Resolution on China, September 2-5, 1971. YAF Records, Box 31, Folder 1.

¹¹³⁶ YAF National Convention Polling Results, September 2-5, 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹¹³⁷ Cf. "Free China Day" (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, December 1971, p.30; FORRESTER, Albert: *China, Trucks and Politics*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1972, p.17.

¹¹³⁸ Cf. Records of the U.N. General Assembly, 26th Session [October 25, 1971], online: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/735611?ln=en> [27.07.2020]. The Nixon administration had not predicted the U.S. proposal to fail. They had promised conservatives like Reagan that it could be assured that Taiwan would stay in the U.N., which led to a furious phone call by the governor to the White House, to which Nixon was unable to coherently respond, cf. TUDDA, *A Cold War Turning Point*, pp.120–121; 140–141.

should withdraw from the organization.¹¹³⁹ At the same time, they condemned the Nixon Administration for the “inept handling” of the matter and its “sell out of the best interests of the free people of the world.”¹¹⁴⁰

6.2 Against Nixon or McGovern? – YAF in the 1972 Elections

Maybe Nixon with his anti-communist background was the perfect man to initiate a change in China relations. His success in jumpstarting a long process of rapprochement is often seen as one of, if not his greatest achievement. The Right, however, saw it as his most crucial error. YAF was not the only conservative group to break with the President about this matter. The ‘Manhattan Twelve,’ an assortment of leading figures of magazines *National Review* and *Human Events*, YAF, and the American Conservative Union, some as individuals, some representing their organizations, lambasted Nixon’s move and vowed to suspend their support of the administration.¹¹⁴¹ Other conservatives reluctantly got behind Nixon, but remained staunchly pro-ROC, aiming to preserve the American commitment towards its long-time Chinese ally.¹¹⁴²

YAF leaders saw themselves as the major impetus behind the formation of the ‘Manhattan Twelve’ (named after the place of their meetings, although the number of attendees varied), especially their actions at the February board meeting.¹¹⁴³ There, they had discussed whether to “unidentify”¹¹⁴⁴ themselves with the President. Their analysis of the situation was that YAF and other non-Republican conservative groups needed to “break the ground” for potential (Republican) leaders of a dissident conservative movement. The board also passed a motion supporting the formation of a joint action conference between ACU, YAF, Human Events and National Review.¹¹⁴⁵ This indeed might have been one of the events that led to the formation of the group.

On July 27th, 1971, the Manhattan Twelve released a statement announcing and explaining their suspension of support for the Nixon administration.¹¹⁴⁶ The undersigned included William F. Buckley, Jr., William Rusher, Frank Meyer, and James Burnham of *National Review*; Randal

¹¹³⁹ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, October 30-November 1, 1971, Appendix 7. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 2.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid., Appendix 8.

¹¹⁴¹ Cf. SCANLON, The Conservative Lobby and Nixon’s “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam, p.269.

¹¹⁴² Cf. MAO, *Asia First*, pp.159–164.

¹¹⁴³ Cf. DOCKSAI, Ronald: To Restore Right Reason, in: *The New Guard*, December 1971, p.12.

¹¹⁴⁴ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 5-7, 1971, p.6. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 3.

¹¹⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid., p.10.

¹¹⁴⁶ Cf. SZULC, Tad: 11 Conservatives Criticize Nixon, in: *The New York Times*, July 29, 1971, p.7. A full reprint of the statement can be found under “We The Undersigned...”, in: *Creative Californian* Vol. 4, No. 2, August 1971, p.2. Buckley had announced the statement to Kissinger when it had been drafted, but the administration showed itself unconcerned, although Nixon “ordered Kissinger to talk to [Buckley] about it. TUDDA, *A Cold War Turning Point*, p.108.

Teague, YAF executive director; Daniel Mahoney, head of the Conservative Party, New York; and Thomas Winter and Jeffrey Bell of the American Conservative Union.¹¹⁴⁷ Their reasoning was the same as in the subsequent YAF resolution cited above.¹¹⁴⁸ During their sporadic meetings and correspondence throughout 1971¹¹⁴⁹ they worked out a catalogue of demands regarding foreign, national security, and domestic policy they presented to the administration in the form of Chuck Colson, Special Counsel to the President.¹¹⁵⁰

Their goal was to give the administration a range of concessions it could make to conservatives to gain their continued support. All demands were (against the fashion of the time) presented as negotiable. Members of the group disagreed on where to put special emphasis, but the general feeling was that an acceptance of some of the demands would satisfy conservatives for now.

While YAF Alumnus and *Human Events* editor Allan Ryskind reported from his meeting with the administration that they would be “not at all intolerant to our recommendations,”¹¹⁵¹ after the administration’s official response, Ronald Docksai painted a grimmer picture: no substantial promises were given to any of the conservatives’ demands, e.g. rescission of the Family Assistance Plan, budget cuts, or the retention of Vice President Agnew on the 1972 ticket, except that the administration would support a “strict constructionist,” should a vacancy on the Supreme Court arise. “In short,” Docksai summed up, the Nixon camp had made “not even the hint of promises, which the administration could then, as is the tradition, break next year. Dr. Kissinger, after many long communications with him, has assured us that nothing can be assured.”¹¹⁵²

While a support of Nixon for the 1972 election was thus out of the question, the Manhattan Twelve agreed that grassroots Republicans in conservative states needed to have some alternative presented, if only to enable a protest vote. Thus, the presidential candidacy of John Ashbrook was born.¹¹⁵³

Ashbrook was a congressman from central Ohio, where he had been elected to the House for the first time in 1960. He also was an associate of *National Review* publisher William Rusher

¹¹⁴⁷ The chairman of ACU, John Ashbrook, although he would be crucial to the planning of the Manhattan 12, was not included, because the group did not “solicit or accept signatures from elected officials.” SZULC, Tad: 11 Conservatives Criticize Nixon, in: *The New York Times*, July 29, 1971

¹¹⁴⁸ Cf. Ronald Docksai to *The New York Times* Editorial Department, March 3, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹¹⁴⁹ A collection of internal memoranda can be found in William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 193, Folder The “Manhattan 12” 1971.

¹¹⁵⁰ Cf. Allan Ryskind to William Buckley, November 2, 1971. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 193, Folder The “Manhattan 12” 1971.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵² Ronald Docksai to National Board and National Staff, December 6, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 3.

¹¹⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.4–5.

going back to their Young Republican days and had been instrumental in starting the Draft Goldwater committee.¹¹⁵⁴ His great network with movement conservatives and his impeccable conservative voting record had made him chairman of the American Conservative Union in 1965. Nevertheless, Ashbrook was not a national figure like Barry Goldwater or the upcoming Ronald Reagan.

The latter, perhaps, would have been the first choice of conservatives. Through his acting career, support of Goldwater in 1964 and governorship of California, he possessed the charm and renown to be a serious contender for the Republican nomination. YAF thus brought the name of its honorary chairman into play in early 1971. Reagan, however, would have none of it. Writing to chairman Docksai, he noted that “the move you’ve announced can only divide and destroy our chance to go forward.”¹¹⁵⁵ In an uphill battle against entrenched liberalism, including a hostile media landscape, Reagan argued, conservatives could not afford division. He thus prompted Docksai to stop ‘Draft Reagan’ activities, lest he distance himself publicly from them. Docksai complied and warned his fellow YAF board members that “it is vital for the future of YAF’s relations with the Governor that we not nominate him [at the 1971 YAF national convention, G.W.] in Houston.” An effort should be made as to validate the previous Reagan for President drive, but “all of us [should] conspire together with enough accuracy so that Reagan is not the final nominee at the mock convention.” Neither, however, should the delegates nominate a “non-celebrity who would appear as our choice” for a primary challenge in the sense of the Manhattan Twelve.¹¹⁵⁶

Thus, YAF chose Agnew and the Twelve Ashbrook. Although the Manhattan group was mostly composed of older conservatives, one YAF commentator observed that the “basic initiative for John Ashbrook came from YAF.”¹¹⁵⁷ He contrasted the drive to the 1968 McCarthy primary campaign, where the initiative supposedly came from older Democrats who then mobilized the youth. In 1972, however, youngsters were trying to mobilize the adult conservative community. Nevertheless, the YAFer continued, “[if] YAF is the youth arm, it must be conceded that there is no body. We cannot, in asserting the primacy of YAF, be accused of trying to have the tail wag the dog: there ain’t no dog.”¹¹⁵⁸ He viewed the ACU as merely a YAF front, the other participants of the Manhattan Twelve as without (political) influence. “Let there be a YAF

¹¹⁵⁴ Cf. RUSHER, William: John Ashbrook, RIP, in: *National Review*, May 14, 1982, pp.532–533.

¹¹⁵⁵ Ronald Reagan to Ronald Docksai, May 21, 1971. YAF Records, Box 79, Folder 2.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ronald Docksai to National Board of Directors, August 17, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 1.

¹¹⁵⁷ N.N. to National Board of Directors, Undated (1972). YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5 The author wished to remain anonymous and was announced by Ron Pearson as “a long-time YAF activist which has to do with the political realm and the Ashbrook candidacy in particular.” It was written before the California primary, which likely dates it somewhere between March and May.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

national convention”, he mused, “let the speakers be no more than the ‘journalistic wing’ (NR, Human Events, for instance).” If, for whatever reason, the food there was poisoned, “[n]ational conservatism has ceased to exist.”¹¹⁵⁹

Without support from Republican elites, the Ashbrook campaign could not seriously harm Nixon’s chances of victory. If conservatives believed otherwise, the commentator predicted, they would only be “making asses” of themselves. The campaign, then, should not be geared towards political success. Instead, it should be seen as “providing the foundation, or a significant part thereof, of a national political effort within the Republican party.” Contrary to the “Goldwater people,” the Ashbrook campaign at least was not composed of “the usual Republican whores.”¹¹⁶⁰ Lists of contributors, etc., could be used for YAF fundraising and recruitment.

While all YAF observers agreed that there was no way Ashbrook would beat Nixon, most painted a less dire picture of its immediate efficacy. Because Nixon would not respond to behind-the-scenes pressure, conservatives needed to make their dissent public, regardless of whether they would support Nixon in the general election. Such pressure, the *New Guard* editors suggested, would move Nixon to the Right.¹¹⁶¹ Long-time YAF activist and staff member Jerry Norton went even further and claimed that the candidacy already had: Nixon’s veto of the Child Development Bill (which would have instituted a national day care system), his endorsement of Agnew for VP and Supreme Court appointments attested to that.¹¹⁶² YAF employee Charlie Black remarked that four years of Nixon had convinced the Republican rank-and-file that the federal government finally needed to be brought under control. “[We] will have new recruits to the cause of limited government—if we go after them.”¹¹⁶³

Inspired by such hopeful predictions, YAF poured considerable resources into the primary efforts in New Hampshire, Florida, and California (after which Ashbrook withdrew). While the organization could not technically endorse the candidacy for legal reasons, it employed indirect methods or front groups to boost its chances.¹¹⁶⁴ YAFers provided or gathered the bulk of the

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p.2 Goldwater had been criticized by YAF during the Nixon administration, because his loyalty often seemed to lie more with the party than his principles, cf. “We Love You Barry, But...”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1972, pp.2–3 Reagan defended the Nixon loyalists against these charges in a letter to the editor, cf. REAGAN, Ronald: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, June 1972, front matter.

¹¹⁶¹ “A Partial Answer”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1972, p.2.

¹¹⁶² Cf. NORTON, Jerry: *The Ashbrook Campaign*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1972, p.8.

¹¹⁶³ BLACK, Charlie: *Bringing the Federal Government Under Control*, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1972, pp.16–17.

¹¹⁶⁴ Cf. Wayne Thorburn to Kieran, August 2, 1972, pp.1–2. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7. The recipient, only addressed as “Kieran,” might be Kieran O’Doherty, brother-in-law of Conservative Party chair Daniel Mahoney and founding member and ex-chairman of the same party.

signatures needed to get the Ohioan on the primary ballot,¹¹⁶⁵ and some 200 volunteers were sent to New Hampshire to work there during the week(end)s leading up to the primary. Through its offshoot, the Young America's Campaign Committee, the organization also provided some 'seed money' for operations in several states.¹¹⁶⁶

The national board passed a resolution commending the congressman for his "determined fight for conservative principles." As individuals, 23 out of 25 of the board members and most of the national staff endorsed the campaign.¹¹⁶⁷ Chairman Docksai and Executive Director Thorburn, Teague's successor, also became advisors to the candidate on youth issues.¹¹⁶⁸

Having poured their money and sweat into the campaign, Ashbrook's poor performance in the primaries—he only gathered slightly less than 10% in New Hampshire, Florida, and California, respectively—came as a disappointment to YAF activists. Docksai kept a positive note by stating that the effort had shown that "principle is alive and well in our movement."¹¹⁶⁹ Perhaps so, but the whole episode of the Manhattan Twelve and Ashbrook demonstrated that movement conservatives had overestimated their political influence and their importance for the Nixon administration and reelection. While many Americans called themselves 'conservatives' by 1971/72, that needed not mean that they adhered to the views or followed the personalities and organizations of movement conservatism.¹¹⁷⁰ At the same time, YAF and other conservatives underestimated the support the president had from the centrist voters of 'Middle America.' This misjudgment also colored their predictions for the 1972 elections in general.

For example, the ACU's Jeff Bell argued in *New Guard* that "you cannot go anywhere in America, to intellectuals, to farmers, to hard-hats, to the South, to California, to liberals or conservatives and hear an enthusiastic defense of the Nixon Presidency. There are no Nixonites."¹¹⁷¹ Bell was convinced that in order to win, Nixon first needed to win *back* the conservative voters of the Midwest and West. The editors chimed in and proclaimed that a widespread conservative defection surely would spell Nixon's defeat.¹¹⁷² In a letter to the editor, a fellow YAFer criticized this view sharply. Bell's belief "that conservatives hold the only key to victory", he argued, was "comparable to the arrogant boasts" of leftist campus leaders that they represented majority opinions.¹¹⁷³

¹¹⁶⁵ Cf. NORTON, Jerry: The Ashbrook Campaign, in: The New Guard, March 1972, p.8.

¹¹⁶⁶ Wayne Thorburn to Kieran, August 2, 1972, pp.1–2. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹¹⁶⁷ YAF & The Right Scene, in: The New Guard, April 1972, p.23.

¹¹⁶⁸ Cf. "YAFers Active in Ashbrook Action" (YAF & The Right Scene), in: The New Guard, March 1972, p.29.

¹¹⁶⁹ Ronald Docksai to William Rusher, June 6, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹¹⁷⁰ Cf. COHEN, American Maelstrom, p.309.

¹¹⁷¹ BELL, Jeffrey: The Ordeal of the President or Can Nixon Find True Happiness in 1972, in: The New Guard, May 1971, p.5.

¹¹⁷² "Should Conservatives Support Richard Nixon?", in: The New Guard, January-February 1971, p.7.

¹¹⁷³ GUMB, Dana: Letter to the Editor, in: The New Guard, Summer 1971, p.32.

Regardless of these differences of opinion, strategic observations of YAFers were colored less by the policies of Nixon or his potential Democratic opponents (which, *cum grano salis*, they held to be virtually indistinguishable except for George Wallace) but by the thought that involvement for or against Nixon might tip the scales towards the Democrats or Republicans with certain long-term implications.

(Reluctant) Nixon supporters often claimed that his reelection would enable other Republicans to ride into Washington on his coattails. The party was, the editors of California YAF's magazine argued, a "natural breeding ground for conservatives"¹¹⁷⁴ and it was likely to keep that character even during four more years of Nixon. As a lame-duck president, Nixon's ability to influence the direction of the party in the face of continued conservative strength would be limited. Abandonment of the Republicans, on the other hand, would leave the GOP "permanently devoid of principle." A McGovern presidency, respectively, would boost the left wing of the Democratic Party. While such a "Babylonian exile," board member Connaught Coyne elaborated, might rally conservative forces, the losses in Congress members might be more severe. "And to the theory of rearguard actions producing a potent leadership," she added, "conservatives have had enough rearguard actions in the past two decades to have gleaned every possible value from the experience."¹¹⁷⁵ Another point was raised in the *New Guard*: because Nixon was seen as a conservative irrespective of whether he actually was one or not, four more years of him would serve to alleviate the "paranoia" about everything labeled conservative that had gravely damaged the Goldwater campaign in 1964.¹¹⁷⁶ Yet, the author did not specify how a Nixon presidency would help make conservative *positions* more amenable to the public if the president would not act like a conservative.

The last argument could also be turned on its head: because Nixon was seen as a conservative and was a Republican, conservative Republicans had a hard time criticizing him. If former Vice President Humphrey had won in 1968, another California YAF editorial argued, he would have acted much the same as Nixon had. Yet, because he was a Democrat, there would have been an organized resistance from conservative Republicans. The lack of the same for reasons of party loyalty moved the country further and further to the Left.¹¹⁷⁷ A Humphrey presidency therefore would have assured a strong conservative opponent on the GOP ticket in 1972.¹¹⁷⁸ Opponents

¹¹⁷⁴ "Four More Years?", in: *Creative Californian* Vol. 5, No. 2, October 1972, p.2.

¹¹⁷⁵ COYNE, Connaught: Right On: Why I'm Sort of For Nixon, in: *Free Campus News Service* Vol. III, No. 3, September 29, 1972. YAF Records, Box 67, Folder 8.

¹¹⁷⁶ MONGILLO, Larry: Conservatives & 1972 – A Rebuttal, in: *The New Guard*, March 1972, pp.9–10.

¹¹⁷⁷ Cf. "What Would We Be Doing Now?", in: *Creative Californian* Vol. 4, No. 3, August 1971, p.2.

¹¹⁷⁸ Cf. "Whatever Happened to the Conservative Nixon?", in: *Creative Californian* Vol. 4, No. 3, August 1971, p.2.

of Nixon could buttress their argument with a detailed analysis written by a “Republican Party official in a Southwestern State” writing under a pseudonym, who showed that if four years of Nixon had not turned conservative senators and congressmen into liberals, they at least had made them less conservative. Between 1968 and 1972, their Americans for Constitutional Action voting scores, a barometer for how close the individual was toeing the conservative line, significantly decreased. Nixon had thus possibly inflicted long-term damage on the strength of conservatism in Congress.¹¹⁷⁹

In the end, such considerations were often made obsolete by the simple lack of tenable alternatives to Nixon. For a while, some YAFers placed some hope in the primary performance of Henry ‘Scoop’ Jackson, the Democratic neo-conservative senator from Washington,¹¹⁸⁰ who appealed to conservatives with his steadfast anti-communism. Yet when Jackson lost to George McGovern, a liberal senator from South Dakota, it was clear that YAFers could not support the Democratic candidate. However, McGovern provided a way out of the quandary: by working against him, YAFers could support the Republican Party without having to openly endorse Nixon. This led to the formation of the Youth Against McGovern group, sponsored by the YAF-offshoot Young America’s Campaign Committee. Unaffiliated with any Nixon operation, foremost the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP), it was chaired by University of Virginia YAF chairman John Buckley, a cousin of William F., Jr.¹¹⁸¹ The board of the group consisted overwhelmingly of national YAF leaders or notable alumni.

By concentrating their efforts against McGovern, YAF hoped to gain several benefits. Firstly, regardless of their position on Nixon, YAFers were united in their rejection of McGovern.¹¹⁸² This lowest common denominator promised to draw in not only hardcore conservatives and Nixonites. YAF hoped it would also attract the Humphrey and Wallace Democrats, as well as supporters of the American Independent Party candidacy of outgoing congressman and John Birch Society member John Schmitz, who might be turned away by a Republican outfit.¹¹⁸³ With a bit of intellectual nudging, Thorburn hoped, their “gut reaction against McGovern and

¹¹⁷⁹ Cf. YANOWSKI, M. H.: Nixon and the Alternatives: The Conservative Dilemma in 1972, in: *The New Guard*, April 1972, pp.10–13.

¹¹⁸⁰ Cf. GEORGE, William: The Rise of Henry Jackson, in: *The New Guard*, September 1971, pp.13–14.

¹¹⁸¹ A statement was released under the name of “Chris Buckley, National Chairman of Youth Against McGovern” (see below). Chris Buckley is the son of William F. Buckley, Jr. Although multiple newspapers picked up that statement (see, for example, “Young Voters Planning to Oppose McGovern”, in: *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1972, A3), it was possibly mistitled. Assuming there was only one national chairman, John Buckley, who was involved with YAF politics and became national chairman in 1977 seems the more likely candidate. See also: “Spotlight on... John Buckley”, in: *Dialogue on Liberty* Vol. III, No. 3, Fall 1973, p.2, which mentions his leadership of the group. An advertisement in “Voter’s Report”, 1972, p.8. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 8, also only mentions John Buckley as national chairman.

¹¹⁸² Cf. FORRESTER, Albert: *The Year That Was*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1973, p.18.

¹¹⁸³ Cf. Statement by Chris Buckley, National Chairman of Youth Against McGovern, Undated (1972). YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 8.

the radicals” could be turned into a coherent conservative philosophy.¹¹⁸⁴ Because it would not take a pro-Nixon stand, YAF itself would be free to ‘talk the issues.’ This would be easier with McGovern rather than Nixon as a target because Nixon could not really be placed on any issue while McGovern provided a “consistent statist and a consistent neo-isolationist” program, giving conservatives the opportunity to “show precisely what liberalism is, and precisely why it is both morally and pragmatically bankrupt.”¹¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, it could motivate all those YAF activists, who either had no promising local races to focus on or were simply not interested in anything but the national election.¹¹⁸⁶

In the end, when Nixon won the presidency in a landslide,¹¹⁸⁷ some activists had concentrated their efforts in Youth Against McGovern, some, like Docksai, had reluctantly endorsed Nixon¹¹⁸⁸ or had worked for Schmitz¹¹⁸⁹ and some had participated preeminently in local elections, most notably in the successful Senate campaign of Jesse Helms. Helms would become one of the most influential conservative voices in the Senate for the next thirty years. His election also broke the long-standing Democratic monopoly in North Carolina, ushering in an era of two-party competition. YAFers played a vital role for this crucial campaign in the history of conservatism. Harold Herring, former Southern regional representative, was campaign director. He was assisted by Florida state chairman Tim Baer as field representative, national board member David Adcock as youth coordinator, and former YAF activist and employee Charlie Black as director of organization.¹¹⁹⁰

6.3 Some Seventies Soul-Searching

YAF’s struggle to define its relationship to the Nixon administration, to decide between a principled and a pragmatic approach is to be understood in the context of the upheavals the organization underwent while transitioning from the late 1960s into the first half of the 1970s. In some ways, this period marked the coming-of-age of the group. It celebrated its 10th

¹¹⁸⁴ Wayne Thorburn to Kieran, August 2, 1972, p.3. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹¹⁸⁵ “McGovern – Nothing to Worry About?”, in: *The New Guard*, September 1972, p.3.

¹¹⁸⁶ Cf. Wayne Thorburn to Kieran, August 2, 1972, p.3. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹¹⁸⁷ For a rundown of the 1972 election, see PERLSTEIN, Rick: *The Election of 1972*, in: SMALL, Melvin (Ed.): *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon*, Malden, MA 2013, pp.164–184.

¹¹⁸⁸ Cf. Ronald Docksai to Warren Chase, October 25, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 26, Folder 4 Docksai also testified before the Republican Platform Committee, requesting a shift to more conservative policies, cf. ID.: *Introductory Statement before the Republican Platform Committee*, August 16, 1972. YAF Records, Box 9, Folder 4, while Wayne Thorburn did the same for the Democrats, see THORBURN, Wayne: *Introductory Statement before the Democratic Platform Committee*, June 23, 1972. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 284, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) 1972.

¹¹⁸⁹ Cf. “YAF Campaigns for American Party”, in: *YAF in the News*, November-December 1972. YAF Records, Box 71, Folder 8.

¹¹⁹⁰ Cf. “YAFers Plunge Into Politics” (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, September 1972, p.20; Wayne Thorburn to National Board, November 16, 1972. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 2; David Adcock to William Rusher, July 31, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

anniversary at Great Elm in 1970, and for the first time, numerous alumni held posts within the administration and in the larger conservative movement. This raised questions about the direction YAF should take for the coming decade: would they continue to be an activist organization dedicated to countering leftist forces on campus or elsewhere? Or should they dedicate themselves to the spreading of conservative ideas and the building of cadres, such as the ones that could be seen in action in the Office of Economic Opportunity?¹¹⁹¹

In a profile written for *Playboy*, journalist George Fox noted that by engaging in the Campus Wars, YAF had transformed from a group attacking the “traditional ogres of the right” such as Social Security etc. into a viable campus force, yet remained virtually unknown out of it. “[J]ust as alienated from mainstream U.S. culture as the sandal-wearing, bearded leftist he derides,” both conservatives and radicals were attacking the center of American society.¹¹⁹² When the most radical elements of this development left YAF during the internal struggle of 1969/70,¹¹⁹³ executive director Randal Teague cautioned that the organization might be narrowing its appeal too much.¹¹⁹⁴ YAF programming was “essentially a ‘balancing act’ [...] it is of a political necessity that YAF never succumb to the pressures to become too traditionalist or too libertarian.”¹¹⁹⁵ In 1969, the organization had run the risk of succumbing to libertarian pressure. Now it needed to find a new balance not only philosophically, but also in terms of campus vs. general interest issues, activist vs. intellectual projects, issue-based vs. political programming, etc. At the time, YAF’s predominant issues were opposition to the New Left and the Vietnam War. In a 1970 survey among local and national leadership, the issues most cited as originally motivating respondents to join YAF in the first place (apart from generic ones such as “conservatism”) were “Vietnam,” “Goldwater,” and “Student Subversion.” They by far outweighed any other issues. Correspondingly, most survey participants had joined during the Goldwater campaign in 1964, and in 1967 (22 respectively) and 1968-69 (100), when the Vietnam and campus wars escalated. All other years of the 1960s combined only amounted to 28 respondents.¹¹⁹⁶ But, for various reasons, those three issues no longer promised to provide a rallying point for the organization during the 1970s.

¹¹⁹¹ See below.

¹¹⁹² FOX, George: Counterrevolution, in: YAF in the News, March 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, Newsletter, “YAF in the News”.

¹¹⁹³ See chapter 5.

¹¹⁹⁴ Cf. Randal Teague to National Board, November 24, 1969. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Minutes of meetings, 1970.

¹¹⁹⁵ Id. to National Board, May 14, 1971, p.1. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹¹⁹⁶ Results of the Spring 1970 Leadership Questionnaire. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

The early Seventies lacked a national conservative figurehead. While Barry Goldwater had been the accepted leader of conservatives in 1964, after his failed presidential campaign, he had become more of an elder statesman. His loyalty to Nixon also alienated some young activists.¹¹⁹⁷ John Ashbrook was known too little outside of conservative circles. Ronald Reagan, who would become his successor from the mid-Seventies onwards, did not yet seem ready to take up the mantle of leadership. Others, like New York Senator James Buckley¹¹⁹⁸ or Jesse Helms, were respected nationally but idolized only locally. In other words, there was no charismatic leader that generated interest for conservatism and therefore new members for YAF.¹¹⁹⁹ If the organization wanted to attract recruits, it had to promote appealing issues.

In May 1970, when the President had just announced that American troops had entered Cambodia to cut off the NLF's supply routes and uproot its HQ, executive director Randal Teague was enthusiastic about the prospects for YAF's future: "[N]ever [...] in YAF's entire history," he had seen "so much that we can capitalize on."¹²⁰⁰ The enactment of a Vietnam policy YAF had been demanding for years, and a new high point in campus unrest sparked by the intensification of a war that was supposed to end promised a host of new recruits. The death of four students by the hands of the National Guard during an anti-war demonstration at Kent State was the tragic climax of those developments. Yet, what seemed to be the starting point of a new phase of the Vietnam and campus wars was actually their zenith.

Almost exactly a year later, Teague lamented that YAF had aimed too high by making the campus Left their main target. "We took on Firestone, and we won."¹²⁰¹ The world saw us win, and gave us credit. [...] We took on the New Left, they haven't disappeared; ergo, YAF failed—so it is argued."¹²⁰² YAFers, however, were fully aware of the manifold successes and institutional legacies of their involvement, even if they had not ultimately defeated the New Left. Nevertheless, the greater danger, and one that Teague did not entirely foresee, was that the New Left *would* eventually disappear from campus. Internal strife and the winding down of the Vietnam War fueled that process. YAF's campus involvement was largely reactionary in nature. Without any leftist action to motivate them, many YAFers became inactive themselves.¹²⁰³ What, then, would the organization do with all the new members it had attracted,

¹¹⁹⁷ Cf. "We Love You Barry, But...", in: *The New Guard*, March 1972.

¹¹⁹⁸ See below.

¹¹⁹⁹ Cf. James Minarik to Ronald Docksai, June 2, 1972. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 3; Wayne Thorburn to William Rusher, January 18, 1973. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹²⁰⁰ Randal Teague to National Board, May 15, 1970. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 2.

¹²⁰¹ See chapter 3.

¹²⁰² Randal Teague to National Board, May 14, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹²⁰³ Cf. Regional and State Organization Report, October 1971. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

but, apart from radicals, given “insufficient targets to ‘hate’”?¹²⁰⁴ Teague had predicted the rise of a new type of YAF member, the “philosophical-activis[t].”¹²⁰⁵ While it had been a struggle in the past to reconcile the interests of political activists with intellectual conservatives, this new type, Teague argued, would embrace both labels. If that were true, it would not have been too severe if YAF could no longer combat the Left on campus. The disappearance of YAF’s second main issue, however, put that thesis to a real test.

At the same time Teague thought YAF could capitalize on the Cambodian incursion, national employee and former (and future) board member Jerry Norton asked whether “[a] quiet withdrawal from Vietnam” as an issue would not be the wiser policy.¹²⁰⁶ The organization, according to Norton, had gone from a “clarion call for rapid victory through escalation”¹²⁰⁷ to a *de facto* rubberstamping of the Nixon policy of graduated withdrawal. This strategy, however, had proven to be a terrible mistake. Writing based on the assumption that the Vietnam was *not* of crucial importance for the global fight against communism—Laos and Cambodia had already virtually fallen, but Thailand and Malaysia showed no signs of weakness, thus invalidating the Domino Theory—Norton observed that a continuation of the war was hurtful to U.S. interests: It drew resources that could be better spent on nuclear defense. Norton worried that congressional doves would use war-weariness to justify slashing the defense budgets. Furthermore, the war had led to the ‘Nixon Doctrine’ of devolution, thus leaving other allies to fend for themselves in the face of communist aggression. Vietnam, Norton continued, also inflicted collateral damage to the U.S.: it damaged the economy, fostered a demoralization of the Army and drug abuse therein, and boosted the New Left.¹²⁰⁸ In the face of all this, the continuing sacrifice of American and Vietnamese lives was hardly justified. “Frankly,” he summed up, “it offends the hell out of me that so many YAF leaders make Vietnam sound like a holy crusade”.¹²⁰⁹

Multiple board members produced renunciatory replies to this memorandum. Michael Thompson, who also chaired the YAF front ‘Student Committee for Victory in Vietnam’, argued that if Norton was already writing off Cambodia and Laos, there was no reason to assume that a thus strengthened Southeast Asian communist bloc would not be able to take Thailand or Malaysia. An American intervention there would, after a defeat in Vietnam, be

¹²⁰⁴ Randal Teague to National Board, May 14, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹²⁰⁵ ID.: YAF: “A Presence in the Room”, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1971, p.19.

¹²⁰⁶ Jerry Norton to id., Undated (Fall 1970). Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars + printed matter.

¹²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.1.

¹²⁰⁸ Cf. Ibid., pp.1–2.

¹²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.2.

politically untenable. While he agreed that YAF had somewhat diluted its position in favor of Nixon's "no-win policy," grounded in a "decade of liberal fuzziness," he remarked that there was still strong support for a "no-nonsense position" on Vietnam.¹²¹⁰ Also, there was no indication that the Left would lose momentum by ending the war.

Ron Docksai, who would be appointed chairman to succeed David Keene only days later, agreed: a YAF retreat would teach the New Left that their violent campaigns constituted an effective means to influence US policy and would enable them to build on the gained momentum (e.g. now that Vietnam is liberated, let's turn to 'Amerika').¹²¹¹ Despite YAF's limited success in convincing war opponents with their pro-war arguments, he cautioned against leaving the field entirely to YAF's enemies. "Are you sure the withdrawel [sic] would be not merely unilateral on our part[?] [...] [W]ould the Left not be accurate to say that there is a national student consensus in favor of a total, immediate pullout from Vietnam?"¹²¹² Finally, it would be naïve to assume that money now flowing into the war would be spend on other defense projects after its end: "Every penny we recall from Vietnam", Docksai predicted, "will go to pay for New York City's unemployed" first.¹²¹³

Dan Joy concurred that pulling out of Vietnam would not save the military budget. He argued for the continued strategic value of the country as the "last coastal country along the western Pacific that is not Communist" (on the Asian Mainland). Should that last bastion of freedom fall, the spread of communism would continue unabated. Especially Indonesia, Joy warned, would be vulnerable after an end of the American presence.¹²¹⁴

Even though they rejected Norton's conclusions, every respondent agreed to some point with his analysis. They especially mirrored his concern that the organization had embraced Nixon's policies too enthusiastically. During the beginning of Nixon's presidency, YAF had been skeptical about his alleged 'secret plan' to end the war. A *New Guard* editorial ambiguously entitled "End the War" pondered:

"Problem is: we don't know if we can include the President among us. We don't *know* if he plans to prevent a communist takeover in Southeast Asia. A general strike for peace, then, a strike for victory, a strike for an honorable end to the fighting are acutely appealing to conservatives. [...] Is Nixon still with us? Or will he capitulate to those who make leftist propaganda out of national moratoriums[?]"¹²¹⁵

¹²¹⁰ Michael Thompson to National Board, Undated (Fall 1970). Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹²¹¹ Cf. Ronald Docksai to Jerry Norton, October 22, 1970, pp.3–4. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹²¹² *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹²¹³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹²¹⁴ Cf. Daniel Joy to Jerry Norton, Undated (Fall 1970). Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹²¹⁵ "End the War", in: *The New Guard*, November 1969, p.3 Emphasis original.

Although the withdrawal of American troops in the wake of Vietnamization—that is the policy to give the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam more responsibility in fighting the war on the ground while limiting the presence of American troops—reeked of surrender, YAF were willing to give it the benefit of the doubt, if it meant that previous demands like a bombing and blockade of the North would be instituted by increased naval and air operations.¹²¹⁶

When Nixon authorized the Cambodian campaign, it raised hopes that this marked a turnaround in war policy. Not since the Cuban Missile Crisis had “an American President so realistically addressed himself to the hard and cold facts of war,” wrote a YAF member in *The New Guard*, adding that this was “the Richard Nixon I voted for in November 1968.”¹²¹⁷ The organization took out a one-page advertisement in major newspapers, praising Nixon’s handling of the war and Vietnamization.¹²¹⁸ However, YAF members urged that actions like the Cambodian campaign needed to be put in a broader framework of escalatory measures, which included, among others, the destruction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail (partly attempted by the ARVN in Operation Lam Son 719, February/March 1971) and the mining of Haiphong harbor (done in May 1972 but cleared in the first half of 1973), which YAF had demanded since the beginning of the war.¹²¹⁹

However, the administration did not seem willing to step up its game quick or extensive enough to satisfy the young conservatives. In March 1971, Randal Teague announced at an Atlanta YAF rally that “[YAF had] had it” with Nixon’s policy of gradual retreat, which, in reality, meant gradual surrender.¹²²⁰ As long as the Vietnamization policy was not meant to assure an eventual Southern victory but only to delay the immediate defeat of the ARVN once the U.S. pulled out, YAF would not back Nixon any longer.¹²²¹ Two years after Norton’s memorandum, a *New Guard* (now edited by Norton) editorial ‘officially’ asked YAF members, “whether the

¹²¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.4; DEAR, Ronald: Vietnam: Where’s YAF Now That We Need It?, in: *The New Guard*, December 1969, p.6.

¹²¹⁷ NORBERG, Rod: Vietnam and Beyond, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1970, p.11.

¹²¹⁸ E.g.: “Mr. President: Young Americans for Freedom Supports Our Fighting Men in Southeast Asia!” (Advertisement), in: *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1970. YAF Records, Box 79, Folder 4 The advertisement does not mention the Cambodian incursion specifically, which may suggest that it was composed before the fact.

¹²¹⁹ NORBERG, Rod: Vietnam and Beyond, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1970, p.12.

¹²²⁰ “YAF Splits With Nixon On Policy for Vietnam”, in: *The Washington Post*, March 13, 1971, A2.

¹²²¹ KIMBALL argues that Kissinger and Nixon indeed accepted that Vietnamization would only provide a “decent interval” until South Vietnamese collapse, but that it could be used to blame the eventual defeat on internal problems of Saigon, cf. KIMBALL, Jeffrey: *Nixon’s Vietnam War*, Lawrence, KS 1998, p.240 In contrast, KADURA maintains that they pursued an “equilibrium strategy” that would maintain the balance of power between North and South, while also downplaying the importance of Vietnam and improving relations with the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China to offset a potential defeat, cf. KADURA, Johannes: *The War After the War. The Struggle for Credibility during America’s Exit from Vietnam*, Ithaca, NY, London 2016, pp.3–4.

sometimes extensive support [we] gave to a no-win, halfhearted effort in Vietnam was worth the price.”¹²²²

Regardless of YAF posturing and board debates, the Vietnam issue had lost steam since the end of 1969.¹²²³ Then, YAF had rallied its members to “Tell it to Hanoi,” distributing a million copies of a tabloid composed of *The New Guard* and other reprints,¹²²⁴ sponsored pro-War speakers and started a petition that was signed by over sixty student government chairmen.¹²²⁵ The Seventies would not see such major, national activities. Perhaps it would have been hard to motivate activists in the face of a withdrawal that appeared to be a done deal. An unsuccessful large project, then, would only have served to decrease morale further.

