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First to the Party:
The Group Origins of Party Transformation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
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by

Christopher Andrew Baylor

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

First to the Party:
The Group Origins of Party Transformation

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles, 2012
Professor John Zaller, Chair

My dissertation shows how two marginal social groups - civil rights activists in the 1940s and religious conservatives in the 1980s – achieved many of their goals by becoming core players in a political party. In each case, the group faced opposition within its chosen party but allied with friendly partisans to marginalize opponents and nominate politicians committed to their priorities. Trying to influence office holders whom the groups had no hand in nominating proved ineffective: office holders would promise benefits but do nothing that displaced core supporters or median voters. Mobilizing nonpolitical groups for political purposes was the road to success. In both cases, marginal social groups rather than politicians drove the process, creating transformed parties that would stand up for rather than straddle the issues they cared about.

This dissertation of Christopher Andrew Baylor is approved.

Scott James

Rachael Cobb

John Zaller, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles 2012

Dedicated to the faculty and staff of the political science department

at the University of California, Los Angeles

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

ACCC: American Council of Christian Churches
ACLU: American Civil Liberties Union
ACTV: American Council for Traditional Values
ACU: American Conservative Union
ADA: Americans for Democratic Action
AFL: American Federation of Labor
AFT: American Federation of Teachers
BSCP: Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
CARD: Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination (later "Racial" was removed)
CBN: Christian Broadcast Network
CFNM: Committee for a New Majority
CIO: Congress of Industrial Organizations
CPAC: Conservative Political Action Conference
CIO: Congress of Industrial Organizations
DNC: Democratic National Committee
ERA: Equal Rights Amendment
FEPC: Fair Employment Practices Commission
FOF: Focus on the Family
JFK: John F. Kennedy
MC: Member of Congress
MF: Microfilm
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAE: National Association of Evangelicals
NEA: National Educational Association
NCPAC: National Conservative Political Action Committee
NLRB: National Labor Relations Board
NOW: National Organization for Women
NR: *National Review*
NRB: National Religious Broadcasters
NUL: National Urban League
NWPC: National Women's Political Caucus
PCCR: President's Committee on Civil Rights
RFK: Robert F. Kennedy
RNC: Republican National Committee
SBC: Southern Baptist Convention
UAW: United Auto Workers
WEAL: Women's Equity Action League
WFB: William F. Buckley
YAF: Young Americans for Freedom

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CHAPTER ONE

UNWANTED RELATIVES AT THE PARTY

What do you do if you belong to a small, unpopular group that wants something from the federal government?

For many political scientists, the answer is obvious: join a political party. Parties are commonly understood as coalitions of groups that, by banding together, can get control of the national government for four-year intervals and sometimes longer. If a group helps a party win an election, the party will reward the group when it gains power. But what if powerful groups in both of the major parties are opposed to a group's program?

That was the situation faced by African Americans in the 1930s. The Republican Party, their nominal ally, had accomplished little for them in decades. Republican members of Congress would sometimes sponsor anti-lynching measures, but they never prioritized them and none ever passed. With the advent of the New Deal, African Americans wanted proportional treatment from new government programs, but the Republican Party wanted to cut these programs, not extend them to new beneficiaries. The Democratic Party, though sponsoring the New Deal, was not especially eager to spread its benefits more broadly. Its entrenched Southern wing was adamantly opposed to proportional government benefits or civil rights for African Americans. The Democratic Party was little more promising as an ally than was the Party of Lincoln.

Political scientists have little advice for unpopular groups in this situation. Yet, civil rights organization leaders found a solution. They set aside long-standing grievances with white labor unions and became their allies in the internecine fights of the

Democratic Party, cooperating to remake the Democratic Party as the vehicle of racial liberalism. To a considerable extent, they succeeded. At the 1948 national party convention, delegates passed a civil rights plank that so infuriated southern opponents of civil rights that many of them bolted to form a third party. When Democrats won without them in that year's election, most southerners returned to the fold, but the party was no longer their vehicle in national politics. Rather, the party continued on its path to racial liberalism.

To be sure, African-Americans could not have accomplished all of this on their own. They were fortunate in that a new national union agreed that allying with blacks made strategic sense for them too. But their strategic decisions, which were by no means obvious or easy at the time, were necessary to make it happen. My research on the successful alliance of blacks and labor to remake the Democratic Party is part of a larger project examining how unpopular groups gain representation in a party. Another case in my research, which has a strikingly similar plot line, shows how conservative strategists mobilized theological conservatives, a non-political group, to remake the socially moderate Republican Party as their electoral vehicle. I hope to offer a theory of how small groups with intense but unpopular agendas can enjoy success through strategic interactions in the country's highly porous party system. The theory has strong lessons for other groups wanting to obtain effective representation for their views.

The Claim

My thesis is that groups are, in the common phrase, the life of the parties – not only the building blocks of party coalitions, but their most important moving parts. Parties change when the group composition of party coalitions changes, and this change

comes about on the basis of the self-interested and strategically savvy decisions of the groups themselves. The existing literature on parties, public opinion, and party realignment treats parties and voters as a two way street and leaves out their intersection with groups. Scholars of social movements and organizations focus on internal dynamics and the effect on public opinion, leaving out their intersection with political parties.

My dissertation explores this intersection by delving heavily into the historical records of social groups and political party leaders. To preview the findings, the two major parties were largely indifferent to an issue area of intense concern for some relatively unpopular voters in both of the major cases in this study. People organized into groups to address the policy vacuum by raising awareness and attempting to influence one of the parties.[1] Groups who stood to gain concentrated benefits for a smaller number of people had lower organization costs than groups who promoted dispersed benefits for a larger number of people (Olson 1965). Politicians would sometimes respond to unpopular groups because opponents were dispersed, inattentive, or less intense. But even when politicians appeased new groups, they were careful not to alienate existing groups. The new groups would have preferred to displace intra-party opponents, but politicians preferred to layer new factions on top of old factions. Schickler points out that Congress prefers to layer new institutions on top of old ones rather than displace old ones.[2] Likewise, politicians in both of my case studies preferred to layer new groups and coalitions on top of old ones in their party, even when their policy demands were incongruent.

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[1] Their preference for one party over another was driven by several factors. In each case, groups made their choice largely based on the existing interest groups influencing the party and how difficult it would be to dislodge opponents of their social or economic agenda.

[2] Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism*

As politicians ambidextrously made minor concessions to competing groups, the marginalized groups recruited new voters or forged new alliances to strengthen their position. They succeeded in mobilizing a movement largely through people in politics for nonpolitical benefits – unions in the case of African Americans and churchgoers in the case of cultural conservatives. They did not merely signal to the parties that new voting blocs were available. They helped shape the ambitious demands and expectations of their members, and maximized their strength through strategic coalition maintenance. To extend Barry Goldwater's metaphor of "hunting where the ducks are," the alliance did not simply point politicians to the hunting grounds. It created a hospitable ecosystem for ducks that changed the hunters' behavior. Groups helped to socialize their followers into the alliance by emphasizing common interest and finessing areas of difference.

This dissertation explores both the motivations for changing parties – changing organizational needs and goals - and the transformative effect of group strategies on the two parties. Without the strategic intervention of external groups, it is likely that African Americans and theological conservatives would have spent more time without a party, and possible that the parties would have maintained the existing issue positions and equilibrium of groups.

In some cases, these groups extracted promises from existing politicians by mobilizing voters. Given the opaque nature of the public policy process, groups frequently suspected that politicians failed to share their priorities and push forward their agenda in "off-the-record" opportunities (Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel, and Zaller 2012). A better solution was to gain control over party nominations and elect people they trusted. Groups encouraged primary challengers to distrusted incumbents, even when

this led to the defeat of their party in the general election. They sometimes supported the opposite party to defeat the politicians Sundquist (1983) calls "the straddlers," who attempt to navigate a compromise position between the group and its opponents. In this respect, interest groups have far more leverage than politicians over the direction of a party. Politicians cannot campaign against straddlers in their own party without jeopardizing their own political fortunes, and have more to lose by short term electoral losses. The interest group efforts to transform the party were self-conscious and many leaders even used the phrase "realignment." Civil rights groups and Christian conservative groups eventually gained enough strength in one party that they could veto party nominations and platform planks when they signaled a lack of attention to group concerns. The party transformation was complete with the marginalization of an older faction. When the old faction remained a nominal part of the coalition, the groups were often able to block its representatives from important appointments or even a place at future party conventions.

When groups formed alliances, they were more decisive than alliances between groups and politicians. Republican leaders corresponded with civil rights groups in the 1940s in an attempt to win their votes, but civil rights groups instead opted to ally with powerful unions to reshape the Democratic Party. Decades later, moderate Republicans such as President Ford and Republican National Committee (RNC) Chair Bill Brock made some concessions to Christian conservatives, but the conservative strategists of the "New Right" and their Christian conservative allies refused to follow their lead. Instead, they tried to reduce the influence of moderates in the party. Politicians have the potential to build bridges between separate groups, but I have come across few cases where they

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played a pivotal role. Instead, group representatives built the bridges with other groups that changed parties.

The reason that parties change with the self-initiated change of groups composing a party is that parties are little more than coalitions of groups. Individuals can seldom change public policy in a democracy without organized followers. Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) President A. Philip Randolph was able to persuade President Roosevelt to ban discrimination in the war industries in 1941 by threatening to mobilize 10,000 followers, perhaps bluffing, in a march on Washington. The porters distributed newspapers reporting on the March-On-Washington Movement to towns along the railroad routes, and congregated in segregated facilities to spread enthusiasm among local inhabitants.[3] Randolph could have hardly gathered such a large following without networking through his union. Roosevelt feared that a Washington, D.C. protest would undermine the war effort and the New Deal. He took Randolph's threat seriously only when another group leader, NAACP executive secretary Walter White, attested that Randolph could really draw 10,000 followers to the capitol. Organized groups can credibly threaten to mobilize followers against a politician or party.

Parties can, of course, target appeals to isolated individuals with shared interests. For example, they can advertise immigration policies to recent immigrants or their opponents whether or not the targeted audience actually belongs to organized immigrant groups. But groups offer many advantages over isolated individuals. Groups can tap their own social networks with leaders familiar with the norms of their members. For example, opponents to the war in Iraq were able to mobilize rapidly by recruiting from existing networks of progressives. The group "Win Without War" coordinated antiwar

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[3] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 48.

activities through existing groups of feminists, environmentalists, gay rights groups, peace groups, and Unitarians. Because members of the groups respected each others' work, which sometimes overlapped, they shared information and resources quickly. Established groups had a high degree of trust and good will that would have been lacking among isolated antiwar individuals (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). Parties and candidates might develop separate, group-centered mobilization efforts on top of existing groups.[4] In the 2012 presidential election, Mitt Romney benefited from an organization called "Evangelicals for Mitt." Building such an organization is more costly than letting existing groups mobilize their members for a candidate or party – as Reagan had with cultural conservatives - if candidates can bring themselves to support the existing groups' agendas. Additionally, politicians may be less familiar with the norms of groups whose leaders have intimate ties to the communities that they represent.[5] An "African Americans for Mitt" organization would conflict with the economic goals of most civil rights groups even if Romney supported all of the positions directly related to civil rights. Candidates who embrace the entire constellation of issues favored by a group and its organizational allies have an easier time mobilizing followers. In the language of economists, a candidate who wants to favor some of the issues of a particular group has higher opportunity costs in mobilizing that group's followers than a candidate who agrees with the group on the entire spectrum of issues.

Groups can also incorporate political goals into part of the group's identity, and provide solidary benefits to voting. The CIO and evangelical churches could mobilize

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[4] Harvey argues that party organizations traditionally specialize in winning over voters in geographic units, such as states and precincts, rather than social group units (Harvey, *Votes without Leverage*, 56).
[5] One exception seems to have taken place in 2004, when George W. Bush relied on its own organization to mobilize Christian conservatives as the Christian Coalition floundered in disarray (Shields, *The Democratic Virtues of the Christian Right*, 146).

voters otherwise uninterested in politics by claiming that one of the parties is better for their group, and being a member in good standing meant supporting the group's political goals. Converse (1964) demonstrated that ideological arguments only appeal to 4-16 percent of voters; 45 percent of voters base their votes on how the outcome affects groups they sympathize with or belong to. The upper strata of informed voters follows the cues of political elites (Zaller 1992), but other voters follow the cues of their foreman or pastor. Individuals have some loyalty to parties but parties are much larger, more diverse, and more apt to compromise than local groups individuals may belong to. Abstract commitment to a national party is no match for the face-to-face interactions that unions and religious believers experience when they congregate in their union hall or church. The foreman of the manufacturing assembly line might also be the foreman of the party coalition assembly line.

There are some cases in which politicians can incorporate new policy goals into their agenda and invite new groups into their party with relative facility, because they do not conflict with the goals of existing groups. Groups may not have to fight their way into a party in these cases. For example, federal attempts to address pollution constituted a new issue in the 1950s, but federal spending and business regulation did not alienate any major Democratic constituency.[6] Environmentalism was arguably an extension of existing policies of business regulation on behalf of workers and the middle class, more than a transformation of the existing Democratic Party stance.

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[6] On a series of votes on pollution control from 1956 through 1995, I found a negative correlation coefficient between first dimension NOMINATE scores (a measure of economic liberalism) and supporting more government pollution control, indicating that economic liberals consistently support more pollution control. A 1960 vote on amending the Water Pollution Control Act, for example, had a -.23 correlation with first dimension scores.

But office-seekers will avoid augmenting their base when a new group's goals conflicts with that of existing groups. The displacement of an existing group's goals with a new group's goals constitutes party transformation. If politicians attempt to include both new and old groups into a party on their own, they risk a tense confrontation and the opposing party may pick up the pieces from an alienated partner. Stable alliances become more difficult to rearrange as groups become more accustomed to working together. The different groups supporting conservative candidates in contemporary America tend to favor both economic and cultural conservatism. Groups who combine issues in different ways, such as libertarians, have not had success in changing the constellation favored by parties against the wishes of more numerous, purely conservative groups allied with each other. Schattschneider pointed out that a party can have "a vested interest in the old lineup in which it confronts familiar antagonists already well identified in old contests."[7] Even minority party politicians often benefit from maintaining existing alliances when they can obtain a prominent position within the minority.[8] An old saying around Washington, D.C., holds that "the minority leader still rides in a limousine." Politicians are especially unlikely to risk changing a line-up for an *unpopular* group.

Unpopular groups will risk a confrontational entrance into a party more often, sometimes at the risk of losing votes for that party. Their organizations usually last longer than the next election, such that gaining access to politics in the long term can be more important. They often have goals that conflict with both parties, and can find themselves frozen into an isolated minority. The only way to catch fish is to break their

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[7] Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People*, 75.
[8] Layman and Carsey, "Party Polarization and 'Conflict Extension' in the American Electorate," 326.

way through thick ice. Political groups form to influence politics in the first place, and their incentives force them to find some way of influencing the parties. If leaders of underrepresented groups fail to fight for representation through the parties, they create opportunities for rival groups to emerge and compete for funding and members.[9] When the NAACP failed to participate in a broad alliance of liberal groups in the late 1930s, the National Negro Congress formed to fill this vacuum.[10] Groups must mobilize members to exert political influence by registering voters, running primary challengers, and socializing members into norms consonant with their political strategy. In each of my case studies, underrepresented groups also forged strategic alliances with a resourceful group in one of the two parties having its own reasons for disrupting the existing party. The difficult task of rearranging the existing line-up of party forces falls upon underrepresented minorities and disgruntled partisans. Because parties want to avoid alienating existing groups in the party, new groups need to provide new incentives to counteract an old party's incentives for inertia.

Parties can lose elections if they make too many concessions to groups, but only if voters are aware that they have done so. Converse (1964) demonstrated that most voters are not ideological and possess only minimal awareness of public policy, so that parties have considerable room to veer from the median voter before s/he notices that the party has made too many concessions. Moreover, groups are sometimes intense enough that they would contribute to the party's defeat when the party fails to make enough concessions. Public opinion will turn against the party if they grant concessions to

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[9] Harvey, *Votes without Leverage*, 50. Sometimes, rival groups even emerge to make the case that a leading group is working with the wrong party; the Log Cabin Republicans have long held that other gay rights groups have chosen the wrong ally in the Democratic Party.
[10] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 36.

intense groups, but the groups can turn against the party and ensure defeat if they do not. In one of his later works, Schattschneider argues that groups cannot manage this. He estimated that even the AFL-CIO affected only 20 percent of their members' views, because many members abstain from voting and others would have voted Democratic even without AFL-CIO influence.[11] This overlooks their voter registration drives, broader public attention to their goals, and the role of contributions to campaigns and other pressure groups.[12] Two studies find that the Republican Party developed its own electoral apparatus because it lacked the kind of assistance the CIO provided to the Democrats; the Democratic Party did not develop a rival to the RNC until decades later, after unions suffered great attrition.[13]

The respect individuals in various organizations have for other organizations' work on non-overlapping issues suggests a role for ideology, if ideology is narrowly defined as a set of issue positions shared by many people. Members of environmentalist and gay rights groups worked alongside each other in the group "Win Without War" because they shared issue positions on many issues besides the Iraq War, their issues of focus. The NAACP had compelling reasons to work with the CIO because of shared interests in civil rights laws alone, but its employees agreed with much of the New Deal before the CIO even existed. Such common areas of overlap reassure groups that future schisms are less likely as they invest organizational resources into a working relationship. When labor groups experienced institutional attacks from civil rights groups in the 1960s,

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[11] Schattschneider, *Party Government*, 201.

[12] E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: a Realist's View of Democracy in America (*New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 52l. A study commissioned by the CIO in Ohio also notes 30 percent gaps in survey answers between CIO workers and general wage earners (Green-Brodie, "Report to the Executives of the CIO," April 13, 1948, Philip Murray Papers, Box 133 folder 5).

[13] Galvin, *Presidential Party Building*; and Emily Charnock, "Business Groups, Political Action, and Republican Party Development."

they continued to support civil rights groups because they needed to maintain their image as liberals. Ideology has a lesser role if expansively defined not only as a set of positions, but as a shared rationale for those positions. Evangelical Christians could agree with *National Review* editor William F. Buckley on a majority of social issues without his ideology of "fusionism," which was at best a partial fit for their evangelical beliefs.

It is important not to overstate the role of ideology in guiding the behavior of organizations. I argue that the civil rights/labor alliance would have occurred on the basis of organizational interests alone, even though ideology produced good will and helped win over volunteers with no direct stake in the outcome. In both cases, groups showed themselves willing to overlook ideological principles that conflicted with the interests of their organization as an institution. Organizational actors with "boots on the ground" were willing to revise long-held positions when new information revealed organizational interests that they had not considered before. However, ideologues with no obvious self-interest in unions, civil rights, or conservative churches still played a significant role. They buttressed and maintained the party transformation initiated by organizational interests even when these interests began to change. For example, liberals in Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) constantly pressured the Democratic Party to support both labor rights and civil rights even when the AFL-CIO and the NAACP clashed with each other, beginning in the 1950s. ADA and similar groups then became a force for Democratic Party stability as organizational interests changed over time.

To recapitulate, groups have several incentives to lead party transformation that politicians lack. Politicians aim to win elections, and left to their own devices, would cater to the median voter rather than voters with extreme or unusual views. Additionally,

politicians usually avoid upsetting the existing balance of groups in their party. Unpopular groups, on the other hand, have little to lose by upsetting a party's coalition when neither one of the parties comes close to representing their interests. This leads them to mobilize and politicize new followers, and attempt to isolate party factions working against their interests.

Previous Findings

Literature on parties and social movements should be a promising place to examine how unpopular groups gain influence in government, and how one influences the other. To be sure, social scientists in both traditions make claims about the importance of one or the other for obtaining favorable policies for unrepresented groups. One textbook on political parties claims that "the party has been the form of political organization most available to citizens who lack the resources to influence public decisions using other means."[14] Walter Dean Burnham wrote that only parties can "generate countervailing collective power on behalf of the many individually powerless against the relatively few who are individually – or organizationally – powerful."[15] Even in a democracy, the will of the people does not automatically translate to government policy. The two principal institutions that mediate between the people and the government are parties and interest groups. Schattschneider asserted that the alternative to strong parties is strong interest groups. Presumably, a polity characterized by strong interest groups hurts powerless individuals because they lack the resources and organization skills to form serious challenges to powerful groups. Beyond this, Schattschneider believed that parties would weigh both majority and minority interests

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[14] Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 305.
[15] Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*, 133

more fairly. Parties are the "special form of political organization adapted to the mobilization of majorities," and they honor majority interests without violating citizens' liberties.[16] For Schattschneider and other democratic theorists, implementation of the majority will with due regard for minority rights constitutes democracy. Pressure groups cannot do this because they are generally unpopular, and they lack the broad outlook, moral support, and the ability to mobilize majorities. Democracy is "unthinkable" save in terms of parties.

If the goal of a party is to win majority support in elections, however, why would it be so interested in Burnham's "powerless individuals"? An unpopular group, by definition, would seem to have more opponents than supporters. A party that supported unpopular groups would gain their voters in a close election but risk losing the votes of their more numerous opponents, unless there was no chance of winning their opponents in the first place. For example, Republicans could not win over ex-Confederates immediately after the Civil War, regardless of what they did for the freed slaves. However, both parties have taken up the cause of unpopular groups in many cases in which they risked losing moderate voters. Since the 1970s, the Democratic Party has supported gay rights when homosexuals lacked majority support. The percentage of General Social Survey respondents affirming that homosexuality is always wrong hovered between 65 and 75 percent from 1973 and 1992, increasing over time more often than not.[17] During this time, the party took several steps to improve relations with gay rights groups, and a few states passed gay rights ordinances, usually under Democratic leadership. After 1992, a majority of survey respondents still believed homosexuality

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[16]Schattschneider, *Party Government*, 192, 208
[17] Brewer, "The Shifting Foundation of Public Opinion about Gay Rights," 1209.

was always wrong, but a Democratic President expended considerable political capital fighting for the right of gays to serve in the military. Likewise, Republican members of Congress (MCs) opposed gun registration and licensing requirements even when surveys from the National Rifle Association showed a public consensus in their favor (Wright 1981). Republican-led congresses of the 1990s steadfastly resisted increases in minimum wage laws despite their enormous popularity; polls showed that 82 percent of Americans would favor an increase even if it led to higher prices.[18] The influence of intense groups with limited appeal, such as gay rights groups, hunters, businesses, and champions of the free market, arguably influenced parties to favor their issue positions against the opposition of a clear majority. One can find examples of mass parties supporting the positions of unpopular individuals tracing back to opponents of slavery in the 1850s.

Parties might also pursue the votes of unpopular groups if they are intensely motivated by a set of issues while more popular groups are less motivated. The unpopular groups considered in this study, however, were matched by opponents that were just as motivated. In the Democratic Party, white Southerners were as intense in their opposition to civil rights as African Americans were in supporting them. While Christian conservatives did not confront the same kind of vitriolic opposition that African Americans faced, "country club" Republicans were uncomfortable augmenting the party with voters of a different class, religion, and disposition. Dedicated cadres of gay rights supporters and feminist groups were long frustrated by their status as second-class citizens, and they, too, faced determined opposition within the Democratic Party.

Schattschneider offers only a partial answer for why parties would care about unpopular groups. By calling interests the "raw materials" of politics and organizations

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[18] Freeman, "The Minimum Wage as a Redistributive Tool," 639.

the manifestations of interests, he suggests that parties use the input of marginal organizations to help form the "finished products" of new laws and policies. Adhering to the manufacturing metaphor, however, he does not document the steps on the assembly line. In the case of the civil rights transformation of the Democratic Party and the cultural conservative transformation of the Republican Party, I have found a similar process at work. This process suggests a more prominent place for groups in parties than Schattschneider admits. In later writings, he argued that parties in a two-party system have considerable leverage over interest groups because "each party must cope primarily with its party opposition," and can lose elections if it makes "excessive concessions to any pressure group." With thousands of pressure groups and two parties, parties have the "favorable bargaining position."[19]

This assumes that groups would not push parties far enough from the median voter that they would lose an election. However, groups are willing to let parties lose elections if they fail to share their priorities. Groups can issue ultimatums in which they threaten to withhold votes or actively oppose the party. If politicians provide the groups with what they want, groups win. If politicians fail to give the groups what they want and lose influence due to group defections, groups facilitate their future influence in the party. No longer obstructed by incumbents, they will have an easier time nominating loyalists in the next election. Moreover, parties that have lost influence will be desperate for group support to gain additional support. Parties have a weaker bargaining position in at least one sense - politicians are less willing to lose the next election. Paul Weyrich, perhaps the most important conservative strategist of his generation, argued that evangelicals were successful partly because of their willingness to lose but persist in

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[19] Schattshneider, *The Semisovereign People: a Realist's View of Democracy in America*, 54-57

subsequent elections. "Sometimes you have to be defeated in order to take the longer range view and perhaps win later," he said. "Many of the conservatives didn't quite understand that."[20]

Not only have political scientists failed to follow through on Schattschneider's line of inquiry, but they have left external groups out of their accounts of party transformation. In Downs' (1957) seminal theory of politics, politicians maximize votes and aim for nothing more than gaining office. Downs specifies that political parties are the vehicles of politicians and not "agents of specific social groups."[21] The leading contemporary treatment of parties, John Aldrich's *Why Parties?,* continues to view parties as the electoral tools of ambitious politicians. Although he is aware of the role of "benefit seekers," most of his casework and quantitative evidence stress the role of candidates and politicians. In folding benefit seekers under the umbrella of the parties, he fails to emphasize that important distinctions exist between the incentives of office-seekers and benefit-seekers, and the distinct roles they play in providing underrepresented groups with access to the political system.

This candidate-centered view of politics is by no means confined to social scientists who view politicians as vote-maximizers. In exploring how parties come to adopt new ideologies, Gerring views interest groups within a party coalition as veto players rather than active participants in the party adoption of issue positions. Interest groups constrain parties from adopting some issue stances, but this leaves "party elites

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[20] Interview with Paul Weyrich; also see Interview with Morton Blackwell by by unknown interviewer, July 22 1995, both in Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[21] Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 271-272

with considerable room to maneuver."[22] They present party leaders with many choices but the leaders do the choosing.

Literature on party realignment also tends to depict politicians as the agents reconstructing party coalitions with new groups. Burnham (1970) argues for the growing weakness of parties as political organizations, but his account also views the parties as the coalition builders. Sundquist (1983) states that new issues create new voter cleavages and lead to realigning eras. Major parties change in order to preempt or respond to third parties. Realignments are not "the rearrangement of the group components of parties – not the forming and reforming of coalitions of groups – but the reordering of individual attachments." Sundquist holds that party behavior influences "great segments of the electorate to seek and form new political allegiances," but does not parse out the role of individual voters and groups.[23] Carmines and Stimson (1989) espouse a candidate centered model of issue "evolution," emphasizing the role of politicians in changing partisan voter opinion. Prominent party leaders attempt to increase their vote margins by changing their stance on issues. When their vote margins increase, other politicians follow suit, and voters change their party identification with the politicians. Tichenor and Harris (2002) observe that "what is striking about this realignment scholarship in relation to the interest group literature is that organized interests are not usually viewed as agents of transformation" and are "typically understood as either an impediment to change or as entities acted upon by external forces."[24]

Some recent political science research has moved toward a more group-centered view. Feinstein and Schickler (2008) and Schickler, Pearson, and Feinstein (2010) offer

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[22] Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America*, 271-271.
[23] Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 41, 49.
[24] Tichenor and Harris, "Organized Interests and American Political Development," 603.

powerful evidence that the CIO influenced both the state and national Democratic Party to favor civil rights. They show that Democratic support in Congress for civil rights correlates with union activity, but they do not detail what organizational strategies unions employed to bring about this change or their motive for doing so. Moreover, they do not use this case to form a general theory of group-party dynamics. Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel, and Zaller (2012) emphasize that voter ignorance creates "blind-spots" in which parties can satisfy intense party activists without notice from the median voter, who is more moderate in his views. Bawn et al. provide considerable evidence that polarized parties create an ideological brand to satisfy activists, not voters. However, they provide few details, let alone evidence, on what organizations are doing to steer parties along this path. Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, and Cooperman (2010) argue that party loyalists change their preferences to be consistent with a party's new issue positions, but do not show where those new issue positions come from. This study takes their analysis a step further by explaining how previously excluded groups come to constitute such a large part of party coalitions that they can induce loyalists to support their views and nominate sympathetic candidates.

While political scientists are only beginning to return to a group-based perspective, sociologists have long understood society through the lens of groups. They have written extensively about the internal dynamics of two kinds of groups, organizations and social movements, and have begun to address the relationship between the two.[25] Very few, however, have investigated group-party dynamics. In fact, many believe that formal organizations such as political parties drain the energy and radicalism

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[25] For a review of this literature, see Davis, McAdam, Richard, Mayer, and Zald, eds., *Social Movements and Organization Theory* and Van Dyke and McCammon, eds., *Strategic Alliances*.

of social movements (McAdam 1999). This is a substantial oversight for social scientists studying American politics, where movements that abstain from party politics usually find their agendas ignored by the government (Harvey 1998). One of the few social movement theorists to discuss group-party interactions, Schwartz (2006), identifies six strategies that organizations can use to change party trajectories, and shows that organizations employ similar strategies in response to similar organizational dilemmas. The "takeover" strategy she describes resembles party transformation, but she organizes her evidence around geographic settings, rather than groups or issues. She does not offer an in-depth look at the process by which a particular group transforms a party, instead offering brief sketches of how organizations respond to their dilemmas.

In writing about how unpopular groups gain access to and transform parties, I hope to address two different bodies of scholarship – political party scholarship and organization scholarship. To understand how groups obtain representation through a party, one must examine both internal group dynamics and the process of gaining a foothold in a party. Groups, as institutions, are not "neutral boxes" that reflect the sum of member interests. Groups have organizational needs and rivalries with other groups that shape their strategies and behavior. Civil rights groups and unions had rivalries with other like-minded groups and each other that may have precluded the CIO from effecting the changes in the Democratic Party articulated by Feinstein and Schickler (2008). The changing contours of the political environment unfolded in a sequence that made the cooperation between the CIO and civil rights groups more attractive to both groups. Groups advanced their own interests in light of opportunities in the political environment. Staying with the example of civil rights, the Wagner Act and the creation of the CIO

were changes in the political environment that strengthened labor unions and made them more desirable as allies to the NAACP. The Great Depression was also such a political bonanza for the Democratic Party that it no longer depended on the Southern opponents of civil rights. On a separate trajectory, the Republican Party's federalist critique of the New Deal led the Party of Lincoln to become the Party of the Confederate Flag, as Karol (2009) describes it. Prior to this time, Republicans had not opposed efforts by the national government to influence business through state-building activities. The Republican trajectory, too, was a change in the political environment affecting civil rights groups' calculus. Groups contemplated strategies, formed alliances, and mobilized their followers with a view to getting into party coalitions, which are the key to success in American politics. Social movement theorists have missed this because they deemphasize parties, while party theorists have missed this because they deemphasize groups.

In summary, sociologists have largely left political parties for political scientists to study. Political scientists have mostly touted the contributions of political parties to democracy without explaining why self-interested party leaders would represent groups that are unpopular with preexisting party allies. My dissertation aspires to explain why that happened with two of the most important unpopular groups in the twentieth century: African Americans and Christian conservatives. Understanding what happened in these cases is a start toward solving the puzzle created by scholarship on parties.

<u>Alternative Strategies</u>

Dahl (1968) points out that marginalized groups with little access to either political party might also attempt to transform politics through a third party. Most groups

in this study realized that third parties have little chance of winning and hoped only that the threat of diverting votes from one party will move that party closer to their position. Both the civil rights transformation and the cultural conservative transformation featured prominent actors who pursued third parties at least briefly. Leading actors gave up on them after it was clear that one of the two major parties would move closer to their position.

CIO PAC founder Sidney Hillman designed one of the most influential political groups of the twentieth century. He had previously participated in several third party movements but worked arduously to quash them in the 1940s, when they posed a real threat to Roosevelt and Truman's reelection.[26] He helped unite the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and Democratic Party, and sought assurances from other party movements that they would not run challengers to New Deal Democrats.[27] Unions, civil rights groups, and liberal groups united behind Harry Truman in 1948 even though Henry Wallace's Progressive Party was more consistent with many of their issue positions.[28] Truman had sharply criticized unions and repressed strikes, and employed Taft-Hartley Act against unions even after he vetoed the law. He was as hostile to unions as any Democratic president of the century, but unions and their allies campaigned harder against Wallace than the Republican nominee. ADA considered third parties in a subsequent memo on strategies and concluded that none had been effective since the early Republican Party. The memo argued that third parties were too risky, since they

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[26] While Hillman was still active in the American Labor Party and the Labor Non-Partisan League, he largely arranged for them to take direction from Roosevelt, consolidating various left-wing splinter factions behind New Deal Democrats and even endorsing a conservative Democrat for governor of New York.
[27] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule,* 503-4.
[28] In their absence, more radical movements gained influence in Wallace's campaign, diverging from the increasingly anti-communist positions of the CIO.

would alienate existing supporters in the Democratic Party and fragment the liberal-labor coalition that had formed around Truman's 1948 campaign.[29]

Many of the major actors in the cultural conservative realignment of the Republican Party also considered third-party ventures. Before the 1976 election, *National Review* (*NR*) Publisher William Rusher formed the Committee for a New Majority (CFNM) to form a third party, believing that the Republicans would never nominate a "true" conservative such as Ronald Reagan. CFNM tried to recruit Reagan and George Wallace for the American Independent Party ticket, but their efforts failed and the party nominated Lester Maddox, who garnered less than 1 percent of the vote. Even an important power broker in CFNM, Richard Viguerie, supported the American Independent Party (though reportedly only to spoil the election for Ford).[30] Rusher's allies among the conservative movement – some of whom viewed CFNM as quixotic to begin with – thereafter concentrated on reforming the Republican Party. Anger and frustration sometimes boil into third parties, but successful group strategists realize that third parties are useful only insofar as they can help change one of the two major parties.

The aforementioned ADA memo considered the option of pressuring both parties instead of just one of the parties. Schlozman (2011) points out that some groups, such as the National Rifle Association, influence both Democrats and Republicans on single issue areas like gun rights. However, my research focuses on cases in which a group was unwelcome in both parties, as was the case with African Americans and Christian conservatives. Neither party paid much heed to civil rights in the 1930s. Christian conservatives found themselves not only ignored, but even unwelcome, at Democratic

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[29] "A Political Program for Liberals," November 1 1948, ADA microfilm (mf) 106.
[30] "Fission on the Right: Richard Viguerie's Bid for Power 1977." 1977. *The Nation*. January 29.

Party events in the 1980s. In both cases, the unpopular groups chose to influence one unfriendly party that was, for a variety of reasons, preferable to the other unfriendly party.

Still another strategy for changing parties is changing public opinion. Public opinion scholars often emphasize such changes as a reason for the changing political fortunes of blacks. To be sure, there are some issues that are so unpopular in a given time period that groups have little chance of enacting their agenda, no matter what strategy they employ. It was unthinkable for gay rights groups to advance gay marriage before 1970, for example. Homosexuals were so marginalized that even gay rights groups were highly secretive and comparatively removed from politics. Within a range of acceptable opinion, it is less clear that public opinion matters as much as party stance. Ansolobehere and Snyder (2001) show that representatives are only modestly responsive to district opinion, while Hussey and Zaller (2011) show that an MC's party affiliation matters much more than district opinion.

In the case of civil rights, Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1998) demonstrate a mostly constant increase in support for civil rights from the 1940s to the 1980s. During the Truman years, about two-thirds of Americans supported poll-tax abolition, while around one-half favored federal anti-lynching laws and the desegregation of travel. Still, when Gallup polled non-Southerners on support for a full FEPC in 1948, only one-third supported it, while 42 percent opposed it. Some polls with different wording resulted in higher levels of support, but public opinion was ambivalent at best. A March poll in 1948 showed that a majority of the public opposed Truman's civil rights proposals as a

whole.[31] Parties incorporated the FEPC into their platforms just the same, and Northern

Democrats showed themselves supportive of Truman's civil rights measures, not just in

poll tax abolition, in Congress (Karol 2009). Even Schumann et al. (1998) concede that

attitude change is only a partial explanation of policy change, and that behavioral change

–sometimes brought about by policy change – changes attitudes. [32] In the case of

Christian conservatism, public attitudes on abortion have remained relatively constant,

although abortion supporters and opponents have sorted into different parties over time

(Fiorina 2004). While a minimal level of public support for a particular set of policies

may be necessary for a party to change its positions, it is hardly sufficient. Strategic

group behavior can change parties once this minimum is met. Teles (2010) argues that

the success of conservative and libertarian legal groups in the 1980s was far from assured

even though public opinion was moving toward their positions.

Based on these studies, it would appear that public opinion is only a partial

explanation for changing party positions, and groups seeking to change the landscape of

American politics are better served by changing the parties than by directly changing

public opinion. Third parties have been useful for underrepresented groups in American

history, but mainly insofar as they affect the two major parties.

Plan of the Dissertation

My dissertation weighs the role of groups and parties in party transformation by

investigating two case studies of party transformation. A historical account offers the

chance to reveal complex processes in which multiple variables are changing at the same

time. It does not simply correlate variables and outcome without delineating the process.

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[31] Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America*, 17.
[32] Chen, *The Fifth Freedom*, 55-60; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America*, 207.

In the civil rights case, the New Deal, the growth of labor unions, the migration of blacks to Northern cities, and the consensus of pundits in black newspapers were all changing the dilemmas faced by civil rights groups. Chronology is a clue about what variables are most important, although what is chronologically first may not be the critical juncture in a coalition's formation. It is often better at ruling out explanations than proving them; for example, if party politicians lack a consensus on issues concerning new issues before the interest groups arrive at a consensus, it is unlikely that parties were the primary causes of a new partisan consensus. However, some other force, such as ideology, could be driving interest groups.

To understand the need for explaining the causal sequence at work and not just the relationship between the variable and the outcome, consider the case of cigarette smoking. The statistical correlation between smoking and cancer was established before the means by which tobacco damaged the heart and lungs were understood. Understanding the mechanisms at work helped scientists to understand which individuals were more likely to develop cancer, how to prevent cancer, and how to reduce the damage from cigarettes.[33] Some social scientists disagree, of course, on the need to explain the process in addition to predicting the outcome. Milton Friedman and Anthony Downs (1957) argue that the measure of a successful theory is its ability to predict, even if the assumptions of the theory are descriptively unrealistic (which Friedman admits they often are not). Predictive theories behave "as if" their assumptions are true.[34]

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[33]Additionally, more people were dissuaded from smoking once they understood the effect of carcinogens on the lungs and nicotine on the heart (George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 133).

[34] Hausman, *The Philosophy of Economics*, 218.

Researchers who have questioned the assumptions in predictivist economic models, however, have generated useful theories about cognitive biases and altruistic behavior.[35]

To trace the process at work in my two case studies, I used the biographies, memorandums, conferences notes, and meeting minutes of interest groups and politicians to determine how they are interacting with potential allies. When available, I conducted interviews with leading politicians and group activists; these are especially important for understanding recent events, given that many important political actors have not opened written records for researchers. To be sure, these forms of evidence have their limits. Some political actors prefer not to keep written records (or prefer to dispose of them). Both in written accounts and interviews, people are apt to exaggerate their own role or distort a course of events to create a narrative that serves their own purposes. For most of the key points in this dissertation, though, multiple pieces of historical evidence confirm the same sequence of events.

Intensive labor is required to establish the causal sequence in complicated cases of coalition formation. This dissertation contributes the two most important cases of party transformation since the New Deal. Since then, parties have maintained the same relative positions on government economic and social welfare policies. The parties have transformed much more on social issues - civil rights and cultural issues. These issues constitute the major axis upon which parties have turned. Any alternate theory of party transformation will have to contend with the evidence presented in this dissertation. We can determine whether or not the explanations remain specific to different cases by using Mill's "method of agreement" and "method of difference." The method of agreement establishes causation by observing the same independent variable(s) leading to the same

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[35] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 140

outcome in more in than one case, while the method of difference shows that independent variables differ in cases with different outcomes. When embarking on this research project, I realized it was possible that a different process may govern the dynamics in different cases. One research outcome might have been finding a common process in the two cases, but another outcome could have been discovering a different process in every case. Finding different processes in important cases would still be an essential part of understanding how groups obtain representation. A group of cases might show what is sometimes called "multiple causality" (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994), when different independent variables lead to the same result. As it turned out, my cases show a similar process at work.

First, the dissertation explores the transformation of the Democratic Party on civil rights as a case study, followed by the cultural conservative transformation in the Republican Party. In these cases, parties embrace new issue positions at odds with the positions of many existing partisans and MCs, in presidential nominations. Research on congressional voting reveals that these social issues comprised distinct dimensions of issues. An orthogonal relationship between civil rights, cultural issues, and economic issues among MCs changes into a direct relationship over time (Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Hillygus and Shields 2008). The conjunction of separate issue clusters offers the opportunity to observe how either groups or politicians manage to transform a party in a way that related issues do not. For most of American history, civil rights constitute the largest cluster of issues that does not map onto an economic issue dimension. Cultural issues like abortion overwhelm civil rights in importance by the 1990s (Hillygus and Shields 2008).

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Civil rights and cultural issues, then, are arguably the most important cases in which economic issue positions merge with other domestic issue positions in the twentieth century. Although cultural issues are not as highly correlated with economic issues among survey respondents, MCs are ultimately the actors that can directly change public policy. Many social issues, of course, are strongly connected to economic issues. Civil rights laws had an impact on the economy by forbidding racial discrimination in employment and businesses open to the public. Nonetheless, they are separate issue dimensions in Congress. MCs voted as if they were different kinds of issues, and for a time, one could not predict roll call votes on civil rights on the basis of economic issue votes.

Party transformation manifests itself in both presidential nominations and congressional races, but the presidency is the only national office the party runs contestants for. Both civil rights advocates and cultural conservatives were heavily invested in the outcome of presidential nominating contests, because the presidential nominee was more tied with the perceived purposes of the national party than any member of Congress. Groups proved their political clout by forcing candidates to earn at least a passing grade from their leaders. Additionally, both groups desired policy changes through the judicial system, where presidential appointments played an inordinate role. In order to uncover the process at work in presidential nominations, I will explore primary sources on presidents, presidential candidates, and nominating conventions. I rely mainly on secondary sources for information on state parties and congressional elections.

Clear definitions of groups and parties are in order. *Groups* refer to the people who have a set of demands, fight politically on behalf of these demands, and possess enough members to be influential. Although some of these groups are organized "interest groups," their interests need not be material. Members of Christian conservative groups or the Anti-Saloon League gained little in the way of material benefits. Rather, their group interest consists of advancing their group's goals, even if those goals reflect some higher ideal. These higher ideals may be broad as well as narrow. ADA and the Heritage Foundation, for example, were designed to promote an economic ideology as well as a foreign policy agenda, and favored a set of positions traversing multiple policy dimensions from the beginning.[36] *Political parties* include office-holders, candidates for office, office-holder employees, and paid party employees (such as party chairs). The groups who seek to influence government through political parties are considered separately from these agents because they face different incentives.

Chapter Two starts by reviewing the importance of civil rights as a case study. For many political scientists, the trajectory of both parties and social issue groups hinges on the civil rights issue. The chapter reviews the neglect of African Americans by both political parties from the end of Reconstruction to the New Deal. Given the indifference of leaders in both parties, what did African Americans leaders and institutions suggest as a course of action? A young crowd of intellectuals in NAACP favored an alliance with the white working class, but the organization as a whole focused narrowly on civil rights until the beginning of the 1940s. This sets the stage for the next chapter, which shows why they chose an alliance with labor at that time.

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[36] One also needs to scratch beneath the surface, however, to find out if these groups are the instruments for interest groups focused on narrower issue areas.

In Chapter Three, I document why the NAACP, the most important civil rights group, chose to broaden its focus to economic progressivism. The organization suffered from declining membership and funding, and needed to maintain its appeal in the face of more radical competitors. Additionally, American workers increasingly joined closed shop unions. The NAACP overlooked the troubled history of unions to help African American workers gain access to closed shops and inject civil rights into Democratic Party politics. Chapter Three also explains the CIO's interest in civil rights and how it developed. The CIO had a political agenda beyond prosperity for its own workers, and African American voters could help them enact this agenda. Although various forms of racial discrimination impeded the CIO's ability to establish new affiliates, the CIO's interest in national politics explains its interest in civil rights better than union-floor considerations. The CIO had the ability to transform the Democratic Party into the party of civil rights and brought this about by the late 1940s. Chapter Three discusses some of the controversial actions both the CIO and NAACP undertook to demonstrate their fidelity to each other.

In Chapter Four, I explain how the new alliance between labor and blacks led to the reconstruction of the Democratic Party as the vehicle for the aspirations of both groups. The NAACP became involved in liberal causes other than civil rights and all but endorsed the Democratic Party by the end of the 1940s. It had also supported labor rights even at a short-term cost to civil rights. The CIO supported the legislative and judicial agenda of the NAACP and helped to marginalize Southern opponents of civil rights from the Democratic Party.

Chapter Five shows that the 1948 convention was reflective of a new balance of power in the party. Labor unions and their liberal allies made civil rights a litmus test for presidential nominations from 1948-1960. Chapter Five also explores the paths not taken by the NAACP, including alliances with business groups and Republicans. Republican leaders

such as Robert Taft and Thomas Dewey pursued black votes as vigorously as any Democratic leaders, but the NAACP saw greater benefit in a potential alliance with labor in the Democratic Party.

Chapter Six provides the starting point for the transformation of the Democratic and Republican Parties on cultural issues, including reproductive rights and gender issues. Theological conservatives, including Protestant fundamentalists, evangelicals, and conservative Catholics, were once reliable Democratic voters. Although fiercely anti-communist, their positions on other issues were mixed. By the 1970s, these once-uncontroversial groups worried that their traditional party was paying less attention to them on a new range of issues. New issues such as abortion, gay rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment created wedges between the theological conservatives and other Democratic Party activists. Theological conservatives were no longer just conservatives in their religious views, but conservatives on a slate of cultural issues new to national politics. A group of people can find themselves excluded from a national party even if they do not suffer from discriminatory laws or hostile surrounding communities. Cultural conservatives distraught by the changes of the past two decades and the Democratic Party's accommodation of these changes needed to find a new political patron.

Chapter Seven establishes the disdain of many Republican Party leaders to cultural conservatives in the 1970s, sometimes describing them in derogatory terms. Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Reagan made efforts to capitalize on new cultural issues, but these efforts were usually short-term flanking moves rather than sustained efforts at party-building. They were trying to divide the Democratic Party vote rather than displace existing Republicans with cultural conservatives. Cultural conservatives found themselves in similar circumstances to African Americans in the 1940s: both parties were aware of their potential as voters, but unwilling to alienate other groups in order to win their votes. Like African

Americans, they needed to fight existing groups in one of the parties to obtain adequate representation.

During the Carter administration, an informal group of conservative strategists dubbed by journalists as "The New Right" was frustrated by what they viewed as the party's moderation. As they saw it, "establishment" Republicans used conservative rhetoric, but they were far from aggressively supportive of conservative policies. Searching for new conservative votes, they noted the increasing dissatisfaction of theological conservatives traditionally affiliated with the Democratic Party. They approached theologically conservative broadcasters and pastors to register voters, distribute literature, and defeat cultural liberals in primary battles. The New Right benefited from changes in the political and cultural environment, including broadcasting laws, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the advent of direct mailing. Differences remained between conservative religious sects as well as between economic conservatives and cultural conservatives, but this chapter discusses some of the strategic means employed to finesse the internecine quarrels.

Chapter Eight shows that the New Right, working with religious conservatives, isolated Republican Party moderates. Just as Democrats with national ambitions had to consider African American voters by the 1950s, Republican presidential contenders needed to meet the approval of cultural conservatives. Although Republican presidents accomplished few policy changes, they provided unprecedented access to the halls of power and legitimated the once-marginalized groups. They also would have succeeded in significant revisions of constitutional jurisprudence but for divided government and unforeseeable issues with judicial appointments. Cultural conservatives helped the New Right elect Republicans who were also conservative on foreign and economic policy. The New Right benefited from the manpower of the cultural conservatives, while the cultural conservatives finally gained a reliable audience with the national leaders of one party.

Through elite interviews and primary sources from presidential contenders, I will show that cultural conservatives demonstrated their newfound political strength through influence over presidential nominations.

I conclude by summarizing how my case studies follow a surprisingly similar plot line. African Americans and cultural conservatives lacked representation in both parties. The former wanted access to the Democratic Party, but faced entrenched opposition from Southern opponents of civil rights. The latter wanted access to the Republican Party, but encountered hostility from Republican moderates. Each group found resourceful political actors to strengthen their position at the expense of their opponents. Existing office-holders saw civil rights and cultural issues as dangerous and favored a "big tent." External groups needed to nominate politicians committed to the new coalition before they could change the parties.

THE DILEMMAS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

One of the most dramatic and well-studied shifts in party identification in the twentieth century is the shift of African Americans from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. African Americans, long neglected by both parties, forced the Democratic Party to acknowledge them as a coalition partner in the 1940s. Data from Baumgartner and Jones' Policy Agenda Project[1] justifies the attention scholars have paid to the civil rights issues surrounding this change. If one consolidates all of the civil rights issues in a sample of 6,000 *New York Times* articles from their dataset,[2] they constitute 5.5% of the articles, comprising the second most important non-economic issue in the dataset, falling behind only military intervention. Skrentny (2002) argues that other order-disrupting groups in the Democratic Party, such as feminist and gay rights groups, piggy-backed on the efforts of civil rights groups. Moreover, many historians and political scientists (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989) argue that the Democratic Party's New Deal coalition unraveled because of racial issues. A powerful case can be made that the civil rights realignment presaged the Republican Party realignment on other social issues, such as abortion.

African Americans contributed to this Democratic Party realignment through difficult, risk-laden choices. The change in party coalitions began with the alliance between the NAACP and the CIO, which was motivated by their organizational interests

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[1] This compilation is available from the author. The sample was taken from *New York Times* articles listed at http://www.policyagendas.org/.

[2] Desegregation, racial violence, discrimination in hiring, civil rights speech, and affirmative action constitute the race-related issues.

and perceived member interests. Black leaders were initially wary of the labor alliance because of the long-standing discrimination of white unions against black workers. But once they decided to ally with labor in the early 1940s, they gained their most potent ally since Reconstruction. The CIO reciprocated by using its increasingly important position in the Democratic Party to strengthen the position of blacks in the party and to weaken that of white southerners, the principal foes of the aspirations of both unions and African Americans. In addition to the political advantages, the membership and finance of the interest groups improved with their alliance.

This conclusion is based on more than 4,000 pages of primary source documents from the CIO, the NAACP, the Truman administration, and the Stevenson and Kennedy campaigns. Historians almost universally acknowledge the CIO as the national union most interested in civil rights. I carefully read through CIO meetings discussing civil rights and political activities more generally, as well as CIO activities in the South, where its commitment to civil rights was repeatedly tested. My heavy focus on the NAACP is justified by the role public opinion specialists and politicians ascribe to the postwar NAACP in influencing black voters. In 1952 pollster Elmo Roper said the NAACP's position was "held in respect by at least 45 percent of Negroes," and at this point African Americans were capable of swaying the election. The NAACP was "far and away the most frequently mentioned organization" that held weight with African Americans.[3] The Library of Congress possesses over 3 million documents from the NAACP; I selected the particular boxes, folders, and microfilms by searching through the index of the papers for

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[3] "Roper Reports on Importance of Negro Vote, NAACP Stand," June 22 1952, NAACP II-A-452. Perhaps for that reason, NAACP Secretary Walter White spoke on behalf of 54 civil rights organizations at the Democratic Convention in 1952 (Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 212). The NAACP could marginalize any civil rights measure or organization that it failed to support, such as the National Negro Congress (Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 29).

politicians, pressure groups, and laws relevant to civil rights, economic policies, and the political parties.[4] I also delved through the records of politicians known to be interested in civil rights, as well as party chairmen, for evidence of coalition-building. Chairmen have a birds- eye view of the national party and advise candidates on new constituencies.[5]

The Bleak Political Landscape for African Americans Before 1940

Before detailing the strategic decisions of African Americans and unions in the pivotal decade of the 1940s, it is necessary to describe the barren political landscape surrounding African Americans before then. This landscape featured few roads to representation other than the one they ultimately traveled on. Politicians of both parties made efforts to appeal to African American voters before World War II, but these efforts were generally half-hearted and ineffective. Given the intense discrimination African Americans suffered, the representation they received was utterly inadequate.

African Americans were nominally represented by the Republicans, the party of Abraham Lincoln, during this time. However, African American voters were a small group because most lived in the South, where they were disenfranchised. They constituted only 1.78 percent of the non-Southern population in 1900 and 2.5 percent of the non-Southern population in 1930.[6] Republican politicians therefore had few electoral incentives to address their problems. Moreover, they hoped in vain that if they paid more attention to white Southerners, they could build a larger voting base in the South. Blacks

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[4] For politician-NAACP interactions, I searched the index for the following terms: political parties, partisanship, politics, Republican, Democrat, William Howard Taft, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Franklin Roosevelt, Robert Wagner, Robert Taft, Thomas Dewey, Dwight Eisenhower, and the Democratic and Republican conventions from 1932-1968. For policy group-NAACP interactions, I searched for: ACLU, Wagner Act, National Labor Relations Act, FEPC, Fair Employment Practices Commission, labor, unions, CIO, AFL, AFL-CIO, UAW, BSCP, A. Philip Randolph, and Walter Reuther.
[5] The years I examined for party chairmen and politicians include 1937, 1938, and 1948, when anti-lynching laws were proposed in Congress and the Democrats adopted a progressive civil rights platform.
[6] These figures are calculated from Hobbs et al., *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*.

enthusiastically supported Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 after he dined with Booker T. Washington, which was widely criticized by white Southerners as a harbinger of social equality.[7] Later in his presidency, Roosevelt said that lynching was a response to rape. Catering to white Texans, he dishonorably discharged a contingent of experienced black soldiers who happened to be in a small Texas town during the murder of a white bartender. Tuskegee Institute President Booker T. Washington warned Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, that appointing "lily white" Republicans to Southern positions would destroy black Republican Party allegiance. Taft said he would not appoint any blacks if there were objections from Southern whites.[8]

The nation's most prestigious civil rights group, the NAACP, met with many presidential candidates, but rarely obtained any concessions. Warren Harding told two NAACP field agents that he supported the NAACP position on the issues of voting rights, an anti-lynching law, Haiti, and the apportionment of African Americans in the armed services. Nonetheless, he refused to bring these up during the campaign, because "the injection of the Negro question into the campaign would lose the Republican Party more votes than it would gain."[9] In 1923, the Republican-sponsored Dyer anti-lynching bill met defeat in the Senate, after 221 out of 238 House Republicans voted in favor of the bill and only 8 out of 103 Democrats did so. Although no Democrat voted to end the Senate filibuster, NAACP President Moorfield Storey wrote in a private letter that "Republican senators as a rule were not in earnest." He noted that Republicans proposed

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[7] According to Booker T Washington, all but five of the 178 black newspapers supported Roosevelt's rection in 1904 (Norrell, *Up From History*, 246, 289).
[8] Norrell, *Up From History,* 384-386.
[9] James Weldon Johnson, "Report of the Field Secretary on Interview with Senator Warren G. Harding," August 9, 1920, NAACP mf C 63-65.

the Dyer bill late in a session, when a filibuster is most likely to succeed.[10] The 1928

Republican nominee, Herbert Hoover, believed that his Democratic opponent's

Catholicism opened the South to Republican overtures. Hoover extended his

predecessors' outreach policies to the white South and attempted to appoint John Parker,

a segregationist judge from North Carolina, to the Supreme Court.[11] The NAACP

campaigned against two senators who had supported Parker, who ultimately lost

reelection. Some interpreted the election results as the first demonstration of what black

voters could accomplish in politics when united.[12]

       The Democratic Party was widely perceived as the party that institutionalized Jim

Crow and filibustered Republican attempts to protect basic civil rights. Future NAACP

Labor Secretary Clarence Mitchell recalled that many blacks treated him like a traitor

when he voted for President Roosevelt in 1932, when two-third of black voters still

supported Herbert Hoover's Republican candidacy. The "general feeling" among blacks

in Baltimore was "that anybody who wasn't a Republican was somehow or other a kind

of questionable character."[13] Some civil rights activists had supported the 1912

Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, only out of opposition to Roosevelt and Taft,

and were repeatedly disappointed by Wilson's segregationist policies. W.E.B. Du Bois,

writing for the NAACP's *The Crisis*, advised blacks in 1916 that neither party suited their

interests, even though Hughes was preferable to Wilson:

> The Negro must expect from [Charles Evan Hughes]…the neglect, indifference and
> misunderstanding that he has had from recent Republican presidents…The Democratic party can
> maintain its ascendancy only by the help of the Solid South…consequently it can never, as a party,
> effectively bid for the Negro vote. The Republican party is the party of wealth and big business

[10]Moorfield Storey to James Weldon Johnson, July 18, 1922, NAACP C75-77.
[11] L.K. Williams to John Hamilton, undated, NAACP II A226.
[12] Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 164.
[13] Denton, *Lion in the Lobby*, 98.

and, as such, is the natural enemy of the humble working people who compose the mass of Negroes. Between these two great parties, as parties there is little to choose.[14]

In 1928, the NAACP drafted a statement for Democratic nominee Al Smith to pledge to be a president for all of the people, but Smith never signed the statement.[15] In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed only lukewarm support in the North, and owed his nomination largely to the South, who considered him their second choice after John Nance Garner.[16] Roosevelt spent large portions of the year in Warm Springs, Georgia, and trumpeted his honorary Southern heritage many times. He honored Jefferson Davis and referred to the "war between the states" in speeches to Southerners. Senator James Byrnes told South Carolinians that "If Roosevelt is elected, I give you my word that South Carolina will be recognized as she has never been recognized by any Democratic President before."[17]

(Insert Figure 2.1 about here)

(Insert Figure 2.2 about here)

African American voting patterns changed considerably in 1936, when Roosevelt ran for reelection. Black support for Roosevelt was comparable to working class white support.[18] One of the oldest explanations for change in African American party identification is that African Americans supported New Deal benefits and, without substantial outreach from either party, voted for the party of the New Deal. Howard University Political Scientist Ralph Bunche put forth this explanation in a report

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[14] Du Bois, W.E.B. 1916. *The Crisis.* October. 12: 268-269.
[15] Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*, 9-11, 27. Walter White, who had been on leave from the NAACP to run Smiths campaign among African Americans, was disappointed and decided to return to the NAACP. A pro-Smith African American organization called the Colored League also worked for Smith's election on a budget of $125,000, and Smith-for-President colored clubs sprang up nationally.
[16] Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 127.
[17] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 34-39
[18] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics.*

commissioned by the Republican Party in 1939. Bunche wrote that Republicans failed to realize how essential the New Deal was for African American voters, asserting that the African American vote "overcame its traditional suspicion of the Democratic Party because…desperation, bred of threatened starvation, overlooks even deeply imbedded prejudices."[19] More recently, Weiss (1983) substantiated this conclusion with quantitative evidence from Northern cities as well as interviews and primary sources. To say that blacks left the Republican Party, however, is not to say that blacks became loyal Democrats. To prove the latter, one would have to show that blacks voted Democratic in higher proportions than whites. Black party identification remained split until 1948 (Figure 2.2). Karol (2009) has shown that New Deal benefits caused African Americans to vote for New Dealers in proportions similar to whites, but not exceeding them. In some cities, African Americans voted Republican. Additionally, votes for Roosevelt did not translate into Democratic Party identification; both Democrats and Republicans believed African American votes might vote Republican in the 1940s (see Chapter 4). In 1940, the NAACP assured Democratic Party Chairman James Farley that blacks had not settled on either party, even though they viewed President Roosevelt as an improvement over his predecessors.[20] There were strategic advantages to persuading a party chairman to work harder for the votes of one's group, but black voters were hardly any more loyal than white voters belonging to the same class.