The issue came to the forefront one last time when the Paris Peace Talks that officially ended the American engagement were nearing their conclusion and shortly afterward when amnesty to draft resisters was on the table. After the peace treaty was signed, the *New Guard* editors lamented that it was the long-demanded, YAF-endorsed bombing of the North¹²²⁶ that had finally led to the conclusion of the war.¹²²⁷ Those who had “hysterically criticized the bombings” should be ashamed and, “as the hysteria subsides in the wake of the settlement, [...] [should] look at their own hypocrisy.”¹²²⁸ The settlement itself was, naturally, unsatisfactory to conservatives. They criticized that it did not seriously limit Hanoi’s war-making capabilities, indeed even boosted it through American reparations,¹²²⁹ especially since another U.S. intervention was basically unthinkable.¹²³⁰ The *New Guard* editors felt that conservative arguments during the war were vindicated in the peace deal. Through gradualism and Vietnamization, they argued, “we have reaped at best something slightly worse than a stalemate in the war, and more likely an ultimate defeat, a high price in blood, treasure, domestic discontent and radicalization, and a weakening anti-communist sentiment. It was a high price to pay for a bankrupt policy.”¹²³¹

Another topic that agitated YAFers was the proposal of amnesty for all persons who had illegally evaded the draft during the war (‘draft dodgers’). Although the organization rejected

¹²²² “Vietnam Revisited”, in: *The New Guard*, June 1972, p.3.

¹²²³ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.297.

¹²²⁴ “Tell it to Hanoi!”-Tabloid, Undated (1969). Hall-Hoag Collection, Box Y-3, Folder Young Americans for Freedom 572.

¹²²⁵ Cf. “YAF Counters December Moratorium”, in: *The New Guard*, January 1970, pp.1–2.

¹²²⁶ Cf. “War’s End” (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, April 1973, p.23.

¹²²⁷ This was also the narrative the Nixon administration pursued, cf. KIMBALL, *Nixon's Vietnam War*, pp.368–369.

¹²²⁸ “The Peace Agreement and the Bombing”, in: *The New Guard*, March 1973, p.2.

¹²²⁹ Cf. Jerry Norton to YAF Leadership, Undated (1973). YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 1; Illinois YAF Press Release, March 6, 1973. YAF Records, Box 42, Folder 2; “Amnesty, Aid Become Major Issues” (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, May 1973, p.28.

¹²³⁰ Cf. “The Vietnam Settlement”, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1973, p.3.

¹²³¹ *Ibid.*

the draft in principle, they maintained that while it was still in place, once drafted, one should serve. A resolution put forward by radical libertarians in 1969 that advocated active draft resistance had been overwhelmingly voted down.¹²³² Granting blanket amnesty for draft dodgers, William Bell argued in a text that would form the basis for a flyer released by national YAF,¹²³³ was unprecedented in American history. The pardons and amnesties granted after the Civil War, he argued, had been rather pragmatically motivated. It would have been near impossible to prosecute the majority of the male white population of the former Confederacy. After the two World Wars, only a fraction of deserters or draft dodgers had been pardoned, respectively.¹²³⁴ Bell also rejected the arguments brought forth in favor of amnesty. Firstly, while there may have been some who resisted the draft out of principle, most were probably just motivated by self-preservation. By their actions, he continued, some of them also had mediate contributed to the deaths of their replacements.¹²³⁵ Secondly, to moralize those that had refused to serve in a war they themselves deemed immoral was absurd: “Those who do believe the war was moral, especially those who served in the armed forces because of that belief, should hardly be eager to grant amnesty if it is going to be interpreted as an admission that those who fled were right and those who stayed wrong.”¹²³⁶ In fact, granting people impunity for breaking the law based on moral considerations would be wrong in principle, because it begot disrespect for every law that one considered immoral. Yes, Bell conceded, there was freedom of conscience, but people still had to accept that they were going to get punished for breaking the law, as the greats like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., had.¹²³⁷ In other words, “[s]hould conservatives [...] pay no taxes for programs they believe to be immoral? Should a member of the Ku Klux Klan be forgiven for burning a school bus because he believes integration is the work of the devil?”¹²³⁸

YAF planned a resolution drive in the state legislatures to counter pro-amnesty sentiments. If possible, both Democrats and Republicans should sponsor such resolutions.¹²³⁹ The 1973 national convention also passed a resolution rejecting amnesty “conditional or unconditional, now and forever.”¹²⁴⁰ If the project could not gather as much steam as the pro-Victory stance

¹²³² See chapter 5.

¹²³³ “No Amnesty” (YAF-Flyer), Undated (1973). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1.

¹²³⁴ Cf. BELL, William: No Amnesty, in: *The New Guard*, May 1973, p.12.

¹²³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹²³⁷ Cf. “No Amnesty” (YAF-Flyer), Undated (1973). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1. Interestingly, YAF had previously argued that MLK in much the same way provoked a disregard for the law among African-Americans, see chapter 2.

¹²³⁸ BELL, William: No Amnesty, in: *The New Guard*, May 1973, p.12.

¹²³⁹ Wayne Thorburn/Ronald Robinson to National Directors et al., February 8, 1973. YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 2.

¹²⁴⁰ YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

had, it is because many YAFers did not exactly occupy a moral high ground in the debate. While there is no evidence of illegal draft evasion, members had used legal avenues available to them to escape service in Vietnam.¹²⁴¹ On the other hand, many had joined ROTC programs. Finally, when President Ford granted conditional amnesty to deserters, the issue basically had been settled in favor of the draft dodgers. A general amnesty, however, came only with President Jimmy Carter, who issued the order on his first day in office.

After the peace deal, the only mistake the *New Guard* editors could see in YAF's actions during the war was that they might not have made clear enough the distinction between the administration's and their own pro-war policy.¹²⁴² Dan Joy, in his retrospection, went a step further: YAF founders had explicitly rejected the status quo, which "was not something with which YAF could or should identify."¹²⁴³ In Joy's eyes, YAF was meant to be "anti-establishmentarian, yet not revolutionary."¹²⁴⁴ Yet in reaction to the Vietnam and Campus Wars, the organization had stressed the latter over the former to the point of almost becoming establishmentarian itself.¹²⁴⁵ Or, as Joy put it: "When enemies of the state are numerous, even critics of the state are required to defend the nation. YAF would not have been reasonably conservative if it had failed to do so." Now that this period was over, YAF needed to get back to its roots, train a new national cadre of persons "who *understand* what the conservative movement is all about." The organization therefore needed to partially divorce itself from the focus on contemporary issues and tackle the "*fundamental* problems of American society." New issues should seek to regain the anti-establishmentarian touch of the early 1960s while being uncompromising on conservative principles.¹²⁴⁶

Joy made public a soul-searching process that had been going on for almost three years. In January 1971, Chairman Docksai had shown himself disappointed with the upcoming leadership of YAF. They knew the ins and outs of combatting the New Left and distributing YAF brochures. Yet, they were "incapable of writing [brochures] [...] hopefully, not incapable of reading one."¹²⁴⁷ In Docksai's eyes, political education of members would be the key to success in the coming years. To start the process, he posed a few questions to the board concerning the "State of the Movement and the State of YAF," among them: "Have we lost site

¹²⁴¹ Cf. Jerry Norton to Randal Teague, Undated (Fall 1970), p.2. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars + printed matter.

¹²⁴² Cf. "The Vietnam Settlement", in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1973, p.3.

¹²⁴³ JOY, Daniel: YAF: Cadre of Conservatism, in: *The New Guard*, November 1973, p.15.

¹²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹²⁴⁵ See also ROBINSON, Ronald: Conservatism versus Apathy: The Challenge of the 70s, in: *The New Guard*, September 1974, pp.23-24.

¹²⁴⁶ JOY, Daniel: YAF: Cadre of Conservatism, in: *The New Guard*, November 1973 Emphases original.

¹²⁴⁷ Ronald Docksai to Board of Directors, January 29, 1971. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars + printed matter.

[sic] of our mission? [...] Have we tried to become too relevant? [...] Have we become too identified as the Establishment students?”¹²⁴⁸ Not much came of the discussion, except that the directors agreed that YAF appeared to be too close to Nixon in the “general populace,”¹²⁴⁹ which was, perhaps, another motivation for the formation of the Manhattan Twelve and YAF’s explicit break with the president.

October of the same year, Teague started another attempt to chart the long-term course of the organization. In the “most important memorandum you have ever received from me” he proposed questions that might guide YAF (and the whole conservative movement) on the path to recover “that evangelical fire that we haven’t seen since the Goldwater Days.”¹²⁵⁰ Common to all the questions was that they were trying to probe what long-term goals existed for the organization, and whether it should focus on those more than on short-term activities. Teague also proposed a decentralization of YAF programming in the sense that there would not only be national projects, but the state organizations and local chapters would have their own projects, respectively. That way, activists would have something to work for in times of local, regional, or national lull.¹²⁵¹

While the battle against the New Left had taught YAF the benefits of this approach,¹²⁵² it is just as likely that Teague spoke to financial realities: in February, when the board first debated a new strategy, treasurer Dan Manion had to inform the members that the organization was highly indebted.¹²⁵³ The share of the organization’s income made up by contributions, raised primarily through YAF-pioneered direct mail marketing, had risen to over 90% by 1969. At the same time, marketing costs increased while revenues could not keep up the pace as more and more organizations competed for the same donors. While in 1968, fundraising costs made up only 39% of the money raised, this number was up to 58.1% in 1971. In 1969, the organization had, on statistical average, had a surplus of roughly \$10,000 in the bank on any given day. In 1971, it faced a negative of about \$64,000.¹²⁵⁴ Manion justified these troubles with the 1970 midterms, which had hurt income because donors were contributing directly to campaigns for office. The bad economic picture in the aftermath of the recession of 1969/70 had made it harder to raise funds for recovering from the temporary setback.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁴⁸ Cf. YAF Board Meeting Agenda, February 4-6, 1971. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 3, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars + printed matter The meeting took place February 5-7.

¹²⁴⁹ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 5-7, 1971, p.5. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 3.

¹²⁵⁰ Randal Teague to National Board, October 14, 1971, pp.1-2. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 1.

¹²⁵¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹²⁵² See chapter 4.

¹²⁵³ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 5-7, 1971, p.3. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 3.

¹²⁵⁴ Financial Analyses and Projections, Undated (1972), pp.1-2. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 1.

¹²⁵⁵ Cf. “YAF to Continue Money Problems Ease”, in: *The New Guard*, May 1971, p.31.

At the board meeting where Teague's proposals were to be discussed, he was instead let go.¹²⁵⁶ His inability to permanently solve YAF's financial crisis coupled with questionable reimbursements paid by YAF for private expenses were the formal reason discussed by the board. Additionally, Teague had made a number of enemies during his long years of involvement with national YAF.¹²⁵⁷ Never one to shy away from backroom dealing and power politics, Docksai remembered, he had "had his moments of Napoleonic pleasure, but in the end he was consumed by the Frankenstein he created." That was the "tragedy of Randy Teague."¹²⁵⁸ Although Teague had instituted cutbacks of about \$10,000 per month, including salary cuts, layoffs and the cancellation of state meetings, which had led to a somewhat balanced situation until mid-1971, the organization from then on never again reached the stable financial footing it had enjoyed from the mid-1960s to 1970. Fundraising income dropped from \$540,000 in 1970 to \$180,600 in 1974 while, apart from list rentals, no other sources of income were created.¹²⁵⁹ No wonder, then, that Teague's successor Wayne Thorburn saw himself confronted with a grim picture: with \$10,000 in the bank, immediate expenses of \$5,800 and accounts payable of \$144,000, further cutbacks were necessary.¹²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, by January 1972, YAF was still spending about \$800 more than it took in *per day*.¹²⁶¹

While the national leadership of YAF was devoting time and resources to find a way out of the crisis, board member Pearson cautioned that YAF not become bureaucratized in the sense that continued existence might be valued higher than progress towards YAF's long-term goal, i.e. building a conservative cadre. "The ideal program," he mused, "is one which educates our members, gives influence to YAF [...] pays for itself and, in addition, helps YAF financially, and is a definite step toward the long-range goal of YAF."¹²⁶² While Pearson nonchalantly stated that most "worthwhile" projects would fulfill these requirements, he failed to name any. He only rejected a focus on short-term oriented political action projects. That was also the thrust of long-term board member Jameson Campaigne, who demanded "less activism and more training of young conservatives."¹²⁶³

¹²⁵⁶ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, October 30-November 1, 1971, p.1. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 2.

¹²⁵⁷ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.152–153.

¹²⁵⁸ Ronald Docksai to Jeffrey Kane, September 15, 1975. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 284, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) 1975.

¹²⁵⁹ Fiscal Years 1970–1976: Monies Raised, List Rentals, Fundraising Expenses, Undated (Mid-1976). YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 3.

¹²⁶⁰ Confidential Report to Policy Committee, Undated (November 1971). YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 3.

¹²⁶¹ YAF Financial Report, January 24, 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 3. See also Wayne Thorburn to William Rusher, January 28, 1972. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 7.

¹²⁶² Ronald Pearson to National Board, June 9, 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5.

¹²⁶³ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, December 1-2, 1972, p.5. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 3.

One project that was supposed to combine long-term and short-term orientation was the ‘Movement for Quality Education’ (MQE). Educational reform had been Docksai’s pet project since the start of his tenure as chairman. In the *New Guard*, he had laid out his motivation:

“[T]he basic purpose for which YAF was founded and our continuing center of gravity is the fortification of the Remnant, the promotion and cultivation of ideas and the academic tranquility necessary for their survival. The general purpose of the university from the conservative point of view is that of an institution which offers the next generation the wisdom of that which went before. The ‘margin of tranquility’ Ortega speaks of has been discarded by the czars of liberal educationism who have, in the process of turning the college into an impersonal daycare-center for the offspring of all carnivorous animals, betrayed the detached investigation of truth in favor of shortcut methods which primarily serve ideological purposes.”¹²⁶⁴

Although he speaks only of universities here, Docksai anticipates several core critiques of MQE towards the state of American education: lack of intellectual diversity in favor of liberalism; lack of moral foundation because of a prevalence of relativism; impersonalization and bureaucratization of the college landscape; and, lastly, the transformation of universities from elite institutions to degree mills.

When board member Bob Moffit, now a leading conservative voice on health care policy,¹²⁶⁵ officially introduced MQE in May 1973, he added a few facets to those: just as important as university education was primary and secondary education, as defects there would inevitably carry over. For a short-term aspect of the program, the legal action program of the late 1960s/early 1970s¹²⁶⁶ should be revived, but this time against the “sale and manufacture of term papers.” Moffit also explained the political aims of the program: because parents were already taxed for public education regardless of whether their children would pursue it or not, they often could not afford to pay twice the price in order to provide them with private education. This would soon lead to a “disastrous” government monopoly in education. YAF should create and promote concepts that would pay greater attention to the potential of the private sector in education.¹²⁶⁷

Some of the solutions YAF presented for the problems of modern education were based on a return to traditional educational virtues. For Dan Joy, those were “excellence” and “substance.”¹²⁶⁸ Restoring substance meant getting rid of “nonsensical” subjects like Social Welfare. If curricula offered no substantial content, he argued, students might conclude that there actually was nothing to learn. “When they as leaders turn their collective attention to

¹²⁶⁴ DOCKSAI, Ronald: Welcome to the Remnant, in: *The New Guard*, October 1971, p.4.

¹²⁶⁵ Moffit is a senior fellow for Health Policy at the Heritage Foundation. In 1993, he drafted the foundation’s response to the Clinton health care plan. See MOFFIT, Robert: Clinton’s Frankenstein. The Gory Details of the President’s Health Plan, in: *Policy Review* Vol. 67, Winter 1994, pp.4–12; “Heritage Aide Faults Clinton Health Plan”, in: *The Washington Post*, November 29, 1993, A9. Since then, he has been influential in the ongoing debate about reform of the American health care system.

¹²⁶⁶ See chapter 4.

¹²⁶⁷ MOFFIT, Robert: Introduction to MQE, in: *The New Guard*, May 1973, pp.13–14.

¹²⁶⁸ JOY, Daniel: LOST: The University, in: *The New Guard*, February 1970, p.22.

alternatives to the studying of ‘nothing,’ they will find what some of them already have found: revolutionary fervor. What else is there?”¹²⁶⁹ Furthermore, he maintained that “knowledge and learning take on meaning for the individual only within the classical concept of Authority.” Students and teachers needed to accept that there was an objective way to acquire knowledge, be it scientific or moral and that a teacher, based on his knowledge, could speak more authoritatively to the course subject—it was *not* simply a matter of opinion.¹²⁷⁰

The restoration of excellence, then, was a more complicated matter. As another *New Guard* contribution argued, that would need conservative professors to broaden the spectrum of *political* opinion in the academy. Because many faculties, especially in the Liberal Arts, were liberal-dominated, and those liberals were systematically excluding voices from the Right while being open to the Left, debates were reduced to a liberal v. radical perspective. This would drive conservatives away from such disciplines, leaving only Economics and Law as safe harbors.¹²⁷¹ Breaking the liberal hegemony on intellectual discourse would also supposedly rid colleges from “‘street people,’ [...] the mentally sterile, the paroled convicts and political network commentators and return [them] to the matriculated college students of America,”¹²⁷² thus increasing the intellectual quality of the student body.

While restoring the former glory of the American educational experience was a long-term path with somewhat vague milestones, YAF had concrete proposals for combatting the specter of a public education monopoly: tax credits or a voucher system. The former would enable parents to deduct tuition cost for private schools from their taxes, while the latter would provide them with a voucher that could be spent either on public or private schools.¹²⁷³ Probably the most prominent proponent of the latter idea was Milton Friedman, soon to be awarded the Nobel Prize for economics. He argued in the *New Guard* that the advantage of the voucher system was that while it did not eliminate taxes paid for schooling, it gave parents a real choice. Especially poorer people could, for the first time, influence their children’s education.¹²⁷⁴ The voucher system, however, also had a darker history, having been put forward as a way to avoid forced legal integration of schools. Friedman, however, argued that schools could simply be forced to comply with certain anti-discrimination standards in order to be eligible for voucher funding.

¹²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷¹ Cf. EAST, John: Talkin’ Liberal Hegemony Blues (With a Note of Optimism), in: *The New Guard*, May 1970, pp.15–17.

¹²⁷² DOCKSAI, Ronald: To Restore Right Reason, in: *The New Guard*, December 1971, p.12.

¹²⁷³ Cf. FISK, Mary: For Radical Reform in School Financing, in: *The New Guard*, May 1973, pp.15–16.

¹²⁷⁴ FRIEDMAN, Milton: Trust Busting the Educational Monopoly, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1974, pp.9–11.

Such a system would also “completely eliminate the busing issue,”¹²⁷⁵ because children only needed to be driven to schools where their parents wanted them to be.

YAFers promoted these and other variants of privatization as panaceas to the troubles of the education system. Some, like Philipp Luce and Libertarian Party founder David Nolan advocated doing away with public education altogether. In their vision, teachers could then be chosen individually for individual purposes, e.g. teacher A for music, teacher B for mathematics etc. Some would naturally bound together to form schools.¹²⁷⁶ They claimed such systems would be pragmatically feasible, but either neglected to or naïvely addressed crucial points: for example, Nolan, as if it went without saying, remarked that teachers would only be paid once their students passed certain certifications (that would also be provided by private companies). Such a system, of course, would be untenable for teachers, whose skill might not guarantee educational success. Neither Nolan nor Luce addressed problems of population density, income inequalities etc. that might be aggravated by a completely private system.

In any case, even though the MQE proposed real alternatives and oftentimes thoughtful critiques, it could not fill the vacuum the Vietnam and Campus Wars had left behind. Although traditionalists could agree with the restorative aspects of the project and libertarians wholeheartedly embraced privatization, individual chapters could not really do anything to achieve these goals, and progress would probably have been intangible. Especially the college students, who had come to form the backbone of YAF in the second part of the 1960s, could hardly be motivated to work the institutions for changes they themselves would not be able to enjoy.¹²⁷⁷

6.4 Coming of Age – YAF Alumni in the Early 1970s

While for YAF, the early 1970s were a period of intense struggle for survival and continued relevance, they were also one where the success of the organization’s cadre building became observable. Results can be seen in places ranging from the 1970 Buckley for Senate campaign in New York to the swamps of Watergate.

In 1968, YAF had already supported James (older brother of William) Buckley’s campaign for the Senate. On the ticket of the Conservative Party of New York, he garnered an impressive 17.3% of the vote, which, however, still left him a long way from securing the seat. Nevertheless, it established him as a serious candidate. Then-NY state chairman James Farley

¹²⁷⁵ Ibid., p.10. For YAF’s stand on busing, see chapter 7.

¹²⁷⁶ Cf. LUCE, Phillip Abbott: *Against the Wall: Liberate Your Mind*, in: *The New Guard*, February 1970, pp.23–24; NOLAN, David: *Free Market Education – A Radical Proposal*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1970, pp.12–16.

¹²⁷⁷ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.154–155.

had led the youth division of the campaign.¹²⁷⁸ He was assisted by scores of YAF volunteers, some of which, like Ron Docksai and Herb Stupp, would play an important role in the 1970 campaign. THORBURN thus characterizes the 1968 attempt as a “dry run” for 1970.¹²⁷⁹

The 1970 Senate election in New York featured a three-way race. Charles Goodell, the Republican incumbent, who had assumed office by appointment after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, belonged to the liberal wing of his party. In fact, he even managed to get the endorsement of New York’s Liberal Party. The Democratic candidate was congressman Richard Ottinger, who so far had enjoyed three terms as a House backbencher. Buckley was again nominated by the Conservative Party.

The campaign was headed by Clifton White, the mastermind behind the Draft Goldwater movement. His first hire was David Jones, formerly YAF’s executive director, as *de facto* campaign manager while White focused on long-term strategy. Jones used his experience with YAF to start a successful direct mail fund-raising campaign that provided the cash needed for a larger operation. The first person *he* hired was Arnold Steinberg as press secretary. Steinberg had recently held the same position in David Keene’s unsuccessful bid for the Wisconsin State Senate and edited *The New Guard* before that. He was assisted by fellow YAFer Tony Dolan, who later became a Reagan speechwriter.¹²⁸⁰ The last key YAF member in the campaign management was Herb Stupp, who was head of the youth division.¹²⁸¹ Hundreds of college and high school students became involved in the well-organized youth campaign and provided the shock troops for Buckley. One factor for the smooth operation of the youth campaign is that YAF had an established structure across the state: many county and chapter leaders became the respective representatives for Youth for Buckley.¹²⁸²

Both the key role YAFers played in the campaign as well as the easy translation of YAF into campaign structures attest to the success of the organization’s cadre- and organization-building in its first ten years. The Buckley operation also provided a positive feedback loop: it drew in new activists which led to a surge in chapter numbers from 58 before the election to 121 in the spring of 1971.¹²⁸³ Jim Minarik, a YAF leader from Ohio had spent some time after the election converting Youth for Buckley into YAF chapters.¹²⁸⁴ Three of the 1970 campaign activists became New York state senators, while a fourth, Fred Eckert, who had been with YAF since

¹²⁷⁸ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.327–328.

¹²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.328.

¹²⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.330.

¹²⁸¹ Cf. STEINBERG, Arnold: *It Happened in New York*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1970, pp.7–9.

¹²⁸² Cf. “Youth for Buckley a Success”, in: *The New Guard*, December 1970, p.30; STUPP, Herbert: *We Have a Senator!*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1975, p.16.

¹²⁸³ STUPP, Herbert: *We Have a Senator!*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1975, p.16.

¹²⁸⁴ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.339.

the early 1960s,¹²⁸⁵ even became a congressman after having served as Ambassador to Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Tonga under Reagan. Herb Stupp served as Eckert's legislative assistant when he was still in the State Senate, joined the Reagan administration and finally became Commissioner for the New York City Department for the Aging, appointed by then-Mayor Rudy Giuliani.¹²⁸⁶ He cites his network of contacts gained within YAF as instrumental in enabling his career.¹²⁸⁷

Although the relationship between Nixon and the organization was rocky, nevertheless some (ex-)YAFers got posts in the administration. David Keene, elected to the national chairmanship at the tumultuous 1969 convention, resigned his post in 1970 to become Special Assistant for Political Affairs for Vice President Agnew. Former Missouri YAF member Pat Buchanan was a speechwriter and assistant to Nixon, where he (claims to have) coined the “Silent Majority” phrase,¹²⁸⁸ as was Tom Huston, chairman from 1965–67. The latter two were also the Nixon administration's “conduits to the conservative movement.”¹²⁸⁹ The case where YAF's cadre-building could probably best be observed, however, is the appointment of Howard Phillips as acting director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the agency responsible for administering many of the War on Poverty programs.

The former YAF board member and head of the program review office of OEO was appointed without congressional hearing and apparently given a deadline of roundabout six months to decentralize the agency and transfer some of its responsibilities to other departments.¹²⁹⁰ Convinced by Nixon aide Haldeman, who told Phillips to “sock it to them” at the agency by virtually dismantling OEO, he let go of every bit of moderation he had shown before.¹²⁹¹ Here was a chance to finally convert YAF's longstanding criticism of an ever-expanding welfare state into action. To go about this task, Phillips hired several YAF comrades for management positions, including, but not limited to former board members John Meyer, Jay Parker, and Mike Thompson, as well as Dave Jones and his successor Randy Teague, and previous chairman Alan MacKay.¹²⁹² The media sensationalized these hirings as the ‘YAF Wrecking Crew’ or “Phillips' Hit Men,”¹²⁹³ as they were often tasked with purging moderate Republicans

¹²⁸⁵ See his *The New Guard* contributions about Katanga in chapter 3.

¹²⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.333–339.

¹²⁸⁷ Herbert STUPP. Interview by Georg WOLFF, New York, NY 27.10.2018.

¹²⁸⁸ “World Over – 2014-10-02 – Full Episode with Raymond Arroyo” [2014], 10:40-11:40, online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEKr_Dv9Md4 [05.08.2020].

¹²⁸⁹ MERGEL, *Conservative Intellectuals and Richard Nixon*, p.19.

¹²⁹⁰ Cf. CANNON, Lou: *Poverty War Critic to Lead OEO Cutback*, in: *The Washington Post*, January 13, 1973, A1.

¹²⁹¹ EVANS, Rowland; NOVAK, Robert: *The Dismantling Style of Howard Phillips*, in: *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1973, A 19.

¹²⁹² Cf. “Personalities” (YAF & The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, April 1973, p.24.

¹²⁹³ ANDERSON, Jack: *Howard Phillips' Hit Men at the OEO*, in: *The Washington Post*, February 17, 1973, B11.

from their patronaged positions while receiving attractive salaries.¹²⁹⁴ YAFers, however, even though media attention focused on them, were, according to Tony Dolan, who also joined OEO under Phillips, not the only group the new director hired. “It is incorrect that YAF has taken over at OEO,” he wrote to Bill Buckley, “[they] are actually only the front men for the Party of the Right.”¹²⁹⁵

The heavy-handed approach Phillips took in phasing out programs that had been funded by Congressional decision for beyond 1973 (which gave his actions questionable legality) provoked a national backlash that thwarted his initiative. After the District Court for the District of Columbia had decided that his appointment had been illegal because it had not been sent to or confirmed by the Senate and a class action suit on behalf of Community Action Programs he had refused to fund was pending, he resigned on June 30, the date he should supposedly have completely dismantled OEO.¹²⁹⁶

The darkest chapter of YAF’s leadership building surely was Watergate. Tom Huston could, according to PERLSTEIN, “as the author of the first extra-legal espionage and sabotage plan in the Nixon White House, [...] fairly be called an architect of Watergate.”¹²⁹⁷ This assessment may be sensationalist. Yet Huston’s actions, who had no problem (ab)using the whole power of the government apparatus once he was in it, pose the question about the sincerity of conservatives’ attacks on big government, a question that would return with a vengeance during the Reagan administration.

PERLSTEIN also implicates Douglas Caddy, YAF co-founder and former national director, “who was the man the White House called on to represent the Watergate burglars in 1972.”¹²⁹⁸ In fact, Caddy had been called by E. Howard Hunt, one of the White House ‘Plumbers’ and coordinator of the break-in at the Watergate, immediately after the arrests had been made on scene to represent the burglars.¹²⁹⁹ He had been working for White House Counsel John Dean as a volunteer for the Committee to Re-Elect the President and was a long-time friend and associate of Hunt. Caddy subsequently received phone calls from a certain “Mr. Rivers” (turning out to be Anthony Ulasewicz, who distributed hush money to key figures in the

¹²⁹⁴ ID.: Phillips Hires New Crew to Fire Old, in: *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1973, E31.

¹²⁹⁵ Anthony Dolan to William Buckley, March 1, 1973. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 129, Folder Dolan, Anthony. The ‘Party of the Right’ is a political/debating organization at Yale university, whose alumni might have formed cliques of their own.

¹²⁹⁶ Cf. WOLHOWE, Cathie: Phillips Out, New OEO Head Named, in: *The Washington Post*, June 27, 1973, A1.

¹²⁹⁷ PERLSTEIN, Rick: ‘I Didn’t Like Nixon Until Watergate’. *The Conservative Movement Now* [2005], online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/i-didnt-like-nixon-until-_b_11735 [06.08.2020]. For the so-called ‘Huston Plan,’ see also chapter 3.

¹²⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹⁹ The following is based on a document I received from Mr. Caddy. CADDY, Douglas: *Memoir on Being the Original Attorney for the Watergate Seven* 2017.

Watergate affair) urging him to accept money to transfer it to Hunt, his associate Liddy and the burglars.

Caddy refused to do so, and, after the court had held him in contempt on questionable legal grounds, testified about his relation to Hunt. When he tried to disclose the phone calls, the prosecution cut him short. Apparently, prosecutor Henry Petersen had to some degree coordinated with John Dean to keep the investigation away from the White House. Caddy maintains that had he been ‘allowed’ to disclose the offers of hush money, the whole Watergate investigation would have blown over with some damage being done but with Nixon surviving relatively unharmed.

Although Caddy might stylize himself too much as the voice of integrity, it is undoubtful that he does not belong in the swamps of Watergate. He was never convicted of any wrongdoing in the affair and the guilt-by-association PERLSTEIN creates is unsubstantiated.

In any case, YAF would probably have been unaware of Huston’s intermediate role in the affair, while Caddy played a major role only during the very beginning. The organization framed the abuses of power during Watergate and the cover-up in their general critique of statism and the growing primacy of the executive branch over the legislative.¹³⁰⁰ The “Great Liberal Ascendancy” begun in 1932, a resolution passed by the delegates to the 1973 national convention read, had centralized powers in the federal government and turned “America’s Republican form of government into a squalid national oligarchy. Given this situation, the fact of Watergate is not surprising.”¹³⁰¹ YAF releases during that period often quoted Baron Acton’s aphorism that “power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” They also quoted the civil disobedience tactics of the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left as resulting in a general atmosphere of disrespect for the law, which eventually got hold of the administration itself.¹³⁰² A *New Guard* contributor summed up this line of argumentation thus:

“If we can justify [...] violence in the name of peace, should we be surprised if government officials justify Watergate in the name of national security? Each rationale is merely an extension of the other. [...] The concept of human rights has been used to violate human rights [...] It is in these violations that the blame for Watergate must rest as equally as it does with individuals.”¹³⁰³

For the bad blood between Nixon and YAF and the fitting place of Watergate in a conservative narrative, it is surprising that the organization did not pursue the matter more aggressively. While it had suspended support of the administration on matters of policy, Docksai warned his

¹³⁰⁰ Cf. ROCHE, George, III: Big Government: Cause or Cure?, in: *The New Guard*, March 1974, p.4; DOCKSAI, Ronald: Better Right than President, in: *The New Guard*, December 1973, pp.19–20.

¹³⁰¹ YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

¹³⁰² Cf. Ibid.; CANNON, Terrel: Left Worse Than Watergate, in: *YAF in the News*, June 1973.

¹³⁰³ MCMILLAN, K. C.: The Roots of Watergate, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1974, pp.24–25.

national board that “any action taken re Watergate should be carefully considered.”¹³⁰⁴ Maybe YAFers believed it was only the product of individuals who got into positions of power without any democratic process. Yet, an editorial that professed this view also maintained that “the ultimate responsibility is [Nixon’s]. He has done incalculable damage both to his political party and the credibility of the highest office in the land.”¹³⁰⁵ Perhaps YAFers were held back from attacking Nixon because, for the largest part, it was Democrats in congress and the liberal press who were driving the investigations, while Republicans, especially conservatives, stood behind the president.

In early 1974, however, the grounds had shifted. Nixon had fired the special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, after the existence of tape recordings made of conversations in the White House had been revealed to the public. Nixon, citing executive privilege, refused to release these tapes even after being subpoenaed by Cox and asked him to revoke the subpoena, which the latter refused. The firing of Cox was incredibly damaging to Nixon’s image and one of the main catalysts for the start of impeachment inquiries against him ten days later.

In this situation, Ronald Docksai made the following statement responding to a question about the impact of Nixon’s decision not to release the tapes during a press conference held at the Conservative Political Action Conference in January 1974:

“Every day in every way, the amazing constancy of reported accidental burglaries and revised denials damage Republican chances in 1974 and suggest a lethal promise for the Party [...] I would hope the President would carry on the work of proving his innocence with dispatch... Specifically, he should either have full disclosure before Congress even if that means personal and public testimony by himself before the Senate or he should resign his office [...] too many doubts remain and new ones are being born concerning the President’s role in illegal activities [...] I would rather he resign before the matter of impeachment even comes up.”¹³⁰⁶

Since the actions of Nixon before had revealed his unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation, this could be read as unequivocal call for resignation. At that point, Docksai was the only major conservative leader demanding that the President step down. John Ashbrook, however, joined him only a few hours later. Since the chairman was responsible for representing YAF policy in public, YAF thus became the first conservative organization “on record for soliciting Nixon’s resignation.”¹³⁰⁷ Docksai’s move made him numerous enemies among conservatives. He used that opportunity to question the board whether YAF should take greater risks to become “the innovative voice of the conservative movement.” Doing so, he proposed, could turn YAF into the standard bearer of conservatism. Once again advising the board to

¹³⁰⁴ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, May 25-27, 1973, p.1. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

¹³⁰⁵ “The Watergate and...”, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1973, p.3.

¹³⁰⁶ Ronald Docksai to YAF National Board and National Staff, January 28, 1974, pp.2–3. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

¹³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

“deliberate very carefully,” he set the topic on the agenda for what was set to become a fateful meeting.¹³⁰⁸

¹³⁰⁸ Ibid., pp.4–5.

7. Mobilizing for the Culture Wars

“There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.”¹³⁰⁹

With these words, YAF alumnus Pat Buchanan called upon his followers to support the re-election bid of George Bush senior, who had just beaten Buchanan for the Republican nomination in the 1992 presidential primaries. His convention speech became (in)famous, partly for its vicious attacks on the Democratic opposition, partly because it succinctly summarized what many Americans felt: that the nation was deeply divided on social, cultural, and religious questions, and no side seemed willing to yield an inch to the other. This struggle to define *the* American way had been simmering since the early 20th century and beyond, with the so-called ‘Scopes Monkey Trial’ about the teaching of evolution in schools being a prominent early milestone.¹³¹⁰

In the 1960s and 70s, however, ‘hot-button’ issues such as religious instruction and prayers in schools, legalized abortion, and affirmative action put cultural questions on top of the nation’s agenda. By the late 1970s, the frontlines of the ensuing ‘Culture Wars’¹³¹¹ had largely stabilized. Since then, conservatives (unsuccessfully) resisted liberal social reforms or tried to revert those that had already been implemented. Analyzing YAF’s debates in the crucial period of the early 1970s, when attitudes regarding social issues were still in flux, helps to understand how conservative reasoning developed.

Some YAFers of the era like Kathy Teague and Connaught (Coyne) Marshner became important figures of social traditionalist campaigns, Teague as a close associate of Phyllis Schlafly and spokesman for her Eagle Forum, Marshner as education director of the Heritage Foundation. In 1974, she travelled to Kanawha County, West Virginia, to help organize a boycott of the local school system. Parents took issue with the selection of new textbooks recommended for instruction at Kanawha schools. During the violent protests, Marshner, in accordance with YAF’s approach to ‘quality education’ held ‘Citizens’ Workshops’ that (successfully) encouraged launching private, parent-controlled schools. She also wrote a speech for Congressman and YAF supporter Phil Crane that was delivered on the House Floor in which she argued for a school voucher system.¹³¹² The Kanawha County textbook controversy thus

¹³⁰⁹ BUCHANAN, Patrick: Republican National Convention Speech [1992], online: <https://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148> [24.09.2020].

¹³¹⁰ Cf. LARSON, Edward: *Summer for the Gods. The Scopes Trial and America’s Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*, Cambridge, MA, London 1998, pp.257–266.

¹³¹¹ ‘Culture Wars’ is defined here as “discussions about what is fundamentally right and wrong about the world we live in—about what is ultimately good and what is finally intolerable in our communities.” HUNTER, James Davison: *Culture Wars. The Struggle to Define America*, New York, NY 1991, p.31.

¹³¹² Cf. WILLIAMS, Daniel: *God’s Own Party. The Making of the Christian Right*, New York, NY, Oxford 2010, pp.134–136.

refueled a larger debate in conservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and among conservative Republicans about governmental interference in local school systems.¹³¹³

Thomas FRANK referred to such conservative responses to the cultural issues of the 1970s as the ‘Great Backlash.’ The paradox of this backlash, he argued, is that culturally motivated conservative voters to this day keep electing candidates that talk social traditionalism and enact economic libertarianism. Republican operatives, the story goes, are exploiting the unwavering social traditionalism of working-class conservatives to secure votes for policies that ostensibly benefit exclusively rich people.¹³¹⁴

The case of YAF, which trained many young people who later became these operatives, somewhat refutes this claim. Activists both from the libertarian and traditionalist spectrum embedded their discussions of social issues in the larger framework of government encroachment on the individual. For example, they framed legalized abortion as the first step towards a loss of the right to life and government-mandated abortions. While it is hard to ultimately ascertain whether their libertarian arguments were genuine or, as LASSITER put it, “a discursive fiction wielded as a form of power in the struggle to shape the nation’s political culture and its political economy,”¹³¹⁵ their debates and resolutions expressed genuine concerns about the social upheavals besetting the nation in the 1970s.

Therefore, when FRANK writes that working class conservatives “[v]ote to stop abortion”, yet “receive a rollback in capital gains taxes” through the intervention of party leadership,¹³¹⁶ the discrepancy he sees belies a misunderstanding of conservative philosophy as constituted in the 70s. YAFers argued that stopping abortion and cutting taxes were essentially two sides of the same coin—both served to weaken the federal government and to transfer control of citizens’ lives back to the individual.

In *A War for the Soul of America*, Andrew HARTMANN describes neoconservatives as the bridgehead of the conservative response to a changing cultural environment. He claims that conservatives of the *National Review* variety “never worked to get into the minds of the New Left”.¹³¹⁷ YAF activists, who had recently spent most of their time contending with young leftists, serve as a counterexample. Their treatment of cultural issues was impacted by the upheavals the fight against campus radicals and their disappearance in the early 1970s had caused in the organization.

¹³¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.136–137.

¹³¹⁴ Cf. FRANK, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, pp.5–8.

¹³¹⁵ LASSITER, *Political History beyond the Red-Blue Divide*, p.764.

¹³¹⁶ FRANK, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, p.7. Emphasis original.

¹³¹⁷ HARTMAN, Andrew: *A War for the Soul of America. A History of the Culture Wars*, Chicago, IL, London 2015, pp.38–69, for this claim specifically p.52.

The blending of social and economic issues into one critique of expanding government is characteristic of fusionism. In this case, however, it was also the result of processes internal to YAF. While the organization needed to capitalize on the upcoming cultural questions to find a new ‘flagship’ fundraising issue, it was unwilling to completely antagonize libertarian members who had chosen to stay in (or joined) YAF after the infighting of 1969. As libertarian and traditionalist YAFers’ responses to social issues differed throughout the 1970s, the framing of such questions as “debates about how power and resources were to be distributed”¹³¹⁸ served as a compromise. Nevertheless, the organization’s resolutions along traditionalist lines, especially concerning the question of ‘victimless’ crimes, turned off activists on the libertarian spectrum, which radical libertarians tried to exploit ten years after the first major clash of St. Louis.

7.1 Filling the War Chest

In January 1974, John Jones, YAF’s fundraiser, painted a dire picture to Frank Donatelli, who had succeeded Wayne Thorburn as executive director. “The reality of the situation is,” he reported, “that what turns on the YAF donor does not turn on YAF leaders and vice versa.”¹³¹⁹ While the latter attended high school or college, some having started a professional career, the former were, on average, over 50 years old. They lacked a “common denominator,” as Jones put it. Issues that had bridged the gap between young and old in the mid and late 60s had been anti-communism, government expansion, and the Campus Wars. Nixon and his supporters, Jones lamented, had “compromised away” the first two issues, and the nation’s campuses had quieted down.¹³²⁰ This left him without an effective fundraising theme.

The organization, however, urgently needed to improve its finances. It had about \$6,500 in the bank and accounts payable of roughly \$81,500, after it had spent \$75,000 more in 1973 than it had taken in. A new financial crisis was on the horizon, exacerbated by YAF’s purchase of a property in northern Virginia to use as national headquarters. The estate was supposed to serve as a marketable asset and cut growing rent expenses from the budget. For the time being, however, YAF, in addition to its current expenses, had to come up with the money for mortgage payments.¹³²¹

¹³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.90

¹³¹⁹ John Jones to Frank Donatelli, January 11, 1974, p.1. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

¹³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹³²¹ Cf. YAF Financial Statements, December 31, 1973. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1; SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.156–157.

Jones suggested that cash cows for other conservative organizations in 1972/73 had been “abortion, marijuana, Nixon, and pornography.”¹³²² Mailings on these evoked emotional responses and donors willingly gave money to combat what they perceived as America’s moral decay. Since YAF’s entire budget depended on small direct mail contributions, Jones urged his clients to capitalize on these issues. Until 1974, however, YAF’s national leadership had often shied away from taking positions on social questions, as they often divided the membership. Like in the late Sixties, the fault lines ran between libertarian- and traditionalist-minded YAFers. The national board, perhaps wary of another period of polarization and major infighting, saw nothing to gain from forcing one particular view on the entire membership. Jones demanded that “[u]nder no circumstances should the organization compromise its position to accommodate its fund raising,”¹³²³ but he did not present another way out of the quandary. Instead, he instructed the national board to talk strategy at its next meeting. As Jones would have known, YAF already was quite flexible on fundraising issues. Although the organization had divorced itself from the Nixon administration, and the chairman had implicitly called for the president’s resignation, it nevertheless used the specter of impeachment to bring in money. “Our donors still love Nixon and cringe whenever his name is taken in vain,” Donatelli explained, adding that he would keep using it as the “biggest fund raising issue by far.”¹³²⁴

At the board meeting in question, Jones repeated his plea “that YAF allow him to use the hard-core stances on the money-raising issues listed above. [...] [He] said that in general, [YAF does] best as reactionaries and suggested that [it] shift from campus to political themes.”¹³²⁵ Reactions were mixed. While Jerry Norton wanted to only send out mailings on issues where YAF had an unambiguous policy, Dan Manion remarked that YAF should indeed “prostitute [them]selves, though not totally” (Danny Rea then “demonstrated how to do that”). After some discussion, the board decided to do a mailing on abortion and passed a resolution condemning the impeachment of Nixon. The latter was *only* to be used for fundraising but still garnered significant dissent.¹³²⁶ YAF leaders likely chose abortion because among the group’s members, it was the least controversial among the social issues proposed by Jones and it also promised a strong return from the donors.

It is perhaps ironic that YAF’s turn towards cultural issues was motivated by material reasons. Although traditionalist members had previously pressed for resolutions condemning abortion

¹³²² John Jones to Frank Donatelli, January 11, 1974, p.1. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

¹³²³ Ibid., p.1.

¹³²⁴ Frank Donatelli to National Board, Undated (January/February 1974). YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

¹³²⁵ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 15-17, 1974, pp.8-9. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 4.

¹³²⁶ Ibid., pp.9/15.

and the Women's Liberation Movement at the national convention in 1973, the national office had not widely publicized these positions, fearing to alienate a libertarian minority. Many libertarian members did indeed take issue with the organization's official policy, which would lead to conflict later in the 1970s. Social issues were also a cornerstone in YAF's return from a focus on (often local) campus issues to questions of national politics.

7.2 The Right to Life

The question whether YAF should position themselves on legalized abortion came up for the first time at a board meeting in February 1971. Richard Derham commented that in his home state of Washington, YAFers were almost evenly split on the question (42 to 43%, with 15% undecided). Another board member, William Saracino, added that while he strongly rejected abortion personally, any such positioning "could only be devisive [sic]" and should be avoided at all cost.¹³²⁷ Every board member turned in an unsigned written statement on the subject, so that the board might work out a common denominator. Those were then "read aloud," which apparently "solved nothing."¹³²⁸ The directors thus decided to not only not make a statement on the topic, but to also prohibit *New Guard* from printing any substantial articles on it until after the 1971 national convention, hoping that a consensus might emerge there. The resolutions committee, however, did not send any proposals to the convention delegates for a vote. Derham, its chair, reasoned that "[a] position which obtains only a 51% affirmative vote" would show "that it cannot be defined as the conservative position. Thus, we have generally tried to avoid areas which would express a split among conservatives." The committee thus favored resolutions where YAF could present themselves as a united front against campus radicalism.¹³²⁹

For the next two years, as instructed by the directors, YAF kept a low profile on abortion. Only when the Supreme Court handed down its landmark ruling in *Roe v. Wade*,¹³³⁰ guaranteeing a woman's right to choose an abortion and placing limits on government regulation of the procedure, did it return to the board's agenda. YAF leaders discussed at length whether they should respond by establishing an ad hoc Right to Life Committee. The tone of the debate remained unchanged compared to 1971. Derham again urged the others to wait until the national convention and suggested that, by then, conservatives would be united against abortion.

¹³²⁷ William Saracino to Randal Teague, May 12, 1971. YAF Records, Box 9, Folder 3.

¹³²⁸ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 5-7, 1971, p.11. YAF Records, Box 6, Folder 3.

¹³²⁹ Richard Derham to National Board, September 25, 1971, p.2. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 5 Emphasis original.

¹³³⁰ *Roe v. Wade* [1973], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/410/113/> [08.09.2020].

Saracino and other board members repeated their concerns that, from a practical point of view, deciding the question would invite the dissent of parts of the membership.

Another director, Pat Nolan of California, who in 1984 became Assembly Republican Leader in the Golden State before being convicted of a racketeering charge,¹³³¹ noted that of the 18 board members present, 13 were Catholics, which was unrepresentative of the general membership.¹³³² In the early 1970s, Catholics spearheaded the battle against legalized abortion, which some contemporary commentators still painted as a *Catholic* rather than a national issue. A board composed mainly of Catholics deciding to take a stand against abortion could have alienated non-Catholic members. Evangelicals, for example, were still undecided or even moderately pro-abortion and joined the pro-life movement in larger numbers only in the years after *Roe v. Wade*.¹³³³

The board finally made a 12-6 decision to establish an ad hoc committee, which was scheduled to appear at the national convention.¹³³⁴ Its advisory board, they decided, should be “pluralistic [...] weighted heavily with non-Catholics” such as Billy Graham.¹³³⁵ As chairmen, the board members appointed John Buckley and Mike Connelly from their own ranks.

The latter wrote an article for the *New Guard* summing up the position of the committee. While he acknowledged that *Roe v. Wade* divided their ranks, he urged his fellow conservatives to unite against the verdict. Abortion, he reasoned, could only be accepted by placing no value on an individual’s life, which both traditionalists and libertarians cherished. He attacked the ‘right to privacy’ invoked by the court, who “could not seem to find any legal precedent to back it up.” Even if it existed, he deemed it irrelevant, because every abortion procedure involved *two* individuals, the mother and the unborn child. He also found a legal precedence for the fetus being such an individual: an unborn child was entitled to their parents’ inheritance. Privacy, he argued, was therefore not applicable to the question of abortion.¹³³⁶

¹³³¹ Nolan and other lawmakers from both parties extorted campaign contributions in return for votes on special interest legislation. After an FBI sting operation popularly called ‘Shrimpscam’, he was sentenced to 33 months in prison, cf. JACOBS, Paul; GLADSTONE, Mark: A ‘Worn Out’ Nolan Resigns, Gets 33 Months, in: Los Angeles Times, 19.02.1994, online: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-02-19-mn-24614-story.html> [09.09.2020] After being released, Nolan worked with former Nixon aide Chuck Colson as a leading conservative voice on progressive justice system reform. In 2019, he was pardoned by President Donald Trump, cf. MAI-DUC, Christine: Trump pardons Pat Nolan, former GOP lawmaker taken down in FBI’s ‘Shrimpscam’ probe, in: Los Angeles Times, 16.05.2019, online: <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-trump-pardons-pat-nolan-20190515-story.html> [09.09.2020].

¹³³² Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, May 25-27, 1973, p.9. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

¹³³³ Cf. WILLIAMS, God’s Own Party, p.116.

¹³³⁴ Cf. Ronald Robinson to YAF National Board of Directors, Undated (November 1973). YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

¹³³⁵ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, May 25-27, 1973, pp. 9/12. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

¹³³⁶ Cf. CONNELLY, Michael: The Right to Life, in: The New Guard, June 1973, p.14.

Connelly rejected distinctions as to at what point in its development the fetus could be considered a living human. These, he claimed, were arbitrary and not backed up by current medical research. He continued that even if one rejected these legal arguments, the “difficult moral question of our right to take the chance that we are destroying human lives” could not be resolved by judicial decree.¹³³⁷

In Connelly’s view, *Roe v. Wade*, attacked the roots of the American family by denying any legal recourse to the father of an unborn child if the mother sought an abortion. He concluded:

“[I]nstead of furthering the cause of individual freedom as some people claim, the decision actually leaves our individual freedoms in greater danger than ever before. [...] [It] denies the right of the people [...] to prohibit abortion on demand [...] by creating a heretofore unknown constitutional right, i.e. the ‘right to kill.’ [...] [B]y the use of such terms as meaningful life, potential life, and viable life, the court leaves in doubt which lives, or indeed if any lives at all, are still protected by our constitution. [...] One has nightmares of some government bureaucrat going through a stack of files and stamping meaningful or not meaningful on them. [...] Of course, the prospect sounds incredible, but then 10 years ago abortion on demand seemed incredible. [...] Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Can we really afford to give up any of the three?”¹³³⁸

While Connelly put *Roe v. Wade* in a framework of expanding government control over individual lives, others disagreed with that conclusion. In a reply, New York YAFer Richard Cooper chastised Connelly for thinking that outlawing abortion denied “a woman’s right to life, liberty, and property. The State has no right to proscribe abortion [...] anymore [sic] than it has to set wages, prices, or hours of employment.”¹³³⁹ He echoed earlier remarks like that of Libertarian Party founder David Nolan, who had asked: “[W]ho is to decide whether a woman is to have a baby—the woman herself, or the government?”¹³⁴⁰ Such arguments for legalized abortion (or rather, against abortion prohibition) rested on the assumption that a fetus could not be considered a human life until a certain, ultimately arbitrarily defined point,¹³⁴¹ a premise that most pro-life groups oppose to this day.

SCHNEIDER argues that YAF rejected developments like legalized abortion as “continued resistance to an active judiciary, not so much because they were influenced by the morality of such positions or [...] a woman’s ‘choice’ to decide.”¹³⁴² While YAFers indeed debated the merits of judicial review,¹³⁴³ and most rejected an active judiciary, the article by Connelly and

¹³³⁷ Ibid.

¹³³⁸ Ibid., p.15.

¹³³⁹ COOPER, Richard: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, October 1973, p.25.

¹³⁴⁰ NOLAN, David: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1970, p.34.

¹³⁴¹ For example, Nolan wrote that he did not “regard the fetus as human until at least the hundredth day after conception, and neither does anyone else who bases his judgement on scientific evidence.” Ibid. Cooper claimed to “not argue the question of whether the fetus in the first three months is a human life or not,” although he wrote that it “is not a person inside or outside the womb.” COOPER, Richard: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, October 1973, p.25.

¹³⁴² SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.155.

¹³⁴³ Cf. MOFFIT, Robert: *Judicial Review is Judicial Tyranny*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1973, pp.6–8; DONATELLI, Frank: *An Uneasy Case for Judicial Review*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1973, pp.9–10.

the board debates attest that the primary impetus *did* come from a moral rejection of abortion. Correspondingly, the ‘Resolution on the Right to Life’ that was finally passed at the 1973 national convention read that “[a]ny remedy short of equal protection for life from the moment of conception is philosophically, *morally*, and medically untenable. An innocent human being cannot be declared a non-person at will[.]”¹³⁴⁴ A critique of the “Supreme Court’s invasion into the legislative process” was also part of the resolution, although it featured less prominently.¹³⁴⁵ When the national office sent the convention platform to the chapters, the caution of YAF leaders in the previous years was partially vindicated. Of all ratified resolutions, the Right to Life decision garnered the least approval.¹³⁴⁶ Although 70% of chapters chose to ratify the resolution, most other resolutions achieved approval rates of 90% or higher.¹³⁴⁷

The cautious approach of the national leadership had not prevented pro-lifers from forcing the issue at the national convention. To prevent a significant split from the libertarian minority that wanted to keep abortion legal and would have liked YAF to at least remain neutral,¹³⁴⁸ it had preemptively embedded the controversial topic in a new project called ‘Privacy, the Role of Government, and the Rights of the Individual.’ Dealing with “the relationship of the government to its citizens and the degree of government involvement in the daily lives of the individuals,” contents of the project ranged from topics such as “Population control and government involvement in the decision as to who shall live and who shall die,” under which abortion was subsumed, to public education, busing, military conscription, the relationship between religion and the state, and government surveillance. “Their unity,” the respective brochure claimed, “exists in the relationship between government enforcement and compulsion and the expression of individual freedom.”¹³⁴⁹ Because these issues were shaping up to be *the* questions of the Seventies, executive director Wayne Thorburn argued, YAF had to get involved.¹³⁵⁰

In this context, Connelly’s concern about a “right to kill”¹³⁵¹ that would potentially be carried out by bureaucrats can be better understood. Opponents discussed abortion as a potential tool

¹³⁴⁴ “Resolution on The Right to Life”, in: YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7. Emphasis added.

¹³⁴⁵ See also Advice & Dissent, in: The New Guard, September 1974, p.4.

¹³⁴⁶ Except for a decentralization proposal, which would have given 1/3 of each membership fee to the corresponding state organization but was rejected by the chapters.

¹³⁴⁷ YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions Ratifying Results, in: The New Guard, March 1974, p.7 The only other resolution which was accepted with an approval of under 90% was the Watergate resolution, which 86% of the chapters ratified.

¹³⁴⁸ Cf. N.N. to Ronald Docksai, February 5, 1973. YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 1.

¹³⁴⁹ “Privacy, the Role of Government, the Rights of the Individual”, Undated (Early 1973). YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 1.

¹³⁵⁰ Cf. THORBURN, Wayne: Training for the Future, in: The New Guard, January-February 1973, p.17.

¹³⁵¹ See above.

for population control. They pointed out the risk of *legalized* abortions leading to *government-mandated* abortions, similar to how forced sterilizations had been used against minority groups in the past.¹³⁵² Chairman Ron Docksai also held that outspoken proponents of population control often simultaneously dabbled in biological and/or social eugenics.¹³⁵³ This, he claimed, further justified concerns about abuse of legalized abortions. Traditionalists and libertarians alike could reject such scenarios, although the latter did not share the slippery-slope argument that legalized abortions would *likely* lead to mandated abortions.

To make its position more amenable to the outgunned minority, YAF enlisted prominent in-house libertarian David Brudnoy to pen a flyer rejecting abortion from his perspective. Brudnoy was well-known to *New Guard* readers as a staunch proponent of the decriminalization of ‘victimless’ crimes such as pornography, drug abuse, and homosexuality.¹³⁵⁴ He later became a successful talk radio host, respected across the political aisle for his non-partisan style. In the flyer, he argued in libertarian language that “one has no right to initiate aggressive behavior against innocents.” Unborn children, even if not yet fully developed, were the “most innocent of all human beings, having committed no acts whatsoever except living.” Performing an abortion therefore was “the most unjustified form of killing.”¹³⁵⁵

7.3 Up from Liberation – YAF and Women’s Rights

Most feminists heralded *Roe v. Wade* and the legalization of abortion as a major victory for the Women’s Rights (or Women’s Liberation) Movement. This was not the only issue where YAF was at odds with feminist groups. As KLATCH has shown, even most female members of the group did not share feminists’ analysis of objective societal oppression of women. Although their political activism might have suggested otherwise, they embraced traditional gender roles and family models. In KLATCH’s interviews, only a small minority of former YAF members reported sexism in the organization, a sharp contrast to female activists in SDS, which she attributes less to a lack of sexism in YAF than to an underdeveloped ‘language of oppression’.¹³⁵⁶ In one of the few articles specifically discussing female activism in YAF before the 1970s, Phillip Abbot Luce (who, as former leftist, knew the ‘language of oppression’) addressed the problem of sexism:

¹³⁵² Cf. EVANS, Bradley: Impeachable Sources. The Great Patriotic Health Movement, in: *The New Guard*, April 1970, p.7; THORBURN, Wayne: Population Control. Who Lives and Dies?, in: *The New Guard*, March 1973, pp.4–6.

¹³⁵³ Cf. Ibid; DOCKSAI, Ronald: The Limits of Genetic Control, in: *The New Guard*, March 1975, pp.20–22.

¹³⁵⁴ BRUDNOY, David: Decriminalizing Crimes Without Victims. The Time Is Now, in: *The New Guard*, April 1973, pp.4–8.

¹³⁵⁵ ID.: Why I Oppose Abortion (YAF-Flyer), Undated (Early to Mid-70s). YAF Records, Box 63, Folder 4.

¹³⁵⁶ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.173–176.

“Male chauvanism [sic] is a continuing problem in the YAF structure. We simply do not give women the opportunity, in almost all cases, to develop or exhibit leadership potentials. Of course, many local and state organizations have their ‘house-female’ functioning as secretary, but with no opportunity to take an actual leadership role. The male monopoly of leadership control must be attacked and radically changed if YAF is to make a serious impact on our political culture.”¹³⁵⁷

KLATCH cites a *The New Guard* department entitled “Miss YAF” that ran in nine issues between September 1967 and Summer 1968 as further evidence of sexism. Therein, female members and their YAF activities were portrayed, including a description of their (good) looks,¹³⁵⁸ which set the articles apart from the more sober ‘spotlights’ on (mostly male) state chairmen and national leaders. Contrary to KLATCH, MCEANEY maintains that it is “perhaps too easy to simply dismiss the ‘Miss YAF’ column as a manifestation of sexism.”¹³⁵⁹ The photographs accompanying the articles were likely produced for the male gaze and the detailed description of the physical qualities of the women rooted them strongly in the ‘beauty queen’ genre. Nevertheless, they also “essentially served as a showcase for ambitious women within the organisation and afforded them an opportunity to be known and applauded by the national membership.”¹³⁶⁰ All of the women chosen as Miss YAF served the group in leadership positions, and some even went on to join the national board.

Even if women generally did not experience sexism within the organization, a minority still harbored sympathies for the Women’s Liberation Movement, for example Carol Bauman.¹³⁶¹ In a *New Guard* article entitled “A Conservative View of Women’s Liberation,” she rejected feminism’s more radical proposals like abortion-on-demand or freely accessible contraceptives (these specific rejections perhaps colored by her catholic faith). “[S]uch ‘reforms’”, she wrote, “would liberate men, not the women,” because “[t]hey would make women more available to men, but would relieve men from all responsibility.”¹³⁶² The silver lining was, she continued, that even the “loony feminists” supporting such demands were, in their outspokenness, encouraging women of all political persuasions to stand up for their needs.

True to the feminist credo that the personal is political, she related her own experiences of discrimination to illustrate problems inherent in society and the political system. Struggling with being a working mother, she called out employers for giving her (less-paid) positions men of the same qualifications would not even be considered for. Closing in on the topics usually discussed in *New Guard*, she elaborated that women did most of the volunteer work in political

¹³⁵⁷ LUCE, Phillip Abbott: Against the Wall, in: *The New Guard*, October 1968, p.5.

¹³⁵⁸ Cf. KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.165–166.

¹³⁵⁹ MCEANEY, *Righting Women in the 1960s*, p.101.

¹³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.98.

¹³⁶¹ See KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, pp.174–175, for Bauman/Dawson discussing her position as a woman within YAF.

¹³⁶² BAUMAN, Carol: *A Conservative View of Women’s Liberation*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1972, p.6.

campaigns. In the end, however, “it is the men who get the glory [...], the patronage, and [who] are written up as the supreme strategists, the wise counselors and the heads of think-tanks that steered the candidate to victory.”¹³⁶³ The best women could hope for was a “separate-but-equal position” like district or county vice chairman, “with which a woman is rewarded for years of faithful envelope stuffing and party organizing.”¹³⁶⁴

However, the times, Bauman observed, they were a-changing. Younger women saw less of a discrepancy between being feminine and having a career, between being a mother and not caring for their children 24/7. On the other hand, some also feared losing their privileges or societal recognition as housewives and mothers if the career woman was to become the new norm. The latter, Bauman argued contrary to other conservative women, was not feminists’ goal. Instead, they demanded, and she agreed, that the basic worth of *all* women, working or not, should be upgraded in American society.¹³⁶⁵

The article evoked mixed responses from readers.¹³⁶⁶ Judy Abramov Thorburn concurred that “[p]rejudicial roles exist and the sooner conservatives realize this, the better.”¹³⁶⁷ She also advised that conservatives should keep stressing the importance of marriage and reproduction for modern society, but they should be open to changing interpretations of wife- and motherhood. Nevertheless, she cautioned that a “major consideration” for conservatives should be that “there are individuals who are of the socialist-Marxist school of thought and regard women’s rights as another theatre of war.”¹³⁶⁸ Their views, she claimed, needed to be separated from the non-Marxist majority. Conservatives would then be able to distinguish between genuine women’s issues and Marxist attacks on traditional family and gender norms.

Not everyone was willing to make that differentiation. YAFer Wayne Johnson wrote to the *New Guard* editor that both Bauman and Thorburn, along with multitudes of other conservatives, had “fallen into the Marxist trickbag.” By demanding equal salaries and job opportunities, he argued, “these well-meaning friends have bought the [Marxist] labor theory of value, the surplus value theory, class struggle and historical determinism hook, line and sinker.”¹³⁶⁹ Individual rights, such as an employer’s right to freely choose which contracts to offer to whom, should never be compromised to achieve a vaguely-defined equality.

¹³⁶³ Ibid.

¹³⁶⁴ Ibid., p.7.

¹³⁶⁵ Cf. Ibid., pp.7–8.

¹³⁶⁶ For a positive response, see EDWARDS, Anne: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, September 1972, p.23; ORVIS, Susan: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, September 1972, pp.23–24. For a negative comment, see LUTE, Daniel: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, May 1972, Front Matter; pp.23–24.

¹³⁶⁷ THORBURN, Judy: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1972, Front Matter.

¹³⁶⁸ Ibid., p.25.

¹³⁶⁹ JOHNSON, Wayne: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, December 1972, p.25.

Johnson’s letter echoes two arguments that YAF brought forth against the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Firstly, furthering a cause supported in part by Marxist elements would lead to furthering the cause of Marxism, even if its demands were not Marxist per se. Secondly, to achieve equality would mean to abridge individual rights. In contrast to the 60s, however, *New Guard* published articles such as Bauman’s that were in favor of the Women’s Rights Movement.

The crucial factor explaining the different treatment of civil rights and women’s issues is that at least some of the women in YAF had shared experiences with feminists while YAF never attracted a significant number of African American activists who could have related their experiences of discrimination. Bauman recalled that she had “read the same feminist literature everybody”¹³⁷⁰ had. Many also were mothers and housewives, the roles which were often at the center of debates about the equality of women. Although they were a minority among YAF members, especially in leadership positions,¹³⁷¹ women represented an integral part of the organization.

While some female YAFers supported parts of the Women’s Rights Movement, others, like Kathy Teague, rejected it outright. “If half the time and space given to women’s liberation was devoted to thoughtful advice and guidance for women who want to become better wives and mothers,” she predicted, “all women would truly be taking a giant step forward.” Women that were bored at home because technological advances had relieved them of the “drudgery” of housework would be just as bored working routine tasks in any office job. Instead of supposed discrimination, conservatives should stress the “vital role motherhood plays in the furtherance and cultivation of the essence of our free society.”¹³⁷²

Although one might assume (as Bauman did) that such pieces were motivated by status anxiety, i.e. the fear of losing societal acceptance as housewife and mother, YAF women were already breaking with traditional gender norms by their political engagement. Teague herself is a good example. In 1973, one year after her *New Guard* contribution, she became the first executive director of the newly-founded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which today is perhaps the most important distributor of (conservative) model legislation across state legislatures.¹³⁷³ Additionally, she became chairwoman of New Right figurehead Paul

¹³⁷⁰ KLATCH, *A Generation Divided*, p.175.

¹³⁷¹ A 1972 leadership survey among chapter chairmen reported 12% female respondents, cf. YAF Leadership Poll, Undated, June 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5.

¹³⁷² TEAGUE, Kathleen: N.N., in: *The New Guard*, June 1972, p.13. (First page with headline missing in the microfilm).

¹³⁷³ For a short history of ALEC and its importance for U.S. state legislation, see HERTEL-FERNANDEZ, Alexander: *Explaining Durable Business Coalitions in U.S. Politics: Conservatives and Corporate Interests across America's Statehouses*, in: *Studies in American Political Development* Vol. 30/1 (2016), pp.1–18.

Weyrich’s (founder of the Heritage Foundation) Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and its successor organization, the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation.¹³⁷⁴ While espousing the virtues of the traditional family and motherhood for a free society, Teague was a career woman.

Her *New Guard* article garnered acclaim by the most important leader of the conservative anti-feminist movement. In a letter to the editor, Phyllis Schlafly stated that she “100% agree[d]” with Teague, who “stated the case very well.”¹³⁷⁵ A conservative activist since the mid-40s, Schlafly had reached national fame by publishing *A Choice, Not an Echo* during the 1964 Goldwater campaign. Attacking moderate and liberal ‘Me Too’ or Rockefeller Republicans, who allegedly controlled the party structure, she struck a nerve with the conservative grassroots. Millions of copies were distributed during the primaries and after the campaign. In the early Seventies, her attention focused on a new project—stopping ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).¹³⁷⁶

A long-term goal of feminist movements in the US first introduced in the 1920s, the ERA would have amended the constitution to forbid legal discrimination based on sex. The version that was debated in the 1970s read “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex”¹³⁷⁷ and was introduced in the House in 1971. Enjoying broad legislative support, it was passed by the House in the same year and by the Senate in early 1972. Both major parties as well as President Nixon and his successors Ford and Carter endorsed the ERA. Ratification by the necessary majority of 38 states seemed almost assured, and by early 1973, 30 state legislatures had already done so.¹³⁷⁸

Schlafly was a newcomer to women’s issues, having previously focused her activities on anti-communism. She entered the fray with an article entitled ‘What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?’ published in her own *Phyllis Schlafly Report* in February 1972.¹³⁷⁹ Schlafly argued that the American woman of the 1970s was the most privileged human to have ever lived. Protected by laws that required men to provide financial support and physical protection to their children and wives, put on a pedestal by a century-old Judeo-Christian tradition of chivalry, and liberated by the technological achievements of the American free enterprise

¹³⁷⁴ Cf. LUPOFF, Jeffrey: YAF Alumni: Where Are They Now?, in: *The New Guard*, September 1978, p.19.

¹³⁷⁵ SCHLAFLY, Phyllis: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, September 1972, p.24.

¹³⁷⁶ The seminal study about Schlafly, placing her activism in the context of the rise of Conservatism is CRITCHLOW, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism. Specifically for the battle against the Equal Rights Amendment, cf. pp.212–242.

¹³⁷⁷ Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the United States [1971], online: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg1523.pdf> [14.09.2020].

¹³⁷⁸ CRITCHLOW, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, p.216.

¹³⁷⁹ SCHLAFLY, Phyllis: What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women? [1972] , online: <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2016/02/02/whats-wrong-with-equal-rights-for-women-1972/> [14.09.2020].

system, she was freed from backbreaking housework while still being assured “the most precious and important right of all—the right to keep her own baby and [...] the enjoyment of watching [it] grow and develop.” Such rhetoric was a direct attack on feminists such as Betty Friedan, who in her *Feminine Mystique* lamented that societal expectations of motherhood left many women unfulfilled, longing for a purpose besides housekeeping and childrearing.¹³⁸⁰

Schlafly claimed that the ERA would do away with this heaven on earth. Compared to the “special privilege” she described, the promise of mere equal rights rang hollow. The amendment, she argued, would force Congress to draft women, eliminate their right to child support and alimony, and outlaw gender-specific workplace protection laws. “Women’s Libbers,” Schlafly thus concluded, did not seek greater opportunities for American women. Instead, they were “waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children.”¹³⁸¹ Writing for *New Guard*, she added that ERA “is like trying to kill a fly with a sledgehammer. You probably won’t kill the fly, but you surely will break up some furniture.” Legislators should not be fooled into supporting a fashionable amendment, which, “like Prohibition, they will surely regret.”¹³⁸²

Enthusiastic responses to her original article encouraged Schlafly to launch a major nationwide movement called STOP ERA (Stop Taking Our Privileges). A diverse coalition of women that rejected the amendment for various reasons, the group managed to stall the ratification process from 1973 onwards, and even led five states to rescind their ratification until the deadline in 1979.¹³⁸³

The majority of YAFers supported Schlafly’s anti-ERA crusade. For example, a *New Guard* article by Charles Moser hammered away at the havoc ERA would supposedly wreak on the American family. In his view, the government intended to usurp the functions families traditionally played in society by eliminating privileges individuals gained as family members. Because legal distinctions based on sex would be outlawed, Moser feared, homosexual marriages would have to be permitted. This, in turn, would reduce the concept of marriage, and, by extension, the family, to a “chance combination of two individuals.” The path for mandatory government daycare and “psycho-social engineering in the schools” would be clear.¹³⁸⁴ Moser

¹³⁸⁰ Cf. FRIEDAN, Betty: *The Feminine Mystique*, New York 1963.

¹³⁸¹ SCHLAFLY, Phyllis: What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women? [1972] , online: <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2016/02/02/whats-wrong-with-equal-rights-for-women-1972/> [14.09.2020].

¹³⁸² EAD.: Let’s Stop ERA, in: *The New Guard*, September 1973, pp.5–6.

¹³⁸³ CRITCHLOW, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, pp.218–227.

¹³⁸⁴ MOSER, Charles: ERA: A Threat to a Free Society, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1974, p.26.

thus classified the ERA as “one of the most totalitarian pieces of legislation ever to have passed the Congress.”¹³⁸⁵

Not all YAF members, however, agreed with Schlafly and Moser. In her “Individualist Case” for the ERA, libertarian Alice Lillie argued that “equal rights under the civil law [...] are a prime requirement for freedom and justice.”¹³⁸⁶ She attacked Schlafly for appealing to emotions like “fear of change, desire for security and other ‘frightened-animal’ characteristics”. Schlafly, she claimed, needed that appeal because she lacked a reasoned foundation for her argument. In Lillie’s view, many of Schlafly’s ‘horror scenarios’ should have actually been enticing for YAFers. Workplace protection laws, for example, interfered with the free market. Other legislation prescribed certain behaviors towards women, therefore limiting individual freedom. Furthermore, ERA would not immediately change American mentality. Lillie cited the example of private employers, who could still limit women’s working hours etc., since the amendment would not apply to them. Responding to Schlafly’s article, another YAF member made the same argument, predicting that the ERA would not lead to women being subject to the draft but its abolition, since American society would not tolerate female draftees.¹³⁸⁷

A third position was articulated by another libertarian, Jean Baker Natale. She agreed with Lillie that the women around Schlafly were driven by fear of losing the “romantic mystique” they had built around the role of homemaker.¹³⁸⁸ The problem, then, was not the upheavals that the ERA would bring but *how* they would come about. The amendment provided that Congress should have the power to enforce it “by appropriate legislation.”¹³⁸⁹ Previous “appropriate legislation”, however, Natale argued, had “made the American woman either a bird in a gilded cage or an unprivileged handmaiden” in the first place. It had “placed her life under the control of others.”¹³⁹⁰ She predicted that the ERA would turn the tables and lead to legislation favorable to women. Still, it would not solve the problem of Congress controlling women’s lives via legislation. An “anti-ERA feminist”, as she called her position, would want the amendment to read that “Congress shall make no laws respecting women”.

Female empowerment, in this view, lay not in legislation, but in women entrepreneurs. As actors in a free market, Baker Natale argued, they could easily improve their economic status were it not for Congress and local governments, who raised opportunity costs by demanding

¹³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹³⁸⁶ LILLIE, Alice: ERA: The Individualist Case, in: *The New Guard*, March 1974, p.20.

¹³⁸⁷ Cf. HARRISON, Verena: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, November 1973.

¹³⁸⁸ NATALE, Jean: Congress is a Chauvinist Pig, in: *The New Guard*, May 1977, p.10.

¹³⁸⁹ Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the United States [1971], online: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg1523.pdf> [14.09.2020].

¹³⁹⁰ NATALE, Jean: Congress is a Chauvinist Pig, in: *The New Guard*, May 1977, p.10.

licensing, public accounting, and “the patience to spend half one’s time coping with red tape.”¹³⁹¹ As bad as husbands that controlled the lives of their wives, “the bureaucrats, our masters, who control and manipulate [the] economy” were preventing “wom[e]n’s happiness and well-being.”

While Johnson’s letter attacking the Women’s Rights Movement as Marxist echoed charges against the civil rights movement, Natale applied libertarians’ earlier demands for black empowerment through capitalism to the ERA. YAF as an organization formalized its rejection of the ERA in a resolution passed at the national convention in 1973. In addition to arguments cited above, they also invoked states’ rights, claiming that “the enabling clause of the amendment grants jurisdiction in areas which in the past have been rightfully reserved to the states.”¹³⁹² This proves the longevity of arguments developed in engagement with African American demands. It also shows that even in the contested social issues of the 70s, traditionalists and libertarians could fight for the same goal, although they presented different rationales for pursuing it.

7.4 Blacks, Busing, and Bakke – The Culture Wars in Education

Two other contexts in which the legacy of the civil rights battles of the 1960s lived on were desegregation busing and affirmative action. As in the preceding decade, libertarians and traditionalists presented a united front against attempts by the federal government and liberal educators to integrate the American education system and remedy historical patterns of black exclusion.

To comply with court-ordered desegregation after *Brown v. Board of Education II*, school districts came up with different integration strategies. One of these was (two-way) busing. Students that previously attended minority-dominated schools were transported to majority white institutions within the same district and vice versa, sometimes over large distances. Since most large cities with significant black populations inside and outside the South were *de facto* segregated, judges ordered busing plans for cities like Boston, Atlanta, Charlotte, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Indianapolis. Such orders and similar decisions by local school boards generated considerable backlash, especially among lower to lower-middle class whites, who formed coalitions that swept board of education elections and defeated liberal incumbents with single-issue candidates opposed to busing. They resented the alleged self-righteous attitudes of the courts, who often appeared to look down—from the comfort of their own homes safely tucked away in the suburbs—upon lower class urban whites as uneducated bigots who did not know

¹³⁹¹ Ibid., p.11.

¹³⁹² YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7.

what was best for them.¹³⁹³ *Brown*, opponents of busing argued, had only outlawed *de jure* segregation, not racial imbalance resulting from segregated housing patterns. They feared that busing students across districts would be damaging to children's social life and mental health and would lead to unnecessary traffic accidents.

In her California case study, however, RUBIN shows that vocal opponents of *desegregation* busing had previously advocated establishing school buses to *increase* students' safety on their way to school. They also did not oppose busing to reduce school overcrowding etc.¹³⁹⁴ Similarly, districts that voted for California's Proposition 14 in 1964 supported anti-busing candidates in the school board elections of 1969 by almost identical margins.¹³⁹⁵ Proposition 14 would have re-established the right of homeowners to racially discriminate in selling their property but was struck down by the California Supreme Court.