In any case, Democratic votes did not translate into Democratic representation. When Franklin Roosevelt won in 1936 with 71 percent of the black vote (Figure 2.1), the Democratic Party did not push a civil rights agenda simply because a black majority

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[19] Ralph Bunche, "Report on the Needs of the Negro (for the Republican Program Committee)," July 1, 1939, NAACP II-L-27.
[20] Walter White to James Farley, July 14 1940, NAACP II-A-226.

voted for its presidential candidate. Only a small number of New Deal officials were concerned that the National Recovery Act, Agricultural Adjustment Act, and Civilian Conservation Corps discriminated against African Americans. When civil rights activists complained that NRA wage rates hurt blacks, Roosevelt responded that "It is not the purpose of this administration to impair Southern industry by refusing to recognize traditional differentials." While the Civilian Conservation Corps withheld funds from states that refused to employ blacks, the Federal Housing Authority enshrined discriminatory housing practices such as "red-lining" into public policy.[21] A handful of New Deal officials, including Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, worked to administer the laws in an unbiased manner, but had only partial success. NRA administrator Hugh Johnson refused to let an African American look into New Deal agency discrimination in the South, and her entire unit was soon disbanded when she made the request.[22] White House Press Secretary Stephen Early banned black reporters from White House press conferences, while Louis Howe and Thomas Corcoran told FDR he should not even perform symbolic gestures such as greeting the NAACP convention. Howe said to remember "our southern brethren" and let the future take care of "our anxious colored brethren."

Roosevelt made many efforts to liberalize the Democratic Party on economic issues orthogonal to race. For example, he supported Alben Barkley's bid to be Democratic Majority leader over Mississippi Pat Harrison. Although both had consistently supported the New Deal, Harrison's support was thought to be opportunistic

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[21] Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 111-114.
[22] Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*, 57.

rather than genuine.[23] Roosevelt had also pushed for the removal of the requirement that

Democratic nominees obtain two-thirds of delegate support, and attempted to purge

Southern opponents of the New Deal in 1938 midterm elections. It is unclear that civil

rights formed a part of Roosevelt's strategy in these matters. Roosevelt wanted to mold

the Democratic Party into a party of the New Deal, but not necessarily civil rights.

Eleanor Roosevelt was a valuable contact for several civil rights activists, and helped

arrange for a meeting between White and the president. The First Lady had little

experience with African Americans prior to her husband's election, but met with NAACP

Executive Secretary Walter White and seven other civil rights leaders for an informal

race relations symposium. The president told White, "I did not choose the tools with

which I must work…Had I been permitted to choose them I would have selected quite

different ones. But I've got to get legislation passed by Congress to save America… If I

come out for the anti-lynching bill now, [Southern Democrats] will block every bill I ask

Congress to pass to keep America from collapsing."[24] He refused to support the NAACP

when it pressed for an anti-lynching law in 1934 and again in 1937.[25] South Carolina

Senator James Byrnes said during the 1938 anti-lynching battle that the white people in

the South "had never voted for a Republican candidate," but only "due to the belief that

when problems affecting the Negro and the very soul of the South arose, they could

depend upon the Democrats of the North to rally to their support."[26] Just as Christian

conservatives were later impressed that President Reagan discussed their concerns

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[23] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 79.

[24] Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 329.

[25] White also found blame to distribute to Republican senators, who caved in to a filibuster after two days.

[26] George E. Mowry, *Another Look at the Twentieth-Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1973), 70. Byrnes, who would become an important adviser to Roosevelt during his third term, had traditionally been a conciliatory figure, not a race baiter. He had never been prompted to issue such warnings during the Roosevelt administration until a majority of Northern Democrats voted for an anti-lynching bill.

without changing public policy, White appears to have been impressed with Roosevelt at the meeting. He said that the president showed "a more decent attitude towards the Negro than 90% of current contemporary Republicans."[27] The NAACP was arguably more incensed at Republican MCs, who had voted for cloture on the 1937 anti-lynching law after announcing they would not. Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins interpreted this as evidence of credit-claiming, arguing that the public announcement led many Democrats not to vote for cloture and prevented its passage.[28]

In 1941, civil rights leaders obtained an important concession from the Democratic president, but only by leaving him without options. They forced Roosevelt to issue executive order 8802, which banned discrimination in defense industries, only by threatening a March on Washington with thousands of black protesters.[29] The NAACP, wary of mass protest at the time, was unable to obtain any concessions through lobbying, but BSCP President A. Philip Randolph was able to recruit thousands of blacks behind the "March-on-Washington Movement." The protest itself and the threat of violent retaliation against the protestors could do much to undermine the Roosevelt administration, and even Eleanor Roosevelt pleaded with Randolph to cancel it. At a meeting with Randolph and White, Randolph told President Roosevelt he could mobilize 100,000 African Americans. The President believed that Randolph was exaggerating the

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[27] White to Henry C. Patterson, October 1, 1938, NAACP II-L-27.
[28] Roy Wilkins to John Hamilton, March 15, 1938, NAACP II-L-27; John Hamilton to Roy Wilkins, March 14, 1938, NAACP II-L-27; and Roy Wilkins to John Hamilton, March 15, 1938, NAACP II-L-27. Republican Party chairman John Hamilton wrote to the NAACP that the Republican minority was reluctant to vote for cloture because the filibuster was its only weapon left against President Roosevelt's proposals. He replied "It will not do now to say that a mere handful of Republican Senators – 16 at the most – can be charged with any responsibility for the action of the Democratic majority of eighty" (John Hamilton to Roy Wilkins, March 14, 1938, NAACP II-L-27). Wilkins called *White* the excuse "hollow" and blamed the Republicans more than the Democrats because the former had more at stake "from both a moral and political standpoint" (Roy Wilkins to John Hamilton, March 15, 1938, NAACP II-L-27).
[29] Civil rights leaders said that whites were excluded so that the Communist Party could not wield influence, but of course, the Communist Party also included blacks (Janken, *White*, 255).

number of protestors likely to mobilize, and turned to White. White confidently

confirmed his estimates and the President appeared convinced.[30]

Of course, presidents and presidential candidates are not the only party leaders

capable of assisting underrepresented groups. But other national Democratic Party

leaders paid little attention to blacks in the 1930s. James Farley, the Democratic Party

Chairman from 1933-1940, met with labor leaders, Catholic leaders, and Jewish

politicians to maintain or augment the Democratic voting base.[31] In 1937, 1938, and

1940, when anti-lynching laws were proposed, Farley almost never discussed African

Americans or the potential of their vote in his almost-daily notes. The NAACP

frequently mentioned New York Senator Robert F. Wagner as an ally, as he sponsored

anti-lynching bills and bills to remove the discriminatory provisions of existing

government benefits. In the hearings for Supreme Court nominee John Parker, Senator

Wagner alone had argued his opposition to labor rights and civil rights were part of a

"single trait of character," a point made to him by Randolph.[32] Neither his letters nor

those of his longstanding aid, Leon Keyserling, reveal efforts to persuade other

Democrats to support civil rights or build a labor/civil rights coalition. It is difficult to

attribute consensus-building within the Democratic Party to politicians like Wagner

without such evidence.

Sundquist argues that a new issue is likely to have "greater inherent appeal" to the

voters of one of the major parties, but civil rights were not one of these issues.[33] A

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[30] Janken, *White*, 254-259; Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 251. Goodwin writes that "NAACP leader Roy Wilkins suggested the whole thing may well have been a bluff on Randolph's part, but what an extraordinary bluff it was."
[31] James Farley Memorandum to Self, March 16, 1937, Box 40-42, Reel 3; James Farley Memorandum to Self, November 4, 1937, 40-42, Reel 3.
[32] Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 160.
[33] Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 306.

majority of African Americans were pleased with the benefits of the New Deal, but the Democratic Party also contained the strongest opponents of civil rights - conservative Southerners. Additionally, labor unions that supported the Democratic Party, such as the AFL, often discriminated against blacks. The Democratic Party was not more likely to promote civil rights until labor unions and civil rights groups could overcome their differences and reshape the party. Neither party had been willing to prioritize civil rights for a long time. African Americans were much more willing to vote Democratic in the 1930s than in the past, but this did not mean they could trust Democratic leaders to fight for civil rights simply to represent their new constituents. To gain representation, they would need to play a strategic game with their eyes wide open to multiple alliances and institutional venues.

<u>African American Organization Leaders</u>

Throughout the era of Jim Crow, African Americans and sympathetic whites formed strategies to advance civil rights as both parties neglected them. Since a generation of civil rights activists was influenced by the debates of this era, I will review them in detail before describing the civil rights organizations that ultimately contributed to the Democratic Party's transformation on race. There was considerable diversity of thought among 20th century black leaders on how to address discrimination and disenfranchisement. The most famous black leaders of the early twentieth century diverged sharply on the relationship of economic improvement to political representation, and whether entrepreneurship and hard work would lead to a better life for African Americans without labor unions. Until black organizations made a decision on these

questions, they would not seek representation in politics through alignment with a particular party.

Economic Individualists

At the height of Jim Crow, Booker T. Washington was by far the most salient spokesperson for the interests of African Americans. Washington believed that African Americans would obtain political representation gradually as they proved themselves to be skillful members of the workforce. Although he focused on economic improvement, he eschewed class consciousness and political alliances with working class whites. Washington viewed unions to be impediments to the rise of lower class blacks into respectability. Before a largely white audience in the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, Washington declared to white capitalists that blacks would show loyalty "with a devotion no foreigner can approach." In *Up From Slavery*, he wrote "Before the days of strikes in [West Virginia]…I knew miners who had considerable money in the bank, but as soon as the professional labor agitators got control, the savings of even the more thrifty ones began disappearing."[34]

Washington's Tuskegee Institute was surrounded by hostile white Southerners and depended largely on Northern capitalists and paternalistic Southerners for its funding, prestige, and security. Washington often downplayed the need for black political equality to keep physical threats at manageable levels, and even with this restraint needed to flee the South during racially charged political campaigns. Francis Garrison said that the Tuskegee Institute rested on a "powder magazine."[35] Although Washington's true beliefs

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[34] Quoted in Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties*, 192.
[35] Norrell, *Up from History*, 287. In 1903, a principal of a black industrial school was killed in Louisiana as politicians like Mississippi Gubernatorial candidate James Vardaman fanned the flames of racial resentment.

on many political issues were obscured due to the need to maintain peace with his hostile surroundings, he fundamentally accepted capitalism. He even helped to create the National Negro Business League, a black counterpart to the Chamber of Commerce, which would help teach blacks how to succeed in a capitalist economy.[36] Later, he advised the founders of the National Urban League (NUL), which focused on promoting black employment, and relied more on business philanthropy than the NAACP would.

Many northern civil rights activists took exception to Washington's leadership when he placated politicians like Theodore Roosevelt in order to maintain his contact with them. Washington exacerbated the conflict by attempting to be the singular national spokesperson for African Americans, spying on rivals and diverting funding from others who might muddy the image he attempted to project for blacks.[37] When the NAACP was founded, he characterized its leaders as a few insincere whites who tricked blacks into believing that "they can get what they ought to have in the way of right treatment by merely making demands, passing resolutions and cursing somebody." Before his death in 1915, most blacks lived in the South, however, and part of his strategy reflected a need to improve upon the situation of blacks in the rural South. There are some indications that Washington's viewpoint changed with changing attitudes among organized labor. In 1910, Washington became more optimistic about unions than he had been in the past after reading the results of a survey among labor leaders. The survey results, along with his belief that discrimination was against union interests, led him to believe that unions could help blacks in his twilight years.[38]

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[36] Norrell, *Up from History*, 229.
[37] Wedin, *Inheritors of the Spirit*, 112-113.
[38] Norrell, *Up from History*, 390, 405-407

Marcus Garvey, an admirer of Washington, gathered a sizeable following in the

1920s. Garvey's brand of Black Nationalism urged blacks to start their own businesses,

buy from other black businesses, and eventually undergo mass migration to Africa.

Garvey argued that the "only convenient friend the Negro worker or laborer has in

America at the present time is the white capitalist," who would hire blacks to save on

labor costs, ultimately leading to a bidding war that would allow black worker wages to

approach that of white workers.[39] Groups like the NAACP worried about his separatism

and the diversion of donations from organizations pursuing realistic goals. Publicly, they

kept their criticism muted to avoid the antagonism of Garvey and his followers. Garvey's

following shows that even after the first Great Migration to the North, it was possible for

a national black organization to thrive while promoting economic individualism.

W.E.B. Du Bois

It was also possible for black leaders to gather a significant following through

socialism. Washington's most famous rival, W.E.B. Du Bois, consistently opposed

capitalism as an economic system. He considered the NAACP's *The Crisis* to be "an

independent organ leading a liberal organization toward radical reform," and "so long as I

conduct it, *The Crisis* is going to be Socialist and Left Wing Socialist." Du Bois wrote in

an obituary for Washington that he "never adequately grasped the growing bond of

politics and industry." Because of this, he was partially responsible for the entrenchment

of segregation and Jim Crow.[40] This did not necessarily mean that African Americans

should ally with groups and interests posing against business. On the matter of unions,

Du Bois summarized his past and present position in response to a letter in the *The Crisis*:

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[39] Quoted in Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties*, 191.
[40] Norrell, *Up from History*, 421.

> For years, I have in the Crisis and on the platform advocated the trade union movement…until the trade union movement stands heartily and unequivocably at the side of the Negro workers, I am through with it. I know that this attitude is a bit unfair to some unions who do admit the Negro, but the attitude of most unions is such that I think I am justified.[41]

By the Great Depression, Du Bois came to believe that both race and class were irreducible categories and prevented working class solidarity. American exceptionalism trumped the ordinary laws of history. White workers, including recent immigrants, would not support a revolution on their own partly because they believed themselves capable of upward mobility. Additionally, they would sabotage themselves by refusing to ally with black workers. Du Bois wrote "the lowest and most fatal degree of suffering comes not from capitalists but from fellow white workers."[42] His study of the U.S.S.R. strengthened this belief.[43] Meanwhile, the "talented tenth" of black leadership still retained "petit-bourgeois" values and fundamentally accepted capitalism. With blacks and whites unable to make common cause, Du Bois urged blacks to form a cooperative enclave where blacks bought, sold, and shared with other blacks until white workers came to support a socialist commonwealth that welcomed them. More orthodox socialists such as Abram Harris believed that Du Bois failed to appreciate the changes in ideology that would accompany fundamental economic transformations.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The NAACP was founded in 1909 largely by liberals, settlement house workers, and socialists who wanted a national voice for civil rights other than Booker T. Washington. One of the founders and lifelong leaders, Mary White Ovington, was a social worker first alerted to the deplorable conditions of American blacks by one of Washington's speeches. She later became a socialist and drew closer to Du Bois'

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[41] W.E.B. Du Bois. 1930. *The Crisis.* 37. May. 37:160.
[42] Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, 213-214.
[43] Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 265.

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position, nudging muckrakers interested in civil rights away from Washington.[44]

Arguing that workers of all races gained from labor laws, she voiced her disagreement

with Washington in academic journals:

> Would the Negro as a workman be better off…if there were no labor unions…I have heard colored men prominent in industrial school work say that they would be…Caste lines disappear when men are held together by a common interest, and as they feel their dependence one upon another they gain in sympathy and fraternal spirit.[45]

Ovington would often intervene in local NAACP branches dominated by Washingtonians

in cases were she believed serious situations would be met with tepid responses.[46]

Among other founding members were muckrakers Ida Barnett and William Monroe

Trotter, two relentless critics of Washington. Oswald Garrison Villard, the owner of the

New York Evening Post and *The Nation*, provided much of the initial funding for the

NAACP. Villard had been a "Goldbug" Democrat but evolved with the party, later

favoring Wilsonian progressivism and the New Deal. When Washington refused to

publicly refused to condemn Theodore Roosevelt's handling of the Brownsville Affair,

Villard and Washington's already-tense relations worsened.[47] Villard said that the

NAACP was "not to be a Washington movement, or a Du Bois movement," and the

organization later recruited an able Washington partisan, James Weldon Johnson, as field

secretary. The founders' preferences were well-known, however, and prior to the 1930s,

Du Bois' *The Crisis* was arguably the central work of the organization. When differences

emerged between Du Bois and Villard, Villard resigned.

  In the 1920s and 1930s, the NAACP's continued to garner much of its support

from reformers on the left. It received large grants from the Garland Fund, created by a

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[44] Wedin, *Inheritors of the Spirit*, 49, 87.
[45] Wedlin, *Inheritors of the Spirit*, 62.
[46] Wedlin, *Inheritors of the Spirit*, 177.
[47] Norrell, *Up from History*, 387. Roosevelt dishonorably discharged 167 black officers in Texas alleged by the townspeople to have killed a local bartender, despite evidence that they were in their barracks.

Wall Street heir who believed that business earned money by immoral means. He initially was going to refuse his inheritance, but socialist writer Upton Sinclair and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) President Roger Baldwin persuaded him to use it for philanthropy. Although Garland seemed to have been influenced most by Christian teachings about the poor, he funded the communist *Daily Worker* and the socialist *New York Call*, along with the ACLU and the NAACP. Economic progressivism and unionism were still peripheral to the NAACP's concerns until 1940. In fact, Executive Secretary Walter White had applied for Garland Fund by outlining a strategy for fighting school segregation in the courts.

Notwithstanding the radicalism of some NAACP founders, the organization focused mainly traditional civil rights in the 1920s and 1930s. In several letters in the 1920s, President Moorfield Storey discouraged attempts to broaden the NAACP's agenda beyond traditional concerns such as lynching and voting rights. When Ovington suggested that the NAACP consider endorsing a socialist agenda, President Storey wrote back "I think the officers of this society and its representatives generally should stick to the particular issue for which this society was formed."[48] In the 1930s, the organization hosted heated debates between those who wanted to keep the mission focused on civil rights, and those who wanted to ally with the working class. In the end, the former succeeded.

Young intellectuals in contact with the NAACP tended to share Du Bois' view that economic inequality was the source of many racial problems like lynching. The NAACP, by focusing on lynching, was addressing a symptom and not the underlying cause. At the 1933 Amenia Conference, which brought together young civil rights

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[48] Moorfield Storey to Mary W. Ovington, May 10 1920, NAACP mf C75-77.

activists to explore new directions for the NAACP, Du Bois recruited young intellectuals who wanted to shift the focus from race to class, including Abram Harris, Charles Houston, and Ralph Bunche. He overlooked more established black leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell and John Davis, who might challenge his agenda.[49] Du Bois's annual convention speech in 1932, entitled "What's Wrong with the NAACP," claimed that many viewed the organization as "highbrow" and funded by both African Americans and whites who exploited others. He said that social reform depended on economic reform and that viewing the capitalist, rather than labor, as an ally was a "grave mistake."[50] Charles Houston and Abram Harris also wrote a report on new directions for the association, which claimed that civil rights could not be achieved without interracial class solidarity. To obtain this, the NAACP needed to establish regional workers' and farmers' councils. Houston argued that the NAACP should look to labor unions to gain more "muscle" in politics.[51]

The most powerful voice for such a working class strategy, W.E.B. Du Bois, resigned from the organization shortly after the Amenia Conference. Du Bois' published support for segregated enclaves were strongly opposed by most organization leaders, who viewed racial integration as a central goal of the NAACP.[52] Walter White believed that segregation almost always meant inferior treatment. In 1931, his dying father was transferred to a dilapidated black hospital when the white hospital realized that he was black. Other NAACP leaders were likewise appalled at Du Bois' statements, especially after an Interior department official quoted Du Bois to push for resettling blacks into

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[49] Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 319.
[50] W.E.B. Du Bois, "What is Wrong with the NAACP," speech to the NAACP annual convention, May 18 1932, NAACP I-B-8.
[51] Frymer, *Black and Blue*, 54.
[52] Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 195.

segregated communities. The NAACP Board of Directors eventually responded to Du

Bois with the statement "Enforced segregation by its very existence carries with it the

implication of a superior and inferior group and invariably results in the imposition of a

lower status on the group deemed inferior."[53] When the NAACP board of directors

forbade Du Bois from criticizing the NAACP's officers or work in *The Crisis*, he

resigned.

Walter White also prevented other members of the "new crowd" from

implementing their progressive, pro-union economic agenda. He specialized in legal

action to bring about integration, and Harris's strategy would shift responsibility away

from him. Realizing that he would not be the right person to mobilize workers, and

determined to maintain his central role in the association, he steered the organization in a

different direction.[54] White managed to keep the focus on legal reform by portraying a

workers' program as impractical and removing opposition within the organization.[55]

Bunche acknowledged that "the most important of the tactics employed by the NAACP is

that of legal redress."[56] Ovington added that there was not enough support for a workers'

program among their members and donors. She called Abram Harris' 1935 Report a

"revolutionary doctrine to which I for one of the Board subscribe, but those who want to

bring it to the Negro will do best to bring it through the socialist or communistic

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[53] Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 335, 342.

[54] Janken, *White*, 182-184.

[55] Bates, "A New Crowd Challenges the Agenda of the Old Guard at the NAACP," 352. Within the association, he prevented the NAACP from hiring radicals like John Davis as recommended in the Harris report. In place of the worker's councils, the NAACP merely asked the branches to conduct workers' education classes at their own expense, without asking them to promote strikes or workers' agitation (Ross *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 239). All of Harris' proposals would have cost $12,000 per year and were easily dismissed as impractical. Yet, employing John Davis to coordinate workers would have cost $2,500, and even the $12,000 sum was not unthinkable if the organization made as much effort on raising this money from the Garland Fund as it had made the legal effort against school segregation (Ross, 226-227).

[56] Meier and Bracey, "The NAACP as a Reform Movement, 1909-1965,"10.

organizations." If they use the NAACP for these goals, it would alienate middle class

supporters and "we should run ahead and then back water when dissension came." She

added that very few blacks supported socialism and the NAACP should put forward a

program endorsed by most blacks.[57] President Spingarn wrote to a colleague "When I

joined the Association we had...a thrilling program...Now we have only [legal] cases and

lobbying, and every effort I have made...has been ignored or thwarted by [Walter White]

or the Board."[58] Abram Harris complained "you can't rely upon the James Weldon

Johnsons and the Walter Whites for any new programs."[59] The 1935 Annual Conference

made no commitment to workers' councils, and White vetoed a resolution to support the

pro-labor National Negro Congress, which later received funding from the CIO.[60] Du

Bois, who had devised reorganization plans for the NAACP transparently designed to

remove White and his allies, strengthened White's position in the Association when he

resigned.[61]

The NAACP praised A. Phillip Randolph's BSCP, but otherwise wavered in its

support of organized labor. President Storey had consistently opposed closed-shop

unions and eventually supported injunctions against individual strikers.[62] The NAACP

recommended that the Garland Fund oppose funding African American union workers in

1930, arguing that unions would be a "money sink." In 1932, its Annual Conference

declared "Hitherto the American Labor movement…has betrayed the interests of the

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[57] Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 230.
[58] Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 210.
[59] Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 247.
[60] Janken, *White*, 195.
[61] In the election of 1948, after which Du Bois had been brought back, White was once again able to dismiss Du Bois for campaigning for Henry Wallace despite White's relatively overt support for Truman. The Board held that White's articles were his own evaluation, and Du Bois's support for Wallace violated NAACP policy against partisan activity. The double-standard was transparent and the Board did not explain why the two instances were different (Janken, *White*, 317).
[62] Hixson, *Moorefield Storey and the Abolitionist Tradition*, 157

Negro worker, and the Negro cannot co-operate with this movement until it recognizes him."[63] In 1934, White told Federal Emergency Relief Administration supervisor Harry Hopkins that African Americans had gained better and higher paying jobs under the open shop.[64] Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins said that the closed shop is the white union shop, and even wrote in a 1934 issue of *The Crisis* that he suspected the AFL was using the National Industrial Recovery Act to exclude African Americans from employment.[65] Although the NAACP later claimed to have always supported the Wagner Act, written evidence indicates only that it supported an antidiscrimination amendment.[66] The NAACP suggested waiting until floor debates on the Wagner Act to propose the amendment so that it could take the AFL by surprise.[67] In 1939, the NAACP investigated a Tampa workplace that was previously divided evenly between the races, but was only 10 percent black after the union set up a closed-shop. Although the union blamed the employer for creating racial division, the NAACP found the employer cooperative and

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[63] "Address to the Country, 23rd Annual Conference of the NAACP, Washington DC," May 17-32, 1932, NAACP mf Part 1 r3.
[64] Walter White to Harry Hopkins, April 26, 1934, NAACP I-C-257.
[65] Bernstein, *Only One Place of Redress*, 95; Roy Wilkins. 1934. *Crisis*. February 1934. 41: 40.
[66]The amendment was not passed and Senator Wagner simply told civil rights groups that unions coming before the NRLB would have more credibility if they had nondiscrimination policies. Regarding 1940 support for the closed shop union, see Walter White to Alfred Baker Lewis, April 12, 1940, NAACP II-A-128. There is an NAACP application for a grant from the Falk Foundation in 1935, in which White suggested that the NAACP could accomplish its goals through contacts it made in Congress through its efforts on behalf of the Wagner bill as well as other bills (Application to the Maurice and Laura Falk Foundation, Re: Appropriation for gathering and utilization, through a Congressional investigation, of material on discrimination against the Negro under the "New Deal," April 9, 1935, NAACP I-C-278). I have not found evidence of this support, however, but merely evidence of lobbying for the antidiscrimination amendment. The Urban League provides another example of continuing distrust of unions from civil rights activists. Lester Granger, speaking to the NAACP in 1938, stated that "Given a fair and democratic union, and there is no question of the benefits received by Negroes under the Act. Given an undemocratic, anti-Negro union, however, the Act as passed constitutes a distinct threat to Negro job-holders or job-seekers...Thus, a union which bars Negro membership is protected by the Wagner Act even as it goes into a shop where Negroes are employed and seeks to obtain a closed shop contract that would throw out of work every Negro employee. This is not an unlikely possibility conjured out of a timid imagination…The New York Daily press reported a case of this kind in October, 1936." (Lester Granger, "The Negro in Labor Unions," Before the 29th Annual Conference of the NAACP, June 30, 1938, mf Part 1 r9 NAACP).
[67] Walter White to Bill Hastie, March 1934, NAACP I-C-257.

blamed the new racial imbalance on the local union and the failure of the international to correct the situation. White concluded, "Depriving these hundreds of Negroes of jobs by unions under a closed shop agreement is as effective as the taking of these jobs by force and violence."[68] This would contrast with the Packard Hate Strike in 1943, when White blamed the race riot solely on the employer despite the evidence implicating both the workers and the employer.[69]

Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins, though a White partisan, was somewhat more sympathetic to unions and the incorporation of progressive economic causes. In 1936, Wilkins did not believe the national organization could afford to move to the left because of the number of conservative local branches. He wrote to a member advocating a more militant approach that a "national group…must of necessity be a compromise between the views of different sections."[70] At his prodding, the NAACP held its annual conference in Motor City in 1937 and featured BSCP President A. Philip Randolph's photo on the front cover of *The Crisis*. The NAACP also invited both UAW union representatives and opponents to speak at the annual conference. However, testing these waters resulted in significant hostility from Detroit's black leaders. The convention adopted a resolution backing away from whatever earlier support of the CIO it had issued, citing the lack of attention the UAW-CIO paid to African American employees in the previous year.[71] Many local NAACP leaders formed alliances with employers to

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[68] "Memo from the Secretary (Walter White) on interviews at Tampa, Florida, with respect to the Labor situation of the Tampa Shipbuilding and Engineering Company," July 20 1939, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[69] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 191. The UAW was subsequently able to minimize the harm and pushed for federal intervention that ended the strike (172).
[70] Roy Wilkins to A.C. MacNeal, April 13 1936, NAACP I-G-53.
[71] Rudwick and Meier, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 57. The NAACP said that blacks should closely study a labor union's activities and the labor movement more generally before joining one. Resolutions adopted by the twenty-eighth Annual Conference of the NAACP, in Detroit, Michigan June 29-July 4, 1937, NAACP mf Part 1 r9.

oppose unions generally and the CIO in particular.[72] *The Crisis* held essay contests on

whether African Americans should join unions, and NAACP youth councils held debates

on whether to join unions, suggesting it was an open issue.[73] Even had the NAACP been

more open to the CIO in the 1930s, it would have encountered significant resistance from

some of its chapters.[74]

It is worth noting that the next largest civil rights organization, the NUL,

criticized labor laws more harshly than the NAACP. It openly opposed the Wagner Act

as long as it contained no anti-discrimination provision, claiming that "as strikebreakers

[we] have no rights under the proposed Wagner labor bill…the Negro's position will be

made worse as that of other workers is enhanced."[75] Future Executive Secretary Lester

Granger called it "the worst piece of legislation ever passed by Congress."[76] Acting

Executive Secretary T. Arnold Hill even suspected that union leadership encouraged

discrimination by the members in order to restrict the labor market for higher pay, writing

that "more often such prejudice is nourished and perpetuated by a selfish, entrenched

clique of officers who derive material gain from splitting the unity of workers and

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[72] Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 217.

[73] Foner *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 208-210; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 81.

[74] See Roy Wilkins to A.C. MacNeal, April 13 1936, NAACP I-G-53.

[75] For another interpretation of the Urban League's involvement in the Wagner Act, see Weiss, *The National Urban League*, 273. Also see a letter from the Urban League's Executive Secretary John T. Clark to the National Recovery Administration's Executive Secretary Donald Richburg in 1934, which reads "An additional evidence of the spread of union influence (which we would welcome if the Federation would broadly include Negro labor) is shown in a recent action of our Board of Alderman. They passed a law to permit only union waiters…Does not such legislation prevent millions of unemployed, who are not affiliated nor care to affiliate with the present American Federation of Labor, from obtaining work…We notice with alarm agents of the administration giving over more and more control on who shall work, to the American Federation of Labor, and with regret, that Negro labor finds it necessary to attempt to protect its right to work apparently against the interests of the American Federation of Labor…There are many evidences that the Negro's patience in the New Deal is being shaken – not because we do not have faith in its provisions, but because the Government, through its various agencies and representatives, seems to allow local "old deal" customs to continue only where Negroes are concerned" (Clark to Richburg, Feburary 13, 1934, NUL 1-D-4). *The Amsterdam News* also questioned whether the AFL provided any token of good faith in the same year (October 12, 1935, NUL 1-D-4).

[76] Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 173.

withholding protection to masses in the labor movement."[77] When the CIO was formed, the NUL expressed no preference between the CIO and the AFL.[78] AFL President William Green was dismissive of the Urban League's complaints.[79]

Even though the NAACP eschewed a working class strategy in the 1930s, it was quietly supportive of the New Deal, with some qualifications. In 1932, its recommendations to both party platform committees briefly moved beyond race issues. Although most recommendations concerned the traditional civil rights agenda, the final recommended plank supported "all sane methods towards the redistribution of present wealth through the systematic taxation of large incomes and the future conduct of industry for public good and not for private profit; this, also, to include sickness, old age, and unemployment insurance."[80] An NAACP questionnaire to candidates in 1932 asked what the candidate planned to do to reduce unemployment, indicating that the NAACP agreed with the New Deal premise that the government had a responsibility to promote recovery and alleviate suffering with positive programs.[81] NAACP officials (along with the NUL) demonstrated that they were not uncritical of New Deal Democrats when they opposed section 7a of the NRA, which empowered unions.[82] One civil rights activist in the CIO acknowledged that "the NAACP and the NUL are deeply concerned over displacement of Negroes in many jobs…It was somewhat aggravated by NRA, when a

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[77] T. Arnold Hill to William Green, November 30, 1935, NAACP I-D-4.

[78] Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 217.

[79] Green appeared dismissive of the requests to integrate unions more rapidly, writing to the Urban League that "the racial problem which you have referred to in your letter cannot be settled in a fair, just and satisfactory way by those who occupy such extreme positions," and "results are never achieved when we denounce and lecture our friends" (William Green to T. Arnold Hill, October 7, 1935, NUL 1-D-4).

[80] A year later, White supported public works bills and the American Labor Association asked White to endorse New York Senator Robert Wagner (American Labor Association to Walter White, May 4 1933, NAACP I-C-257).

[81] Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 151.

[82] Bernstein, *Only One Place of Redress*, 95.

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fixed minimum wage no longer made it pay to use cheaper Negro help."[83]   The NAACP

also testified against Social Security so long as it did not include traditionally African

American occupations such as farm workers.[84]

The NAACP did not focus on the Democratic Party as the principal vehicle for its

political goals, asserting itself as a nonpartisan organization. President Arthur Spingarn

openly supported Roosevelt in 1936, explaining that he was not speaking for the

organization. White nevertheless stated that Spingarn was a "volunteer" who did not

represent the organization, and pointed out that some board members supported

Republican challenger Alf Landon. In the election of 1940, White declined invitations to

join organized groups for Roosevelt. The NAACP continued its nonpartisan postured,

rebuking Field Secretary William Pickens for openly supporting the Republican

candidate, Wendell Willkie.[85] In the words of one biographer, the NAACP was mainly

"non-economically" liberal; the "black man's struggle for full civil and political rights

must take precedence over any program of economic advancement, for once color

discrimination had been swept away, the black man would be able to compete

successfully with his white counterpart in jobs."[86]

This section shows that civil rights groups were not ready to ally with unions or

working class whites in the 1930s. Many members of the organization hesitated to ally

politically with working class whites or transform the organization into a multi-issue

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[83] Lucy Mason to Jonathan Daniels, September 11 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62. For studies confirming this concern, see Keyes, "The Minimum Wage and the Davis-Bacon Act," 399, 401; Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 397-398; and Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR*, 610.
[84] Testimony of Charles Houston, representing the NAACP, Feburary 9, 1935, NAACP I-C-257. That being said, the NAACP, soon afterwards, worked toward ending the discrimination (extending the benefits to exempted occupations) rather than ending social security.
[85] Simon Topping, "Supporting our Friends and Defeating Our Enemies: Militancy and Nonpartisanship in the NAACP, 1936-1948," 20-22.
[86] Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 14.

organization. Before a CIO-NAACP alliance could be contemplated, both organizations would first need to overcome traditional barriers to cooperation. Schickler, Pearson, and Feinstein (2010) provide evidence for the role of unions in promoting civil rights through the Democratic Party, but do not explain how civil rights groups and unions were able to reach a point where they could cooperate. Had economic individualism prevailed in civil rights organizations at the time of the CIO's growth, national unions may not have fought so vigorously for civil rights in the Democratic Party. In such a case, blacks would have remained more divided in their party identification. As we will see in the next chapter, the NAACP came to believe that it needed to ally with labor in order to spearhead an effective civil rights program.

Black Workers, Churches, and Newspapers

The NAACP's ambivalence about diverging from civil rights and allying with working class whites was not out of touch with African Americans at the mass level. One could argue that the NAACP was more receptive than black workers, churches, and newspapers, which gave political prognosticators little reason to believe that African Americans and unions could work closely together in a political coalition. Their behavior demonstrated that an alliance with unions could generate considerable resistance among other pillars of black communities. As Kersch (2004) and Bernstein (2001) have expressed, "African Americans were among those Americans least interested in seeing the New American State develop along a trajectory that augmented the political-economic power of organized labor."[87]

In 1919, Socialist Party leader William Foster reported that blacks provided the steel industry unions in Chicago, Buffalo, Pueblo, Youngstown, and Sparrows Point with

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[87] Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties,* 188-189.

"less cooperation than any other element, skilled or unskilled, foreign or native."[88]   In 1930, a NUL study found that blacks were "the most individualistic of workers and as yet have no body of sentiment to guide their group decisions and movements either toward the established labor organizations or the protection of employers."[89]   Future CIO president Phillip Murray found organizing black steelworkers difficult even with the cooperation of civil rights organizations in 1936, and pessimistically concluded "that the organization of the negro [sic] steel workers will follow, rather than precede, the organization of the white mill workers."[90]   In 1937, African American workers in Detroit mostly declined to participate in sit-down strikes in which many whites took part, and voted against the UAW-CIO's organization of the Ford plant in 1941.[91]

Many historical incidents provided reasons to distrust unions. In 1898, Illinois coal miners on strike attacked a train of black replacement workers, killing ten of them. The governor of Illinois only responded by outlawing the importation of replacement workers – who were often black - from other states. Blacks felt as if they were attacked simply for seeking employment. White union members saw unions as social organizations as well as economic organizations, and extending "brotherhood" to African Americans would have meant recognizing social equality. When two Columbia researchers interviewed African American workers about their experiences, many

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[88] Quoted in Reid, *Negro Membership in Labor Unions*, 166.

[89] Reid, *Negro Membership in Labor Unions*, 165.

[90] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 26.

[91] Janken, *White*, 244, 251. Even those less sensitive to the historic realities of labor unions had no idea if unions would succeed or control future hiring, in which case currying favor with management was less risky; others worried that plant-wide union seniority rules would weaken the seniority in traditional African American departments. For another account of the NAACP avoiding labor support in the 1930s, see Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights,* 174-182. On the other hand, NUL's Lester Granger (a CIO member) acknowledged in 1938 that an NAACP audience was much more receptive that year than it had been five years earlier (Lester Granger, "The Negro in Labor Unions," Before the 29th Annual Conference of the NAACP, June 30, 1938, NAACP mf Part 1 r9).

reported that employers said they would have hired them, but their white workers would quit if they did.[92]

American's largest union, the AFL, contributed to this pattern of discrimination. Generally, affiliates organized separate locals for black workers and often restricted blacks from better-paying positions. In 1915, unions and white Southerners supported La Follette's Seamen's Act, which raised the living standards of sailors partly so that whites would find the work more attractive. AFL president Samuel Gompers told Senator Robert La Follette that working conditions were driving "all white men from the sea." In 1917, the Central Trades and Labor Union claimed that blacks were being used "to the detriment of our white citizens by some of the white capitalists" during a unionization drive. In the same year, the AFL attributed a Chicago race riot on the employer's use of black workers.[93] In 1929, the AFL blamed leaders like Booker T. Washington for poor black-union relations at an interracial conference and said that when blacks learned the appropriate trades they would be admitted. Walter White summarized the presentation: "unskilled labor must become skilled before it can gain rights,' he declared; union labor keeps the Negro out of the skilled trades – and the spokesman of the AFL calmly faces an intelligent audience and coolly justifies to his own satisfaction such a course."[94] While the CIO would often hire organizers because of their ability to recruit blacks, the AFL declined to hire a black organizer in 1926 even when the NUL offered to pay half of the salary. (It had earlier promised the NUL that it hire black organizers when it had enough money).[95] The AFL admitted A. Philip Randolph's BSCP, but only after Randolph had

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[92] Spero and Harris, *The Black Worker*, 133-134. The findings were first published in 1931.
[93] Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*,121, 125.
[94] Walter White. 1929. "Solving America's Race Problem." *The Nation*. 128: 42-43.
[95] Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 170.

spent years cultivating a relationship, at times calling off strikes against the clear

preferences of BSCP members. The AFL also turned down the following proposals from

the NAACP in 1935: 1) international unions take up the "Negro Question" at their next

convention; 2) issue no new charters to discriminating unions; and 3) begin an

educational campaign not to discriminate. The AFL's moral obtuseness destroyed the

NAACP's last vestige of confidence, and it picketed the AFL's convention.[96] One AFL

leader, later impressed by NAACP's opposition to the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act, wrote

to the NAACP that while serving on the wartime FEPC, "we had very definite opposition

quite often from members of the NUL against the closed shop" and admitted in "some

cases there was justification for the position they took."[97]

Tensions between unions and blacks continued into the New Deal. Arneson

(2001) argues that the labor regulations provided unions with considerable power to

discriminate that they lacked before.[98] Some unions would employ blacks long enough to

ensure workplace unionization and then dismiss the black workers. Of course, some

employers would also hire black replacement workers and dismiss them once the white

strikers returned to work. The AFL opposed an antidiscrimination amendment to the

Wagner Act, arguing that it would provide a pretext for federal interference with unions,

but it was surely wary that many of its discriminatory affiliates would be disempowered

by the act. The Railroad Brotherhoods and the Teamsters, among other unions, were able

to violently exclude African Americans from work that had previously been dominated

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[96] Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker,* 208-210; Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 109; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 24.
[97] Frank Fenton to Clarence Mitchell, February 20, 1947, NAACP I-X-211.
[98] Arneson, *Brotherhoods of Colors*, 126-128.

by African Americans.[99] The Railway Labor Act of 1936 declared that only legally recognized unions could bring grievances before the government. For a black fireman to present a grievance, he had to present it to the white union that his grievance may have been against. Even if the union approved the grievance, white unions and management comprised the government review boards. Willard Townsend, the highest black official in the CIO, said that under the Railway Labor Act,

> the Negro railroad worker finds himself in much the same position as Dred Scott, the runaway slave, who had entered a free state and was ordered back to slavery by the United States Supreme Court…[The] maintenance of this brotherhood-management-government axis converts racial discrimination into a profitable flourishing big business, where craft unionism declares dividends each year to their own compact membership at the expense of the lower paid unskilled Negro and other race minorities.[100]

Although blacks constituted eight percent of nonagricultural labor in 1929, they constituted one percent of unionized workers, and half of that number was due to the all-black BSCP.[101]

The BSCP and its president, A. Philip Randolph, garnered exceptional support in communities normally ambivalent or hostile to labor. Among grassroots civil rights activists, Randolph was perhaps the most sympathetic to labor and socialism. Although he had been the editor of the Socialist Party *Messenger*, and not a manual laborer, the BSCP wanted someone outside of the company to serve as president. Randolph sharply criticized economic individualism and branded blacks who supported the company union, or otherwise did not organize, as "stool pigeons" and "Uncle Toms." Influenced by Karl Marx, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Lester Ward, Randolph had proclaimed that socialism would eliminate racism: "When no profits are to be made from race friction, no one will longer

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[99] Bernstein, *Only One Place of Redress*, 47-48. On the Teamsters, see "Panel Discussion: Economic Opportunity and Employment" before the Thirtieth Annual Conference of the NAACP in Richmond, Virginia, June 28, 1939, NAACP mf Part 1 r10.
[100] Quoted in Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties,* 197.
[101] Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 170.

be interested in stirring up race prejudice."[102] Randolph's focus on economics over race led him to oppose federal regulations that interfered with union discrimination, stating that it was better to have strong labor unions with prejudice than weak ones without prejudice.[103] Certain of the need for national unions to advance economic progress, he lobbied repeatedly for admission to the AFL, despite its poor history of discrimination. Randolph backed down on a highly anticipated strike in deference to AFL president William Green, and the BSCP was ultimately admitted in 1935.

Schickler and Caughey's (2011) analysis of early survey data concludes that Northern blacks were more liberal than Northern Democrats generally on labor issues. But even the racially liberal CIO had difficulty making inroads among Northern black workers. The CIO signaled its support for civil rights at its inception, barring discrimination in its constitution and unanimously endorsing anti-lynching laws at national gatherings. Many of its large unions, such as the United Mine Workers and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, proclaimed their support for racial integration and organized with substantial help from black workers.[104] Nevertheless, wary of past discrimination, other black leaders and workers waited before endorsing the AFL's new rival. The NUL's Lester Granger, for example, warned workers against "jubilantly rushing toward what they assume to be a new day for labor and a new organization to take the place of the AF of L."[105] Some worried that blacks

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[102] Quoted in Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph*, 9-10.
[103] William H. Hastie, Memorandum to the Committee to Study Discrimination in Labor Unions, February 19, 1940, NAACP II-A-128; Handwritten minutes, Committee to Study Discrimination in Labor Unions, June 9, 1940, NAACP II-A-128; Memorandum to Mr. Marshall from Mr. White, March 11, 1940; NAACP mf Part 13b r23.
[104] Foner, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 215-237
[105] Foner, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 216; also see Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 121.

would be unable to obtain jobs in unionized workplaces dominated by white workers,[106] while others worried that plant-wide union seniority rules would weaken the seniority of black workers in traditionally African American departments.[107] These concerns were well-founded. After years of education and workplace integration efforts in the racially liberal UAW, blacks constituted only two percent of the well-compensated craft workers in 1960.[108]

Blacks in the South appeared far more positive about unions than those in the North. CIO organizer Henry White reported that black civic groups were interested in CIO activities.[109] Lucy Randolph Mason, the CIO Director of Public Relations for the South, wrote that "the negro audience was the most responsive of any I have talked to, practically every one leaning forward and listening intently, with now and then an approving smile or nod."[110] Mason's voluminous correspondence and records from her Southern campaigns from 1937-1953 includes only one mention of unreceptive blacks.[111] These primary sources are consistent with Schickler's (2011) analysis of early polling data, which show that Southern blacks were far more likely to prefer the CIO to the AFL than Northern blacks.[112] Before long, however, many Southern blacks would become disappointed. At the U.S. Pipe and Foundry Company in Bessemer, Alabama, blacks lost

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[106] Lucy Mason to W.W. Ball, May 27, 1940, Operation Dixie mf 62. Her statement of policy was corroborated by John L. Lewis in John L. Lewis to W.W. Ball, June 10 1940, Operation Dixie mf 62.
[107] Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*, 174-182.
[108] Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 149.
[109] Executive Committee of the Tennessee State CIO PAC, Minutes of the Meeting, March 20 1948, Operation Dixie mf 67.
[110] Lucy Mason to editors, October 5 1937. Also see Lucy Mason to Allan Haywood, February 24, 1941; Lucy Mason to Van Gelder, January 16 1943; all in Operation Dixie mf 62. Also see E.L. Sandfeur to Lucy Mason, May 29 1945, Operation Dixie mf 63.
[111] In 1939, a group of black students dominated the discussion and asked questions indicating their skepticism, even after Mason contrasted the CIO record with the AFL's. Lucy Mason to Miss Mary Jane Willett and Mr. William, March 31, 1939, Operation Dixie mf 62.
[112] Schickler and Caughey, "Public Opinion, Organized Labor, and the Limits of New Deal Liberalism, 1936-1945," 55.

many of their positions as skilled laborers and sub-foremen after the organization of the

plant by U.S. Steelworkers. The number of "one-race" department in the Pullman-

Standard's manufacturing plant in the same location increased after the collective

bargaining agreement of 1941. An investigation by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

in 1961 found that Atlantic Steel's practices were even worse than a recent NAACP

report indicated. No black workers received a pay grade above 8 on a scale of 1 to 26,

and more than half earned a pay grade at 4 or below.[113]

Northern black churches tended to oppose unions. Some of them helped provide

local employers with regular members of the congregation, and many people even

attended church because it provided this employment service. Detroit ministers

convinced Henry Ford to adopt a racial quota system in 1921, in which the proportion of

blacks in his factories equaled to proportion in the work force, and were represented in

every department. In the mid-1920s, this arrangement led to 10,000 black workers in the

Rouge plant, which constituted half of the black autoworkers in the country.[114] Other

employers with good records in hiring blacks were often the first to lay them off during

the Great Depression, but Ford augmented its black workforce in the late 1930s.

Preachers did not want to upset the employers' view of blacks as loyal workers by

working with unions.[115] Reverend Archibald Carey, a black community activist in

Chicago, forbade union organizers (including Randolph) from speaking in his

congregations and told ministers that they had a duty to warn members about the evils of

labor unions.[116] African American ministers in the critical city of Detroit issued a neutral

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[113] Zieger, *Southern Labor in Transition, 1940-1995,* 116-124.
[114] Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 154.
[115] Meier and Ruckwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 16.
[116] Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 48.

statement about unions at the 1936 NAACP convention.   On the eve of the 1941 strike at

the Rouge Plant, one black minister said "If Henry Ford hires one colored for every ten

whites, I am for him first, last, and always."[117]

For a time, black newspapers contributed to black hostility toward unions. A

gathering of 52 African American newspaper editors in 1914 condemned "all forms of

Unionism and economic radicalism."[118] When Samuel Gompers urged African

Americans to join AFL unions in 1918, the *Baltimore Herald* told African Americans to

"Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts."[119] The *Washington Bee* also praised capital and

compared the AFL to a spider offering an invitation to a fly. The opinion read

> We wonder, should colored labor become affiliated with the AFL, if it will find itself in the predicament of the fly that accepted the spider's invitation. Because of organized labor being unable to supply, from its own ranks, all the men now needed to man the trades, capital has been permitted to use colored labor in unusual numbers – a thing capital would have done long ago had organized labor permitted it to do so…Capital…as a rule, always stood willing to give colored labor employment, and in many instances has contested organized labor's right to exclude this class of labor.[120]

Much of this hostility continued into the 1920s. In 1925, The Chicago *Whip* and

Defender recommended that African Americans not join A. Philip Randolph's BSCP,

which actively supported civil rights, and instead join the company unions.[121] John P.

Davis, who supported unions by the late 1930s, wrote in *The Nation* in 1929 that

> Capital has never presented as sinister and malevolent a front to the Negro laborer as have the white labor unions…Our liberal white "friends" urge use to wait until they can persuade the white unions to see the light. But who can wait when winter has come and there is no coal, no food?...In the face of these facts can you give me any good reason for being a socialist or joining with the "organized forces of labor to overthrow a despotic capitalistic regime"? Why shouldn't Negro labor organize to defeat every attempt of white labor to bargain collectively with capital? Why

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[117] Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 121.

[118] Bernstein, *Only One Place of Redress,* 92. Bernstein mistakenly dates the conference year as 1924.

[119] *Baltimore Herald*, September 1917, 126, NAACP C-142.

[120] NAACP I-C-142.

[121] Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 180. The BSCP needed to support civil rights and not merely "bread and butter" to win broader support from the black community (Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 85). Broad support may have factored into the Chicago *Defender's* change in tone in 1927; after that year, it ceased attacking the BSCP and eventually actively promoted union ideals (Bates 81, 103).

shouldn't we join in this cutthroat game and help capital throttle white labor? This it seems to me is the only way to make white labor see the light. And so I urge all Negro laborers to adopt as their motto: "Hurrah for the Scab and the Open Shop and to Hell with the Unions."[122]

The NAACP kept a file on labor unions that included op-eds for or against unions, most of which were negative.

Kersch (2004) and Bernstein (2001) still overstate the degree of economic individualism in the black press during the New Deal and particularly after the creation of the CIO in 1935. The most widely read black newspapers in the US before World War II were the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*. To detect change over time, I surveyed all editorials concerning unions in two years, one in the early 1920s and the other in the late 1930s.[123] The *Pittsburgh Courier* supported the entrance of blacks into unions as early as 1911, even though it remained a staunchly Republican newspaper until the Great Depression. Only two of four editorials concerning unions in 1924 favored them. One editorial argued that wages are not raised by strikes, but productivity and profits, while another criticized black supporters of Progressive candidate Robert La Follette because of his support for unions even when they discriminated. The two supportive editorials praised Randolph's all-black BSCP and the right of its workers to a "living wage." In the 1930s, editorials continued to condemn discriminatory unions, but praised New Deal laws granting protection to unions, and admonished blacks not to blame unions for not remedying discrimination overnight. Foreshadowing the feelings that would emerge in the wake of the 1941 Ford Strike, the paper declared in 1937 that

Whatever opinions many may hold about organized labor, it seems a foregone conclusion that it is going to be much more powerful and entrenched in the future than it has been in the past…To

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[122] *The Nation.* 1929. 128: 44.

[123] The terms entered into a pro-quest search engine were union, labor, AFL, CIO, Green, strike, Wagner Act, capital, capitalism, socialism, and communism. The years were different for different publications based on availability. I generally chose 1922 and 1937 because anti-lynching laws were proposed in those two years, and I plan to compare black newspapers to conservative newspapers in the future.

meet this cost [labor-driven higher prices] the same as the white worker, [black workers] must [join unions].

In 1937, 81 percent of 15 *Pittsburgh Courier* editorials were pro-union. Overall, it was satisfied with the record of the CIO and optimistic about its future.

The *Chicago Defender*, which had urged blacks to consider voting Democratic in the 1920s, was skeptical of unions. Only three of the twelve editorials in 1922 favored unions. While supporting the right to unionize and encouraging blacks to join non-discriminatory unions, it also favored the right of a worker to not join a workplace union and serve as a replacement worker. In 1937, 54 percent of 22 editorials were pro-union. Some editorials argued that unions forced blacks to be "scabs," but the *Defender* showed itself to be hopeful about the CIO and its prospects for race relations. In 1947, 90 percent of the 37 editorials about unions were positive. By that time, CIO members had threatened to boycott the paper unless the company accepted a CIO-affiliated union.

Other black newspapers had less than one-half the circulation of the *Defender* and less than one-fourth the circulation of the *Courier*, but if one considers them, a somewhat more Republican tilt emerges. According to a survey of the 15 largest African American newspapers (including the *Defender* and *Courier*), nine endorsed Roosevelt and three endorsed Hoover in 1932; in 1936, nine endorsed Roosevelt and four endorsed Alf Landon; in 1940, six endorsed Roosevelt and nine endorsed Willkie; in 1944, six endorsed Roosevelt, and seven endorsed Dewey.[124]

Conclusion

Campbell (2005) argues that a social movement, in order to be successful, must "frame issues in ways that resonate with the ideologies, identities, and cultural

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[124] DM Dodge and Company, NAACP II-A-452. In most of the elections, a few of the newspapers endorsed neither candidate.

understandings of supporters and others who might be drawn to their cause." Although

the NAACP was an organization, not a movement, it too framed issues consistent with

the goals of existing and potential members. As late as the New Deal, the NAACP had a

relatively free hand in whether it pursued overtly civil rights goals or involved itself in

broader political and economic struggles. Multiple points of view existed among other

major black institutions. In particular, considerable African American opposition to labor

unions persisted into the late 1930s. New circumstances and new opportunities at the end

of the decade would lead to the NAACP-CIO alliance that transformed the Democratic

Party.

Figure 2.1
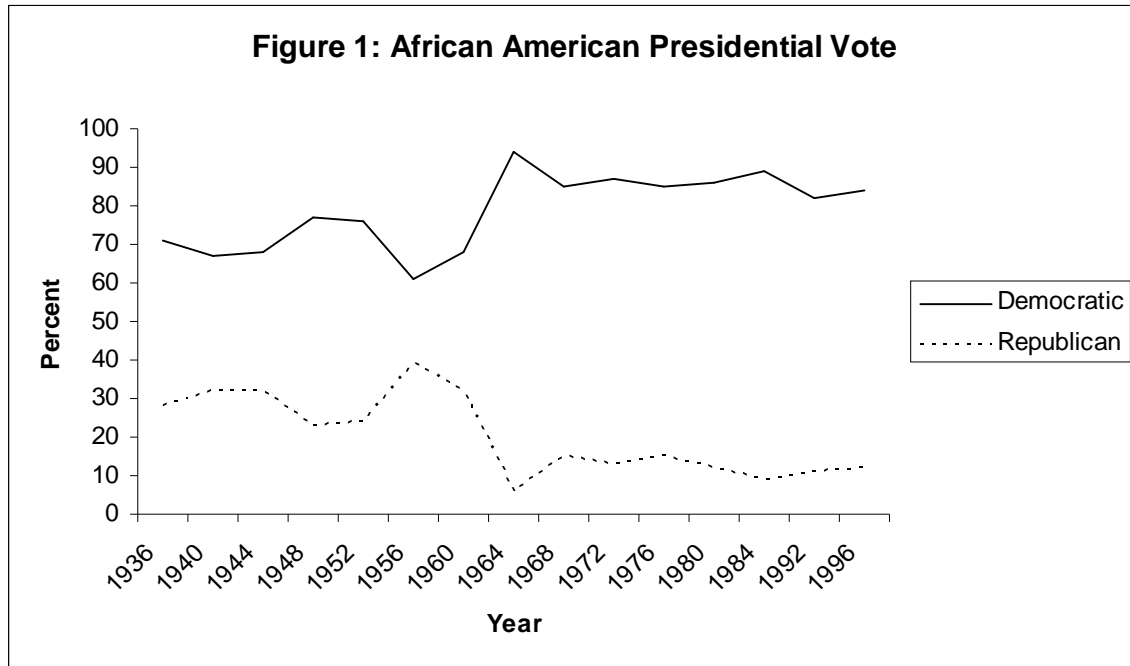
Figure 1: African American Presidential Vote

Source: David A. Bositis, "Blacks and the 2004 Democratic National Convention," Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Table 1, Presidential vote and party identification of black Americans, 1936–2000; p. 9.

73

Figure 2.2

Figure 2: African American Party Identification
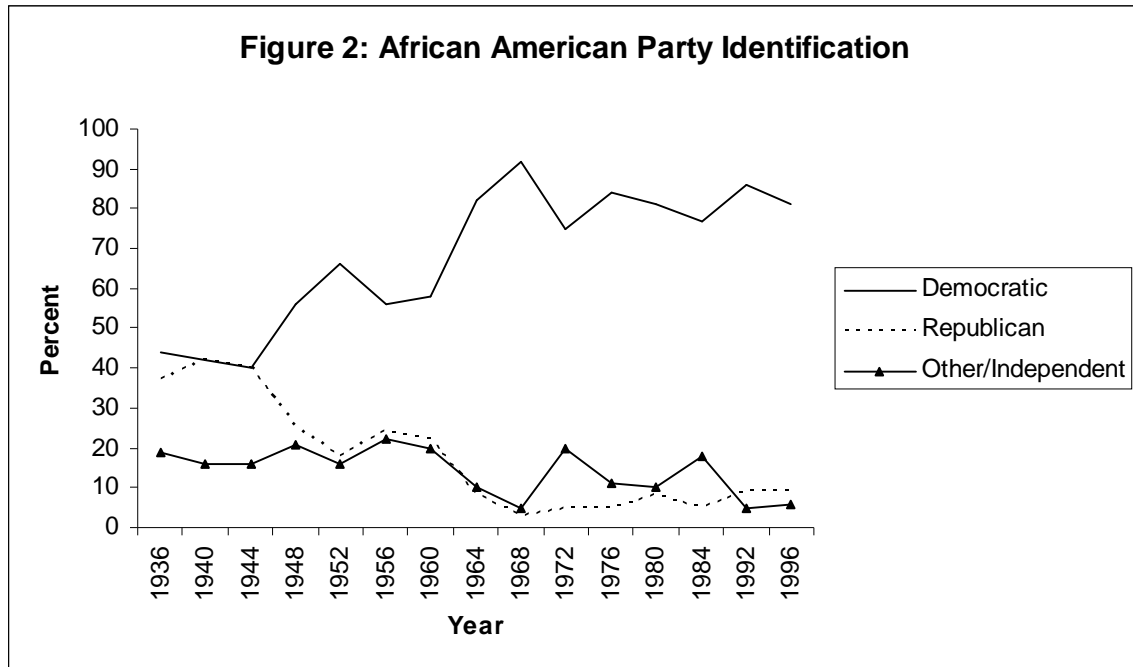
Source: David A. Bositis, "Blacks and the 2004 Democratic National Convention," Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Table 1, Presidential vote and party identification of black Americans, 1936–2000; p. 9.

CHAPTER THREE

MAKING A CIO-NAACP ALLIANCE

In the Packard "hate strike" of 1943, 25,000 white United Auto Workers (UAW) members went on strike. The workers were protesting the promotion of a small group of African American workers at the Packard Motor Company, which was then producing goods for the country's war efforts. Both management and white laborers had inflamed racial tension, but not all observers reported events this way. Walter White, executive secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), placed the blame entirely on the management rather than the white laborers. Noting the shutdown's effect on wartime industries, he stated: "Tokyo and Berlin tonight rejoice in the effective and unexpected aid given them" by capital. Although he was aware of the instigating role that white workers had played in the strike, he chose to side with the UAW leadership and omit labor's role.[1]

Only a few years later, the NAACP supported strikes from discriminatory labor unions such as the railroad brotherhoods in 1946[2] and the New York City Teacher's Guild in 1961.[3] From a modern perspective, the actions of the NAACP may not seem surprising. Underprivileged racial minorities, it would seem, have a common interest in the welfare of underprivileged groups such as unskilled workers. For example, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has offered unqualified support for abortion rights

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[1] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 191. The UAW was subsequently able to minimize the harm and pushed for federal intervention that ended the strike (172).

[2] Janken, *White*, 302. In 1935, the NAACP had warned the railroad brotherhoods that they could "never attain freedom for their groups by climbing on the backs of black labor." "Along the NAACP Battlefront." 1935. *The Crisis* 42: 250.

[3] Irving Adler to NAACP, December 16 1961, mf 13 supplement r1.

and marched alongside women's rights advocates.[4] What may come as a surprise is evidence that the strong alliance between labor organizations and the civil rights groups did not exist before World War II. African Americans may have never become reliable Democratic Party voters without this alliance.

This chapter will explain the forces leading to the alliance. For the NAACP, an alliance with the CIO provided needed help for the organization at both the local and the national level. Finding itself marginalized in both parties, it needed a political ally of the CIO's stature. For the CIO, national political interests weighed more clearly in favor of a civil rights stance than local organizational interests. Although some local unions affiliated with the CIO benefited from racially liberal policies, others did not. Intervening in local situations was a burdensome holding action necessary to accomplish the CIO's national political goals. Like any marriage, the two partners had their differences, and needed to work with each other to maintain a harmonious relationship in spite of those differences. The partnership created a powerful political coalition that benefited a faction within the Democratic Party, but the partners largely maintained the coalition by themselves without mediation from this party faction.

Together, the CIO and the NAACP fought at multiple levels of government, and local governments and institutions translated national policies to suit their interests. Still, the civil rights-labor alliance was forged largely to pursue federal policy changes. In the CIO's view, the living standards of all workers in America affected their own workers in an interdependent economy. They sought a package of economic measures designed to promote a full employment economy, but had little chance of passing meaningful reforms

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[4] Foreman, Matt. 2004. "Reproductive Freedom is a Gay Issue, Now More than Ever." April 23. http://www.thetaskforce.org/press/releases/pr666_042304

through Southern legislatures, or displacing powerful Southern chairmen in Congress, without a national political strategy. At the grassroots level, CIO leaders found that local workplace integration was often a liability and their incentives were more muddled than national political considerations in favor of civil rights. The CIO's success as a union depended on maintaining the Wagner Act and the liberal jurisprudence of the New Deal regime, and only the federal government could adopt countercyclical policies capable of avoiding another depression. Additionally, as long as the South remained a bastion of low wages and union restrictions, the CIO program was in jeopardy. Federal economic regulations such as the minimum wage were the remedy. The NAACP, likewise, needed a national strategy to bring about civil rights in the South, where most blacks were disenfranchised and state legislatures stood firmly against them.[5] National laws, court appointments, and congressional protocol could not be changed without a coordinated national strategy. Local results depended on national changes.

The NAACP's Interests in an Alliance

The NAACP began vigorously supporting the cause of labor by 1940, reflecting its organizational interests. Leading up to this change in policy were discussions about how to maintain member interest and meet mounting financial challenges. In the first half of the 1930s, NAACP revenue was half that of the 1920s, and one study shows that declining middle class contributions accounted for much of the loss.[6] In March of 1939, Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins prodded Executive Secretary Walter White to consider new strategies, saying that if the NAACP failed to capitalize on the growth of NAACP

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[5] The NAACP was able to fight poll taxes at the state level with some success in the 1940s, but they normally enjoyed little success in Southern state politics.
[6] Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 358; Nelson, "The Philadelphia NAACP."

"youth councils" - which were generally pro-labor - young people will lose interest. The NAACP had also failed to appeal to the young by eschewing mass campaigns, apart from anti-lynching buttons.[7] Wilkins suggested to White that "a great deal of money seems to be lying around in Left and near-Left circles…our cautious conservatism has kept us standing still while a great many persons who were sympathetic with us…have become more…progressive."[8] These concerns continued into the 1940s, when White confessed that "some people" believe that the "March-On-Washington Movement," an organization which embraced the politics of mass protest wholeheartedly, "should replace the NAACP."[9] In 1939, the IRS disallowed tax deductions for donations to the NAACP because of its political "propagandizing" and lobbying, forcing the NAACP to rely less on donations from large donors.[10] In contrast to the national organization, the Chicago, Detroit, and Baltimore NAACP branches greatly increased their memberships and revenue by recruiting black laborers.[11] Daisy Lampkin, a Chicago organizer active in the NNC, pressed for a more economic agenda, and for her recruitment success, was given attention in *The Crisis* and a significant raise in the midst of financial hardship.[12]

The CIO could satisfy Charles Houston's aforementioned desire for political "muscle" if the two groups could reconcile their differences. The CIO had the ability to issue group appeals to workers. Additionally, they could distribute political literature, solicit donations, and recruit canvassers from a captive audience in a given workplace. In order to become foreman, a worker needed to have a positive rapport with most of the

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[7] Roy Wilkins to Walter White, March 11, 1939, NAACP mf I-80.
[8] Memorandum from Roy Wilkins to Walter White, March 24, 1939, NAACP mf I-80.
[9] Janken, *White*, 259.
[10] Walter White to Arthur Spingarn, October 5, 1939; White to William Rosenwald, October 10, 1939; White to Rosenwald, October 10, 1939; White to Rosenwald, November 22, 1939; all in NAACP I-80.
[11] Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 369.
[12] Daisy Lampkin to Walter White, December 21, 1938, NAACP I-C-69.

workplace, and resisting such a person's requests would take exceptional resistance to social pressures. Long before most politicians used direct mailing to target different constituencies, the CIO had workers' home addresses and could target workers in pivotal precincts.[13] When the CIO PAC was organized in 1943, it would go on to publish 85 million pieces of campaign literature in 1943 and 1944, including some targeted at African Americans.[14] The PAC was also one of the first political organizations to use advanced survey methods previously used by advertising firms.[15] Its educational activities had a demonstrable impact on its workers' beliefs; in a survey of 25 Ohio cities, an advertising firm found that CIO workers were far more likely to take CIO positions than non-unionized wage earners.[16] *New York Times* journalist Arthur Krock sensationally reported that the CIO caused Truman to be the vice presidential candidate in 1944. Although the CIO was not present at the meeting where Truman was chosen, Roosevelt did request that the suggestion be "cleared" with CIO PAC director Sidney Hillman. Hillman was working privately for months to find a Democratic vice presidential candidate acceptable to all party factions, given that Henry Wallace would not satisfy the South and segregationist James Byrnes would not satisfy the North.[17] Republicans often presented the PAC as all-powerful when campaigning against CIO-backed opponents. "Clear it with Sidney" became a popular Republican reminder of the CIO's influence. While the CIO PAC's influence was exaggerated, the RNC reformed its

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[13] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 512.
[14] Zieger, *The CIO*, 183.
[15] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 131.
[16] Green-Brodie, "Report to the Executives of the CIO," April 13, 1948, Philip Murray Papers, Box 133 folder 5.
[17] Foster, *The Union Politic,* 46-49; Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 530-531.

tactics to follow the CIO PAC model closely after the 1948 election due to belief in its effectiveness.[18]

The CIO was especially influential in the Truman administration as the 1948 election neared. Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act because he needed union support for his foreign policy and reelection. He told NLRB member James Reynolds that Taft-Hartley was necessary, but Congress would override his veto. According to Reynolds, Truman said "the Taft Hartley [Act]…is about that important compared to this," pointing to Eastern Europe on a map. "If I veto it, I'm going to hold labor support…[and] I'll be re-elected and the Marshall Plan will go forward."[19]

Initiating the Alliance

A turning point in relations between the NAACP and labor occurred in 1940. None of the written records of the NAACP's meetings or correspondence directly announce a decision to ally with labor, but they reveal a pattern of support that contrasts with the organization's earlier behavior. NAACP initiatives were below the radar, but nonetheless generous. The NAACP considered proposing an anti-discrimination amendment to the Wagner Act, but worried that doing so would alienate labor and set a dangerous precedent for federal harassment of unions.[20] When Senator Howard Smith attempted to make changes to the Wagner Act, the NAACP acknowledged that the Wagner Act was not perfect, but falsely claimed that the NAACP had always supported the closed shop union and viewed the changes as intended to "emasculate" it rather than

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[18] CIO PAC News Release November 20, 1949, Jack Kroll Papers Box 7.

[19] Zieger, *The CIO,* 1995, 276.

[20] William H. Hastie, Memorandum to the Committee to Study Discrimination in Labor Unions, February 19, 1940, NAACP II-A-128; Handwritten minutes, Committee to Study Discrimination in Labor Unions, June 9, 1940, NAACP II-A-128; Memorandum to Mr. Marshall from Mr. White, March 11, 1940; NAACP mf Part 13b r23.

resolve disputes more fairly. [21] After a meeting with John L. Lewis and several other

CIO leaders, the NAACP suggested its own amendment in a strategic move to prevent

the advocates of the Smith amendments from claiming that the reforms helped alleviate

discrimination.[22] The NAACP amendment was even revised for labor's benefit at the

risk of making it more difficult to prove discrimination. The first draft denied legal

benefits to unions that discriminated, but the later draft changed the phrasing to deny

benefits to unions that "customarily" or "usually" discriminated. An NAACP memo read:

> These changes leave a certain loophole in the bill. A Union might, for example, take in a few
> negroes [sic] to give lip service to the requirement and refuse admission to others. However, in
> view of the status of this proposed legislation and of the importance of labor support for it, I
> personally think it is all right.[23]

NAACP leaders also agreed not to reveal to Congress any unions that discriminate by

name, in order to avoid antagonizing them.[24] AFL President William Green thanked the

NAACP for their interference with the Smith committee, and agreed to support

"constructive" amendments in the future.[25] In the same year, the NAACP assumed

responsibility for a $25,000 debt the International Ladies Garment Workers Union owed

to the Garland Fund. Publicity Director George Murphy also praised the NAACP's

retention of a white-only printer's union to publish *The Crisis*, saying that "the NAACP

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[21] The NAACP claimed in 1940 that it had supported always collective bargaining, the closed-shop union, and the original Wagner Act (Walter White to Matthew Dunn, May 14 1940, NAACP 11-A-443). All of the NAACP documents I found concerning the Wagner Act of 1935, including indices to the collections, are limited to support for an anti-discrimination amendment to it; the earliest written support for non discriminatory closed shop unions was 1940 (Walter White to Alfred Baker Lewis, April 12, 1940, NAACP II-A-128). There is an NAACP application for a grant from the Falk Foundation in 1935, in which White suggested that the NAACP could accomplish its goals through contacts it made in Congress through its efforts on behalf of the Wagner bill as well as other bills (Application to the Maurice and Laura Falk Foundation, Re: Appropriation for gathering and utilization, through a Congressional investigation, of material on discrimination against the Negro under the "New Deal," April 9, 1935, NAACP I-C-278). I have not found evidence of this support, however, but merely evidence of lobbying for the amendment.
[22] Walter White to the Committee on Administration, March 15, 1940, NAACP II-A-443.
[23] Memorandum to Dean Hastie, March 14, 1940, NAACP II-A-243.
[24] Walter White to Matthew Dunn, May 1940, NAACP II-A-443.
[25] William Green to Walter White, March 22 1940, NAACP II-A-443.

has shown real intelligence in taking this step to show the identity of the interest with that of organized labor."[26]

The Ford Strike of 1941 was the first highly visible evidence of the NAACP's new attitude toward labor. Between 1,500 and 2,500 black workers were trapped inside a Ford plant when they refused to join the strike. Both the Chrysler Corporation and Ford Corporation had recently responded to major strikes by organizing "back to work" movements among blacks, raising suspicion among Detroit NAACP leaders that the corporations were dividing workers for their own advantage or even provoking a race riot in order to enlist government aid in repressing the strike.[27] The hitherto anti-union Detroit NAACP president, James McClendon, urged African Americans not to serve as replacement workers during the strike, and urged the blacks inside to leave the plant. Detroit's Youth Councils, the most active in the nation, broadcasted the union message using a UAW vehicle with a loudspeaker. The national NAACP quickly became involved. White wrote to the president that blacks need to be aware of "the new order of things" represented by the union.[28] After securing a pledge from the UAW to reduce discrimination, White sent a telegram to the local NAACP branch president to continue "full cooperation" with the union.[29] White visited the plant in Detroit with a loudspeaker and urged blacks, some of whom he knew personally, to leave the plant.[30] Since most

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[26] Memorandum to Mr. White from George B. Murphy, Jr., February 24, 1940, NAACP II-A-128. For the admittedly pragmatic issues that concerned NAACP leaders about the printer's union, see Memorandum to Mr. Murphy from Roy Wilkins, undated, NAACP I-C-80.
[27] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 67.
[28] Walter White to James McClendon, April 11 1941, NAACP mf 13a r3.
[29] Telegram from Walter White to James McClendon, April 5 1941, NAACP mf 13a r3.
[30] His own actions had little effect on the African American workers at Ford, who were already persuaded by the local NAACP. Nonetheless, they had high symbolic value.

black Ford employees still voted against the UAW-CIO,[31] the local and national NAACP showed themselves leading, rather than reflecting, grassroots opinion.

The Ford strike illustrates the existing incentives for a CIO-NAACP alliance were compounded with the growing realization that black workers could not afford to stay out of unions. The NAACP believed that African Americans had to improve relations with unions given their increasing role in the economy. Numerous statements suggest that blacks felt they had no choice but to support the UAW-CIO after the Ford strike. To a Cleveland attorney, White wrote that some union would organize Ford and "the Negro worker had the grim choice of casting his lot with the union or having its hostility after they organized."[32] One African American UAW member, present in the union from the beginning, said that "hard as it might have been for the Negro auto worker to maintain his worker's economic equilibrium in the union, it would be much harder for him to be sure of a decent job if he should persist in staying out."[33] The largest black newspaper in the country, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, wrote that Detroit black leaders "who lean toward the CIO point out that the day of open shops has passed and that the Negro must line up with organized labor."[34] The Wagner Act had facilitated closed shop unionization in so many places that blacks had to find a way to win the favor of closed shop unions. As Kersch interprets the events, "to persist in opposing a *fait accompli* of state construction and… governance by social collectives or groups now, to many African Americans, seemed futile."[35]

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[31] Lewis-Coleman, "African Americans and the Politics of Race Among Detroit's Auto Workers 1941-1971," 40.
[32] Walter White to Harry E. Davis, April 17, 1941; NAACP mf 13a r3.
[33] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, 77.
[34] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW,* 93.
[35] Kersch, *Constructing Civil Liberties*, 195. This theme is also implicit in the title of Bernstein's account of economic intervention affecting African Americans, *Only One Place of Redress.* As mentioned earlier,

Attempting to capitalize on the cooperation shown during the Ford strike, White urged CIO president Phil Murray and other union leaders to meet and share constructive proposals. He showed considerable awareness of the painful choices he needed to make. Privately, he thought that "there is really little difference fundamentally between the attitude of employers and of unions toward the Negro," but stressed to unions that if discrimination remained, "employers and anti-union forces would use the situation most vigorously and perhaps viciously."[36] Murray made excuses not to meet, but the two organizations reciprocated at many organizational levels. The national CIO created a "Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination" (CARD) in 1942. By 1945, 100 state and local committees existed among CIO unions.[37] At the local level, the UAW-CIO leadership, alone among Detroit's white leaders, defended blacks in a riot and criticized the city government for police brutality. It also formed a Fair Employment Practices Department, and worked closely with blacks to integrate a housing project and oppose a race-baiting mayoral candidate.[38] The Detroit NAACP gained 20,000 new members during the housing project crisis, when the UAW's support helped keep the housing project open for blacks after the city government attempted to keep it a white-only project.[39]

The NAACP altered its organizational identity to include labor interests. At the national level, the NAACP donated money to workers on strike and urged local chapters

this consideration is only a partial explanation for the change in black attitudes. Southern blacks showed great interest in the CIO before it was clear that any union, let alone the CIO, would successfully unionize the South.

[36] Walter White to Jim Jayne, April 15, 1941, NAACP mf 13a r3.

[37] Zieger, *The CIO*, 157.

[38] Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, 196; 217.

[39] Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost," 797.

to do the same.[40] The NAACP appointed a "labor secretary" in 1946, acknowledging that

black employment was not part of its mission. One of Labor Secretary Clarence

Mitchell's seven goals was to join labor unions to support labor legislation benefiting

both blacks and unions. Mitchell consistently told black "working people to join bona

fide non-segregated labor organizations, to attend the meetings of such organizations, and

to be good members in all respects."[41] In 1947, CIO Secretary Treasurer told CARD

"We have tremendous influence in each of the organizations," referring to the NAACP

and the NUL.[42]

Honoring its new commitment to organized labor, the NAACP retreated from

litigation against labor unions.[43] As shown by its interference with the Smith amendment

to the Wagner Act, the NAACP favored unions even when doing so meant temporarily

trimming its demands on civil rights. The NAACP also removed *Nation* publisher

Oswald Garrison Villard, the most important early financier of the NAACP, from the

board of trustees for his hostility to labor unions. Several NAACP leaders said he was

"out of step" and dismissed him.[44] NAACP leaders bundled opposition with labor rights

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[40] Memorandum to Roy Wilkins from Clarence Mitchell, NAACP IX-211.

[41] Clarence Mitchell to James Longson, February 12 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 160, Clarence Mitchell Folder.

[42] CARD Minutes, February 11 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Committee Folder.

[43] Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*.

[44] In a discussion of labor unions, Villard said there were many worthwhile political causes, and "if we should take time out to go into all of them the Association's work would suffer." The following month, Labor supporter William Hastie said that "we could not justify keeping on our Board someone who opposed the things we are working toward ("Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, January 9, 1946, NAACP mf 1 r3). Janken (2002) attributes the dismissal of Villard to his reservations about aiding unions, although the member calling for his dismissal mentions a letter to the *New York Times* coauthor by Villard. This letter opposed the New York State FEPC, arguing that prejudice would not be ended by legal penalties and the federal model worked well without such penalties. On the one hand, the minutes describing the dismissal did not specifically mention Villard's reservation about unions, and Villard was later reinstated after giving a stirring speech in which he supported a state FEPC given that the federal FEPC was ended (Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, March 11, 1946, NAACP mf 1 r3). On the other hand, the timing of the dismissal just one month after his statement about organized labor

with opposition to civil rights, writing to Green in 1947 that they had a "vital and mutual interest" in anti-lynching bills, FEPC bills, and their "unwholesome twin – the desire to shackle the labor movement with the Taft-Hartley Act."[45] In an address to the CIO's annual convention in 1947, the NAACP stated "there is no difference between the assaults upon the rights of labor and the various forms of discrimination which oppress minorities."[46]

The NAACP even opposed civil rights amendments and provisions when they threatened labor laws and social welfare measures. In the past, the NAACP had opposed social welfare measures such as the National Industrial Recovery Act (section 7a) and social security when adequate safeguards were not in place for minority workers. In the future, the NAACP would oppose aid to education that did not exclude segregated schools. For most of the 1940s, however, the NAACP opposed antidiscrimination amendments to social welfare measures, knowing that these amendments would cause the bills to fail, and opposed union legislation that weakened unions even if they contained civil rights provisions.[47] As mentioned earlier, the closed shop posed risks for African Americans because it strengthened the hand of white unions that had in the past discriminated against African Americans and often still wanted to.[48] In 1947, the Republican supporters of the Taft-Hartley Act, which proposed to outlaw closed shop unions, attempted to win support from African Americans. The act disempowered open

suggest that it may have been one of the factors contributing to Villard's being "out of step" with the NAACP's goals.

[45] Walter White to William Green, October 6 1947, NAACP mf Part 13C r 2.

[46] "NAACP Greeting to CIO Hits Taft-Hartley Law," October 16 1947, NAACP mf Part 13a r4.

[47] After 1949, the NAACP reversed policy and supported federal aid to housing and education only when they were not applied in a discriminatory manner. They were sometimes supported by the UAW and CIO, but opposed by most other liberal groups (Hamilton and Hamilton, *The Dual Agenda,* Chapter Five).

[48] White replacement workers (being more plentiful) were even more effective at preventing strikes from any all-black unions (Lester Granger, "The Negro in Labor Unions," Before the 29th Annual Conference of the NAACP, June 30 1938, NAACP mf Part 1 r9).

shop unions that practiced discrimination. Walter White needed labor support for new cloture rules necessary to advance civil rights legislation, and appears to have bargained for this help in exchange for its opposition to Taft-Hartley.[49] A "labor organization must have some security against the concentrated economic power of management," testified the NAACP representative before Congress in opposing the anti-union bill.[50] The Taft-Hartley Act, which passed despite NAACP opposition, later proved to be a boon to the NAACP. The antidiscrimination section of the act was slow to be enforced, but the NAACP eventually used it to win a lawsuit against a segregated union in 1964, and urged all branches to look out for similar opportunities.[51] It distributed the *New York Times* article describing the case, which deprived discriminatory unions from immunity from raids of other unions. The NAACP solicited complaints and wrote "We are prepared to spend a major part of our time in assisting employees who desire representation before the Board and in helping them file complaints. Please GIVE THIS PROGRAM PRIORITY."[52]

In the wake of Taft-Hartley, the NAACP boasted that it "mobilized its entire resources to crush 'right to work' laws" in individual states. The NAACP sent members to public forums and registered voters in pivotal areas. NAACP publications linked opposition to labor with opposition to civil rights, including a pamphlet entitled "Keep Mississippi out of California." AFL-CIO President George Meany thanked the NAACP for its work against "right-to-work" laws in 1958 and again in 1964; AFL-CIO analyses

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[49]White to Poppy Cannon White, Series I, Box 12 Folder 113, Walter Francis White and Poppy Cannon Papers. See also Assistant Special Counsel Marian Wynn Perry to Labor Secretary Clarence Mitchell, January 1947, NAACP I-X-211.
[50]Frymer, *Black and Blue*, 71
[51]Robert L. Carter to branch presidents, August 31, 1964, mf supplement to Part 13, r11.
[52]Robert L. Carter to branch presidents, August 31, 1964, mf supplement to Part 13, r 11.

found that African American voters were pivotal voters in right-to-work referenda.[53] The NAACP had become so closely tied with labor that when it received funding for an event in 1951 primarily from business, White personally appealed to the CIO to donate money so that labor's role could be emphasized. "It would not be good for labor or the NAACP if most of the money was given by non-labor groups," White warned.[54] One exception to NAACP-CIO cooperation seems to have taken place in 1953, when the NAACP supported a bill to forbid discrimination only where unions are the bargaining agents. CARD argued that labor opponents would use the law to discourage unionization in the South, and the NAACP should wait for a bill that prohibits both union and employer discrimination. In a heated exchange, the NAACP said that such a bill had no chance of passing.[55]

Disagreements with unions were handled with considerably more tact than other groups. The first NAACP labor secretary, Clarence Mitchell, "approached unions about their internal affairs cautiously and with considerable diplomacy."[56] When the AFL-CIO replied to charges of discrimination in 1960, Wilkins told Mitchell's hot-headed successor, Herbert Hill, "before you dream up a torrential rebuttal for my signature I would suggest a quiet retreat and a communing with nature, one of those Yogi-Gandhi businesses."[57] Its treatment of non-allied organizations was quite different. The NAACP publicly criticized the 1944 GOP platform for favoring a constitutional amendment to abolish the poll tax, calling it the "most objectionable" part of the platform. The NAACP believed it would "delude" African Americans because it was strategically impossible to

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[53] George Meany to Roy Wilkins, July 10, 1958 and June 3, 1964.
[54] Walter White to George Weaver, January 11 1951, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 154.
[55] CARD Minutes, May 12 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.
[56] Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights,* 223.
[57] Roy Wilkins to Herbert Hill, May 27, 1960, NAACP IX-4.

obtain a two-thirds majority from Congress.[58] When the CIO supported a poll tax

amendment in 1949, the NAACP sent a private letter asking the CIO to revise its

position.[59]

Organizational Benefits of the Alliance

The NAACP officers correctly identified the enormous organizational benefits of

working with unions. Beginning in 1940, the NAACP began receiving substantial

contributions from CIO-affiliated unions.[60] These new contributions were crucial in a

time of decreasing donations from the middle class. The NAACP and the CIO

collaborated more strongly on fundraising as the 1940s marched on. On the eve of the

Brown case, White wrote to the CIO that the NAACP ended 1952 with a deficit of

$34,000 and needed $100,000.[61] The CIO readily advised the NAACP on which local

unions and individuals were likely to be sympathetic to fundraising drives.[62] CARD also

encouraged local unions to set up committees to run membership drives for the NAACP,

not only to help the CIO but to raise awareness of civil rights.[63]

CIO funding and access solidified the NAACP's standing as the leading civil

rights organization. The NAACP obtained an agreement from the CIO not to cooperate

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[58] In 1953, a meeting of civil rights leaders at the 1953 Conference of Negro Organizations also showed leaders worrying about the "danger" of Republicans supporting an amendment to abolish the poll tax (Transcript of the Conference of Negro Organizations, December 4, 1953, NAACP II-A-452). A 1944 NAACP press release declared disapproval of such a plank in the 1944 Republican Platform because it had no chance of passing, instead favoring a simple bill passed by majority vote (NAACP Press Release "Only one GOP Plank on Negro OK'd by NAACP, June 29, 1944, NAACP II-A-510).
[59] Minutes of the CIO Legislative Committee, May 10, 1949, NAACP II-A-347; Walter White to Philip Murray, May 26, 1949, Philip Murray Papers Box 166, Folder 5.
[60] Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 372.
[61] Walter White to James Weaver, April 28 1953, NAACP II-A-347. Outside of the NAACP, the AFL-CIO had already funded the Freedom Rides in 1961 and registration drives in 1957, well aware of the similarity with labor's sit down strikes.
[62] Memorandum from Herbert Hill to Walter White, April 20, 1953, NAACP II-A-347.
[63] CARD Minutes, May 12 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.

with rival organizations such as the NNC, which the CIO originally funded.[64] After

World War II, Wilkins observed that both the NUL and the NAACP were growing

rapidly, and the former was hiring adept staff members to address member needs. In

order to maintain its position as the foremost civil rights organization, it needed to take a

more militant stand.[65] White was always careful not to let other civil rights groups take a

leading role in any visible task. He tried to preempt the March-On-Washington

Movement with a meeting with Roosevelt, which led only to Roosevelt falsely

announcing that civil rights leaders had agreed to minor concessions. White was then

forced to work with the Movement due to his own fumbling. Once Randolph established

the March-On-Washington Movement as a permanent organization, White tried to isolate

him in the defense program.[66] When President Truman created the President's

Committee on Civil Rights, he tried to dominate the proceedings by providing NAACP

information to its members. He wrote to Thurgood Marshall that "We must move

fast…we must not let anybody else steal the show from us."[67] When a Los Angeles

affiliate endorsed the NNC, the Industrial Director John Brophy wrote that "the stated

program and agenda of the NNC are largely a duplication of the work of the NAACP"

and are "from time to time at variance." Brophy continued that "the organization with

which we work very closely and successful is the NAACP" and warned that the Los

Angeles chapter must discontinue its support or be in violation of rules passed by the

governing council.[68]

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[64]Gloster B. Current to State Presidents and Secretaries, and Executive Secretaries of NAACP Branches, Februrary 19, 1947, NAACP II-A347.
[65] Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 189-190.
[66] Janken, *White*, 253, 259.
[67] Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 107.
[68] John Brophy to Philip Connelly, November 26 1946, Operation Dixie mf 26.

. In the early 1950s, the CIO provided essential funding for the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which many regard as the most important victory in the NAACP's history. The NAACP ended 1952 with an operating deficit of $34,000 and sought to raise $100,000 in 1953 to prepare for whatever decision the Supreme Court made. It raised $2,500 from the CIO in and $75,000 from the Philip Murray Memorial Foundation (headed by longtime CIO operative James Carey) in 1954.[69]

While CIO overtures to the NAACP are not accompanied by written *quid pro quos*, there are some revealing incidents. White had previously been willing to tailor policy to fundraising needs and access to influential people. He persuaded the Chicago NAACP branch to call off a boycott of Sears in 1932. One of the chairmen of the Board of Sears had annually donated $2,500 to the NAACP and other civil rights causes, and advised White to moderate the content of *The Crisis*.[70] Union leaders were sometimes blatant in the expected gains from their donations. UAW President Walter Reuther reminded Martin Luther King of how much money the UAW donated to civil rights when attempting to influence the direction of King's movement, and he used union resources to prevent the NAACP from moving in more militant directions in the 1960s.[71]

In this section, I have focused on examples of CIO-NAACP cooperation on political issues, labor laws, finance, and membership drives. Both organizations were signaling sympathy for each others' interests. These signals were soon accompanied by

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[69] George Weaver to Robert Birchmann, June 12 1954, NAACP II A347. It raised another $25,000 from the CIO, the Steelworkers and other union sources in 1953 (Walter White to James Carey, April 28, 1953, NAACP II A347; Walter White to George Meany, April 17 1953, NAACP II A347). The CIO also filed an amicus brief in *Brown*.

[70] Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America*, 350.

[71] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* , 394 and 411-12. Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, said that in college, he attempted to work with the Havard University NAACP chapter and the chapter would not take action that unions would not approve of (Interview with Grover Norquist, July 24, 2010).

significant logrolling on political issues. As shown in the last chapter, the NAACP had to endure considerable recalcitrance from unions (even CIO affiliates), but opposing a constructive relationship appeared to be more dangerous, and the CIO in particular offered a brighter political future. African American leaders were not pawns of either party or the CIO; they entered an alliance fully cognizant of the realities facing African Americans and the risks of an alliance.

<u>The CIO's Interest in the Alliance</u>

To understand the interest of the CIO in party realignment and its need for African American support, one needs to understand how its leaders envisioned its mission and strategy. The CIO was not merely an AFL for unskilled workers. At the level of the workplace, it sought to increase worker involvement in workplace decisions in addition to "bread and butter" concerns. Asserting the "oneness of economic and political activity" at its founding,[72] the CIO continuously pressed for an ambitious liberal political agenda within the Democratic Party. The first CIO President, John L. Lewis, thought the CIO should remain politically independent and wait for parties to bid for CIO favor, but Lewis' position helped lead to his resignation in 1941.

According to CIO leaders, a union promoting prosperity for its own members alone was bound to fail; government must ensure widespread employment with safety nets, economic planning, and countercyclical spending. Maintaining the purchasing power of workers was necessary for full employment.[73] Southern Public Relations Director Lucy Randolph Mason was advised to contrast the CIO with other unions in her presentations:

> Your mission should be to gather together the liberal groups – churches, university and colleges, welfare organizations – and impress these and other representative groups with…the real mission of the CIO…that it is not merely another labor movement but is a real epoch marking industrial and democratic upheaval seeking better economic conditions and also democracy in industry.[74]

Since CIO members were more likely to support its political views than other workers, its leaders believed, widespread unionization was a necessary part of furthering its political goals.

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[72] James Carey to Walter White, August 13 1946, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 27.

[73] Zieger, *The CIO*, 16, 315.

[74] William Jeff Lauck to Lucy Mason, June 18, 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62.

Given communism's focus on class over race, some scholars attribute the CIO's anti-racism to its communist organizers and members.[75] Many conservatives readily associated the CIO, along with the New Deal, with communism. Most leaders asserted an intimate link between politics and economics, and supported a role for workers in management decisions. However, few other tenets of communism commanded a consensus within the organization. Philip Murray, the president of the CIO for most of the crucial years of the 1940s, attended Catholic mass daily and embraced corporatism. He saw the tripartite war boards of World War II as a model for future economic planning. Business, government, and labor should have input in the decisions, and labor should submit to the board's decision so long as it has a genuine role in decisions. Murray opposed full-nationalization of industry and wanted the CIO dissociated from radical ideology, having lived through the post-World War I Red Scare, in which all unions were suspected of having the same radical tendencies as the International Workers of the World. While the CIO employed open communists until the late 1940s, Murray often demoted any communists who issued radical statements in the name of the CIO.[76] The transcripts of CARD reveal a group of people frequently referring to communists derisively as "Commies," and viewed them as opportunists who sought to draw African Americans away from the CIO to serve as pawns for Moscow.[77]

Murray's successor, UAW President Walter Reuther, studied socialism with great interest in college and visited the Soviet Union. He defended the Soviet Union to anticommunist New Dealers, paid dues to the Communist Party, and attended the 12th

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[75] For example, see Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker; Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost"; and Zeitlin and Weyher, "Black and White, Unite and Fight."
[76] Angelo, *Philip Murray*, 32, 46, 71, 182-183.
[77] For example, see CARD Minutes, May 25 1943, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

anniversary of Lenin's death.[78] Prior to becoming a UAW President, UAW factions

made an attempt to unify communist and non-communist factions, but UAW communists

appeared to support Reuther's rivals in the union and thus jeopardize unity. Reuther felt

as if he had no choice but to cut ties with the Communist Party and work with Homer

Martin, who wanted to purge communists from the union. Reuther also resigned from the

Socialist Party to support Democratic gubernatorial candidate Frank Murphy, who was

popular among the rank-and-file.[79] In future union elections, Reuther consolidated

support among Catholics and evangelicals who had supported Martin. He also joined the

Union for Democratic Action, a precursor to the anticommunist ADA, early in World

War II. In 1948, President Murray appointed then-UAW President Reuther to a board to

purge the CIO of communists.[80] African American UAW members tended to support

communist factions against Reuther, but Reuther worked to mollify them once in power.

CIO PAC-founder Sidney Hillman was a Jewish immigrant who fled Russia in

1906 after government repression of both radicals and labor activists. Hillman had been

an organizer for the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic Party. In

America, he was a friend and reader of Walter Lippman, Herbert Croly, and Louis

Brandeis, all of whom favored an administrative state and a planned economy that

avoided inefficiency and unpredictability. Much like Murray, Lipmman, Croly, and

Braindeis, Hillman believed that both manufacturers and labor should have a role in

government planning. Despite Hillman's socialist leanings, he came to favor contracts

that assigned rights both to labor and management. Hillman thought that carefully

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[78] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 50-59.
[79] Detroit socialists earlier attempted to isolate Reuther when he worked with the Farmer Labor Party, thought by older socialists to be a Communist front
[80] Angelo, *Philip Murray*, 184.

specified roles for management and labor would avoid wildcat strikes and factionalism, which threatened to replace the CIO with other unions, as well as undermine his own leadership role. One biographer writes that "the mutual recognition of 'the rights of management'…and the 'rights of the union'…amounted to an industrial compact between two institutions each interested in protecting its own power and stability, and together prepared to bargain away the popular rights and power of shop floor militants." Many corporations were satisfied with the equilibrium brought about by such arrangements by the 1940s. Hillman believed that labor's rights under such arrangements depended on liberal Democrats remaining in power, and on the CIO to obtaining a permanent role among the highest strategists and policy makers in the Democratic Party. He tried to reduce the power of Communist Party members of the CIO after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, in which the Party abandoned support for the New Deal, in order to maintain favor with the Roosevelt administration. Hillman served informally as Roosevelt's liaison to labor and formally as labor's representative on several war-related government boards in the early 1940s.[81] Both in Russia and the U.S., Hillman witnessed fierce ethnic rivalries prevent workers from cooperating against management, and saw workers focus on their own ethnicity rather than the ideology promoted by unions. This undoubtedly influenced his strong desire to involve black workers in the CIO's political and organizational goals, though he was sometimes willing to sacrifice racial equality to avoid contention within the union.[82] Given the willingness of Reuther and Hillman to oppose socialism when it ran against the CIO's organizational interests, and perhaps their

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[81] In the 1930s, he had helped Democrats draft the Wagner Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. His strategy of working with the Democratic Party alone estranged him from John Lewis, who wanted the CIO to be more politically independent.

[82] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 16,116-118, 425, 427-429, 434, 449.

own interests, no one set of ideas seems be the decisive force behind their behavior.

Their opposition to racial discrimination, which could have come from any number of

experiences as well as ideas, may have been set aside if it obviously set back CIO

interests. If they would be unwilling to set aside racial egalitarianism in such a case, one

wonders whether they would have been effective organizers and still promoted to

positions of leadership.

Murray, Reuther, Hillman, and other CIO leaders eschewed communist party

politics and ideals. Instead, they worked with Democratic Party leaders to advance the

New Deal and extend labor protections. While the CIO viewed the national Democratic

Party as an ally in labor rights and full employment, they saw the southern wing of the

party as a hindrance. Southern members of Congress (MCs) began opposing Roosevelt's

labor policies before they opposed other liberal economic policies.[83] While their

opposition to labor crystallized in response to the CIO's racial liberalism, the CIO

threatened other pillars of Southern electoral politics. Southern officeholders benefited

from elections that excluded working class voters of both races with poll taxes and a one-

party system.[84] The status quo enabled company towns and government intervention in

strikes, and the beneficiaries of this system had ample reason to oppose the CIO

regardless of civil rights. Paul Kellogg, a journalist and social reformer, wrote to future

CIO PAC President Sidney Hillman in 1937 that

> Efforts to bring the backward South abreast of the rest of the country in labor legislation is of
> central national importance – if we are not to have them drag on every attempt to lift standards
> nationally; and again namely, that your CIO drive for organization in textiles is a curtain raiser.[85]

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[83] Farhang and Katznelson, "The Southern Imposition: Congress and Labor in the New Deal and Fair
Deal."
[84] Friedman, "The Political Economy of Early Southern Unionism."
[85]Paul Kellogg to Sidney Hillman, June 14, 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62.

CARD Secretary George Weaver said that "The unorganized plant in the South is a loaded pistol at the head of the organized plant in the North," and emphasized the possibility that unionized Southerners would elect more pro-union MCs.[86]

Blacks could help the CIO pursue its political agenda as well as its union drives, both in the North and the South, if the CIO won their loyalty. In order to elect more liberal MCs in Southern Congressional elections and prevent businesses from moving to non-unionized states, the CIO attempted to unionize Southern workers. Blacks were often an important faction in these internal quarrels, and an especially unpredictable component of the CIO's Southern strategy.[87] First, the CIO needed to overcome traditional black suspicions of unions. Second, it needed to manage potential conflicts between blacks and other workers and contain competition from the AFL. Finally, given its eventual make-up, it needed to develop a political apparatus capable of swaying wavering Democratic Party politicians, including machine politicians and Southern Dixiecrats. If any of these requirements were not met, it is unlikely that the Democratic Party would have changed so dramatically on the issue of civil rights in the 1940s.

Workplace Cooperation: The Dilemmas of Organized Labor

The CIO was both a workers' organization and a political organization. As visionary as the CIO was, its political goals were affected by perceived benefits to workers. Many recent accounts of civil rights groups stress the realignment of state parties (Feinstein and Schickler 2008; Chen 2009) and local groups (Sugrue 2003) as the impetus behind the Democratic Party's transformation on civil rights. Both unions and civil rights activists fought at multiple levels of government, and local governments and

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[86] Quoted by John Popham, June 29 1949, "CIO's Drive Called 'Crusade' in South," *New York Times*.
[87] In Memphis, for example, blacks constituted a majority of the 27,000 CIO members in 1944. Lucy Mason to Eleanor Roosevelt, March 10 1944, Operation Dixie mf 62.

institutions translated national policies to suit their interests. Therefore, I will review the quandaries in promoting civil rights in the workplace before moving on to political advantages of favoring civil rights. In the end, I find that the civil rights-labor alliance was forged largely to pursue federal policy changes, and local considerations often weighed against racial liberalism.

The CIO endeavored to unionize industrial workers and adopted a non-discrimination policy in its constitution. There were several advantages to including blacks. If a union did not include blacks, they might vote against unionizing or vote for a competing union.[88] In 1927, the United Mine Workers failed to organize Southern coal mines because of African American replacement workers, but the UMW succeeded in 1934-1935 when it took several steps to accommodate African Americans.[89] One white female textile worker from Georgia reported "We didn't take the colored in when we first organized and one reason we lost two elections was because they didn't vote for the union. Before our last election we took the colored in the union – and we won."[90] By 1940, the UAW had unionized every automobile manufacturer in Detroit except Ford, which employed far more African Americans than Chrysler and General Motors.[91] In one town in the South, one of the most bigoted members of a workplace campaigned for black support when it appeared that the union would lose the election otherwise.[92] Even if a discriminatory white union succeeded in organizing a workplace, blacks might serve as replacement workers and impede the success of strikes.[93] Black replacement workers

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[88] Carey Haigler to Lucy Mason, May 22 1945, Operation Dixie mf 63.
[89] Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 179.
[90] Lucy Mason, "The CIO and the South," March 1944, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[91] Lewis-Coleman, *Race against Liberalism*, 37-38.
[92] Lucy Mason, "The CIO and the Negro in the South," June 30 1945, Operation Dixie 64.
[93] See Mason's comments in Minutes of Regional Conference of CIO and International Union Directors 10/12/1942, Operation Dixie mf 64.

could provoke race riots, which could lead to state repression of a strike.[94] Anti-labor politicians and newspapers could use union discrimination to rally opposition to unions, as Senator Smith had with proposed Wagner Act amendments in 1940 and Senator Taft had with the Taft-Hartley Act. CARD Director George Weaver urged the CIO to address racial unrest in Cincinnati in 1943 before the *Cincinnati Times Star* and other "reactionary groups" used this to portray unions unfavorably.[95]

Integration was not a necessary consequence of focusing on unskilled workers. The AFL had great success in competing with the CIO in unskilled labor markets despite having more discriminatory practices.[96] Welcoming blacks posed risks to both organizations. Union organizers recognized that integrated workplaces were easier to organize, but any efforts to persuade new members to integrate the workforce could end an organization drive or cause white workers to look to a different union.[97] Although the CIO's first constitution barred discrimination, the national organization had difficulty integrating newly organized workplaces or stopping local discrimination in existing local and international unions that decided to affiliate with it.[98] Many otherwise committed white union members, particularly in the South, opposed the union's policies on civil rights.[99] CIO Secretary Treasurer James Carey worried in 1945 that "we still have

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[94] Noel Beddow to Philip Murray, July 12, 1943, Philip Murray Papers Box 42, Folder 15.

[95] Report of George Weaver to Committee Members, April 26 1943, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[96] Weyher, *Rival Unions, the Politics of Race, and Interracial Equality.*

[97] "Mr. Shapiro" stated at a regional CIO conference "You have not mentioned the white workers who think and say they will not come into the union with 'niggers' – I have heard that time and time again. That is a problem of the entire south" (Minutes of Regional Conference of CIO and International Union Directors, 10/12/1942, Operation Dixie mf 64).

[98] A labor education program at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina sponsored by Chemical Workers Union included race relations in the "national issues" course. Draper, *Conflict of Interests*, 75-75, 86-93.

[99] Morris Pizer reported "We still seem to be too sure that the people know the CIO program already and what we are too peaceful about is that we are under the impression that CIO membership and the public at large is following CIO policy…I spent a lot of time in the South, and every time I go I am sick and disgusted. I see good white union men very bad in this respect. Speeches made in these union meetings,

situations where" international unions do not cooperate "with CIO policy…I have been

unable to force action, and I hesitate because of the position of our Board…I don't know

what can be done to implement what is already being done."[100] Another CARD member

reported that verbal ultimatums alone seem to have little impact on uncooperative unions:

"I have seen international officers come in, law down the law, and I have seen the

international representatives agree wholeheartedly with him, and then when they go away

they say 'Hell, that's just part of their job – we don't have to pay any attention to

that.'"[101] Sometimes, white workers did not even feign cooperation. Smelter Workers in

Butte, Montana, told CIO President Phil Murray to "go to Hell" when he told them to hire

black workers during World War II.[102]

In the South, the CIO did not change the composition of workplaces that were

already all-white, and otherwise showed sensitivity to white prejudice. Lucy Mason

wrote to a Southern newspaper editor:

> It is the business of the unions to organize the workers employed by the manufacturers…It
> organizes the workers just as it finds them. This means that the union may be composed
> exclusively of white operatives…or it may mean that there are white operatives and Negro
> laborers in the union.[103]

One North Carolina organizer reported on the need to have locals organize local unions

and the difficult task of changing the attitudes of older members:

> It will take a native of this hill country to work with the mountaineers to help them see the light of
> progress. They resent the "intrusion" of the "furriners"! Racial and religious prejudice can be

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but the people are not yet impressed with it. In other words, we have not yet accomplished our first stage
of educating the people." CARD Minutes, December 16 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files
192.

[100] CARD Minutes, March 13 1945, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[101] CARD Minutes, December 16 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[102] See Boris Shishkin's remarks in the President's Civil Rights Committee Meeting, September 12 1947,
CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 42, p. 857. Secretary Treasurer James Carey responded that no
blacks were employed in Butte four years ago but blacks are employed no.

[103] Lucy Mason to W.W. Ball, May 27, 1940, Operation Dixie mf 62. Her statement of policy was
corroborated by John L. Lewis in John L. Lewis to W.W. Ball, June 10 1940, Operation Dixie mf 62.

eliminated by education – adult education. The young people are learning by their own initiative. The difficult ones are between 45 and 65.[104]

Southern chapters often had segregated seating for their meetings or even separate meetings, and seldom promoted blacks to higher union offices except where blacks were a majority.[105] When White Citizen Councils recruited union members to oppose the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the AFL-CIO limited its own statements on the issue from Northern officers.[106]

The dilemma of losing black support on the one hand and losing the support of prejudiced white workers on the other are evident in the history of "Operation Dixie," launched in 1946 to prevent Northern companies from shifting their workforce to a non-unionized part of the country. When James Carey was asked whether the Operation Dixie task force would address racial problems, he replied that the director, Van Bittner, had "a single purpose in mind, that of organization."[107] Carey announced that while other committees in the CIO should deal with discrimination, the Operation Dixie operatives should not "at the present time engaging in a program of publicizing the PAC, anti-poll tax campaign, or any other matter except organizing."[108] Operation Dixie bypassed industries where large number of blacks were employed.[109] The CIO instructed its organizers to improvise based on local needs, but generally instructed them to start by

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[104] Mildred Nixinon to Timothy Sandfeur, November 12 1948, Operation Dixie mf 66. Also see Minutes of Regional Conference of CIO and International Union Directors, October 12 1942, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[105] Lucy Mason to Charles Thompson, March 20 1945; Carey Haigler to Lucy Mason, May 22 1945: E.L. Sandfeur to Lucy Mason, May 29 1945; all in Operation Dixie mf 63.
[106] "Progress Report on the Work of the Civil Rights Department," AFL-CIO, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 195, AFL-CIO, p.2
[107] CARD Minutes, August 16 1946, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.
[108] CARD Minutes, February 11 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.
[109] Zeitlin and Weyher, "Black and White, Unite and Fight," 442.

organizing whites.[110] Mason and other organizers often found that they needed to

obfuscate some of the CIO's more ambitious goals:

> One of the most interesting sidelines of my adventures down here is on the one hand convincing Negroes that the CIO offers their best opportunity, and on the other influencing white union members and representatives in the direction of a squarer deal for the Negro. Sometimes the latter has to be done by devious methods but I never lose a chance to promote it.[111]

While Southern CIO PACs were politically active, the CIO preferred that organizers sent

to unionize new workplaces keep a low profile politically.[112] CIO leaders declared it

would be "purely an organizational campaign," with "no extra curricular activities—no

politics . . . no FEPC."[113]

Compounding the risks of including blacks in the workforce, the perception that

the CIO was attempting to uplift blacks led to police harassment. One example is

provided by William Botkin, a Southern CIO organizer from California:

> [The police captain] began to lecture me that I was a stranger in the South, and that I knew nothing of the customs of the southern people. Particularly, the negro race, that I was inciting trouble for the police department and said he guessed he would have to shoot up a bunch of these burr-headed negroes. He told me that regardless of what Federal laws might be passed that if the negroes got out of place that they would probably be lynched and the police department would not interfere.[114]

Mason refused to publicly endorse a "Conference on Discrimination in Higher

Education" because it would "bring unfavorable reaction to the CIO."[115]

Competition Among and Within Unions

CIO competition with the AFL was an important variable in union integration.

The AFL traditionally opposed unionizing all workers, restricting itself to craft unions.

Traditional ethnic groups bound their ethnicity and pride in craftsmanship together in

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[110] Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor*, 68, 72-82.

[111] Lucy Mason to Jacob Billingkopf, May 20 1942, Operation Dixie mf 62. On the dangers of public advocacy of civil rights, also see Lucy Mason, March 24 1942, Operation Dixie mf 62.

[112] Mr. J. Dameron to E.L. Sandfeur, December 3, 1947, Operation Dixie mf 66.

[113] Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 161.

[114] William Botkin to George Brown, April 5 1944, Operation Dixie mf 62.

[115] Lucy Mason, March 4 1950, Operation Dixie mf 64.

ideas of manliness that left little room for non-whites. The AFL attempted to organize industrial workplaces in 1940, only after the CIO began to do so. Even after it recruited industrial unions, its civil rights policies were less ambitious than those of the CIO. The national organization was officially opposed to discrimination, but by the mid-1940s, only 14 percent (13 of 89) AFL affiliates had constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination, compared with 80 percent (29 of 36) CIO international affiliates. Unlike the CIO, the AFL did little to punish workers who initiated wildcat "hate strikes." Only 3.4 percent of its total membership was black in 1945 (compared with ten percent black membership in the CIO in the same year), and many of those members belonged to segregated locals.[116] AFL affiliates allied with the Ku Klux Klan in Tampa, Memphis, and Birmingham.[117] A. Philip Randolph (whose union was affiliated with the AFL) published a pamphlet in 1949 arguing that discrimination was no worse in the AFL than the CIO, but contemporary studies do not support his conclusion.[118]

The AFL was also more likely to confine its political agenda to issues directly affecting organized labor. For example, an Atlanta chapter of the AFL refused to meet with the CIO and other liberal groups to discuss integrationist resolutions drawn up in an important conference of blacks in Durham.[119] The North Carolina AFL dissented from the state CIO's gubernatorial endorsement despite being part of an alliance with them. An AFL activist reported to the governor:

> At a recent meeting of the United Political Committee most of the AFL, and R.R. Brotherhood took the position that their membership should not be urged to vote against a candidate unless the record or expressed views of that candidate revealed that he was unfair or antagonistic to the welfare of labor and that your record did not warrant such action…We think the CIO view unwise; that it borrows the hazard of defeating and resulting reprisals from other groups, and places labor

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[116] Zeitlin and Weyher, "Black and White, Unite and Fight," 435.
[117] Weyher, *Rival Unions, the Politics of Race, and Interracial Equality*, 16.
[118] See appendix to the chapter.
[119] Lucy Mason to Allan Haywood, May 25 1943, Operation Dixie mf 62.

in the position of attempting to gain political control for special political advantage. We are endeavoring to be realistic.[120]

A CIO activist in the North Carolina coalition complained that other unions, including the AFL, "would not actually do anything progressive unless they were goaded into action."[121]

The AFL's more moderate ambitions in workplace democracy, race relations, and politics endeared it to Southern politicians, churches, and employers, especially after the CIO began organizing in the South. The CIO's organization drives were made more difficult by this contrast. Lucy Mason reported:

> After long years of opposition and often deep opprobrium, the A.F. of L. had suddenly achieved respectability and was held up in contrast to the CIO as safe, sane, and conservative…Employers who found their employees joining an industrial union sometimes hastily invited the A.F. of L. to come in and held them fight the CIO.[122]

A Southern Baptist Convention representative wrote to Mason that "the AF of L is a sane, sensible, trustworthy labor organization. I should not feel the same way at all about the CIO."[123] One police department aligned with the AFL reportedly would not protect CIO organizers or workers on strike.[124] Using early opinion polling, Schickler (2011) finds that white Southerners were only slightly more anti-union than the American public until the early 1940s. It is difficult to determine how much of this change is due to the CIO's position on race relative to earlier unions, as opposed to its economic issue positions and tactics. CIO "sit-down" strikes, associated with communism, were unpopular in the

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[120]"CIO to Back [Kerr] Scott; Rail Unions Neutral," July 20, 1946, Operation Dixie mf 67.
[121] E.L. Sandefur, "Report of Activities North Carolina PAC 1948-1949," July 1 1949, Operation Dixie mf 67.
[122] Lucy Mason, "The CIO in the South," September 1941, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[123] Arthur Barton to Lucy Mason, September 7 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62.
[124] Lucy Mason to Victor Rotnem, December 7 1942, Operation Dixie mf 62.

South, but Southerners were still less likely than Republicans to favor the use of force to end sit-down strikes.[125]

It is important to acknowledge the regional variation in the AFL, as well as change over time. Some locals won organizing drives by arguing that they would serve black interests better, while others won organizing drives by attacking the CIO's racially progressive policies. In 1941, blacks at the Ford Plant tended to support the AFL over the UAW-CIO because it appointed an African American member to its board, which the UAW-CIO refused to do.[126] The Minneapolis AFL had a decisive influence in Hubert Humphrey's efforts in favor of civil rights, as well as the creation of a local FEPC. However, many in the CIO viewed the autonomy the AFL provided to local unions as a way to nurture discrimination without implicating itself. When the NAACP investigated AFL discrimination in Tampa Florida, one worker told Walter White

> General consensus is that you will not get much from [AFL President] Green, who will probably refer you to the unions involved, who will in turn refer you right back to the locals in Tampa. This is one of the great virtues of the AFL type of autonomy – nobody need claim responsibility for anything if they don't want to.[127]

Some blacks readily joined the AFL – when it had the opportunity to do so - in places where it had a more developed infrastructure. It controlled trades in peripheral industries and small towns where the CIO had no reach. They were sometimes content to control their own segregated local.[128]

The competition between the AFL and the CIO to organize workplaces had varying effects. In some places, appeals to racial conservatism were effective in winning

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[125] Schickler and Caughey, "Public Opinion, Organized Labor, and the Limits of New Deal Liberalism, 1936-1945," 11, 23.
[126] Moreno, *Black Americans and Organized Labor*, 189.
[127] "Memo from the Secretary (Walter White) on interviews at Tampa, Florida, with respect to the Labor situation of the Tampa Shipbuilding and Engineering Company," July 20 1939, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[128] Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 136

an organization drive; in other places, the competition caused both to take African Americans more seriously.[129] When steelworkers in Birmingham, Alabama were accused of bigotry in 1950, President Philip Murray ordered desegregation of all facilities. The Southern director of steelworkers reported that white workers signed a petition to quit the union if the order was enforced, and if the AFL learned of their dissatisfaction, it would take over "lock, stock, and barrel." Not only did Murray retreat from the order, but he also cancelled a civil rights conference in Birmingham at the director's suggestion.[130] The U.S. Steelworkers also took over a racially progressive union with communist ties in 1950 by campaigning against communism. Although they repudiated racist support, they succeeded with the help of many of the most racist members of the local.[131]

Overall, it appears that the competition between the CIO and AFL had a net positive impact for black workers civil rights groups. A quantitative analysis of income and unemployment inequality in the 1940s shows significant reductions of both in the CIO, and modest income inequality reduction in the AFL during that decade.[132] Such an improvement on the AFL's part was surely driven partly by its decision to organize and recruit industrial unions, which it had steadfastly refused to do before the CIO emerged. In Savannah, Georgia, Mason reported that "the AF of L has consistently discriminated against the Negroes and has never held union meetings until the CIO came."[133] When the AFL-affiliated Tobacco Workers International Union first heard of CIO efforts to recruit blacks, the president at first responded, "Yes I am informed that the CIO is after the

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[129] Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights* , 85-87; Northrup, *Organized Labor and the Negro* , 14-15, 233-237; Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, chapter 7.
[130] R.E. Farr to Philip Murray, May 19, 1950, Box 36, Folder 17; see Ernest Wooten to Philip Murray, June 2, 1950, Philip Murray Papers Box 36, File 18; Francis C. Shane to Philip Murray, May 23, 1950, Philip Murray Papers Box 36, File 17.
[131] Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom*, 163
[132] Weyher, *Rival Unions, the Politics of Race, and Interracial Equality*.
[133] Lucy Mason to Philip Murray, December 7 1942, Operation Dixie mf 62.