In its 1971 landmark ruling in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court upheld busing as an appropriate tool to combat racially imbalanced schools, even if those schools did not deliberately bar minorities from attending and the imbalance resulted from *de facto* segregation in housing patterns.¹³⁹⁶ Although President Nixon had personally opposed busing, he vowed to respect the new law of the land. He did not interpret the Supreme Court's decision to be applicable to *de facto* segregation, however.¹³⁹⁷ During the election year of 1972, Nixon repeatedly stated that some lower courts had gone further than *Swann* demanded and proposed a moratorium on further busing orders. The president ordered his Attorney General to intervene in such cases, extending credibility to his compromise position.¹³⁹⁸

YAFers went beyond Nixon's opposition. Charles Black predicted that busing "might be the number one issue of 1972."¹³⁹⁹ For him, it demonstrated the major political development of the early 1970s: the revelation of the shortcomings of the federal government and its institutions, whose members could pursue erratic social engineering policies because they were not democratically elected. Their decisions thus eluded voters' control, enabling federal courts and

¹³⁹³ Cf. FORMISANO, Ronald: Boston Against Busing. Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s, Chapel Hill, NC 2004, pp.17–18.

¹³⁹⁴ Cf. RUBIN, Lillian: Busing and Backlash. White Against White in a California School District, Berkeley, CA 1972, pp.7–8.

¹³⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.150–153.

¹³⁹⁶ Cf. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* [1971], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/402/1/> [15.09.2020].

¹³⁹⁷ Cf. The President's News Conference of April 29, 1971: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Richard Nixon, 1971, Washington, D.C. 1972, pp.592–602, here pp.596–597.

¹³⁹⁸ Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Guests Following a Dinner at Secretary Connally's Ranch in Floresville, Texas. April 30, 1972: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Richard Nixon, 1972, Washington, D.C. 1974, pp.557–571, here pp.568–569.

¹³⁹⁹ BLACK, Charlie: Bringing the Federal Government Under Control, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1972, p.16.

the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to “run roughshod over standards of quality education, local government control, individual freedom, parental control of children, and public opinion.” The goal of federal bureaucrats, Black claimed, was to “implement the demise of the neighborhood school.”¹⁴⁰⁰

Supporters of busing hoped that a minority of strong students would serve to raise the overall quality of their new school, thus producing a net benefit. Weak students, on the other hand, would not impair the educational progress of their peers. The underlying assumption of this theory, a *New Guard* article countered, was that majority black schools were inherently inferior to otherwise identical majority white institutions.¹⁴⁰¹ Disregarding that majority black schools of comparable quality to white schools in the same district existed in theory only, the author polemicized that busing supporters were racists trying to dilute the inherently negative influence minority students had on school quality. “Black children,” he proclaimed, “are treated by the court as some unspeakable societal disease to be rationed around to lessen the chance of contamination.”¹⁴⁰² He predicted that such attempts were bound to fail. If 20% of students at worse schools were bused to a better institution, the latter would either become overcrowded or would have to send an appropriate number of its students to the former. “In neither case,” the contributor concluded, “is the education of *all* students improved.” By treating individual school quality as a static variable, he turned busing into a zero-sum game that could not be justified on educational grounds.

Other YAF material also attacked busing as a racist policy and instead promoted the ideology of ‘color-blindness’. “Equal access to public schools,” one anti-busing flyer read, was, because of court orders, “once again being denied for reasons of race. As in the period prior to [*Brown v. Board of Education*], where children attend school is determined by skin color.”¹⁴⁰³ The flyer warned that this renewed discrimination would drive (white) urban parents away from the city and to suburbs that featured less racially diverse populations, thereby eroding the tax base of city schools and exacerbating residential segregation. In *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), the Supreme Court had protected suburban school districts from metropolitan (inter-district) busing schemes, as long as they did not deliberately segregate their schools.¹⁴⁰⁴ The resulting phenomenon became known as White Flight.¹⁴⁰⁵

¹⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰¹ Cf. REYNOLDS, Alan: The Bus Comes Home, in: The New Guard, January-February 1973, p.9.

¹⁴⁰² Ibid., p.10. This was a rationale many black parents and activists opposing busing also embraced, cf. FORMISANO, Boston Against Busing, p.4.

¹⁴⁰³ Busing Must Stop (YAF-Flyer), Undated (Mid-70s). Lawrence Samuels Collection, Box 4, Folder 1. Cf. FORMISANO, Boston Against Busing, p.19.

¹⁴⁰⁴ *Milliken v. Bradley* [1974], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/418/717/> [16.09.2020].

¹⁴⁰⁵ See KRUSE, White Flight, esp. pp.234–245.

Because it supposedly had not served to integrate schools, one YAFer in 1977 called busing “the most disastrous social experiment of the past decade.”¹⁴⁰⁶ The same year, 78% of respondents in a *New Guard* survey supported a constitutional amendment against busing.¹⁴⁰⁷ By ending busing through democratic means, opponents hoped to reduce its legacy to “a bizarre historical footnote.”¹⁴⁰⁸

In contrast to abortion or the Equal Rights Amendment, there is no evidence of YAFers ever supporting busing. The national leadership thus articulated the organization’s position earlier. To prevent school boards from becoming complicit in busing schemes, the board determined in 1972 that YAF should introduce bills into state legislatures which would have slashed state funding for districts employing busing. It also decided that YAF would “work to try and get jurisdiction removed from federal courts on the busing issue.”¹⁴⁰⁹

Court-ordered desegregation busing was a natural target for YAF’s critique of a public education system supposedly beleaguered by social engineers and federal bureaucrats.¹⁴¹⁰ ‘Freedom’ from busing was therefore incorporated into the “Student Bill of Rights” passed at the 1973 national convention and remained a cornerstone of YAF policy until the organization’s (and busing’s) demise in the early 1990s.¹⁴¹¹

Another right the delegates approved was ‘freedom’ from affirmative action. In Executive Order 11246, President Lyndon Johnson had ordered federal contractors to take “affirmative action” to ensure that their hiring practices would not be colored by the race of applicants.¹⁴¹² This had been the first time the phrase had featured in a prominent document, yet the wording had left it unclear what “affirmative action” entailed. It could be construed both as adherence to the letter of the Civil Rights Act of 1964’s non-discrimination clause or positive steps towards larger minority participation in the workforce.

The Revised Philadelphia Plan implemented by the Nixon administration in 1969 fleshed out EO 11246. Taking the Pennsylvania city as a model location, it required federal contractors to present “goals and timetables” for increased hiring of minority workers.¹⁴¹³ Contractors were to make good faith efforts to expand the share of minority sheet metal workers from 1% in 1969

¹⁴⁰⁶ CLARK, Duncan: Disaster by Decree, in: *The New Guard*, March 1977, p.20.

¹⁴⁰⁷ ROBINSON, Ronald: New Guard Readers Sound Off, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.6.

¹⁴⁰⁸ CLARK, Duncan: Disaster by Decree, in: *The New Guard*, March 1977, p.20.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 16-18, 1972, p.7. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 2.

¹⁴¹⁰ See chapter 6.

¹⁴¹¹ YAF 1973 National Convention Resolutions Ratifying Results, in: *The New Guard*, March 1974; YAF Platform 1978-1979. YAF Records, Box 11, Folder 3.

¹⁴¹² Executive Order 11246 – Equal Employment Opportunity [1965], online: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/11246.html> [17.09.2020].

¹⁴¹³ ANDERSON, Terry: *The Pursuit of Fairness. A History of Affirmative Action*, New York, NY 2004, pp.115–117.

to about 20% by the end of 1973. Critics argued that this would violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by *de facto* mandating preferential hiring and racial quotas. Senator Ervin of North Carolina put it succinctly: “In order to achieve hiring without regard to matters of race, a contractor must take into consideration race in hiring.”¹⁴¹⁴ Proponents, on the other hand, pointed out the great disparity between a minority population of about 30% (in Philadelphia) and their low representation in skilled trade unions which could not be explained exclusively by their lower qualifications. The plan, then, would address subconscious hiring biases and results of structural discrimination like the seniority system.¹⁴¹⁵

Affirmative action boomed in the early 1970s. With its Revised Order 4, the Department of Labor added women as an affected class entitled to positive action.¹⁴¹⁶ HEW subsequently issued rules that barred colleges and universities from discriminating against individuals based on sex or race in their admissions processes.¹⁴¹⁷ Although higher education was only one battleground of affirmative action, it became its face, since it challenged ideas of a strictly meritocratic education system. YAF primarily engaged with the issue in the university context. There, activists only focused on the question of positive action *for minorities* in the admissions process.

There are three reasons for YAF’s narrow focus: firstly, in total, 80% of YAF leaders had begun or completed college education in 1972, with 8% still attending high school.¹⁴¹⁸ Although YAF members on average became older during the 1970s,¹⁴¹⁹ university chapters remained wellsprings of activity. Those were the chapters most likely to encounter affirmative action directly. Secondly, many companies only enacted measures after much cajoling and pressuring by the federal government. Especially unions were recalcitrant in protecting their (white male) members’ seniority rights against recently hired minority workers. In contrast, liberal educators embraced affirmative action, upholding policies against protests of students or applicants claiming discrimination-in-reverse. Thirdly, the landmark Supreme Court case *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, around which YAF’s most intense activism coalesced, was concerned with racial bias in a specific university admissions policy.

Before *Bakke*, another court case captured YAF’s attention. In *DeFunis v. Odegaard*, the plaintiff claimed that he had only been denied admission to the University of Washington

¹⁴¹⁴ Cited according to *Ibid.*, p.123.

¹⁴¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.118–119.

¹⁴¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.133–134.

¹⁴¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.142–145.

¹⁴¹⁸ YAF Leadership Poll, Undated, June 1972. YAF Records, Box 14, Folder 5.

¹⁴¹⁹ Cf. THORBURN, Wayne: A Modest Proposal for the Total Reorganization of Young Americans for Freedom, Undated (1974), p.2. YAF Records, Box 26, Folder 1.

School of Law because of preferential treatment of minorities.¹⁴²⁰ In the university's system to gauge the potential of applicants, the Predicted First-Year Average (PFYA), he had scored higher than 36 minority students who had been offered a spot. Although the university used the same formula for all applications, minority students only competed against each other and therefore could be admitted with lower PFYA scores. After the trial court had ordered the law school to admit DeFunis, the university appealed to the Washington Supreme Court, which reversed the lower court but stayed the decision pending judgement of the U.S. Supreme Court. By the time the latter heard the oral argument, DeFunis had already registered for his final quarter. It thus ruled the case moot since its judgement would not affect DeFunis' enrollment. However, in this case, "not to decide is to decide," a *New Guard* editorial stated, because it meant that affirmative action plans would remain in place.¹⁴²¹ By not acting, the court had shuffled out of responsibility, leaving "millions of people who are not members of chic minority groups [to] become victims of 'reverse discrimination'" and proving that it was becoming "the most highly politicized and pragmatic branch" of government. This argument, however, only made sense if the justices felt that affirmative action was unconstitutional but personally preferred its survival, a view that was not vindicated by subsequent ambiguous Supreme Court rulings such as *Bakke*. Indeed, in that case groups picketed the university *not* to appeal to the Supreme Court, as they felt that it would surely decide against affirmative action programs, subsequently endangering them nationwide.¹⁴²²

The key difference to *DeFunis* was that Alan Bakke had not eventually been admitted to the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine. His case could therefore be tried on its merits and promised to become a landmark decision on affirmative action. YAF involved itself as soon as it became clear that *Bakke* would be heard in the Supreme Court. National vice-chairman Jeffrey Kane offered financial support through Bakke's lawyers. The organization also submitted an amicus curiae brief for the trial.¹⁴²³ Furthermore, coverage of the topic once again flared up in the *New Guard*.

In his essay on "The New Racism," board member Clifford White argued that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had already exhausted all legislative avenues to combat discrimination. Although YAF had termed it a "legislative monstrosity"¹⁴²⁴ when it was first passed, White called the Act

¹⁴²⁰ Cf. *DeFunis v. Odegaard* [1974], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/416/312/> [17.09.2020].

¹⁴²¹ Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, June 1974, p.5.

¹⁴²² LINDSEY, Robert: Male/Caucasian—and Rejected. *The Bakke Case*, in: *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1977, A1–A2.

¹⁴²³ Cf. Jeffrey Kane to Jacoby, Blackenberg, May & Colvin, October 13, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1.

¹⁴²⁴ "... To Uphold the Constitution, not Destroy it", in: *The New Guard*, February 1964, p.5.

“altogether sensible.”¹⁴²⁵ By going further and demanding affirmative action, however, President Johnson and his successors had created “policies which are equally as harmful and every bit as widespread as the Jim Crow racism of the past.” ‘Anti-discrimination’ had become a shibboleth for ‘reverse discrimination’, “in short, racism.” Because federal administrators needed not prove that universities and employers were in fact discriminating against minorities, they faced a situation of constant uncertainty:

“What we have here is something unheard of in the history of Western jurisprudence. The intent to violate the law is not considered in the determination of guilt. Simply not meeting a quota, or in bureaucratic lingo, fully utilizing a particular group, is *prima facie* evidence of lawbreaking.”¹⁴²⁶

Especially universities, who depended on federal assistance for their financial survival, would rather “acquiesce to the Big Brothers, who reside in the marble edifices along Pennsylvania Avenue” than risk losing funding. As with busing, YAF interpreted affirmative action as a consequence of excessive power concentration in the hands of unelected bureaucrats.

National director John Parker labeled their policies as thoroughly un-American. While previously, personal success was achieved through the “principle of merit,” positive action plans reduced accomplishment to “a privilege to be granted by government favor.”¹⁴²⁷ Under the meritocratic system, he elaborated, immigrant groups were able to quickly integrate into American society through individual initiative and hard work. While African slaves had not voluntarily immigrated to the U.S., Parker claimed that their descendants should be treated merely as the newest immigrant group: the Second Great Migration was only decades ago, as was legal emancipation in the South. In time and under the principle of merit, blacks would assimilate into society just as Italians, Irishmen etc. had. The new policy of ‘reverse discrimination’, however, would extinguish “the fires under the American melting pot, with a concomitant increase in racial strife and a decrease in the traditional upward mobility of minorities.” Prophetically, Parker painted a picture of a future in which immigrants would “struggle *not* to become ‘Americans,’ but to remain distinct, certifiable minorities so that they may qualify for the government’s largesse. America will not be a melting pot, but a mere collection of alien groups, constantly at odds in a crude and demeaning struggle for government favors.”¹⁴²⁸

YAF propagated their views through the amicus curiae brief submitted to the Supreme Court. In a publicity stunt, they enlisted Marco DeFunis, who by then had become a practicing lawyer, to be its author.¹⁴²⁹ The brief argued that racial quotas and preferential admissions policies

¹⁴²⁵ WHITE, Clifford: The New Racism, in: The New Guard, December 1976, p.18.

¹⁴²⁶ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁴²⁷ PARKER, John: Affirmative Action and the American Dream, in: New Guard Bulletin, October 1978, p.7.

¹⁴²⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴²⁹ Cf. “YAF Fights for Equal Rights” (The Right Scene), in: The New Guard, January 1978, p.20.

violated the 14th amendment that demanded “neutral [...] rather than race-conscious equality.”¹⁴³⁰ The case drew a record number of amicus curiae briefs¹⁴³¹ and pitted YAF and other opponents of affirmative action like the B’nai B’rith against groups such as the ACLU, whose brief was signed by future Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and the United States themselves, represented by the solicitor general. The projects director predicted that *Bakke* would be the hottest issue on campus in 1978 and animated chapters to sponsor debates on affirmative action.¹⁴³²

In the end, the Supreme Court upheld considering race as one of several factors in the admissions process but struck down racial quotas. It ordered Davis to admit Bakke. Both supporters and opponents of affirmative action could consider the ruling a victory: the general principle of affirmative action had weathered Bakke’s challenge, yet the end to racial quotas exposed a chink in its armor that conservatives would seek to exploit in the coming decades.¹⁴³³ Therefore *Bakke*, DeFunis summed up in *New Guard*, was only the first step. “A great deal of further litigation” awaited the courts in the coming years, requiring them to continue defining the borders of acceptable affirmative action policies.¹⁴³⁴

To capitalize on the momentum gained by Bakke’s admission, YAF established an Affirmative Action Task Force “includ[ing] several prominent members of Congress, attorneys and professors.”¹⁴³⁵ Its main purpose was to analyze the problems inherent in preferential admissions/hiring policies and draw up specific legislative remedies, although other than a “lengthy report,” not too much seems to have come out of it.¹⁴³⁶

In retrospect, the *Bakke* case marked the zenith of affirmative action in the United States and was one of the few victories conservatives scored in the Culture Wars. The anti-busing and right to life constitutional amendments YAF demanded towards the end of the decade never came to fruition.¹⁴³⁷ Busing as a policy, however, was severely weakened by several Supreme Court decisions since the 1990s, which stated that after a school system had been successfully desegregated, busing (and other desegregation) plans could be eased. In practice, this led to quick resegregation of the respective school districts.

¹⁴³⁰ “Bakke Reverse Bias Case Backed by Young Americans for Freedom”, in: The New York Times, August 28, 1977, p.48.

¹⁴³¹ Cf. ANDERSON, *The Pursuit of Fairness*, pp.153–154.

¹⁴³² Cf. YAF Projects Director Report, Undated (March 1978). YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 2; THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.392

¹⁴³³ Cf. “YAF Begins Post-Bakke Effort” (The Right Scene), in: *The New Guard*, September 1978.

¹⁴³⁴ DEFUNIS, Marco: *The Indecision of Bakke*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1978, p.7.

¹⁴³⁵ “YAF Task Force Fights to End Racial Quotas”, in: *New Guard Bulletin*, October 1978, p.1; BOAZ, David: *YAF Legislative Program Designed to Push Youth Issues*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1978, p.8.

¹⁴³⁶ THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.392–393.

¹⁴³⁷ Cf. YAF Platform 1978-1979. YAF Records, Box 11, Folder 3.

7.5 Listen Again, YAF

In June 1979, *National Review* published two articles attacking libertarians. The first, “Libertarians and Conservatives” by Ernest van den Haag,¹⁴³⁸ was a general critique of libertarian philosophy. The second analyzed the libertarian Cato Institute and its associates.¹⁴³⁹ Especially van den Haag worked out what he saw as “unbridgeable chasms on moral, political, and social issues.” The terminology, however, was somewhat misleading. ‘Libertarian’ denoted the most radical (exclusive) libertarians, and among those, van den Haag especially attacked Murray Rothbard. Contrary to van den Haag, YAFers joining the ensuing debate confined their critique to libertarians’ supposedly naïve rejection of an anti-communist interventionist foreign policy. Analyzing a few quotes by libertarian publications such as *Libertarian Review* and *Inquiry* a *New Guard* editorial concluded that “such vapid nonsense bears no resemblance to conservatism.”¹⁴⁴⁰

Rothbard used the 10th anniversary of the notorious St. Louis convention¹⁴⁴¹ to respond to the (van den Haag) charges and addressed an open letter to the 1979 YAF national convention delegates. The piece appropriately entitled “Listen Again, YAF”¹⁴⁴² chided conservatives for doing the exact opposite of what FRANK accused them of in *What’s the Matter with Kansas*: talking libertarianism and the free market and walking moral authoritarianism. Rothbard illustrated this by the “ultimate immorality” of the draft, compulsory registration for which was on Congress’ agenda after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.¹⁴⁴³ He (wrongfully) argued that YAF had opposed the draft in 1969 only because of a principled stand by libertarians, who in turn got shafted by the national organization.¹⁴⁴⁴

By 1979, however, the tables had turned. When William Lacy restated YAF’s arguments against the draft in a 1977 *New Guard* article,¹⁴⁴⁵ he was met by angry responses in the form of letters to the editor. The debate dragged on for the next one and a half years and had ex-YAFer Lawrence Samuels, who had been with the organization during the original draft debate, wondering about the sudden “authoritarian tripe” making rounds in YAF.¹⁴⁴⁶ Representing the other end of the spectrum, state chairman William Hawkins of Tennessee claimed that the 1969 resolution had been “opportunistic [...] politics [...] aimed at appeasing the campus mobs of

¹⁴³⁸ VAN DEN HAAG, Ernest: Libertarians and Conservatives, in: *National Review*, June 8, 1979, pp.725–739.

¹⁴³⁹ COTT, Lawrence: Cato Institute and the Invisible Finger, in: *National Review*, June 8, 1979, pp.740–742.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Advice and Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.6.

¹⁴⁴¹ See chapter 5.

¹⁴⁴² ROTHBARD, Murray: Listen Again, YAF, 1979. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 9.

¹⁴⁴³ Ibid., p.1.

¹⁴⁴⁴ The minority resolution on the draft that was submitted by radical libertarians called for active draft resistance, while the majority resolution merely rejected the draft in principle.

¹⁴⁴⁵ LACY, William: The Draft. Short Term Slavery, in: *The New Guard*, September 1977, pp.7–8.

¹⁴⁴⁶ SAMUELS, Lawrence: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, May 1978, p.3

the 1960s.”¹⁴⁴⁷ Abolition of the draft had resulted in manpower shortages for the US army, while allies such as France and Germany drafted large parts of their forces without becoming authoritarian states, he argued. A resolution by the 1981 national convention that supported “the concept of a volunteer army *in time of peace providing that it provides sufficient manpower*”¹⁴⁴⁸ proves through its careful wording that the issue remained contested, but supporters of the draft were gaining the upper hand.¹⁴⁴⁹

Rothbard sensed this shift and promoted the libertarian groups that had sprung forth from St. Louis as the only ones consistently advocating for individual freedom. In contrast, he branded YAFers as “theocrats and compulsory moralizers, who want to use the [sic] police power to force their own version of religion and morality down everyone else’s throat.”¹⁴⁵⁰ Rothbard’s diatribe referred to the organization’s stand against the decriminalization of so-called ‘victimless crimes’ like drug use, pornography, and homosexuality.¹⁴⁵¹ Of the cultural issues debated in the 1970s, these were the only ones where traditionalists and libertarians could find no common ground whatsoever.¹⁴⁵² While the latter argued that laws could never make men moral, and what consenting adults did in private was no one else’s business, the former countered that continued criminalization would reduce the ‘opportunity to sin’. Furthermore, especially minors would be protected from bad influences if they did not have to witness drug abuse or obscene material at newsstands.¹⁴⁵³

However, the YAF membership was not as monolithic on these issues as Rothbard suggested. Bearing testimony to the spectrum of opinions is a survey of *New Guard* readers conducted in 1976. Although I suspect that the respondents were more strongly libertarian than the general membership, their answers nevertheless suggest that there was a respectable minority supporting social laissez faire. For example, in the question of ‘victimless’ crimes, only 51.5%

¹⁴⁴⁷ HAWKINS, William: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, Spring 1979, p.3 Hawkins was also elected to the board of directors at the national convention in 1979.

¹⁴⁴⁸ YAF National Platform, 1981, p.26. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 1. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Robert Heckman to William Buckley, September 29, 1981. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 189, Folder YAF 1977-1981.

¹⁴⁵⁰ ROTHBARD, Murray: Listen Again, YAF, 1979, p.2. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 9.

¹⁴⁵¹ See the Resolutions on “The Family” and “The Judiciary” in YAF National Platform, 1981, p.20. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 1.

¹⁴⁵² For the libertarian position see BRUDNOY, David: Decriminalizing Crimes Without Victims. *The Time Is Now*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1973, pp.4–8. Unfavorable responses are contained in the June 1973 *New Guard*. Also see COWEN, Richard: Marijuana. *The Continuing Debate*, in: *The New Guard*, March 1974, pp. 12; 25; *The Conservative Case for the Decriminalization of Marijuana (Southern Region YAF Position Paper)*, Undated (late 1970s). Group Research Inc. Records, Box 341, Folder YOUNG AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM, Letters & Materials from Local & Regional Org’ns. For positions arguing continued criminalization see GOODWIN, Randy; SILLS, James: You’d Better Be Straight. *The Case Against Marijuana*, in: *The New Guard*, October 1973, pp.7–9; STANMEYER, William: Social Laissez Faire. *The End to Freedom*, in: *The New Guard*, September 1974, pp.18–20; GRASSO, Kenneth: On the Censorship of Pornography, Part I, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.39; GRASSO, Kenneth: On the Censorship of Pornography, Part II, in: *The New Guard*, Fall 1979, pp.13–15.

¹⁴⁵³ Cf. GRASSO, Kenneth: On the Censorship of Pornography, Part I, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.39.

of respondents outright rejected decriminalization of marijuana, while 59% did so for its sale. 57% wanted to keep pornography illegal, but only 40% favored criminalization of gambling. Lastly, a majority short of 60% opposed the legalization of homosexuality.¹⁴⁵⁴

In YAF's response to the letter, executive director Ron Robinson noted that the radical libertarians around Rothbard had "spent more time fretting over the decade-old St. Louis conference than anyone in YAF." Although "their entire movement wouldn't add up to a small faction within Young Americans for Freedom," he continued, "they publish more tracts on YAF politics than YAF itself."¹⁴⁵⁵

While Robinson tried to downplay the importance of radical libertarians to the conservative movement, Rothbard, in his polemic, landed one hit: the organization had left the 1970s with a different outlook than it had entered them. I propose that the cultural questions enumerated above set in motion a feedback loop: by—sometimes reluctantly—taking official positions along the lines of the traditionalist majority, the organization alienated some libertarians. More importantly, it became harder to vie for libertarian-minded recruits with dedicated libertarian organizations such as Rothbard's. On the other hand, traditionalist resolutions drew in new members supporting cultural conservatism, which, in turn, strengthened the majority even further. Thus, while the board of directors for example had advised the *New Guard* against printing anything related to abortion in the early 1970s, a 1979 article termed it "America's Holocaust."¹⁴⁵⁶ Ultimately, this development would lead to YAF abandoning social libertarians altogether and embracing the Christian Right in the 1980s.

Nevertheless, thanks perhaps in part to the anti-statist framing shown in this chapter, in part to YAF's support of economic libertarianism, there was still a (vocal) minority of libertarians left in the organization by the end of the decade that would subsequently be marginalized on cultural questions. Not all traditionalists were happy with their presence: one member suggested that YAF divest itself of all libertarians in the face of a promising picture for conservatives in the 1980 presidential elections. Libertarians, who spent most of their energy criticizing (other) conservatives, should not have a share in the power the latter worked long to achieve.¹⁴⁵⁷ The YAFer was right in one thing: Ronald Reagan, long-time YAF advisor, friend, and honorary chairman, indeed went on to capture the Republican presidential nomination. 16 years after the Goldwater campaign, victory was once again in touching distance.

¹⁴⁵⁴ ROBINSON, Ronald: New Guard Readers Sound Off, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.6.

¹⁴⁵⁵ ID.: Listen Again, Libertarians, in: *New Guard Bulletin*, August 1979, p.8.

¹⁴⁵⁶ BRENNAN, Christopher: Abortion. America's Holocaust, in: *New Guard Bulletin*, November 1979, p.3.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Cf. GRASSEY, Robert: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.47.

8. The Road to Revolution – YAF in the Ford and Carter Years

For YAF, the second half of the 1970s were marked by struggles over the direction of the conservative movement. Would it finally be able to capture the GOP or would it have to build its own party? That question was finally resolved when Ronald Reagan won the nomination in 1980. The era also demonstrated the success of YAF's movement building: YAF members and alumni served in key positions in presidential campaigns and directed institutions that were crucial in furthering the conservative cause.

Before YAFers could dream of a conservative president, however, they had to come to grips with the realities of post-Watergate America. One of them was a new president. Former vice president Gerald Ford had already succeeded YAF darling Spiro Agnew after the latter had resigned amongst charges of corruption and tax evasion.¹⁴⁵⁸ Then, YAF's *New Guard* magazine had reported "modest pleasure" with the new second-in-command, his "decency and integrity" presenting a welcome change after Watergate.¹⁴⁵⁹ As a Republican moderate, Ford was not a natural ally of movement conservatives. Based on the "excellent record" compiled in his almost 25 years of service in the House, however, YAFers hoped that he would at least stand against what they characterized as "excessive government interference" in the private and economic life of U.S. citizens.¹⁴⁶⁰

Nixon left to his successor an office whose public perception had been forever transformed by the 'White House Horrors', including the abuses of Watergate. The new president's personal integrity, an important asset in legitimizing his non-elected presidency, got a first dent with his pardon of Nixon for any crimes he might have committed while in office. Movement conservatives, however, curbed their enthusiasm for another reason: their nemesis Nelson Rockefeller, symbolic figure of everything they deemed wrong in the Republican Party, was Ford's chosen vice-president.¹⁴⁶¹

That congressional conservatives such as Barry Goldwater acquiesced in the selection of Rockefeller demonstrated, in the words of one YAF commentator, their "overwhelming sense

¹⁴⁵⁸ Cf. LEVY, Peter: Spiro Agnew, the Forgotten Americans, and the Rise of the New Right, in: *The Historian* Vol. 75/4 (2013), pp.707–739, here pp.732–737. LEVY cites the reactions of several conservatives, among them a YAF press statement urging the vice president not to resign. A YAF song honored Agnew's importance for Nixon's success: "Rockabye the voters with a southern strategy/Don't you fuss, we won't bus the kids in old Dixie. We'll put George Wallace in decline/Below that Mason-Dixon line. We'll help you save the nation/from civil rights and inte-gra-tion! A zillion Southern votes we will deliver/Move Nixon down onto the Swanee river! Rockabye with Massa Agnew/And his Dixie Strategy." *The Songbook*. "Glory Be, There Goes Another" or *Songs of the Militant Extreme*, 1987, p.19. YAF Records, Box 28, Folder 4. Agnew appealed to conservatives for his urban 'ethnic' background, his attacks on the liberal press, and his cultural conservatism. He embodied the attitude of Nixon's famous 'Silent Majority.'

¹⁴⁵⁹ Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1974, p.5.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶¹ Cf. Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, September 1974, p.4.

of powerlessness.”¹⁴⁶² The last remnants of Taft Republicanism seemed unwilling or unable to form a conservative leadership able to stop the “oppressive trends of decadent liberalism.”¹⁴⁶³ Therefore, “not in a cavalier or careless fashion,” the *New Guard* editors announced that YAF should begin to consider its options for the 1976 presidential race.¹⁴⁶⁴ With the GOP in shambles because of Watergate and allegedly ineffective congressional leadership, conservative forums were abuzz with talks of reshaping the national party system.

8.1 A New Majority Party? Conservatives and the GOP in 1975/76

“There may yet be a home for conservatives in the Republican Party, but it is increasingly becoming a nursing home.”¹⁴⁶⁵

- William Rusher, 1975

Conservatives were united in their disaffection with the current state of the Republican Party—Ron Docksai quipped that their main contention was whether it was “dying or dead”¹⁴⁶⁶—but their conclusions differed. On one end of the debate, members of the movement with stakes in the party called for a realignment of Republicans and Democrats along ideological lines. On the other, people without party office such as *National Review* publisher William Rusher and most YAFers lobbied for establishing a completely new, national, and conservative party. Both sides based their considerations on national surveys in which a majority of the populace described themselves as conservative.¹⁴⁶⁷ They neglected, however, to critically reflect on that assessment. Movement conservatives themselves often disagreed among each other on what being conservative exactly entailed, and a non-politico defining themselves as such did not necessarily share the ideology of any of those groups.

An occasion where conservatives could talk strategy was the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), jointly founded and organized by YAF, the American Conservative Union, *National Review*, and *Human Events* since 1973 (and still being sponsored by one of YAF’s successor institutions, the Young America’s Foundation, to date). In 1975, the focus of the conference was the future of the party system. Former YAF chairman Robert Bauman, by then a congressman from Maryland, set the theme in his opening speech. Dismissing the

¹⁴⁶² CAMDEN, Henry: Capitol Commentary, in: *The New Guard*, October 1974, p.6.

¹⁴⁶³ Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, November 1974, p.4.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁵ FISK, Mary: Toward a New National Party. An Interview With William Rusher, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1975, p.9.

¹⁴⁶⁶ DOCKSAI, Ronald: GOP: Dying or Dead?, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.28.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Cf. CAMDEN, Henry: GOP: A Sinking Ship?, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1975, p.6; HELMS, Jesse: American Parties. A Time for Choosing, in: *The New Guard*, December 1974, p.7; EDWARDS, Lee: A Conservative Party. Has Its Time Come?, in: *The New Guard*, December 1974, p.9; BUCKLEY, James: “Releasing the American Spirit...”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.27.

Democratic Party as “populated by special interest groups, power blocks, union bosses, and assorted leftist kooks,” he turned to an indictment of the GOP.¹⁴⁶⁸

Echoing the grievances of conservatives in the 1972 elections,¹⁴⁶⁹ he enumerated how the party had systematically betrayed all positions which voters believed it stood for, including a strong national defense, balanced budgets, and limited government. Ford, Bauman went on, had continued that trend, “culminating in the elevation to the high office of vice president of the single most unacceptable nominee one might contemplate: Nelson Rockefeller. I ask you, is this what we are to stand and fight and die for in elections to come?”¹⁴⁷⁰ The time for compromises, Bauman proclaimed, was over. Still, he stopped short of advocating a break with the GOP, instead favoring what he called a “basic realignment” of the major parties: as in 1964, grassroots conservatives should capture local party machineries while the national party should make switching palatable for conservative Democrats, for example by having them retain their congressional seniority rights.¹⁴⁷¹ Wooing established political leaders would also help to draw in their (conservative) constituencies.¹⁴⁷²

Retaining seniority rights and status also motivated the group supporting realignment. Bauman had worked over a decade to achieve his congressional seat on the Republican ticket. A third-party run might have gambled away his chances for reelection. Consequently, the speakers joining him, notably Jesse Helms and even former Nixon challenger John Ashbrook,¹⁴⁷³ held office for the GOP, although none but Mississippi Republican chairman Clarke Reed explicitly rejected leaving the party behind.¹⁴⁷⁴ Their personal fate was linked to the party’s survival.

Contrary to Bauman and his colleagues, *National Review* publisher William Rusher had nothing to lose by abandoning the Republican Party. He shared the misgivings about its recent history but did not see realignment to be a “lead-pipe cinch.”¹⁴⁷⁵ Instead, he believed that conservatives should go all out and form a new national party. Such an endeavor could take several forms, Lee Edwards elaborated in a *New Guard* article discussing the proposal: firstly, it could copy the strategy of George Wallace’s American Independent Party, trying to achieve electoral impact by focusing on capturing a few conservative stronghold states. Secondly, it could go the way of the Socialist Party, having almost no electoral significance but still able to influence

¹⁴⁶⁸ BAUMAN, Robert: “The Present Party System Has Failed...”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.9.

¹⁴⁶⁹ See chapter 6.

¹⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.9–10.

¹⁴⁷¹ *Cf. Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁴⁷² *Cf. HELMS, Jesse: American Parties. A Time for Choosing*, in: *The New Guard*, December 1974, p.7.

¹⁴⁷³ *Cf. HELMS, Jesse: “Back to the Two-Party System...”*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, pp.15; 22–25; ASHBROOK, John: “The Issue is Survival”, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, pp.14–15.

¹⁴⁷⁴ *Cf. CAMDEN, Henry: Capitol Commentary*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.6.

¹⁴⁷⁵ FISK, Mary: *Toward a New National Party. An Interview With William Rusher*, in: *The New Guard*, January–February 1975, p.9.

public debate on key issues. Thirdly, it could share the fate of the Progressive Party (Bull Moose), essentially being the appendix of a popular national figure. Lastly, it could attempt to be the new Republican Party, this time “based on philosophical principles, not simply the memory of a martyred president.”¹⁴⁷⁶

Rusher rejected considerations to form a *third* party existing parallel to Democrats and Republicans as a *minority* party, predicting that it would amount to merely a pressure group. Conservatives, he advised, should only bolt the Republicans if they were willing to form “a new *major* party, a Great Coalition” able to win national elections.¹⁴⁷⁷ That coalition should comprise movement conservatives (including libertarians), (implicitly white) blue-collar union workers, Catholic ethnic groups, former Dixiecrats, Midwestern Republicans, and suburban middle-class Jews.¹⁴⁷⁸ Essentially, these were the groups dubbed the ‘emerging Republican majority’ by political strategist Kevin Phillips.¹⁴⁷⁹ On the other hand, the new coalition should not appeal to the “welfare constituency,” urban minorities, the Eastern intelligentsia and “limousine liberals,” meaning upper-class Republicans in the Northeast. With this anti-elitist, reactionary tint, the proposed coalition, Rusher explained, was both populist in the tradition of George Wallace and conservative in the tradition of Barry Goldwater.¹⁴⁸⁰

Bringing those groups together would be no simple task. Rusher himself predicted that libertarians and Huey Long-style, ‘every-man-a-king’ populists would make up the opposite poles of the party and frequently clash. A YAF critic added that the plan underestimated the differences between economic libertarians and blue-collar America, which Rusher saw as crucial in assuring majority status of the new party. The key error in the eyes of the critic was confounding Labor with labor unions. There was, he elaborated, a “hard hat” contingent among blue-collar laborers that might support conservatism unconditionally. The leadership of the powerful labor unions, whom Rusher wanted to win for his coalition, however, was decidedly liberal on domestic policy. Including their interests would mean repeating the mistake of George Wallace, who had supposedly squandered away the votes of economic conservatives by too closely toeing the union line. To placate libertarians, the critic argued, the new party would sometimes need to work against union interests, e.g. by supporting ‘right to work’ laws.¹⁴⁸¹

¹⁴⁷⁶ EDWARDS, Lee: A Conservative Party. Has Its Time Come?, in: The New Guard, December 1974, p.10.

¹⁴⁷⁷ FISK, Mary: Toward a New National Party. An Interview With William Rusher, in: The New Guard, January-February 1975, p.9.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid., p.10.

¹⁴⁷⁹ PHILLIPS, Kevin: The Emerging Republican Majority, New Rochelle, NY 1969.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Cf. FISK, Mary: Toward a New National Party. An Interview With William Rusher, in: The New Guard, January-February 1975, p.9.

¹⁴⁸¹ DENHOLM, David: Unions and the New Majority Party, in: The New Guard, January-February 1976, pp.9–10.