Colored,…[but] if they do [organize them] what will they have if we have the WHITES"
[emphasis in original]. The same president later competed for the allegiance of black
workers out of self-preservation.[134] On several occasions, the national CIO had to
address civil rights issues to prevent blacks from joining an AFL union where the local
CIO discriminated.[135] The NAACP played an important role in many elections; an
endorsement could often decide which union African Americans would support.[136] It
revitalized nearly inactive unions in 1941 and 1947 with North Carolina's Food and
Tobacco industries, as well as the Agricultural Workers Local and Boilermakers in San
Francisco.[137] The CIO also asked the NAACP to recruit members in the South to CIO
unions in 1947, even though Operation Dixie steered clear of politics.[138]

Within CIO unions, blacks were often involved in competing "left-wing" and
"right-wing" anti-communist factions. The Communist Party recruited black workers
and often produced divisions so serious that the CIO appealed to Eleanor Roosevelt to
make a statement to help persuade black workers not to support communists.[139] One
CARD member hoped that CIO members would join local union civil rights committees
and NAACP chapters to prevent communist influence: "If some of our white brothers in
these areas would get on the boards of these organizations it would place the Commies in
a position where they couldn't accuse us of not taking part in these affairs."[140] The
Communist Party gained traction by proposing to change seniority rules for black

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[134] Griffler, *What Price Alliance?,* 178.
[135] Paul Christopher to Van Bittner, September 3 1947, Operation Dixie mf 25.
[136] Frymer, *Black and Blue*, 55. Both the AFL and the CIO blamed the NAACP when union members supported one over the other. See William Green to Roy Wilkins, October 22, 1943 and Walter White to William Smith, Decmber 23, 1943, both in NAACP mf 13A r15.
[137] Frymer, *Black and Blue*, 56.
[138] George Weaver to Walter White, April 14, 1953, NAACP II-A-347. See also William Smith to Walter White, April 6, 1949, NAACP II-A-347.
[139] Lucy Mason to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 19 1950, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[140] CARD Minutes, January 14 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.

workers. It argued that since many blacks had only recently been admitted to unions during World War II, seniority rules would lead most blacks to lose their jobs first. Different seniority rules should apply to blacks. The CIO opposed this proposal, with the support of the NAACP and the Urban League, because it would cause white workers to resent both unions and blacks.[141] As I have already shown, cooperation with the CIO was so important for civil rights groups that they would not support civil rights proposals in several cases where they hindered unions.

By strengthening the implementation of their non-discrimination policies, the CIO intended to keep defections to communist factions minimal.[142] They joined the AFL in creating an organization to counter the Communist Party's Negro Labor Council.[143] Non-communist organizers often donated to the NAACP or otherwise made friendly overtures to African Americans in order to help discourage them from siding with other factions.[144] UAW President Walter Reuther realized that civil rights was a recruiting tool for his more left-wing rivals, and expanded the UAW's Fair Practices Committee to preempt future opposition.[145] Willard Townsend, who consistently sided with "right wing" union factions, stated that the communists "did keep the civil rights question alive, even though we recognized why they were doing so."[146]

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[141] Director's Report, August 16 1944, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 196.

[142] George Weaver to Cy W. Record, December 16 1949, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 188, General Correspondence Folder.

[143] Memorandum from George Weaver to James Carey, 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 71.

[144] In 1943, the CIO donated $1,000 to a black hospital in Birmingham, an area where some local black activists were recruiting blacks to a quarrelsome communist faction. See Noel Beddow to Philip Murray, April 27, 1943, Philip Murray Papers, Box 42, Folder 14; Notes on Meeting Held Saturday Morningm [sic], July 10, 1943, in office of Noel R. Beddow, Philip Murray Papers Box 42, Folder 15; and Noel Beddow to Philip Murray, September 27, 1943, Box 42 Folder 15.

[145] Lewis-Colman, *Race against Liberalism*, 47.

[146] Willard Townsend to Robert Oliver (Assistant to the CIO President), February 12 1956, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 190, Willard Townsend Folder.

To summarize, working with African Americans posed risks and created friction. Persuading local chapters to give up segregated facilities or open all trades without regard to race was an absorbing task in which organizers often made no progress. CIO leaders opted to push racial integration along where they could, though their efforts were not as extensive as some civil rights advocates would have liked. Though the CIO ultimately chose to promote racial integration as part of its organizing strategy, it might have chosen a national policy similar to the AFL to avoid trouble with Southern authorities. The labor-civil rights alliance was a strategy with risks, not an inevitable confluence of economic and racial interests. Local considerations were variable, but as we will see below, national political considerations made a political alliance with civil rights groups imperative. These political considerations, more than local workplace considerations, clearly pointed to the need for a CIO-NAACP alliance.

The Unambiguous Benefits of Political Cooperation

The CIO viewed blacks as a necessary part of a political coalition to elect liberal Democrats, who favored the CIO positions on labor rights as well as economic intervention and social welfare. The CIO's varying efforts to integrate workplaces were arguably made to accommodate its national political goals, rather than the reverse. CIO leaders believed that blacks were far more likely to support their political agenda as full members than non-members or second-class members. When Lucy Mason attempted to persuade white workers to welcome blacks into the union, she mentioned not only the greater likelihood of succeeding in securing higher wages, but their value as political allies. She declared:

> A square deal on part of white workers for Negro workers means that both will be interested in the
> same qualified candidates for public office and will vote together…Negroes' votes will back white

workers' votes if Negroes know they can trust white people to look out for economic interests of all workers.[147]

CIO Vice President Joseph Curran told the CIO Executive Board that "if your organization is going to fight against discrimination, then certainly its house…must be in a position where it can be without having stones thrown at it."[148] In the CIO Convention of 1953, Thurgood Marshall advised that political rights were "questions of abstract morality" while rights to work on a fair and equal basis were "burning life and death problems." [149]

As with politicians who logroll, interest groups gain political advantages through an alliance even if they have nothing in common, but if they do have something in common, the alliance will be stronger.[150] Unions and racial minorities had a common interest in voting rights and "civil rights"; before 1948, civil rights appeared to mean federal protection of the rights of union organizers and free association, and not just the rights of racial minorities.[151] Black and white CIO organizers were both harassed by the police or lynched, as White pointed out to Hillman in a request for funds in 1940. Mason concurred that:

> The South is Fascist – its domination of the Negro has made it easy to repeat the pattern for organized labor…There is a new reason for passing the Anti-lynching Bill – it will be a protection to organizers and union members.[152]

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[147] Lucy Mason, "Reasons white workers should welcome Negroes into Unions," May 23 1945, Operation Dixie mf 63. Also see Lucy Mason, "The CIO and the South," March 1944, Operation Dixie mf 64.

[148] Meeting of October 29 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 6.

[149] Remarks of Thurgood Marshall Before CIO Convention, Atlantic City, December 3, 1952, NAACP II-A347.

[150] Bawn, "Constructing 'Us'," 1999.

[151] Even in 1947, the PCCR said that "typical 'civil rights' cases involve such varied matters" including "racial, labor, pacifist, and alien rights" ("Federal Criminal Jurisdiction Over Violations of Civil Rights," January 15, 1947, CIO Secretary Treasurer Papers 41, PCCR).

[152] Walter White to Sindey Hillman, April 1, 1940, NAACP mf 13a r4; Lucy Mason to Molly, September 6, 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62. Union organizers, both African American and white, had been lynched during efforts to unionize the South, and NAACP campaigns against lynching had succeeded in reducing lynching during the 1940s.

The creation of the civil rights division in the attorney generals office aided CIO organizers in addition to civil rights workers. Although few matters were brought to trial, a single conversation between the office and a local police official would often lead to a cessation of complaints by unions.[153] Laws used to restrict the labor movement's mass protest tactics could be used to restrict civil rights marchers, sit-ins, labor marches, and pickets alike.[154]

The wartime FEPC, strongly favored by civil rights groups, helped the CIO because it documented abuses of civil rights by its rival, the AFL.[155] While serving on the President's Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR), James Carey fought unsuccessfully for the report to include the names of discriminatory AFL unions.[156] He was eager to use the Committee to publicize the CIO's efforts to promote racial harmony, saying that "the traditions in the labor movement have been to discriminate, and when an organization actively engages in a campaign against the very traditions that have been inherent in that type of organization, it should be mentioned."[157]

Many organizers found that mandated segregation impeded every step of the organizing process during Operation Dixie, meaning that there was a group interest in promoting desegregation. Union organizers struggled to find places in which both white and black workers could meet, as many motels refused to let the latter enter the establishment in any capacity, and police would find ways to break up interracial

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[153] Lucy Mason to Tom C. Clark, May 19 1944; Toxey Hall To Lucy Mason, May 17 1944; Lucy Mason to Allan Haywood, June 4 1941; all in Operation Dixie mf 62. Also see Lucy Mason to Van Bittner, December 9 1948, Operation Dixie mf 63.
[154] Draper, *Conflict of Interests,* 86-93.
[155] Zieger, *The CIO*, 158.
[156] CARD Minutes, September 17 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.
[157] See James Carey's remarks at the President's Committee for Civil Rights, September 12 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 42, p. 857.

gatherings they observed.[158] George Weaver reported to the PCCR that many CIO

officials in the South jeopardized their reputation by voluntarily supporting integration.

During World War II, the same officials had no trouble practicing nondiscrimination

because they could explain that they were complying with the wartime FEPC.[159]

Government-mandated civil rights facilitated the work of union organizers.

Even though African Americans shared the CIO's interest in desegregation, the

FEPC, and federal protection for civil rights, CIO leaders could not assume that, if left

alone, they would cast votes in accordance with their political strategy. In the early

1940s, the CIO feared blacks would begin voting for Republicans, who threatened to

disembowel the labor laws that enabled the CIO to organize successfully. Some modern

writers contend that black voters were a core Democratic Party constituency in the 1930s,

but many contemporary actors, lacking the hindsight of history, were not sure. [160] Given

the lethargy of many Democratic politicians on civil rights, and the promises of

Republican leaders, CIO PAC Director Jack Kroll thought an African American return to

the Republican Party was possible. Polls attempting to measure longstanding party

attachment also supported the view that blacks were a pivotal group in the 1940s and

could swing to either party (Figure 2.2). Wilkins wrote an article on the subject during

Roosevelt's 1944 reelection campaign.[161] Former RNC Chairman John Hamilton and

black newspaper editors also thought so, believing that black voters mainly wanted

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[158] See Lucy Mason to Victor Rotnem, January 16 1943, Operation Dixie mf 62.
[159] See George Weaver's testimony to the PCCR, April 14 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 42.
[160] Weiss, XXXX; Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, 109-133.
[161] Roy Wilkins to Horace Koons, September 1, 1944, Wilkins 76.

Republican patronage and the votes for Roosevelt were protest votes.[162] These forecasts

proved prescient in the 1946 midterm elections, when the Democratic Party lost between

16 and 50 percent of the support it received in black communities in 1944.[163]

A major part of the CIO PAC's strategy was increasing turnout among lower class

voters who often failed to vote at all or only voted in presidential years. Their research

indicated that anti-labor MCs were elected in low-turnout elections.[164] African

Americans were a large part of this group. In Mississippi, 26 counties had an African

American majority, and many of the most anti-labor legislators came from those counties.

CIO activists believed blacks were far more likely to vote for progressive legislators.[165]

They recruited thousands of "block workers" to register and encourage people in working

class neighborhoods to vote. Often, they worked with the NAACP and black churches to

recruit blacks for this task in African American neighborhoods.[166] Altogether, block

workers registered hundreds of thousands of voters and reminded them to pay their poll

taxes. Both organizations cooperated to abolish poll taxes at the state level, which

discouraged not only African Americans, but also working class whites, from voting. A

1952 CIO PAC organizational program read:

> We should know and have personal contact with the leaders [of minority groups] in every state
> and every city (or other area) where the Negroes or Mexican descendants live. We can work
> closely with the NAACP, Urban League and the anti-discrimination departments of the different

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[162] John D. Hamilton to Roy Garvin, November 21, 1946, John D. Hamilton Papers 6. Garvin, a black newspaper editor, was upset about the FEPC defeat in 1945, but seemed to think a Republican campaign for more fair patronage would work by 1946.

[163] James, "A Theory of Presidential Commitment and Opportunism," 15.

[164] Proposed letter describing the plan for National Roosevelt Clubs, undated, Philip Murray Papers Box 131, Folder 5; CIO Department of Education and Research, "When the People Vote-they Win!," *Economic Outlook* VII:6 (June, 1946); Statement on Political Policy, 1948, John Brophy Papers Box 12, Folder 6.

[165] Lucy Mason to P Murray, October 30 1944, Operation Dixie mf 63.

[166] Report of PAC 1951, August 14 1951, Jack Kroll Papers Box 7, page 10. The CIO also mobilized women. While upper class women generally voted, working class housewives did not, and the CIO wrote union literature encouraging husbands to talk to their wives as well as guides to voting geared toward women (Jack Kroll to Philip Murray, March 8, 1948. Philip Murray Papers, Box 133, Folder 4).

unions...These personal contacts plus, perhaps, some ads might lessen the sellouts during the campaign.[167]

The CIO would also hire full-time PAC organizers – often black - to recruit black voters.[168] One such appointee, Henry White, reported that many blacks were paying their poll taxes for the first time.[169] A strategy note declared that if you recruit blacks popular with their peers to a citizen's committee, you would have 12 black volunteers within a half hour on the telephone. If these volunteers canvassed the black wards in traditionally Republican cities, they could change the election outcomes.[170] The *Michigan Chronicle*'s George Crockett, reflecting on the increased Southern black turnout in 1944, wrote that "Properly channeled, this new vote can go a long way towards the elimination of some of the most reactionary southern congressmen. Indeed no progressive movement can be developed in the South without the support of the Negro vote."[171] In the North, the CIO would organize civil rights conferences to energize opposition to anti-labor Republicans. In 1950, an important goal of the CIO conference in Cleveland was "to imbue" black and white groups in attendance "with the idea of defeating [Senator Robert] Taft."[172] One organizer wrote to Roy Wilkins that "a statement" against Taft "from prominent Negroes and whites addressed to the voters of Ohio…would have a substantial effect" on professional blacks that might vote for Taft.[173]

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[167] "PAC Organizational Program for 1952," Jack Kroll Papers Box 7, CIO PAC 1950-1953.

[168] Paul Christopher to Jack Kroll, January 20, 1948 Operation Dixie mf 67.

[169] Executive Committee of the Tennessee State CIO PAC, Minutes of the Meeting, March 20 1948, Operation Dixie mf 67.

[170] Philip Murray Box 132 Folder 5, Folder 4.

[171] George Crockett, "Labor Looks Ahead," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 26 1946.

[172] Jacob Clayman to George Weaver, June 30 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 191, Civil Rights Conference Folder; also see George Weaver to C.B. Blankenship, July 31, 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 191.

[173] George Weaver to Roy Wilkins, August 8 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 191. Wilkins said that NAACP policy prevented him from supporting any statement but other civil rights leaders might do so as individuals (Wilkins to Weaver, August 30 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 191).

Support for Jim Crow policies among Southern Democrats undermined the CIO's

attempts to solidify blacks behind the national Democratic Party. In marketing terms, the

Southern Democrats contaminated the Democratic "brand name" as the CIO wished to

shape it. After the 1940 election, Lucy Mason wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt

> The small Willkie vote among Negroes and some of them CIO members was partly due to John Lewis' speech and perhaps more to the persecution of the CIO by the Memphis Democratic administration. You can't try to destroy what people believe in and get their political support. The surest way to have a solid democratic vote...is to give them a square deal and prove that the Democratic city administration is friendly to them.[174]

Whether Mason was correct or not about African American voting patterns, the

perception of such patterns such worried CIO organizers, who redoubled their efforts to

liberalize the Democratic Party on race. The CIO worried when the Republicans had a

realistic chance of passing a civil rights bill in 1953. CARD Secretary George Weaver

told the Executive Board that he feared the Republicans would pass a weak bill and it will

"require a good deal of care on the part of our organization not to get sucked into some

proposals."[175] In 1955, the CIO PAC was concerned about African American defections

to the Republican Party because of the response of Democratic politicians to school

segregation in the South.[176] These concerns appear warranted. In 1956, CIO PAC

research indicated that in cities with a large CIO presence, blacks voted Democratic,

while supermajorities of blacks voted Republican where there was no CIO presence.[177]

The CIO played a large role in coalition maintenance.

Kroll and other CIO leaders also worried about union-centered third parties that

could cause Democratic candidates to lose, especially Henry Wallace's racially liberal

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[174] Lucy Mason to Eleanor Roosevelt, [undated, in collection between November 1940 and February 1941], Operation Dixie mf 62.

[175] Meeting of February 5, Minutes of the Executive Board mf 15.

[176] "Estimate of the Political Situation and Proposed Activity," Jack Kroll Papers Box 7, CIO PAC 1954-1957, 5.

[177] "Preliminary Analysis of 1956 Elections," Jack Kroll Papers Box 6, Research Department Reports, 1956-1957, 4-5.

Progressive Party. By adopting an agenda broader than labor rights and transforming the Democratic Party, the CIO PAC could convince union volunteers that the CIO PAC and the Democratic Party themselves were visionary organizations that obviated the need for a third party. Civil rights was part of this agenda. Internal memos revealed that leaders adopted long-range, broadly progressive goals in part to attract non-union liberals and meet "the demands of those who seek to push us into third party adventures."[178] CIO PAC spawned organizations to rally non-union members to liberal causes where labor rights were one subset of the organization's goals.[179] Kroll's predecessor, Sidney Hillman, created the National Citizens PAC in 1944 to push the CIO program among middle class people unlikely to donate to labor unions. NCPAC "provided an entrée for the CIO into diverse segments of the population not reachable directly through the trade union movement." Twenty-two of NCPAC's 142 board members were black. [180]

Renovating the Glass House

At the level of the shop floor, civil rights threatened to lose white support for the CIO. At the level of the voting booth, however, there was no downside to working with civil rights groups. Presented with the unquestionable benefits of a political alliance, the CIO consciously chose to promote workplace integration, lobby for civil rights, and work closely with civil rights organizations. Civil rights organizations and liberal groups were generally pleased with their workplace integration efforts and did not let union discrimination interfere with a political alliance so long as those efforts were being made.

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[178] Jack Kroll, "Memorandum to President Philip Murray Regarding Long Range PAC Objectives," 1949, Philip Murray Papers Box 133 Folder 12; Foster, *The Union Politic*,135.

[179] Kroll's predecessor, Sidney Hillman, created the National Citizens PAC in 1944 to push the CIO program among middle class people unlikely to donate to labor unions. National Citizens PAC "provided an entrée for the CIO into diverse segments of the population not reachable directly through the trade union movement" (Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 515).

[180] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 515-516.

The civil rights transformation of the Democratic Party was "top-down" in the sense that national political considerations led to the alliance of the CIO and the NAACP, who helped transform the party, but "bottom-up" in that the CIO had to attempt local reforms to allow the alliance to flourish.

Extensive efforts on behalf of integration do not seem to have taken place until after the NAACP had made efforts to cooperate. This occurred during World War II, just as blacks were becoming a more pivotal voting group in the North. Hillman's biographer writes that "his approach" to union integration "was to equivocate and placate." As a CIO operative working for the Roosevelt administration, Hillman's wartime "construction and shipbuilding stabilization agreements froze in place the all-white practices of the craft unions."[181] CARD, which created a formal apparatus to deal with discrimination, was not created until November, 1942. At the workplace level, CARD pushed racial integration through subtle persuasion as the situation permitted. Carey recalled that the CIO had to choose between organizing more unions but compromising on the race issue and organizing fewer unions that adhered more closely to CIO principles. He criticized those who said the country was not ready for desegregation, arguing that the CIO's experience showed it was possible to make progress. He told his colleagues on the PCCR "we had to operate against the patterns of the workers who didn't think it was possible," mixing groups against state laws and getting "away with it to some degree."[182] A CIO Conference on civil rights said that integration needed to be 'sold' "to the CIO membership in the same manner as wage increases, shorter work week or any other benefit of trade unionism." Some pamphlets emphasized that discrimination

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[181] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 478.
[182] President's Committee for Civil Rights, September 12 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 42, p. 906.

was unfair and un-American, but economic benefits were also stressed: a popular pamphlet was entitled "Discrimination Costs You Money."[183] CARD discussed highlighting the role of blacks in World War II and unions to foster interracial solidarity. Their newsletters featured stories about employers approaching black workers offering paid positions as "scabs," and the blacks dutifully turning down the offers.[184] One CIO pamphlet featured a cover with three workers – one black, one Asian, and one White – on the cover. (A Southern employer requested copies of this and used it to defeat a CIO election, saying the CIO was trying to abolish Jim Crow.)[185] Civil rights were integrated into CIO summer school curriculums, although summer schools were typically attended by those already enthusiastic about the national CIO's mission. In 1950, the national CIO directed all locals to disobey state and local laws requiring segregation, since it considered them constitutional. Clearly, by asserting a civil rights jurisprudence ahead of the Supreme Court, the CIO was exceeding mere token or symbolic support for civil rights.[186]

Several labor historians have argued that local labor activists were surprisingly committed to racial egalitarianism and class consciousness. The CIO would have made more racial progress if only it had more committed leadership.[187] In contrast, my findings concur with those who stress the leadership's sustained commitment to civil rights in the 1940s and 1950s, surpassing that of their members.[188] Even when the CIO

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[183] Report of the Panel on Publicity and Education Techniques, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 79, Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination, 1947-48 Folder.

[184] CARD Minutes, March 13 1945, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[185] CARD Minutes, February 11 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[186] Arthur Goldberg to all regional CIO Directors, April 24 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.

[187] For example, see Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights,* and Robert Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism.*

[188] See Draper, *Conflict of Interests*, and Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism.*

merged with the AFL in 1955, the new organization continued to support civil rights and other liberal positions in the Democratic Party, though in a less confrontational manner. The AFL had been moving toward the CIO's ideological position and interest in political causes as the merger approached, and their platforms nearly converged.[189] The CIO arguably could have supported local integration more forcefully, but they never relented in their efforts to support racial liberalism in the Democratic Party. Some locals may have held progressive attitudes on civil rights and other issues, but many more did not.

CARD, lauded by *The Crisis* at its inception, educated workers to overcome racial difference with mixed success.[190] In Jacksonville, a CIO affiliate instituted desegregated meetings after two years of education and the "opposition by white workers to mixed meetings" was still bitter.[191] In another workplace, a Texas Packinghouse Workers Unions negotiated with the company to remove the signs for segregated facilities, and a "near-riot started among the workers."[192] In a subsequent election, however, the white supremacist faction of the union was defeated. In addition to fighting white racism, CARD taught blacks to "forget their historic animus to all whites and to forget extreme Negro nationalism."[193] The NAACP and NUL sometimes aided unions in avoiding race-based infighting, as Reuther would note in letters urging UAW members to become NAACP members.[194]

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[189] Cornfield and McCammon, "Approaching Merger: The Converging Public Policy Agendas of the AFL and CIO, 1938-1955," in Van Dyke and McCammon, eds., *Strategic Alliances.*
[190] Willard Townsend, "Citizen CIO," October 1943, p. 299.
[191] Charles Smolikoff to Lucy Mason, May 31 1945, Operation Dixie mf 63
[192] "How Three CIO Leaders Answered This Question," April 4 1946, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[193] Charles Smolikoff to Lucy Mason, May 31 1945, Operation Dixie mf 63. Also see George Weaver's comments in Meeting of October 29 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 6.
[194] Walter Reuther to All Regional Directors and Local Union Officers in Regions 1 and 1a, May 6 1946, WR 505, Folder NAACP 1946.

CARD did not meet the standards of the most racially progressive CIO workers. It abstained from publicly investigating or punishing instances of discrimination and even rebuked black CIO workers who made their grievances public. Carey rationalized that "it has not tried to alienate or discredit CIO affiliates…we would be building up those little things all out of proportion to what the CIO practices in its field of racial problems." Another CARD member said "every International…would be telling the committee to get out of their business."[195] Director George Weaver urged CARD operatives to work with discriminatory unions privately, saying that "if you can go in and help them without a lot of publicity, you have made lifetime friends…When it becomes a matter of public knowledge, you might be able to overcome the problem but you have made a lasting enemy. He will never forgive you."[196] Instead, CIO leaders approached local leaders and attempted to persuade them, to the chagrin of some militant black members.

Recruiting black workers and voters was important enough that the CIO approached anti-labor black newspapers with considerable tact. When one black newspaper reported on a segregationist local union, Weaver warned CARD that "you cannot go around and denounce them publicly for doing that." Secretary Treasurer James Carey and Willard Townsend (an African American CARD member) met privately with weekly black newspapers to address their concerns and persuaded several newspapers to include columns from pro-labor blacks, including Townsend himself. The second largest newspaper in the country, the *Chicago Defender,* eventually acceded to unionizing its workplace when local CIO members threatened to boycott the paper. The *Defender*

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[195] Meeting of November 6, 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 6
[196] Minutes of the Meeting on Civil Rights, February 11 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192. Some members objected that making an example out of some unions would spur others to action and use the publicity to show that CARD is accomplishing its task. Also see James Leary's comments in the CARD Minutes, December 16 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

would publish columns from Walter White and W.E.B. Du Bois, who actively promoted

organized labor in his columns.[197]

Two quantitative studies find that unionization's effect on income and

unemployment inequality vanished sometime between 1950 and 1960.[198] Although the

study attributes the decreasing effect to the purge of communists, this was also the time

during which the AFL and CIO increasingly cooperated. The political similarities

between the two organizations increased incrementally leading up to their merger in

1955. In 1952, the CIO and AFL agreed that neither union benefited financially from

raiding each others unions.[199] As it turned out, CIO President Reuther committed few of

the CIO resources to organizing lily-white craft unions or disproportionately black

industries. The CIO spent a pittance on the black-led tobacco workers union and

awarded much more to the Brewery workers, a new affiliate with a record of

discrimination.[200] The AFL-CIO promised to end discrimination within 5 years of its

founding and the NAACP extended deadlines for various locals many times. Open

clashes between the two groups emerged when the NAACP called for an active program

instead of ad hoc responses to individual complaints. When some reformers in the AFL-

CIO Civil Rights Committee attempted to follow the NAACP recommendations, "this

was quickly dispensed with as the majority agreed that the most important problem at the

moment was how to 'handle' the NAACP."[201] In such cases, they not only failed to help

black workers, but also raised the prices of goods from unionized industries while many

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[197] CARD Minutes, June 4 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.
[198] Weyher, *Rival Unions, the Politics of Race, and Interracial Equality*; Asherton, "Racial Discrimination and Trade Unionism."
[199] Memorandum from George Weaver to James Carey, "Analysis of Raiding 1951-1952," CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 188.
[200] Zieger, *The CIO*, 347.
[201] Herbert Hill to Roy Wilkins, February 2, 1939, NAACP IX-4.

blacks in peripheral industries had to settle for their non-unionized wages. By the time the AFL-CIO emerged, however, civil rights and labor had become so closely "braided" together, in Farhang and Katznelson's phrase, that neither could credibly threaten to leave the coalition.

Historians debate the economic benefits unions provided to African Americans. Former NAACP Labor Secretary Herbert Hill writes that unions found it easier to support "civil rights causes far removed from the factories where its members worked and far from the union itself."[202] Labor historians vary in their evaluation of the CIO's efforts at civil rights; some point to the CIO's workplace practices as the most important force in American culture for race relations, while others dub CARD as mere "window dressing" to deflect communist criticism.[203] For the purposes of my research, there is no need to resolve the lengthy debates. Whatever the real economic benefits of the CIO's integration efforts during the 1940s,[204] the NAACP at the time was satisfied that the CIO was taking reasonable steps to address workplace integration (even as they pressed for more) and therefore did not let past union practices interfere with its evaluation of the CIO's desirability as an ally.[205] At the time, the NAACP's former in-house pundit, W.E.B. Du Bois, said the greatest "interracial understanding among the working masses" came about through the CIO, echoing the future Nobel Prize winner Gunnar Myrdal.[206]

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[202] Herbert Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions: Meany, Reuther and the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *New Politics* 7 (1998), 102.

[203] Goldfield, "Race and the CIO," 150.

[204] See chapter appendix for a review of literature that examines this issue.

[205] Remarks of Thurgood Marshall Before CIO Convention, Atlantic City, December 3, 1952, NAACP II-A347.

[206] Zeitlin and Weyher, "Black and White, Unite and Fight," 440.

The Rosenwald Foundation, too, concluded in an annual report that the CIO was more responsible for racial progress in the South than any other institution.[207]

The CIO leaders who favored civil rights appear sincere in their convictions in transcriptions of private meetings. They clearly wanted to avoid solutions that were mere window-dressing, since they gathered information about the effectiveness of their policies and suggested changes where they were ineffective. However, their organizational interest in civil rights is also made clear by their eagerness to claim credit for their role in civil rights rather than playing a role behind the scenes. CARD Director George Weaver expressed considerable irritation in 1942 when the government claimed credit for defense industry integration that unions were responsible for:

> Credit for much of this work has gone to various agencies rather than to the international union directly responsible. For example, the Office of War Information release of August 13, 1942 gives credit to the National War Labor Board for aiding Negroes in the International Union, Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers program for wage increases. This we know absolutely to be a CIO effort.[208]

CARD distributed 85,000 copies of *To Secure These Rights* and 25,000 summaries, and highlighted their role in the PCCR and the 1948 convention plank.[209] UAW-CIO lobbyist Paul Sifton helped secure financing for a radio documentary of the report.[210] In 1950, CARD discussed conducting a race relations survey on Chatanooga, Tennessee, where members knew that race relations were unusually positive and the survey would generate good publicity.[211]

Union integration programs and visible support for respected African American organizations like the NAACP earned the good will of many blacks. Before long, the cause of civil rights and labor rights would become one in the eyes of many.

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[207] Lucy Mason to William Watkins, November 5 1946, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[208] Director's Report, August 24 1942, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 196.
[209] For example, see Directors Report, June 28 1948, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 196.
[210] Paul Sifton to Melvyn Douglas, November 16 1947, Paul Sifton papers Box 5.
[211] Summary of CARD Minutes, May 24-25 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.

Conclusion

  An alliance emerged between civil rights groups and labor groups during the 1940s because two of the largest and most prestigious organizations in both categories, the NAACP and the CIO, had compelling political interests. For the NAACP, flagging membership, diminishing resources, and political roadblocks led them to embrace new organizational strategies. Supporting organized labor was a viable strategy because a powerful new national union, the CIO, had political ambitions larger than bread and butter for their own workers. Operating through the Democratic Party, the CIO saw the NAACP as an ally in displacing another powerful Democratic Party faction. Had the NAACP managed to raise more money through other sources, or had the AFL defeated more of the CIO's organizing drives, the relationship between civil rights groups and organized labor may have remained tense.

Appendix to Chapter 3: The Economic Impact of Unions on African Americans

Ashenfelter (1972) authored one of the few studies that examines not only the effect of unionization, but the relative effect of industrial unionism vs. craft unionism. Overall, he found that there was less discrimination in unionized markets than non-unionized markets in the 1960s. He compared the effects of unionism on wage inequality and unemployment inequality in states in which the CIO was more powerful and states in which the AFL was more powerful from 1940-1960. His results show that the ratio of African American male wages to white male wages was 5% lower among skilled labor, and was 4% higher in the industrial unions, leading to a net 3.4 percent gain relative to a nonunionized economy.[212] In other words, the improvement provided by industrial unions more than offset the harm done by craft unions, although the differential fades between 1950 and 1960. Ashenfelter argues that the CIO's improved race relations were a function of the number of blacks in a workplace, not the ideology of CIO leaders.

Zeitler and Weyher (2001) argue that Ashenfelter's demographic argument overlooks the race relations efforts in CIO unions with a small black population and the lack of such efforts in AFL industrial unions with a large black population. They also dispute scholarly claims that racial parity improved in the 1940s not because of the CIO, but because of the tight labor market of World War II.[213] They point out that similar gains did not occur during the Korean War because CIO leadership had changed and the pro-civil rights communist factions had been purged.

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[212] Orley Ashenfelter, "Racial Discrimination and Trade Unionism," 463.
[213] Zeitlin and Weyher, "Black and White, Unite and Fight," 458.

Both authors' data is limited to states that were never part of the Confederacy. My sample of primary sources, incorporating both Northern and Southern incidents, indicates that the decision to improve race relations varied according to whether it would contribute to unionization in particular local circumstances. Zietlin and Weyher's data is consistent with an ideological explanation, but it is also consistent with an explanation that competition – not ideology alone – forced both to attempt to flank each other. Their emphasis on ideology folds the compelling political interests (discussed above) of the CIO into ideology. Any effort of the CIO to win over black voters to its political agenda, which leaders perceived as integral to its worker interests, would have been less successful without efforts to reduce discrimination in its own ranks.

CHAPTER FOUR

Twisting the Donkey's Tail

The NAACP and CIO had a common interest in civil rights, and the NAACP was satisfied that the CIO was taking appropriate steps to improve workplace race relations. Given their common interests, the two organizations worked politically to advance both union rights and civil rights. Bringing the NAACP into the CIO's orbit meant bringing the NAACP closer to the Democratic Party's orbit. Joined by the anticommunist liberal organization ADA, they managed to launch the Democratic Party on a liberal trajectory in which civil rights were a defining feature of what it meant to be liberal. African American voters followed the CIO and NAACP into a permanent place in the Democratic Party between 1948 and 1952, around the same time as the ambitious 1948 platform (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Civil rights opponents remained in the party for decades and defied the trend of the national party, but exercised influence mainly through MCs well-situated to obstruct legislation, and not presidential nominations and platforms. Democratic politicians responded to the pressure of the CIO-NAACP alliance in part because of changing demographics; industrial states with large worker and African American populations were more pivotal than Southern states. However, the pressure groups played a large role in shaping the voting behavior of liberals, unions, and African Americans in those states. By forming a united front and working together strategically, pressure groups wielded influence in elections and conventions disproportionate to the number of voters they purported to represent. Even when African American voters could swing elections in pivotal states, politicians offered only token gestures for African Americans until the CIO-NAACP alliance had built a strong coalition.

<u>The Failed Republican Bid for the Black Vote</u>

African Americans became a larger voting bloc in the North as they migrated out of the South for job opportunities, constituting 4.7 percent of the non-Southern population and an even larger, growing percentage in large cities.[1] Recognizing the importance of the black vote, both parties attempted to recruit African Americans. In 1940, *Life* magazine reported that African Americans might decide who the next president was.[2] Their importance as voters only increased after World War II was over. A newspaper headline after Truman's 1948 victory read "Negro Vote in 3 Key States Big Factor in Truman Victory."

Politicians feared opposition from the NAACP, in particular, more than they had in the past. During the hearings for Judge Parker's nomination in 1930, AFL President William Green did not exchange greetings with NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White, despite having met him several times. Nor did Green raise Parker's poor civil rights record as an issue.[3] The NAACP sometimes withheld endorsement of a particular bill or nominee in the 1930s because its endorsement would cause it to lose more votes than it gained.

In the 1940s, however, Senator Robert Taft claimed that the NAACP was able to defeat his FEPC bill by holding out for the "compulsory" FEPC, and thus preventing the passage of any civil rights measures which were not NAACP-supported.[4] Segregationist Senator James Byrnes privately admitted that he funded a committee to investigate discrimination in defense contracts in 1941 to ward off an NAACP fight against him as a

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[1] These figures are calculated from Hobbs et al., *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*; also see Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*, 33.
[2] NAACP II-A-226.
[3] Jankin, *White*, 141.
[4] Robert Taft to Harry E. Davis, March 8, 1946 in Wunderlin, *Papers of Robert A. Taft Vol. 3*, 137.

Supreme Court nominee.[5] When President Roosevelt signed executive order 8802 to defuse the threatened March on Washington, Walter White concluded that the NAACP could compel the president to support a policy if the organization could credibly threaten to mobilize thousands of protestors.[6] A simple change in electoral incentives, however, was not sufficient for the parties to enact legislation that addressed the concerns of African Americans. Both political parties attempted to straddle the civil rights issue and maintain or recruit white Southern votes.

Since the Republican Party had fared poorly in recent presidential elections, it arguably had more of an incentive to recruit black voters. As Carmines and Stimson describe party dynamics, "dissatisfied political losers…have an ever-present motive to unseat the governing status quo" by "generating new issue conflicts."[7] The Republican National Committee (RNC), concerned that 71 percent of African American voters had supported Roosevelt in 1936, commissioned Ralph Bunche to investigate why blacks had abandoned the party of Lincoln and describe how the party might win their votes back. Bunche concluded that the "Republican Party will need to decide whether it prefers to court the dissident white vote of the Democratic South, through continuance of its lily-white program and an obscure Negro policy, or really desires the Negro vote. It cannot seduce both."[8]

Republican politicians were unable to "seduce" either demographic, although they made a serious effort. Alf Landon, the Republican nominee in 1936, met with civil rights

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[5] Walter White to Lester Granger, March 21 1941, NAACP mf Part 13 A, Reel 24. Byrnes remembered the NAACP's fight against Judge Parker in 1931. Although the AFL's opposition to Parker was more important, the NAACP claimed credit for defeating two senators who had voted for Parker (Ross, *J.E. Spingarn and the Rise of the NAACP*, 165).
[6] Janken, *White*, 257.
[7] Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*, 7.
[8] Ralph Bunche, "Report on the Needs of the Negro (for the Republican Program Committee)," July 1, 1939, NAACP II-L-27.

leaders and endorsed an anti-lynching law, which Roosevelt refused to do.[9] The 1940

Republican nominee, Wendell Willkie, stressed his record in hiring African Americans as

a private employer, and emphasized Roosevelt's links to Southern opponents of civil

rights. Additionally, he called attention to New Deal agencies that discriminated against

or otherwise harmed African Americans.[10] Republican nominee Thomas Dewey had

helped pass a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) law in New York State

and promised a national one. The Republican platform of 1944 supported most of the

proposals that civil rights advocates demanded: a permanent national FEPC, an anti-

lynching law, desegregation of the armed forces, and a constitutional amendment

abolishing the poll tax. The platform promises continued into 1948, and ADA

acknowledged that the 1948 Republican platform was liberal on civil rights.[11] In each

case, a majority of blacks voted for the Democratic nominee (Figure 2.1).[12]

   The Republicans managed to flank the Democratic Party's left on civil rights in

1944. A 1944 reelect-Roosevelt advertisement targeted to blacks pointed to low-cost

housing, Social Security, the Economic Bill of Rights, and the Supreme Court decision

overturning the white primary (enunciated by Roosevelt-appointed judges). However,

the 1944 Republican civil rights platform would have been deeply unacceptable to the

Democratic Party, when many Southerners were already threatening to bolt a convention.

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[9] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 91. Civil rights groups had even protested the campaign launch of Republican rival William Borah, who opposed anti-lynching laws, in order to derail his campaign for the nomination (Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 163). But this was not followed by support for Landon in the general election.

[10]NAACP Secretary Walter White commented in 1947 that "Wendell Willkie in 1940 came closer to breaking the support given the Democrats by Negro voters than any other Republican since Theodore Roosevelt." After the 1940 election, Willkie had introduced him to Hollywood producers in his effort to persuade them to use less stereotypical depictions of African Americans (Janken, *White*, 267-268).

[11] "A Strategy for Liberals," ADA mf 106. The author is unidentified.

[12]Ralph Bunche, "Report on the Needs of the Negro (for the Republican Program Committee)," July 1, 1939, NAACP II-L-27. Weiss' (1983) account largely concurs.

Georgia Governor Eugene Talmadge assembled a group of Democrats to oppose

Roosevelt's policies in 1938. At one of their gatherings, Senator Josiah Bailey declared

that "Our Party is being taken away from us by John Lewis, Harold Ickes, Robert Vann,

White of the Society for the Advancement of the Negroes, Madam Perkins, Harry

Hopkins, Cochran and Cohen…It is a singular thing that we have permitted men who

were not Democrats to take our Party captive."[13] Animated by the white primary

decision, Texas Democrats discussed bolting the 1944 convention. Due to the influence

of Southern opponents of civil rights, the 1944 platform included only a vague statement

that some rights are guaranteed by the Constitution to all citizens. Roosevelt told the

only black representative in Congress, William L. Dawson, that he would run on his

record rather than on specific civil rights pledges, and persuaded him to rally liberals

around the vague plank for party unity. Although Dawson had previously urged the

removal of conservative Southerners from the party, the pull of the Democratic Party

toward the existing balance between North and South channeled his reconstructive

sympathies into maintaining the status quo.[14]

Given the economic moderation and civil rights liberalism of the Republican

tickets in 1940 and 1944, and Roosevelt's unwillingness to deal forthrightly with civil

rights, why didn't more African Americans vote Republican? At worst, a split vote

would force both parties to bid for the black vote with more concessions. Judge William

Hastie, a lone voice at a NAACP board meeting to discuss the 1944 Democratic

Convention, said "Unless there is some indication that we are willing to take reprisal

measures against these people…we will be criticized…If we are willing to take the risk

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[13] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 126-128.
[14] Manning, *William L. Dawson and the Limits of Black Electoral Leadership*, 97. However, Dawson did oppose the nomination of James Byrnes as a vice president, and supported the controversial Henry Wallace.

of trying to beat the Democrats, both parties will become frightened."[15] Republicans in the 80th congress failed to honor any of the civil rights pledges of the 1944 platform, but Republicans had not controlled Congress in more than a decade when the NAACP analyzed the 1944 election. The answer lies in the strategic behavior of group leaders, who opted to hold out for a reformed Democratic Party in order to maintain their standing with other groups who supported civil rights. Civil rights activists believed that labor unions and liberal groups would advance civil rights policies if civil rights groups remained "team players" in good standing with the coalition.

The NAACP withheld praise from the Republicans from 1940-1944 even as Democratic Party efforts lagged behind. Against the advice of CIO Secretary Treasurer James Carey, the NAACP refrained from officially endorsing candidates,[16] but its preferences were still voiced in an oblique manner. The NAACP's partnership with the CIO and its goals for the Democratic Party necessitated that it avoid alienating liberal groups. President Arthur Spingarn, echoed by White, said that "the Negro should align himself with all the liberal forces behind the New Deal," and if "we in any way attack President Roosevelt (We have got to be realistic) we are helping to elect Dewey and so are cutting ourselves off from all association with liberal forces."[17] The board refrained from saying that the Democrats "lost face" with black voters by sponsoring a weak platform and replacing Henry Wallace with Harry Truman as Roosevelt's running mate. Instead, the NAACP publicly declared in 1944 that "neither party platform on the Negro

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[15] "Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the NAACP," July 31 1944, NAACP mf 1 r11 (f471).
[16] Roy Wilkins to James Carey, June 14 1944, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 160. Also see Walter White to Phillip Murray, July 25 1948; and James Carey to Walter White, August 13 1946, both in CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 27.
[17] "Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the NAACP," July 31 1944, NAACP mf 1 r11 (f471). Spingarn and White agreed that the NAACP should criticize both party platforms.

is satisfactory to intelligent Negroes," even as the Republican Platform promised most of what civil rights groups wanted. White wrote a syndicated column in the *New York Herald* that touted the Democrats over the Republicans, and when the NAACP board of directors voted on White's behavior, they decided to take no action.[18]

The NAACP arguably showed foresight by not responding to the Republican civil rights promises, since the Republicans failed to enact any of them in the postwar Congress they controlled. Perhaps they realized that the Republican's coalition partners and strategic allies would prevent them from honoring their platform. The NAACP and the CIO increasingly viewed an FEPC with enforcement powers as the most important legislative goal for civil rights supporters. This was the part of the 1944 Republican Platform that was most unpalatable to pressure groups supporting the Republican Party.[19] Like many agencies of the New Deal, it placed a burden on employers and implied a federal prerogative to second-guess their business decisions for the public interest.[20] Liberals sought an FEPC resembling the Securities and Exchange Commission and National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), in which a panel of experts regulated private businesses.[21] The wartime FEPC had even borrowed personnel from the NLRB.[22] While there are no written records indicating that prioritizing FEPC was a deliberate attempt of the CIO to drive a wedge between business groups and civil rights groups, it was an ideal

[18] Simon Topping, "Supporting our Friends and Defeating Our Enemies: Militancy and Nonpartisanship in the NAACP, 1936-1948," *The Journal of African American History* 89:1 (Winter, 2004), 23.
[19] White opposed a public announcement of this priority in 1948 (Walter White to Richard Allan, February 27 1948, NAACP mf 13 r 13). On the change in priorities, see CARD Minutes, January 14 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Meeting Folder. The NAACP and other civil rights groups convinced Truman's advisers to focus on the FEPC and drop other matters in 1950. On the NAACP's opposition to national action on the poll tax, see Conference of Negro Organization Minutes, September 4 1953, NAACP II-A-452, page 2.
[20] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*.
[21] Chen, *The Fifth Freedom*, 46.
[22] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 137

instrument for doing so. Republicans were as eager to win black votes as ever, but at this point, the most important item on the civil rights agenda produced great friction with business groups, due to the burden it placed on employers. During the 80th Congress, conservative leader Robert Taft denied that the 1944 FEPC promise referred to an FEPC with enforcement powers. The furthest Taft would go was to support an FEPC that would investigate and publicize cases of discriminations. Skeptical that Republicans could win the black vote, he wrote privately:

> The Negro situation…is a very difficult one. I doubt if we can outbid Mrs. Roosevelt. I don't think we can make much of the issue of forcing a full vote in the South. Just at present the Negroes will be satisfied with nothing except the FEPC Bill. That is something which violates any possible party philosophy we could adopt.[23]

The National Council for a Permanent FEPC approached Taft to cosponsor a permanent FEPC in this Congress, but he merely agreed to vote for cloture and allow Republican Senators to support the bill without interference.[24] House Speaker Joseph Martin acknowledged "The FEPC plank in the 1944 Republican platform was a bid for the Negro vote, and they did not accept the bid."[25]

By the 80th Congress, the CIO and NAACP focused on passing the FEPC over other goals, such as its World War II goal of ending military discrimination.[26] A. Philip Randolph attempted to build a working relationship with Republican Senator Robert Taft to desegregate the armed forces. Randolph, who led the National Council for a Permanent FEPC, increasingly showed his willingness to compromise with Taft and support a weak FEPC. Walter White and James Carey contacted other groups National

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[23] Wunderlin, *Papers of Robert Taft III*: 46-47.
[24] Paul Sifton to George Weaver, January 30 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 206, National Council for a Permanent FEPC Folder (1947).
[25] Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 59.
[26] Only Congress could pass a national FEPC, but the NAACP had some success opposing the poll tax at the state level, and lynching was becoming less common. Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 165-166.

Council for a Permanent FEPC and persuaded them to let the NAACP take over the FEPC fight.[27] The NAACP downplayed Randolph's role in Truman Administration reforms by publishing literature highlighting the NAACP's role in the creation of the Fair Employment Board.

The NAACP sharply criticized Republicans for their failure to deliver on their platform promises, even though they had not responded to the platform with encouragement in the first place. To be sure, the NAACP rebuked the Democratic Party and threatened that black voters would support Republicans when the Democratic Party failed to move leftward on civil rights. But they offered strong praise and encouragement for Democratic leaders when they made public pronouncements in favor of civil rights, even when these were not followed by legislative success. The NAACP encouraged bold promises for the party that better fit the economic goals of its coalition, while rebuffing bold promises from the party that did not. Furthermore, the NAACP targeted Taft, the Senate's foremost opponent of organized labor, for intense criticism. Senator Taft, nicknamed "Mr. Republican," ran the Republican Senate in the 80th Congress "like the Commanding General at Supreme Headquarters."[28] In his own Senate roll calls, Taft consistently supported anti-lynching laws, desegregation of the armed forces, abolition of the poll tax, and cloture on FEPC votes.[29] He also supported federal aid to education and housing with an eye toward relieving African American poverty in the South, and he was the Congressional sponsor of major legislation in both areas.[30] The NAACP's *Crisis*

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[27] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 166.

[28] Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 36.

[29] A. Philip Randolph had consistently called on Taft when trying to desegregate the armed forces. RFT to A. Philip Randolph, February 5 1948 in Wunderlin III: 385.

[30] Patterson, 262, 322-324; RFT to Edward F. Hoban November 5 1945, in Wunderlin 3, 93; and RFT to Edward Freking January 18 1946 in Wunderlin 3, 121; Wunderlin II 258.

attacked Taft for his position on FEPC and refused to publish a response he submitted.[31]

When Taft declared that a high-ranking figure among the NAACP preferred a fact-finding FEPC during his reelection campaign in 1950, the NAACP publicized its demand for him to name the official and sent a telegram to the senator four times. Executive Secretary White wrote to the CIO that "I am delighted that we have caught him in such a vicious distortion of the truth and you may be sure that we are going to follow it through to the end."[32] From a purely civil rights point of view, Taft should not have been such a high target. But Taft was the most reviled member of Congress among unions. CIO PAC director Jack Kroll wrote *A Speaker's Handbook on Robert Alphonso Taft*, and the AFL's Labor League for Political Action solicited $2 contributions from 9 million members in 1949 to defeat him in 1950.[33]

The NAACP muted its criticism of Democratic civil rights failures, even when African Americans had voted for Democratic presidents and MCs. In the Democratic-controlled 81st Congress, Senator Scott Lucas introduced the FEPC bill at the end of the session, the most difficult time to defeat a filibuster, and a time where many senators were facing primary challenges. In 1923, the NAACP had interpreted the late-session proposal of the anti-lynching law as evidence that Republicans did not support the anti-lynching bill in earnest. No such criticism was forthcoming for the 81st Congress.[34] According to Truman's Special Counsel Stephen Spingarn, the RNC was working "full blast" to persuade Republican Senators to vote for cloture, and the president should push

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[31] Wunderlin III:38.
[32] Walter White to Jack Kroll, June 30 1950, NAACP II A246 1950.
[33] Patterson, *Mr. Republican*, 448.
[34] When the Congress took up the question of the FEPC in 1950, only 19 of the 54 Democratic Senators voted for cloture, while 9 were absent (rules at the time required a 2/3 vote of all senators and not just senators present).

the DNC to do the same.[35] Democrats in the 81st Congress also defeated Republican civil

rights amendments to the Oleo tax and federal aid to housing and education, with the

support of Wilkins.[36]

The failure of Republicans to enact civil rights legislation is only a partial

explanation for the NAACP's interaction with the party. In the wake of its alliance with

the CIO, the NAACP became more active in promoting a liberal economic agenda, and

took more interest in Democratic Party politics. In 1944, the NAACP urged both parties

to use government programs to secure full employment instead of leaving recovery to

private initiative. White – joined by the CIO – called for a Conference of Progressives in

1946. At this conference, White favored universal health care and the continuation of

rent and price controls.[37] These positions ran contrary to Republican ambitions to scale

back government spending after World War II. While NAACP leaders privately favored

New Deal Democrats and progressive causes before then,[38] they now made their

preferences public and showed more interest in working with liberal interest groups. In

1950, a member complained that the NAACP was distracted from civil rights,

campaigning for such economic measures as rent control, and spending $500 to support

primarily white workers on strike.[39] The NAACP wrote back that "the NAACP has

grown in its conception of the scope of our work…It is quite true that there are many

organizations working in specific fields with regard to some of these matters, but we feel

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[35] Memorandum from Stephen Spingarn "re: FEPC," May 16, 1950 Truman Official File 1510, Truman Library.
[36] Perry Howard to Walter White, October 7 1950, NAACP II-A-510.
[37] Janken, *White*, 306.
[38] Wilkins, for instance, recounts that he repeatedly tried to persuade his wife to become a Democrat before the 1928 election (Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 80).
[39] Eugene Cheeks to Roy Wilkins, February 25, 1950, NAACP II-A-246. Wilkins wrote that many members felt the same way (James E. McCann to Roy Wilkins, June 25, 1958, mf 13 Supplemental r14, 5; Roy Wilkins to James L. McDevitt, December 16, 1958 NAACP 13 Supplemental, r14, 76).

that there should be the utmost cooperation on the part of all organizations committed to a program of bettering human relations."[40]

The NAACP's deference to the political positions of the liberal-labor coalition continued into 1948. The NAACP terminated W.E.B. Du Bois' employment a second time when he publicly wrote in favor of Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace. Wallace was more racially liberal than Truman, but the CIO PAC and ADA vigorously opposed him as a spoiler candidate with too many ties to the Communist Party. Ostensibly, the rationale for Du Bois' removal was that he violated the organization's policy on endorsements. However, White's support for Roosevelt in 1944 and Truman in 1948 was almost as overt. Firing Du Bois generated bad publicity after the organization went to the trouble of hiring him to win international support for civil rights. The NAACP was willing to suffer this embarrassment, firmly committed to the consensus of liberal groups behind Truman.[41] By 1952, the NAACP participated in an informal caucus of groups, including the CIO and ADA, plotting strategy to move the Democratic platform in a liberal direction.[42]

The NAACP was linked to the alliance of liberals and labor unions working towards a Democratic Party that was liberal on civil rights and economic issues, rather than a Republican Party issuing liberal promises on civil rights. It strategically rejected Republican overtures in a context in which the NAACP was conjoining civil rights goals with economic liberalism and working in an alliance committed to this conjunction. The

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[40] Madison Jones to Eugene Cheeks, April 6, 1950, NAACP II-A-246.
[41] Janken, *White*, 316-317
[42] The caucus included the ADA, the CIO, the Farmer's Union, and a few liberal MCs. Violet Gunther to William Rafski, June 10, 1952, ADA mf 21.

choice to participate in the liberal-labor alliance enabled the NAACP to flourish as an institution and ultimately accomplish many of its civil rights goals.

Of course, the NAACP assured Democratic politicians that blacks might vote for either party, and that the Democrats needed to at least match Republican platforms. In a press release after the 1946 elections, White warned that if "the Republicans keep some of the promises they so eloquently and frequently make to Negroes, the present Negro resentment against the Bilbo-Talmadge-Rankin-Byrnes domination of the Democratic Party may develop into a force strong enough to decide who will occupy the White House and control Congress in 1948."[43] The NAACP's record in the 1940s, however, clearly shows that its leaders preferred the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, even if they told Democratic Party leaders that blacks were not yet "in the bag," as White told DNC Chair James Farley. Many liberal Democrats either took White at his word, or used such threats as a way to nudge party leaders toward proactive support for civil rights. Special Counsel Clark Clifford presented President Truman with a memorandum for the 1948 election, advising that "under the tutelage of Walter White…the Negro has become a cynical, hardboiled trader" that will change parties if the Democrats fail to deliver on civil rights.[44]

Groups did not join parties simply because politicians invited them in. Leading Republicans wooed blacks as actively as Democratic leaders, but NAACP leaders supported the Democrats. Perhaps they were attracted by the economic positions of the Democratic Party, but they had never been as politically active or involved in economic issues as they had become in the wake of the CIO alliance. At times, NAACP leaders

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[43] "NAACP urges Republicans to consider needed legislation," November 15, 1946, NAACP II A509.
[44] Memorandum from Clark Clifford to Harry S. Truman, November 19, 1947, Political File, Clifford Papers.

141

explicitly referred to the need to avoid isolation from other progressive groups. While I do not have proof that the NAACP changed black opinion on these matters specifically, African Americans had more respect for the NAACP than any other African American organization. Roy Wilkins asserted "we can influence a fluid and independent Negro vote which has no fixed anchor or position."[45] The timing of the NAACP shift closely precedes the change of blacks from swing voters to solid supporters of the Democrats, and follows the organizational advantages it gained from allying with unions. The Democratic Party transformation on civil rights did not materialize because of the Great Migration, which affected the electoral calculations of both parties. Rather, Republican bids for the black vote were counteracted by strategic groups as they worked to bring their long-term designs on the Democratic Party to fruition.

Transforming the Democratic Party in 1948

By the end of the 1948 election, civil rights groups and labor groups sat closer to the head of the Democratic Party table. Organized labor's ties to the Democratic Party and the New Deal were longstanding. The CIO PAC concluded early on that it needed to work internally in the Democratic Party and disregard the Republican Party.[46] CIO PAC Director Sidney Hillman claimed that labor groups wielded considerable strength in party nominations in 1943, before the CIO PAC was fully organized:

> The Democratic Party is very open to the proposition of giving our groups a great deal of say right in the party – not merely on policies, but a discussion of the kind of people they are going to nominate before they nominate them. I think if we have real leadership we can work out, especially with the Democratic Party, some satisfactory arrangements so that we do not really have a choice between two evils. After my trip I have seen some of the top leadership of the Democratic Party, and I think there, too, there is a desire to discuss with us before instead of after. You know what happened in New Jersey where, because of the AFL and the CIO and the Brotherhoods working together, we have forced our nominee as the gubernatorial candidate.[47]

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[45] "Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the NAACP," July 31 1944, NAACP mf 1 r11 (f471).
[46] Zieger, *The CIO*, 16, 315.
[47] Meeting of October 29 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 6.

President Roosevelt's maneuvering prior to the 1944 convention illustrate what Hillman was describing. Roosevelt asked Frank Walker, a machine boss, to work with Hillman to ensure a pro-labor delegation at the 1944 Democratic Convention.[48] The CIO was careful not to let Republicans divide the union vote in order to maintain its position in the Democratic Party. During the Republican nomination contest of 1944, Wendell Wilkie sought to obtain union support by flanking Roosevelt's left on labor issues in 1944. CIO Executive Board members worried and contemplated making a statement against Willkie, saying "all the work we have done will be damaged, and it will take a terrifically long time to repair it if we don't hit this thing in the head."[49] The CIO needed to promise its members' votes as a bloc to the Democratic Party to have the leverage it wanted.

The NAACP's place in the party was more difficult to secure, even though the CIO was also opposed by Southern Democrats. Labor groups and liberal groups realized that demographic changes were not enough to transform the Democratic Party on race. An unsigned Roosevelt administration memo from 1940 claimed that blacks constituted 4-16 percent of the vote in 13 swing states.[50] But Democratic politicians could not simply ignore the Southern wing of the party; its influence was too entrenched. African Americans could vote Democratic when they migrated to Northern states, but they could not remake the Democratic Party into one that prioritized their concerns over Southerners without the help of strategic organizations. Strategists in the liberal-labor coalition concluded that they would need to displace Southern conservatives from the party, and used to the 1948 election as the national forum for doing so. An early ADA memo on

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[48] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 514.

[49] Meeting of October 29 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 6. As it turned out, Willkie was not the nominee and whatever support he gained from labor did not transfer to Thomas Dewey.

[50] McMahon, *Reconsidering Roosevelt on Race*, 101.

political strategy noted that politicians would not carry out the realignment because they were not interested in rallying voters around issues in non-election years. Pressure groups needed to sustain the pressure. Moreover, non partisan organizations were better able to recruit voters who were not already registered Democrats.[51]

Publicly and privately, the CIO-NAACP alliance affirmed the Southern wing of the party as a liability. In 1940, future CIO-PAC Director Jack Kroll wrote that

> The bi-partisan Tory Democratic-Republican bloc must be reckoned with, as through control on the part of the Tory Democrats of key positions in the Congress, they are anything but weak adversaries in spite of the reelection of President Roosevelt.[52]

The CIO PAC's public statement on the 1948 elections read "A coalition of do-nothing Republicans and bigoted Dixiecrats has steadfastly adhered to the philosophy of the National Association of Manufacturers."[53] One CIO activist wrote in 1949 that "South Carolina sure has a lot of Republicans who insist that they are Democrats."[54] In a 1957 speech to the NAACP, Reuther said "these fellows [in Congress] are the same fellows who passed the Taft-Hartley Act, the same people who fight against civil rights are the same people who fight against raising minimum wages, the same people who fight against social progress."[55]

The goal of realignment was self-conscious. As early as 1937, a sympathetic lawyer wrote to the CIO that he hoped for "a new Democratic Party and the elimination of the reactionary political groups which have dominated Southern Democracy from Virginia to Mississippi."[56] Some Southern Democrats saw the writing on the wall once

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[51] "A Strategy for Liberals," undated, ADA mf 106.
[52] Jack Kroll, "Political Review," undated 1940, Jack Kroll Box 4.
[53] Meeting of October 29 1943, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 11.
[54] Earle Britton to Lucy Mason, August 18 1949, Operation Dixie mf 63.
[55] Address of Walter P. Reuther Before the 48th Annual NAACP Convention, Detroit, Michigan, June 26 1957, NAACP VIII 83.
[56] William Jeff Lauck to Lucy Mason, June 18, 1937, Operation Dixie mf 62.

the party, under Roosevelt, no longer needed a single Southern state to win presidential elections. Senator Josiah Bailey warned in 1938 that "there is grave danger that it [the Democratic Party] will fall into the hands of very objectionable men whose politics are entirely distasteful to the Southern Democracy. They get elected by the negro vote in New York, Pennsylvania, Boston, Chicago, and the cities of the Middle West."[57]

Democratic Party leaders in the early to mid 1940s also equivocated on civil rights, despite being well aware of the importance of the African American vote.[58] Party insiders knew of Roosevelt's deteriorating health and selected a vice presidential nomination with great care. The existing vice president, Henry Wallace, was widely popular with African Americans and unions, but his views were considered too radical to be president. Roosevelt and several party bosses worried that one of the top candidates to replace Henry Wallace, James Byrnes, would lose several swing states by alienating African Americans. Byrnes was conservative on both civil rights and labor issues. After a series of mixed signals, Byrnes was nonetheless given a "green light" on the eve of the convention. Dawson said that he did not think blacks would leave the party over Byrnes. Roosevelt asked Byrnes to "clear" his candidacy with Phil Murray and Sidney Hillman. Both offered strenuous objections. The president and several party bosses decided to oppose Byrnes, emphasizing labor's opposition as the foremost reason.[59] While it is possible that Roosevelt hoped to avoid unpleasant conversation by passing the responsibility to Hillman, contemporaneous written sources offer no support for this theory (although some of the participants explained the outcome this way afterwards). In spite of all of the demographic changes in swing states, the Democratic Party almost

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[57] Leuchtenburg, *The White House Looks South*, 77.
[58] McMahon, *Reconsidering Roosevelt on Race*, 101.
[59] Robert Ferrell, *Choosing Truman*, 39-47.

nominated a conservative Southerner as Roosevelt's likely successor. Labor's objections were, according to the participants at the time, the most important reason that Byrnes was not nominated.

The CIO-NAACP alliance was not the only player fighting for a more liberal party, but it was the most willing to take electoral risks in pursuit of this goal. Within the White House, a group of liberals sought to pressure Truman in a more liberal direction, though they were highly sensitive to the need to secure his reelection. To counter the influence of conservative Truman advisers, Federal Security Agency Administrator Oscar Ewing hosted informal dinners every other Monday evening. Most of the seven or eight participants were lesser-known cabinet officials or part of the White House Staff.[60] Special Counsel Clark Clifford served as the group's liaison to Truman, and although Truman was aware of the group's existence, it was otherwise kept private. In November of 1947, Clifford presented Truman with a report that Southern Democrats would still vote Democratic even with a civil rights platform, but African Americans might vote Republican without one.[61] The report read that "It is inconceivable that any policies initiated by the Truman Administration, no matter how 'liberal,' could so alienate the South in the next year that it could revolt. As always the South can be considered safely Democratic. And in formulating national policy, it can be safely ignored."[62] The Ewing group anticipated a third-party challenge from the dismissed Secretary of Commerce, Henry Wallace, but not South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond. Wallace was making substantial inroads among black voters, but Clifford believed the black vote could be

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[60] Interview with Clark Clifford by Jerry Hess, May 10 1971, Truman Library.
[61] Most of this memorandum was written by James Rowe, then working for the Hoover Commission, but Clifford synthesized other advice, adding several pages to the Rowe memorandum.
[62] Memorandum from Clark Clifford to Harry S. Truman, November 19, 1947, Political File, Clifford Papers.

salvaged and the South had no other candidate to support.[63] A Farm Credit

Administration official commented that "Of course, they [African Americans] made their

greatest progress under us and should be grateful; but you know, and I know, how easily

they are swayed."[64] Additionally, civil rights proposals would gain the president the

enthusiastic support of labor groups and liberal groups.[65] Clifford therefore presented

Truman with an ambitious set of civil rights proposals.

Truman took some steps to implement Clifford's advice, including a well

publicized "special message to Congress" on civil rights on February 2, 1948. His staff

reminded him that he was a party leader and he had a responsibility to "make every effort

to persuade Southern Representatives and Senators that it is essential that they accept (or

at least do not kill by filibuster) a minimal program."[66] But Truman backpedaled under

pressure from Southern Democrats. According to Phileo Nash, Special Assistant to the

President on Minority Problems, "the reaction in Congress to the February 2nd message

was such that there was some question in everybody's mind as to whether the President

would get the nomination if he didn't back off a little bit." [67] Many Southern Democrats

refused to attend the Jefferson-Jackson day dinner and others discussed bolting the

convention. Clifford later admitted he seriously erred in his estimate of the South by

basing his predictions only on past elections.[68] In February, Truman had promised he

would issue orders to desegregate the federal government and the armed forces. In May,

[63] William L. Batt, Jr., to Gael Sullivan, April 20, 1948, Political File, Clifford Papers.
[64] Joseph Lawrence to Howard McGrath, May 18, 1948 Student Research File 19, Truman Library.
[65] Memorandum from Oscar Ewing and David Kingsley to Clark Clifford, January 30, 1948, George Elsey Papers, Folder 2, Truman Library.
[66] David Niles to Phileo Nash "A Minimum Civil Rights Program For the Eightieth Congress," January 8, 1948, Student Research File 19, Truman Library.
[67] Interview of Phileo Nash by Jerry Hess, October 18, 1966, Truman Library.
[68] Interview with Clark Clifford by Jerry Hess, April 13,1971, Truman Library.

he denied ever supporting the desegregation of federal employees.[69] Truman's latter-day

equivocation matches Sundquist's description of party leaders: "The normal reaction of

the established leaders to the new issue is…defensive. They try to straddle it, to change

the subject, to find policy compromises."[70] Democratic Party leaders considered

proposing a civil rights plank on their own initiative due to electoral calculations, but

held back.

     The 1948 Democratic Convention in Philadelphia provided liberals with the

opportunity to deliver a symbolic blow to the overlapping enemies of labor and civil

rights below the Mason-Dixon Line. Truman instructed his supporters to present a civil

rights plank similar to that of 1944, which contained only a vague statement that some

rights are guaranteed by the Constitution to all citizens.[71] A floor fight took place over a

stronger civil rights platform supported by independent groups who wanted to displace

Southern conservatives. The CIO PAC's 1948 statement of political policy noted that

"progressive factions have existed in the major parties for many years," but these groups

"must now be combined into a unified political party," excluding "venal and racketeering

old-time political machines."[72] Months before the Democratic Convention, ADA also

planned to make civil rights a central issue. ADA Director James Loeb later recalled that

the Truman plank "didn't go whole hog and we were frankly looking for a fight."[73] Civil

rights groups were marginal to American politics just ten years earlier, but at the time of

the 1948 convention, they were an integral part of the liberal coalition. Civil rights

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[69] Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 121; 161.
[70] Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 306-307.
[71] Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 121; 161.
[72] Statement on Political Policy, 1948, John Brophy Papers Box 13, Folder 6.
[73] Interview with James Loeb by Jerry Hess, June 26, 1970, Truman Library.

cemented labor unions, civil rights groups, and liberal groups, and if the strong civil rights plank passed, they could claim the Democratic Party as their vehicle.

ADA had little hope that Truman would win reelection, but the plank would help elect Democrats to Congress and establish the Democratic Party as the liberal party.[74] Loeb told Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. that without a strong civil rights plank, "we face, not only a defeat, but a rout of such proportions as to mean the disintegration of the liberal-labor-Democratic-Party coalition which represented the support for the New Deal under your father's leadership."[75] ADA urged local members to run as delegates for their precinct in order to constitute a formidable force on the convention floor. It privately asked Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey to sign a statement in favor of civil rights and arranged for a wide variety of Democratic politicians, including machine politicians, to sign it. ADA distributed this document to local chapters to obtain signatures from important figures in even more states, so that its representatives could claim a mandate for the outlined civil rights policy on the convention floor.[76] Schattschneider argues that parties in a two-party system have considerable leverage over interest groups.[77] However, pressure groups in many cases are willing to lose an election to attain a party more in line with their goals. CIO President Phil Murray explained after the convention that "If the party is defeated," then "opportunity may be provided for sound reconstruction upon liberal lines."[78]

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[74] Nash stated "Now, some of the President's advisers, I'm sure, thought it was time to ease off. I don't think that they were wrong, in general, they were just wrong, when reference to a convention where some people undoubtedly had concluded that Mr. Truman was going down to defeat anyhow and, therefore, they might as well take care of themselves" (Interview of Phileo Nash by Jerry Hess, October 18, 1966, Truman Library.).

[75] James Loeb to Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., April 27 1948, ADA mf 31.

[76] James Loeb to Frank McCulloch, April 24 1948; ADA mf 31.

[77] Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People*, 54-57

[78] Meeting of August 30, 1948, *Minutes of the Executive Board* mf 11.

At the 1948 convention, CIO Secretary-Treasurer James Carey proposed the

strong plank that was ultimately adopted. CIO PAC Director Jack Kroll pushed the late-

night meeting of ADA on July 14 urging the ADA to press for this plank on the

convention floor.[79] Representative Andrew Biemiller, largely elected by labor forces in

his Wisconsin district, introduced the plank on this group's behalf. Truman's convention

managers and Democratic Party leaders lobbied against the stronger plank late into the

night. Truman himself called it a "crackpot amendment" in his diary and wrote that the

"crackpots hope the South will bolt." Former DNC Chair James Farley said "This is a

terrible thing; it's going to split our party, and we've got to prevent it."[80] Clifford thought

the effort was "the wrong time, the wrong place, and the wrong way to further the civil

rights case."[81] He later recalled that "I felt that there was no need to mortify the South by

pressing for an extreme civil rights plank at the convention."[82] While Truman and

Clifford wanted to support civil rights to reach black voters, they did not want

conservative Southerners to leave the party; both believed that Truman could carry the

South and the black vote.[83] Future Party Whip Francis Myers and DNC Chair J. Howard

McGrath also lobbied for the mild plank.[84] Twenty years later, Oscar Ewing confirmed

that Truman preferred this plank to the stronger plank that ultimately emerged as a result

of the CIO-ADA alliance. Ewing recalled that "Naturally, as the prospective candidate,

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[79] 120 of the 1,200 delegates were ADA members. Speech by Jack Kroll to Convention of United Gas, Coke, and Chemical Workers at Milwaukee, July 22, 1948, Jack Kroll Papers Box 4, January-July. President Truman later thanked the CIO for its maneuvering (CARD Minutes, November 19 1948, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Committee Folder).
[80] Interview with James Loeb by Jerry Hess, June 26, 1970, Truman Library.
[81] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 194.
[82] Interview with Clark Clifford by Jerry Hess, July 26, 1971, Truman Library.
[83] Interview with Clark Clifford by Jerry Hess, July 26, 1971, Truman Library.
[84] Interview with John Barriere by Jerry Hess, December 20, 1966, Truman Library.

he wanted a plank that, if possible, would satisfy both sides of the controversy."[85] Phileo Nash remembered that the "President was going to have kind a hard time getting the nomination . . . in other words, if you are looking at blocs of voters, and you are interested in their sympathies, the pro-civil righters had been taken care of with a report and a strong message. Truman gave Illinois Congressman Bill Dawson the responsibility for a plank that would be "acceptable, and yet wouldn't be tough." He "had the basic job over at the committee of engineering a plank that would be acceptable all around, and it wasn't, and there was a floor fight."[86] As Loeb portrayed the fight, "we had to fight not only the South but the Administration, which tried to put over a horrible compromise."[87]

According to Carey, Myers asked him "if we intended to give a fight on the civil rights issue." Carey "told him that there was another substantial group that would join us in that fight – the ADA, and other groups."[88] ADA operatives called the compromise "meaningless" and would only hurt Truman in the election.[89] A stirring speech from Hubert Humphrey, plus intense politicking by ADA and CIO operatives, led convention delegates to adopt the more progressive plank.[90] Humphrey convinced New York politician Ed Flynn to persuade the Pennsylvania delegation to support the plank, which provided enough votes to carry the plank.[91] Senate Democratic Whip Scott Lucas reportedly said "Who is this pipsqueak who knows more than Franklin Roosevelt knew about Negro rights?" The CIO and ADA-instigated civil rights plank of 1948 provoked a

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[85] Interview with Oscar Ewing by J.R. Fuchs, May 2, 1969, Truman Library.
[86] Interview of Phileo Nash by Jerry Hess, October 18, 1966, Truman Library.
[87] James Loeb to Alfred Baker Lewis, July 28, 1948, ADA mf 17.
[88] CARD Minutes, November 19 1948, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Committee Folder. Although Carey claimed that the presidents supported him throughout his efforts, historical accounts since then do not support this claim.
[89] James Loeb to Joseph Sharts, July 27 1948, ADA mf 17.
[90] Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 162.
[91] Interview with Andrew Biemiller by James Fuchs, July 29, 1977, Truman Library.

walk-out of several southern delegations and set of a far-reaching set of transformations

in the Democratic Party. Blacks, who had scarcely any representation in the Democratic

Party before this time, could never have won the 1948 platform fight on their own.

These changes were intended by the interest groups. After the civil rights plank

was adopted, CIO PAC Director Jack Kroll told a group of workers that the Democratic

platform

> will go a long way to separate the sheep from the goats…I think that the basis may have been laid for transforming the Democratic party as a whole into a genuine instrument for expressing the will of the vast majority of the people, unencumbered by civil war hangovers, unburdened by the magnolia and mint julep mentality, unhampered by sectional prejudices.[92]

Echoing these sentiments, CIO PAC Field Director Phillip Weightman told CARD to

"read the Dixiecrats out of the party, they have shown their hands. Then we'd be in a

better position to run liberal Democrats to oust these cases."[93] UAW President Walter

Reuther wrote to White that the 1949 filibuster of a civil rights bill was an "unholy

alliance between the Dixiecrats and reactionary Northern Republicans" that "underscores

the need to bring about fundamental political realignments in American politics."[94]

ADA argued that the civil rights plank was a more significant victory than it

would have achieved nominating an ADA-backed own candidate, and members wrote

that the plank alone won ADA a place in history. Loeb declared that "the strangle hold of

the South on the Democratic Party has finally been broken" and told a donor that he was

proud that ADA divided the party and provoked the Southern states to leave.[95] ADA had

lost its fight to nominate William O. Douglas or Dwight Eisenhower over the incumbent

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[92] Jack Kroll Speech to Convention of United Gas, Coke, and Chemical Workers at Milwaukee, July 22, 1948, Jack Kroll Box 4, January-July, page 3. Also see Lucy Mason to P Murray, October 30 1944, Operation Dixie mf 63.

[93] Committee to Abolish Discrimination Meeting Transcript, April 4 1949, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 191, CIO Committee on Civil Rights Folder.

[94] Walter Reuther to Walter White, March 30 1949, NAACP VIII 83.

[95] James Loeb to David Engvall, undated 1948, ADA mf 31; James Loeb to Babbette Deutsch, July 28 1948, ADA mf 17.

president. Winning passage for an ambitious platform was the only way to emerge from the convention with enhanced prestige.[96] Responding to numerous inquiries on the failure to nominate Douglas or Eisenhower, James Loeb assured donors that their original plans for the convention fell through but they achieved the platform that was more important.[97] Determined to follow through with the plank, ADA and other liberal groups rallied members around it to purge the party. The National Farm Labor Union suggested creating a "Southern Democrats for Truman" organization, writing that "if enough people can be gotten together in such a committee and a smart publicity job done, you can drive the rest of the bourbons out and get control of the party machinery in the South into hands of the liberal element. Regardless of what we might think of Truman, a vote down South for him will be counted a vote for civil rights in the end."[98]

After the strong plank was passed and the Dixiecrats ran their own candidate, Truman and his advisers saw little point in softening their position on Civil Rights. The convention had forced him to take more risks in favor of civil rights than he would have had his platform passed. Truman wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt that he was happy to have reduced the South's influence in the party, omitting that he had opposed the bold steps that accomplished this: "At least the Democratic Party is no longer in the position of the dog whose tail wags him. We are not only rid of the fringes on the left end but we are free of the so-called solid South and I hope to see a Democratic Party from now on that will really be a Democratic Party and represent all the people."[99] He assured Roosevelt

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[96]James Loeb to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Richter, undated 1948, ADA mf 17; James Loeb to J.C. Schutte, July 27, 1948, ADA mf 17.
[97] There are numerous letters making this point, including some form letters, between the convention and the general election (ADA mf 17).
[98] HL Mitchell to James Loeb, July 20 1948, ADA mf 31.
[99] Harry Truman to Eleanor Roosevelt, December 13, 1948, Truman PPF 242, Truman Library.

that he was making an effort to persuade Southern employees of the federal agencies to change their attitude about working with blacks.[100] Truman's assistants warned wavering Southern Democrats (including Christian conservative leader Pat Robertson's father) that there would be disastrous consequences if they supported the Dixiecrats.[101] But Truman proved lenient to Dixiecrats after the election, and public statements he made after leaving office revealed that he retreated into a more moderate civil rights position.[102]

The CIO's initiative and political clout resulted in the 1948 platform plank, but CIO efforts did not end with symbolism. The CIO (and later, the AFL-CIO) supported NAACP-favored legislation from the FEPC to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1947, Secretary Treasurer James Carey was a participant in the President's Committee on Civil Rights, and generally pushed for the least compromising position that the committee would accept. Once a satisfactory report was published, he worked to ensure that the Democratic Party followed through with its recommendations. Carey believed that his participation forced "the President and the Democratic Party into new fields in that report….One of our jobs is to make sure the Democratic Party recognizes its obligations."[103] The CIO also hoped that the document would help persuade recalcitrant international unions to reconsider their objections to civil rights out of respect for President Truman.[104] The CIO would later press Truman, often unsuccessfully, not to appoint former Dixiecrats to administration positions.[105]

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[100] Harry Truman to Eleanor Roosevelt, February 11, 1950, Truman PPF 242, Truman Library.

[101] Robinette to Hutchinson, August 10, 1948, Truman PPF 242, Truman Library.

[102] In 1956, he made a strong case for a civil ranks plank mild enough to win applause from Southern delegates. In 1958, he supported various devices Southerners used to avoid the consequences of the Brown decision (Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 222).

[103] CARD Minutes, June 29 1948, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193.

[104] Civil Rights Committee Minutes, December 16 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.

[105]George Weaver to Philip Murray, April 19 1951, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 154, Philip Murray Folder. DNC Chair J. Howard McGrath promised to remove Dixiecrats from DNC positions but

The CIO generally followed the NAACP's lead on civil rights issues. In 1950, the CIO's position on federal aid to education was to support "progressive equalization of school plant facilities before receiving Federal grants." The NAACP's Clarence Mitchell told Carey that the CIO's position was inadequate; the CIO should oppose federal aid to education unless the appropriations were barred from segregated schools. Teachers' unions and liberal groups generally opposed the NAACP's position, fearing that it would lead to the defeat of federal aid appropriations. But the CIO changed its position to match the NAACP's position.[106] In 1949, the CIO arranged for the AFL, ADA, NAACP, and Jewish groups to meet with the president's strategists and continue pressure for a compulsory FEPC.[107] Based on their cue, Clark Clifford dropped plans for an omnibus civil rights bill and favored an FEPC by itself, which they believed was more realistic.[108] CARD repeatedly refused to settle for a compromise FEPC bills. CARD members argued among themselves that their committee had become a barometer for the progressive position on civil rights. One member of the committee even opposed remaining silent on the compromised Humphrey-Ives bill of 1953, because the committee would lose its reputation for progressivism if it failed to oppose it.[109] CARD members

said he could do nothing about their positions in Congress, because the seniority system was too entrenched (Frank McNaughton to Bob Hagy, November 12, 1948, McNaughton Reports File, McNaughton Papers.)
[106] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 297.
[107] Report of the Director, September 7 1949, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 79, CARD 1949. The CIO was generally useful in providing the NAACP access to elected officials. Unions were instrumental in arranging for the NAACP and BSCP President A. Philip Randolph to attend meetings with members of the Roosevelt administration.
[108] CARD Minutes, January 14 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Meeting Folder.
[109] Minutes of the CARD, January 26 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Meeting Folder.

believed that their outreach efforts raised public support for the FEPC, even in the South.[110]

<u>Conclusion</u>

During the 1940s, politicians were aware of the increased black voting population in several pivotal Northern states. The CIO-NAACP alliance hoped that the Democratic Party would become the party of civil rights so that they would have a vessel for both their economic and civil rights positions, even if this alienated voters in the South. At first, Republicans made a stronger effort than the Democrats to win more votes in these states by promising to support civil rights. The NAACP behaved according to the norms of their coalitional partners, downplaying Republican promises and sincerity, and hoping the Democratic Party would at least match the Republican position in the future. At the 1948 Democratic Convention, the party indeed announced a progressive position on civil rights that broke sharply from the party's history of supporting states' rights on civil rights. However, the CIO and liberal groups fought for this position against the will of the incumbent Democratic president and a large group of Southerners willing to bolt the party. National politicians sought to augment the party with African American votes but not to displace existing factions in the party. Pressure groups, for now, were willing to displace party factions that only served to obstruct their goals. In the next chapter, we will see that this firm posture had lasting effects on the party. Democratic Party leaders were unable to back down from the standards set in 1948. Although neither politicians nor pressure groups were as willing to write off the South as they were in 1948, they prioritized black support over Southern support. Democratic politicians did so willingly

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[110] CARD Minutes, January 14 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Meeting Folder.

only years after the African American population had become a pivotal bloc in Northern

states.

Maintaining the Democratic Trajectory on Civil Rights

Both the CIO and ADA played a lesser role in the 1950s than they had in 1948. ADA was experiencing declining revenue and influence throughout the 1950s, [1] and the CIO merged with the comparatively moderate AFL in 1955. Although the AFL had been moving toward the CIO's ideological position,[2] the merger failed to produce the politically influential juggernaut Walter Reuther hoped for. AFL-CIO president George Meany's politically complacent leadership focused on no-raid policies and defending the union from laws that weakened union influence.[3] In both the liberal and labor groups, many of the same group activists willing to provoke a floor fight in 1948 seemed more willing to compromise in the subsequent decade. After Eisenhower won in three Southern states in 1952, they were less willing to displace the Southern wing of the party. Nonetheless, civil rights were still a unifying issue for liberals, and liberals were unwilling to support a nominee who would not support an FEPC or later, the *Brown* decision. While the 1952 and 1956 Democratic conventions did not break as much new ground as the NAACP hoped for, they did not turn the clock back from the trailblazing 1948 convention, either. The Democratic Party had been permanently remade. Vice presidential candidates such as James Byrnes were now unthinkable, as was the absence of civil rights seen in the 1944 platform.

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[1] Brock, *Americans for Democratic Action*, 164-165.
[2] Van Dyke and McCammon, *Strategic Alliances*, 79-97.
[3] Lichtenstein, The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit, 351-353.

Adlai Stevenson: The Conciliator That Wasn't

The Democratic nominee in 1952 and 1956, Adlai Stevenson, catered more to the liberal-labor coalition than Southern conservatives. His nomination is often viewed as a Democratic Party concession that would conciliate the South and avoid another split convention.[4] In fact, he had a more racially liberal record than Harry Truman or his principal 1952 rival, Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver. Stevenson supported the civil rights plank that provoked a walkout in 1948. Most of Stevenson's overtures to the South were cosmetic, not substantive, and he inspired many of the same defections from Southern politicians that Truman had. As governor of Illinois, he had desegregated the Illinois National Guard and supported a state FEPC. As a presidential candidate, he favored reforms to remove the filibuster as an obstacle to civil rights legislation. His major concession to the South was his preference for FEPCs with enforcement powers at the state level. In the 1950s, the national Democratic Party continued to prioritize African Americans over Southerners. The mystery is not how Stevenson managed to increase African American support in 1952, but how he was able to maintain support in the South.

Even before Truman decided not to run in 1952, many prominent liberals rallied behind Stevenson. Arthur Schlesinger, Walter Reuther, Eleanor Roosevelt, and future NAACP treasurer Alfred Baker Lewis each considered Stevenson the liberal standard bearer on civil rights and sought the nomination for him.[5] Conveying the concerns of other Democrats, ADA activist Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. pleaded with the reluctant

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[4] E.g., Cohen et al., *The Party Decides*, 89.

[5] Arthur Schlesinger to William Rivkin, January 29, 1952, Stevenson Papers Box 73; Walter Reuther to Adlai Stevenson, July 29 1952, Stevenson Papers Box 68; Alfred Baker Lewis to Harry S. Truman, January 28, 1952, Harry S. Truman Papers, Box 299. There is a lengthy correspondence between Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson (Stevenson Papers Box 68).

candidate to run: "if the President runs, it will really tear apart the Democratic party…on the other hand, any retreat from the President's platform to appease the southerners would be even more fatal. You appear the only solution." [6] By February of 1952, Stevenson won the plurality of support among ADA board members even though many were personal friends of Kefauver. In their view, Kefauver was "doomed first by his bad civil rights record."[7] In March, the Independent Voters of Illinois, which later became the Illinois ADA, ran a full-page ad for Stevenson in the *Chicago Sun Times*, though Stevenson had forcefully denied he was a candidate.[8] UAW lobbyist Donald Montgomery wrote that Stevenson's relative fiscal conservatism "presents us with a problem" but recalled "Walter [Reuther] was so mesmerized by this guy…his beautiful English and his beautiful common sense that he forgot to ask" about a number of issues.[9] NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins said of Stevenson, "here is a man who understands the whole broad background on civil rights, who needs no kindergarten explanation of philosophy and objectives." While Wilkins offered some praise for Eisenhower's character, he also criticized the Republican nominee for speaking about civil rights only in "general terms" and opposing an FEPC with enforcement powers.[10]

Most of Stevenson's reputation for being a conciliator to the South stemmed from his rhetoric. The brief notes he usually wrote to politicians such as Fulbright, Russell, South Carolina Governor Edgar Brown, and Mississippi Governor Hugh White pledged his support for party unity and healing, but steadfastly reminded them that he would not

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[6] Arthur Schlesinger to Adlai Stevenson, March 25, 1952, Stevenson Papers Box 73.
[7] Violet Gunther to Robert Trentlyon, February 18, 1952, ADA mf 21. Its annual convention in May did not endorse a candidate because loyalty was split between Stevenson, Kefauver, and Harriman (Reginald Zalles to Robert Thomas, October 22, 1952, ADA mf 21).
[8] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 180.
[9] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 320.
[10] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 213-215.

change his policy positions on civil rights. Stevenson's private correspondence with Northern liberals such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Agnes Meyer, and Arthur Schlesinger was far more extensive and revealing than letters written to key Southern supporters. Stevenson told an audience in Richmond Virginia that the Democratic Party had set the "New South" on its feet after the Civil War. Anti-Southernism and "self-righteousness" were unjustifiable. But he also declared that prejudice against blacks and Jewish people were "unjustifiable," and remained firm in his commitment to civil rights.[11] Mississippi Representative Frank Smith called the Richmond speech "the best summary of over-all Southern problems ever made by a national political figure," but "most of the knowledge of this speech in the South was confined to the headlines 'Stevenson Tells South he is still in Favor of Civil Rights.'"[12]

Equally revealing, conservative Georgia Senator Richard Russell's ill-fated presidential run in 1952 demonstrated that no candidate could win the Democratic nomination if identified as a Southern candidate. At the 1956 convention, Russell told Lyndon Johnson "don't ever let yourself become a sectional candidate for the presidency. That was what happened to me."[13] Prior to the 1952 Democratic convention, Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright reported that many Southern Democrats, including Russell, considered Stevenson a desirable nominee. The biographical materials on Russell suggest a reason for the South's willingness to accept Stevenson. Russell believed that an Eisenhower's coattails would give Republicans control of Congress. The South's source of power was its committee chairmanships, which could be lost under Eisenhower's coattails. The South needed a unified party - one biographer speculates

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[11] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 222.
[12] Frank Smith to Stephen Mitchell, September 25, 1952, Stevenson Papers Box 58.
[13] Caro, *Master of the Senate*, 822.

that Russell ran for the nomination in 1952 to assemble a bloc of voters for the most sympathetic candidate. Russell and others viewed Stevenson as the least of three evils among the Democratic frontrunners. New York's Averill Harriman was much more of a crusader on civil rights, and Kefauver had run against the Crump machine – which happened to be racially conservative - as a senator in Tennessee.[14] Though Southerners usually viewed Stevenson as preferable to Harriman and Kefauver, Stevenson lacked intense support. Liberals were flabbergasted by comparative lack of campaigning by Democratic senators from the South.[15]

Neither the nominee nor convention offered little solace to states' rights Democrats. ADA political secretary Violet Gunther had been meeting with members of ADA, the CIO, the NAACP, and the National Farmers Labor Union to work for a more liberal Democratic Party platform. They maintained an expensive headquarters right at the convention to keep abreast of new developments, putting the group in the "position of being pretty much in the center of whatever liberal action develops there."[16] At the convention, Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. proposed a "loyalty oath" requirement in which delegations had to pledge that their state would place the national ticket on the state ballot (in the 1948 election, only the Southern states without the national ticket on the ballot voted for Strom Thurmond as a presidential candidate). Michigan Senator Blair Moody went further and passed a resolution that no delegate would be seated unless he signed the pledge. Southern delegations, including some Stevenson supporters, viewed the loyalty oath a gratuitous insult, and complained that it was unfair to implement this rule after delegations had already been sent to the convention. Virginia, South Carolina, and

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[14] Caro, *Master of the Senate*, 464.
[15] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 475.
[16] Violet Gunther to Francis Biddle, June 24, 1952, ADA mf 21.

Louisiana refused to sign the oath, and were denied seating. Stevenson's intervention allowed them to participate.[17]

Despite Stevenson's support for civil rights, his emphasis on party unity inspired some liberals to plot against Stevenson. Several hundred delegates gathered at 3am on the last day of the convention to oppose Stevenson. Humphrey persuaded them that Stevenson was a liberal and his nomination was inevitable. Opposing his nomination would hurt them if the South could take credit for the nomination. ADA lobbyist Joseph Rauh and Chicago Boss Jacob Arvey, both of whom supported the 1948 civil rights plank, supported party unity this time around and applauded Humphrey for "pumping sense into large numbers of heads."[18]

Hubert Humphrey, Brooks Hays, and John Sparkman met privately to discuss a platform that would avoid a floor fight. They agreed to avoid inflammatory issues by omitting the words filibuster, cloture, "compulsory," or "enforceable."[19] The platform did not specifically name the FEPC, but pledged support policies that promoted equal employment opportunity.[20] It euphemistically allowed for legislation after "reasonable debate without being blocked by a minority in either house." The platform addressed most of the concerns presented by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights – an organization of 50 civil rights groups led by the NAACP – but without their strident tone. Walter White reported to the NAACP that he worked "indefatigably to secure strong civil rights planks and suitable candidates" with Wilkins, Clarence Mitchell, and Henry Lee Moon. Byrnes said that the platform was worse than the 1948 platform because it

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[17] Holtzman, "Party Responsibility and Loyalty," 487.
[18] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 82, 270n34.
[19] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 83.
[20] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 211.

supported government lawsuits on behalf of citizens claiming that their civil rights had been violated, while the NAACP emphasized that the 1952 platform was an improvement over 1948.[21]

The only serious concession to the South was the nomination of Alabama Senator John Sparkman for vice president.[22] Although Sparkman was consistently liberal on economic issues, he opposed civil rights measures up to and including the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1948, he told voters that he was "not a Truman Democrat," and ADA Director James Loeb called him "the national spokesman for the anti-civil rights people."[23] Truman, Stevenson, Sam Rayburn, and DNC Chair Frank McKinney agreed on Sparkman as the vice presidential candidate in a small room behind the speaker's platform. They thought that Sparkman's liberalism on issues other than civil rights would help the ticket in the South while keeping liberal opposition to a minimum.[24] However, the CIO qualified its endorsement of Stevenson in 1952 with disapproval for Sparkman.[25] Representative Adam Clayton Powell said that Sparkman would lead to "sheer political death" for the Democrats.[26] Reuther wrote that "My personal contact with key Negro leaders within the UAW-CIO, who are with us and who want to do the most effective job possible, confirms the impressions that I received from other sources" that Sparkman created serious doubts in the black community.[27] After receiving the vice presidential nomination, Sparkman told Southern voters that the Republican platform was stronger on civil rights and that Republicans were responsible for recent civil rights

[21] James Byrnes to South Carolina State Democratic Convention, Stevenson Papers Box 16.
[22] Interview with Oscar Chapman by Jerry Hess, May 19, 1972, Truman Library.
[23] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 188; James Loeb to John Thomason, December 18, 1948, ADA mf 17.
[24] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 201-202.
[25] Donald Montgomery to Paul Sifton, August 12 1952, Paul Sifton Papers Box 30.
[26] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 270n34.
[27] Memorandum to Wilson Wyatt, August 26, 1952, Stevenson Papers Box 66.

legislation in Congress. When asked if the platform unintentionally left out the FEPC, he answered that an FEPC amendment was offered in both the drafting committee and the full resolutions committee, and voted down. Sparkman was eager to repair relations with civil rights groups during the general election, though, especially when the *Baltimore Afro-American* rated his civil rights record below Richard Nixon's. In response to the rating, he met with NAACP lobbyist Clarence Mitchell and suggested strategies for reforming the filibuster rules.[28] ADA condemned his stance on civil rights but said that he was better than any other potential running mate from the South.[29] Some, including Humphrey and Schlesinger, believed Sparkman could help change Southern politics. His economic liberalism and his willingness to meet with liberals to discuss civil rights suggested that he might be persuaded to support civil rights down the line, and he would be in a better position to rally Southern MCs than they would.[30] Sparkman was no Adlai Stevenson, but nor was he a James Byrnes. While Walter White condemned the choice, he did not do so without adding that Republican vice presidential candidate Richard Nixon was also an opponent of civil rights, even though he had supported most civil rights measures aside from the FEPC.[31]

Despite Sparkman's presence on the ticket, a number of important Southern power brokers believed that Stevenson represented no improvement over Truman and supported the Republican nominee. Virginia Senator Harry Byrd refused to support Stevenson just as he refused to support Truman four years earlier. South Carolina

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[28] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 213-216.

[29] Reginald Zalles to Helen Rotch, August 12, 1952, ADA mf 21. Georgia Senator Richard Russell was under consideration, and was conservative on more issues than Sparkman (Francis Biddle to Herbert Leman, July 4, 1952, ADA mf 21).

[30] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 84.

[31] Walter White to Arthur Summerfield, October 31, 1952, NAACP II-A-510; Archibald Carey to Roy Wilkins, November 6, 1952, NAACP II-A-510. The NAACP acknowledged the difference but claimed that they expected more from Nixon because he was not from a Southern state

Governor James Byrnes had offered tentative support for the Democratic ticket at the

South Carolina Democratic Convention, dubbing Stevenson the most conservative

Democratic contender besides Russell. Although Stevenson clearly had a more liberal

record on civil rights than Kefauver in 1952, he had opposed national health insurance

and favored amending the Taft-Hartley Act rather than repealing it.[32] In the end, Byrnes

opposed Stevenson. He declared in a public address that "Four years ago the people of

South Carolina at long last realized that the Democratic Party had deserted the principles

upon which it was founded. There is no reason why a man who voted against Truman

four years ago should not now vote against Truman's candidate, Adlai Stevenson."[33]

Future South Carolina Governor Edgar Brown helped hold South Carolina in line for

Stevenson against the "independents" led by Byrnes. Brown reported after the election

"the bolters gave us a terrific race. It was the toughest political fight I have ever engaged

in and we only kept the State in line by about 15,000 votes."[34] A prominent Virginia

Democrat, conservative Representative Howard Smith, also opposed Stevenson.[35]

On Election Day, Stevenson's support among African Americans was much more

notable than his support among white Southerners. It was the first presidential election in

which black support for a Democratic nominee exceeded working class white support.[36]

Eisenhower performed better in the South than any previous Republican nominee since

Reconstruction, winning Texas, Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia.[37] A survey of 47 cities

by the NAACP showed that the black vote for Stevenson in the South was even higher

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[32] James Byrnes to South Carolina State Democratic Convention, Box 16; Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 320.

[33] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 221.

[34] Edgar Brown to Adlai Stevenson, January 3, 1953, Stevenson Papers Box 14.

[35] "Key Facts on North Carolina," May 1, 1953, Truman PPF Box 49.

[36] Abramson, "Class Voting in the 1976 Election," 1068.

[37] Of course, many issues of the campaign other than race influenced Southern voters, including Eisenhower's support for state control of Tidelands oil.

than the black vote in the nation. The NAACP claimed, based on this survey, that without the black vote, the Democrats would have also lost Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, and West Virginia. It stressed its own success in registering voters in these states as a reason for the Democratic surge among blacks.[38]

The Stevenson-Kefauver ticket in 1956 arguably became more progressive on civil rights than the 1952 ticket, even though it performed worse among black voters. In the general election, Stevenson lost more than 17% of the support he received from African Americans in 1952, and Eisenhower won the largest percent of the African American vote of any Republican nominee since Herbert Hoover (Figure 2.1). It is difficult to determine how much of the decrease stems from the reaction of Southern Democrats to the *Brown* decision, which may have alienated Southern black voters in particular.[39] Among prominent black leaders, only Harlem Representative Adam Clayton Powell endorsed Eisenhower. Roy Wilkins and Ralph Bunche privately assured Stevenson of their continued support in the general election.[40] Stevenson still performed better among blacks than he did among working class whites. In 1956, 56 percent of the black vote went to Stevenson, compared with less than 50% of working class whites.[41]

Kefauver and Harriman were once again Stevenson's main rivals. Both attempted to flank Stevenson's left on civil rights. During the primary campaign, Harriman's strategy to win the liberal vote hinged on his relative stance on civil rights. He promised to appoint the NUL's George Weaver to the cabinet and arrange for the NUL to appear

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[38] Henry Lee Moon, "Suffrage, 1952-53," NAACP II A 452.
[39] COPE Research Department, "Preliminary Analysis of the 1956 Election," November 19, 1956.
[40] Roy Wilkins to Adlai Stevenson, October 23 1956, Stevenson Box 89; Ralph Bunche to Adlai Stevenson, July 31, 1952 and November 4, 1952, both in Stevenson Box 15.
[41] Abramson, "Class Voting in the 1976 Election," 1068; Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 231. "CIO PAC Election Results," undated, Jack Kroll Papers Box 7, page 6.

before the Democratic platform committee. Kefauver attempted to match Harriman's positions on civil rights after losing ground to him on civil rights in 1952 primaries.[42] His campaign hired F. Joseph Donohue as his campaign chair. Donohue had a long record as a civil rights supporter and successfully mobilized black voters in Washington, D.C. for Harriman in 1952.[43] Harriman and Kefauver supported the "Powell amendment," which withheld federal funding from segregated schools. Both the NAACP and the CIO had supported this position since the beginning of the decade. Schlesinger commented "It looks as if the Harriman strategy will be to push the civil rights issue so that it will split the convention in the expectation that you will end up on the wrong side. In other words, the effort will be to induce a platform fight in a way which will identify you as the southern and conservative candidate and Averell as the northern and liberal candidate."[44]

Schlesinger's advice to Stevenson was to adhere firmly to his liberal positions. Other close advisers warned him to avoid civil rights. Agnes Meyer, whose husband owned the *Washington Post*, canvassed Virginia Democratic leaders and reported that white voters will return to the fold. Despite her stellar record in civil rights, she advised Stevenson not to make any statements on "the desegregation mess" even though he might lose black votes.[45] Eleanor Roosevelt warned Stevenson that "There is a Negro situation here [in Florida] which I think a little later on you will have to think about seriously but at the moment I think the less you say here the better."[46] Stevenson hired Harry

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[42] Arthur Schlesinger to Adlai Stevenson, December 13, 1955, Stevenson Papers Box 73.
[43] Stan Karson to Bill Blair, December 12, 1955, Stevenson Papers Box 12.
[44] Arthur Schlesinger to Adlai Stevenson, June 11, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 73; also see LK Garrison to William McCormick Blair, June 12, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 36.
[45] Agnes Meyer to Adlai Stevenson, January 25, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 56.
[46] Eleanor Roosevelt to Adlai Stevenson, February 11, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 68.

Ashmore, a Southern journalist who helped Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus drive off charges of socialism, to advise him on the South. After speaking with Southern politicians, Ashmore reported that "their advice boils down to an urgent plea to avoid the race issue if you can, and play it down if you can't." A party bolt "will bring racists to power in many of the Southern states and may keep them there for years to come."[47]

In the end, Stevenson retained the same Southern supporters and opponents from 1952. Byrnes, for example, attempted unsuccessfully to gather support for a third party alternative to the Democratic Party.[48] South Carolina Governor Edgar Brown expected the same "defectors," but noted that the Republicans "sold the President down the river on his states rights and farm program promises" and the 1952 defectors are now "left high and dry."[49] Texas Governor Allan Shivers, who returned to the Democratic Party after bolting to the Republican Party in 1952, continued to oppose Stevenson.

Stevenson's moderation on civil rights early in the campaign was mostly rhetorical, and he later backtracked on much of the rhetoric. He assured his correspondents that he wanted to keep the South a Democratic region, and called for "moderation" and "rationality" in civil rights.[50] Stevenson used the word "gradual" in an answer to a question about segregation in a black neighborhood of Los Angeles, which was often interpreted as support for delay. New York's liberal Senator Herbert Lehman responded that the words "gradual" and "education" had been "used by apologists for discrimination and injustice for many years."[51] Rhetorical moderation was characteristic

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[47] Memorandum for Governor Stevenson from Harry Ashmore, March 30, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 168.
[48] Harry Ashmore to Adlai Stevenson, August 2, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 6.
[49] Edgar Brown to Adlai Stevenson, February 11, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 14.
[50] Adlai Stevenson to Harry Ashmore, December 23, 1954, Stevenson Papers Box 6.
[51] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 366-367.

of Stevenson's style in both the North and the South, however. His only policy disagreement with Kefauver and Harriman was the Powell amendment. Stevenson argued that the amendment would deprive schools of much needed federal aid without having an impact on segregation. Desegregation often required significant funding.[52] Stevenson told Humphrey, who had proposed a compromise amendment, "this is one case in which I don't in the least sympathize with the attitude of the Negro leaders."[53] He wrote to DNC Chair Paul Butler that "The philosophy of rule or ruin is no more tolerable among Negroes than whites."[54]

When Stevenson lost the Minnesota primary to Kefauver, many correspondents and campaign advisors told him that his nomination was in jeopardy and he needed to win California.[55] Black voters played a large part in Stevenson's California strategy.[56] Kefauver and Harriman won the favor of the *Los Angeles Tribune* and *Sentinel* editors, and Kefauver campaigned personally in the black neighborhoods of Los Angeles.[57] His campaign met with Loren Miller, who owned three Los Angeles weekly black newspapers. After hearing a speech Stevenson gave in New York, Miller agreed to support Stevenson, and recommended that he repeat his New York speech in black areas.[58] In the primary, Stevenson received almost twice as many votes as Kefauver, and DNC Chair Paul Butler told Stevenson that the nomination was within reach after the California victory.[59]

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[52] Memorandum from Harry Ashmore, March 30, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 168.
[53] Adlai Stevenson to Hubert Humphrey, July 7, 1955, Stevenson Papers Box 41.
[54] Adlai Stevenson to LK Garrison, July 20, 1955, Stevenson Papers Box 36.
[55] Stephen Mitchell to Adlai Stevenson, March 20, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 48; Edgar Brown to Adlai Stevenson, February 11, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 14.
[56] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 374.
[57] Memorandum for Adlai Stevenson, April 26, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 354.
[58] LK Garrison to William McCormick Blair, Jr., April 30, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 36.
[59] Edgar Brown to Adlai Stevenson, June 6, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 14.

Stevenson had been acutely aware of the need to win the black vote and prepared

a strategy well ahead of the campaign. In the summer of 1955, Stevenson asked former

NUL treasurer Lloyd Garrison (the great-grandson of abolitionist William Lloyd

Garrison) to meet with the NUL Board of Directors and obtain a list of important blacks

to talk to. Garrison urged him not only to meet them, but "bat ideas around" to learn the

intricacies of civil rights policy. He advised that "a little of this would go a long way

because the educated part of the Negro community is so small the country over and the

members of it are pretty well acquainted with each other and news travels like wild

fire."[60] Later, Chicago civil rights leader Frank Horne supplemented the list and

reviewed the racial policies of the campaign headquarters.[61] Stevenson and Garrison met

with Fisk University President Charles Johnson to discuss how to frame civil rights in a

way that was acceptable to the White South. Upon Johnson's recommendation, Garrison

instructed the campaign to hire Hampton-Sydney Institute's Professor Saunders Redding,

who was "dark enough to be 'visible' in photographs and therefore would be better than

Frank Horne."[62] Pamphlets of an Eleanor Roosevelt speech for Stevenson in

Washington, D.C. were distributed to black leaders, along with some of Stevenson's

liberal speeches on race.[63] Chicago Mayor Richard Daley obtained the endorsement of

J.H. Jackson, the African American National Baptist President, for Stevenson.[64] National

ADA Board member Leo Lerner argued in an open letter that there is no difference

between Kefauver and Stevenson on civil rights except that Stevenson held those

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[60] LK Garrison to Arthur Schlesinger, August 12, 1955, Stevenson Papers Box 73; Memorandum for Archibald Alexander from LK Garrison, May 2, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 354.
[61] LK Garrison to Adlai Stevenson, April 30, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 36.
[62] LK Garrison to Adlai Stevenson, April 23, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 36.
[63] John Horne, "Thoughts on Integration," February 17, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 294.
[64] Memorandum from Jane Dick, August 29, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 269.

positions in 1949.[65] Taking a page from Lerner, Stevenson advertised that Kefauver had

once called the FEPC "a dangerous step toward regimentation" that "violates the rights of

the employers of our Nation." Kefauver had also opposed all of Truman's civil rights

proposals in 1948 and later opposed change in the cloture rules and segregation in the

armed forces.[66]

The South's only hope for a Southern candidate, Lyndon Johnson, gambled that

the convention would be deadlocked and delegates would settle on him as a dark horse

candidate. Johnson had worked with the AFL-CIO on social security increases, but

George Meany appeared before the platform committee, and grinning at the Southerners,

said that the party must declare its intentions to support the *Brown* decision. More than

100 delegates to the convention belonged to the UAW alone. Tommy Corcoran said that

Johnson "really thought these guys were going to come around. Hell, as long as he

wasn't with them on civil rights, they were *never* going to support him!" Even Harry

Truman's unexpected endorsement of Harriman did not slow Stevenson's momentum.

Many Southerners decided they had to support Stevenson to block Harriman. DNC Chair

James Finnegan told liberal groups that if they didn't support Stevenson, Johnson would

benefit, and even Harriman supporters considered changing to Stevenson to avoid a

Johnson coup. In a private meeting of the Michigan delegates, Walter Reuther, Eleanor

Roosevelt, and Governor G. Mennen Williams spoke in favor of Stevenson and warned

of the dangers if liberal forces did not unite. [67]

The 1956 convention was not especially conciliatory to the South. Stevenson told

Edgar Brown that he hoped to avoid "pyrotechnics" on civil rights but "at the same time I

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[65] Leo Lerner to Alfred Baker Lewis, April 11, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 269.

[66] "Senator Kefauver's Inconsistency on Civil Rights," April 10, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 268.

[67] Caro, *Master of the Senate*, 808, 817-818.

have no doubt we shall have to adopt a firm plank."[68] Before the convention, Eleanor

Roosevelt met with black leaders to work on a platform.[69] Although the 1956 convention

did not retreat from the 1952 platform, it did stop short of raised expectations created in

the wake of the *Brown* decision. Convention Chairman Sam Rayburn pushed through a

statement reading "We reject all proposals for the use of force to interfere with the

orderly determination of these matters by the courts" and recognized "the Supreme Court

of the United States as one of the three Constitutional and coordinate branches of the

Federal Government, superior to and separate from any political party, the decisions of

which are part of the law of the land." The first statement was interpreted as opposing

force to implement the judicial ruling, and a number of northern delegates planned to

demand a roll call vote. The UAW forces at the convention managed to defy Governor

Williams, who was fighting for a more forceful platform. Reuther reportedly told

Williams, "We've got all we can so let's stop." Four years earlier, Reuther had told the

Democrats they could win without the South. In 1956, he seemed to prefer a unified

party to another presidential term for Eisenhower.   He had grown far less militant in his

willingness to challenge the Democratic Party. Biographer Nelson Lichtenstein argues

that Reuther transferred his political hopes from the inadequate AFL-CIO to the

Democratic Party itself, so that he became a "team player" rather than a "watchdog."

UAW lobbyist Donald Montgomery, who had spent the previous ten years urging

Reuther to fight Democratic Party conservatives, passed away shortly after the election.[70]

In a surprise move, Stevenson decided to leave the vice presidential nomination to

the convention. The convention chose Kefauver as Stevenson's running mate.

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[68] Adlai Stevenson to Edgar Brown, June 15, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 14.
[69] Eleanor Roosevelt to Adlai Stevenson, June 20, 1956, Stevenson Papers Box 68.
[70] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 351-353, 372.

Organized labor helped orchestrate Kefauver's victory over Hubert Humphrey. Despite Humphrey's past support for civil rights, his voting record was tepid during the most recent Congress, and he had campaigned for Southern support for the vice presidential slot in vain at the convention.[71]

During the campaign against President Eisenhower, desegregation played a smaller role than it had during the primary campaigns. When it became an issue, Stevenson was more supportive of civil rights than he had been in the spring. After Stevenson endorsed *Brown v. Board of Education* at a convention speech, Mississippi Governor Hugh White, a longtime supporter, grumbled:

> I am afraid the statement you made endorsing the Supreme Court decision is going to hurt you all through the South…If you follow the advice of Harry Truman…and Huberty Humphreys [sic], you need not expect any support in the South...They are very unpopular throughout the South; as a matter of fact, they are more or less despised.[72]

To a pro-segregationist crowd in Little Rock, Stevenson endorsed the *Brown* decision as morally correct and said that it needed to be enforced.[73] In October, Stevenson made a notable speech in Harlem criticizing Eisenhower for refusing to endorse the *Brown* decision and taking credit for Democratic Party initiatives on civil rights. His southern supporters reported that the speech empowered Democratic Party defectors like Byrd. Governor Edgar Brown wrote to him:

> What your speech did was to make it well nigh impossible to hold South Carolina in line...You don't realize how fired up our people here are over this integration problem, and how hard it is for loyal Democrats to justify our enthusiasm for you in the face of the outlined situation….Frankly, we could lose the state."

When the general election votes were tallied, Stevenson retained South Carolina and Mississippi, but added Louisiana and Kentucky to the Southern states he lost in 1952.

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[71] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 97.
[72] Hugh White to Adlai Stevenson, August 8, 1956, Stevenson papers Box 89.
[73] McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson*, 384.

Labor analysts fretted that Stevenson lost significant ground among blacks in 1956, but his losses were negligible in northern black areas organized by trade unions. Stevenson won comfortable margins in cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit.[74] His greatest losses among blacks were in the South, where Democratic opposition to integration was salient. Where segregationist Democrats ran unopposed in the general election, voting for a Republican president was arguably the only way of protesting Southern Democrats. Eisenhower had also advertised his role in desegregating the armed forces and Washington, D.C., even though the first steps were taken when Truman was president.

Although the 1956 campaign placed considerable weight on party unity, it was exceptional in the prominence each candidate ascribed to black voters. No major candidate thought to provide a challenge to Stevenson by running to his right on racial issues, and the Democratic nominee worked assiduously to meet with the nation's black leaders. A previously unsuccessful Democratic contender, Kefauver, thought that he needed to become a supporter of civil rights in order to improve upon his 1952 total. Another contender, Harriman, believed that the civil rights issue was the best route to winning liberal support. In 1948, Democratic nominees thought black voters were a swing constituency. By 1956, party officials saw their task as coalition maintenance. Black voters were a bloc of Democratic Party voters that a nominee could not afford to lose. Correspondence between campaign workers reveals that the need to meet with black leaders weighed upon Stevenson more than the need to meet with Southern politicians. To the extent that we can measure Stevenson's motives through written correspondence, his true sympathies appear to lay much more with the liberals and the

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[74] "Preliminary Analysis of 1956 National Elections," November 19, 1956, Jack Kroll Box 6.

civil rights activists than the Southerners. 1956 was another year in which the

Democratic nominee moved further left than the median voter to win the support of

liberal pressure groups.

<u>"The Best Statement on Civil Rights Ever Made by a Political Party in America"</u>

In 1960, as in 1956, serious contenders for the Democratic nomination recognized

African American voters as an essential Democratic constituency and hired staff

members with extensive ties to black communities. Candidates continued to seek some

support from the South but worked hard to avoid being identified with the South.

The South's favorite son, Lyndon Johnson, learned from Russell's 1952 campaign

and avoided the Southern brand name. Russell refused to campaign for him, saying that

"any concerted action that would stamp Lyndon as the Southern candidate" would cause

Johnson "a great deal more harm than good."[75] Johnson persuaded some Southern

Democrats to vote for the Civil Rights Act of 1957 so that he could solidify his civil

rights credentials and prevent Humphrey from winning the nomination in 1960. As the

1957 Civil Rights Act was taking shape, Jim Rowe told Johnson, "to put it bluntly, if you

vote against a civil rights bill, you can forget your presidential ambitions in 1960."[76]

Johnson managed to clear the way for the weak civil rights bill, telling conservative

Southerner Senators that a worse bill would be introduced if they filibustered this bill.

Strom Thurmond told an interviewer that Russell refrained from fighting the bill with his

normal parliamentary tactics because "he was trying to help Lyndon get elected

president."[77] Mississippi Senator John Stennis said that many Southerners allowed the

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[75] Mann, *The Walls of Jericho,* 264.   Russell campaigned for Johnson in the fall in Texas after Lady Bird Johnson was assaulted in a Dallas rally. The ticket won in Texas by a small margin (288).
[76] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 259-265.
[77] Goldsmith, *Colleagues*, 65.

bill to pass because they supported Johnson's presidential ambitions. Johnson told his constituents that he forestalled "a punitive sectional monstrosity" and it would be a mistake to think of it as a civil rights law. But Johnson also claimed to civil rights supporters that it paved the way for stronger bills.[78]

Johnson's record was still not strong enough among Northern liberals to win the nomination in 1960. ADA published a pamphlet entitled *Lyndon Johnson is Unqualified*, and sent a letter to every delegate labeling him "a conservative, anti-civil rights, gas-and-oil Senator."[79] Even though he tried to shore up his credentials with Northern Democrats, Johnson did not run in primaries and thus offered no evidence that he could win in Northern states. On the other hand, John F. Kennedy showed that he could win in diverse states despite his Roman Catholic background.[80]   Of course, when President Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, he quipped that "I fear we've lost the South for a generation." The former racial conservative had realized that the liberal-labor coalition was more important to maintain than the South.