Kevin Phillips, who had originally publicized the idea of a new majority, generally supported Rusher's idea, assuming that "the Republican framework is probably spent."¹⁴⁸² Nevertheless, he cautioned against having an independent run in 1976. The economic picture of galloping inflation and soaring unemployment numbers would make voters less susceptible to free market and limited government rhetoric. After the election, Phillips predicted, both current major parties would lose favor by proving themselves unable to improve the economy. Then, potential recruits from both camps would be more willing to jump ship, and conservatives could start their independent effort. For this strategy to work, he advised conservatives to not push for one of their own as the Republican nominee since for the reasons cited above, the next presidency was inevitably bound to fail. Indeed, if anyone, Nelson Rockefeller should be the preferred candidate, as he "would be making a deal with everyone from Common Cause to George Meany, and the whole Democratic party structure would be torn to shreds."¹⁴⁸³ This would drive right-wing Democrats into the arms of the new party.

Lee Edwards concurred that a conservative party would not be a reasonable contender for the presidency in 1976. For every Bob Bauman or Jesse Helms that at least supported realignment, he argued, there were two Barry Goldwaters or John Towers (the first Republican senator from Texas since Reconstruction and a fellow YAF hero of the early 1960s) supporting the party's moderate course as long as the ship stayed afloat.¹⁴⁸⁴ Contrary to Phillips, he argued that a new party should nevertheless be formed now, and, contrary to Rusher's assessment, it should be formed for philosophical, if not electoral impact.

The result of the debates surrounding CPAC was the Committee on Conservative Alternatives led by Helms, which would probe conservative opportunities for '76. Although the resolution establishing it carefully avoided mentioning a possible third party run,¹⁴⁸⁵ the group was tasked with studying local election laws,¹⁴⁸⁶ signifying that the option had not been ruled out. The YAF national board unanimously endorsed the committee and its goals.¹⁴⁸⁷ Resistance came only from members closely tied to the Republicans such as future YRNF chairman Roger Stone, who predicted that Young Republicans would "lead the way for Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1976" like they had done for Goldwater in '64.¹⁴⁸⁸ Such voices were in the clear minority, however.

¹⁴⁸² PHILLIPS, Kevin: New Party Opportunity, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.27.

¹⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Cf. EDWARDS, Lee: A Conservative Party. Has Its Time Come?, in: *The New Guard*, December 1974, p.12.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Cf. APPLE, R. W.: Study of 3rd Party for '76 Approved By Conservatives, in: *The New York Times*, February 17, 1975, p.1.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Cf. Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.4.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, February 21-23, 1975, p.6. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 4.

¹⁴⁸⁸ STONE, Roger: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1974, p.35.

More divisive than the possibility of a third party run per se was the question of leadership. Rusher dreamed of a Reagan/Wallace ticket, with the former representing the conservative, the latter the populist wing of the new majority party.¹⁴⁸⁹ As in the 1960s,¹⁴⁹⁰ the inclusion of Wallace provoked opposition by conservatives noting that during his tenure as governor the state budgets and bureaucracy grew proportionally faster than their federal counterparts.¹⁴⁹¹ Contrary to the '60s, on the other hand, the national leadership was willing to court the governor, with a photograph of him sporting a YAF button printed in the *New Guard*. Executive director Frank Donatelli even invited the governor to address the national convention.¹⁴⁹²

Wallace, however, was only meant to be the sidekick to the main show Reagan. The latter's support would make or break a third-party attempt. But, to the frustration of YAFers and other CPAC attendees, Reagan remained "enigmatic" as to his opinion on the different proposals. In his conference remarks, he posed the question of a new party, but also raised prospects of "a new and revitalized second [i.e. Republican] party, raising a banner of no pale pastels, but bold colors which make it unmistakably clear where we stand on all the issues troubling the people."¹⁴⁹³ On the one hand, he stressed the congruence of Republican and conservative principles, apparently stating the case for remaining. On the other hand, his call to go forward without those "who cannot subscribe to these principles" brought hope to supporters of the third-party idea.¹⁴⁹⁴

Reagan likely wanted to see where the probes of the Committee on Conservative Alternatives would lead before making a clear commitment. *New Guard's* Washington analyst Henry Camden rightfully suspected that he peered at the Republican presidential nomination and therefore did not want to jeopardize his intra-party position.¹⁴⁹⁵ Without any definitive move by Reagan, however, the new party would lack a national standard bearer. The effort would thus be doomed from the start. The only viable alternative, George Wallace, announced in November 1975 that he would again seek the presidential nomination as a Democrat.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Cf. RUSHER, William: *The Making of the New Majority Party*, New York 1975, pp.162–176.

¹⁴⁹⁰ See chapter 2.

¹⁴⁹¹ EHRMANN, Peter: *Wallace's Southern Shadow*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1976, p.12; WHITE, Clifford: *Letter to the Editor*, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1975, Front Matter.

¹⁴⁹² YAF & The Right Scene, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1975, p.34; Frank Donatelli to George Wallace, June 16, 1975. YAF Records, Box 35, Folder 5. Wallace himself did not make it, but an aide made an appearance.

¹⁴⁹³ APPLE, R. W.: *Study of 3rd Party for '76 Approved By Conservatives*, in: *The New York Times*, February 17, 1975, p.1.

¹⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹⁵ Cf. CAMDEN, Henry: *Capitol Commentary*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1975, p.6.

8.2 “Showdown in Cattle town” – The RNC 1976

With their other options depleted, conservatives were once more left to work through Republican channels. Although YAF could not formally endorse Reagan’s candidacy¹⁴⁹⁶ (the former governor had announced his intention to seek the nomination on November 20, 1975), the organization and its members did everything in their power to bolster their long-time honorary chairman’s chances of dethroning Ford. A *New Guard* editorial proclaiming that “Ronald Reagan’s announcement of his candidacy for President made [the] task [of returning to the ideals of 1776] infinitely easier”¹⁴⁹⁷ was YAF’s substitute for an official endorsement.

YAFers got to work, and both alumni and current members scored important positions in the campaign organizations. David Keene, chairman in 1969/70 became Southern Coordinator. Charles Black, an employee of the national office in the early 1970s, joined him as Midwestern Coordinator. Black had cut his teeth in the YAF-supported Helms campaign for senate in 1972¹⁴⁹⁸ and had worked as a special assistant to the North Carolinian in the meantime. Former board member Bruce Eberle raised funds, while alumnus Loren Smith was Legal Council for the ‘Citizens for Reagan’ campaign organization. Reagan would later reward Smith for his service by appointing him (Chief) Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims. Of the people still actively involved with YAF, Roger Stone headed the youth division of the campaign.¹⁴⁹⁹ Others held local positions, like Ron Dear, who directed the successful efforts in the Texas primary, and future chairman Jim Lacy, who co-chaired the youth organization in California.¹⁵⁰⁰ They commandeered the usual multitude of YAF volunteers that “trudge[d] through the snows of New Hampshire and assault[ed] the beaches of Florida.”¹⁵⁰¹

By March 1976, when Reagan had lost both of those primaries, his supporters were concerned that another setback in North Carolina would likely spell defeat for the campaign. According to YAF executive director Frank Donatelli, erstwhile conservative idols like Goldwater and Tower had already resigned themselves to four more years of Ford,¹⁵⁰² which earned them acerbic comments from him and other YAF leaders. Donatelli felt “disappointed and disgusted” by Goldwater’s attacks on Reagan’s platform and supporters.¹⁵⁰³ Finally, it dawned on him that the “Sunshine Boys of the American Right” had become the new Old Guard of American conservatism, “great a dozen years ago [...] but incapable of or unwilling to forge the ‘new

¹⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Kenneth Parkinson to Frank Donatelli, September 30, 1975. YAF Records, Box 78, Folder 10.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Advice & Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1976, p.4.

¹⁴⁹⁸ See chapter 6.

¹⁴⁹⁹ DUTTON, Pam: *The YAF Voice in the Reagan Campaign*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1976, pp.16–17.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Cf. “Ronald Reagan. President of the United States”, in: *Creative Californian* Vol. 8, No. 4, Spring 1976, p.1.

¹⁵⁰¹ KANE, Jeffrey: *Chairman’s Report*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1976, p.23.

¹⁵⁰² Frank Donatelli to National Directors, March 16, 1976. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 3.

¹⁵⁰³ ID.: *Blasts and Bravos*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1976, p.4.

majority.”¹⁵⁰⁴ *New Guard* reprinted a list of Goldwater’s recent mistakes compiled by ex-YAFers Richard Viguerie and Lee Edwards for *Conservative Digest*, the magazine published by former Indiana YAF member R. Emmett Tyrrell. Starting with his support of the Equal Rights Amendment, the list claimed, the Arizona senator had left behind all his former convictions except a hawkish foreign policy. However, *New Guard* editor Alan Crawford added, with his support of the Panama Canal ‘giveaway,’¹⁵⁰⁵ even this last vestige of 1964 Goldwater had disappeared.¹⁵⁰⁶ Some YAF members cautioned against such attacks on established conservative figures. The central question between them and people like Donatelli was whether YAF should support the forging of an inclusive new majority or be the watchdog of conservative purity.¹⁵⁰⁷ The purists won out decisively. In a 1976 *New Guard* survey, only 2% selected Goldwater, who had come to represent the ‘new Old Guard’, as their favorite public figure, while 7% wrote him in as their most disliked man in public life.¹⁵⁰⁸

As the poor early performance of the Reagan campaign fanned the flames of internal division, the YAF-supported Helms organization led Reagan to victory in the North Carolina primary of March 1976, injecting new vitality into the dying effort. Reagan’s subsequent victory in Texas kept his chances for nomination open. The capture of the state’s large delegation also gave rise to considerable schadenfreude among conservatives: John Tower, who was scheduled to be floor leader for Ford at the GOP convention, was shut out by the pro-Reagan delegates of his home state.¹⁵⁰⁹

With Reagan sustaining his momentum in the following months, the race was still too close to call as delegates traveled to Kansas City for the Republican National Convention. YAF aimed to make a strong showing in order to gain media attention, reestablish their prestige as a cadre-building organization, and present themselves as a worthwhile cause to Republican leaders.¹⁵¹⁰ 62 delegates and alternates from 18 delegations represented YAF at the convention floor.¹⁵¹¹ Board member Eric Rohrbach had even edged out Washington Governor Dan Evans, finishing 17th out of 17 state at-large delegates, one place ahead of Evans.¹⁵¹²

¹⁵⁰⁴ ID.: Blasts and Bravos, in: *The New Guard*, June 1976, p.4.

¹⁵⁰⁵ See below.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Cf. CRAWFORD, Alan: The “Sunshine Boys” Bow Out. Goldwater & Tower, Stage Left, in: *The New Guard*, June 1976, pp.7–9.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Cf. FITZGERALD, Gregory: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, September 1976, p.3; BUFKIN, David: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, December 1976, p.3.

¹⁵⁰⁸ ROBINSON, Ronald: New Guard Readers Sound Off, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.7.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Cf. CRAWFORD, Alan: The “Sunshine Boys” Bow Out. Goldwater & Tower, Stage Left, in: *The New Guard*, June 1976, p.9.

¹⁵¹⁰ Cf. YAF and the GOP Convention, Undated (1976). YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 8.

¹⁵¹¹ ROBINSON, Ronald: YAFers Storm Kansas City, in: *The New Guard*, September-October 1976, p.14.

¹⁵¹² Cf. EASTON, Michelle: “Kansas City, Here I Come”, in: *The New Guard*, July-August 1976, p.12.

The strategy of the Reagan camp, which trailed Ford among committed delegates, was to establish a new rule (16c), mandating candidates to publicly announce their choice of running mate before the nomination. To woo uncommitted moderates, Reagan had already announced liberal Republican Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania as his choice of vice-presidential nominee, a move that backfired as it incensed many conservatives, including Jesse Helms and Clarke Reed, chairman of the important uncommitted Mississippi delegation.¹⁵¹³ YAF, although they rejected Schweiker’s record, stood behind Reagan’s choice (New York state chairman Robert Heckman’s “extremely reluctant endorsement” is exemplary).¹⁵¹⁴ Reagan’s campaign manager John Sears hoped that by forcing Ford to announce his choice, the president might similarly ruffle the feathers of some of his reluctant supporters. Rule 16c made it out of the committee, where YAF alumni Wayne Thorburn, Roy Brun and Dick Derham had lobbied for its approval as the “Right to Know” amendment,¹⁵¹⁵ but was narrowly rejected by the delegates.

With the Ford camp judiciously avoiding fights over platform planks, the Reaganites had played all their cards and had to endure Ford narrowly winning the Republican nomination. Movement conservatives once again faced the choice of swallowing the bitter pill of a moderate Republican candidate or looking elsewhere for their pick. Donatelli and YAF Chairman Jeffrey Kane saw a silver lining: the campaign had revitalized YAF, leading to a 25% surge in membership; it had shown that the organization’s cadre building was working as intended, with many alumni playing key roles in campaign organizations and at the convention; finally, it had demonstrated once more that Republican conservatives like Goldwater no longer were the spearhead of conservatism.¹⁵¹⁶ “The torch has passed to new leadership in the conservative movement, to that handful of courageous men that stuck with Reagan this year,” Donatelli concluded.¹⁵¹⁷ In addition to YAF, this group included officeholders like Senators Helms and Paul Laxalt of Nevada, who would become some of the most steadfast congressional supporters of the Reagan administration.

Proponents of a third party run and Republican disaffecteds turned to Wallace’s former vehicle, the American Independent Party, in a last-ditch attempt at an independent run. Many were skeptical: when Reagan’s prospects had seemed grim in spring, Donatelli had already warned

¹⁵¹³ See ‘It Was Riotous’: An Oral History of the GOP’s Last Open Convention [12.10.2020], online: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/04/1976-convention-oral-history-213793> [12.10.2020]. The article includes bits by YAFers Frank Donatelli, Charles Black, Roger Stone, and Oklahoma chairman Steve Antosh.

¹⁵¹⁴ HECKMAN, Robert: New York YAF Press Release, August 1, 1976. YAF Records, Box 9, Folder 2.

¹⁵¹⁵ Cf. ROBINSON, Ronald: YAFers Storm Kansas City, in: *The New Guard*, September-October 1976, p.14.

¹⁵¹⁶ Cf. DONATELLI, Frank: Developing the Cadre, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.15; KANE, Jeffrey: The Liberation of the Conservative Movement, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.14.

¹⁵¹⁷ DONATELLI, Frank: Why Reagan Lost, in: *The New Guard*, September-October 1976, p.13.

of “some of the groups Rusher is working with.”¹⁵¹⁸ A visit by Rusher and a YAF delegation to the party’s 1976 convention sobered them up for good. “I have never seen such a collection of zany people in my life,” reported Jeff Kane to the board of directors after the convention had nominated former Georgia Governor and infamous segregationist Lester Maddox for president. The only takeaway from “this collection of political rabble,” Kane concluded, were “additions to my collection of political paraphernalia,” including a “‘This is Maddox Country’ sign autographed by the ax wielder himself.”¹⁵¹⁹

8.3 A Time for Reassessment

YAFers judged the victory of Georgia governor Jimmy Carter over Ford in the general election as both a blessing and a curse. While Ford would still have been the lesser of two evils, a Democratic president meant that “for the first time since John Kennedy” YAF had “a highly visible ‘opponent,’” as Donatelli put it.¹⁵²⁰ At the same time, YAF had managed to reduce its debt, bringing it down from \$83,000 in 1974 to just \$10,000 at the eve of the election.¹⁵²¹ Fundraising income was on the rise, although, adjusted for inflation, at \$400,000 a year, YAF still earned only about half of the \$540,000 it had netted in 1970. More importantly, the organization had not recovered the losses in membership. Standing at 7,826 nationally paid members in 194 chapters, the steep decline of the early 70s had been halted, but the general downward trend had not been reversed.¹⁵²² Furthermore, the makeup of the membership had shifted. While at the start of the decade most YAFers were organized in college and high school chapters, by 1976 community chapters of young professionals were most common and high school chapters virtually non-existent.¹⁵²³

Former executive director Wayne Thorburn had commented on this development at the beginning of 1974, when the most radical shifts had already occurred. YAF, he argued, had been founded as an organization made up by young professionals and only transformed into a

¹⁵¹⁸ Id. to National Directors, March 16, 1976. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 3.

¹⁵¹⁹ Jeffrey Kane to National Board, September 8, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1. Maddox had infamously ‘defended’ his Atlanta restaurant against attempts of African Americans to be seated following integration orders by confronting demonstrators wielding a pickaxe handle.

¹⁵²⁰ Frank Donatelli to National Directors, November 5, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1. Unclear is where Johnson fits into the picture. Perhaps Donatelli thought YAF had been too close to the administration on Vietnam to warrant the epithet of ‘opponent’.

¹⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁵²² YAF Organizational Report, November 5, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1.

¹⁵²³ At the high point in May 1971, the organization had 335 college and 281 high school vs. 211 community chapters. In 1976, 92 community chapters led the count, followed by 77 college and 25 high school chapters. Cf. Report on Student Chapters, FCN, FCNS, May 1971. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 10; YAF Organizational Report, November 5, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1.

campus force by Vietnam and related issues.¹⁵²⁴ This assessment is somewhat misleading: at least most participants at Sharon had been college students.¹⁵²⁵ Nevertheless, with universities no longer being “the major battleground for YAF” and many leaders having left college, Thorburn argued that it was time to get back to the group’s supposed roots. High school chapters, “an anachronism from the activist days of the 60s,” should be “left to die and merge with effective community chapters.”¹⁵²⁶ YAF ought to give up calls for campus reform such as the Movement for Quality Education in favor of national politics like the Reagan campaign.

While Thorburn tried to reconcile YAF’s emphasis with the reality of its development, his proposal was not without danger. Jerry Norton had convincingly argued at the beginning of the decade that college chapters presented the most sustainable organizational unit.¹⁵²⁷ Firstly, they were presented with an almost automatic influx of new members if they kept up their activities. Secondly, campus politics could keep the chapters occupied in cases of national lull. In contrast, community chapter members lacked the homogenous occupational background, and, with YAF’s increasing focus on national politics, had few reasons to engage in sustained activity outside of special projects or events like political campaigns.

Thus, not everyone shared Thorburn’s vision for YAF. Outgoing chairman Ronald Docksai—who had assumed the position while being a college undergraduate—made the case for retaining a strong campus presence:

“We are first and always an organization of ideas, and the college campus—for better or worse—is still the place where concepts traffic on their way to capturing the imagination of and thereby transforming into the ideals certain students will hold throughout their lives.”¹⁵²⁸

After the conservative defeats of 1976, Clifford White, who became YAF’s organizational director in the late 1970s, agreed that educating the membership was a worthwhile objective, but, referencing Richard Weaver, he added that ideas needed to have consequences. YAF should define clear political objectives that went beyond organizational mechanics like gaining new members etc. “A small corps of energetic and bright YAFers,” well-versed in conservative thinking was “more valuable” to him “than a paper organization which boasts ten times the membership.”¹⁵²⁹ The issues he staked his hopes on were welfare reform, national defense, law and order, and affirmative action. Political essayist and science fiction author Brad Linaweaver countered that these were “obvious issues with which all right wing groups identify.” They

¹⁵²⁴ THORBURN, Wayne: A Modest Proposal for the Total Reorganization of Young Americans for Freedom, Undated (1974), p.2. YAF Records, Box 26, Folder 1.

¹⁵²⁵ See chapter 1.

¹⁵²⁶ Wayne Thorburn to National Board, January 19, 1974, p.4. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 1.

¹⁵²⁷ Report on Student Chapters, FCN, FCNS, May 1971. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 10.

¹⁵²⁸ DOCKSAI, Ronald: All the Rest is Prologue, in: *The New Guard*, September 1975, p.20.

¹⁵²⁹ WHITE, Clifford: A Time for Reassessment, in: *The New Guard*, March 1977, pp.16–17.

were “too broad to be a political stepping stone for YAF” and “lack[ed] sex appeal.” YAF could not energize its membership with the national issues everyone else was talking about already. Instead, they should copy leftist groups and focus on narrow (“the more specific, the better”) issues to draw in activists. If the organization pushed the right issue at the right time, it could slowly build a broad-based movement in the process.¹⁵³⁰

Linaweaver echoed concerns of higher-ups in the organization. At the session following the presidential election, Terrell Cannon of Nebraska noted that YAF’s national political projects like Zero Government Growth, which was concerned with tax reduction and deregulation, were bringing in almost no new members.¹⁵³¹ As with the Movement for Quality Education there was not much local groups could do, save for creative displays on the National Tax Protest Day like urging taxpayers to attach tea bags to their IRS forms or burning the documents for being “obscene by prevailing community standards.”¹⁵³² While handing out literature was central to spreading the conservative message, the prospects of doing so hardly attracted new recruits to the cause.

With individual chapters limiting their activities, the organization itself became even more top-heavy. Chapter Services Director Robert Heckman desperately cried for more local action and guidance for chapters by national employees. “Our local situation is the worst, nation-wide, that I have ever seen it, and we seem to be doing little or nothing to alter the fact.”¹⁵³³ Many successful young conservatives appeared to join the organization more for its name and contacts than to further its development. For Example, Frank Donatelli lamented that many of the YAF-affiliated RNC delegates were barely active in their respective chapters.¹⁵³⁴ Similarly, once YAFers joined the national leadership, they often ceased local activities.

Richard Derham, who had served on the national board from 1963 to 1973, explained this phenomenon with the bureaucratization of the organization. In the Goldwater days, he elaborated, the staff consisted of just two members and YAF lacked the funds to run nationwide projects. If they became so, it was because local chapters picked them up and spread them (like the Firestone project). Out of necessity, “that condition [...] focused the attention of the national organization on the grass roots, where members are recruited and YAF activity really occurs.”¹⁵³⁵ During his later tenure, he “felt that YAF was becoming too much a Washington D.C.-oriented organization, involved in presidential politics and “national activities.”

¹⁵³⁰ LINAWEAVER, Brad: Letter to the Editor, in: *The New Guard*, June 1977, p.3.

¹⁵³¹ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, November 5-7, 1976, pp.5–6. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 3.

¹⁵³² *The Right Scene*, in: *The New Guard*, June 1977, p.25.

¹⁵³³ Robert Heckman to Frank Donatelli, February 25, 1976, pp.1–2. YAF Records, Box 27, Folder 3.

¹⁵³⁴ Frank Donatelli to YAF Directors, November 5, 1976. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 1.

¹⁵³⁵ Richard Derham to id., April 21, 1976. YAF Records, Box 4, Folder 8.

In a way, YAF met the fate of many expanding organizations. As success increased the possibilities the group had, it also increased the stakes its leading members had in its continued existence, which became a priority for many of them. National leaders (ab)used the powers vested in their positions to secure their status, and YAF business was funneled into the firms of alumni like Bruce Eberle's 'Potomac Arts' fundraising venture. This needed not be problematic per se, but as national leaders generally became even older toward the 1980s, some started channeling YAF money into their own fundraising and PR firms.¹⁵³⁶

As national YAF focused on fundraising, the board decided to cut back on one of the biggest non-fundraising expenses: in 1975, the new national chairman Jeffrey Kane proposed radically cutting back on *New Guard*, either reducing its issues from ten a year to as low as four, or abolishing it altogether in favor of a newsletter.¹⁵³⁷ The plan evoked considerable opposition from longstanding (ex-)board members such as Ronald Docksai and Bob Moffit, who feared that YAF might give up its most important tool for educating its membership.¹⁵³⁸ Although the proposal was soundly defeated by the directors in a 5-17 votes in 1975,¹⁵³⁹ the question remained on the board's agenda, and finally, during its 18th volume, the magazine was reduced to a quarterly—with monthly newsletters interspersed—in 1978.¹⁵⁴⁰ Proponents of the reduction argued that YAF members would be interested more in YAF news than a “junior *National Review*” anyway and the cutbacks of roughly \$20,000 a year might be invested into chapter building or other programmatic expenses.¹⁵⁴¹ In reality, the money was probably used to service debts. The board decision left the organization without a monthly flagship publication to distribute among its (potential) members and supporters.

In sum, the second half of the 1970s continued the trend of gradual organizational decay. While the organization had managed to stabilize its finances by the mid-decade, the leadership was more focused on expanding fundraising than local activities, a process that would eventually lead to YAF becoming a *de facto* fundraising organization in the 1980s.

8.4 YAF's Carter Watch and the Panama Canal

YAF had never held any sympathies for James Earl Carter. When the former Georgia governor started campaigning for the presidency, *New Guard* articles attacked both his rhetoric and policies. One article compared Carter to two former Democratic leaders. His “soak the rich”

¹⁵³⁶ See chapter 9.

¹⁵³⁷ Cf. Mary Fisk to William Rusher, September 3, 1975. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 8.

¹⁵³⁸ Cf. Ronald Docksai to Jeffrey Kane, September 15, 1975. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 284, Folder Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) 1975.

¹⁵³⁹ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, September 12-14, 1975, p.9. YAF Records, Box 16, Folder 7.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, July 7-9, 1978, pp.7-8. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 1.

¹⁵⁴¹ Jeffrey Kane to YAF Board, June 29, 1978. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 1.

rhetoric may not end up crucifying [the rich] on a cross of gold [...] but he is certainly bombarding them with peanuts,” YAFer Stephen Maloney noted in a twisted reference to three-time Democratic presidential nominee (1896, 1900, 1908) William Jennings Bryan’s legendary ‘Cross of Gold’ speech.¹⁵⁴² He used that reference to attack Carter’s image as a crusader for the ordinary man, an image typically associated with Bryan: the self-proclaimed “dirt farmer” Carter, Maloney claimed, had actually amassed quite some fortune in his peanut business, implying that his attacks on the rich were hypocritical. Nevertheless, the author warned of an expanding welfare under Democratic rule.

For the second comparison, Maloney noted that Carter’s “faith in God is seemingly only exceeded by his faith in himself.” Although Carter had claimed to know when he was doing God’s will, Maloney countered that the Georgian had “confused God’s will with the traditional policies of the liberal Democrats.”¹⁵⁴³ While Carter himself allegedly downplayed the role religion would play in his presidency, Maloney claimed that just like Woodrow Wilson had, Carter would see himself as the pastor of the congregation of the United States. Not only had Wilson’s self-righteousness irritated his contemporaries (as Carter’s would),¹⁵⁴⁴ the comparison also helped placing Carter in a Democratic tradition of Progressive government expansion and (alleged) foreign policy naïveté.

It is unsurprising, then, that YAF started their attack on the Carter presidency before it had even begun. Shortly after November 2nd, an article in YAF’s *dialogue on liberty* newsletter announced the inception of the new “Carter Watch” program in which YAF would closely monitor the actions of the new commander-in-chief and already announced their first bone of contention: amnesty for draft dodgers during the Vietnam War.¹⁵⁴⁵

After Carter’s first year in office, *New Guard* summarized: “more government, higher taxes, and foreign policy incompetence.”¹⁵⁴⁶ Those were the keywords describing Carter’s lackluster performance in the eyes of the young conservatives. Domestically, he had failed to curb inflation and deregulate the economy. To the contrary, although many of his proposals had not passed Congress (yet), they accused the president of exacerbating the economic plight of Americans by raising the minimum wage YAFers had long blamed for inflation,¹⁵⁴⁷ and by not

¹⁵⁴² MALONEY, Stephen: The Carter Crusade, in: The New Guard, September-October 1976, p.8. Bryan spoke of poorer people’s lives supposedly being sacrificed for the benefits of the financial elite, while Maloney criticized the opposite.

¹⁵⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Cf. O’TOOLE, Patricia: *The Moralist. Woodrow Wilson and the World He Made*, New York, NY 2018.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Cf. YAF Begins “Carter Watch”, in: *Dialogue on Liberty* Vol. VI, No. 4, December 1976, p.1.

¹⁵⁴⁶ WILLIAMS, David: Carter’s First Year: More Government, Higher Taxes, in: *The New Guard*, June 1978, pp.6–7; MOFFIT, Robert: ... And Foreign Policy Incompetence, in: *The New Guard*, June 1978, pp.8–9.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Cf. QUIST, Terry: Minimum Wage, Maximum Harm, in: *The New Guard*, November 1976, p.25.

combatting *de facto* tax raises through bracket creep. The contribution predicted that if Carter kept his course, “the American taxpayer should run for his life. [...] [Carter] is not the moderate, fiscally sound, distruster of Washington that ran in 1976. He is a Southern-fried McGovern.”¹⁵⁴⁸

In foreign policy, Bob Moffit attacked Carter's perceived double standard in the application of his ‘human rights’ foreign policy.¹⁵⁴⁹ He explained that whereas the president chastised America's long-standing anti-communist allies for lacking democratic standards, he remained silent on oppression in regimes like Cuba, the USSR, and the People's Republic of China. Among the U.S.'s allies, Moffit claimed, anxiety was growing that the administration lacked the determination to confront the Soviets if necessary, not least, he added, because Carter had failed to answer the Soviet arms buildup. In the end, Moffit arrived at the same conclusion as the domestic policy analyst: “Students of international relations no longer have to guess what a foreign policy forged by Senator George McGovern would look like. President Carter has given them a wealth of insights.”¹⁵⁵⁰

The area of most vigorous disagreement between Carter and YAF and focus of much YAF activity in 1977/78 was the renegotiation of the Panama Canal treaties. American and Panamanian interests in the canal had been at odds since the inception of the original Hay-Bunau Varilla treaty in 1903, but had reached new heights in 1964, when a riot about the sovereignty of the canal left twenty-eight dead and hundreds wounded. Panama subsequently suspended diplomatic relations with the US for a brief period.¹⁵⁵¹

The new treaties, which Carter and Panamanian military dictator Omar Torrijos signed in September 1977, provided that the Canal zone would cease to exist and that the U.S. would gradually relinquish its Panamanian possessions. Finally, it would hand over control of the canal to Panama after 1999. YAF had spoken out against these proposals since Kissinger had first taken preliminary steps to negotiate a new treaty.¹⁵⁵² In a 1976 membership survey, 95% of all respondents favored retaining sovereignty over the canal zone.¹⁵⁵³ By 1977, they were joined by groups such as the (YAF-founded) American Conservative Union, YAF alumnus

¹⁵⁴⁸ WILLIAMS, David: Carter's First Year: More Government, Higher Taxes, in: *The New Guard*, June 1978, p.7.

¹⁵⁴⁹ See STUCKEY, Mary: *Jimmy Carter, Human Rights, and the National Agenda*, College Station, TX 2008, esp. pp.67–69.; TULLI, Umberto: *A Precarious Equilibrium. Human Rights and Détente in Jimmy Carter's Soviet Policy*, Manchester 2020, pp.135–144.

¹⁵⁵⁰ MOFFIT, Robert: ... And Foreign Policy Incompetence, in: *The New Guard*, June 1978, pp.8–9.

¹⁵⁵¹ Cf. LAFEBER, Walter: *The Panama Canal. The Crisis in Historical Perspective*, New York, NY ³1989, pp.105–110.

¹⁵⁵² Cf. *Advice & Dissent*, in: *The New Guard*, April 1974, pp.5–6.

¹⁵⁵³ ROBINSON, Ronald: *New Guard Readers Sound Off*, in: *The New Guard*, January-February 1977, p.6.

Terry Dolan's National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), and former YAFer Howard Phillips' Conservative Caucus.

Because the Young Republicans and the College Republicans also mobilized against the treaties, as did leading conservative spokesmen such as Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms, the issue promised to show the strength of the conservative coalition. Individuals and groups organized in two ad-hoc bodies: the Committee to Save the Panama Canal and the Emergency Coalition to Save the Panama Canal, both of which were financed through direct mail fundraising conducted by former YAF executive secretary Richard Viguerie.¹⁵⁵⁴ For YAF, fundraiser Bruce Eberle hoped that the issue would reinvigorate conservative fundraising that had been lacking throughout the summer:

“The average American can easily visualize the Canal itself and can understand the relatively simple arguments against paying someone to take this clearly valuable asset off of our hands. Hopefully, this will be a major turning point in the public's perception of Jimmy Carter as a moderate.”¹⁵⁵⁵

The coalition's strategy was to mobilize public sentiment against the treaties and thus pressure officials into voting against them rather than lobbying Congress directly. Therefore, grassroots groups like YAF naturally played an important role in the campaign. YAF's prestige received a considerable boost when Ronald Reagan used the occasion of the 1977 national convention to publicly announce his rejection of the treaties. “What does this treaty say to our allies around the world about our leadership intentions?”, he asked the delegates. “What does it say [...] about our own view of our national defense capability?”¹⁵⁵⁶ Newly elected chairman John Buckley announced afterwards that the organization would soon begin a national campaign against the “giveaway.”¹⁵⁵⁷

SKIDMORE argues that whereas conservatives often cited American economic and military interests in keeping the canal, they primarily portrayed the symbolic act of ‘giving it away’ as characteristic of a liberal foreign policy threatening the US' status as a world power. Since Carter apparently acceded to the new treaties not of necessity, but to appease a hostile military dictator, they held the president's actions as further proof that America's decline was less the product of a changed global environment than of unwilling leadership.¹⁵⁵⁸ Reagan's speech at the national convention is a case in point. By focusing more on the symbolic effects ceding the

¹⁵⁵⁴ Cf. SKIDMORE, David: Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power. Jimmy Carter and the Battle over Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties, in: Presidential Studies Quarterly Vol. 23/3 (1993), pp.477–497, here pp.479–480.

¹⁵⁵⁵ Bruce Eberle to Eric Rohrbach, November 8, 1977. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 8.

¹⁵⁵⁶ REAGAN, Ronald: Speech before the 9th YAF National Convention, August 25, 1977, p.2. YAF Records, Box 36, Folder 2.

¹⁵⁵⁷ PACE, Eric: Young Conservatives Elect a Buckley as Leader, in: YAF in the News, Fall 1977. YAF Records, Box 71, Folder 13.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Cf. SKIDMORE, Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power, p.482.

canal would have on America's perceived strength and on her self-perception, he could place Panama in a line of events conservatives regarded as liberal failures. Those included the Vietnam War—lost not because of inherent factors making military victory unlikely but because of the national leadership's unwillingness to win—and the ABM treaty, where Nixon and Kissinger allegedly had jeopardized the nation's defensive capabilities in pursuit of a détente the enemy was not willing to honor in the first place.¹⁵⁵⁹

YAF itself, however, *did* stress military and economic concerns over great power sentimentality. In his statement before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, board member Kenneth Boehm poignantly stated: “we lose a lot and gain nothing.”¹⁵⁶⁰ Losses included the US' entire investment in the zone and the ability to close the canal in times of war and the assurance that its own navy could use it without restrictions (although some carriers were too large to use the canal anyways). Furthermore, while the U.S. allowed toll-free use of the canal, there was no guarantee that Panama would continue to do so. “The history of treaties which trade real estate for promises speaks for itself,” Boehm noted cynically.¹⁵⁶¹

With their arguments in place, YAF got to work and created an ‘activist’s kit’ containing fact sheets, an issue paper, posters, buttons, bumper stickers etc. YAF distributed those materials on college campuses, enlisting some new recruits in the process. Chairman John Buckley and board member Kenneth Boehm took part in the ‘Truth Squads’ organized by the Committee to Save the Panama Canal that toured through major cities in the states of senators uncommitted about ratification. A petition distributed by YAF against the treaties was signed by at least 35,000 individuals.¹⁵⁶²

The success of conservative efforts to mobilize public opinion could be felt on two counts: firstly, the offices of uncommitted senators were flooded with mail overwhelmingly rejecting the treaties. Secondly, during the Senate ratification debate, senators introduced amendments ostensibly protecting American rights to keep the canal neutral. Although they did not substantially alter the treaty contents, these senators felt they had to show that they were getting concessions from the president so that they could justify voting for the treaties to their constituents.¹⁵⁶³ In the end, however, the senate approved the (amended) treaties. The passage

¹⁵⁵⁹ REAGAN, Ronald: Speech before the 9th YAF National Convention, August 25, 1977, p.2. YAF Records, Box 36, Folder 2.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Statement by Kenneth F. Boehm before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, October 12, 1977.

¹⁵⁶¹ Ibid. See also BOEHM, Kenneth: YAF Fights to Keep Canal, in: *The New Guard*, November-December 1977, p.15.

¹⁵⁶² Cf. YAF Projects Director Report, Undated (March 1978). YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 2; SKIDMORE, *Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power*, p.481.

¹⁵⁶³ Cf. SKIDMORE, *Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power*, pp.487–488.

attests to the skillful political maneuvering of President Carter, who managed to woo enough senators to get the needed two-thirds majorities.¹⁵⁶⁴

However, according to Skidmore, by exhausting its “treasury [...] of political capital,” the administration was only able to score a “Pyrrhic victory.”¹⁵⁶⁵ Carter had bought the needed votes by widely distributing favors, but proven unable to convince the senators or the public of his foreign policy views. 20 of the 68 senators voting for the treaties were defeated in their re-election bids either in 1978 or 1980, and the conservative coalition forged by YAF and its alumni maintained the momentum in the foreign policy debate, e.g. outspending proponents of the SALT II treaty 15-1.¹⁵⁶⁶ A *New Guard* article predicted this new dynamic, noting that “a renewed sense of national pride has been awakened by the debate on the Panama Canal.” Americans would no longer tolerate “appeasement” in foreign affairs.¹⁵⁶⁷ Conservatives should use this new dynamic to strike down disarmament or non-rearmament policies.

Two key events further bolstered conservative morale in 1978: Republican gains in the 1978 mid-term elections, and the passage of Proposition 13 in California. Although the Democrats won the popular vote and held on to control in both houses, Republicans picked up three seats in the Senate, fifteen in the House, and six gubernatorial seats. Furthermore, most of the congress freshmen were more conservative than their predecessors,¹⁵⁶⁸ which prevented, for example, the ratification of the SALT II treaty. A few months earlier, California voters had passed anti-tax activist Howard Jarvis' Proposition 13. The measure slashed property taxes by some 57 percent and instituted safeguards against future hikes. Its proponents were incensed by rising taxes in the face of stagnating real wages. So-called ‘bracket creep’ put citizens into higher tax brackets purely by inflation, meaning their relative tax burden increased. Furthermore, the galloping inflation increased the values of real estate and thus property taxes, which especially hurt people on fixed incomes. Meanwhile, state budget surpluses increased. Opposed by Democratic state politicians and public employee unions, the voters nevertheless passed Proposition 13 in a 2–1 landslide. The stunning success of the ballot initiative ignited a short-lived anti-tax fever that sparked similar proposals across the nation.¹⁵⁶⁹

¹⁵⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.486.

¹⁵⁶⁵ MOFFETT, George: *The Limits of Victory. The Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties*, Ithaca, NY 1985, p.107.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Cf. SKIDMORE, *Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power*, pp.490–491. Although the group was smaller in numbers, it is striking that of the senators voting against the treaties, only one was defeated for re-election in the same timeframe.