As a presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy had to shed some of the support he sought from the South as a vice presidential candidate in 1956. Kennedy's future Southern campaign manager, Robert Troutman, managed to rally Southern delegates to his cause in 1956, mainly because they strongly opposed other candidates such as Humphrey and Kefauver.[81] One Mississippi delegate told a reporter he voted for

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[78] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 259-265.
[79] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 279.
[80] Davis, *US Presidential Primaries and the Caucus-Convention System* , 54.
[81] Interview with John M. Bailey by Charles T. Morrissey, April 10, 1964, JFK Library Oral History Program.

Kennedy because "Well, we'd be for anybody against that nigger-loving Kefauver of

Tennessee."[82] Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus said that

> the Kennedys at that time were sort of known to us as middle-of-the-road people, they were not extreme liberals, nor extreme conservatives. Kefauver had quite a bit of disfavor in the state because he's from the South and many southerners felt that he had been too liberal on some of the issues which vitally affected the region…Many of the people in the state felt that with the Kennedy background—his father was a free enterprise businessman and a member of the Roosevelt administration—he would not be an extremist on any issue.[83]

Kennedy quipped after the 1956 convention that "I'll be singing 'Dixie the rest of my

life."[84] In his visits to Southern Democrats, he mostly discussed economic issues

sprinkled with references to positive episodes in Southern history.[85] *The Grenville News*

editorialized that "To date, Senator Kennedy's popularity with Southerners is due not

nearly so much to his voting record as it is to his personal attraction. To put it simply, he

has sought the support of the South. In a time when most national politicians seek favor

by condemning the South, this can be effective flattery."[86]

In fact, Kennedy associates wrote to thousands of former delegates and

officeholders around the country leading up to the 1960 contest, asking about Kennedy's

strength in their area. In the former Confederate states, more respondents brought up

civil rights than religion. In general, white Southerners believed that Kennedy was the

most sympathetic candidate out of the candidates who could win over the liberal wing of

the party, which they recognized as necessary for the nomination. The other Northern

candidates were more strongly supportive of civil rights.[87] A former Georgia legislator

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[82] Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction*, 19.

[83] Interview with Orval Faubus by Larry Hackman, June 29, 1967, JFK Library Oral History Program.

[84] David Burner and Thomas West, *The Torch is Passed: The Kennedy Brothers and American Liberalism* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), 94.

[85] Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction*, 22.

[86] B.H. Peace, "Why does the South Love Kennedy So?", The *Grenville News*, *JFK: Pre-Presidential Files*, South Carolina (A-C). Undated, but mailed to Kennedy on October 1, 1958.

[87] Even Lyndon Johnson was suspect after playing a strong role in passing the Civil Rights Act of 1957. Robert C. Arnold (Chairman of University of Georgia) to John Hynes, September 29, 1959, JFK: Pre-

wrote that "It is my opinion that you are by far the best man for the South…you are the only serious contender who would not have to sell the South down the river to get the support of the ultra-liberals."[88] One former delegate from South Carolina wrote that Kennedy "will probably not be as vicious anti-South as some members of the party, particularly the left wing group which now controls it."[89] The South's most conservative Senators, including John Stennis, James Eastland, and Harry Byrd pledged to support Johnson on the first ballot but Kennedy on subsequent ballots.[90] Alabama Governor John Patterson later remembered that Southerners hoped "we would have a place where we could get an audience for the problems that we had."[91]

Kennedy's support in the South caused grave concern among NAACP officeholders and delegates to their national convention.[92] NAACP activists were also alarmed that Kennedy voted to refer the 1957 Civil Rights Act to the obstructionist Judiciary Committee and allow (white) juries to try civil rights violators. During the Little Rock crisis, he merely issued a statement against mob violence and upholding the law.[93] As Kennedy ran for reelection to the Senate in 1958, Roy Wilkins and Clarence Mitchell emphasized his votes on the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and his ties to Governor

Presidential Files, Georgia: Political A-B; CW McKay, Jr. to Theodore Sorensen, March 10 1960, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Alabama: Political McKay; Edward Reid to H. Coleman Long, April 27, 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Alabama: Edward Reid file; Stuart Brown to William Battle, March 21, 1960, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Virginia: Stuart Brown; Stuart Brown to Steven Smith, March 21, 1960, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Virginia: Stuart Brown

[88] Jack Helms to John Hynes, January 6, 1960, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Georgia Political H-J.
[89] John K. de Loach to John Hynes, September 14, 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, South Carolina: Political D-L; Asa Green to John Hynes, October 20, 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Alabama: Political D-G; Judge James Hugh McFaddin to John F. Kennedy, January 30 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, South Carolina: Political M-P; CA Jacobs to John Hynes, September 10, 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, VA: J-L.
[90] Frank Barber to John Hynes, September 24, 1959, JFK: Pre-Presidential Files, Mississippi: Political A-C.
[91] Savage, *JFK, LBJ, and the Democratic Party*, 19.
[92] Interview with Ruth M. Batson by Sheldon Stern, January 24, 1979, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[93] Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction*, 22. The statement in favor of upholding the law was enough to alienate South Carolina legislator Lloyd Bell, who wrote that before he approved of the use of troops, South Carolinians were prepared to support him in 1960.

Patterson to black audiences in Massachusetts. When Kennedy defended his record,

Wilkins replied that black voters

> know that ordinarily a Democratic candidate must not proceed so far as to destroy all his support in the Southern states; but they view with more than casual distress any events which seems to indicate close identity of the candidate with the well-known views of the Negro's traditional opponents. They swallowed Sparkman in 1952 because they had faith that Stevenson, while welcoming Deep South support, would not go along completely with Deep South sentiment on the Negro…They feel uneasy over this apparent entente cordiale between Kennedy of Massachusetts and Griffin, Timmerman, Talmadge, Eastland, et al, of Dixie.

To repair his standing with black voters, Kennedy recruited a number of civil rights

activists, including Hebert Tucker, the president of the Boston chapter of the NAACP,

and Marjorie Lawson, a prominent lawyer. Lawson compiled a list of black community

leaders and tried to arrange a personal meeting with them on any occasion in which

Kennedy spoke nearby.[94] Wilkins was apparently persuaded by Kennedy's allies in the

NAACP, and his willingness to admit error, to write a positive letter on his behalf. The

letter read that "Senator Kennedy has one of the best voting records on civil rights and

related issues of any Senator in Congress. It would require too much time and space to

detail Senator Kennedy's record over his twelve years' service in the House and in the

Senate."[95] The letter was leaked to the press and Tucker distributed it to prominent

blacks during the fall of 1958.   By the end of October, Kennedy wrote "the NAACP-Roy

Wilkins situation has come along rather well."[96]

Other contenders for the Democratic nomination in 1960, including Stuart

Symington, Hubert Humphrey, and Adlai Stevenson (though not a declared candidate),

each had significant support among civil rights liberals. Some civil rights activists

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[94] Interview with Marjorie Lawson by Ronald Grele, October 25, 1965, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[95] Quoted in John F. Kennedy to Herbert Tucker, January 24, 1959, Sorensen Subject Files Box 9.
[96] John F. Kennedy to Lewis Weinstein, October 30, 1958, Sorensen Subject Files Box 9. Kennedy won 73.6 percent of the black vote in Massachusetts in November (Stern, "John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights: From Congress to the Presidency").

viewed Kennedy's supporters in the Boston civil rights community as "cronies."[97]

Lawson, hired to work on a civil rights section for the campaign, recalled that she never

knew if Kennedy made private commitments to Southern politicians, and "had difficult

times trying to convince people that he had no deal with people like Patterson."[98] After

alienating the liberals in 1956 without attracting the South, Hubert Humphrey positioned

himself as the strongest supporter of civil rights in the 1960 primaries. He told

Democrats to "go look some place else" if they wanted compromise, although civil rights

were not a major issue in the Democratic primaries. Reuther supported Humphrey at

first, but switched to Kennedy after Humphrey proved to be an ineffective campaigner.

Joseph Rauh said Humphrey's campaign "was kind of a useless gesture and that's the

kind of thing you let idealists do…You don't go for a guy who is not going to win." After

Kennedy defeated Humphrey in Wisconsin and West Virginia in April, Humphrey quit

(Reuther had tried to persuade him to quit earlier). In May, Kennedy enlisted Law

Professor Harris Wofford, the first white male graduate of Howard Law School, to help

win over black leaders. Campaign manager Robert F. Kennedy told Wofford, "We're

really in trouble with Negroes. We really don't know much about this whole thing.

We've been dealing outside the field of the main Negro leadership and have to start from

scratch."[99]

As the convention approached, Kennedy seemed far more concerned with the

black vote than with the Southern vote. While Kennedy had not been a leader in civil

rights legislation in the past, the 1960 campaign supported the policies endorsed by most

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[97] Interview with John Feild (a member of the minorities division of the Democratic National Committee) by John Stewart, January 16, 1967, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[98] Interview with Marjorie Lawson by Ronald Grele, October 25, 1965, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[99] Mann, *Walls of Jericho*, 271

civil rights activists. After offering measured support for civil rights in a June speech to New York's Liberal Party, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that he neither needed nor desired Southern support. Troutman and Kennedy agreed that their chances of regaining the South's trust were lost until the convention.[100] A few days before the 1960 Democratic Convention, Kennedy promised to use the "immense moral authority of the White House…to offer leadership and inspiration" on civil rights. He even said that more subtle forms of segregation needed to be fought outside of the South.[101] Kennedy also cosponsored an old-age health insurance bill developed by AFL-CIO. Kenneth O'Donnell, the director of Kennedy's campaign schedule, had promised numerous labor and civil rights groups that Kennedy would not nominate Johnson as vice president. Reuther fought against a "Stop Kennedy" campaign at the convention waged by Eleanor Roosevelt, Eugene McCarthy, and secretly, Lyndon Johnson.[102]

A prospectus on the convention ventured that Kennedy could win the nomination with no Southern support, unless one included Maryland, West Virginia, and Oklahoma, which leaned toward supporting Kennedy. Furthermore, in an appendix on "The Relative Value of Liberal and Conservative Ties," the prospectus argued that Kennedy could obtain 326 votes from Southern and Border States "if the Johnson candidacy begins to fade," compared with only 198 votes that he could acquire from Humphrey. However, if Stevenson sought the nomination, Stevenson could win by augmenting votes from states with loyal governors with Humphrey's votes. Humphrey's supporters, therefore, were

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[100] Interview with Robert Troutman by David Powers, February 2, 1964, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[101] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 268.
[102] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 355.

more pivotal than Johnson's supporters.[103] At the 1960 convention, Wofford organized a

civil rights suite at the hotel that offered breakfast every morning. In the end, Kennedy

obtained the votes of 95 percent of the black delegates (Johnson won a few black

delegates in Texas).[104] Kennedy deflected a move by liberal delegates, including Eleanor

Roosevelt, to support Stevenson by packing the platform committee with liberals.[105] The

platform committee wrote the most ambitious civil rights plank to date, supporting *Brown*

explicitly and praising the civil disobedience tactics of the growing civil rights

movement.[106] Kennedy's Southern supporters quietly assured Southern delegates that he

was a gradualist in civil rights. In Senator Johnson's office, Kennedy promised Georgia

Governor Ernest Vandiver that he would never send troops into Georgia to enforce

school desegregation.[107] Since 1944, the tables had turned. Roosevelt appeased the

Southerners with the party platform while Dawson quietly reassured blacks and liberals;

Kennedy appeased the civil rights activists with the party platform while quietly

reassuring Southerners behind closed doors. Kennedy's campaign was clearly

maximizing convention votes, as candidate-centered models of politics would predict, but

his means for doing so was complying with pressure groups such as the NAACP and

New York's Liberal Party.

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[103] "Prospectus for 1960," undated, Sorensen Papers, Box 22, JFK Library.

[104] Interview with Harris Wofford by Larry Hackman, May 22, 1968, JFK Library Oral History Program.

[105] Gillon, *Politics and Vision*, 133.

[106] According to Wofford, the original platform drafted was meant to be ambitious in anticipation of the compromises likely to be made. No one thought that the draft would be accepted in full. Robert F. Kennedy did not know about this strategy, nor did he read the draft carefully. He instructed the campaign to push for the Bowles platform in its entirety. Southerners did not press for a roll call vote, although they wrote a minority platform (Mann, *The Walls of Jericho*, 273). Wilkins speculated that Johnson's vice-presidential candidacy "helped the Democrats adopt a strong civil rights plank because his followers could not afford to oppose the plank and still hope to recruit votes for Johnson outside the South" (Stern, "John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights," 810). Sorensen remembers that Robert F. Kennedy thought the platform promised "too many unwarranted hopes" and "specifics that could not be fulfilled" (Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction*, 36).

[107] Bryant, *The Bystander*, 181.

Notwithstanding the prospectus, a Virginia governor told Kennedy that he needed to win Texas, and selecting Lyndon Johnson as a running mate would enable him to carry Texas and one or more Southern states he would otherwise lose.[108] In the end, these considerations prevailed upon him. Kennedy met with Johnson and said "I know you don't believe in a lot of this integration in this platform," but "you've got to go with it the whole hog or I don't want you to go," and Johnson pledged to support the platform in full.[109] Kennedy told liberals that they were better off with Johnson as vice-president than as majority leader, because the more cooperative Montana Senator Mike Mansfield would replace Johnson. Kennedy called for the passage of a number of liberal proposals in Congress in the fall of 1960 and Johnson and Sam Rayburn could thwart them if they left the convention upset with Kennedy.[110]

Numerous liberal groups were still upset, with Joseph Rauh apoplectic about Kennedy's broken promise to appoint a Midwestern liberal such as Humphrey. Walter Reuther spent two hours convincing the AFL-CIO's executive council to accept Johnson against the wishes of George Meany.[111] In meetings to discuss the appointment, Governor Williams said

> You know, there is a group of us who since 1948 have been working to get the civil rights planks in the platform. We have now, after twelve years, succeeded, and we are sort of rejoicing a little bit at this. What I see here disturbs me greatly because I'm afraid that it is never going to take place and that it is going to just be nothing but words.[112]

Florida Governor LeRoy Collins presided over the convention and held a voice vote for Johnson. Though the voices were unclear, Collins said that the nomination had been

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[108] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 281.
[109] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 501 n337.
[110] Mann, *The Walls of Jericho*, 277.
[111] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 271; Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 356.
[112] Interview with Robert Troutman by David Powers, February 2, 1964, JFK Library Oral History Program.

approved by a two-third's vote. Governor Williams demanded a roll call vote, but

Reuther persuaded the majority of Michigan's delegates to accept Johnson. After

Johnson's nomination, UAW Vice President Leonard Woodcock went on to say that

"Kennedy had betrayed us all…Our whole theme had been to unite behind Kennedy to

stop Johnson."[113] At the end of the convention, Johnson met with the black caucus and

told them "Just give me a chance. I won't let you down. I'll do more for you in four

years in the field of civil rights than you've experienced in the last hundred years."[114]

The selection of Johnson proved less controversial among black voters than

Sparkman's selection in 1952. One civil rights activist in the Kennedy campaign recalled

that:

> The opposition to Johnson was certainly not like that we had in regard to Sparkman, even
> though…there were…many more indications that Sparkman was a liberal…But I know in New
> York, for instance, the strategy was just not to even mention Sparkman was on the ticket. Well, I
> don't think we had this problem with Johnson.[115]

Wofford argued that more reassurance was needed. He organized a "National

Conference for Constitutional Rights and American Freedom" in October to discuss how

to implement the civil rights platform, although the word "Constitutional" replaced the

original word "Civil" to avoid alienating Southerners.[116] More than 500 of the most

prominent civil rights activists in the country were invited, and most attended.[117] The

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[113] Stern, "John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights," 809. In the West Virginia primary, Kennedy supporters
began a whispering campaign that if Humphrey obtained the nomination, Johnson would be the vice
president (Interview with Marjorie Lawson by Ronald Grele, October 25, 1965, JFK Library Oral History
Program).

[114] Mann, *The Walls of Jericho*, 278. At least a few of Kennedy's black supporters were reassured by the
meeting (Interview with Ruth M. Batson by Sheldon Stern, January 24, 1979, JFK Library Oral History
Program). Wilkins was convinced that Johnson's past votes on civil rights were simply electoral
calculations and that he honored his deals as often as possible (Stern, "John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights,"
809).

[115] Interview with Frank Reeves by John F. Stewart, March 29, 1967, JFK Library Oral History Program.

[116] Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction*, 52.

[117] Interview with Harris Wofford by Berl Bernhard, November 29, 1965, JFK Library Oral History
Program.

civil rights leaders and liberal activists chastised the Eisenhower administration for supporting so few voting rights cases, and recommended a series of proposals for Kennedy to implement within the first 100 days. In contrast to this high-profile event in favor of civil rights, Kennedy avoided being photographed with Southerners such as Orval Faubus. Faubus had supported Kennedy since 1956 and agreed to welcome him in the state during the fall campaign in 1960, in spite of Kennedy's latter-day political liabilities. When Kennedy learned that someone sought a photograph with the governor to distribute in New York, Kennedy left without exchanging planned farewell greetings.[118] Just the same, Johnson was able to persuade some of the most conservative Southern Democrats to campaign for the ticket: James Eastland, Eugene Talmadge, and Richard Russell. Persuading them often required repeated requests and histrionic appeals; some of them, including Louisiana Senator Allen Ellender, expected he would not pursue civil rights once in office. Many Southern states had close vote counts but Kennedy won most of the Deep South, except for Mississippi (which supported an independent Democrat).[119]

The Kennedy campaign intended to push wholeheartedly for civil rights, but the campaign went further than campaign manager Robert F. Kennedy would have preferred. Several Southern governors warned the campaign that if Kennedy associated too closely with King, they would support Nixon and Kennedy would lose their states.[120] Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield arranged for the release of student civil rights protestors and attributed credit to Kennedy. Kennedy's campaign issued a release clarifying that the

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[118] Interview with Orval Faubus by Larry Hackman, June 29, 1967, JFK Library Oral History Program.
[119] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 286-291; 504 n60.
[120] Carl Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 46.

campaign merely demanded an inquiry. After King was sentence to four months of hard

labor, his wife became hysterical. Wofford convinced Sargent Shriver that Kennedy

needed to call Coretta Scott King and offer consolation, and Shriver prevailed on

Kennedy. After news of the call became public, Robert F. Kennedy was livid and

declared "You bomb-throwers have lost the whole campaign." Upon learning the details

of King's imprisonment, however, he called the judge and arranged for King's release.[121]

Nixon's campaign did not intervene. The Democrats distributed 2 million copies of a

pamphlet contrasting Nixon and Kennedy's reaction to King's sentence, quoting Nixon

with a "No Comment." When Kennedy won Southern states in the election despite the

call to Mrs. King, Robert Troutman said Southern politicians were astonished. They

noted that Kennedy won more black votes in the South than they lost white votes, and

"gained a wider margin of freedom on racial issues."[122]

The Republican Party began the 1960 campaign with a promising start for black

voters. New York's Nelson Rockefeller pushed successfully for a platform that was

unprecedented in its support for civil rights, and Nixon named Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., a

civil rights supporter, as his vice president. As the campaign progressed, Nixon appeared

more interested in Southern support. Nixon compared himself to Thomas Jefferson in

Virginia, and Barry Goldwater campaigned for Nixon in the Deep South with pledges to

limit federal power. On October 12, Lodge campaigned in Harlem and promised that

Nixon would appoint a black cabinet member. On the next day, Lodge withdrew the

pledge.[123] To be sure, the Democratic Party was also trying to "play both ends against

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[121] Mann, *The Walls of Jericho,* 284.
[122] Harris Wofford Memorandum to President-Elect Kennedy on Civil Rights, December 10, 1960, RFK Box 62.
[123] Stern, "John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights," 809-813.

the middle," as Harry Byrd described it. Johnson's campaign speeches supported the platform very carefully, and promised to provide federal largesse that the South would not receive from a Republican administration.[124] But Kennedy reversed the Republican gains of four years earlier even while winning most of the Southern states.

In conclusion, the 1960 election continued the Democratic Party trend towards support for civil rights. Not only did Democrats advocate upholding the law of the land, but they associated themselves with advocates of civil disobedience in the name of civil rights. Nominating a moderate Southerner such as Johnson for the vice presidential position proved to be controversial even though he was essential to the passage of the first civil rights bill since Reconstruction. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement had moved faster than UAW President Walter Reuther would have liked, but Reuther could not slow its momentum if he wanted the union to maintain its legitimacy among progressives.[125] At that time, the NAACP publicly confronted the AFL-CIO to address discrimination in its own ranks even as it continued to receive funding for its legal and legislative work from unions. Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins knew that the AFL-CIO needed to keep supporting the NAACP to maintain its liberal image and role as a leader in the New Deal coalition.[126] The NAACP's 1940s strategy of becoming an integral part of the liberal-labor coalition had succeeded, so that it no longer needed to be a "team player" on all issues to remain part of the coalition.

The Partisan Trajectories on Civil Rights after 1948

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[124] Carl Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 55.
[125] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 379.
[126] Meier and Bracey, "The NAACP as a Reform Movement."

The 1948 convention was the first of many in which leaders like Kroll and Reuther used civil rights as litmus test for the support of labor groups and liberal groups.[127] National Democratic leaders such as John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson had to support civil rights in order to gain credibility with the liberal wing of the party. By several measures 1948 election is the turning point in African Americans. As described above, presidential nominees had to meet minimum standards set by civil rights and labor groups. Additionally, black support for the Democratic Party consistently surpassed working class white support from that year onward. After Truman endorsed civil rights, a majority of blacks voted for Democratic Presidential candidates and identified as Democratic voters.[128] In all election years after 1944, Black Democratic Party identification was 56 percent at its lowest in 1956 and peaked at 92 percent. By contrast, white Democratic Party identification peaked in the 1950s, never surpassing 50 percent. Presidential voting reveals that black support for Truman was over 70 percent (Figure 2.1), but white working class support for Truman was nearly 80 percent. In 1952, 73 percent of African Americans voted for the Democratic presidential candidate, while white working class support sunk below 60 percent. In 1956, 56 percent of the black vote went to Stevenson, compared with less than 50% of working class whites.[129]

Although union leaders advised the Democratic Party that it could win presidential elections without the South in 1952, they also seemed overoptimistic about the existence of a "New South" consisting of blacks and whites appreciative of the New

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[127] Donald Montgomery, the director of the UAW's lobbying activities in Washington, D.C., wrote to Walter Reuther that "labor and other progressive groups and leaders could hardly go for a man who, openly or sub rosa, had given pledges to soften or scrap the civil rights program." Donald Montgomery to Walter Reuther, March 20 1948, WR 430, Folder 19 (Politics).

[128] Bositis, "Blacks and the 2004 Democratic National Convention," 9; Abramson et al., *Change and Continuity in the 2008 elections*, 174-175.

[129] Abramson, "Class Voting in the 1976 Election," 1068; Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 231. "CIO PAC Election Results," undated, Jack Kroll Papers Box 7, page 6.

Deal. CARD Director George Weaver worked not only to insert the CIO into Adlai

Stevenson's campaign and ensure John Sparkman's cooperation, but also to campaign for

Southern liberal votes:

> An increasing number of Southern political leaders realize the old Southern attitudes require readjustment…it is now possible to drive a wedge between the new South and the old. I am convinced that now is the time to wage an aggressive campaign aimed at the rank and file Southerner by Stevenson, in order to lay the groundwork for a changed party in the south…no Southerner, whether conservative or not, doesn't like the benefits received [from the New Deal].[130]

While the CIO's effort to reduce the role of conservative Democrats in national elections

was successful, time reveals that they may have been overoptimistic about the electoral

chances of liberal Southern MCs.[131]

By the 1970s, Republican MCs were as conservative on the civil rights proposals

of the decade as Southern Democrats, and even Southern Democrats became more liberal

on civil rights when they faced Republican challengers.[132] The Republican gains in the

South have received enormous attention from scholars. But Republican presidential

candidates discounted the black vote only after several elections in which the party made

an effort to at least match the Democratic position on civil rights, yet still failed to win

their votes. The Democratic Party changes from 1964 onward were only accelerating a

trend that had begun decades earlier, and constitute a case of Democratic coalition

maintenance rather than augmentation. Carmines and Stimson's (1989) timeline of

realignment, echoed by Frymer and Skrentny (1998), does not take the earlier trend into

account. They argue that "1948 could not be a critical moment in the partisan evolution

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[130]Memorandum from George Weaver to James Carey, August 9 1952, SBC 188.

[131] In Texas, liberals worked to elect Republican John Tower against a conservative Democrat William Blakely, hoping that Tower's election would help ensure a liberal nominee in the next election. However, Democrats nominated a conservative in the next election as well. In 1962, liberals successfully challenged Democratic representative J.B. Frazier, who voted against President Kennedy's Medicare proposal, with Wilkes Thrasher. Thrasher, however, would lose in the general election to Republican William Brock (Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System*, 294-295).

[132] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, 109-133.

of race because both parties were competing for the pro-civil rights pole of the

dispute."[133] It is true that Republicans continued to favor many civil rights measures

alongside Democrats through Nixon's 1960 campaign, but a supermajority of African

Americans had clearly made their choice long before then. White Southerners did not

switch parties until after 1964,[134] but the earlier change in allegiance of black voters -

their opponents - constitutes a realignment of its own.

The 1940s were also a turning point for Northern Democratic MCs and state

legislators, who became more liberal on civil rights than Republicans by the mid-1940s.

In congressional elections, the CIO PAC was effective at transforming the Democratic

Party by defeating conservative Democrats. Feinstein and Schickler (2008) show that

Democratic support for civil rights was strongest in state platforms in the 1940s where

the CIO had an established presence, and more strongly in favor of civil rights than

Republican platforms in these states.[135] As early as 1944, the CIO was widely held

responsible for defeating three anti-CIO Democrats in the primary stage, all members of

Un-American Activities Committees (which attacked communist influence within the

CIO).[136] In the South, seven PAC-endorsed candidates prevailed and only one survived a

primary challenge (only two others survived a PAC challenge outside the South).[137] In

1948, 64 percent of the 215 House candidates endorsed by the CIO PAC won, as did 81

percent of the 21 endorsed Senators, 82 percent of the 17 endorsed governors, and the

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[133] Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*, 36.

[134] Cultural issues tied to Christian conservative positions also fed the change in allegiance among White Southerners in the decades following 1964.

[135] Feinstein and Schickler attribute much of the change at the state level to "meso level actors," who are statewide office-holders and office-seekers. During the 1940s, many meso level actors were not vote maximizers seeking rection as Downs (1957) suggested, but amateur activists working for political causes. In this regard, they still resemble Cohen et al.'s (2008) intense policy demanders even though they hold office.

[136] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 28.

[137] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 514.

underdog presidential candidate.[138] The CIO would even run challengers where they would lose, hoping it would deprive incumbents of the claim of universal support, and "lay the groundwork through education for a campaign that may be successful in later years."[139] Union organizers considered voting for Southern Republicans just to remove anti-labor Democrats from their entrenched position of incumbency and fight for pro-labor Democrats in the future.[140] The CIO distributed the President's Committee on Civil Rights report, *To Secure These Rights*, to pressure state level Democratic Parties and the national Democratic Party to implement its civil rights recommendations. CIO leaders argued that failure to implement its recommendations would betray the Democratic President.[141] Nowhere did CIO PAC officials discuss Roosevelt's 1938 "purge" attempt as the inspiration for their efforts.

Consistent with our emphasis on the role of groups in coalition formation and maintenance, politicians in both parties seemed unable to control what groups belonged to both party coalitions. Instead, groups like the CIO PAC forced one of the parties to take a stand against the wishes of its leaders. Even Truman's liberal advisers did not want conservative Southerners to leave the party, while independent groups did (at least in 1948). Both parties targeted both African American voters and Southern whites. There is little evidence in the records of Farley, Hamilton, Wagner, and Taft that they were successful at building a consensus for a position within their party or even attempting to do so in the case of Farley. Before 1948, both parties distributed civil

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[138] Jack Kroll, Report on 1948, Jack Kroll Papers Box 4.
[139] Jack Kroll to E.L. Sandefur, July 13 1949, Operation Dixie mf 67.
[140] Lucy Mason to Jack Jenkins, July 14 1949, Operation Dixie mf 63. Also see Draper, *Conflict of Interests*, 86-93. Draper documents examples of the response from the rank and file. Guernsey accused Citizen's Councils of using race to disguise an anti-labor agenda. Many local union presidents said they were members and it had no such agenda (75-76).
[141] Directors Report, June 29 1948, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 196.

rights campaign literature, and the Republicans, who lost the party loyalty of African Americans, offered more civil rights promises in their platforms. Concrete civil rights legislation does not explain the change, either. Northern Democrats passed major civil rights legislation in the 1960s, but African Americans had already voted Democratic in higher percentages than whites before then.

On the surface, Hubert Humphrey's support for civil rights at the 1948 convention illustrates that party leaders can play a decisive role in transforming parties. His support did not reflect mere ambition or constituent service. As a local Works Progress Administration head, he had a reputation for fairness toward African Americans, who formed less than 1 percent of the population in Minneapolis. However, Humphrey declined to run for public office until the Minneapolis AFL promised financial support for a mayoral campaign. Humphrey's support for a Minneapolis FEPC drew the ADA and UAW to promote his further rise in politics, but its passage was greatly aided by the local AFL, which threatened to oppose alderman who voted against it.[142] Humphrey's civil rights work with ADA won him favor with national liberal figures. Although Humphrey's support for civil rights was sincere, it was the labor-liberal groups that enabled Humphrey to become an important figure in his party, which underscores the role of pressure groups, not politicians. Humphrey later proved willing to compromise on civil rights when it appeared to hinder his advancement. In 1956, he joined 70 Senators who blocked the introduction of House civil rights legislation to the Senate in 1956, and supported a weak civil rights plank in the party platform.[143] This led labor leaders to

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[142] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 19, 43.
[143] Thurber, *The Politics of Equality*, 97.

support Kefauver over Humphrey as vice president. Labor promoted him and withheld promotions from him.

The Paths Not Taken

To obtain influence in the Democratic Party, the NAACP needed allies. To forge their alliance with labor groups, they had to support labor union activity and their progressive political agenda without hesitation. Had civil rights groups retained their traditional hostility toward unions or supported economic individualism, union organizers would have found it difficult to integrate workplaces and raise funds for the NAACP. African American workers would have likely been ostracized.[144] In one Southern union that attempted to foster racial tolerance among members, an organizer found white members very resistant because of the local African American newspaper's steady opposition to the CIO.[145] When Labor Secretary Herbert Hill threatened to use the Taft-Hartley Act to disband discriminatory unions in 1960, one op-ed replied that

> if there is anything that Organized Labor in America hates and fears…it is the anti-union bias of certain provisions of the Taft-Hartley law. And for the NAACP to urge the NLRB to apply one of the most hatred [sic] provisions of the Taft-Hartley law against Organized Labor is to make it almost impossible for Organized Labor to continue supporting the programs and the principles of the NAACP. [146]

Had African Americans continued to serve as replacement workers or the NAACP continued its lawsuits against discriminatory unions in the 1940s, it is hard to imagine that the 1948 civil rights plank would be the measure used by the CIO PAC to "separate the sheep from the goats," as Kroll promised. The pursuit of civil rights helped turn

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[144] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 27.
[145] The organizer wrote to the NAACP "We find it rather difficult to do any effective work in race relations here in Hamilton, as long as the one and only negro [sic] newspaper comes out continuously against the CIO." Berkeley Watterson to Roy Wilkins, November 25, 1946, NAACP II-A-347.
[146] Editorial, *Twin City Observer*, May 5, 1960, 4.

Southern Democrats, who had accepted parts of the New Deal, against it.[147] Only three

Southern Democrats consistently opposed New Deal from the start – Carter Glass, Harry

Byrd, and Josiah Bailey.[148] Before the PCCR report was issued, Strom Thurmond

declared that "We who believe in a liberal political philosophy…will vote for the election

of Harry Truman."[149] Black and Black argue that many Southern Democrats who had

supported the national party on issues not related to race relations "angrily revolted

against the liberal wing" of the party and "renewed their ties with their most conservative

constituents."[150] Although the CIO could not completely predict the impact of civil rights

on white Southern support for the New Deal, their studies of public opinion were as

advanced as any at the time, and must have considered the possibility of this result. This

risk was hardly worth the effort if African Americans did not prove themselves to be

reliable allies in the workplace and the voting booth. The CIO's pursuit of civil rights

had a cost.

One of the NAACP's alternatives to an alliance with labor was to work more

closely with business organizations. Under this arrangement, they may have continued

the lawsuits against discriminatory unions it had practiced earlier.[151] It was not inevitable

that the NAACP would forego this path, but such a choice would have reduced its size,

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[147] E.D. Rivers, segregationist Lister Hill, Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo (a notoriously vocal racist), were among the Southern redistributionists enthusiastic about the New Deal. Frederickson depicts the South as a whole as enthusiastic for the New Deal (see Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South*, 18, 26). At the 1948 Mississippi Democratic convention, a student named George Maddox said "You have never objected to flood control programs, subsidies for farmers and education, and TVA or any of the other things the government has brought in to your profit." He called states rights hypocrisy, and was booed (Frederickson, 144).

[148] Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 137.

[149] Leuchtenberg, *The White House Looks South*, 187.

[150] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 80, 141, and 160. According to their classifications of MCs, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 resulted in a large increase in "nominal" Democrats, a large decrease in moderate Democrats, and a somewhat smaller decrease in Democrats adhering to the national party stances

[151] Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*, 223.

prestige, and accomplishments in courts and legislatures. Business interest groups had

not shown the willingness to donate money that would match the contributions of labor

unions, and if they had, they lacked the manpower to assist with membership drives,

voter registration, and workplace integration efforts. Even African American fraternities

and churches lacked this kind of manpower, the NAACP recognized.[152] Business groups

like the National Association of Manufacturers had too few members who were too

widely dispersed.[153]

      The NUL's history provides evidence that relying heavily on business donations

would have likely been a suboptimal organizational strategy for the NAACP. The NUL

received much of its funding from employers and cautious white philanthropists, but

because of their donors, had a much more difficult time influencing unions to integrate.

In 1934, it set up "Workers' Councils" to train blacks to establish and join unions and

fight against discriminatory unions; eventually, 70 councils were set up nationwide.

However, many affiliates refused to cooperate because of the tensions the councils

produced with donors. In the end, the councils had less impact on union discrimination

than the NAACP had, even though the NUL and NAACP agreed in 1914 that the former

would focus on employment and the latter on legal rights.[154] The NUL's Lester Granger

testified to the President's Committee on Civil Rights that the League's educational

approach was inadequate and that the political reforms espoused by the NAACP were

necessary. Granger told the committee that "we have fallen flat on our faces more often

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[152] NAACP A-454.

[153] Truman, *The Governmental Process*.

[154] Weiss, *The National Urban League*, 282-296.

than we have succeeded" and the discussion of compulsory integration in recent years helped the League negotiate with employers to voluntarily desegregate.[155]

If the NAACP were allied with business, rather than labor, it would have had difficulty pushing for the FEPC.[156] Friendly relations with employers would have upset relations with unions, and the NAACP would have been no more effective at working with unions to reduce discrimination than the NUL. What would they have gained by upsetting unions? There is no reason to think the NAACP would have worked any better with employers than the NUL had before the FEPC. Business might have been more receptive to fighting government discrimination against African Americans than to the FEPC, which regulated private employers. Even in the domain of government discrimination, most businesses showed themselves less willing than unions to fight for civil rights. When the NAACP lobbied against discrimination in federal housing in 1954, few businesses joined the battle. The government financed thousands of homes that excluded blacks, such as Levittown. Additionally, it cleared black neighborhoods and excluded them from the new neighborhoods. While the federal government paid to relocate the black families, black families were paid, on average, $2,000 less than white families. Most real estate groups opposed efforts to attach anti-discrimination amendments to federal housing bills. One of the exceptions, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, supported the NAACP's position and asked President Eisenhower to instruct housing agencies to revise their housing policies. But the Association did not provide funding for the NAACP or aid in the lobbying effort in Congress, as unions

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[155] See Lester Granger's testimony to the President's Committee on Civil Rights, April 17, 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 42.
[156] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*.

did.[157] An NAACP-business alliance presupposes that businesses would have behaved much differently had the organization not cast its lot with labor. Business groups were making too little effort in this direction to make this alternative credible.

That does not mean that the CIO-NAACP alliance was inevitable. The advantages of the alliance are clearer now than they could have possibly been at the time, and had the NAACP antagonized labor, it would have harmed the CIO considerably even though it had far less influence. The NAACP attested that civil rights measures favored by the CIO were authentic civil rights measures with widespread support among blacks. The NAACP cast doubt on the propriety of measures that sought to place the burden of integration on unions rather than employers, such as the Taft-Hartley Act, Smith's amendments to the Wagner Act, and proposals to have separate seniority rules for blacks.[158] More importantly, many political organizations have acted against their own interest by acceding to racial division, and the CIO might have chosen to follow in their footsteps. CIO workers would have easily been diverted away from civil rights if the most prestigious voice of civil rights in the nation undermined them. In one Southern union that attempted to foster racial tolerance among members in 1946, an organizer found white members very resistant because of the local African American newspaper's steady opposition to the CIO.[159] Frymer shows the result of division such as this on a broader scale. When unions rejected NAACP recommendations for integration in the

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[157] Watson, *Lion in the Lobby*, 250-256.

[158] Director's Report, August 16 1944, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 196. One exception seems to have taken place in 1953, when the NAACP supported a bill to forbid discrimination only where unions are the bargaining agents. CARD argued that labor opponents would use the law to discourage unionization in the South, and the NAACP should wait for a bill that prohibits both union and employer discrimination. In a heated exchange, the NAACP said that such a bill had no chance of passing. The CIO said that the NAACP "should have known better" (CARD Minutes, May 12 1953, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193).

[159] Berkeley Watterson to Roy Wilkins, November 25, 1946, NAACP II-A-347.

1960s, the NAACP turned to the courts with their grievances, weakening union treasuries and seniority rules. NAACP litigation increased racial resentment in unions, led union members to support conservative politicians in some cases, and fractured the Democratic Party coalition.[160] Projecting Frymer's findings back in time, it is hard to imagine that the CIO PAC would have prioritized civil rights if the NAACP worked against unions or Democrats. For the CIO to prioritize civil rights with the assent of its members, the NAACP had to support unions without hesitation and endorse their progressive political agenda.

Alternative Explanations

What was responsible for the liberal trajectory the Democratic Party embarked upon in 1948? Combing through the evidence above, one might view electoral calculations as the most proximate cause of party transformation. James (2000) argues that parties tailor their policy agenda so that their presidential candidates can win pivotal states in the Electoral College.[161] In this way, parties evolve not because of group pressure, but because candidates and their allies in the party determine what issues matter to the right voters. Candidates, not external groups, are the most important moving parts in parties. As shown above, Truman and Stevenson were acutely aware of the importance of the African American vote in the general election. Kennedy knew that losing the votes of African Americans and labor could cost him the Democratic nomination. While Democratic candidates would not have moved left on civil rights if it were not a viable strategy for winning elections, electoral considerations were insufficient for party transformation. In the elections of 1944 and 1948, Democratic nominees

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[160] Frymer, *Black and Blue*.
[161] James, *Presidents, Parties, and the State: a Party System Perspective on Democratic Regulatory Choice*.

worked harder to avoid alienating the South than they did to maintain African American support. Both Roosevelt and Truman were presented with information on the importance of the black vote. When forced to choose priorities by aggressive groups, both chose the South. The Democrats passed a platform to appease the South in 1944 and almost nominated a Southern conservative as vice president, knowing he was likely to be the next president. Roosevelt campaigned for black votes in the blind spot of Southerners. Truman resisted a bold civil rights platform to the end at the 1948 convention, and prioritized the liberal wing only after a polarizing civil rights plank was passed against his instructions. Future Democratic nominees – and liberal pressure groups - saw that this set of priorities was viable after the 1948 election. Even then, Democratic leaders had to be reminded, now and again, of the potency of the labor-civil rights coalition, as Kennedy found out when the NAACP criticized him in his home state.

Furthermore, external groups had the challenging task of making the alliance work. Had the civil rights groups and labor groups not worked together in a constructive manner, civil rights could have been a dividing issue among liberals, rather than a uniting issue. Past and future events proved that blacks, liberals, and white union workers could work against each other in politics. The labor-civil rights coalition was most influential when it presented a united front to politicians. President Roosevelt created the unprecedented wartime FEPC only with combined pressure from the NAACP and A. Philip Randolph, a labor leader and civil rights leader. When the wartime FEPC expired, the NAACP supported an FEPC with enforcement powers over all other goals. With

labor's backing, the Democratic Party leadership promoted it over less controversial goals such as voting rights and anti-lynching bills.[162]

The pivotal African American voters accelerated their political expectations as a result of the alliance. In 1944, they voted for Roosevelt, even though the Democrats took virtually no stance on civil rights. After the labor-civil rights alliance passed the bold platform of 1948, they now expected specific promises from the Democratic Party on employment legislation, voting rights, and later, obstructionist tactics. In the 1950s, the labor-civil rights alliance boldly pressed Democratic leadership to support another polarizing policy that required them to marginalize their Southern wing - school desegregation. This goal was only imaginable after *Brown v. Board of Education.* Labor had provided steady support to the NAACP as it pursued its legal strategy, particularly on the eve of the Supreme Court's landmark decision. The labor-civil rights alliance might have simply accepted Stevenson and Kennedy's Southern overtures as they walked a geographic tightrope to the Democratic nomination, but instead forced them to back away from gradualism and embrace liberal positions on civil rights. It was no longer possible to appease liberals with measures that would maintain the New Deal equilibrium between North and South. African Americans, who were an important group in pivotal delegations and the Electoral College, had different policy demands because of the work of groups representing them. These demands forced Democratic Party leaders to marginalize the South more than they would have otherwise.

To the extent that the 1948 convention raised expectations and demands of pressure groups, one might also view the assent of party bosses as the most important

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[162] CARD Minutes, January 14 1950, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 193, Civil Rights Meeting Folder; Robert Taft, "Statement on Failure of the Cloture Vote," May 19 1950 in Wunderlin, *The Papers of Robert A. Taft 1949-1953, 161.*

moving parts in the Democratic Party'. As actors of pure political ambition, their compliance suggests that the Democratic Party may have been changing with electoral calculations rather than succumbing to group pressure. Regional party bosses revealed that they agreed the 1948 plank would help elect the Democratic ticket or at least state- and local-level Democrats. They were surely aware of the electoral needs of the party before the convention, but did not plan to propose a strong plank in the absence of the ADA's initiative. Since most party bosses have not left behind written records,[163] their intentions and alternate plans are opaque. Their willingness to support a stronger plank but not initiate one suggests that the ADA changed the outcome of the convention by raising the issue.

Several of these party bosses softened their willingness to antagonize the South over time. Bosses Jacob Arvey, Carmine De Sapio, and David Lawrence later opposed efforts of an ambitious party chairman to liberalize the national party on civil rights. DNC Chair Paul Butler, when elected in 1954, privately pledged to Southern Democrats "I do not consider the question of segregation a political issue. I see no reason for any chairman of our party at any level to project segregation into our political discussions." For a time, Butler was a conciliatory figure, but he seems to have changed course after the reaction of Southerners to the *Brown* decision, beginning with Little Rock. First, he angered the South by creating the Democratic Advisory Council. The Council provided a

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[163] The most important party bosses were arguably New York's Ed Flynn, who pressured the Pennsylvania delegation to support the plank, and David L. Lawrence, who controlled the Pennsylvania delegation. Flynn's small collection of written records are held at the Franklin Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York. Almost no correspondence exists between him and other party bosses, or Humphrey and Biemiller. The University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania State archives contain some written records from Lawrence, but only after he became governor in 1959. Illinois Party Boss Jacob Arvey's records are kept at the Truman Library. This collection only consists of 175 documents, only two of which date to Truman's years as president. Frank Hague of New Jersey, who also agreed to the civil rights plank, did not leave any substantial written records.

national voice for the party in the absence of a Democratic President, and as the decade passed, supported civil rights and criticized President Eisenhower for his moderation on the issue. Congressional leaders such as Rayburn and Johnson rightly viewed it as an attempt to provide an alternative to them, as they were more cooperative with the administration. The Council was also an attempt to replace patronage based politics with issue based politics. In late 1958, Butler said that the South should not remain in the party just to retain chairmanships on national television. He declared that the 1960 platform would offer

> no compromise on the integration problem…Those people in the South who are not deeply dedicated to the policies and beliefs in fact the philosophy of the Democratic Party will have to go their own way...[If Southerners did not] want to go along on the racial problem and the whole area of human rights, [they would] have to take political asylum wherever they can find it, either in the Republican Party or a third party.

Not only were Southern leaders furious, but Pennsylvania Boss David Lawrence sent copies of Butler's 1954 pledge to National Committee members and called for his ouster. His opponents did not have enough votes to remove him before the 1960 convention, but Butler announced he would step down, knowing he would not win the next round.[164] Butler's tenure showed that a party employee was willing to marginalize a party faction to advance another party faction, but this was more than a decade after the electoral implications of the Great Migration became clear. It was ten years after pressure groups were willing to marginalize the South at the 1948 convention, and even then, it cost him his job.

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[164] Roberts, *Paul M. Butler: Hoosier Politician and National Political Leader*, 54, 94, 97, 160.

It is possible to see the ADA, and not the CIO, as the pivotal organizational ally of the NAACP. Cohen et al. (2008) even present the ADA as the organization that set the Democratic Party on a path to racial liberalism beginning in the 1948 convention. Not only did ADA provide the large number of delegates at the convention to support the plank written by James Carey, but ADA had planned for months to make civil rights a major issue at the convention. It is not clear that the ADA would have supported civil rights had the NAACP failed to participate constructively with liberal and labor groups in the 1940s. The historic hostilities between unions and African Americans might otherwise have been a wedge issue rather than an issue that unified liberals. Additionally, the ADA was a weaker organization without CIO support.

Parsing the CIO and ADA before, during, and after the 1948 convention is difficult. The Union for Democratic Action (ADA's predecessor) was started by Thomas Amilie in 1942; Amilie went on to work for CIO PAC in 1944.[165] ADA was not a front for the CIO, but there is some evidence that the CIO could act as a veto player on the ADA. The ADA was a small, poorly funded organization before the CIO supported it. An early ADA statement of strategy declared that "While it is true that labor cannot possibly win by itself in the present political composition of America, it is even more true that no progressive program can be successful without active support of the organized workers."[166] Phil Murray refused to support the Union for Democratic Action's reorganization plan (to create the ADA) in 1943 for fear of dividing anti-communist and pro-communist forces on the left. His opposition stopped the plan in its infancy. In 1946, the CIO was a major sponsor of the competing "Conference of Progressives"

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[165] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 32-33.
[166] "A Political Program for Liberals," November 1, 1948, ADA mf 106.

(along with the NAACP), but the CIO later forbid members from supporting either group in order to avoid a split among progressives. When the third party movement behind Henry Wallace threatened to hurt Truman's reelection prospects, Murray finally authorized an alliance between the CIO and the anti-Wallace ADA.[167] The CIO PAC then cooperated with the ADA and shared political strategy and survey data.[168] Both Hubert Humphrey and Charles La Follette cleared their ADA presidency candidacies with Murray. In 1947, the ADA's total revenue from labor unions was 22 percent of all donations; in 1948, the figure was 45 percent.[169] Humphrey admitted to Murray that out of the "progressive influences and forces here in Washington," the "most powerful of these are the forces of labor." Though "labor needs allies…independent liberals need labor" and the "organizational experience which the trade unionists have had."[170] ADA leaders complained that declining labor contributions in the 1950s were the most important part of its financial deficit and its declining influence.[171]

At times, ADA claimed credit for bringing rival unions together for common political purposes. Its 1948 convention brought together the CIO, the AFL, Railroad Brotherhoods, and Machinists, all of whom were represented on the ADA board. Leaders of each union agreed to oppose Wallace at the February convention.[172] In Massachusetts, ADA, the CIO, and the AFL successfully worked together to increase ADA membership in the early 1950s. But ADA acknowledged that, as an outside organization, it could not reach rank and file union members as well as union leaders. If union leaders supported a

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[167] Brock, *Americans for Democratic Action*, 50, 73.
[168] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 131.
[169] Gillon, *Politics and Vision*, 41.
[170] Hubert Humphrey to Phillip Murray, March 30 1949, Phillip Murray Papers Box 143, Folder 14; Foster, *The Union Politic*, 134.
[171] Brock, *Americans for Democratic Action*, 164-165.
[172] Brock, *Americans for Democratic Action*, 73-74.

political effort, the rank and file would follow. Otherwise, it was very difficult for ADA

to raise money from them, except on specific issues like the Taft-Hartley Act.[173] ADA

could have chosen to become a meeting ground for labor unions, but if it were limited to

such a purpose, the other liberal interests in the organization would be overwhelmed.

ADA needed labor to be effective, and labor needed the ADA to win liberal allies that did

not belong to organized labor.[174] An early strategy memo admitted "While it is true that

labor cannot possibly win by itself in the present political composition of America, it is

even more true that no progressive program can be successful without active support of

the organized workers."[175]

Karol (2009) focuses on the role of business groups in forcing the Republicans to

oppose civil rights, rather than the role of the NAACP-labor alliance in forcing the

Democratic Party to support civil rights. If there is a turning point in his account, it is

1944, when Republican MCs opposed renewing the FEPC. One might argue that the

Republicans' use of federalism to oppose the New Deal made it difficult for them to

support a strong central government to enforce civil rights. However, the Republicans

could have used any number of rhetorical flourishes or constitutional rationales to paper

over any such contradictions. For example, the 14th amendment might have been

reinterpreted to justify federal civil rights policies while the tenth amendment left

economic matters to the states.[176] My research on the NAACP suggests that it was

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[173] Discussed by James Loeb, Louis Schaeffer, and Morris Ernst in the minutes of the National Board
Meeting, September 20 1947, ADA mf 45.
[174] "A Strategy for Liberals," undated, ADA mf 106.
[175] "A Strategy for Liberals," undated, ADA mf 106.
[176] Kesselman, *The Social Politics of FEPC,* 170. The business/reformer coalition of the Civil War Era
Republican Party supported federal agencies to find jobs for recently freed slaves. Part of the reluctance of
business groups to support measures such as an FEPC may have hypersensitivity to government intrusion
in the wake of the New Deal; had federal government limited its intervention to race relations, the response
may have been different.

already fighting alongside organized labor before that point (see Chapter 3), and would

have continued participating in the liberal-labor alliance even if Republicans supported

an FEPC. The NAACP president had stressed the need to support Roosevelt or else

isolate the NAACP from other liberal groups, and the organization sternly rebuked

Republicans in 1944 despite a promising platform. It was not that business groups drove

civil rights groups out of the Republican Party, but that organizational interests drew

them into the Democratic Party.

Converse (1964) and Noel (2006) argue for the centrality of ideological writers in

directing party positions, concurring with several of the conservative leaders I

interviewed.[177] Party coalitions emerge from and are constrained by the ideas created

from a narrow group of pundits, although there is typically a substantial lag between the

two. Since neither author outlines how politicians come to adopt pundit positions, their

accounts are consistent with an account that interposes interest groups in between pundits

and politicians.

Converse (1964) shows that most voters clearly lack coherent ideologies, even

demonstrating that most are not able to explain concepts such as "liberal" and

"conservative." The "shaping of belief systems of any range into apparently logical

wholes that are credible to large numbers of people is an act of creative synthesis

characteristic of only a miniscule proportion of any population." For these creative few,

however, issue positions "go together not simply because both are in the interest of the

person holding a particular status but for more abstract and quasi-logical reasons

developed from a coherent view of the world as well." The rest of the population comes

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[177] Richard Viguerie, Eugene Meyer, and Timothy Goeglin said that they believe that a conservative
realignment would have taken place because of the conservative ideas, whatever else happened.

to see the issue positions as part of a "natural" package. Following Converse's footsteps, Noel (2006; 2007; 2012) argues that the intellectuals create an ideological framework and politicians are then constrained to operate in that framework. The intellectual arguments for what issue positions fit together limit candidates and interest groups to embrace certain constellations of issues, because too many political actors accept these arguments and will resist politicians who present alternative arguments. As Mansbridge writes, "people create and adopt ideas, and are transformed by them, when the ideas flow logically or emotionally from previously held premises."[178] Even when people promote ideas to favor interests, the ideas take on a "life of their own" and lead adherents to positions they would not otherwise take. In this pundit-driven model, interest groups and politicians may use ideology to their advantage, but it is the writers who are pivotal in deciding who works together.

Noel's data show that the only writers favoring civil rights before the 1930s were economic progressives. However, he did not include the largest African American newspapers in the country. If he is correct that pundit consensus is necessarily to build a political coalition, African American newspapers should have pushed for its readers to support labor unions before the Democratic Party supported both in the 1940s. The largest black newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier,* often supported union rights decades before the Northern Democratic Party consensus. Using search terms designed to ferret economic issues, I found that out of six editorials concerning unions in 1923 and 1924, two of them were positive and three negative. Two of the negative articles merely criticized union discrimination and not organized labor per se, but one of them argued that wages are not raised by strikes but higher production and higher profits. Before the

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[178] Marcus and Hanson, *Reconsidering the Democratic Public*, 101

Great Depression, the *Courier* was also an economically conservative newspaper that generally supported Republicans. Out of ten economic editorials not concerning unions, all ten favored a conservative position. The *Courier* praised the tax cuts promoted by Harding, Coolidge, and Mellon, and blamed the 1921 "recession on the vilification of capital."[179] After Roosevelt's election in 1932, the *Courier* supported the New Deal without qualification.

The second-largest black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, tended to oppose unions in 1924, while editorials were divided in 1937 and 1941. By 1947, 90 percent of 37 editorials were positive about unions, but at that time, Northern Democrats already favored both unions and civil rights. The *Defender's* change of tone seems partly due to the unionization of the *Defender's* employees, which succeeded because of a threatened boycott from CIO readers. The pro-labor Michigan *Chronicle* replaced a Republican subsidiary of the Chicago *Defender* in Detroit in 1936, less than a decade before the Detroit NAACP supported UAW strikes.[180] Leading African American newspapers wavered in their enthusiasm about unions at the same time as civil rights groups were wavering, and came to support unions consistently during or after civil rights groups came to a consensus. It is difficult to sustain a pundit-driven model of party realignment if interest groups and pundits are changing their outlook in tandem, because neither one clearly came first in the process.

Although my sample shows a consensus of black newspapers in favor of unions in the 1940s, it is noteworthy CARD members still believed black newspapers to be hostile,

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[179] The search terms used were union, labor, AFL, William Green, strike, capital, communism, capitalism, Marx, and "free market." Data set available upon request. The quoted phrase comes from "The Depression Why," from August 2, 1924.

[180] Meiers and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, 33.

and negotiated with many newspapers for a more positive outlook on organized labor even in 1947.[181] One reason for concern may have been frequent support for Republican presidential candidates. A sample of the ten largest African American newspapers available online during the years from 1932-1964 reveals that most African American newspaper readers were reading newspapers that endorsed Republican presidential candidates from 1932-1960 (Figure 5.1).

(Insert Figure 5.1 here)

Many of the labor activists in the civil rights case were also members of the "chattering classes." A. Philip Randolph had been the editor of the Socialist Party *Messenger* before becoming BSCP president, and some CIO leaders had also written for socialist publications.[182] UAW leaders Walter and Victor Reuther studied socialism and visited the Soviet Union. Sidney Hillman had been a Menshevik before leaving Russia in 1906. Each of these leaders showed themselves willing to subordinate their philosophical positions to their personal interest and advancing their group's power, membership, and funding. A. Philip Randolph was an atheistic socialist, but downplayed his opposition to religion because of its importance to members of the BSCP and later the March-on-Washington Movement. He reminded followers that he was a preacher's son and held BSCP meetings in churches, usually starting with a prayer.[183] The Reuthers allied with ethnic and religious subgroups in the UAW when the communist wing of the UAW elevated a rival for a leadership position. Hillman believed that the Communist Party (and later, other third parties) "represented a real and present danger to the [Roosevelt] administration and to hopes that Hillman cherished for the CIO: that it be invited

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[181] CARD Minutes, June 4 1947, CIO Office of the Secretary Treasurer Files 192.
[182] Zieger, *The CIO*, 28.
[183] Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph*, 23-24.

permanently inside the highest policy-making and strategy-making circles of the

Democratic Party." Many communists were also allied with John L. Lewis due to his

foreign policy positions in 1940, when Hillman and Lewis were rivals in a CIO power

struggle. Accordingly, Hillman's followers authorized a resolution at the CIO

convention in 1941 condemning communism and calling for an expulsion of communists.

A biographer characterizes Hillman as a "half intellectual…committed first of all to the

palpable dynamics of organized power and uninhibited by any prescribed beliefs that

might obstruct the pursuit of that power," particularly in his later years when he was

involved with the CIO.[184]

Many communists and socialists, including Hillman, showed themselves willing

to give up their ideological commitment to a democratic organization of the workplace

for contracts with management. The contracts provided certain benefits to the workers,

but also gave unions the responsibility for creating a predictable workforce, disciplining

members and preventing wildcat strikes. Subversive behavior was channeled through the

grievance procedure. Some of the CIO's best organizers were influenced by ideology but

were willing to check their ideology in at the factory gates when there was an obvious

organizational advantage in defying it. As Piven and Cloward write, "Radical ideology is

no defense against the imperatives created by organizational maintenance."[185]

Some lower-level members of the CIO were also influenced by Karl Marx. This

arguably influenced their thinking that members of the working class should fight for

economic improvement while disregarding race. The CIO's flagship union, the UAW,

had an organizing staff of nine whites in 1936, five of whom had been communists.

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[184] Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 16, 434, 449.
[185] Piven and Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, 161.