¹⁵⁶⁷ KACHINSKY, Lenny: *Carter's Dangerous Defense Policies*, in: *The New Guard*, May 1978, p.10.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Cf. GOULD, *The Republicans*, p.290.

¹⁵⁶⁹ For a (sympathetic) account of Proposition 13, see RABUSHKA, Alvin/RYAN, Pauline: *The Tax Revolt*, Stanford, CA 1982, esp. pp.1–39.

YAFers played central roles in Proposition 13's success: board member Randy Goodwin managed the 'Yes on 13' committee and California YAF member Stewart Mollrich wrote and produced TV and radio commercials;¹⁵⁷⁰ National Treasurer Jim Lacy later drafted the legislation that Jarvis introduced to Congress through Representative Bob Dornan after the victory in California.¹⁵⁷¹

YAFers therefore looked hopeful to the presidential elections of 1980, where it was once again Ronald Reagan who gained their favor as presidential candidate. At the 10th national convention in 1979, where the former governor himself addressed the delegates praising the contributions YAF had made to his campaigns and the conservative movement, he gained 78% of the votes in the presidential poll.¹⁵⁷² Although the number already speaks for itself, among the Republican hopefuls Phil Crane, a congressman from Chicago, was an alumnus of YAF's early days. Crane, however, did not manage to draw a significant amount of votes in the presidential poll, although many delegates respected him as a potential vice president,¹⁵⁷³ which attests to Reagan's enormous popularity. The new national chairman, Jim Lacy, even called on Crane to drop out of the race early as to not jeopardize Reagan's chances of winning the primaries.¹⁵⁷⁴ As in 1976, some YAFers and alumni worked with the Reagan campaign, notably Frank Donatelli as Regional Political Director, Charlie Black as Political Director and Roger Stone and Loren Smith as staffers.¹⁵⁷⁵ Former YAF director Roger Ream worked as New England coordinator for Phil Crane, while David Keene directed the campaign of Reagan's main contestant for the nomination, George H.W. Bush.¹⁵⁷⁶ However, YAF was discontent with the way the Youth for Reagan campaign treated the organization. The youth effort was led by Morton Blackwell, himself a YAF alumnus although more devoted to Young Republican efforts.¹⁵⁷⁷ YAF executive director Robert Heckman noted that the early departure of Charlie Black as political director of the Reagan for President campaign, had made YAFers wary of a "shift in emphasis away from grass roots conservative activities" to Republican groups."¹⁵⁷⁸ With the youth division not giving YAF the role they wanted, these fears seemed to materialize.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Cf. HECKMAN, Robert: America Joins the Tax Revolt, in: Dialogue on Liberty Vol. VI, No. 3, Fall 1978, p.3.

¹⁵⁷¹ The legislation would have cut personal income tax rates by 25% over four years and limited federal government spending to 18% of the GNP, cf. "Lacy New YAF Chairman", in: New Guard Bulletin, January 1979, p.5.

¹⁵⁷² Cf. "Reagan Wins YAF Presidential Poll", in: Dialogue on Liberty Vol. VI, No. 1, Winter 1980, p.1. YAF Records, Box 67, Folder 3; REAGAN, Ronald: Speech before the 10th YAF National Convention, August 18, 1979. YAF Records, Box 70, Folder 11.

¹⁵⁷³ Cf. "Crane Wins YAF Vice Presidential Poll", in: Dialogue on Liberty Vol. VI, No. 2, Summer 1980, p.2.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Cf. Robert Heckman to National Board of Directors, March 6, 1980. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 8.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Cf. "YAF's Detroit '80 Youth Operation", in: YAF in the News, Spring 1981.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Director's Bulletin, in: New Guard Bulletin, February 1979, p.8.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Cf. Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, September 26-27, 1980, p.1. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 3.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Cf. Robert Heckman to National Board of Directors, March 6, 1980. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 8.

YAF would have liked a repeat of 1964, where the group had been a large, if not dominating part of Goldwater's youth operation. YAF's *Dialogue on Liberty* newsletter thus stressed, for example, that "the YAF presence was felt at this year's GOP convention in a way it has not been felt since [...] Goldwater [in] 1964."¹⁵⁷⁹ To really get the message across, they even awarded Goldwater a plaque "for his heroic 1964 presidential campaign and essential support of Young Americans for Freedom" (the hiccups of 1976 seemed to have subsided). And indeed, the organization had a formidable presence of alumni and current members at the GOP national convention: Bob Bauman co-chaired the Maryland delegation; Phil Crane was still a potential running mate; Dick Derham oversaw the crucial Convention Rules Committee; and former Louisiana member Roy Brun was part of the Platform Committee. 84 members took part as Reagan delegates or alternates.¹⁵⁸⁰

1980 was not 1964, however. Goldwater had captured the nomination against the resistance of large parts of the Republican establishment. He had to rely on grassroots groups like YAF to make up for some of the party support he was missing. Reagan, on the other hand, did very well with constituencies that had joined the GOP since Goldwater's days: white Southerners in general and evangelicals in particular, and catholic ethnics. Their influx not only bolstered the party's chances but made it and its affiliated institutions more conservative. While, for example, conservatives (successfully) struggled for control of the YRNF with an equally strong liberal faction in 1963, with YAF adviser Donald 'Buz' Lukens making the race, 1979 saw the election of YAF's national board member Rick Abell to the chairmanship—after Roger Stone the second YAF-affiliated chair in a row. Contrary to the group's claims of non-partisanship, it appears that the YAF chairman even served on the YRNF's board *ex officio*.¹⁵⁸¹

The Young Republicans were not the party establishment. But with them and similar non-youth Republican groups tightly in conservative control, Reagan's campaign did not have to rely on conservative grass roots movements the same way Goldwater had to. Additionally, YAF, at one point the lone voice of conservatism on many campuses, was not the only conservative youth group anymore. Thus, YAF States & Chapter Services Director Clifton White noted that "no one could expect a surge such as that which followed the 1964 presidential campaign for several

¹⁵⁷⁹ "YAF's Detroit '80 Youth Operation", in: *Dialogue on Liberty* Vol. VI, No. 2, Summer 1980, p.1.

¹⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*. The wording of the article leaves open whether those 84 only included current members or alumni, too.

¹⁵⁸¹ David Barron to James Lacy, September 8, 1981. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 4. In that letter, Barron states that Lacy could not be an *ex officio* member of the YRNF because of his position in the Reagan administration and Vice Chairman Peterson should take his seat. This suggests that such an arrangement had already been established earlier.

reasons” one of them that “there are too many conservative groups to divert potential members.”¹⁵⁸², esp. pp.169–180.

Nevertheless, with Reagan’s victory in the general election, the future appeared wide open. The electorate had embraced conservative politics, rejecting liberal policies that had proven unable to fix the economy at home or contain America’s enemy abroad, signified by the Iranian Hostage Crisis¹⁵⁸³ and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Conservatives finally held the reins of power in the US. Friends and enemies alike, the new executive director Bob Heckman suggested, were “watching in many respects Young Americans for Freedom to see if we have the personnel to staff the new government.”¹⁵⁸⁴ Shortly before Reagan’s inauguration, Bob Heckman presented the board with the following outlook:

“It is incumbent upon the Board to take this opportunity to examine YAF’s role in this conservative take-over. Where does YAF fit in to the plans that Ronald Reagan and his closest advisors are making? Where does YAF fit in to the role of the conservative movement now that many of its graduates have assumed power? [...] There is an opportunity for YAF to grow and explode into exciting new areas.”¹⁵⁸⁵

8.5 The Revolutionary Cadre – YAF Alumni in the Late 1970s

As many YAFers and alumni joined the Reagan administration or held elected office, 1981 promised a bright future for the organization that had labored over 20 years to get there. Former executive director Frank Donatelli was part of Reagan’s staff and directed the transition at the Commerce Department, while ex-board member Don Devine ultimately became the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (i.e. the head of US civilian service). In this function, he hired several YAFers for his staff, among them Carol Bauman and Scott Faulkner. Jay Parker, erstwhile Pennsylvania YAF chairman and board member and one of the few African Americans of rank in the organization’s history, headed the transition at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.¹⁵⁸⁶ Many more would follow during the Reagan administration.¹⁵⁸⁷ YAF’s ‘congressional delegation’ of notable alumni, most prominently Bob Bauman as former chairman, was expanded through the 1970s by the addition of several new members, among them Jim Sensenbrenner from Wisconsin who got elected in 1978¹⁵⁸⁸ and at the time of his retirement from the House in 2021 was its second most senior member. He also introduced the

¹⁵⁸² YAF State & Chapter Services Report, December 19, 1980, p.1. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁸³ Cf. FARBER, David: *Taken Hostage. The Iran Hostage Crisis and America’s First Encounter With Radical Islam*, Princeton, NJ 2005, esp. pp.169–180.

¹⁵⁸⁴ YAF State & Chapter Services Report, December 19, 1980, p.2. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁸⁵ YAF Executive Director Report, January 1981, pp.1–2. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Robert Heckman to National Board, December 9, 1980, pp.1–2. YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁸⁷ See chapter 9.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Cf. “YAFers Play Key Roles in Campaigns”, in: *New Guard Bulletin*, November 1978, p.4.

USA PATRIOT Act to the House after 9/11.¹⁵⁸⁹ In 1980, Jack Fields won a seat from Texas and John LeBoutillier from Long Island in a campaign “run by former YAF leaders.”¹⁵⁹⁰ Furthermore, with the victory of Dan Quayle in Indiana, the first YAF alumnus joined the Senate.

How closely elected officials cooperated with YAF in office depended on their degree of involvement with the organization while active. While, for example, Bob Bauman filled his office with YAFers such as former national chairman Ron Docksai and *New Guard* editor Mary Fisk,¹⁵⁹¹ I do not know of a strong YAF presence in the offices of Quayle (while in the House/Senate) or Sensenbrenner. Alumni, however, were not the only ones hiring YAFers, and so by 1977, there were enough YAF staffers in Congress to form “Capitol Hill Community” YAF, according to its founder the “Newest, Oldest [referring to the age of its members] Chapter in The Nation.”¹⁵⁹²

After the Reagan Revolution, the group could make use of its vast contacts in the conservative movement both in and out of the party to “[make] sure that qualified activists in the market for entry level government and conservative movement positions are given adequate consideration.”¹⁵⁹³ The national office sent out a list to YAF leaders on where they might apply for lucrative jobs in the now booming field of conservatism. Once someone hired a member, it would include those persons and institutions on the list and circulate more resumes to them.¹⁵⁹⁴ The second half of the 1970s was also when YAF’s movement-building came to fruition. As seen in the Panama Canal episode, alumni occupied central positions in the network of activists that became known as the ‘New Right.’¹⁵⁹⁵ For example, one article in the *National Journal* questioned how ‘new’ this movement really was: “There is a common thread in the early 1960s that includes membership in Young Americans for Freedom.”¹⁵⁹⁶ Its principal fundraiser, Richard Viguerie, had developed his direct mail marketing skills while employed as executive secretary/director of YAF, although he only served as the organization’s independent fundraiser

¹⁵⁸⁹ Cf. STISA, Jennifer; JON, Christopher: The Criminal N.S.A, in: The New York Times, 27.06.2013, online: https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/28/opinion/the-criminal-nsa.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1& [10.11.2020]. The article calls Sensenbrenner “one of the architects of the Patriot Act,” although he was not its primary author.

¹⁵⁹⁰ “YAF Members and Advisors Win Throughout Country”, in: YAF in the News, Spring 1981.

¹⁵⁹¹ Ronald Docksai to William Rusher, July 1, 1975. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 26, Folder 5; YAF Notes, in: The New Guard, December 1975, p.35.

¹⁵⁹² Ronald Docksai to William Buckley, May 20, 1977. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 127, Folder Docksai, Ron.

¹⁵⁹³ YAF State & Chapter Services Report, December 19, 1980, p.1. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Cf. “Selected List of Where to Send Your Resume”, Undated (1980/81). YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4; Robert Heckman to National Board, December 9, 1980. YAF Records, Box 10, Folder 4.

¹⁵⁹⁵ The term itself comes out of the YAF context, where it was first employed by Lee Edwards, see EDWARDS, Lee: *The New Right. Its Face, Its Future*, in: The New Guard, July 1962, p.7.

¹⁵⁹⁶ LANOUILLE, William: *The New Right—‘Revolutionaries’ Out After the ‘Lunch-Pail’ Vote*, in: *National Journal*, January 21, 1978, p.90.

for a short time.¹⁵⁹⁷ One of his clients was the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), founded in 1975 by YAFers Terry Dolan and Charlie Black.¹⁵⁹⁸ NCPAC was one of the pioneers in circumventing federal election law by raising money through alarmist direct mail solicitation that was then spent on support of conservative candidates for elected office, usually in the form of attack ads on their opponents. Because NCPAC nominally did not coordinate itself with the candidates' campaigns, its expenditures did not count towards the federally mandated \$10,000 contribution limit. As the group was formally independent, its beneficiaries could also claim to have nothing to do with distasteful or factually incorrect advertisements. As Dolan put it: "We could say whatever we want about an opponent [...] and the senator wouldn't have to say anything. A group like ours could lie through its teeth and the candidate it helps stays clean."¹⁵⁹⁹ In the 1980 elections, NCPAC was credited with manufacturing the defeat of liberal Senators John Culver (Iowa), George McGovern (South Dakota), Frank Church (Idaho), and Birch Bayh (Indiana, against Dan Quayle), bringing its activities to national attention.¹⁶⁰⁰

After his stint at the Office of Economic Opportunity, Howard Phillips, a member of the original board of directors and Sharon participant, launched The Conservative Caucus, a public policy advocacy and lobbying group that became infamous for its abrasive, uncompromising style as watchdog of conservative purity (or, as Viguerie would put it, "the True North" of conservatism). Together with Viguerie, Paul Weyrich, and Terry Dolan he helped set up the Christian Voice organization and later the Moral Majority, two of the most important early institutions of the Christian Right.¹⁶⁰¹

Of those four organizers of the New Right, only Paul Weyrich, founder of the Heritage Foundation, had never been a YAF member. However, YAFer Kathy Teague worked for him as chairwoman of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and its successor organization, the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation.¹⁶⁰² She also became the first executive director Weyrich's American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which

¹⁵⁹⁷ Cf. VIGUERIE, Richard: We're Coming for You, John Boehner, in: Politico, April 17, 2014, online: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/04/were-coming-for-you-john-boehner-105781.html>.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Cf. FRANK, Thomas: Charlie Black's Cronies, in: The Wall Street Journal, July 2, 2008, online: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121495512615821247> [11.11.2020].

¹⁵⁹⁹ Cited according to Ibid.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Cf. ISAACSON, Walter: Running with the PACs, in: Time Magazine, October 25, 1982, online: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,953584-4,00.html> [20.04.2021].

¹⁶⁰¹ Cf. WILLIAMS, God's Own Party, p.153; 159–185.

¹⁶⁰² Cf. LUPOFF, Jeffrey: YAF Alumni: Where Are They Now?, in: The New Guard, September 1978, p.19.

today is perhaps the most important distributor of (conservative) model legislation across state legislatures.¹⁶⁰³

Seeing these successes in cadre and movement building, one would expect that the organization would have entered a new golden era in the 1980s. The opposite was the case. By the end of the Reagan administration, YAF was, for all intents and purposes, a national paper organization with some active strongholds in New York and California. The group struggled to find its niche in an era of conservative government and lost the trust of many advisors and supporters due to ongoing infighting. Perpetually in debt and with an eroded membership base, YAF faded into obscurity in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

¹⁶⁰³ For a short history of ALEC and its importance for U.S. state legislation, see HERTEL-FERNANDEZ, *Explaining Durable Business Coalitions in U.S. Politics: Conservatives and Corporate Interests across America's Statehouses*.

9. Rule and Ruin – YAF’s Decay in the 1980s

“With no disrespect for counsel intended, I would feel less than candid if I did not point out at the outset of this decision that during the ten years of my progressively deteriorating career as a judge of the Court of Chancery this has to constitute the most sophomoric exercise that I have yet been compelled to endure in the name of disposing of legal issues. Having thus vented my personal anguish, I proceed to the task at hand.”¹⁶⁰⁴

With these words, Judge Grover C. Brown of the Delaware Court of Chancery in 1983 announced his judgement in the *Flaherty v. Lacy* lawsuit. That decision formally ended a year and a half of factional infighting that left YAF financially devastated and alienated a large portion of members, advisors, and supporters. It marked a milestone in YAF’s decay during the decade of conservative rule. After *Flaherty v. Lacy*, the group’s rapidly changing leadership became increasingly backwards oriented, intending to restore YAF to a retrotopian greatness it presumably had had in the 1960s and 70s. Several members and advisor proposed extensive reform plans to get the group back on track, all of them attacking the concentration of power in the national leadership. However, the national board always featured enough directors with vested interests in keeping their power to block such reforms.

Internal strife was not the only factor contributing to YAF’s eventual demise. The national office never managed to reverse the tide of dwindling membership that had begun in the early 1970s. One reason was the alienation of libertarian members, a small part of whom left during the battles of 1969/1970. The larger contingent might have been alienated by YAF’s increasingly traditionalist stance in the Culture Wars, culminating in the appointment of Richard LaMountain as *New Guard* editor in 1978. According to David Brudnoy, the longstanding libertarian voice of the magazine, the new editor was “somewhat dedicated to expunging any vestiges of libertarian-conservative thought from his magazine.”¹⁶⁰⁵ While previous leadership had attempted to reconcile libertarian and traditionalist differences, focusing instead on shared disdains against big government (for example in the Movement for Quality Education or the attacks on affirmative action), the leadership on the eve of the Reagan Revolution did not seem particularly interested in keeping YAF amenable to libertarian-leaning conservatives.

Outside of the group, the U.S., and specifically the Republican Party was becoming more conservative.¹⁶⁰⁶ In the case of the GOP, the moderate wing of the party steadily lost power

¹⁶⁰⁴ Grover Brown to Vernon Proctor et al., May 20, 1983: *Flaherty v. Lacy*, p.1. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁰⁵ David Brudnoy to William Buckley, October 2, 1981. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 10, Folder Brudnoy, David 1979-1981.

¹⁶⁰⁶ This need not mean a reorientation of all policies. For example, despite rhetoric catered to the Religious Right, the Reagan administration did not (try to) reverse the liberalization of societal norms. Yet in the economic and foreign policy sphere, a reorientation along conservative policies is tenable. See also below.

leading to a realignment of the two national parties on conservative-liberal ideological lines—something many conservatives had demanded when discussing the future of conservatism in the mid-70s.¹⁶⁰⁷ While on first glance this should have been a welcome development for YAF, it presented a formidable problem: now that the ‘respectable’ conservatism the group had espoused for 20 years had become mainstream, YAF struggled to find a place in its new environment. More and more conservative youth groups, among them the Young Republicans, now a bastion of conservatism, competed for membership, and prospective members needed to ask themselves why they should become part of YAF specifically. With each right-turn of the GOP, YAF had to shift to the right accordingly to maintain the role of conservative watchdog it had assumed in the past. The overlap with the spectrum of ‘respectable’ politics narrowed in return.

9.1 A Most Sophomoric Dispute

In 1979, the outgoing executive director Ron Robinson advised in his letter of resignation that after having served both as executive director and member of the board, he knew cooperation among YAF’s leadership was indispensable for success. “Trust and support,” he wrote, “are mutually advantageous and these virtues are strengthened as long as they are allowed to grow.” It was only when the group’s leaders tried to outmaneuver each other that the organization suffered.¹⁶⁰⁸ It appears his words went unheeded since under his successor, YAF plunged into the longest and most devastating factional battle it ever experienced.

Contrary to previous major infighting, the power struggles in 1981–1983 seemingly came without warning. In June 1981, the board resolved that Robert Heckman ranked “among the finest Executive Directors in YAF’s history” and extended his contract.¹⁶⁰⁹ Half a year later, Chairman James Lacy summoned the board and fired Heckman in a 12–12 vote with the chair himself breaking the tie.¹⁶¹⁰ Among others, Peter Flaherty, the projects director, and *New Guard* editor Richard LaMountain, were also let go or resigned, a move Heckman’s supporters would dub the “Christmas Purge.”¹⁶¹¹

I found it hard to establish any motivation behind Lacy’s sudden maneuver. Heckman cited inquiries into the chairman’s expense account as the main reason. According to this version, Lacy had financed “numerous examples of extravagances” through YAF. When Vice Chairman

¹⁶⁰⁷ See chapter 8.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Ronald Robinson to YAF National Board, October 5, 1979. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 189, Folder YAF 1977-1981.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 12-14, 1981, p.4. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4. Including Douglas Caddy, formally executive secretary, YAF had only had eight executive directors at this point.

¹⁶¹⁰ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.434.

¹⁶¹¹ Robert Heckman to YAF Activists, December 22, 1981, p.1. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 4.

Brad Peterson gave records of these expenses to YAF's lawyer, Lacy allegedly fired the lawyer and tried to get rid of Peterson. As the national staff subsequently revolted, Lacy turned against them too.¹⁶¹²

Regardless of whether the accusations of Heckman are true, it is likely that the events surrounding the expense account would have only triggered a decision that was brewing anyway. In YAF's history, the organization suffered many internal conflicts between the powerful positions of executive director and chairman. While the latter served as the highest elected leader of the group and formally set its policy (in coordination with board and policy committee), the former managed its day-to-day affairs like communication with the membership. Both offices bestowed great influence on their occupants who could easily threaten the other's position in a conflict of interest. During Tom Huston's and David Jones' shared reign, altercations led to a clear delineation of the responsibilities of both offices.¹⁶¹³

After the experience of Randy Teague's divisive tenure as executive director (most famous for the supposed mass-purges of libertarian members), Chairman Ronald Docksai had decided (possibly with the backing of the board) that the executive director would be forbidden from intervening in any YAF politics.¹⁶¹⁴

It is unclear whether these guidelines were ever strictly followed. Heckman, in any case, clearly did not respect them. After he had already intervened in a contested Mid-Atlantic (his home region) regional director election once while serving on the national staff,¹⁶¹⁵ he addressed a hectic New England regional convention to garner support for the election of his crony Flaherty. This continued meddling in YAF politics, which probably continued while he was serving as executive director, might have angered Lacy, who, himself no stranger to power plays,¹⁶¹⁶ might have looked for an opportunity to get rid of his executive director.¹⁶¹⁷

Lacy also had reason to feel his position threatened: of the nine new directors elected to the board at the national convention in 1981, six were Heckman supporters. In August of the same year, the board decided on whether to hold the next convention in New York City or Los Angeles, Heckman's and Lacy's respective homes. Whoever prevailed in this vote was

¹⁶¹² Ibid., p.2.

¹⁶¹³ Cf. James Campaigne to The Board, May 15, 1970. Patrick Dowd Papers, Box 2, Folder Subject File - YAF, National Board - Memoranda, circulars, + printed matter.

¹⁶¹⁴ Cf. Charlie Black to Wayne Thorburn, June 10, 1972, p.2. YAF Records, Box 15, Folder 1. This apparently remained policy from thereon as signified by a resolution aiming to expand that limitation to the chairman and the board. See Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, July 7-9, 1978, p.15. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 1.

¹⁶¹⁵ Cf. Transcript of New England Regional Convention, Undated (1979), p.6. YAF Records, Box 78, Folder 10; Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, July 7-9, 1978. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 1.

¹⁶¹⁶ See for example Robert Feliz to Ronald Docksai, September 25, 1973. YAF Records, Box 13, Folder 7; James Lacy to Sergio Picchio, May 1, 1989. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 2.

¹⁶¹⁷ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.171-172.

guaranteed a major advantage for the elections to the board and national chairmanship, since supporters from the regional strongholds were expected to show up in force. Los Angeles won by the narrowest margin of one vote, but the slightest change in board composition might have overturned that result.¹⁶¹⁸

Immediately after the purge, Heckman threatened that Lacy's actions would "undoubtedly plunge YAF into legal battles for months to come."¹⁶¹⁹ His supporters wasted no time and launched a rhetorical broadside against Lacy. William Hawkins, a board member from Tennessee, who claimed not to be taking sides in the conflict, scolded his chairman for manipulating regional conferences in his favor (which had been a preferred method of YAF leaders to maintain power since their inception and certainly was not exclusive to Lacy). Lacy's struggle for absolute power, Hawkins argued, was the biggest threat to YAF's survival. Therefore, he demanded that the chair step down.¹⁶²⁰ Former *New Guard* editor LaMountain also complained that the new national staff, hand-picked by Lacy, was composed mainly of "hacks and cronies."¹⁶²¹

Such vicious rhetoric was not new in YAF infighting. However, carbon copies of these communiqués were sent to dozens of prominent conservatives and YAF supporters, some of whom involved themselves but most of whom looked with concern upon their receipt: YAF was now airing its dirty laundry publicly, which not only threatened its narrative as a 'respectable' organization, but also to drive away legions of small donors upon whom the group relied for most of its income.¹⁶²² Those donors identified with YAF's positions, not the group itself. Public infighting risked turning them off for fear of their donations being wasted on factionalism (which indeed would happen in the coming years).

Perhaps Heckman supporters, who gathered around Kenneth Grasso and Peter Flaherty (both had been propelled to national leadership by Heckman intervention), felt that they had no choice but to go public. They had formed a sort of 'government-in exile' (also a first in YAF history), with both Lacy's faction and them holding separate board meetings and each claiming to be the legitimate representation of YAF. Because both groups certified different elections and hired different staff,¹⁶²³ the confusion among the rank-and-file and outsiders only grew. For example,

¹⁶¹⁸ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.433.

¹⁶¹⁹ Robert Heckman to YAF Activists, December 22, 1981. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁶²⁰ Cf. William Hawkins to James Lacy, April 2, 1982. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 189, Folder YAF 1982.

¹⁶²¹ Richard LaMountain to James Lacy, June 15, 1982. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁶²² Cf. NELLIGAN, Jeff: *All Together Again?*, in: *National Review*, September 16, 1983, p.1136. Some prominent conservatives were also swayed against the current leadership, see for example Albert Wedemeyer to James Lacy, January 3, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁶²³ Cf. Committee to Save YAF to Friends, April 23, 1982. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 8.

the First Virginia Bank froze YAF's assets, being unable to determine who its legitimate representative was. Because Lacy controlled the national headquarters, however, he was bound to ultimately prevail as the accepted leader of the group. Flaherty et al. sensed that if there was a chance of winning back control, it lay in mobilizing conservative opinion against Lacy.

Finally, presumably as a last resort, Flaherty sued Lacy, honoring Heckman's earlier threats.¹⁶²⁴ For the first time in YAF's history, major infighting had to be settled in the courts. This only threatened to tarnish the group's reputation further. Thus, a group around YAF founders Buckley, Evans (the author of the Sharon Statement), and Rusher launched an attempt at a settlement. Former board member and executive director Frank Donatelli drafted up a plan that would have presented a compromise: Lacy would have kept his board majority of 13–12 and should nominate an executive director of his faction, while Flaherty would have secured a senior staff position for his faction and the majority in the policy committee.¹⁶²⁵ According to Donatelli, this presented a reasonable compromise considering the pending litigation was expected to go in Lacy's favor. When the factions met, they agreed to limit communication pertaining to YAF politics to organization members and to give all directors access to the corporation's records. While the Lacy faction also agreed to the provisions cited above (with certain reservations), and even offered to split the board 13-12 with one neutral member added on, Flaherty and his supporters refused any board composition not giving them the majority.¹⁶²⁶ “[F]urther discussion,” Donatelli summed up, “would not be productive. It is obvious that the divisions and mistrust run so deeply that any forced marriage of the two sides would be doomed to failure.”¹⁶²⁷ He now hoped for a quick resolution in the courts and pleaded his employers to stay any actions until then. Presumably, the organization's elders were thinking of disassociating with the organization, although no definite intention can be read from Donatelli's memorandum.¹⁶²⁸ “We can only hope,” he closed, “that this episode is an aberration, not a harbinger for YAF's future.”¹⁶²⁹

After several delays caused by the respective counsel of both sides, over half a year went by before Judge Brown submitted “the best [he] had to offer under tedious and trying

¹⁶²⁴ Cf. Kenneth Grasso to James Lacy, May 26, 1982. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 5. Heckman himself had also sued YAF, although I could not find any material related to that case. See Frank Donatelli to James Lacy et al., September 3, 1982, p.9. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 10.

¹⁶²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁶²⁶ Cf. *id.* to William Buckley et al., September 17, 1982, p.2. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 10.

¹⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁶²⁸ Buckley responded to Donatelli's report that “it would appear at least problematic that there will be a 1983 convention, of other than narcissistic [sic] pretensions.” William Buckley to All Concerned, October 7, 1982. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 10.

¹⁶²⁹ Frank Donatelli to William Buckley et al., September 17, 1982, p.4. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 10.

circumstances.”¹⁶³⁰ Although the rulings are rather technical, they give insight in how petty the infighting must have appeared to local members and outsiders alike. For example, Heckman supporters around Grasso had petitioned chairman Lacy to hold a special board meeting on April 15, 1982. According to YAF’s bylaws, the chair had to call the meeting for a date between 5 and 15 days after the petition. Grasso called for the 21st in his petition, but Lacy fixed it for the 30th. The Flaherty faction, claiming that the chairman had to comply with the date set forth in the petition, nevertheless met on April 21st and took actions purportedly on behalf of the board. Brown now had to decide who under the by-laws of YAF had the authority to set the date for board meetings.¹⁶³¹

Another point of contention was whether one director, who apparently had forgot to pay his membership dues, had been ineligible for his subsequent reelection to the board.¹⁶³² The most bizarre claim, however, concerned the directorship of Lewis Doherty. Doherty hailed from Louisiana, which hitherto had been part of YAF’s Southwestern Region, but had been moved to the Southern Region on February 6, 1982. Doherty was subsequently elected to the board as regional director from the Southern Region. The Flaherty faction pointed out that the rules of the Southern conference read that in order to be eligible for election, the candidate needed to have administered a YAF office in the Southern Region as of January 15th. Doherty thus was technically ineligible for election, since Louisiana, where he was state chairman, was not part of the Southern Region then. Brown resolved the situation on the basis that the drafters of the conference rules had forgotten to add in the position of state chairman to the deadline in the first place and another rule in the bylaws stated that state chairmen were eligible for election without specifying any date by which they needed to have been such.¹⁶³³

Brown minced no words when attacking the positions of both plaintiffs and defendants. The Lacy faction, he mused for example, at one point appeared to claim that one opposing director “is not a member of YAF, but [...] neither is he not a member of YAF.”¹⁶³⁴ He ended his “litany” with the dry remark that if he had left any questions unanswered, “it is probably just as well that I did so. It might be wise for YAF to consider the prospect of adopting new bylaws if this is to be the level at which its membership intends to operate.”¹⁶³⁵ Although the Lacy faction prevailed on most substantial issues, the organization itself suffered a critical blow to its image.

¹⁶³⁰ Grover Brown to Vernon Proctor et al., May 20, 1983: Flaherty v. Lacy, p.3. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁶³¹ Ibid., pp.5–8.

¹⁶³² Cf. Ibid., pp.8–12.

¹⁶³³ Cf. Ibid., pp.12–14.

¹⁶³⁴ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁶³⁵ Ibid., p.22.

It had accumulated about \$100,000 in legal fees, leading to a cutback in expenditures such as *New Guard*, which went unpublished for several months.¹⁶³⁶ Lacy himself, it dawned even upon his supporters, had become untenable.

Additionally, while the Heckman/Flaherty-Lacy episode was being resolved in court, the next conflict was already underway. Executive Director Sam Pimm, selected as replacement for Heckman, got under fire for ostensibly not being able to consolidate YAF's finances and for proving unable to stimulate local activism. Pimm defended himself by stating that most of his resources had to be spent "defending James Lacy's actions,"¹⁶³⁷ but the accusations alienated him from his former sponsor.

Thus, a *National Review* article lamented, while the occasion would have been perfect for demonstrating unity, "to forget a year and a half of fratricide,"¹⁶³⁸ what happened at the national convention of 1983 was a fight. Lacy and Pimm both sent proxies as candidates for the national chairmanship into the fold, Vice Chairman Bob Dolan and board member Floyd Brown (of future Willie Horton-ad fame) respectively. However, the correspondent reported, Brown "suddenly announced that he was dropping out of the race."¹⁶³⁹ Brown's reversal was the result of an agreement reached by the factions behind closed doors, which survived in the YAF records and is illustrative of the political dealings in late-stage YAF.¹⁶⁴⁰

In it, the signatories Lacy, Pimm, and Dolan (note the absence of the formal candidate Brown) agreed that all candidates except Dolan would drop out of the race for chairman while Brown would become vice-chairman. In return, Dolan guaranteed nine board seats to Pimm, to be achieved by "a series of seat switches," while he should control the remaining sixteen.¹⁶⁴¹ Part of that new makeup was also established through a unified slate of candidates for national board that would be virtually guaranteed election. Apparently, Dolan essentially bought off Pimm's approval, promising to pay him a severance of \$15,000 in return for his resignation as executive director. His successor should be chosen on a "technocratic" basis with the help of advisers such as Rusher and Phillip Abbott Luce, YAF's former chief strategist in the fight against the New Left.¹⁶⁴² Attached to the agreement are signed candidature withdrawals and a resignation letter from Pimm. After being elected chairman, Dolan seems to have reneged on many

¹⁶³⁶ Cf. James Lacy to Richard Abell, January 18, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1; Richard LaMountain to James Lacy, June 15, 1982. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1; NELLIGAN, Jeff: All Together Again?, in: *National Review*, September 16, 1983, p.1136.

¹⁶³⁷ Cf. Sam Pimm to Fellow Board Member, October 12, 1983. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 5.

¹⁶³⁸ NELLIGAN, Jeff: All Together Again?, in: *National Review*, September 16, 1983, p.1136.

¹⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1137.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Statement of Agreement, August 5–6, 1983. YAF Records, Box 23, Folder 11.

¹⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.1. Since the board filled any vacancies itself, such a maneuver could easily be executed.

¹⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p.2. For Luce, see chapter 4.

promises of the agreement, purging Brown from the position of vice-chairman and discharging most of the state chairmen loyal to Pimm or Brown.¹⁶⁴³

This fixing of the convention left a foul taste in the mouth of the delegates, who were now presented with a choice neither for chairman nor board. Attendance was generally low compared to previous conventions—estimates range from fewer than 350 in the *National Review* report to “less than 100 people” by Flaherty who intended to portray the convention as Lacy’s ultimate (in both senses of the term) failure.¹⁶⁴⁴ Many delegates later “wandered off to Disneyland” instead of participating in the panels. The proceedings of the conference thus hardly helped to dispel doubts about YAF’s future. The organization, as one conservative leader put it, was still on probation.¹⁶⁴⁵

In addition to successfully maneuvering internal YAF politics, Dolan was also supported by the clique of older YAF supporters that had tried to arrange a settlement during the lawsuit. Marvin Liebman personally recommended Dolan to his peers and helped arrange the settlement between Dolan and Pimm (“It’s rather like old times,” Liebman added as a handwritten postscript to the copy of his recommendation letter addressed to Rusher).¹⁶⁴⁶ Nevertheless, conservative elder statesmen were not willing to go through another period of organizational infighting and presented Dolan with a list of questions regarding how he would run the organization. In particular, they wanted to know how he would reform the organization’s structure to prevent further lawsuits; whether he would resume publishing *New Guard*; how he would strengthen chapter organization and services; and lastly, how he planned on improving the group’s finances.¹⁶⁴⁷ They gave Dolan and YAF until June 1984 to show improvements, lest they look for another group to support as *the* new premier conservative youth organization. Behind the scenes, Liebman had already urged his associates to found a new group that would benefit from the lessons learned through YAF, i.e. it should have a decentralized structure and less bureaucracy.¹⁶⁴⁸ After some stalling, Dolan responded that he would reform YAF by strengthening the position of the chairman vis-à-vis the staff; that he planned on publishing *New Guard* on the regular; and that he had managed to improve YAF’s financial picture by

¹⁶⁴³ Cf. Ronald Robinson/James Taylor to Marvin Liebman et al., July 19, 1984, p.7. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁴⁴ NELLIGAN, Jeff: All Together Again?, in: *National Review*, September 16, 1983, p.1137; Peter Flaherty to Friends, August 18, 1983. Group Research Inc. Records, Box 342, Folder 1976–.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Cf. NELLIGAN, Jeff: All Together Again?, in: *National Review*, September 16, 1983, p.1137.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Cf. Marvin Liebman to William Rusher, April 22, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1; Ronald Docksai to William Buckley, August 16, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 26, Folder 6; Robert Dolan to William Rusher, August 22, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1. For the “old times”, see chapter 1.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Marvin Liebman to Robert Dolan, October 12, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Marvin Liebman to Those Concerned, September 2, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

consolidating its short-term debt into a mortgage on YAF's headquarters in Virginia.¹⁶⁴⁹ These answers would have hardly satisfied the group around Liebman, Buckley and Rusher. Instead of decentralizing YAF, Dolan strove to further concentrate power at the top. Additionally, while he had stabilized YAF's debt, he had not presented a concept for improving its income.

In the meantime, it became clear that the conflict with Pimm had not been resolved, only suspended, and only a few weeks after the national convention, Dolan supporters started attacking Pimm again and vice versa.¹⁶⁵⁰ The latter group, in the minority after the convention agreements, complained (outside the group, since they wrote to Buckley directly) that Dolan had prevented discussion of the questions posed by Liebman et al. and abused his board majority to ramrod his plans. Buckley thus concluded that nothing had substantially changed since the Heckman-Lacy fight. "I reluctantly incline to the position that YAF is not going to make it," he stated and asked his peers whether it would be wise even waiting until June before withdrawing support.¹⁶⁵¹ Nevertheless, the majority of the elder statesmen apparently intended to stick with their original ultimatum, as there is no evidence of further discussion.

After that ultimatum expired, no one seemed content with YAF's progress. Indeed, even diehard YAF supporters like former chairman Docksai could not see any signs of revitalization under Dolan.¹⁶⁵² The group thus decided to, in the words of Rusher, "let a thousand flowers bloom" and support other conservative youth groups. Perhaps out of sentimentality, however, they did not rescind their endorsement of YAF.¹⁶⁵³ Nevertheless, one of the pillars that YAF's success had rested on in the past was the almost unconditional support of older conservatives, especially of the *National Review* circle. That pillar was now gone or at least dilapidated.

9.2 The End of YAF's Gilded Age

When Robert Dolan took over, YAF's financial situation was extremely alarming. The corporation's current liabilities exceeded its current assets by \$341,156 and its total liabilities its total assets by \$223,685. The organization, however only held a total of \$186,286 in assets.¹⁶⁵⁴ Recently, the projects director, Mike Boos, had lamented that he could not implement his program for the current academic year because "almost no financial resources have been allocated" towards political action. He had listed a number of previous projects that had been

¹⁶⁴⁹ Cf. Robert Dolan to id., January 13, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Sam Pimm to Fellow Board Member, October 12, 1983. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 5; Sam Pimm to YAF National Board of Directors, May 22, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁵¹ William Buckley to Ronald Docksai et al., January 6, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁵² Cf. Ronald Docksai to William Rusher, July, 23, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁵³ Marvin Liebman to William Buckley et al., August 7, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2; Ronald Robinson/James Taylor to Marvin Liebman et al., July 19, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁵⁴ YAF Balance Sheet, July 31, 1983. YAF Records, Box 24, Folder 1.

phased out because of lack of resources, among them the Zero Option and the Youth for the Reagan Agenda projects.¹⁶⁵⁵ Of the budgeted \$23,000 (already a small share of the total expenses)¹⁶⁵⁶ only about 10% had actually been allocated to programs. Boos feared a vicious cycle, where a lack of projects would reduce the visibility of the organization and thus its fundraising income, fueling further cutbacks.¹⁶⁵⁷

Dolan did not hear that warning cry. “Since assuming the role as a full-time chairman, I have become more convinced that debt servicing [...] is the priority of the corporation. The political activists within YAF’s inner circle will be, as in the past, committed to the political program of YAF,” Dolan wrote to a Virginia bank in hopes to secure a loan to bring YAF’s other debtors to current.¹⁶⁵⁸ The recipient might have colored Dolan’s emphasis on restoring the organizations financial health, but his actions as chairman leave no doubt that he focused on money first. Of the \$20,000 left to YAF as a monthly budget after servicing its direct mail debt, 80% were used to pay other debtors during Dolan’s first months as chairman.¹⁶⁵⁹ When the bank rejected Dolan’s application, he turned to an even more drastic measure. He now looked to sell YAF’s headquarters in Virginia as a last resort to get the debt under control.¹⁶⁶⁰ Although that plan was only carried out under Dolan’s successor, he did secure a new mortgage on the property.

The problem with Dolan’s actions was that they focused on short-term financial gains. He lacked a long-term strategy for rebuilding YAF. Perhaps he did not even want to: former executive director and board member Ron Robinson analyzed that Dolan preferred “to reduce YAF’s size in order to control what is left.”¹⁶⁶¹ This included ruthlessly fixing regional meetings to the point where only about a dozen voting delegates were left (while the rest were not accredited or purged altogether).¹⁶⁶² Since, for the purpose of keeping power, activism and membership growth were of secondary importance or even harmful—national campaigns might give rise to prominent activists that might challenge Dolan in the future—no resources were

¹⁶⁵⁵ YAF Projects Report, May 28, 1983, p.1. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁶⁵⁶ The total expenses of the organization in the 82–83 fiscal year amounted to over \$1,500,000, with most of that spent on fundraising, cf. YAF Balance Sheet, July 31, 1983. YAF Records, Box 24, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Cf. YAF Projects Report, May 28, 1983, p.2. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 4.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Robert Dolan to Harry Rauner, September 23, 1983, p.2. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 8.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶⁰ Cf. Harry Rauner to Robert Dolan, October 12, 1983. YAF Records, Box 30, Folder 3; Minutes of YAF Policy Committee Meeting, January 25, 1984. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 11.

¹⁶⁶¹ Ronald Robinson/James Taylor to Marvin Liebman et al., July 19, 1984, p.7. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁶² Cf. Amy Moritz to William Buckley, June 28, 1984, pp.3–4. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2. Moritz (not a YAF member herself) reports attending the Southern Regional Convention and the Northwest Regional Conference in Seattle. While only a handful delegates showed up to the former in the first place, Dolan actively intervened in the latter, telling delegates (unfriendly to his camp?) to drop out of YAF. “[T]he national representatives purged them in a manner so callous I can only conclude that they intentionally wished to drive out the young, committed members.” (p.4).

provided for it. Out of a budget of above \$1,000,000, a meager \$2,450 was assigned to action projects in the fiscal year of 1983–1984.¹⁶⁶³

While he limited political activity, Dolan dreamed of expanding YAF fundraising by building—in addition to YAF's political file—a file of donors interested in charitable causes.¹⁶⁶⁴ This file could later be combined with the political file to broaden the range of YAF's fundraising appeals.¹⁶⁶⁵ At least two charitable fundraising projects were initiated: Operation CHILD-Watch, purportedly a program against child abduction, and a committee to raise funds for maintaining the Statue of Liberty.¹⁶⁶⁶ Donors interested in these causes were encouraged to contribute to YAF directly. I could not find any hints, however, that the organization ever undertook any charitable projects with those contributions. Nevertheless, a *New Guard* reader interested in YAF as a political organization might get turned off by these appeals and by advertisements for fundraising agencies within the magazine's pages.¹⁶⁶⁷ They reinforced the impression that Dolan treated YAF as a fundraising rather than political operation.

Critics around the deposed vice chairman Floyd Brown saw their chance to strike. “Is YAF's money building YAF?”, he asked the board of directors. Or was “YAF just another Washington-based fundraising operation with little programmatic benefit?”¹⁶⁶⁸ After reviewing the organization's expenditures, he found that Dolan had used YAF money for questionable expenses, including buying a tuxedo for CPAC, securing a parking spot near his girlfriend's apartment, and paying a traffic ticket. Although Brown encouraged other directors to investigate these expense accounts, Dolan's extravaganzas only became a hot topic in the spring of 1985, when he was forced to resign over what the new chairman Terrell Cannon of Nebraska termed “philosophical differences with other board members.”¹⁶⁶⁹ These philosophical differences, according to an article in the *New York Post*, included \$3,000 each paid for Dolan's wedding rings and a roof repair in his home. The former chairman also seemed to have granted himself

¹⁶⁶³ YAF Balance Sheet, March 31, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Donors of previous fundraising runs were added to computerized lists and would receive future fundraising appeals. Keeping such lists up to date and expanding them via so-called prospect mailings was one of the important tasks in long-term fundraising. Prospect mailings would usually incur immediate losses but enabled organizations like YAF to keep a large base of potential contributors.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Cf. YAF Direct Mail Program Report, Undated (1984), pp.5–6. YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Cf. CHILD-Watch fundraising letter, Undated (1984/85). YAF Records, Box 41, Folder 5; Operation CHILD-Watch: The National Tragedy of Our Missing Children, in: *The New Guard*, Spring 1984, p.34; HAHN, Robert: Lady in Distress, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1984, pp.24–25.

¹⁶⁶⁷ See for example the *New Guard* of Spring, 1985, pp.2–3; 5. The advertisements might also have been a way for YAF to pay some outstanding debts with its vendors.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Floyd Brown to YAF Board of Directors, April 23, 1984. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁶⁹ LATHEN, Niles; FLICK, Rachel: Scandal Forces Right-Wing Big to Resign Top Post, in: *New York Post*, March 11, 1985. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 173, Folder 1.

an unsecured loan by YAF amounting to \$30,000 and funneled further money into a political action committee of his.¹⁶⁷⁰

SCHNEIDER contends, based on interviews with Dolan, that he succeeded on what he had set out to do when becoming chairman, namely stabilizing the organization.¹⁶⁷¹ However, after roughly a year and a half of his leadership, YAF did not look healthier than before. The organization was still in debt—the Financial statement for the 1984–85 period lists a negative net worth of \$174,657—and had not had a functioning budget in several years.¹⁶⁷² The infighting had not stopped, even though there were no more lawsuits (Dolan's excesses were settled out of court).¹⁶⁷³ YAF still was in need for a real turnaround.

Cannon was the wrong person for that job. After having served on the board since 1973, he could not convincingly stand for a new beginning. More likely is that he was a compromise candidate to serve as interim chair until the next convention. Cannon went through with Dolan's plan to sell the YAF headquarters,¹⁶⁷⁴ a move SCHNEIDER judged as the final nail in the coffin for the group (and characterizes as a panic reaction by Cannon, even though the process had started more than a year earlier).¹⁶⁷⁵ He also continued the politics of nepotism, nominating his Plains Region ally Charley Ohlen for executive director.¹⁶⁷⁶

The latter performed poorly in his duties, leaving the new YAF administration in a state of general disarray. When he resigned in January 1986, his successor Mike Boos wrote to the board that the group's new offices in Alexandria, VA, looked "like a pig pen [...] papers are scattered all over the place and equipment does not work. In short, the condition of the office is sickening."¹⁶⁷⁷ Additionally, since Ohlen did not keep records of YAF's finances, Boos could only estimate outstanding debts, most of which were overdue or already in the process of litigation. Furthermore, the former executive director had illegally made a copy of YAF's contributor file and was using it for independent fundraising (thus potentially weakening YAF's own fundraising returns).¹⁶⁷⁸ Boos saw the only way out in transferring the administration of YAF's finances entirely to Richard Delgaudio's (a YAF alumnus from New York) fundraising

¹⁶⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷¹ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, pp.174–175.

¹⁶⁷² Cf. YAF Financial Statement, July 31, 1985. YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 4; Carolyn Malon to Terrell Cannon, October 28, 1985. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 8; Charley Ohlen to Carolyn Malon, November 6, 1985. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 8.

¹⁶⁷³ Cf. Dolan Agreements, December 22, 1986. YAF Records, Box 42, Folder 1; Dolan Agreement, April 1, 1987. YAF Records, Box 44, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Cf. Terrell Cannon to Sergio Picchio, June 17, 1985. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 8.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Cf. SCHNEIDER, *Cadres for Conservatism*, p.160.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.445.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Michael Boos to YAF Board, February 27, 1986. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 5.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Cf. Richard Delgaudio to Terrell Cannon, March 10, 1986, pp.3–4. YAF Records, Box 46, Folder 3.

firm, already established as the group's exclusive fundraising agency.¹⁶⁷⁹ "The time is long overdue for YAF to make some serious decisions. If the organization is going to continue down the path of self destruction, then maybe YAF has outlived its usefulness," he warned the board of directors.¹⁶⁸⁰

At the same meeting where the board decided to grant Boos' and Delgaudio's request, Cannon resigned (roughly a year after assuming the position as chair).¹⁶⁸¹ Perhaps he was afraid that transferring so much power to someone formally an outsider spelled disaster for the organization. On the other hand, the board might have felt that after no progress had been made under his leadership, a fresh start was necessary. Cannon was succeeded by Sergio Picchio of California, but, in contrast to his predecessors, was kept as a senior board member until the end of the 1980s, making him the longest serving board member in YAF's history. Picchio led YAF into a period of relative stability and was twice reelected national chairman.¹⁶⁸² He could not, however, bring YAF back to the size and influence of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, only one issue of *New Guard* was published under his auspice (in 1989). After 25 years of runtime, YAF could not come up with the necessary funds to continue publication.¹⁶⁸³

The developments of the 1980s, especially after the taxing *Flaherty v. Lacy* suit, beg the question why YAF was unable to reform its internal organization to combat some of its most glaring problems. Indeed, several such reforms were proposed. Their common ground is that they saw YAF's problems fundamentally as problems of the national leadership. For example, when Dolan received the questionnaire from Liebman, Rusher et al., a group around Floyd Brown urged a board meeting to discuss the chair's prioritization of financial consolidation. They also wanted to strengthen the review powers of the board vis-à-vis decisions of the chairman. The bylaws often stated that the chairman should make policy and decisions in accordance with the board, but they did not spell out who was to decide in the case of disagreement. Floyd et al. wanted the board to have the last word in all these decisions, including the selection of several staff members and all state chairmen.¹⁶⁸⁴ While the demands are clearly related to the infighting surrounding the 1983 national convention and the behind-the-scenes agreements subsequently not kept by Dolan, they addressed one issue that united almost all reform proposals: the concentration of too much power in the hands of too few YAFers.

¹⁶⁷⁹ See Proposal for Financial Management, April 7, 1986. YAF Records, Box 19, Folder 4.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Michael Boos to YAF Board, February 27, 1986. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 5.

¹⁶⁸¹ Thorburn writes "was forced to resign." THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.445.

¹⁶⁸² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.451 with fn. 180.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Cf. Floyd Brown to Robert Dolan, November 1, 1983, p.5. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 5.

One of the basic problems was that the chairman could appoint state chairmen, who were important in credentializing delegates to regional conferences and national conventions. By filling their ranks with loyalists, whoever was in power could prevent hostile delegates from appearing at such meetings, thus ensuring that more loyalists were elected to the board from those conventions. As seen above, this, in practice, deprived regional conferences of their purpose. In a letter to the "YAF By-Law Reform Committee," Terrell Cannon noted that in 1985, only two out of eight regional conventions had drawn more than 40 delegates.¹⁶⁸⁵ In one case, only six delegates were accredited for voting while 40 were turned away. Cannon's solution was to tie the existence of regional seats to a minimum amount of chapters and members in that region. Regional directors should also only be able to take their board seat if at least a fixed number of votes was cast in their favor.

The former chairman's suggestion would also have served to alleviate the most important flaw in the group's current structure. As Morton Blackwell, a former YR and YAF activist most notable for carrying on conservative cadre-building with his Leadership Institute, put it in a letter to *Human Events* publisher Thomas Winter: "Right now, the way anyone wins power is to destroy or purge his opponents. Success in organizing new chapters or building greater membership is almost without reward."¹⁶⁸⁶ Cannon's proposal would have mandated aspirants to the national board to put at least some work into organizing new chapters to fulfill the necessary regional quorum.

Board member Michael Waller went a step further: to make YAF "leaner, nastier and more effective," he proposed having all state chairmen elected at state conventions, thus ensuring that they enjoyed the support of their constituents.¹⁶⁸⁷ He also advocated reducing the board to 10 members, eliminating all convention and senior (those elected by the board members themselves) seats. Although no one should be purged, existing seats should be left vacant once their occupants resigned. To facilitate the process, no elections should be held at the 1987 national convention, since they would only restart the cycle of election-rigging. With pathos, Waller declared: "[S]weeping revolutionary reforms have to be made. As in any revolution, there needs to be an interim period where the government (in this case, the board) needs to have some sort of dictatorial powers."¹⁶⁸⁸ Those powers, however, should be turned back to the grassroots as soon as possible.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Cf. Terrell Cannon to YAF By-Law Reform Committee, Undated (1986), p.1. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 8.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Morton Blackwell to Thomas Winter, July 9, 1986. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Michael Waller to YAF National Board of Directors, October 4, 1986, p.1. Box 7, Folder 4.

¹⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

Despite many board members agreeing with the analysis of Cannon and Waller, no substantial reforms were introduced until Picchio became chairman. Even then, only the credentializing process was touched.¹⁶⁸⁹ The reason is quite straightforward: those interested in reforms usually belonged to a group that was not in control of YAF. Even Cannon wrote his memo only after he had resigned as chairman. Blackwell argued that “the national organization’s main perceived asset [was] its mailing list of old contributors who still loyally give.”¹⁶⁹⁰ Money raised via that list could, as in the case of Dolan, be used for personal gain and to keep internal power.

Why, then, did Picchio manage to reform the credentials process? Blackwell contends that “when there was so little left to fight over, the organization was dropped by those whose primary interest was personally enjoying the power, prestige and resources of YAF. There was nothing left to loot.”¹⁶⁹¹ Since YAF possessed no major resources after years of infighting and organizational decay, the new chairman could interest people in returning to the grassroots. Faced with low membership numbers and income, the new leadership was poised to repeat the quick buildup of the 1960s. In a radically changed landscape, however, YAF could not prosper as it had before and faded into obscurity under Picchio’s successors.

9.3 How to be Conservative in Conservative Times

With the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency of the United States, conservatives finally overcame the trauma of the humiliating defeat of Goldwater in 1964. After decades of hard work, the president was one of them! And of course, that hard work paid off in more than just one way, as the *New York Times* reported:

“By common count here, some 50 graduates or present members of the Young Americans for Freedom have been appointed to the White House staff, others are sprinkled throughout the Administration, and still others make up much of the conservatives’ successful direct-mail fund-raising apparatus, which may bring in \$50 million this year.”¹⁶⁹²

Among the more prominent YAF appointees were Tony Dolan (“Ash Heap of History”; “Evil Empire”¹⁶⁹³) and Dana Rohrabacher (Instrumental in formulating the Reagan Doctrine)¹⁶⁹⁴ as Presidential Speechwriters; Don Devine, Director of the Office of Personnel Management; Don Senese as Assistant Secretary of Education; Richard Abell in a leading position with the Peace

¹⁶⁸⁹ Cf. Eugene Delgaudio to Sergio Picchio, April 10, 1987. YAF Records, Box 79, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Morton Blackwell to Thomas Winter, July 9, 1986. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁹¹ ID.: 1987 YAF National Convention Speech. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁶⁹² CLENDINEN, Dudley: After 20 Years, Young Conservatives Enjoy a Long-Awaited Rise to Power, in: *The New York Times*, August 22, 1981, p.7, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/121698489/7327B5D072D64E76PQ/2?accountid=11359>.

¹⁶⁹³ WILLIAMS, Juan: Writers of Speeches For President Claim Force Is With Him, in: *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1983, p.A10, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/138063222/84237E5EB5004FA0PQ/1?accountid=11359> [25.2.21].

¹⁶⁹⁴ Cf. O’BRIEN, Luke: Putin’s Washington, in: *Politico*, January/February 2015, online: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/putins-washington-113894/> [25.2.21].

Corps, etc.¹⁶⁹⁵ The administration and YAF members/alumni within it continued to recruit more YAFers through Reagan's years in office.

While the Reagan Revolution was much cause for celebration, it also presented a new challenge to YAF: never before in the history of the organization had there been a sitting president with most of whose positions it agreed. Furthermore, Reagan was *the* voice of conservatism. YAF, who had spent most of its time in the past criticizing government policy now had a tough choice to make: would they continue to play the role of watchdog, criticizing the administration whenever they strayed from conservative principles or would they rally young people behind the president's policies?

However fateful that question might have been for YAF's future, it was quickly resolved in favor of the latter approach. Some of the support came naturally: National Chairman Jim Lacy, for example, declared in January 1981 that Reagan's proposed tax and budget cuts¹⁶⁹⁶ were "the first serious attempt by a modern president to truly bring the federal leviathan under control. As such, [they] deserv[e] the staunch support of conservatives everywhere," adding: "As ones who long have advocated 'Zero Government Growth,' we are delighted at the prospect of eventual government shrinkage."¹⁶⁹⁷ In the same breath, he announced YAF's new major project, Youth for the Reagan Agenda.¹⁶⁹⁸ Through YAF support, Lacy hoped to offset opposition to the cuts by "big-spending special interests" like the ADA, NAACP, or the Urban League.¹⁶⁹⁹

YAF also coordinated with the Reagan administration (via Lyn Nofziger, Assistant to the President for Political Affairs) and other conservative groups.¹⁷⁰⁰ For example, they held a joint press conference with the American Conservative Union, the Fund for a Conservative Majority, and Citizens for Reagan in support of the tax and budget cuts.¹⁷⁰¹

¹⁶⁹⁵ Cf. CLENDINEN, Dudley: After 20 Years, Young Conservatives Enjoy a Long-Awaited Rise to Power, in: *The New York Times*, August 22, 1981, online: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/121698489/7327B5D072D64E76PQ/2?accountid=11359>; Right-wing activity of Reagan appointees – A supplement, June 1981. Group Research Inc. Records, Box 400, Folder Reagan, Ronald – Appointments, Right-Wing Connections.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Cf. BROWNLEE, Elliot: "Reaganomics". *The Fiscal and Monetary Policies*, in: JOHNS, Andrew (Ed.): *A Companion to Ronald Reagan*, Chichester 2015, pp.131–148, here pp.134–135. Reagan was less successful both in cutting taxes and the budget than Lacy's rhetoric suggests. While some of the tax cuts had to be reverted in 1982 in the face of skyrocketing budget deficits, the president never managed to substantially cut the budget in the first place—it turned out that while voters supported welfare and government program cutbacks in theory (and some, to the extent of roughly \$50 billion were introduced by the administration, they resisted any attempts to curtail programs they might personally benefit from. BROWNLEE thus rejects speaking of "a Reagan Revolution [...] in tax policy." *Ibid.*, p.144. HOGAN reached a similar conclusion at the end of Reagan's presidency. See HOGAN, Joseph: *Reaganomics and Economic Policy*, in: HILL, Dilys et al. (Eds.): *The Reagan Presidency. An Incomplete Revolution?*, London 1990, pp.135–160, here pp.157–158.

¹⁶⁹⁷ "YAF Endorses Reagan Economic Program", in: *New Guard Bulletin*, January 1981, pp. 1; 5.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Cf. "Youth For The Reagan Agenda Newest YAF Project", in: *New Guard Bulletin*, January 1981, p.5.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Chairman's Bulletin, in: *New Guard Bulletin*, January 1981, p.8.

¹⁷⁰⁰ See Robert Heckman to Lyn Nofziger, January 29, 1981. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁷⁰¹ Cf. YAF News Release, February 19, 1981. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 4; Robert Heckman to Lyn Nofziger, February 19, 1981. YAF Records, Box 80, Folder 4.

More significantly, even when the organization felt that Reagan was not acting in the best interests of conservatives, it refrained from openly criticizing his actions. A point in case is Reagan's nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court in 1981. The nomination was criticized sharply by pro-life groups, who claimed that O'Connor had amassed a liberal record in favor of legalized abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment during her career in the Arizona Senate. They questioned Reagan's dedication to what they perceived as the conservative mandate he had received on social issues. Furthermore, the process led them to reevaluate their status vis-à-vis the administration. Reassurances from the president and symbolic access apparently did not translate into political influence.¹⁷⁰²

Pro-life groups were not the only critics: major actors on the Right such as the YAF-affiliated Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips, and Terry Dolan¹⁷⁰³ vehemently opposed the nomination as sign that Reagan apparently did not care much for social issues. YAF itself, however, remained quiet. Seeing that abortion and questions like the ERA had become increasingly important during the 1970s,¹⁷⁰⁴ this may come as somewhat of a surprise. There are two reasons for the lack of public involvement: Firstly, as shown before, in contrast to the single-issue organizations of the Religious Right at least some YAFers proposed a more holistic view of abortion as only one aspect of government interference with the life of the individual. As a moderate conservative, O'Connor might have been an acceptable choice for those YAFers. Secondly, not criticizing the nomination publicly was simply good politics. Demonstrating conservative disunity this early during the Reagan administration could have potentially damaged the president's position. It might also have gambled away the influence YAF had in government. Risking so much appeared unwise as O'Connor was virtually guaranteed confirmation—most senators would not risk voting against the first female Supreme Court Justice. YAF thus voiced its criticism through Nofziger and scolded members like New Hampshire State Chairman and board member Douglas Bourdon who released a press statement attacking the nomination.¹⁷⁰⁵

A few days after O'Connor had been confirmed, Lacy noted to Executive Director Heckman that YAF's approach had been vindicated: "Had we broken away and denounced this nomination as betrayal to conservatism, in view of the Senate action, we would have been left out on a limb and portrayed as ineffective by our detractors."¹⁷⁰⁶ On the other hand, YAF's

¹⁷⁰² Cf. FLOWERS, Prudence: 'A Pro-life Disaster'. The Reagan Administration and the Nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 53/2 (2018), pp.391–414, here pp.397–404.

¹⁷⁰³ See chapter 8.

¹⁷⁰⁴ See chapter 7.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Cf. James Lacy to David Keene, May 27, 1982. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 5.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Id. to Robert Heckman, September 26, 1981. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 4.

behavior could also be interpreted as the group selling out conservative principles to keep its influence in Washington.

The conflicting roles of loyal Reagan supporters and conservative watchdogs characterized YAF's activism in the 1980s. I propose that while national leaders carefully cultivated YAF's (and, by extension, their own) influence in Washington, local activists were less intent on compromising. For example, in 1986, board member Michael Waller relayed that they saw national leaders as "too intent on retaining their cushy jobs in the Reagan administration," becoming "squish[s]" (YAF slang for someone selling out) in the process.¹⁷⁰⁷

The gap between national and local YAFers was exacerbated by the influx of few, but dedicated members in the 80s. In contrast to most members of the board, who were often over 30 years old,¹⁷⁰⁸ (one supporter questioned the continued use of "Young" in the group's name after looking at a list of directors),¹⁷⁰⁹ new YAF recruits were usually in college and did not have stakes in Washington. By joining YAF, they expressed their commitment to principles over party: The College Republicans, perhaps YAF's most important competitor on campus, had also grown into a conservative bastion loyal to Reagan but critical of moderate Republicans. To not alienate potential members, the CR shied away from emphasizing social issues too much because even conservative college students were often moderately liberal on these questions. Instead, they promoted the GOP as the party of economic stability and national security.¹⁷¹⁰ A conservative pragmatist striving to make a career in party politics would have chosen the College Republicans—or, for that matter, the Young Republicans—over YAF.

During Reagan's first term as president, the leadership reliably defended him, as seen in the O'Connor episode. When the President reneged on his tax cuts in 1982 after a projected revenue increase had not materialized,¹⁷¹¹ critics argued that he had left his 'Reaganomics' behind. Virginia State Chairman and future national director David Nolan (not to be confused with David Nolan of Libertarian Party fame) defended the "revenue enhancement proposals" as being aimed mostly at "over-protected special interests."¹⁷¹² The larger part of the previous tax cuts would remain in effect: "Reaganomics is on track, has always been on track, and is working."¹⁷¹³ For an organization advocating 'Zero Government Growth,' YAF was remarkably lenient towards the administration.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Michael Waller to YAF National Board of Directors, October 4, 1986. Box 7, Folder 4.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Cf. Marvin Liebman to Those Concerned, September 2, 1983. William A. Rusher Papers, Box 174, Folder 1.

¹⁷⁰⁹ Eugene Flynn to Sergio Picchio, January 28, 1987. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁷¹⁰ Cf. COULSON, Crocker: Lost Generation. The Politics of Youth, in: *The New Republic*, December 1, 1986, pp.21–22.

¹⁷¹¹ Cf. BROWNLEE, "Reaganomics", pp.138–139.

¹⁷¹² NOLAN, David: In Defense of the President's Economic Program, in: *The New Guard*, Fall 1982, p.4.

¹⁷¹³ *Ibid.*

YAF's strategy, however, did not pay off long-term. While National Chairman Robert Dolan celebrated Reagan's reelection in 1984 as heralding "another four years to steer this nation back to the course charted in the American Proposition by the Founders,"¹⁷¹⁴ behind the scenes, the directors had reason to be concerned: According to a board report, Reagan's campaign team had carefully disassociated the incumbent from "'fringe' groups" like YAF. "They are doing nothing that might associate the President with a known conservative organization [...] There exists a 'freezing out'" of YAF.¹⁷¹⁵ If all the loyalty YAF had shown during the past four years was not rewarded, YAF, according to the author of the report, "must proceed accordingly."¹⁷¹⁶ This did not mean abandoning Reagan or turning into vociferous critics. Still, it appears that under Picchio (1986 onwards), the organization was more willing openly demanding more conservative solutions from the president and his administration.

For example, in a press statement released in October 1986, the board of directors urged Reagan to move more decisively against communism, including invading Nicaragua to support the anti-communist resistance (Contras), breaking off all negotiations with the African National Congress in South Africa, and to intervene in favor of the government in case of a "communist" (=ANC) offensive.¹⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, they wanted the Strategic Defense Initiative to be non-negotiable in any future disarmament talks. The release demonstrates YAF's new approach in finding a place in the conservative spectrum. All those demands could be read as logical extensions of Reagan's own positions. If pressed, a YAF official might have argued that they would already be national policy if not for the intervention of Congress or Republican moderates within the administration. Thus, conservatives could claim that all they were really arguing for was to 'let Reagan be Reagan'. Whether activists actually believed this is hard to establish. Nevertheless, such rhetoric provided a powerful narrative to those who wanted to criticize administration policy without attacking the president directly.

The danger in always one-upping an already conservative administration was that YAF might drift off into extremism. Indeed, former *New Guard* contributor David Brudnoy had warned at the beginning of the decade about the "Howard Philippsian[ization]" of YAF.¹⁷¹⁸ Howard Philipps, head of the Conservative Caucus, early YAF leader, former director of the Office of Economic Opportunity and perennial presidential candidate, was known for his combative, offensive, and uncompromising attitude towards politics. Occasion for Brudnoy's concern was

¹⁷¹⁴ DOLAN, Robert: The Last Campaign, in: *The New Guard*, Winter 1984/85, p.8.

¹⁷¹⁵ YAF Public Relations Report, August 25, 1984, p.2. YAF Records, Box 24, Folder 1.

¹⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷¹⁷ YAF Press Release, October 14, 1986. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 4.

¹⁷¹⁸ David Brudnoy to William Buckley, October 2, 1981. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 10, Folder Brudnoy, David 1979-1981.

a mailing on Henry Kissinger, a long-time YAF nemesis, which Brudnoy's (and Kissinger's) pen pal Buckley had called "one of the most ignorant and defamatory representations I have seen in a lifetime of polemics."¹⁷¹⁹ The piece, ostensibly warning of Kissinger's impending nomination to be Reagan's future Secretary of State, had called détente "self defeating [sic]."¹⁷²⁰ In the Iranian Hostage Crisis, it argued, America was reaping what Kissinger had sown.

Even Randy Teague, Brudnoy reported further, wondered whether his successors were turning the group into a place hostile to libertarians.¹⁷²¹ The irony is palpable: Teague, as executive director, had overseen the events surrounding the 1969 national conference at St. Louis marked by a traditionalist-libertarian split,¹⁷²² and had been viewed by his enemies as the driving force behind the exodus of some of the more radical libertarians from YAF.

Both of Brudnoy's observations can be substantiated by examples of YAF positions and activism in the 1980s. YAF's drift away from the last vestiges of libertarianism can best be observed in its response to the AIDS pandemic and the rising influence of Christian conservatism, while its actions following the revelations of the Iran-Contra scandal show the adoption of positions to the right of Reagan in foreign policy.

As one of several 'victimless crimes,' homosexuality had been a contentious issue among young conservatives of the 1970s, but, apart from some discussion in the *New Guard* and an invitation to Anita Bryant—a singer turned anti-gay-rights-activist—to address the national convention 1977, it was not a central concern for YAF.¹⁷²³ When in the early 1980s a series of new, lethal diseases swept the homosexual communities in the United States, the topic became much more heated. Opponents of decriminalization felt that their view had been vindicated, especially since drug abuse was one of the other factors associated with those diseases. Researchers showed that the diseases were enabled by an underlying condition, the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Although it was soon proven that transmission was not *a priori* related to homosexuality and could occur during blood

¹⁷¹⁹ William Buckley to Robert Heckman, November 3, 1980. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 189, Folder YAF 1977-1981. Buckley had become acquainted with Kissinger during his stint as advisor to the Nixon administration. In spite of their political differences, the two developed a long-standing friendship, see Henry A. Kissinger: Eulogy for William F. Buckley, Jr. [2008], online: <https://www.henryakissinger.com/remembrances/eulogy-for-william-f-buckley-jr/> [02.03.2021].

¹⁷²⁰ "National Opinion Poll on Henry Kissinger", Undated (Summer/Fall 1980), p.2. William F. Buckley, Jr., Papers, Box 189, Folder YAF 1977-1981.

¹⁷²¹ Cf. David Brudnoy to William Buckley, October 2, 1981. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 10, Folder Brudnoy, David 1979-1981.

¹⁷²² See chapter 5.

¹⁷²³ See chapter 7. For the Bryant invitation see Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, June 10–12, 1977, p.4. YAF Records, Box 17, Folder 6. It is likely that there were more of such speaking engagements, but the 13-10 decision of the board suggests that YAF was not monolithic on the issue.

transfusions or heterosexual intercourse, a wave of homophobic hysteria rolled over the United States, often dividing patients into guilty perpetrators (homosexuals and drug abusers) and innocent victims (heterosexuals, persons infected via contaminated blood infusions, especially hemophiliacs).¹⁷²⁴

When discussing homosexuality, opponents of legalization or anti-discrimination measures now stressed not only an abstract moral threat but rather tangible public health concerns. In an article for the *New Guard* entitled “Homosexuality and the AIDS Threat to the Nation’s Blood Supply,” leading anti-gay activist Paul Cameron argued that “the ‘gay community’ consume[d] and distribute[d] fresh germs daily on a world-wide scale: a life threatening, pulsing breeding ring in which the germs never get a chance to dry out.”¹⁷²⁵ Cameron compared homosexuals to rabid dogs, who were quarantined, while “homosexuals diagnosed with AIDS are allowed to continue their cruising habits without restriction.”¹⁷²⁶ He also described people contracting the virus via heterosexual relations as “unsuspecting victims” of homosexuality, “the most promiscuous sexual aberration [sic] in the world.”¹⁷²⁷ Cameron therefore demanded the recriminalization of homosexuality, the closing down of meeting places, and a quarantine of all “homosexual practitioners.”

In his article, Cameron did not mention morals, but descriptors such as “promiscuous” and the characterization of homosexuals as predators infecting “unsuspecting victims” would not have missed their mark. As a dog whistle, public health only thinly veiled the homophobia of its proponents.¹⁷²⁸ The latter prominently came to light in an episode of the mid-80s. A gay rights activist had gotten hold of a YAF songbook containing “The Christmas Song of 1985.”¹⁷²⁹ In it, the authors (three YAFers from the San Diego Area) threatened to the tune of ‘Santa Claus is Coming to Town’:

¹⁷²⁴ See BRIER, Jennifer: *Infectious Ideas. U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis*, Chapel Hill, NC 2009.

¹⁷²⁵ CAMERON, Paul: *Homosexuality and the AIDS Threat to the Nation’s Blood Supply*, in: *The New Guard*, Fall/Winter 1985, p.11.

¹⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.10/12.

¹⁷²⁸ Other examples denying homophobia as their motivation and citing health concerns are RICHARD, Dean: *Stay Out Of My Closet*, in: *The Minuteman Vol. II, No. 7*, October 5, 1987, p.3. YAF Records, Box 70, Folder 8; Gavin Goschinski to Paul Doell, November 4, 1994. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 4 (“I’m not extreme, just informed”; “Examining their life expectancies, sex acts, propensity towards child molestation, and the medical consequences leaves no room for debate on the issue.”).

¹⁷²⁹ The details are fuzzy. The editorial that ‘leaked’ the song claimed that YAF “distributed” the songbook at the Republican Central Committee meeting, which seems rather unlikely. Cal-YAF Chairman Wright claimed that the songbook was acquired by politically hostile non-YAFers who “crashed” a private YAF party and then waited for an opportune moment to publicize it. Jeffrey Wright to George Deukmejian, May 27, 1986, p.1. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 9.

“We’ll blast you fucks asunder,
 We’ll fill your ass with lead.
 We’ll leave you on your boyfriend’s lawn
 And carve Y-A-F on your head!”¹⁷³⁰

The song was subsequently leaked in the gay newspaper *Sentinel*. The editor urged its readers to voice their anger and concern to YAF and to Governor George Deukmejian. Because the latter sat on California-YAF’s advisory board and was embroiled in a re-election campaign, the issue could not simply be brushed away. In a rather half-hearted apology letter “set[ting] the record straight”, California State Chairman Jeffrey Wright mainly disputed that YAFers had knowingly distributed the song and regretted that Deukmejian had been “caught in the cross-fire [sic] of an obvious political ploy to discredit California Young Americans for Freedom.”¹⁷³¹ After the governor pointed out to Wright that nowhere in this ‘apology’ did YAF distance itself from the *contents* of the song, the latter followed up about a month later:

“Although Young Americans for Freedom does not support ‘Gay Rights’ legislation, we most strongly abhor any threats or acts of violence against any American citizen. Although this was intended as a ‘joke’, it was without a doubt in the poorest taste. [...] [T]his conduct will not be tolerated in an organization committed to the ideals of freedom and human decency. [...] Such an incident will not occur again.”¹⁷³²

Despite this retraction, the song was added to future YAF songbooks, joining its destined place amongst other Christmas classics such as “Deck the Halls with Commie Corpses” and “Come All Ye Leftists.”¹⁷³³

In all its distastefulness, the episode revealed a problem YAF was facing. In contrast to the *Rat Fink* scandal of the 1960s,¹⁷³⁴ the organization could not credibly deny that the song did at least partially represent the true sentiments of its authors. Despite Wright’s reassurances, this made it likely that similar instances might occur again. YAF thus became a potential liability for officeholders like Deukmejian. On the one hand, the organization depended on their endorsements (by joining the advisory board or signing fundraising letters) to attract new recruits and donors. On the other, it could not easily turn away members such as the authors of the song. In times when the Young Republicans and College Republicans were viable alternatives for well-tempered conservatives, zealots like them often were YAF’s most dedicated activists. For example, two of the three authors of the song (Barry Jantz and Kevin Parriott) became national directors in the second half of the 1980s. Jantz also later served as state chairman, while Parriott was California YAF vice chairman until 1988.¹⁷³⁵

¹⁷³⁰ MURRAY, Tom: Sour Notes, in: *Sentinel*, May 9, 1986. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 9 I have only provided this one verse for illustration, but the rest of the song is in the same spirit.

¹⁷³¹ Jeffrey Wright to George Deukmejian, May 27, 1986. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 9.

¹⁷³² Id. to George Deukmejian, June 26, 1986. YAF Records, Box 1, Folder 9.

¹⁷³³ The Songbook. “Glory Be, There Goes Another” or Songs of the Militant Extreme, 1987, pp. 15; 34; 45. YAF Records, Box 28, Folder 4.

¹⁷³⁴ See chapter 2.

¹⁷³⁵ Cf. Jeffrey Wright to Kevin Parriott, March 4, 1988. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 4.