Three of the six black organizers added in 1937 were communists.[186] One director of the CIO-affiliated United Electrical, Machine, and Radio Workers of America said that communists were among the most experienced and reliable labor organizers in the early CIO.[187] Was the CIO lead by the ideas of communism, or merely exploiting their talents?

The CIO did not hesitate to purge itself of communists when communism worked against the union's interest during the postwar Red Scare. Communist organizers were critical to the growth of the CIO, and for the CIO to purge them suggests that they would have ceased supporting civil rights if civil rights support were a liability, whatever pundits said they ought to do. When President John L. Lewis was asked about the role of communists in the union, he replied "Who gets the bird, the *hunter* or the dog?" President Philip Murray opposed ADA when he thought it would needlessly split the labor movement over the communist issue and provide fodder to politicians willing to use anti-communism to discredit liberals. However, he funded, encouraged, and helped direct the anti-communist ADA when he saw that Progressive candidate Henry Wallace could derail Truman's reelection and lead to a Republican presidential victory 1948.[188]

Communism is an anti-racist ideology, but it is also an anti-religious ideology. CIO leaders were mostly anti-racist, but mostly not anti-religious. Several CIO leaders, such as Murray, prayed daily and tried to keep the CIO a "big tent." Hillman, though a secular socialist, recruited Lucy Randolph Mason, a patrician Southerner with well-known religious convictions, as the CIO's Southern Director of Public Relations. Mason made a sustained effort to assure Southerners that the CIO was compatible with religion. She secured statements from most of the major religious denomination that labor unions

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[186] Meiers and Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, 44.
[187] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 80.
[188] Foster, *The Union Politic*, 91.

were at least permissible and possibly commendable. She also obtained statements that many anti-union itinerant preachers were either expelled from official churches or acting alone.[189]

The CIO's opposition to racism was not driven solely or even mainly by communist members. The most vocal communist in CARD, Ferdinand Smith, was removed from the committee early in its existence. After the communist purge, CARD's commitment to fair employment and desegregation continued through the remainder of its existence. Its directive not to cooperate with local ordinances requiring segregation took place after the purge, and the committee continued to eschew compromise measures in order to maintain its status as a barometer of racial progressivism. Liberal operatives for ADA and NCPAC clearly buttressed the political goals of the CIO and the NAACP, but Chapter 5 shows that they were acutely sensitive to the lead of unions, and played a supplementary rather than a leading role.

As seen in Chapter 3, socialist members of the NAACP pushed the socialist agenda only as far as it furthered the organizations interest. Mary White Ovington, who been a socialist for decades, advised socialists in the NAACP to pursue socialism through other groups, as the NAACP's funding and membership would suffer should they conjoin socialism with their civil rights agenda.[190] W.E.B. Du Bois' writings in *The Crisis* had once been the centerpiece of the NAACP, but when he pushed for a form of segregation for ideological reasons, and provided what he considered to be constructive criticism, he

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[189] "The CIO in the South," September 1941, Operation Dixie mf 64, p.4; Lucy Mason, Radio Script for WGPC, Albany Georgia, June 22 1948, Operation Dixie mf 64, p.5; Lucy Mason, Spring 1939, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[190] Ross 1972, 230.

found himself isolated and subject to restrictions that caused him to resign.[191]   Ovington, who considered herself a follower of Du Bois' ideas for nearly three decades, was relieved by his departure. She wrote that "now we are rid of our octopus, for of late he has been draining our strength, I hope we shall do better work."[192] Walter White had Du Bois removed from the NAACP a second time (Du Bois had been reinstated after World War II) when he vocally supported Henry Wallace's third party bid in 1948, even though White's written praise for Truman was not substantially different. In the NAACP, leaders who pushed ahead with ideology without regard for organizational interest were set aside.

In the case of civil rights, the leaders of the realignment were well-acquainted with socialism and other anti-racist ideologies, but previous chapters show that the most important organizations in the Democratic Party transformation had compelling interests in cooperating, regardless of leader ideologies. The biographical data on organizational leaders were strategic actors first and ideologues second. Given the inconclusive quantitative evidence of the black newspapers, further evidence is needed to show that ideology adds to the group-centered explanation. If an alliance can be explained by interest alone, and pundits and interest groups favor the same bundles of issue positions simultaneously, interest is the more parsimonious explanation. The most important historical contingency in forming the alliance described in this chapter was convincing union leaders and civil rights leaders that despite their history, they had common interests. It was far less difficult to generate political writings that would justify favoring

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[191] Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, 228; Levering, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 335.
[192] Wedin, *Inheritors of the Spirit*, 271.

both civil rights and progressive economics.   As the Urban League's Lester Granger pointed out:

> There was a time when we thought we could discharge these responsibilities through reading, conferences or oration. Those days are gone, if indeed they were ever here. The hard job of bed-rock contact…will be performed only when…we go into shops and homes where men and women are working…when we sit down with them in meetings and discuss their problems with them and plan for their solution.

Many CIO leaders believed in civil rights, but political realities necessitated that they be strategic actors. The CIO suffered serious general election defeats in the Congressional elections of 1942 and 1946, and their success in 1948 was by no means guaranteed. Together with their plan to unionize the hostile South, the CIO had an ambitious agenda and limited power and resources. Would CIO leaders direct their limited resources to their civil rights beliefs if they had not furthered the organization's interest? The NAACP, too, was always struggling financially to implement its ambitious plans.

Conclusion

African Americans obtained representation in one of the two major parties by forming an alliance with the CIO and forcing politicians like President Truman to go along with their shared interests. Politicians were relatively ineffective in the process. President Roosevelt was unable to purge conservative Southerners in Congressional elections, but the CIO PAC sometimes succeeded. Unlike party politicians, employees, or machine workers, interest groups could influence a party to change policy direction more than state and local party activists because they could withhold votes. ADA refused to become an adjunct to the Democratic Party so that they would not be forced to support conservative Democrats. A memo considering a Democratic Party-partnership read that "if the ADA were compelled to support a candidate as Mr. Chapman of Kentucky [who supported the Taft-Hartley Act], it would cause a complete revolt within the ranks of our

organization, including the trade union members."[193] Party politicians and organizers, like the Dixiecrats, could not threaten to bolt the party without risking their own careers.

With the ability to use group appeals in addition to ideological appeals, the NAACP and the CIO were able to register and deliver voters that had been previously inactive, disenfranchised, or unreliable. Civil rights groups and unions presented group members in both organizations with political alternatives that affected their everyday lives in visible ways. The CIO could draw political strength through face-to-face meetings with workers, spreading its message to people who were primarily affiliated with it for non-political reasons. The NAACP recognized the advantages the CIO over politicians, since it preferred its alliance with the CIO to cooperation with national Republican figures such as Taft and Dewey. In the Democratic Party, the politicians most eager to work with the NAACP before the civil rights-labor alliance were regional figures such as Wagner and Humphrey. The NAACP sensed – correctly, as it turns out – that a coalition of interest groups could change the Democratic Party over the long term.
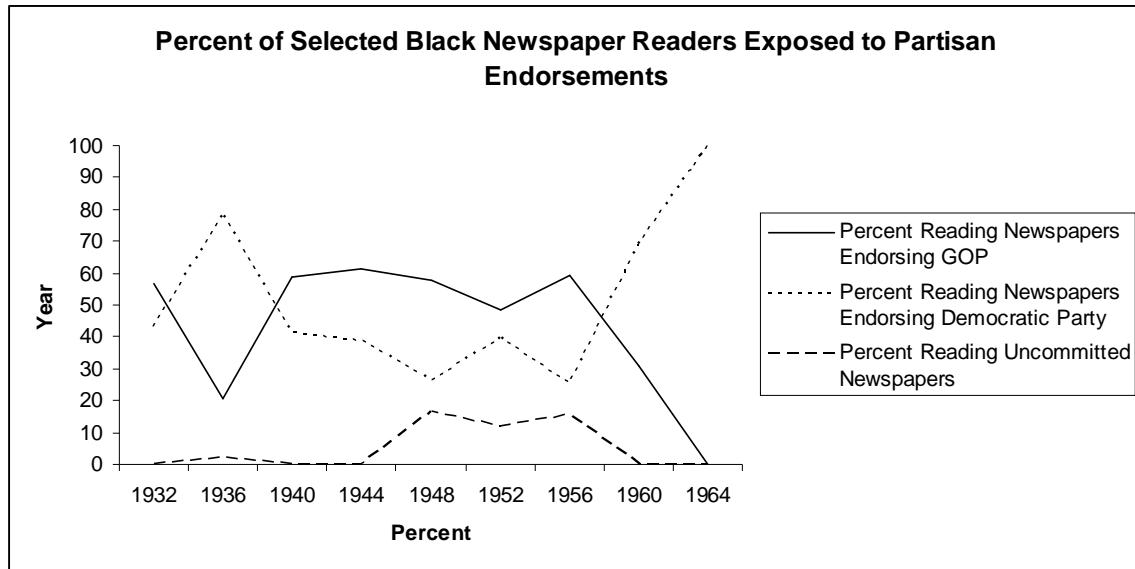
Consistent with political science evidence that voters are mostly inattentive, group leaders rather than group members drove the change. Walter White and Jack Kroll embraced positions that group members agreed with later, but their members voted for the same candidates just the same.

The NAACP desperately needed new sources of money and political strength. The Wagner Act also threatened to exclude blacks from unionized workplaces if blacks maintained an adversarial relationship with unions. For these reasons, the NAACP supported the CIO. The CIO turned out to be a highly effective force for strengthening the position of blacks in the Democratic Party at the expense of white Southerners. Its

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[193] "A Strategy for Liberals," undated, ADA mf 106.

leaders were genuine civil rights supporters, but the organization also benefited from reliable black voters and, sometimes, the recruitment of black workers. The alliance between labor and civil rights brought African Americans into the Democratic Party and eventually necessitated that ambitious Democratic Party politicians support civil rights. The politicians were the last part of the sequence in an alliance between civil rights groups and labor groups.

Figure 5.1

Percent of Selected Black Newspaper Readers Exposed to Partisan Endorsements

(Chart: Y-axis labeled "Year" with values 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100; X-axis labeled "Percent" with years 1932, 1936, 1940, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1960, 1964. Legend: Percent Reading Newspapers Endorsing GOP; Percent Reading Newspapers Endorsing Democratic Party; Percent Reading Uncommitted Newspapers)

Newspapers in Sample: *The Amsterdam News*, *The Atlanta World*, *The Baltimore Afro American*, *The Chicago Defender*, *The Cleveland Call and Post*, *The Los Angeles Sentinel*, *The Norfolk Journal and Guide*, *The Philadelphia Afro American*, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, *The Washington Afro American*[194]

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[194] I determined endorsements with an electronic search for editorial articles with the two candidates names, or alternatively, the terms "election," "president," "support," and "endorse." Most circulation figures were either obtained through N.W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals or NAACP A452. The former base their figures on independent audits or statements from the newspaper publishers. Newspapers were not included if their circulation was unavailable. Circulation figures were unavailable for the following newspapers and years: *Atlanta World* (1932, 1936, 1964), *Cleveland Call and P*ost (1932), *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1932, 1936, 1940, 1944, 1960), *Philadelphia Afro American* (1932, 1936), *Washington Afro American* (1932, 1936). Endorsements are missing from the following newspapers and years: *Atlanta World* (1964), *Cleveland Call and Post* (1956), and *Pittsburgh Courier* (1960).

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN THEOLOGICAL CONSERVATIVES WERE DEMOCRATS

Many people naturally associate the fight for political representation with the struggle of powerless groups. Women, homosexuals, and racial minorities, for example, suffered considerable discrimination from the federal government, the private sector, and their surrounding communities. Political parties did not address their policy issues until strategic organizations persistently fought for representation.

However, groups who do not differ from their community norms or suffer from economic discrimination can also find themselves excluded from both parties. This was the case with evangelical Protestants and other theological conservatives in the 1970s. Evangelicals had been isolated from national religious organizations, dominated by "mainline" theologians, since the 1920s. But at the local level, white evangelicals often enjoyed strong ties with their communities and success in business, and they had never been deprived of the right to vote. When American culture changed rapidly on a number of issues in the 1960s and 1970s, evangelicals believed that changing with the culture would violate their moral integrity. They had traditionally affiliated with the Democratic Party, but the cultural liberals managed to weaken their influence and transform the party into a progressive force for gender relations and reproductive rights. These culturally liberal groups lacked representation in either party only a few years earlier, but reacted to new cultural issues far more quickly than evangelicals. Meanwhile, mainline Protestants and political moderates fought for cultural moderation in the Republican Party. Some Republican candidates flanked Democratic opponents on the right on cultural issues, but they were far from aggressively supportive, especially after elections were over.

In the 1940s, civil rights groups found that the Democratic Party was influenced by actively hostile groups and the Republican Party made promises that it never carried out. Evangelicals found themselves in a similar situation in the 1970s. Many Republicans – mostly moderates, but some conservatives - did not welcome their votes if that meant changing the balance of power in the party. Rather than attempting to marginalize their most hostile opponents from the Democratic Party, as civil rights groups did, evangelicals chose to gain influence in the Republican Party. Though many in the white South were already becoming Republicans due to the partisan realignment on race, the evangelical realignment appears to be a separate phenomenon. As cultural issues became more salient in politics, white evangelicals who attended church on a regular basis were far more likely to become Republicans than evangelicals who did not attend regularly.[1]

Evangelicals found politically experienced patrons among the informal group of conservative strategists known as the "New Right." Members of the New Right were tied to one of the parties but repeatedly frustrated with leaders unwilling to pursue their more ambitious goals. Most resented the Republican Party for its lack of vision, and even their allies in Congress had no strategy for reducing the influence of their in-party opponents. Attempting to shift control away from Republican moderates, the New Right mobilized disaffected evangelicals. This reflected their own issue positions as well as recognition that fiscal conservatives and foreign policy conservatives were never numerous enough to win elections.[2] Establishment Republicans were initially reluctant to embrace this alliance but evangelicals showed too much strength in nominating contests. Like

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[1] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 171.
[2] Interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20, 2011 and Phyllis Schlafly, February 14, 2011.

organized labor, evangelicals benefited from extensive networks of people and resources drawn together for non-political reasons, and mobilized previously inactive voters. With the New Right's organizational expertise and the manpower of the evangelicals, the Republican Party shifted right on cultural issues over the next two decades. Both presidential nominees and congressional leaders switched positions on key cultural issues to meet with the approval of the new powers in the party.

Cultural issues arguably constitute the most important case in recent history in which economic issue positions increasingly correlate with other domestic issue positions over time.[3] Other political scientists have recognized the importance of this transformation and put forth their own explanations. Black and Black argue that the Republican Party became more culturally conservative as the South became a more important part of its electoral strategy.[4] The civil rights case, however, shows that politicians do not simply assimilate to demographic change or the positions of new party identifiers when they are tied to their opponents. Noel argues that the intellectuals create an ideological framework and politicians are then constrained to operate in that framework.[5] On the specific issue of abortion, Noel argues that the only pundits advocating abortion rights in the 1960s were economic liberals; consensus for this fusion of positions followed. Shortly thereafter, economically conservative pundits began opposing abortion. The economically liberal and conservatives parties sorted according to the cues of their pundits. Lichtman documents a tradition of "antipluralism" among economically conservative pundits, businessmen, religious groups, and financiers tracing

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[3] In both the civil rights and cultural issues cases, the orthogonal relationship between these issue-clusters and economic issues among members of Congress (MCs) changes into a direct relationship over time (Poole and Rosenthal, *Congress*; Hillygus and Shields, *The Persuadable Voter*).
[4] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*.
[5] Noel, "The Coalition Merchants."

back to 1920s.[6] But many of the conservatives described had few followers and only marginal influence until the 1970s. A majority of theological conservatives still supported Democrats until then. Why were they so slow to gain access to either party once cultural issues featured more prominently on the political landscape? Even if pundit consensus is a critical juncture, Noel and Licthman do not specify how the thoughts of intellectuals were later adopted as issue positions by parties. Neither explanation claims that pundits shape parties independently of organized groups. Uncovering the entire sequence leading to party transformation is important because the outcome may pivot on more than one part of the sequence.

Carmines and Woods[7] and Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, and Cooperman[8] show that activists in both parties were polarized on culture issues before partisans in the mass electorate. They interpret their findings as evidence that activists "cued" party identifiers on what stance to take. How did cultural conservatives climb a pedestal where they could cue party loyalists? Many of the cues that influence voters are party nominations, platforms, and interest group campaigns. Cultural conservatives gained influence in the party before the party became their voice, and only then would the party cue other activists to become cultural conservatives.

It is worth noting the limits of the evidence in the current and subsequent chapters. Many written records from the Reagan administration onward have not been declassified, and advocacy groups generally wait decades before making their written records public. Many of the major influences on politics in this case study are alive, and

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[6] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*.
[7] Carmines and Woods, "The Role of Party Activists in the Evolution of the Abortion Issue."
[8] Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, and Cooperman, "Activists and Conflict Extension in American Party Politics."

have provided interviews to the author and other social scientists. However, the limits of oral history are well-known. Interviews often take place years, even decades, after events the subjects are asked about. Subjects also have a tendency to exaggerate their own role or portray events according to a narrative that serves their group's purpose. That being said, most of my subjects agreed on the major events outlined in the next few chapters.

<u>Theologically Conservative Democrats</u>

To the extent that fundamentalists, evangelicals, and other theological conservatives were politically active before 1980, they tended to be Democratic voters. Their religious beliefs did not necessarily bring them into conflict with the Democratic Party during the New Deal or even the civil rights era. After public relations debacles in the 1920s, fundamentalist Protestants resigned themselves to minority status and attempted to preserve their own teachings of Biblical inerrancy. Radio audiences elsewhere scoffed when William Jennings Bryan enunciated his literal interpretation of the Bible at the Scopes Trial, and fundamentalists gave up on changing the views of the "mainline" Protestants, who believed in evolution and integration in modern society. Fundamentalists generated a much greater following among white Southerners, who were Democrats, despite originating with thinkers from the Northeast.

Many of their pastors from the Great Depression to the civil rights movement avoided politics. Some were "Premillenial Dispensationalists," who believed that the world would become increasingly corrupt until Jesus returned for his one-thousand year reign. The local and international events of the 1930s and 1940s convinced them that the end of an era was at hand, and did not bother debating public policy to prevent it.[9] Charles Fuller, the most popular radio fundamentalist preacher of the 1930s, criticized the

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[9] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 15.

political activism of both the liberal Federal Council of Churches and the anti-Semitic radio priest, Father Coughlin.[10] In 1965, future Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell proclaimed that "Nowhere are we commissioned to reform the externals. We are not told to wage wars against bootleggers, liquor stores, gamblers, murderers, prostitutes, racketeers, prejudiced persons or institutions."[11] Falwell's announcement was arguably a cover for opposing clerical support of civil rights, but he was echoing sentiments held by many fundamentalists well before the civil rights movement. *Christianity Today* would also warn ministers involved in civil rights that their calling was spiritual, not political, and their tax exempt status depended on them remaining aloof from politics.[12] During and after the Great Depression, Northern liberals were frustrated with the lack of interaction between liberal social causes and churches in the South. Churches, labor unions, schools, and liberal groups had a symbiotic relationship in the north and the west, but liberal activists found few efforts or organized groups in the South.[13]

At least two prominent fundamentalists were political conservatives who did not hesitate to take positions on political matters. One was Bob Jones, Jr., president of South Carolina's Bob Jones University. His father, the university's founder, had been a supporter of William Jennings Bryan and Prohibition, but later campaigned for Republican Herbert Hoover and opposed the liberal CIO's politically-charged Southern drive.[14] By 1950, Bob Jones, Jr. blamed the expansion of communism on the State Department and the United Nations, and opposed Truman's health care proposals. A 1952 straw poll at Bob Jones University showed 80 percent of the students supporting

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[10] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 55.
[11] Quoted in Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 341.
[12] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 75.
[13] Lucy Mason to Mr. McMullen, January 18 1946, Operation Dixie mf 63, p. 2.
[14] Lucy Mason to Raven McDavid, October 8 1946, Operation Dixie mf 63.

Eisenhower, even though his Democratic opponent, Adlai Stevenson, won handily in South Carolina. Later, Jones would oppose the civil rights and economic policies of the Johnson administration, and supported Goldwater even though he was "not conservative enough."[15]

The other was Presbyterian radio preacher Carl McIntire, who formed one of the most important Fundamentalist organizations, the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC). More than 500 stations broadcasted McIntire's show, 45 percent of them in the South. Although McIntire was highly interested in theological doctrine, he was also staunchly anti-communist and devoted to free enterprise. He claimed to be non-partisan, but like Jones, he opposed Truman's health plan and blamed the communist takeover of China on the state department. Later, he even served on the board of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), organized at *NR* editor William F. Buckley's estate to engage young Americans in the battle against communism abroad and "big government" at home. McIntire became increasingly marginal within fundamentalist circles by the late 1960s. In 1969, the ACCC voted not to renew McIntire's seat on the executive committee because he supported Georgia's segregationist governor, Lester Maddox.[16] The ACCC's insistence on doctrinal purity often prevented it from forming working together with other anticommunist religious sects.[17]

The Southern Baptists, the largest religious sect in the South, were not usually liberal allies but nor were they adversaries.[18] Many Alabama Baptist pastors also thanked Roosevelt for the New Deal when he solicited information about poverty in their

[15] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 37, 74.
[16] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 92.
[17] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 91; Williams, *God's Own Party*, 38-39, 74, 92.
[18] Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism,* 37-38

congregations.[19] In 1938 the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) passed a resolution in 1938 supporting organized labor:

> We recognize the right of labor to organize and to engage in collective bargaining to the end that labor may have a fair and living wage, such as will provide not only for the necessities of life but for recreation, pleasure, and culture.[20]

The SBC also unseated J. Frank Norris for his anti-Catholic pronouncements in *The Fundamentalist*, which sought to save America from "atheism, Leninism, Communism, and CIOism."[21] Later, it supported *Brown v. Board of Education*[22] and *Roe v. Wade*.[23] Even before *Roe v. Wade* voided anti-abortion laws in 46 states, a *Baptist Viewpoint* poll from 1970 found that 71 percent of Southern Baptist pastors favored abortion in cases rape, incest, or danger to the woman's health, while 64 percent favored state laws permitting abortions in the case of deformities.[24] When *Roe v. Wade* was announced, SBC President W.A. Criswell stated that "I have always felt that it was only after a child was born and had life separate from its mother, that it became an individual person, and it has always, therefore, seemed to me that what is best for the mother and for the future should be allowed." Many in the SBC regarded abortion as a peculiar Catholic concern. The SBC's Christian Life Commission head, Foy Valentine, explained that "The Roman Catholic bishops have been pushing very hard with a well organized and well financed campaign to enact their absolutist position abortion into law in this country," and he refused to participate.[25] Some Baptists, such as Jerry Falwell, opposed abortion rights

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[19] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 55.
[20] "The CIO in the South," September 1941, Operation Dixie mf 64, p.4.
[21] Lucy Mason, Spring 1939, Operation Dixie mf 64.
[22] Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 125.
[23] Interview with Grover Norquist (President of Americans for Tax Reform), July 24, 2010.
[24] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 289.
[25] Independent Baptist churches, however, were more likely to oppose abortion, civil rights, and economic liberalism during the period discussed. Williams, *God's Own Party*, 92, 116-118.

from the beginning, but even they did not approach the issue as political activists.[26] In the next chapter, I will document how the SBC changed in the late 1970s.

The Southern Methodists also praised organized labor, although the Northern Methodists had a slightly stronger statement of support.[27] The Pentecostal Holiness Church based in Atlanta banned membership in many kinds of organizations, but declared that the ban "is not intended to prohibit consistent association with a legal effort on the part of labor to prevent oppression and injustice from capitalism."[28]

Beginning in the 1940s, many Christian conservatives preferred the word "evangelical" to "fundamentalist" to signal that they were willing to proselytize without insisting on complete theological agreement. Unlike the fundamentalists, evangelicals sought to "evangelize" diverse listeners to support conservative social mores and legislation.[29] The most centralized organization of evangelicals was the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), formed in 1942 partly to resist the modernization of the church without resorting to the insular style of fundamentalists. The NAE also fought for a place for socially conservative religious broadcasts, as the Federal Council of Churches attempted to crowd out conservative religious broadcasters.[30] It welcomed liberal denominations as well as Pentecostals and charismatics, although it supported discrimination against Catholics, Jews, and atheists (it opposed an FEPC not because it protected the rights of racial minorities, but these religious groups). The NAE strongly supported the efforts to fight communism domestically and abroad. Fundamentalists

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[26] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 98.

[27] "The CIO in the South," September 1941, Operation Dixie mf 64, p.4.

[28] Lucy Mason, Radio Script for WGPC, Albany Georgia, June 22 1948, Operation Dixie mf 64, p.5.

[29] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 68-71. The NAE formed the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) specifically to fight for air time. It drafted a statement supporting civil rights for African Americans in education and housing at the same time as it opposed the FEPC.

[30] The Federal Council of Churches convinced all but one of the major radio networks to eliminate paid religious programming and substitute free "public service time" with their guidance.

such as Bob Jones, Jr. and Carl McIntire condemned the NAE (and the nation's most popular evangelical minister, Billy Graham) for accepting support from theological modernists.[31] The SBC declined to affiliate with the NAE, satisfied with its own practices and doctrines, and differing with the NAE in its intense political conservatism.[32]

Notwithstanding the NAE, evangelical churches were decentralized, obstructing religious reformers from influencing the churches from the top down.[33] The most nationally known voice of evangelical Christianity was Billy Graham, whom both conservative and liberal politicians sought the support of. Graham was a conservative Democrat who frequently visited Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon.[34] His political opinions were more varied than the opinions later espoused by conservative religious broadcasters.[35] Though he linked communism with Satan, he supported the War on Poverty and civil rights.[36] Graham's high profile in politics was exceptional. Most of the subjects I interviewed claimed that evangelicals were less likely to be involved in politics than mainline Protestants because they focused on conversion rather than political reform. Focus on the Family (FOF), for example, blamed social

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[31]Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 85.

[32] Reichley, *Religion and American Public Life*, 312-313; Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 74. While all fundamentalists are evangelicals, not all evangelicals are fundamentalists. Evangelicals believe in a direct personal relationship with God, while Fundamentalists believe in Bible infallibility.

[33] Interview with Tim Goeglein, February 7, 2011.

[34] Months before deciding whether to run in 1968, Nixon called upon Billy Graham to visit for three days. According to Nixon, Graham resisted advising him on whether to run, but gave in after much probing. Graham declared "I think you should run...You are the best prepared man in the United States to be President." Graham let Nixon know which Southern Baptists would be most receptive to speaking invitations, and helped urged Southerners to support Nixon's China policy and comply with court-ordered desegregation at Nixon's request. Graham assured evangelicals of Nixon's solid moral character, but after Nixon's tapes were made public in 1974, he was sickened by Nixon's behavior and said that he "felt like a sheep led to the slaughter." He refused to become involved in politics again and warned others to focus on spiritual fellowship. Williams, *God's Own Party*, 90-96, 103.

[35] Graham told a CIO field director that "religion and organized labor have much in common, and that each needs to understand and respect each other." Lucy Mason to Billy Graham, undated, Operation Dixie mf 64.

[36] Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 125.

problems on permissive parenting, rather than government policy, when it was founded in 1977. One religious scholar wrote that "social evils will disappear through the miraculous regeneration of the individual by the Holy Spirit."[37]

Even the school prayer controversy failed to inspire political activism among theological conservatives in the 1960s. Neither the NAE nor the SBC filed a brief for *Engel v. Vitale* or *Abington School District v. Schempp*, which prohibited school prayer and the reading of Biblical passages in school, respectively. McIntire declared that the former was a victory for religion because public school prayers tended to be non-denominational, "pagan prayers." After the *Schempp* decision was announced in 1963, the NAE and the ACCC responded with opposition. Despite a clear majority of support for school prayer among the American public, no protestant denomination supported Senator Everett Dirksen's school prayer amendment, and the two presidents of the SBC during the 1970s consistently opposed efforts to amend the Constitution.[38] Conservative strategist Paul Weyrich tried to persuade Republican leaders to become involved and had no success. The Wisconsin state Republican chair asked him "Why would we want to involve ourselves in that? That's crazy. Are you out of your mind?"[39] Abortion also failed to animate major opposition among Protestant groups, evangelical or mainline. Two theologically conservative magazines, *Eternity* and *Christianity Today*, published articles justifying abortion in some cases.

Among rank and file evangelists, a 1980 Gallup Survey showed that only slightly more evangelicals were right-of-center compared with the public. On economic issues,

[37] Liebman and Wuthnow, *The New Christian Right*, 168.
[38] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 174-177, 187. Catholics were critical of the *Engel* decision immediately.
[39] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 170.

54 percent favored government programs to deal with social problems, compared with 53 percent of all respondents. On cultural issues, they were 1 percent less likely to favor the death penalty, 10 percent more likely to favor banning abortion, 22 percent more likely to favor school prayer, and 16 percent less likely to allow homosexuals to teach in school.[40]

Catholics, though not devoted to biblical inerrancy, would later become allied with theological conservatives on many cultural issues. Catholics had been a traditional Democratic constituency since the nineteenth century, when the Democratic Party recruited Irish immigrants. During and after the New Deal, the Democrat's traditional immigrant base remained loyal while African Americans and unions joined the party and influenced the party agenda. In the 1940s and 1950s, many liberal union leaders like Philip Murray, James Carey, and John Brophy identified as Catholics, while others, such as Walter Reuther, were elected by Catholic factions in their union. Unions would sometimes use Catholic churches, as well as synagogues and protestant churches (both black and white) to promote their message.[41]

In summary, conservative Protestants and Catholics tended to be registered Democrats before the 1980s. With some exceptions, most were not allied with conservative economic groups, though Southern churches did not actively promote economic progressivism as some Northern churches did. Nor were they actively conservative on many early cultural issues. The moderation of the SBC, in particular, would also stand in contrast to the positions it would later be known for.

Cultural Liberals and the Democratic Party

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[40] Johnson and Tamney, *The Political Role of Religion in the United States*, 133.

[41] Lucy Randolph Mason, the Public Relations director for the CIO in the South, traveled extensively to recruit Southern ministers to liberal causes or at least assure followers that their sect did not prohibit unionism.

Culturally liberal groups emerged in the 1960s and pushed for women's rights, abortion rights, and gay rights through the Democratic Party. This agenda – labeled a "secular humanist" agenda by its opponents – eventually strained the loyalty of traditional Democratic partisans such as Catholics and evangelical Protestants. The transformation of the Democratic Party is the starting point of the Republican Party transformation's on those issues. After the repeal of the Prohibition amendment in 1933, cultural issues other than civil rights were conspicuously absent from party agendas. Women's rights groups, teachers unions, and gay rights groups changed the cultural issue landscape in the 1970s and provided Republicans with opportunities to recruit longstanding Democratic voters unhappy with the new stakeholders in the party.

Prior to the 1960s, women's rights activists were more likely to be found in the Republican Party. Of the first 36 states to ratify the 19th amendment, 29 of them had Republican legislatures. The Republican Party supported an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) throughout the 20th century, though Republican politicians did not actively campaign for it, and it had little chance of passage. Liberals and labor unions traditionally opposed the ERA because it would void laws protecting female workers. When the federal judiciary and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission extended protective laws to men, worker protections were no longer in danger and liberal groups supported the ERA.[42] In Congress, both parties converged in ERA support in the 1970s and then switched places.[43] On the abortion controversy, rank-and-file Republicans were more likely to be pro-choice even as late as 1980. In a survey from

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[42] Wolbrecht, "Explaining Women's Rights Realignment," 9.
[43] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, 5, 22.

that year, the pro-choice/pro-life split among Republicans was 62-33 percent, while the split among Democrats was 54-43 percent.[44]

One of the first steps into Democratic Party politics occurred when President Kennedy created the President's Commission on the Status of Women to mollify ERA supporters. One existed in every state by 1967, and recommended new policies in employment, civil rights, and social insurance. The National Organization for Women (NOW) emerged at a conference of these commissions and urged enforcement of the Civil Rights Act's provision against gender discrimination, maternity leave rights, abortion rights, passage of the ERA, and government child care facilities. The National Abortion Rights Action League was found in 1969 with close ties to NOW. Although abortion initially produced a split in NOW, the splinter organization, Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), soon became explicitly pro choice.[45] Many of the most politically involved feminists by 1972 were Democrats. While Betty Friedan wanted the National Women's Political Caucus to be a bipartisan group supporting many ideological positions compatible with women's rights, New York City representative Bella Zbzug and women's movement leader Gloria Steinem sought to create a party coalition of the "outs" – the poor, blacks, women, youth, and homosexuals.[46]

Women's groups found the Democratic Party more accessible partly because the McGovern-Fraser Commission recommended convention quotas for women (in addition to youth and African Americans), which were put in place in 1972. (STOP ERA founder

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[44] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 30. Convention delegates in the 1980s were more antiabortion: only 20 percent of Republicans favored unrestricted abortion access, and 40 percent supported a constitutional amendment banning abortion.
[45] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, 24, 34.
[46] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 33.

Phyllis Schlafly helped to defeat quotas for women in the Republican Party.[47]) National

Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) Director Doris Meissner had met with DNC Director

Larry O'Brien to push for the quotas, which enabled women to challenge biased state

delegations and placed the burden of proof on state parties. Women's groups challenged

40 percent of the delegates from 30 states using these procedures before the convention,

and forced a floor fight on some issues. While the RNC made efforts to increase the

proportion of women delegates, the ideological self-placement of female delegates was

nearly identical to Republican men, and Democratic female delegates were considerably

more liberal than male delegates. NWPC members at the Republican convention were

far more reserved. Many of them were elected officials or married to elected officials,

and together they held only one meeting at the convention. One NWPC organizer said

"These Republican women were, on the whole, a group of savvy politicians, who

recognized that they were a 30% minority group, and were not about to risk losing any

futile battles in a public rout."[48] The Republican Women's Task Force prioritized Ford's

reelection in 1976 and only worked quietly on the abortion and ERA planks.[49] A panel

study of female delegates who dropped out of Republican convention politics showed

them to be more liberal than their male counterparts or females who continued to be

active.[50] The Democratic Party clearly provided more access to vocal feminists. By the

late 1970s, more than 70 percent of feminist PAC contributions went to Democrats and

the percentage has never fallen below 70 percent.[51]

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[47] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 309.
[48] Katznelson and Mueller, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 222-224.
[49] Katznelson and Mueller, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 227.
[50] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 114-115.
[51] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 46.

Feminist groups adopting a moderate approach found that they could not sustain interest among their members. Elizabeth Boyer set up the Women's Equity Action League as a moderate counterpart to NOW and more radical feminist groups. Boyer believed in conventional political tactics and opposed mass protest, which she thought would be too likely to alienate Midwestern constituencies. She reported "We don't take positions on issues that polarize people – like the Pill or abortion." In 1972, however, WEAL became pro choice and declared "rebellion is inevitable, and WEAL stands for responsible rebellion."[52] From the CIO strikes of the 1930s to the antiwar demonstrations of the 1960s, the Republican Party had never been a comfortable place for the politics of rebellion and mass protest. The more feminists employed the language of rebellion, the less they fit in with the party that traditionally housed more women's rights advocates.

Gay rights activists also became a new Democratic Party constituency in the wake of 1960s cultural changes. The first gay rights organization openly affiliated with a political party was the Log Cabin Republicans, found in 1993 (constituted by local gay Republican groups tracing back to 1978). It was shortly followed by Barney Frank's National Stonewall Democratic Federation in 1998. However, gay rights organizations had unofficial but visible ties to Democrats and liberal organizations before either. One of the earliest gay rights organizations, the secret Mattachine Society, was organized in 1951 by Harry Hay. Though Hay was a communist, other members of the group thought that communist ties were a liability, and adopted a resolution against communism that caused Hay to leave the group he founded. The Mattachine Society embraced a moderate, accomodationist tone in its publications and forums. A number of factors still

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[52]Katznelson and Mueller, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 199-201.

weighed in favor of working with the Democratic Party and liberal causes. Militant anticommunists in the Republican Party, like Joe McCarthy, were even more critical of homosexuals than other politicians of the era. Additionally, the Democratic-sponsored Civil Rights Act of 1964 inspired many homosexuals to fight for similar antidiscrimination laws against gays. Two New York City Democratic representatives, Bella Abzug and Edward Koch, introduced the first gay rights bill proposed in Congress in 1974. Abzug refrained from actively campaigning for the bill, or even informing other representatives or gay rights groups, and called gay rights a "dangerous" issue.[53] Little discussion took place on the matter in Congress. Nonetheless, Democrats were consistently more receptive than Republicans to gay rights. In 1982, four safe-seat Democrats in the Wisconsin legislature sponsored the first state antidiscrimination bill to become law in the country. Although some visible Republicans supported the bill, the overall percentage was low.[54]

Many homosexuals pursued rights using litigation, which further estranged them from conservatives. Homosexual conduct was widely deplored in the U.S., and judges insulated from public opinion were more likely to decide in favor of gay rights than politicians. The ACLU, which was liberal on labor rights as well as civil rights, was one of the few allies against anti-sodomy laws in the 1960s. Earlier, it had defended the right to consume "obscene" literature read by San Francisco's Beat scene, which was popular with homosexuals.[55] By the 1970s, conservatives had developed a critique of judicially

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[53] Karol, "Party Position Change and the Politics of Gay Rights in the US Congress," 4.
[54] Rimmerman, *The Politics of Gay Rights*, 303.
[55] D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 178.

enunciated rights unintended by the legislatures that granted them.[56] This often led them

to view obscene materials as unprotected by the first amendment.

Homosexual organizations proliferated after the Stonewall Riots of 1969. While

50 organizations existed before the riots, 800 existed just four years later and thousands

existed by the late 1970. The more militant gay activists drew on networks of 1960s

radicals, adopting their broader critique of American life and methods of mass protest,

and recruiting allies in New Left and feminist circles.[57] The oppression of homosexuals

was linked to other forms of inequality.[58] While gay conservatives opposed expanding

government to achieve gay rights, the progressives linking gay rights to other liberal

social movements were far more visible to the public. The politically liberal Randy

Wicker persuaded the *Village Voice* to run a series on New York City's gay community,

making him appear as a community spokesperson. Willing to display all aspects of the

gay culture, he drew the ire of many of older homosexuals who preferred to be known as

ordinary Americans apart from their sexual orientation. Wicker lobbied for speaking

engagements in the early 1960s with liberal groups such as ADA, Village Independent

Democrats, and the American Humanist Association. The efforts of homosexual social

group leaders to ally with other activists on the left provoked some backlash among the

rank and file. The lesbian magazine *Ladder* emphasized commonalities with the feminist

movement that divided its readers.[59] Homosexual writer David Brudnoy wrote to *NR*

publisher William Rusher that

> MOST homosexuals in America are fundamentally conservatives – successful, quiet, capitalistic,
> professional, competent, turned off by the vulgarity and trashola of the Left – but the vocal gays

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[56] For one example, see Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*.
[57] D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 237-238.
[58] D'Emilio, "Cycles of Change,"34- 35.
[59] D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 158, 58, 228-229.

are the screaming lefties. Chalk this one up to the failure of the Right to come out with a civilized position on the matter.[60]

Nonetheless, organizations for homosexuals flourished in the 1970s as they networked with liberal groups.

Both feminists and gay rights supporters came to work with each other in pushing the Democratic Party in a more culturally liberal direction. Abzug was a feminist as well as an opponent of the Vietnam War. Although feminist Betty Friedan initially chastised feminists who worked for gay rights, she came to support gay rights in the International Women's Year Conference in 1977. A gay rights plank passed overwhelmingly, though a few of the women present turned their backs during the vote.[61] For their part, gay rights organizations have reciprocated with feminist groups by endorsing abortion rights and affirmative action for many minorities.   The Victory Fund, which helps to elect openly gay and lesbian officials, mandates that endorsed candidates be strongly pro-choice. Gay rights groups such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign have also supported labor rights in return for support from unions.

Public School Teachers' Unions, who would come to embrace liberal cultural issue positions, were also becoming increasingly important players in the Democratic Party. Although they had existed well before the rise of cultural issues, national teachers' unions gained more influence beginning in the 1960s. Their clout increased when a collective bargaining agreement was achieved for New York City's teachers in 1961, and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) upheld the right to strike in 1964.[62] In 1964, the National Education Association (NEA) and AFT devoted far more resources to

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[60] David Brudnoy to William Rusher, August 20 1972, William Rusher Papers 12.
[61] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatives*, 246.
[62] Lieberman, *The Teachers Unions*, 10, 15.

238

collective bargaining than ever before, with a corresponding increase in membership.[63]

In 1969, the NEA favored including birth control and family planning in sex education, and it favored on-site child care services for adolescents in 1978. Its opposition to school choice, favored by religious schools, has been a litmus test for any candidate endorsement.[64] In the 1980s, it also favored "reproductive freedom" and AIDS education, and by the 1990s, it passed a resolution celebrating diversity in sexual orientation that it was later forced to modify under fire from conservative critics.[65] These positions would place the NEA in opposition to the political positions theological conservatives came to take by the 1980s. The NEA overwhelmingly endorses and contributes to Democratic candidates, and was closely involved with Al Gore's campaign in 2000. Vice Presidential nominee Joe Lieberman recanted his previous support for school choice immediately upon accepting the nomination.[66]

Parties and Cultural Liberals

At first, the Democratic Party showed more interest in retaining the support of theological conservatives and Catholics than recruiting feminists and gay rights groups. George McGovern was associated with the "three A's" of "acid, amnesty, and abortion," but he backpedaled on his initial pro choice position. After narrow victories in Catholic states, McGovern favored leaving abortion to the states.[67] Feminists attempted to force a floor vote at the Democratic Convention on the abortion issue, but lost by a three- to-two

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[63] Lieberman, *The Teachers Unions*, 19. From 1962-1965, the AFT doubled its membership from 60,715 to 112,000 and the NEA increasing its membership from 765,616 to 943,581

[64] Interview with Leonard DeFiore, former superintendent of Catholic schools in Washington, D.C., March 24, 2011.

[65] Lieberman, *The Teachers Unions*, 33.

[66] Interview with Leonard DeFiore, March 24.

[67] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, 181; Williams, *God's Own Party.*

margin. One speaker was allowed to support gay rights at the 1972 convention, but only at 2:00am, and only after another speaker extolled opposition to homosexuality.[68]

The party platforms did not reveal major differences in 1972. Both platforms supported ERA, day care programs, and bars to gender discrimination, and neither one mentioned abortion. Even in 1976, both parties continued to support ERA but party nominees had difficulty finessing the abortion issue. Carter favored abortion rights, but angered feminist groups by opposing existing federal funding for abortion. Paul Weyrich, the conservative organizer responsible for the Heritage Foundation, even testified before the Democratic platform committee. Weyrich claimed he felt that evangelicals were not represented in politics, and was pleased that Carter, who had appealed to pro-life voters in Iowa was openly evangelical.[69] Ford had originally proposed states' rights on abortion, but when Ronald Reagan proposed to challenge the state rights position before the platform committee, Ford agreed to a platform that commended groups working to pass an antiabortion amendment.[70] Senator Robert Dole, one of the earliest Republicans Senators to oppose abortion after *Roe v. Wade*, became Ford's running mate. Strategy notes from Dole's 1976 campaign only briefly note Dole's position as an asset when campaigning among Catholics, and did not list him as such among evangelical or fundamentalist voters.[71]

President Carter had the potential to win over cultural conservatives due to his evangelical background, but instead crystallized them into a conservative opposition movement over the course of his presidency. Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson called

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[68] O'Leary "From Agitator to Insider: Fighting for Inclusion in the Democratic Party." 86.
[69] Interview with Paul Weyrich, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[70] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, 118.
[71] "Strategy-Vail," Personal/Political Campaign Correspondence, 1968-1976, Box 27, Folder 2 of 4, Robert Dole Archives.

Carter a "Christian brother" and taped an interview with him months before Election Day.[72] Just under one-half of evangelicals voted for him in 1976, and more than 56 percent of Baptists supported him.[73] In office, President Carter alienated conservative evangelicals by failing to appoint many evangelicals to high office. Instead, he appointed Sara Weddington, the lawyer who argued the case against abortion restrictions in *Roe v. Wade*, as his liaison to women's groups. He also appointed Bella Abzug, a feminist and supporter of gay rights, to preside over the National Women's Conference. He later invited the first delegation of gay rights leaders to the White House, and the Democratic Party included a gay rights plank in 1980.[74] Although Carter said that homosexual unions were not "normal" relationships, he reassured the press that "I don't see homosexuality as a threat to the family" and "society, though its laws," ought not to "abuse or harass the homosexual."[75]

In an effort to rally support for the 1980 election, Carter sponsored a "Conference on Families" to address family-related issues.[76] The conference, attended by over 700 people, endorsed government funded day care and other forms of economic assistance to families. Gloria Steinem claimed that she persuaded Carter to change the name from the "White House Conference on The Family" to the "White House Conference on Families" to imply acceptance of diverse forms of family lifestyles.[77] According to one report, gay and lesbian groups attempted to isolate cultural conservatives and time important votes to

[72] He later claimed he changed his vote for Ford later in the campaign (Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 43).
[73] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 185; Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 168.
[74] D'Emilio, "Cycles of Change," 37.
[75] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 149.
[76] Freedman, *The Religious Right and the Carter Administration*, 246.
[77] Interview with Phyllis Schlafly by Cal Skaggs, October 27 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

coincide with church services.[78] Connie Marshner, who edited a newsletter entitled *The Family Protection Report*, hoped the conference would address issues such as divorce and sexual permissiveness. She argued that the Conference was stacked against cultural conservatives, and walked out of the conference with thirty delegates on the second day. This enabled resolutions on the ERA, abortion, and gay rights to pass by a single vote.[79] Marshner said that the Conference helped unite single-issue conservative groups against a united front of cultural liberals:

> Before the White House Conference on Families, somebody told me they had gone to a… "Stop E.R.A." meeting and said, "You've gotta be concerned about something to do with abortion," and the "Stop E.R.A." people said, "Well, we don't care about that; you know, we're not interested in that; that's not our issue." Well, by the time the White House Conference was over, you never heard that any more, because the people who were concerned about stopping E.R.A…[who] were concerned about "crazy feminism," realized that there was a whole interwoven connection of all the issues on the other side. And therefore there had to be an interweaving of the issues on our side, that it wasn't going to fly to say, "Well, I'm against E.R.A. but I don't care what they do with abortion or I don't care what they do with the schools or I don't care what they do with, you know, parents' rights or anything," because it's inconsistent and doesn't work.[80]

To attendee Terry Scanlon, a Democrat and future pro life activist, the conference was a crude way for Carter to energize his reelection campaign in the name of family values, and a wake-up call that Carter was not sensitive to family concerns as he and other Catholics understood them.[81] Conservative strategist Paul Weyrich claimed that the conference paved the way for conservatives to recruit theological conservatives because it showed how far the Carter administration was from mainstream evangelicals.[82] For

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[78] Interview with Ed Rodgers by David van Taylor, October 23 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection. Rodgers reports this second-hand from his mother-in-law, who was in attendance.
[79] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 184.
[80] Interview with Connie Marshner by unknown interviewer, August 7 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[81] Interview with Terrence Scanlon (a former Reagan appointee to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Heritage Foundation employee, and current President of Capital Research Center), December 28 2010. Only Carter's evangelical sister Ruth appealed to evangelicals through evangelical organizations (Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, 63).
[82] Interview with Paul Weyrich by unknown interviewer, date unknown, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

feminist groups such as NOW, Carter did not put enough effort into supporting ERA, and

NOW's executive board voted to oppose Carter's renomination in December of 1979.[83]

The Carter administration further alienated theological conservatives when the

IRS sought to revoke the tax exemption for schools established after *Brown v. The Board*

of Education until they proved that they did not discriminate. Many of these schools

admitted blacks, but made no effort to recruit them, and high tuition rates discouraged

attendance. By 1981, there were an estimated 1,000 religious schools starting each year

affected by the tax issue. Fundamentalists had traditionally avoided politics partly

because their local communities offered insulation from societal trends they disagreed

with. Federal efforts to restrict local school prayers, along with the increasing

pervasiveness of popular culture that ran contrary to their values, impeded their efforts to

shield their subculture from the culture at large. The federal government's attempt to tax

them appeared to threaten their enclaves with the most vulnerable part of their population

– their children.[84]

Carter abandoned a pledge he had made to Catholics in the 1976 election, when

he sent a telegram to Catholic school superintendents in 1976 hinting at support for

parental choice or a federal tuition tax credit:

> I am firmly committed to finding constitutionally acceptable methods of providing aid to parents whose children attend parochial schools. I am firmly committed to seeing that children attending parochial schools benefit fully from federal education programs.[85]

Once in office, Carter announced his strong opposition to the bipartisan Packwood-

Moynihan tax credit for parochial schools.[86] Catholic school superintendents were

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[83] Wolbrecht, *The Politics of Women's Rights*, 45.
[84] Cromartie, *No Longer Exiles*, 26.
[85] Interview with Leonard DeFiore (Catholic University Education Professor), March 24, 2011.
[86] The bill was never reconciled between the House and Senate, partly because proponents knew the president would not sign it.

furious at Carter's reversal of his campaign pledge, viewed as a way to cement his ties with the NEA.[87]

NOW and the National Women's Political Caucus wanted a plank in 1980 to withhold campaign assistance and funding from candidates who did not support ERA. The Carter campaign considered this a litmus test, and would have preferred to maintain a "pluralistic" party. But Carter's campaign withdrew when the NEA, whose delegates constituted the largest single block of voters at the convention, endorsed the plank.[88] House Speaker Tip O'Neill persuaded Bella Abzug to hold a voice vote on the issue to avoid being divisive. Even though witnesses could not tell which side won the vote, O'Neill immediately announced it passed.[89] Carter's own predispositions seem to have been to try to keep Catholics, evangelicals, feminists, and public school teachers satisfied, but in order to avoid alienating the latter two, took positions that alienated the first two. NOW retracted its opposition to Carter in October.[90]

By 1984, the Democrats were not even making token efforts to reach out to evangelicals. NAE took the initiative to approach the Democrats. A Democratic staffer told NAE that the party was not holding platform hearings, even though they did for groups such as the National Abortion Rights Action League. When NAE asked if it could provide written testimony, the staffer said "Yes, well, if you get testimony in to us," and said that two photocopies would be sufficient.[91] Robert Dugan, Political Director of NAE recalled:

> It is not that we haven't tried [to approach Democratic candidates]. Over the years, for example, before the details were known, we sought year after year to get Senator Gary Hart to speak to our

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[87] Interview with Leonard DeFiore, March 24, 2011.
[88] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 99.
[89] Katznelson and Mueller, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 231.
[90] Wolbrecht, *Politics of Women's Rights*, 45.
[91] Cromartie, *No Longer Exiles,* 83.

federal seminar of college students and got terrible treatment from his staff, which showed zero interest in making a connection with the evangelical community.[92]

The Democrats would risk losing the support of other interest groups by accepting the overture from NAE. NEA opposed school prayer and vouchers. Women's rights groups supported abortion. In the case of Carter's failure to reach out to evangelicals, Sara Weddington said that "I do not feel making a switch on something like abortion would have helped Carter at all" because of all of the liberal women whose votes he would have alienated.[93]

Many Democratic leaders who had opposed abortion in state level politics changed their positions once they ran for national office. Ted Kennedy, Sam Nunn, Joseph Biden, Al Gore, Richard Gephardt, Jesse Jackson, Bob Kerrey, and Dennis Kucinich had all changed from an anti-abortion to a pro-choice position as the issue became more salient in the party; some changed shortly before presidential elections. Even congressional leaders such as Tip O'Neill, Robert Byrd, Jim Wright, and George Mitchell changed positions.[94]

With the advent of the new cultural issues in the 1970s and 1980s, the Democratic Party increasingly sided with the proponents of cultural change more than their scattered opponents among religious sects. Theological conservatives, largely concentrated in the South, were slow to organize and even seemed divided on issues such as abortion and school prayer. As future events would reveal, granting greater representation to one group meant increasing conflicts with another group. The creation of institutional

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[92] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 116.
[93] Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, 68-69.
[94] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, Chapter 3.

orderings in politics – such as political party positions – almost inherently leads to friction with other political institutions, such as religious groups and interest groups.[95]

The Republican Party and Cultural Issues

Beginning in the 1960s, new groups in the Democratic Party strained the loyalty of traditional Democratic partisans such as fundamentalist, evangelical, and Catholic voters. As Ronald Reagan told the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, the "so-called cultural issues—law and order, abortion, busing, quota systems—are usually associated with blue-collar, ethnic and religious groups themselves traditionally associated with the Democratic Party."[96] Women's rights groups, gay rights groups, and teachers unions provided Republicans with opportunities to recruit these "blue-collar, ethnic and religious" Democrats. But most Republican leaders failed to pick up the pieces at the time. As with the civil rights transformation of the Democratic Party, the cultural conservative transformation of the Republican Party was resisted by existing Republican politicians and delegates.

(Figure 6.1 about here)

Many modern conservatives trace the conservative transformation of the Republican Party to 1964, but Layman (2001) shows that evangelicals and Catholics leaned Democratic in their party identification until the 1980s.[97] Figure 6.1 shows that neither evangelicals nor Catholics were especially receptive to Goldwater's conservatism, notwithstanding Bob Jones, Jr.'s endorsement. A clear majority of evangelicals have voted against Democratic presidential candidates consistently only since 1980. Although

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[95] Orren and Skowronek, *In Search of American Political Development.*
[96] Ronald Reagan, Speaking at a banquet of the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, January 15 1977, William Rusher Papers 75.
[97] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 188-193.

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they joined the Nixon landslide in 1972, they were divided over Carter's candidacy in 1976. The most important changes in presidential voting seem to have occurred between 1980 and 1984. Republican MCs were slow to use cultural issues in their campaigns. One study of the *Almanac of American Politics* finds that very few Congressional Republicans espoused culturally conservative messages in 1978. Between 10 and 20 percent did so in the 1980s, followed by a significant increase in the 1990s, peaking in 1998 with 30 percent of Republicans nationwide and 46 percent of those in the South.[98] Presidential elections have been competitive among Catholics only since 1980. It is unclear that the growth in Catholic identification with the Republican Party took place because of cultural issues. Nonregular church members were just as likely to become Republicans as regular church members.[99]

Republicans of the 1970s were following the path of earlier Republicans. It is difficult to find hints of Christian conservatism among Republican politicians, even conservatives, before then. Mainline Protestants identified as Republicans in a ratio of 3:2 in the 1940s and 1950s.[100] Their churches were hierarchical organizations heavily influenced by religious thinkers from top-tier schools, and even social reformers such as birth control advocate Margaret Sanger.[101] When Republican members of Congress (MCs) drew up a "Conservative Manifesto" in 1937, the ten point program consisted entirely of economic planks, except for one plank supporting state's rights in vague terms.[102] In 1938, Republicans held a "Program Committee" to discuss ideas for party

[98] Cohen, "Moral Victories."
[99] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 171.
[100] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 127.
[101] Interview with Tim Goeglein (Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family, former Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison from 2001-2008), February 7, 2011.
[102] John Moore, "Senator Josiah W. Bailey and the 'Conservative Manifesto' of 1937," 35. Admittedly, most Republicans distanced themselves from it when it was prematurely leaked to the press.

reform. The meeting included 8 blacks, 16 Jews, and 30 Catholics among its 273

members. Former president Herbert Hoover suggested a proposal to reestablish the

"common morals" appropriate "in a Christian country," but it did not pass.[103] The anti-

New Deal Liberty League consisted largely of business leaders who opposed Prohibition,

the most important cause of cultural conservatives in recent memory. The cosmopolitan

Democratic presidential nominee of 1928, Al Smith, was one of its speakers. In the early

1940s, former RNC chairman John D. Hamilton, who blamed Republican presidential

defeats on "me-tooism," was eager to define the conservative ideology. In a series of

writings on "The Attempt to Obtain a Conservative Policy," he never brought up religion,

cultural issues, race, or even states' rights.[104] The "Old Right's" standard-bearer, Robert

Taft, supported ERA.[105] Future Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell wrote a private

memo for the Chamber of Commerce, which often cited as the strategy that inspired the

growth of conservative think tanks in the 1970s.[106] In his list of concerns about the

culture, he mainly focused on hostility to free enterprise and only briefly mentions books

on "erotic free love" as a concern. Powell did not bring up any other cultural issues or

religion in the memo. At the state level, Republican governors signed abortion

liberalization laws passed by Republican legislatures in both Colorado in 1967 and New

York in 1970 (Catholic pressure prevented the New York legislature from passing the

same bill when Democrats controlled the legislature). California Governor Ronald

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[103] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 103.
[104] John D. Hamilton, "On the Attempt to Obtain a Conservative Policy, 1942-1945," John D. Hamilton
Papers 6.
[105] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatives*, 215.
[106] The memo convinced Joseph Coors to play a more active role in politics and provide funding for the
Heritage Foundation (Edwards, *The Power of Ideas*, 9).