The episode also stands for another YAF phenomenon of the 1980s: the sharp decline of libertarian and concurrent rise of cultural traditionalist influence in the organization. Libertarians would likely have resisted threatening violence against individuals suspected of purportedly morally ambiguous behavior and might have started an internal backlash against the song. But the influx of religious and cultural conservatives mobilized in the Culture Wars had gradually withered away their influence. In the early 1970s, the national leadership repeatedly debated on whether YAF should take a position on abortion, as the membership was evenly split on the question. In the 1980s, it distributed the “Joseph Mengele Award,”¹⁷³⁶ commemorating the work the recipient had done “in using his medical skills in disposing of unwanted people. Although Dr. Mengele is no longer with us, his spirit lives on today thanks to the work and dedication of abortionists such as” the recipient.¹⁷³⁷ The award certificate featured a picture of Mengele and a Caduceus resting on a Swastika. It was framed by Swastikas and coat hangers. That the organization’s official newsletter encouraged chapters to distribute the award shows that by then, anti-abortion radicals dominated its ranks.

A particularly poignant example that explicitly links these developments to the Religious Right is the pamphlet “The Eternal Truths,” published by San Diego County YAF. Its preamble stated:

“So then, all you hardcore conservative activists, all Republicans, all CRA members, libertarians and Christian Coalitioners, all who fight for the most conservative of conservative causes, realize this: That unless all your positions, unless all your actions are carried out for the expressed purpose of glorifying God by obeying His revealed will, and His will alone, you are utterly adrift, without any foundation whatsoever, and just as guilty as the most blood-thirsty communist of being a self-willed, tyrannical monster.”¹⁷³⁸

By posing uncompromising devotion as a litmus test for legitimate political views, the authors, although nominally addressing diverse strands of conservatism, specifically targeted libertarians. “Libertarians,” they wrote in a subsequent section of the piece, “hold somewhat of a common ground with sodomites and prostitutes.”¹⁷³⁹ Because God was the real victim of drug abuse, homosexuality etc., since His laws were allegedly rejected through them, no such thing as victimless crimes existed. Indeed, by incurring God’s wrath, the whole society fell victim to such behavior: “Since we have not punished non-repentant sodomites for their acts of treason against God, we the citizens of the United States must deal with one of the covenantal curses, a plague, in this case AIDS. Following the libertarian line has put us foursquare under the very curse of God.”¹⁷⁴⁰

¹⁷³⁶ Known as the ‘Angel of Death,’ Mengele had been a physician at the Auschwitz concentration camp. He had been involved in the selection of prisoners for gassing and performed deadly experiments on humans, especially twins. In June 1985, shortly before the award was created, his remains had been discovered near São Paulo, Brazil.

¹⁷³⁷ “Joseph Mengele Award”, Undated (1985). YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 8; “YAF Launches Mengele ‘Award’”, in: Leadership Bulletin, June 21, 1985, p.6. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 8.

¹⁷³⁸ “The Eternal Truths”, Undated (1980s), p.1. YAF Records, Box 62, Folder 2.

¹⁷³⁹ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.6–7.

Clearly, one holding such views would strive to exclude different-minded individuals from the organization. The pamphlet aims to do so by adding statements to the Sharon Statement that would reflect the United States being a Christian Theocracy “whether anyone wants to realize it or not!”¹⁷⁴¹ For example, it wanted to add as the first “eternal truth”¹⁷⁴² of the Sharon Statement “that God has covenantally established four forms of government: Self, Family, Church, and State.” Regarding the legitimate purposes of the latter, the authors added the protection and worship of the “Triune God of the Bible” to the preservation of internal order, the administration of justice, and national defense.¹⁷⁴³

Whereas in the late 1960s/early 1970s, libertarians and anarchists had challenged the Sharon Statement, demanding revisions or formulating alternatives like the Tranquil Statement,¹⁷⁴⁴ now ultra-traditionalists attacked the fusionist credo of YAF. Both proposals were spearheaded by activists from California, although the San Diego/Orange County area had been a traditionalist stronghold even in 1969. The erosion of the libertarian-traditionalist alliance can, however, also be observed in other places. For example, “The Right House,” a residential community for conservative students at Georgetown University dissolved over ideological differences. As a pilot project, the house was meant to facilitate urgently needed long-term continuity of YAF/conservative campus presence. It all went downhill when national board member Michael Centanni started loudly playing pornography on his TV, angering his mostly catholic traditionalist roommates. When the latter forced changes in the house rules prohibiting “sexual licentiousness,” Centanni and former YAF vice chair Floyd Brown marked the project failed and forced the inhabitants to vacate the premises.¹⁷⁴⁵ The incident might illustrate things to come. As Christian traditionalists’ impulse was to proscribe deviating lifestyles (represented by Centanni), they were willing to employ higher authorities like government (or, in this case, the house rules) to do so. Libertarians who feared the Religious Right would erect a quasi-theocracy once they held the reins of power could feel vindicated by the story of the Right House. Despite such (anecdotal) evidence, there still were libertarians in YAF during the second part of the 1980s. Their national influence, however, was almost entirely relegated to economic matters.

In the realm of foreign policy, YAF continued its anti-communist course. In addition to the well-established calls for higher defense spending (finally finding sympathetic ears in the

¹⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁷⁴² The Sharon Statement (1960), p.229.

¹⁷⁴³ “The Eternal Truths”, Undated (1980s), p.8. YAF Records, Box 62, Folder 2.

¹⁷⁴⁴ See chapter 5.

¹⁷⁴⁵ PELTON, Tom: Conservatives Dissolve Right House, in: *The Hoya*, November 14, 1986. YAF Records, Box 57, Folder 4.

Reagan Administration), one small Central American country captured the attention of its activists: After the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1978/1979 had deposed the pro-American dictatorial regime of the Somoza family, the leftist Sandinista National Liberation Front, who had led the revolution, tried to enact sweeping reforms, e.g. mandatory schooling and land reform. This brought former Somoza loyalists and reactionary forces on the scene, who formed counterrevolutionary groups, the Contras. Lacking regional strongholds and broad support from the populace, they waged a guerilla war against the Sandinistas from neighboring Honduras.

YAF's and the conservative response to the events in Nicaragua shared some similarities with their positions during the Vietnam War: Although the Sandinistas encompassed diverse political ideologies ranging from Marxism-Leninism to nationalism and liberation theology, like the (communist-dominated) NLF, American conservatives often described them simply as "communist."¹⁷⁴⁶ They also applied the Domino Theory to Central America, believing that the Sandinistas would strive to export their revolution to El Salvador and Guatemala, which would trigger a "Communist onslaught" gradually enveloping the whole region.¹⁷⁴⁷ As their predecessors had done with the (A)RVN, YAFers naïvely lionized the Contras, referring to them as 'Freedom Fighters,' and ignored their bloody repression of the local populace as well as reports of their criminal activities.¹⁷⁴⁸ For example, board member Michael Waller traveled to Nicaragua, met up with rebel leaders, and spoke enthusiastically to YAF groups about his experiences.¹⁷⁴⁹

In accordance with what became known as the Reagan Doctrine, i.e. the support of pro-democratic opposition groups in the Global South,¹⁷⁵⁰ the administration, parts of which, including the president, shared YAF's view, supported the Contras.¹⁷⁵¹ However, whereas conservatives feared another Vietnam in the sense of a communist takeover, thousands of political refugees, and the loss of an important ally, opponents of assistance drew their own conclusions from America's longest war: They had learned that financial and material assistance could easily escalate into military engagement and predicted another protracted conflict fought merely in another jungle. Confronted with the aggressive anti-communist rhetoric characteristic for the early Reagan period, they strove to nip such a development in the

¹⁷⁴⁶ Advice and Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.7. Cf. SIEKMEIER, James: *The Iran-Contra Affair*, in: JOHNS, Andrew (Ed.): *A Companion to Ronald Reagan*, Chichester 2015, 321-338, here 223.

¹⁷⁴⁷ Advice and Dissent, in: *The New Guard*, Summer 1979, p.7.

¹⁷⁴⁸ See for example BRINKLEY, Joel: *Nicaragua Rebels Accused of Abuses. Senator Predicts Investigation of Reports of Atrocities*, in: *The New York Times*, December 27, 1984, pp. A1; A13.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.453.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Pro-democratic was interpreted both as a shibboleth for anti-communist and as an umbrella term encompassing groups opposed to authoritarian anti-communist regimes, cf. WALCHER, Dustin: *The Reagan Doctrine*, in: JOHNS, Andrew (Ed.): *A Companion to Ronald Reagan*, Chichester 2015, pp.339-358, here pp.340-341.

¹⁷⁵¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.342.

bud by placing restrictions on American aid to the Contras. A series of amendments in the first half of the 1980s—collectively named “Bolan Amendment” after the first of their kind—barred the government and its institutions (notably the CIA and the Department of Defense) from providing military assistance to the Contras.¹⁷⁵²

The Reagan administration subsequently circumvented these provisions by illegally diverting funds to the Nicaraguan resistance. The most significant of these operations became known as the Iran-Contra scandal. The scheme started out in 1981 as a deal in which the US was supplying supposedly moderate elements in the Islamic Republic with arms funneled through Israel. In return, those elements would pressure Hezbollah to release American hostages in Lebanon.¹⁷⁵³ Although higher-ups, including President Reagan, gave their blessing to the general concept, specific operations were often handled by Lt. Con. Oliver North, who increasingly acted on his own initiative. It was North, then, who decided to funnel a surplus generated during the arms trading scheme to the Contras.¹⁷⁵⁴

These activities were uncovered through leaks in the fall of 1986. As Reagan established a special commission (the Tower Commission) to investigate the role of the National Security Council staff (among them North) in the affair, top level government officials were already undertaking the destruction of damning material. Thus, to this date, the story, e.g. extent of the president’s knowledge of the details, remains incomplete.¹⁷⁵⁵

The scandal caused the largest drop in Reagan’s approval rating during his presidency.¹⁷⁵⁶ However, while the administration tried to distance itself from the events and survived the scandal relatively unscathed, YAF, who had urged the administration to “invade Nicaragua” only weeks before,¹⁷⁵⁷ and other conservative groups doubled down. To them, the affair was proof that the Reagan administration kept its anticommunist promises. Where liberals attacked North as a “cowboy diplomat and a reckless ideologue,” conservatives heralded him as a “superpatriot who valiantly pushed the limits of the law.”¹⁷⁵⁸

In the late 1980s, support of North became one of, if not *the* central issue of YAF.¹⁷⁵⁹ Executive Director Christopher Long even wrote to Vice President Bush, front runner for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988, urging him to support North and to prove to conservatives that

¹⁷⁵² Cf. SIEKMEIER, *The Iran-Contra Affair*, 323-324.

¹⁷⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 321-324.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 330-331.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 328-329.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Cf. PARK, Eunkyung; KOSICKI, Gerald: *Presidential Support During the Iran-Contra Affair*, in: *Communication Research Vol. 22/2* (1995), pp.207–236, here p.208.

¹⁷⁵⁷ YAF Press Release, October 14, 1986. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 4.

¹⁷⁵⁸ SIEKMEIER, *The Iran-Contra Affair*, 331.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.464; YAF Executive Director Report, Undated (June 1987). YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 7.

a Bush ticket was a valid choice for them.¹⁷⁶⁰ Local activists, too, rallied to the support of the embattled colonel. For example, during his trial, “YAF members braved the winter cold to show their support for a man who led their fight for freedom around the world.”¹⁷⁶¹ After North was convicted of three felony counts in 1989, YAF lobbied for his pardon, drawing in question whether it could be just that an honest family man should be punished for his service to the country.¹⁷⁶²

North’s conviction was eventually overturned on a technicality. He used his newfound hero status in conservative circles as steppingstone for a career in politics, culminating in his presidency of the National Rifle Association in 2018.

The continued support of North by YAF proved once again that YAF’s anti-government rhetoric was all bark and no bite. During Watergate, the group had initially defended President Nixon as victim of a witch hunt, but ultimately was the first major conservative group to demand his resignation.¹⁷⁶³ The case of North could have served as the paramount example of unaccountable government bureaucrats running rampant—a scenario YAF had warned against for over two decades. Because his actions served their political agenda, however, they turned him into a hero fighting a recalcitrant Congress for the good of the American people.

9.4 The Death of a Movement

Historian and journalist Rick Perlstein once mused in a panel stuffed with YAFers—the topic at hand was the Goldwater campaign—that in the age of Clinton, “the notion of conservative Republicans seeing as their first duty divesting themselves of the power they have been given seems perfectly absurd.”¹⁷⁶⁴ He called the Republicans of the 21st century “less the party of Goldwater, and more the party of Watergate.” In the case of YAF, the statement could be slightly modified: At the end of the 1980s, it had become less the party of Goldwater, and more the party of the Iran-Contra scandal. The fusionist project begun in 1960 had been eroded by anti-communist and ultra-traditionalist zealotry. Accordingly, the organization’s motto adopted in 1963—“Individual freedom is our heritage; preservation of that freedom our creed; world freedom our goal.”¹⁷⁶⁵—was changed to “God, Family, Country” shortly before YAF’s formal dissolution in 1994.¹⁷⁶⁶

¹⁷⁶⁰ Christopher Long to George Bush, March 18, 1988. YAF Records, Box 2, Folder 4.

¹⁷⁶¹ “Pardon North Now!” (YAF Flyer), Undated (1989/1990). YAF Records, Box 61, Folder 4.

¹⁷⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶³ See chapter 6.

¹⁷⁶⁴ PERLSTEIN, Rick: ‘I Didn’t Like Nixon Until Watergate’. *The Conservative Movement Now* [2005], online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/i-didnt-like-nixon-until-_b_11735 [06.08.2020].

¹⁷⁶⁵ Minutes of YAF Board Meeting, September 7, 1963, p.8. YAF Records, Box 12, Folder 1.

¹⁷⁶⁶ See for example YAF-Flyer, Undated (1994). YAF Records, Box 62, Folder 2.

Another member of the panel, Lee Edwards, who had coined the term “New Right” in the 1960s and prominently demanded a conservative establishment then,¹⁷⁶⁷ lamented in 1989: “There are just too many conservatives in Washington... Go home, young conservatives, go home.”¹⁷⁶⁸ But the overabundance of activists over the age of 30 with stakes in Washington was not the most pressing issue for YAF anymore. The young conservatives had returned home, it was just that their home was different from the one Edwards had known. YAF had refocused on campus activities. Writer Clancy Sigal observed in 1990:

“Originally shaped in the cerebral image of its wealthy, intellectual East Coast founder, YAF has increasingly emerged as a California-style populist group, hellbent on more street action and fewer hallway debates [...]”¹⁷⁶⁹

YAF always had been primarily a *political action* group. But with the demise of *New Guard*, YAF’s most important forum for philosophical debate was gone and the balance shifted further to political activism. Furthermore, the magazine had policed the boundaries of acceptable positions and those that were deemed extremist even by YAF standards. This exacerbated the shift away from fusionism in its original sense and gave way to more recent or niche forms of conservatism. For example, one activist interviewed in the same article claimed that he had been brought to conservatism by the John Birch Society classic *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*.¹⁷⁷⁰ YAF alumni, in contrast, expressed “quiet unease at YAF’s increasing ‘Christianization.’”¹⁷⁷¹ Steve Wiley, a longtime activist and (with Cannon) elder statesman on the board until 1989 worried about “‘new influx from the religious right—the Christians are infiltrating us, and that isn’t what YAF is, or used to be, about.’”¹⁷⁷²

These trends, combined with a contempt for ‘sellouts’ shaped by the events of the first half of the 1980s ultimately drove YAF into the camp of paleoconservative Pat Buchanan.¹⁷⁷³ After the collapse of Communism and the Eastern bloc, many YAFers, especially in California (the largest remaining state organization by far), embraced non-interventionism, claiming that military engagements like Operation Desert Storm did not serve American interests and thus violated the Sharon Statement.¹⁷⁷⁴ With anti-communism out of the picture, traditionalism was

¹⁷⁶⁷ EDWARDS, Lee: *The New Right. Its Face, Its Future*, in: *The New Guard*, July 1962, pp.6–7; EDWARDS, Lee: *Needed: A Conservative Establishment*, in: *The New Guard*, June 1962, pp.2; 7. See also chapter 1.

¹⁷⁶⁸ HAYWOOD, Charles: *Whither the Conservative Youth Movement?*, in: *The Intransigent* Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 1989, p.3. YAF Records, Box 69, Folder 5.

¹⁷⁶⁹ SIGAL, Clancy: *Doing the Right Thing*, in: *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, April 29, 1990, p.26.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, p.44.

¹⁷⁷³ Gavin Goschinski to All Active Board Members, December 10, 1994. YAF Records, Box 7, Folder 10. YAF had already considered Buchanan a valid presidential choice in 1986, cf. *Minutes of YAF Board Meeting*, October 4, 1986, p.1. YAF Records, Box 18, Folder 7.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.467–469.

the only remaining of the three original pillars of YAF conservatism. However, by 1992, the organization had by all practical means ceased to exist.

Sergio Picchio and his competent executive director Steve Baldwin had managed to internally stabilize the organization and direct its attention from fundraising back to the campus. They could not solve the problem of YAF's increasing irrelevance, however. In 1988, California was the last remaining state with more than 10 chartered chapters.¹⁷⁷⁵ By 1989, national YAF had less than 2,000 members.¹⁷⁷⁶ Furthermore, once Picchio announced that he would not seek re-election in 1989, infighting broke out again. Since the outgoing chairman had not chosen a preferred successor,¹⁷⁷⁷ his vice chairman, Jeffrey Wright of California, and Tom Lizardo of New York competed for the position. The convention was set to take place in San Diego, prompting some Eastern activists to allege a "California Conspiracy."¹⁷⁷⁸ As so often before, the conflict was settled behind the scenes. Baldwin's former right hand and successor Christopher Long was removed from office to make room for Lizardo, who in turn withdrew his candidacy for chairman. Additionally, four of the senior board members, including former chairman Cannon, were purged, probably because they did not sign the oath to vote for Long's removal.¹⁷⁷⁹ Others only accepted "with deepest personal regret" or "in the name of YAF unity."¹⁷⁸⁰

When Long got wind of the conspiracy, he tried to work out a compromise that would forego purges (apart from Steve Wiley who, according to Long, planned to retire anyway), that would make Lizardo chairman.¹⁷⁸¹ The latter, however, stuck with the original deal and replaced Long as executive director. Long then petitioned conservative elder statesmen to intervene. In an internal memo, Marvin Liebman probably summed up the feelings of most of his peers when he wrote: "Personally, after more than 30 years, I'm rather weary."¹⁷⁸²

The election of Wright at the national convention 1989 sent YAF into free fall. Lizardo started a fight with YAF's fundraiser (Baldwin: "for reasons I can't fathom")¹⁷⁸³ and cancelled YAF's lease, leaving the group without home nor funds.¹⁷⁸⁴ As several directors resigned, Wright did not fill all the vacancies on the board. One year after his election, 14 out of 22 members of the

¹⁷⁷⁵ YAF Chapter List, Undated (1988). YAF Records, Box 47, Folder 2.

¹⁷⁷⁶ YAF Membership Report, November 1989. YAF Records, Box 25, Folder 4. Of the 1,884 memberships, only 1,476 were regular two-year members.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Christopher Long to Marvin Liebman, March 9, 1989, pp.1–2. YAF Records, Box 22, Folder 17.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Steve Baldwin to YAFers, May 5, 1989. YAF Records, Box 29, Folder 5.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.463–464.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Christopher Long Removal Oath, February 24, 1989. YAF Records, Box 23, Folder 11.

¹⁷⁸¹ Cf. Christopher Long to Marvin Liebman, March 9, 1989, pp.4–5. YAF Records, Box 22, Folder 17; Steve Baldwin to Sergio Picchio, May 30, 1989. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 2.

¹⁷⁸² Marvin Liebman to William Buckley et al., March 10, 1989, p.2. YAF Records, Box 22, Folder 17.

¹⁷⁸³ Steve Baldwin to Sergio Picchio, May 30, 1989. YAF Records, Box 3, Folder 2.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Cf. Michael Centanni to Board of Directors, June 7/8, 1989. YAF Records, Box 8, Folder 4.

board as constituted at the convention were gone and Lizardo's tenure as executive director was over.¹⁷⁸⁵ Wright even purged Marvin Liebman from the executive advisory board, which the latter forwarded to his peers with the handwritten comment: "I've waited about 30 years, but I finally made it. I've been purged!!!"¹⁷⁸⁶

Wright was reelected at the 1991 national convention after ruling the candidacy of his only opponent invalid for allegedly faulty paperwork.¹⁷⁸⁷ He then, according to THORBURN, lost all interest in the organization in 1992, which, for all practical purposes ended its history.¹⁷⁸⁸ YAF alumnus and former fundraiser Richard Delgaudio started a failed reorganization attempt at CPAC 1994, but after the new board had made no serious progress, some members found out that YAF's corporate charter had expired. After 34 years of conservative activism, YAF was officially dead.¹⁷⁸⁹ Some former board members founded successor organizations that led nowhere. Nevertheless, some local chapters and state organizations continued to 'fight the good fight' independently.

More recently, former board member and executive director Ron Robinson revived Young Americans for Freedom as the chapter affiliate of his Young America's Foundation (also abbreviated YAF).¹⁷⁹⁰ Because Robinson could rely on an existing infrastructure, this undertaking was somewhat more successful. For the first time in decades, for example, new *New Guard* editions were produced. However, this new YAF bears no organizational resemblance to the 'old' YAF, whose history as an organization ended shortly after their hero Ronald Reagan left office.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.466.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Jeffrey Wright to Marvin Liebman, August 21, 1989. William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers, Box 190, Folder YAF 1989.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Cf. THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, p.469.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.470.

¹⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.470–471.

¹⁷⁹⁰ For a YAF's history as the affiliate of the Foundation, see ID.: *Young Americans for Freedom. Igniting a movement*, Reston, VA 2017.

Epilogue

In 1988, Dana Rohrabacher, who had served as speechwriter for Reagan throughout his presidency, got elected to Congress, representing parts of Los Angeles and Orange Counties until his eventual electoral defeat in 2018.¹⁷⁹¹ During his time in the Reagan administration, Rohrabacher had been instrumental in formulating the Reagan Doctrine. Now he felt it was time to get some first-hand experience in its implementation. After his election, he travelled to Afghanistan and joined the native resistance (once again labeled ‘freedom fighters’ by conservatives) against the Soviet invaders. In a way, Rohrabacher thus became the first literal ‘conservative mujahid’.

Back in Congress, he quickly established a reputation as both staunch supporter of and expert regarding the Afghan people. When one of his erstwhile brothers-in-arms, anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, was assassinated by supporters of Al-Qaeda, Rohrabacher felt that a serious threat to US national security was imminent. Given his reputation, he was granted an audience with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. The meeting was scheduled for the very next day—September 11, 2001.

Although YAF had disappeared from the scene for several years by then, its legacy survived in people like Rohrabacher. One of his congressional colleagues—former California YAF comrade Jim Sensenbrenner, now a Republican congressman from Wisconsin—introduced the by now infamous domestic response to the terrorist attacks that happened on that fateful 11th September, the USA PATRIOT act.¹⁷⁹² Rohrabacher voted for the measure in the House, as did the other YAF alumni present: Christopher Cox (R-Ca.), James Kolbe (R-Az.), ‘Jimmy’ Duncan (R-Tn.), Donald Manzullo (R-Ill.), Peter King (R-NY.), and Ed Royce (R-Ca.).¹⁷⁹³ In the Senate, future Attorney General Jeff Sessions (R-Al.) gave his affirmative.¹⁷⁹⁴

For an organization that never had more than a mere 25,000 official members (and probably never more than 75,000 in total),¹⁷⁹⁵ the size of the ‘congressional YAF delegation’ in 2001 is impressive in itself. This, of course, is only an excerpt of YAF alumni in Congress: more had served previously, and some are Representatives to this day. Additionally, dozens of alumni

¹⁷⁹¹ The following is largely based on SCHULMAN, Daniel: Dana Rohrabacher’s War [2010], online: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/04/dana-rohrabacher-afghanistan-war/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁷⁹² H.R.3162 - 107th Congress (2001-2002): Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001 [2001], online: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/3162> [18.05.2021].

¹⁷⁹³ Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives: Roll Call 398, Bill Number: H. R. 3162, 107th Congress, 1st Session [2001], online: <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2001398> [18.05.2021].

¹⁷⁹⁴ U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 107th Congress – 1st Session [2001], online: https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=107&session=1&vote=00313 [18.05.2021]. Sessions was a YAF member while studying at Huntington College, cf. THORBURN, A Generation Awakes, p.499.

¹⁷⁹⁵ For the problem in determining accurate membership numbers, see chapter 5.

were state representatives or senators.¹⁷⁹⁶ For example, long-time Hawaii YAF chairman and national director Sam Slom represented the 9th district as Hawaiian state senator for 20 years from 1996 to 2016. Before his eventual defeat, he was the only Republican in the State Senate, serving as minority ‘leader’ and on all standing committees.¹⁷⁹⁷

YAF’s conservative cadres, however, contributed to more than just public service. Many of today’s influential conservative institutions were (partly) founded or influenced by YAFers.¹⁷⁹⁸ Most prominent is the American Conservative Union (ACU), whose origins lie in 1964, when YAF and other conservatives wanted to establish a ‘graduate’ organization for activists that were (or felt) too old for YAF. Today, it is mostly known as a lobby organization and host of the Conservative Political Action Conference, an annual gathering of the Who’s Who of conservatism. Featured speakers in the past included Presidents Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump. Other YAF-founded institutions include Citizens United (Floyd Brown), which won a landmark Supreme Court case against the Federal Election Commission¹⁷⁹⁹ that struck down restrictions on independent expenditure campaigns and gave rise to so-called Super PACs; the Philadelphia Society (Don Lipsett), an important forum for conservative ideas; on the libertarian spectrum Liberty International/the Society for Individualism (Dave Walter/Don Ernsberger), one of the most important libertarian membership organizations; the Libertarian Party (David Nolan); the Cato Institute (Ed Crane), and the Mises Institute (Lew Rockwell), perhaps the premier libertarian think tanks. YAFer Allan Gottlieb founded the Second Amendment Foundation, which grew out of YAF’s ad hoc Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

If they did not start conservative organizations themselves, YAF alumni often held important positions in them. Former national chairman David Keene was chairman both of the ACU and the Second Amendment Foundation’s largest competitor, the National Rifle Association. Another example is the Heritage Foundation, one of the most important conservative think tanks. At the time of this writing, *New Guard*’s founding editor Lee Edwards serves as Distinguished Fellow in Conservative Thought, while Robert Moffit, previously ‘resident intellectual’ at YAF, is the Senior Fellow for Health Policy Studies. In positions as leaders and founders, YAFers demonstrated their *esprit de corps* by hiring other alumni or members, even former political enemies. As Michael Thompson related, YAF in this regard was similar to a

¹⁷⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp.500–503.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Samuel Slom - Ballotpedia, online: https://ballotpedia.org/Samuel_Slom [18.05.2021].

¹⁷⁹⁸ For a comprehensive list, see THORBURN, *A Generation Awakes*, pp.488–498.

¹⁷⁹⁹ *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 558 U.S. 310 [2010], online: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/558/310/> [18.05.2021].

fraternity. Alumni like himself considered YAF membership an important factor when reviewing applications for open positions.¹⁸⁰⁰

If Young Americans for Freedom dissolved in 1994, the organization therefore still reached its goal of creating a conservative establishment that successfully overcame what YAFers perceived as the liberal dominance of the 1960s.¹⁸⁰¹ But the movement's legacy lies not only in institutions and people, but also in ideas and conflicts. I will explore this legacy through a brief recap of the topics covered in this book.

Questions of 'extremism' plagued the conservative movement in the early 1960s. Especially YAF's relation to the John Birch Society was subjected to scrutiny by both members and outsiders. While both parties respected each other as dedicated (anti-communist) activists, YAF ultimately tried to keep its distance as to not let its 'respectable' conservatism be tarnished by the conspirational style of the JBS. The presidency of Donald Trump, a dedicated conspiracy theorist, marks the return of the extremism issue with a vengeance. In his run for the presidency, Trump enjoyed the support of far- and alt-right fringe groups. As in the 1960s, figures around the *National Review* magazine tried to police the boundaries of acceptable conservatism. Its editor, Jonah Goldberg, for example, warned about a Trump "cult of personality" that was corrupting the Right.¹⁸⁰² As Buckley had done with Welch, Goldberg questioned the capabilities of the movement's leader, in this case the President himself. Conservatives, he argued, could not seriously support Trump's "whole whiplash-inducing spectacle: the unfiltered, impulsive tweeting, bizarre interview non sequiturs, glib insults, and distractions."¹⁸⁰³ It turns out they could.¹⁸⁰⁴ Four years of conservative support for Trump later, the issue of extremism looms even larger in the face of a Trump-supported quasi-insurrection and sustained attacks on the democratic process. Whether today's conservatives will be able to shed images of extremism as successful as their predecessors in YAF remains an open question.

In the 1960s, conservatives developed ostensibly colorblind arguments against the Civil Rights Movement's demands for integration. This rhetoric strategy persists to date. Libertarians, for

¹⁸⁰⁰ Cf. Michael THOMPSON. Interview by Georg WOLFF, Alexandria, VA 08.10.2018.

¹⁸⁰¹ EDWARDS, Lee: Needed: A Conservative Establishment, in: *The New Guard*, June 1962, pp.2; 7.

¹⁸⁰² GOLDBERG, Jonah: Trump's Cult of Personality Is Corrupting Conservatism, in: *National Review*, 12.12.2015, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/g-file/donald-trump-populism-corruption-conservatism/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁸⁰³ ID.: The Right Can't Defend Trump's Behavior, in: *National Review*, 09.02.2017, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/02/donald-trump-conservative-defenders-behavior-indefensible/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁸⁰⁴ In the CPAC straw poll for the 2020 presidential elections, over 80% supported Trump while in 2021, after his defeat, 68% favored him as the 2024 GOP presidential candidate. Cf. DINAN, Stephen: CPAC Straw Poll: Biden Biggest Threat to Trump, in: *The Washington Times*, 02.03.2019, online: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/mar/2/cpac-straw-poll-biden-biggest-threat-to-trump/> [19.05.2021]; PLOTT, Elaina; GOLDMACHER, Shane: Trump Wins CPAC Straw Poll, but Only 68 Percent Want Him to Run Again, in: *The New York Times*, 28.02.2021, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/28/us/politics/cpac-straw-poll-2024-presidential-race.html> [19.05.2021].

example, decried the alleged abridgment of individual rights to further equality. The term ‘special rights’ (for minorities) that conveys that sentiment was subsequently employed (among others) against affirmative action, feminism, and various LGBTQ movements.¹⁸⁰⁵ Traditionalists’ claims that giving in to the demands of protestors employing civil disobedience tactics would encourage further unrest or rioting echo in debates about the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and its demands to defund the police.¹⁸⁰⁶ Furthermore, although less common, conservatives still employ red-baiting against their opponents. A recent example is former Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal calling attention to the Marxism of leading BLM activists.¹⁸⁰⁷ Without further elaborating on the fact, Jindal seems to imply that BLM would abuse questions of racism and civil rights to further other agendas, a common claim of civil rights opponents in the 1960s.

Conservatives’ support of the Vietnam War leaves a mixed legacy. While Reagan during his presidency somewhat successfully rehabilitated the American effort,¹⁸⁰⁸ the failure to achieve victory also gave rise to anti-interventionism on the Right, most notably among autonomous libertarian groups. After the end of the Cold War, YAF-supported paleoconservatives were skeptical of neo-conservatives’ crusades for democracy abroad, reminded perhaps of the prospects for a democratic Vietnam that never came to fruition. Still, of the YAF alumni in Congress, who were socialized during the Cold War, only Jimmy Duncan voted against the invasion of Iraq,¹⁸⁰⁹ even though some, like Rohrabacher, later expressed their regrets over an invasion that seemed to repeat many mistakes of the Vietnam War.¹⁸¹⁰ Whether the current non-interventionist (and unilateralist) mood is only another swing of the pendulum or will leave a lasting impact on conservatives’ foreign policy remains to be seen.

In any case, attacks on student radicals (and intellectuals in general), which came to the forefront through debates over Vietnam, remain a cornerstone of conservative rhetoric. While the turmoil of the 1960s and early 1970s has subsided, the pages of *National Review* still chide college students as intending to “turn American higher education away from the search for truth

¹⁸⁰⁵ Cf. DUDAS, Jeffrey: In the Name of Equal Rights: “Special” Rights and the Politics of Resentment in Post-Civil Rights America, in: *Law & Society Review* Vol. 39/4 (2005), pp.723–758.

¹⁸⁰⁶ See for example FRENCH, David: Anti-Cop Rioters Don’t Care about ‘Justice’, in: *National Review*, 22.09.2016, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/09/black-lives-matter-rioters-rule-law-under-attack/> [19.05.2021].

¹⁸⁰⁷ Cf. JINDAL, Bobby: Looking for Racism, in: *National Review*, 31.10.2020, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/10/looking-for-racism/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁸⁰⁸ Cf. FARBER, The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism, p.161.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Final Vote Results for Roll Call 455 [2002], online: <https://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll455.xml> [19.05.2021].

¹⁸¹⁰ Cf. SCHULMAN, Daniel: Dana Rohrabacher’s War [2010], online: <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/04/dana-rohrabacher-afghanistan-war/> [18.05.2021].

and into an engine of political change.”¹⁸¹¹ Such language could have been directly taken from a late 1960s YAF flyer. Another article sounds like a piece of Movement for Quality Education literature when it criticizes the alleged leftist bias of many college programs.¹⁸¹²

Much has been made of the (alleged) libertarian-traditionalist split of YAF in 1969. Parts of the autonomous libertarian movement still see the national convention in St. Louis as its birthplace. Yet the GOP, even after it was captured by conservatives, seems to have had no problem in accommodating libertarians. People like Ron and his son Rand Paul have held elected offices on GOP tickets. Libertarian ‘revolts’ like the Tea Party Movement attest to ongoing tensions within the Right yet did not seriously threaten right-wing unity. Even religious conservatives like Richard Viguerie heralded the Tea Party Movement as a positive development, as its populist impulses would ensure the vitality of conservatism for years to come.¹⁸¹³ Still, the temporary success of the Tea Party reflects the development of libertarianism within YAF, as its supporters were first and foremost economic, not social libertarians. During its existence, then, anti-establishmentarianism became the principal *modus operandi* of the Tea Party, which quickly lost the support of the libertarians coalesced around institutions like the Cato and Mises institutes.¹⁸¹⁴

The Tea Party also revitalized debates about the relationship between conservatism and the GOP. Its activists characterized parts of the party establishment as ‘Republicans in name only’ (RINOs), which is not a far cry from YAF’s critiques of ‘Modern Republicanism’ in the 1960s and 1970s (one need only think about the movement’s relation to Nelson Rockefeller). It will be interesting to see whether conservatives reevaluate their ties to the GOP (or vice versa) in the aftermath of the Trump presidency.

Lastly, the arguments developed by YAF and the conservative movement in the ensuing Culture Wars of the 1970s still cast their shadow over today’s US society. Although societal norms have progressed largely irrespective of conservative objections, the general framing of cultural issues as questions “about how power and resources were to be distributed”¹⁸¹⁵ persists.

¹⁸¹¹ LEEF, George: The Decline of the American University — as Forecast in 1968, in: National Review, 12.05.2021, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-decline-of-the-american-university-as-forecast-in-1968/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁸¹² See e.g. REDSTONE, Ilana: We’re Failing Our Students, and It Hurts Us All, in: National Review, 12.02.2019, online: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/02/colleges-universities-left-wing-bubbles-failing-students/> [18.05.2021].

¹⁸¹³ 50th Anniversary of the Sharon Statement [22.03.2021], [1:29:00–1:40:40], online: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?295406-1/50th-anniversary-sharon-statement> [22.03.2021].

¹⁸¹⁴ Cf. STEINREICH, Dale: The Tea Party, Ten Years Later [2017], online: <https://mises.org/wire/tea-party-ten-years-later> [19.05.2021]. Another view was presented by YAF alumnus David Boaz, who rejected the label “libertarian” for the Tea Party, but had high hopes for it as a “libertarian force” in US politics. BOAZ, David: Does the Tea Party Care about Liberty? [2011], online: <https://www.cato.org/blog/does-tea-party-care-about-liberty> [19.05.2021].

¹⁸¹⁵ HARTMAN, A War for the Soul of America, p.90.

Conservative communities claim that they, not the government, should set the boundaries of acceptable behavior and moral standards, e.g. for school education. Particularly poignant is *Roe v. Wade*, which may be subjected to intensified scrutiny in times of a Republican majority on the Supreme Court.

With YAF alumni thus successfully transitioning the group's positions into conservative institutions and elected office, the YAF story could be called an unequivocal success. Nevertheless, despite assurances to the contrary,¹⁸¹⁶ the conservatism of the 1960 Sharon Statement is neither the conservatism nor the wisdom of the day—perhaps it never was. YAF's history illuminates the fractures between traditionalists, libertarians, and anti-communists, which ultimately led to the group shedding anti-communism and social libertarianism. The attitude of conservatives towards small government has always been ambiguous in practice, as debates about the Vietnam War or 'victimless crimes' demonstrate. The excesses of the Reagan, Bush, and Trump administrations, namely skyrocketing budget deficits, further revealed conservatives' inability to reconcile their legislative successes such as tax cuts and deregulation with adequate reductions in government spending. For all their free market rhetoric, most movement conservatives eagerly embraced a president whose solution to the nation's economic problems—"buy American, and hire American"—¹⁸¹⁷ included economic interventionism in the form of tariffs and trade wars.

Thus, if YAF alumni and the conservative movement have gained considerable discursive and institutional power, and electoral support, they have so far, in most cases, failed to convert this power into legislation compatible with their avowed ideals. The US of 2021 is scarcely closer to the ideals of the Sharon Statement than it was in 1960. Will conservatives use the end of Donald Trump's presidency to reconsider their ideals and strategy? No matter the outcome, we can be sure that the 'conservative mujahideen' will play an important part.

¹⁸¹⁶ Primary Sources: The Sharon Statement [25.03.2021], online: <https://www.heritage.org/article/primary-sources> [26.03.2021].

¹⁸¹⁷ Donald Trump Inauguration Speech Transcript [2017], online: <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/full-text-donald-trump-inauguration-speech-transcript-233907> [19.05.2021].

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