Reagan signed the most liberal abortion law in the country in 1967, which failed to pass under a unified Democratic state government.[107]

Cultural conservatism was not even part of the conservative wing of the Republican Party in the 1960s. Many conservatives credited Senator Barry Goldwater with beginning the transformation of the Republican Party into a conservative party.[108] While Goldwater showed that Northeastern moderates held less influence than they once did, he did not push the party in the direction of cultural conservatism. His daughter obtained an abortion with his support.[109] A survey of Goldwater delegates from the South found that they were mostly mainline Protestants, with Southern Baptists constituting only 10 percent. *Christianity Today* reported that only 3.8 percent of Goldwater supporters were fundamentalists.[110] The convention's keynote speaker, Mark Hatfield, was an evangelical, but he had been a Rockefeller delegate.[111] Although Goldwater counted Jerry Falwell, Jesse Helms, and most of the future New Right among his 1964 followers, he also counted future Republican Party feminists. In 1994, he co-chaired the Human Rights Campaign's "Americans Against Discrimination" project, which fought state and local initiatives against gay rights.[112] Goldwater was a conservative leader in the 1960s, but the Republican Party's main divisions at the time concerned civil rights, economics, and foreign policy. Moderates accepted the New Deal

[107] Williams, "The GOP's Abortion Strategy," 6-7.
[108] William F. Buckley (WFB) to Roger Milliken, November 30, 1960, WFB I:10. *NR* editor William F. Buckley, who closely observed and even managed several conservative interest groups, said that Goldwater was more responsible than anyone else for the receptivity of Southerners to the Republican Party. Buckley said that Milliken, a donor to Goldwater, *NR*, and other conservative causes was the second most responsible individual.
[109] Interview with Howard Phillips, March 18, 2011.
[110] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 139-140.
[111] Interview with Mark Hatfield by Cal Skaggs, October 26 19995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[112] Rimmerman, *The Politics of Gay Rights*, 60.

as inevitable and possibly desirable but ignored the cultural issues that would come to play such a large role in coming decades.[113]

President Nixon was alert to the potential of both evangelicals and Catholics, but lacked intimate knowledge of the religious sects and the persistence to bring about long term party transformation. White House tapes reveal Nixon to have a very rough grasp of evangelical culture. For example, he was unaware of how much progress they had made in overcoming prejudice against Catholics. Nixon made several efforts to speak to Southern Baptist gatherings in 1972, but too many pastors complained. Nixon aides even attempted to install deputy Veteran Affairs administrator Fred Rhodes as SBC president. Not only did the attempted coup fail, but the SBC instead elected a friend of Jimmy Carter, Owen Cooper, who supported civil rights and rebuked the Nixon administration after Watergate.[114]

Nixon initially opposed abortion as part of a "Catholic strategy" in 1972 that also included aid to parochial schools, traditionally a Democratic issue. Pat Buchanan advised Nixon to "go hunting where the ducks are," and an unnamed aid advised

> The liberal Republican woman in the suburbs who favors abortion won't vote against the President just because he's against it…And the strong pro-abortionists, the women's libbers like Gloria Steinem, they aren't going to vote for him anyhow. But the working class Catholic mother, who thinks abortion is evil, will vote for him just because she's against it.[115]

When Democratic primary candidates Edmond Muskie and Hubert Humphrey campaigned for Catholic votes by opposing abortion, Nixon released anti-abortion statements to preempt them in the general election. After winning only narrow victories in Catholic states, George McGovern favored leaving abortion to the states. By the Republican convention, when Nixon could no longer use abortion against his opponents,

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[113] Interview with Mickey Edwards, March 15, 2011.
[114] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 97.
[115] Karol, Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, 63-64.

He dropped the issue.[116] Conservative strategist Paul Weyrich later said that Nixon was right that the Republicans should win over Southern Democrats and religious conservatives, but failed to adopt policies that would bring a socially conservative realignment to fruition. He claimed, "I thought Nixon had it right in terms of where the Republicans ought to go, but that he was not propounding the kind of policies that would ultimately get there."[117]

President Ford initially believed that he could not win the support of evangelicals against Jimmy Carter in the 1976 election, but after Carter's interview with *Playboy* magazine alienated some of them, he reconsidered. He became the first president to address the SBC convention and Jerry Falwell's congregation. He also told *Christianity Today* and the president of NAE that like Carter, he had a "born again" experience and read the Bible daily. Ford lined up many pro life supporters, including leaders of American Citizens Concerned for Life, the National Right to Life Committee, the Christian Action Council, and the Christian Crusade. Nonetheless, his wife was outspoken in support of ERA and abortion rights, and in the past, the president seemed to support her. Ford also refused to let gospel film executive Billy Zeoli, a longtime associate, write a book about his faith, or lend his name to the Preachers' committee for Ford.[118]

Ronald Reagan's campaign was courting culturally conservative voters with the abortion issue as early as 1975. Although Reagan had signed the most liberal antiabortion law in the country as governor of California, he claimed to regret the

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[116] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, 181; Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 82; Williams, "The GOP's Abortion Strategy."
[117] Interview with Paul Weyrich by unknown interviewer, unknown date, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[118] Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, "The Other Born-Again President," *Time*, January 2 2007.

decision because too many women were fabricating reasons to have abortion to protect their health.[119] He also advertised that he vetoed a 1969 bill that would have allowed adolescents to buy condoms.[120] Still, Don Devine, his deputy director of political planning and analysis, recalls that many campaign workers in 1976 were afraid that the abortion issue would lose more votes than they gained.[121]

Neither Ford nor Reagan's 1976 campaign featured the efforts to reach out to theologically conservative churches typical of later Republican presidential candidacies. Southern campaign director David Keene said that it would have never occurred to him or anyone else to contact Southern churches for support, because they had never been politically active. He recalled "there wasn't some place you could go to do that. Churches weren't that involved. You did not sit down and say 'how do you get the church?'"[122] Devine added that in 1976, churches may have reacted angrily to campaign efforts to politicize their church.[123] When Reagan, still hoping to be the Republican nominee against Carter, drafted a strategy note in June of 1976, he discussed the issues he planned to raise during the campaign and did not bring up a single cultural issue.[124]

Besides Reagan, at least one other politician with national ambitions had learned the importance of the abortion issue. After Reagan lost to Ford, Senator Robert Dole helped draft the antiabortion plank in the Republican platform in order to line Reagan supporters behind his bid to be Ford's running mate.[125] The platform still enunciated "a

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[119] Interview with Terrence Scanlon (former head of Consumer Product Safety Commission, Heritage Foundation employee, and current President of Capital Research Center), December 28 2010.
[120] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 32.
[121] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 8; Interview with Don Devine, June 14 2011.
[122] Interview with David Keene, June 3 2011.
[123] Interview with Don Devine, June 14 2011.
[124] Ronald Reagan to Clark Reed, June 28 1976, Robert Dole Archives, Personal Political Subject Files (Republican) Box 399.
[125] Williams, "The GOP's Abortion Strategy."

continuance of the public dialogue on abortion."[126] Otherwise, to the extent that Reagan

helped recruit evangelicals to the Party in 1976, the efforts were from his own campaign

and not from existing Republican politicians, few of whom supported Reagan's challenge

to the incumbent president. In 1974, Dick Cheney assured Ford that he need not worry

about Reagan rallying grassroots conservatives against him, because Ford had an

enthusiastic grassroots following. Cheney and his boss, Donald Rumsfeld, believed that

Reagan's wing of the party would be exposed as "really a front for Joseph Coors."[127]

Even Senator Goldwater endorsed Ford against Reagan in the 1976 Republican Primary,

though he considered Reagan's television spot on his behalf to be the best advertisement

of his 1964 campaign. Goldwater believed "I never really had a choice…[Ford] was a

Republican and the incumbent President."[128] Conservative activist M. Stanton Evans

pointed out that Reagan would not be able to defeat Ford in key states such as Indiana,

Illinois, and Ohio, "where party solidarity and organization are constantly stressed" and

"the 'pragmatic' nature of the Republican governor and the local Republican machine,

and the highly structured party organization all would militate against your victory."[129]

Leadership Institute President Morton Blackwell, who had started his career as a party

delegate and a chairman of the College Republicans, explains that "there is a presumption

that if you are active in a party, you have an obligation to support the candidates, the

nominees of that party…If you are going to be the leader of a party committee, it is

ruinous." As the 1980 election approached, many Republicans opposed Reagan's

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[126] Jo Freeman, "Feminist Activities at the 1988 Republican Convention," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March, 1989), 40.

[127] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 241, 381n. 67.

[128] Goldwater, *Goldwater*, 29.

[129] M. Stanton Evans to Ronald Reagan, undated 1975, William Rusher Papers 134 (Committee for a New Majority).

candidacy even though he was no longer challenging a sitting incumbent. RNC Chair Bill

Brock, who had been one of the earliest Republican Senators to be elected from the

South, invited a polling company to a televised presentation in which he compared

presidential contender ideologies to voter ideologies. While most of the Republican

contenders were slightly to the right of the average voter on the graph, Reagan was far to

the right. The implication that Reagan was too extreme was not lost on Reagan's

supporters.[130]

The Republican National Committee (RNC) made an effort to recruit Southern

Democrats with "Operation Switch," inviting Southern Democrats to change their party

affiliation. Though not explicitly a culturally conservative tactic, it was later headed by

one of the most outspoken proponents of cultural conservatives in Congress, Jesse

Helms.[131] The Republican Party sponsored "roving registrars" in many states that

registered new people to vote. Before the Republicans became a viable party in the

South, many Southerners did not bother registering to vote where Democrats primary

contenders held similar views.[132] These efforts were resisted by many existing

Republican politicians from the South. V.O. Key observed that "Southern Republican

leaders are usually pictured as vultures awaiting the day when the party wins the nation

and they can distribute patronage in the South. Meantime, they exert themselves only to

keep the party weak in the South in order that there will be fewer faithful to reward."[133]

David Keene concurs that most Southern Republicans in 1970 were businessmen who

moved with their companies to the South. A relatively small number of them would

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[130] Interview with Don Devine, June 14 2011.
[131] Council for a National Policy, Council Update, April 1 1985, William Rusher Papers 185.
[132] Interview with Mickey Edwards on March 15, 2011.
[133] Quoted in Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 58.

attend Republican "post office parties" because, as "big fish in small ponds," they had good chances of obtaining political appointments. They felt threatened by a large pool of Republican voters and candidates, who reduced their chance at securing appointments. Other Republicans in the South had spent years building a moderate party in the region.[134] A Florida MC visited Keene in Vice President Agnew's office and "screamed" at him for twenty minutes, claiming that "we don't want these people in the party. He went on and on about how they were no good, they were lowlifes…And then he said that if they come into the party, next thing you know there are going to be primaries." In the 1980 election, the same MC lost a primary contest to a Democrat who had defected.[135]

Nixon and Ford's efforts to win over evangelicals and Catholics were opportunistic, short-lived, and even clumsy. They hardly remodeled the party into a welcoming home for stray, theologically conservative Democrats. Theological conservatives had to choose between candidates who embraced them opportunistically and candidates who embraced their opponents. The RNC made a somewhat more sustained effort to win over Southern Democrats, but they did not approach congregations and pastors the way Republican candidates would in the near future. It would fall upon the theological conservatives themselves and a group of maverick conservatives to build the infrastructure necessary to do that.

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[134] Mason, "I was going to build a Republican Party and a New Majority," 474.
[135] Interview with David Keene, June 3, 2011.

Figure 6.1

Republican Share of Two-Party Presidential Voting

— White Evangelical
····· Catholic
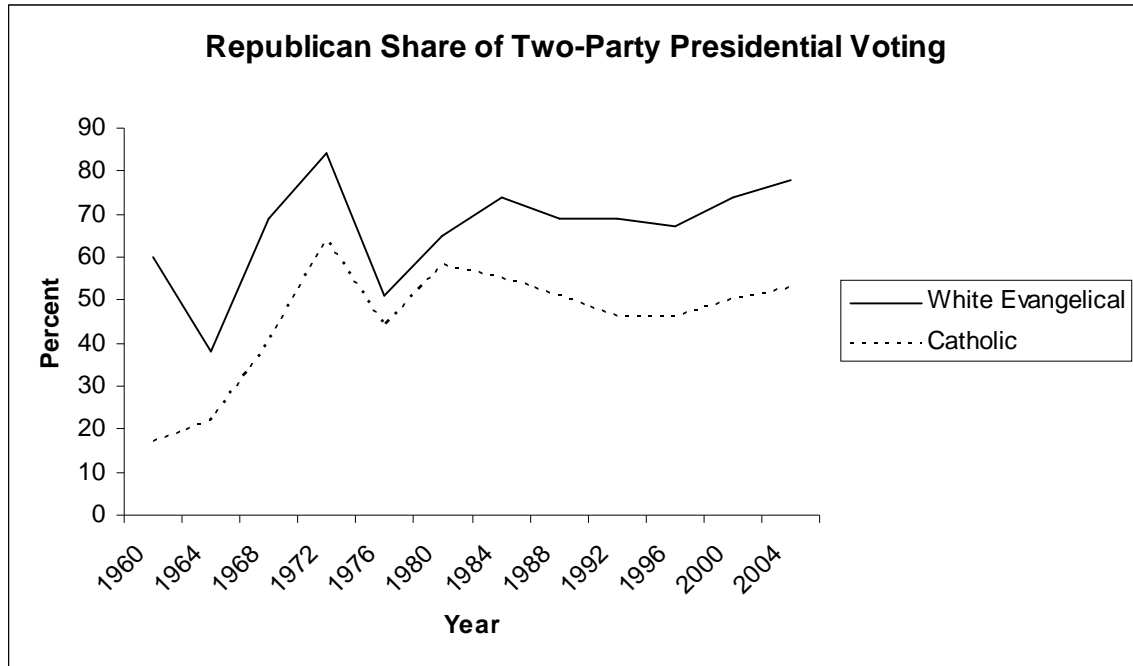
Source: Espinosa, *Race, Religion, and the American Presidency*, 15.

THE LARGEST TRACT OF VIRGIN TIMBER ON THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Republican presidential candidates endeavored to win the votes of evangelicals and Catholics as early as 1972. Nonetheless, a number of conservative strategists believed that the Republican Party would remain insufficiently conservative on cultural issues, as well as economic and foreign policy issues, without exogenous pressure. "The New Right," a group of former Goldwater supporters, actively recruited theological conservatives to the conservative movement in the late 1970s. The timing of their activities closely coincide with growing Christian conservative support for Republicans.[1]

In 1974, conservative direct-mailing mogul Richard Viguerie became incensed at President Ford's choice of Nelson Rockefeller as vice-president. He invited a group of former Goldwater supporters to his living room to discuss how to end the continuous domination of moderates in the Republican Party. By and large, the invitees were socially conservative and came from blue-collar, religious backgrounds. Rockefeller had worked tirelessly to block the advance of the Goldwater faction and flaunted his disregard for traditional values by rapidly divorcing his wife to marry a recently-divorced employee. Although the attendees could not stop the Rockefeller nomination, they impatiently plotted to realign the Republican Party without the help of established politicians. In 1975, political analyst Kevin Phillips labeled them "The New Right," and they soon described themselves that way. Just as the CIO-NAACP alliance treated the symbolic politics of conventions quite seriously, the New Right was energized by the symbolic appointment of Rockefeller. Heritage Foundation founder Paul Weyrich said:

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[1] See Figure 6.1.

> That move…contributed to the development of the new right – and later religious right – than any other single move…Nelson Rockefeller was symbolically the devil incarnate for the conservatives in the country…It said 'you people don't mean anything. We're going to take the party in a different direction'…We can no longer influence this party from the inside. We will have to try to influence it from the outside.[2]

Among the New Right leaders were Viguerie, Weyrich, Conservative Caucus founder Howard Philips, National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) founder Terry Dolan, and Morton Blackwell, who later became President Reagan's liaison to conservative groups.[3] They were experienced in political campaigns, fundraising, and the mass media, and learned to mobilize followers by capitalizing on anti-establishment sentiment. In the late 1970s, they actively sought to recruit evangelical Christians to the Republican Party on the basis of cultural issues. They were motivated not only by their own conservatism on cultural issues (even if they were not themselves evangelical Christians[4]), but their desire for new allies to displace Republican moderates.

Realignment through a Third Party

The New Right's study of historical realignments led them to believe the Republican Party needed to shift its emphasis beyond its base of economic and foreign policy conservatives. Some New Right leaders thought the Republican Party would never move in this direction and pushed for a third party. Before the 1976 election, *NR* Publisher William Rusher formed the Committee for a New Majority (CFNM) to form a third party, fearing that the Republican Party was collapsing in the wake of Watergate and establishment Republican stagnation. Rusher believed that the Republican Party

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[2] Interview with Paul Weyrich by unknown interviewer, unknown date, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[3] Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution*, 183-184.

[4] Weyrich and Viguerie were devout Catholics from blue collar families; Howard Phillips was Jewish but became a born-again Christian.

would never nominate a candidate as conservative as Ronald Reagan.[5] A CFNM study

asserted:

> to have survived as party capable of winning elections, the Republican party would have to have
> violated the interests of large scale corporate structures, structures within which the names
> Rockefeller, Scranton, Lodge, Percy and Romney are so prominent…A major party will only
> collapse if a dominant function of the party prevents it from accepting new interest groups.[6]

CFNM authored a study asserting that it needed to avoid the mistakes of the National

Republican Party of the 1820s and the Free Soil Party of the 1840s, whose policy

positions catered too heavily toward the group initiating the party.

The nucleus of CFNM and its supporters consisted of economic conservatives

such as the ACU members and *NR* readers, but for a new party to avoid the fate of the

Free Soil Party, CFNM needed to unite their group with social conservatives. Most of

them were familiar with Kevin Phillips' *The Emerging Republican Majority*, which

argued that blue collar ethnic voters were disgruntled with liberalism. George Wallace's

success was proof of their dissatisfaction, and that Republicans could become the

majority party by augmenting their coalition with voters attracted to Wallace. Economic

conservatives alone would win only 10 percent of the electorate. The social

conservatives were a group that was

> [Less concerned with] unrestrained free market economics [and] more concerned with retaining
> social structures that maintain social cohesion….Social conservatives have a basic animosity
> against social control by the upper classes in general, which includes the economic
> conservatives…Their talk is rougher and many racist statements they make in their bars and
> homes reflect the rhetoric of a frustrated and unrepresented voting block that is not more capable
> of a more articulate vocalization.[7]

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[5] Interview with David Keene, June 3 2011.
[6] Untitled Manuscript, 1975-1976, William Rusher Papers 142 ("Committee for a New Majority").
[7] Untitled Manuscript, 1975-1976, William Rusher Papers 142 ("Committee for a New Majority"), page 12.
The essay classified ethnic Democrats as another group ready to join a new party. This included Greeks
who wanted Greek taught in school and the Irish in South Boston who resisted busing. The author
cautioned against employing America's Judeo-Christian heritage openly, as it would create worries against
some of the ethnic groups.

Howard Phillips also described conservatives as a group that would soon realign

American politics on the basis of relatively new cultural issues, listing the 1828

Democratic Party as an example to follow. In 1974, he wrote:

> How to bring together parents against busing, workers fed up with high taxes, right-to-lifers, advocates of capital punishments, opponents of gun control, foes of pornography…is the same kind of organizational challenge which confronted 1820's "conservatives."[8]

CFNM's commitment to a coalition with the Wallace supporters was strong enough that

they considered moving leftward on economic issues to appeal to the union workers and

Catholics that supported George Wallace. Viguerie stated that:

> I'm willing to make concessions to come to power. That's what a coalition is…We're going to have to be willing to use the government to stimulate the economy more than I think we should in order to get the votes.

David Keene, the southern regional director for Reagan's 1976 campaign and future head

of the ACU, confirmed that the New Right urged the Reagan campaign to be more

conservative on cultural issues and less conservative on economic issues:

> The compromises that we conservatives are being asked to make go right to the core of what we consider conservatism – our dedication to preserving the free-enterprise system...We conservatives who have a strong attachment to economic freedoms do so because it is an outgrowth of our attachment to the freedom of the individual—and this is not necessarily shared by some people within the Viguerie group.

Daniel Joy, the legal counsel to conservative Senator James Buckley, concurred that the

New Right was most willing to compromise on economic issues.[9]

Rusher and Viguerie believed that the American Independent Party offered

conservatives the opportunity to unite with blue collar voters provided they were willing

to soften their position on these economic issues. They participated in the American

Independent Party's campaign in 1976, hoping to persuade Ronald Reagan and George

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[8] Howard Phillips. "Jacksonian Democracy Offers Precedent for the 'New Majority'." 1974. *Human Events*. October 5.
[9] All quotes from "Fission on the Right: Richard Viguerie's Bid for Power 1977." 1977. *The Nation*. January 29. 105.

Wallace lead the ticket.[10] Rusher said the purpose of their efforts was insurance - to have

a means of running a Reagan candidacy in the general election if he failed to win the

Republican nomination. Reagan and other conservative Republicans (including Senator

Steven Symms) declined to participate in the convention, and the American Independent

Party nominated segregationist Governor Lester Maddox.[11] Rusher said that the pool of

conservatives willing to bolt the Republican Party was smaller than he had expected, and

the nomination of Maddox proved that the American Independent Party could not be

trusted again.[12] With the possibility of an alliance with George Wallace scuttled, they no

longer believed they needed to compromise on economic issues, either.

For several years thereafter, Rusher believed that Reagan had lost his only chance

to become president by working within the existing two-party system. The New Right

generally lamented the lack of strategy to change the party even among conservative

office-holders. Leadership Institute President Morton Blackwell was shocked that "Old

Right" conservatives like Barry Goldwater, John Tower, and Strom Thurmond never

coordinated with each other to strengthen their position. When Phyllis Schlafly asked

Strom Thurmond to hold Southern delegates in 1968 unless Nixon nominated a

conservative running mate, Thurmond said that he opposed convention politics of that

sort. In 1971, Senator Goldwater defended Nixon to a group of conservatives who

approached him to convey a message to the president, arguing that deserting Nixon meant

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[10] Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution*, 189.

[11] Phillips said that Viguerie's main purpose in attempting to seize the American Independent Party was to defeat Ford ("Fission on the Right: Richard Viguerie's Bid for Power 1977." 1977. *The Nation*. January 29) but the CFNM made a concerted effort trying to convince Reagan that his chances of winning the election were better on a third party ticket (M. Stanton Evans, to Ronald Reagan, undated, William Rusher Papers 134, Committee for a New Majority 1975).

[12] William Rusher to Joseph Coors, September 9 1976, William Rusher Papers 12.

the election of Edward Kennedy or Edmond Muskie.[13] A group of conservative senators

published a conservative manifesto for forthcoming decade in 1979. Paul Laxalt wrote

the chapter on "the family," but it mainly focused on solid child-rearing practices and the

effects of government programs on families. Laxalt briefly criticized government

funding for abortion, divorce, and gay rights through legal aid at the end.[14] The House

Republican Conference, likewise, published a program that year that covered many

issues, but completely omitted cultural issues.[15]

Even worse, the RNC obstructed the New Right's efforts to move the Republican

Party to the right, and drained resources from genuinely conservative movements.[16] The

RNC arranged for conservatives such as Goldwater and Reagan to sign fundraising letters

focused on conservative issues, but they spent the money raised on electing Republicans,

regardless of their ideology, rather than policies. Weyrich complained that the RNC has

"been unwilling to make so much as a phone call on a key conservative issue," but it

"gets the money on our issues…and reduces our contributions so that we have less money

to fight the GOP in the many instances where it is on the wrong side."[17] If New Right

strategists were to transform the Republican Party, it would have to be without substantial

help from elected Republicans.

Realignment through the Republican Party

By the late 1970s, the New Right viewed theologically conservative churches as a

repository of inactive voters who could remake the Republican Party into a more

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[13] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 191, 205.

[14] Rich Williamson to Ed Meese, December 30 1979, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 107.

[15] "House Republican Conference Program," Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 106.

[16] William Rusher to William Brock, December 21, 1978, WFB III: 38.

[17] Quoted in William Rusher. 1978. "Raising Conservative Bucks." *National Review.* October 8. Page 1531.

conservative across different policy areas.[18] Blackwell recalls making this suggestion at

one of the meetings:

> It was clear we needed to bring in a lot of new people. At one of those meetings, I said…theologically conservative Christians were the largest tract of virgin timber on the political landscape. And we, in these meetings that Richard had, one of the things we focused on was how the theologically conservative Christians could be awakened politically.[19]

Mickey Edwards, a founding member of the Heritage Foundation, corroborates

Blackwell's story. He recalls that most attendees at Viguerie's meeting agreed that a

majority of Americans were conservative in their beliefs, but observed that liberals kept

on winning elections.[20] The way to reach these Americans was through the churches:

"Where are you likely to find masses of them gathered together? In Churches….If you

got people in the churches to be focused on why conservatism was a better course for

them, you started winning elections."[21] Charles Colson, the author of *Born Again*, agrees

on this account even though he disagreed with the strategy of politicizing the churches.[22]

Many in the New Right had considered this earlier, as had President Nixon,

without obtaining results. Howard Phillips hired Ed McAteer, a Colgate-Palmolive

salesman networked with the most popular religious broadcasters in America, as field

director of the Conservative Caucus in 1974. In 1976, Viguerie told *Sojourners*, a

progressive Christian magazine, "The next real major area of growth for the conservative

ideology and philosophy is among evangelical people. I would be surprised if in the next

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[18] Conservative Caucus founder Howard Phillips had earlier hired Edward McAteer, a sales promoter with many evangelical preacher contacts, as field director in 1974 (Reichley, *Religion and American Public Life*, 320).

[19] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27 2011; Ed Dobson confirms Blackwell's account in an interview with David Van Taylor, November 30 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[20] Opinion polls showed that 60 percent of Americans identified as conservatives. "Fission on the Right: Richard Viguerie's Bid for Power 1977." 1977. *The Nation*. January 29. 105. A Heritage Foundation visit to Youngstown, Ohio, confirmed their belief that American workers were fundamentally conservative.

[21] Interview with Mickey Edwards on March 15, 2011.

[22] Interview with Charles Colson by unknown author, unknown date, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

year you did not see a massive effort to involve them, utilizing direct mail and other techniques."[23] Viguerie knew that Billy Graham and other theologically conservative ministers with large followings had valuable mailing lists, but they would not share them, partly to protect their lists from competitors. Blackwell reports that the New Right planned in 1979 to persuade a theologically conservative religious broadcaster that Christian values were under assault from the federal government, and hope that others followed his example. A religious broadcaster could make his mailing list available for conservative political causes. Moreover, New Right leaders needed "an ordained minister," rather than secular political strategists, if they wanted to "garner a force of Christians for good."[24] Liberal clergy were already "up to their necks" in politics, but conservative theologians, almost by definition, eschewed political activism.[25] Many theological conservatives believed the material world was beyond reform. At this time, Bob Jones, Jr. urged fundamentalists to "turn their back on the Moral Majority and seek the soul-satisfying contentment of being a scriptural minority."[26] Two of the most popular evangelists in America, Oral Roberts and Rex Humbard, eschewed politics. According to Weyrich, many of the new conservative Christian groups were afraid that political involvement would undermine their integrity and alienate donors.

It would not be the first time political activists would use churches as a means to organize voters politically. Both the CIO and civil rights groups used churches to hold meetings, provide information, recruit new voters, and lend moral legitimacy to their cause. Cesar Chavez realized that incorporating Catholic teachings into the Farm

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[23] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 330.
[24] Future Moral Majority director Ed Dobson made this comment (Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 203-204).
[25] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27 2011.
[26] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous,* 25-31.

Workers of America's mission could help insulate them from red-baiting and attract members of the community not directly involved with the union.[27] Nevertheless, Republican officeholders and party chairs steadfastly resisted recruiting theological conservatives or shifting focus to cultural issues. When Weyrich first advised RNC Chair Bill Brock to reach out to evangelicals and fundamentalists, "he didn't understand what I was talking about…it was so foreign to him that it didn't make any sense." Brock said publicly at the time:

> You can't build a party around these emotional cultural issues and I'm not sure government can solve them. The New Right groups…draw attention in Congress from the broad issues of tax reduction, job creation, health care, housing – the American Dream issues. We can only become a majority party by bringing people around those issues.[28]

Brock said he was receptive to working with the New Right, but he was also open to working with other factions. He had earlier appointed Mary Dent Crisp, who was in favor of abortion rights and the ERA, as his co-chair. For the New Right, the only way to gain real representation for cultural conservatives was to weaken the position of moderates such as Crisp. As is often the case, party leaders wanted to straddle controversial issues.

Brock's behavior might be regarded as a strategy to maximize votes with a "big tent." However, it is clear that differences in class, religion, and behavior also separated the existing Republican Party activists from evangelical Christians. New Right strategists – who largely came from modest backgrounds – attributed the moderation of Republican leaders to their social class and a desire to preserve their position in the party. Dolan claimed that "The Republican Party is a fraud. It's a social club where the rich people go to pick their noses." Viguerie claimed that "Country Club" Republicans viewed New

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[27] Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, 104, 134.
[28] Kotz, Nick. 1978. "King Midas of the New Right." *The Atlantic*. November.

Right and Christian conservatives much the way people viewed unwanted relatives – they need to be invited, but one hopes they do not accept, and if they do, one hopes they keep quiet. The difference reflected social and economic differences as well as beliefs:

> These people are not ideologues, the social things are very important to them. The social status, the social clubs they belong to…What's important to my country club?…The best and brightest of the local community, people who are well-bred…They're the people who control the social environment. People on their way up, whose wives like to go to the right parties, know that if you hold traditional conservative views you're not going to be invited to as many parties…One of the most powerful and effective parts of the liberal ruling class is the style section of the *Washington Post*…If a congressman comes to Washington and votes like Jessie Helms, he's not going to be invited to as many social events.[29]

Faith Whittlesey, Reagan's Public Liaison, echoed Vigeurie's impression:

> Washington at that time [the early 1980s] was a town wholly-owned, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the liberal establishment. If you wanted to be invited to parties in Georgetown and if you wanted to get good press, you had to subscribe to a certain set of policy positions. And if you didn't you would get punished in the press. Somehow material would be leaked about you, and there would be negative articles about you in *The Washington Post* "Style" section…All the people they knew, the "important" people, in their world, were against Ronald Reagan's positions, and they would like Ronald Reagan better if he--if he changed his mind on some of these things….To take a position that is opposed by the Washington establishment has lots of implications for one's future life: You don't get invited to the right parties, you don't get invited to sit on the corporate Boards, you don't get certain clients…if you try to practice law. There are all kinds of future financial implications[30]

STOP ERA leader Phyllis Schlafly attributed establishment Republican resistance to a power struggle in which existing politicians and party leaders feared that culturally conservative, lower class voters would not follow the direction of party leaders.[31] Howard Philips said that establishment Republicans were not "ideologically motivated." "No strong issue or principle" drove their political involvement, and "when they found people who were very strongly motivated by policies and principles, it made them feel a little bit uncomfortable."[32]

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[29] Interview with Richard Viguerie on January 20 and February 16, 2011.

[30] Interview with Faith Whittlesey, September 21 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[31] Interview with Phyllis Schlafly on February 14, 2011. Although Schlafly does not consider herself to be a member of the New Right, she frequently attended their meetings, and shared their belief that establishment Republicans were unwelcoming to her and her followers.

[32] Interview with Howard Philips on March 18, 2011.

Several pieces of evidence, then and later, add some credence to these depictions of high-ranking Republicans. In private, George H.W. Bush referred to Christian conservatives as "temple burners."[33] Bush's son Neill called Pat Robertson's 1988 primary supporters "cockroaches issuing out from underneath the baseboard of the South." One third of Bush's supporters viewed Pat Roberston more negatively than Michael Dukakis and nearly as many viewed him more negatively than Jesse Jackson, a reverend who helped mobilize Democratic primary voters through black churches. Bush's Secretary of State James Baker referred to cultural conservatives as "the full-moon bayers of the Republican Right."[34] Lee Atwater reportedly described anti-abortion activists as the "extra chromosome" group.[35]

Both sides believed that the other side wished to exclude them from influence in the party. A political brief written for Ronald Reagan in the fall of 1980 indicates that regular party members felt as if the evangelicals aimed to exclude them, and not the reverse. The brief read that "The GOP is in good shape in South Carolina. There have, however, been some problems with the movement of Christian fundamentalists into the Party ranks. Some fundamentalists have rubbed party regulars the wrong way with statements that they will soon be 'taking over' the party."[36] One of Pat Robertson's Michigan organizers in 1988 admitted that a follower at a state party meeting hit a Republican politician over the head with a Bible for using profanity, while others were visibly uncomfortably when they interacted with Republican volunteers drinking.[37] In

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[33] Kelly, *The Family*, 430.
[34] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 420-421.
[35] Quoted by *Nation* reporter Eric Alterman in Forbes, *The Boogie Man*.
[36] "South Carolina Political Brief," October 9, 1980, Reagan Library Box 525 Campaign Papers.
[37] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 272. For a different perspective on the civility of Christian conservative discourse, see Shields, *Democratic Virtues of the Christian Right*, which focuses on a later time period.

1992, when NAE pressured a Bush speechwriter to change language in his speech, a staff member wrote "These are very haughty people. They say 'we got President Bush elected' [and they]…will hit us hard to manipulate the speech."[38]

The discomfort felt by longstanding Republicans mattered little to the New Right, who believed they had too much control over the party. Movements benefit enormously from "bridge builders" who are familiar with the distinctive norms of two or more social groups. Bridge builders identify groups separated by class, ethnicity, location, previous political activity, and mine their rolodexes for personal contacts likely to be sympathetic.[39] The New Right found such a bridge builder in Conservative Caucus Field Director Ed McAteer. McAteer's Baptist pastor, Adrian Rogers, later became SBC president and steered it toward conservative political positions and Biblical inerrancy in theology. McAteer also agreed to head an ecumenical cultural conservative group named the "Religious Roundtable" in a meeting with Phillips, Viguerie, STOP ERA leader Phyllis Schlafly, and SBC president Adrian Rogers.

McAteer introduced Weyrich to most of the evangelical leaders he worked with. Religious broadcaster Jerry Falwell asked McAteer to convey his interest in conservative politics to the New Right.[40] The Moral Majority emerged in 1979 from a meeting at a Holiday Inn with McAteer, Jerry Falwell, Weyrich (who named the organization), and Phillips. Falwell hosted one of the most popular religious programs in America. He agreed with conservative Republicans on most issues and had already helped Anita Bryant campaign to overturn a gay rights law in Florida. Falwell also built on the

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[38] Leigh Ann Metzger quoted in Carol Aahrus Memorandum RE: National Association for Evangelicals, February 22 1992, P2/P5 Box 21 (document 6259), George Bush Library.
[39] Obach, *Labor and the Environmental Movement.*
[40] Interview with Paul Weyrich, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

reaction to Christian school taxation policy by recruiting Bob Billings, founder of

Christian School Action, to work for the Moral Majority, which was headquartered in the

same building. Billings had shown the political potential of Falwell's mailing list by

purchasing it in 1977 to raise money for the "National Christian Action Coalition."

Blackwell said that other pastors realized that donations and membership to Falwell's

congregation flourished, and followed his lead.[41] The Moral Majority used the mailing

list of 250,000 donors to Falwell's show to raise $1 million in a month. By 1980 it had

300,000 members, including 70,000 ministers. Although Falwell and the Moral Majority

became the most well-known Christian conservative organization in the 1980s, the New

Right approached many pastors to persuade them to become involved in politics. Most

were more reluctant than Falwell. Weyrich persuaded Lance Torrance and Associates to

commission a $30,000 study to determine whether evangelicals would object to a pastor

that became involved in politics. The study found that most evangelicals were

disappointed that their pastors were not already politically active.[42] Viguerie recalls that

New Right leaders "spent countless hours with electronic ministers…urging them to get

involved in conservative politics."[43]

Pentecostal religious broadcaster Pat Robertson was also uniquely positioned to

build bridges between Pentecostals and Baptists, as he had begun preaching as a Baptist

minister. Robertson had solid ties to the New Right; Holly Coors, whose husband had

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[41] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27, 2011.

[42] Interview with Paul Weyrich by unknown interviewer, unknown date, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[43] Howard Phillips remembers the willingness of the conservative Christians to participate differently than Weyrich and Viguerie. He claims that most of them had no doubt that political involvement would help them grow their congregations, and some of them, such as Pat Robertson, came from political families (Interview with Howard Phillips, March 18, 2011).

helped to create the Heritage Foundation, sat on the board of CBN University.[44]

Robertson cultivated friendships with conservative SBC presidents and worked to bring

thousands of Baptists and charismatics together for a Washington for Jesus Rally in 1980.

Robertson, Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright, SBC president Adrian

Rogers, and Dallas broadcaster James Robison all used their programs and mailing lists

to draw more than 200,000 adherents to Washington D.C. for this day-long prayer

meeting, which had been the largest gathering to date.

According to Viguerie and Weyrich, the Christian Right mobilized primarily over

the tax-exempt status of religious schools during the Carter administration.[45] Viguerie

said that evangelicals were starting three new schools per day, and the issue "kicked a

sleeping dog…It was the episode that ignited the religious right's involvement in real

politics."[46] Weyrich said that

> What galvanized the Christian community was not abortion, school prayer, or the ERA. I am living witness to that because I was trying to get those people interested in those issues and I utterly failed. What changed their mind was Jimmy Carter's intervention against the Christian schools, trying to deny them tax-exempt status on the basis of so-called de facto segregation.[47]

Robert Billings, who would become Reagan's campaign liaison to evangelicals, admitted

that the issue activated religious conservatives, but they had also been concerned about

the moral direction of the country for years.[48] Weyrich said that once conservative

Christians were mobilized, they largely followed the tactical advice of New Right

strategists. George H.W. Bush's future liaison to evangelical Christians, Doug Wead,

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[44] Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, 13.
[45] Interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20 2011.
[46] Freedman, *The Religious Right and the Carter Administration*, 223,2 40; interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20 2011.
[47] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 173.
[48] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 317. Former ACU President Mickey Edwards claimed that this did not motivate the public or parents, but it mobilized Protestant leaders (Interview with Mickey Edwards, March 15, 2011).

said that even in the late 1980s, the Bush White House felt more threatened by the New Right than evangelical Christian organizations:

> From the vantage point of the White House, we were more fearful of someone like Paul Weyrich than we were some-one like Beverly LeHaye, who had a huge organization, Christian Women of America, with five hundred thousand paid members… because Paul Weyrich was savvy, he knew how to work the national media, and he would go to the press…[and] get millions of dollars worth of publicity. And the evangelical leaders didn't know how to do that.[49]

As Weyrich described it, Christian organizations "were so new to politics, they deferred to people like Howard Philips and myself."[50] Evangelicals were "babes in the woods," and many "sixth graders who had just learned civics that had a better clue as to how things actually went on in the country than many evangelical leaders."[51]

Multiple institutional trajectories converged at the right time for a party transformation favorable to evangelicals and the New Right. First, liberalism in the largest evangelical organization, the SBC, was producing a backlash. In 1968, religious moderates attempted to influence the SBC leftward. By the mid 1970s, many Southern Baptists became actively involved in civil rights, economic reform, and opposition to the Vietnam War. This produced a reaction that culminated in Adrian Rogers' conservative takeover in 1979. Some leaders would have preferred the church stay apolitical, but if political involvement was inevitable, such leaders preferred a conservative church to a liberal church.[52] Theologian Francis Schaeffer's attacks on "secular humanism" influenced a young cadre of Baptists to attack SBC President Foy Valentine, who was more open on abortion.[53] Rogers was officially elected president on a platform requiring seminary professors to believe in biblical inerrancy, but many supporters shared his

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[49] Interview with Doug Wead by Brad Lichtenstein, March 18 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[50] Oldfield. *The Right and the Righteous*, 101-102.
[51] Interview with Paul Weyrich, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[52] Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism*, 48.
[53] Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon*, Chapter 1.

stances on politicized cultural issues. One year later, the SBC convention denounced pornography, homosexuality, evolution, the ERA, and President Carter's "White House Conference on Families." Some leading SBC members, including former president Jimmy Allen, publicly criticized the Christian right in general and Moral Majority in particular, but the direction of the SBC was set. In 1980, only 29 percent of Southern Baptist pastors were Republicans, but by 1984, 66 percent were.[54]

Second, the New Right benefited from the activity of Catholics who had already created an anti-abortion political infrastructure. Sociologist Anthony Obserschall concluded in his study of social movements that "mobilization does not occur through recruitment of large members of isolated and solitary individuals. It occurs as a result of recruiting blocs of people who are already highly organized and participants."[55] The National Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a 13 page plan for pro life activities, including an effort in every parish and congressional district. The plan called for a "systematic organization and allocation of the Church's resources of people, institutions and finances," and cooperative ties with other opponents of abortion. The Conference's Family Life Division created the National Right to Life Committee, which had 11 million members in 1979. Boston Archbishop Cardinal Medeiros urged Catholics to vote against any pro-choice candidates in 1980.[56] During the same time period, the theologically conservative guru Francis Schaeffer, a critic of "secular humanism," toured the US showing an antiabortion film to numerous Christian groups.[57]

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[54] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 157-158, 192.
[55] Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, 125.
[56] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics: Mutiny in the Ranks of the Right*, 23-25.
[57] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 194.

New Right leaders were firmly convinced that abortion was morally abhorrent and a way to activate culturally conservative voters, including Catholics. Weyrich suggested that the abortion issue would help split the Catholic vote, and his "Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress" required MCs to oppose abortion in order to gain its support. Weyrich declared "We will not support candidates who are not sound on the abortion issue, and a Carter like stance (i.e., I am opposed to it but won't do anything about it) won't wash with this committee."[58] By first making contact on the abortion issue, they could discuss other issues with people who had not considered the conservative point of view before:

> Their convictions against abortion are like the first in a series of falling dominoes. Then we lead them to a concern about sexual ethics and standards among young people. This leads to opposition to secular humanism, then particularly in the schools with a purportedly decadent morality we point out that secular humanism is identified as both the godfather and the royal road to socialism and communism – which points the way to minimally regulated free enterprise at home and to aggressive foreign and military policy.[59]

Falwell readily agreed that abortion should be the centerpiece of the Moral Majority's political efforts, although he had not focused on it in the past. Weyrich and Viguerie advised a number of organizations not directly related to the Catholic Church, such as the American Life Lobby, on which districts to target and how to use direct mail effectively.[60]

Feminist and gay rights activism also created opposition movements to build on. STOP ERA groups took advantage of these earlier organized forces. In Florida, singer Anita Bryant organized evangelical and fundamentalist women against local ordinances that allowed gay adoption and prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Schlafly (a Catholic) worked with Southern Baptists, Churches of Christ,

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[58] Schlozman, "The Making of Partisan Majorities," 220.
[59] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 330.
[60] Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, 91.

273

and Mormons in various states where she fought the ERA.[61] Opponents to feminism

organized a Pro-Family Rally in Houston the same weekend as the International

Women's Year Conference, which endorsed abortion rights and gay rights, in 1977. Clay

Smothers, an African American Texas state legislator, said at the rally "I want to

segregate my family from these misfits and perverts." In the future, STOP ERA leaders

would simply present the International Women's Year Conference platforms to audiences

to depict ERA proponents as having radical agendas out of touch with mainstream values.

The International Women's Year Conference inspired James Dobson to organize FOF,

which later became one of the foremost family values groups in the country.[62]

Third, campaign finance laws in the 1970s benefited candidates who raised

smaller sums of money from a larger number of individuals. Culturally conservative

candidates benefited from the advice of direct mailing pioneer Richard Viguerie and

fared well in raising money from small donors. Even when recipients of the mail did not

return a check, they often read conservative arguments for various issues. Many of these

letters featured "red meat" appeals, stressing the role of government in subsidizing

abortions and homosexuals, protecting the distribution of pornography while crowding

religion out of public life.[63] Viguerie advised several single-issue organizations and

mailed single-issue appeals to the same address. Perhaps this broadened their horizons to

new issues, so that the gun rights supporters became aware of antiabortion arguments.

Earlier conservatives who attempted to fuse economic and religious conservatism, such

as J. Howard Pew, lacked this means for reaching large audiences. Viguerie claims that

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[61] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 111.
[62] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 248-250.
[63] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 205.

Reagan could not have won without direct mailing, as he raised $25-$50 donations from 250,000 people.[64]

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the more conservative religious sects were growing much faster than mainline sects, which have actually declined in membership. From 1960 to 1993, Episcopal Church membership declined from 3.3 million to 2.5 million; United Methodist membership from 10.6 million to 2.7 million; and Presbyterian Church membership from 4.2 million to 2.7 million. Among the Evangelicals over the same period, Assemblies of God grew from .51 million to 2.3 million and the Southern Baptists from 9.7 million to 15.4 million. In 1960, there were 50 percent more Americans regularly attending mainline Protestant churches than evangelical churches; by 1988, the reverse was true. Part of this growth was driven by change in religious television programming. Once television stations started charging religious programs for air time in the 1970s, mainline churches declined to pay and fundamentalists and evangelicals took over their program slots. The number of Protestants watching or listening to at least one religious broadcast a month doubled between 1963 and 1981.[65] Many of them, including Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Jim Bakker, frequently discussed politics by the late 1970s. Evangelicals constituted 20 percent of the American public by the 1980s, although not all evangelicals were enthusiastic about conservative politics or becoming involved in politics.

Coalition Maintenance

To fit comfortably in the conservative movement, cultural conservatives also needed to be conservative on economic and foreign policy issues. Religious groups

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[64] Interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20 2011.
[65] Reichely, *Religion and American Public Life*, 315.

sometimes oppose other factions in the conservative movement on economic issues. The Catholic Church has long promoted social welfare measures as a form of social justice. Even the NAE called for government protection for the poor, sick, and disabled through spending on education and health care in 2004.[66]

Conservatives had their hands full acclimating economic conservatives to culturally conservative messages as well. Business groups in the Republican Party actively avoided cultural issues,[67] and free enterprise organizations like the Cato Institute actively opposed cultural conservatism. In 1998, as Clinton's impeachment proved unpopular and the Republican majority in the House narrowed, the New York Times focused on the divisions between the party's "corporate pro-business faction" and "populist social conservatives." Of 52 stories on Christian conservatives and the Republican Party, 36 focused on such divisions.[68] These tensions emerged recently at ACU's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). ACU President David Keene was criticized by many conservative groups for allowing homosexual conservatives at CPAC. The Family Research Council, the Concerned Women of America, and the American Principles Project declined to attend CPAC in 2011 because of the presence of GOProud, a homosexual conservative group founded in 2009. On the other side, the culturally liberal Cato Institute has refused to attend since its inception to avoid association with cultural conservatives.

Don Devine, Reagan's deputy director of political planning and analysis, claims that the Reagan campaign did not believe that evangelical voters shared their economic

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[66] Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 68.
[67] Rimmerman and Wald, *The Politics of Gay Rights*, 123. Business Groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and National Federation of Independent Businesses rarely involved themselves in abortion or gay rights, and mostly sought to avoid controversy.
[68] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 133.

276

positions. He recalls that the campaign "had to make the social conservative message loud enough that they didn't care about economic conservative message."[69] Richard Viguerie, Phyllis Schlafly, and Federalist Society President Eugene Meyer, however, claimed that religious conservatives were already closer to Republicans on economic issues than Democrats.[70] Jerry Falwell and Jesse Helms had been Goldwater supporters, and the Moral Majority took positions on economic issues far removed from religion, such as the balanced budget and minimum wage.[71] The Michigan Family Forum later fought for lower taxes while the Michigan chapter of the American Family Association opposed "radical" environmentalists.[72]

In any case, conservative organizers since the New Right have made efforts to minimize any differences between cultural and economic issues. Weyrich's invitation-only "Kingston Group" meetings, beginning in 1972, encouraged economic conservatives, cultural conservatives, and defense conservatives to become interested in each other's projects. Activists who only tried to recruit for their own cause without volunteering to help on other causes, or failed to follow through with their commitment, were asked not to return.[73] In 1982 Weyrich organized a one-day conference between evangelicals and "neoconservatives," who had almost no personal contact between each other.[74] As Blackwell points out, frequent contact between merely political allies leads to greater bonds of affection:

> There are centripetal forces which pull people together in politics. When the same organizations and the same leaders work side by side against the same enemies in a long series of election

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[69] Interview with Don Devine, June 14, 2011.
[70] Interviews with the author on February 16, February 14, and March 28, respectively.
[71] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 44.
[72] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 106-107.
[73] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27, 2011.
[74] Paul Weyrich to Morton Blackwell, June 11 1982, Morton Blackwell Box 2, OA 1976, Reagan Library.

contests and legislative battles, they tend to become comfortable together. They frequently confer, make plans around the same tables, and get to know each other on a first-name basis. They learn which of their allies are trustworthy and come to like them.[75]

Eventually, the meetings became too large for the meeting room, and different kinds of conservatives met at different times and places.

Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist explicitly tried to return to the older model in his "Wednesday Meetings" so that conservatives would learn to market their ideas to a broader audience.[76] While these meetings began to unite different conservative organizations - including the Christian Coalition and the National Rifle Association - against President Clinton's health care proposals, they continued after the proposals' defeat. Norquist said that when one bloc of the coalition is indifferent to another bloc, he and other conservative activists attempt to minimize the differences and emphasize the commonalities:

> You find out when people go, "Gee, I have a problem with this. . . ." If you have the different interests in the room . . .[you] get everybody in the room focused on talking about what you're doing, and then you say, "What about this idea?" And if everyone says I am either for it or I'm indifferent, it's an okay position. The pro-lifers may not care about some gun issue. But if somebody [says], "No, that's a problem"—where there are disagreements, [you] try to minimize them. And so the whole point of the meetings is to figure out how we translate the general ideas into what we do today, tomorrow, over the next five years, and how we work together without tripping.[77]

Think tanks helped promote solutions acceptable to different partners within a coalition. Some Christians and Orthodox Jews were uncomfortable with the idea of school prayer, because their children may be forced to listen to prayers from other denominations. But conservatives found common ground with vouchers, with which they could send their children to a school with denominational prayers.[78] Sometimes, the statistical

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[75] Blackwell, Morton. 2010. "Another Large Influx of Grassroots Conservatives." July 7. http://www.redstate.com/morton_c_blackwell/2010/07/07/another-large-influx-of-grassroots-conservatives/
[76] Interview with Grover Norquist, July 24, 2010.
[77] Medvetz, "The Strength of Weekly Ties," 359-360.
[78] Interview with Grover Norquist, July 24, 2010.

information provided at meetings reassured different parts of the coalition. For example,

National Rifle Association presentations on gun violence help convince conservative

Christians that families are safer with gun rights than gun control. Candidates who

appear are encouraged to appeal to different parts of the movement in addition to signing

Americans for Tax Reform's anti-tax pledge. When a Republican Senatorial candidate in

Wisconsin uttered a standard political appeal to the meeting, Norquist said "Alright, we

don't need a stump speech. We're gonna stipulate that Feingold's bad and big

government sucks. Now tell us where you stand on babies, guns and taxes."[79]

A realignment of conservative think tanks and advocacy groups took place

following the rise of cultural conservatism, with many older groups broadening their

concerns to cultural issues. The Heritage Foundation's mission statement incorporated

family values only in 1993, twenty years after its founding. The ACU also concentrated

on economic and foreign policy issues at its founding. While ACU president Mickey

Edwards resisted making such appeals during his tenure, he claimed that "people would

yawn [when they received a letter] about strong defense."[80] Shortly after he left, ACU

was recast as an organization to serve other conservative groups, including the cultural

conservatives, and facilitate conversations between different kinds of conservatives.

Terry Dolan, a closeted homosexual, confirmed that cultural issues were important for

fundraising and mobilization. He crafted many of his written appeals based on abortion

and opposition to gay rights, even though later said that he was really more of a

libertarian.[81] Dolan conceded that he needed the cultural issues for successful

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[79] Medvetz, "The Strength of Weekly Ties," 353.
[80] Interview with Mickey Edwards on March 15, 2011.
[81] However, there is little evidence showing other New Right leaders to be insincere in their beliefs.
Weyrich and Viguerie were devout Catholics from blue collar families; Howard Phillips was Jewish but

fundraising claiming, admitting "We are trying to be divisive…the shriller you are, the better it is to make money."[82]

The Heritage Foundation purposely finessed the aforementioned differences between economic libertarians and cultural conservatives by confining cultural conservatism to forums and discussions, without committing much to writing. Much of its discussion of family values consisted of criticizing government welfare programs, such as those that impacted marriage rates or funded abortions.[83] Fiscal conservatives could agree on these issues. Since 1995, the Heritage Foundation has published *The Insider*, a magazine for policy analysts that emphasizes commonalities among different interest groups on the political right. The Federalist Society, an organization for conservative and libertarian law students, has avoided splits between the two factions by avoiding formal positions on political issues. Debates are sponsored on contentious issues to air differences, but the Federalist Society confines its own positions to a few basic tenets such as belief in the Constitution and the role of the state in preserving freedom.

The Christian Coalition, founded in the wake of Pat Robertson's failed presidential bid in 1988, was more successful than the Moral Majority in reaching out to cultural conservatives of many religious sects. While most of the Moral Majority's county chairs were pastors, the Christian Coalition recruited housewives, retirees, and professionals (only 15 percent of their local chairs were pastors). Executive Director

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converted to evangelical Christianity. Many of them criticized Reagan for prioritizing taxes and defense over cultural issues in his first year of office. According to *Newsweek*, other New Right strategists dissociated from him in 1982 when he criticized the New Right for attacks on homosexuals and apologized for doing so himself in the past. Alter, Jonathan. 1987. "Death of a Conservative: Terry Dolan's Legacy." *Newsweek* (January 12), 23.

[82] Quoted in Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 328.

[83] Interview with Edward Hudgins (former Heritage Foundation analyst), August 6, 2010.

Ralph Reed was careful to exclude "extremists" from leadership positions, and it was comparatively successful at recruiting conservative Catholics and mainline Protestants.[84] The Christian Coalition made an effort to frame their issues in language more amenable to liberal values, which antagonized secular Republicans and libertarians less. The Moral Majority and the Christian Voice used phrases such as "putting God back in the schools" and "stopping murder of the unborn." By the early 1990s, Christian conservative leaders were more likely to emphasize "parental rights" over school curriculums and the internet, "student rights" to voluntarily pray or form religious organizations, and "no special rights" for homosexuals. Abortion was reframed as a civil rights issue involving equality for the unborn.[85]

During the Clinton presidency, the Christian Coalition worked against Clinton's health care proposal, mirroring gay rights groups that campaigned against abortion in working on highly peripheral issues. Ralph Reed declared

> The pro-family movement has limited its effectiveness by concentrating disproportionately on issues such as abortion and homosexuality. These are vital moral issues, and must remain an important part of the message. To win at the ballot box and in the court of public opinion, however, the pro-family movement must speak to the concerns of average voters in the areas of taxes, crime, government waste, health care, and financial security.[86]

Reed later indicated that the Christian Coalition played an active role in promoting free markets to hold together a conservative coalition that included libertarians and social conservatives:

> we decided that as long as there were gonna be tensions between the economic conservatives, who were social libertarian, and the social conservatives, that these two companion elements of the coalition had to find a way to agree more than they disagreed. They had to agree that there were some things that they didn't agree on, and having settled that, then move on to work together on things that united 'em.[87]

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[84] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 54.
[85] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 25.
[86] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 455.
[87] Interview with Ralph Reed, October 23, 1995.

Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America" downplayed social issues, but the Christian

Coalition still focused considerable resources behind electing Republicans during that

campaign, apparently convinced they would obtain more without explicit cultural

conservatism in the Contract itself.[88] In anticipation of the Congress elected in 1994, the

Christian Coalition announced in a press conference that its priority was to fight for a tax

cut for middle class families with children. The Christian Coalition had also distributed

one million voter guides for Paul Coverdell, a Republican Senatorial candidate who was

pro choice, but opposed to federal funding for abortion. Similarly, it supported the

moderately pro-choice Kay Bailey Hutchison as Texas State Treasurer and George Allen

as Virginia Governor. According to Paul Weyrich and Michael Horowitz, the Christian

Coalition garnered respect from moderate Republicans and libertarians because of these

strategic decisions.[89] Reed explained "Our objective was to win a big victory on the

Contract with America, thereby building up political capital that we could later spend on

social issues."[90] A Christian Coalition pamphlet read, "There is an old expression that

goes 'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.'"[91] Although the pamphlet

referred to changing American politics, it also applies to the gradual transformation of the

Republican Party that Reed was willing to endure.

In addition to the differences between economic and cultural conservatives,

another potential obstacle to a church-centered strategy was sectarian division. Many

Fundamentalist groups, such as the ACCC, were associated with anti-Catholicism in the

1940s and 1950s. At the Religious Roundtable National Affairs Briefing in 1980, SBC

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[88] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 26.

[89] Interview with Ralph Reed by unknown interviewer, October 23, 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection; Interview with Michael Horowitz, April 25, 2011.

[90] Watson, *The Christian Coalition*, 73.

[91] Watson, *The Christian Coalition*, 63.

president Bailey Smith said that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew," prompting Pat Robertson to resign.[92] However, even different varieties of evangelicals quarreled with each other. To some extent, religious leaders themselves made efforts to repair relations with Catholics for the sake of the abortion issue. Robert Holbrook, a Texas Baptist who previously opposed working with Catholics, became willing to work with them on the abortion issue after *Roe v. Wade* was decided. *Christianity Today* editor Harold O.J. Brown organized the Christian Action Council as an ecumenical antiabortion group. The Catholic National Right to Life Committee and the American Citizens Concerned for Life also recruited Protestants to head their organizations. Christian Voice was found in January, 1979, and claimed to have 200,000 members and 37,000 ministers on its mailing list by the fall of 1980. It focused on the new cultural issues as well as staunch opposition to communism abroad. Both Baptists and Pentecostals joined the organization, but the leaders also recruited 300 Catholic priests into the organization.[93] NAE refused to endorse tuition tax credits until 1983 because they viewed them as a way for the federal government to subsidize Catholic education. NAE President Robert Dugan said that even in 1979, tuition tax credits were too controversial to discuss, but in 1983, a resolution supporting them passed by 91 percent.[94]

The Moral Majority was less successful than other Christian conservative organizations in bringing together diverse sects. Francis Schaeffer helped persuade Falwell to support "co-belligerency," in which different kinds of Christians joined forces to oppose secular humanism.[95] Falwell said that "in another context we would be

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[92] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 190.
[93] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 164-167.
[94] Robert Dugan to Morton Blackwell, March 22 1983, Morton Blackwell Box 16, Reagan Library.
[95] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 99, 118-119.

shedding blood, but our commitment to the family has brought those of us of differing religious views and backgrounds together to fight a just cause."[96] Despite the rhetoric, 45 out of 40 state chairmen were Baptists, and some of the largest chapters had no Catholic members.[97] Just the same, Falwell at least made an effort at coalition maintenance. In 1982, eminent evangelical spokesperson Carl Henry organized a meeting of fundamentalists and evangelicals to discuss their differences at his home. While he was interested in greater cooperation on service to the poor as well as cultural issues, the meeting quickly evolved into a discussion of the split between Falwell and Bob Jones, Jr. Falwell announced that Jones agreed to stop attacking Falwell before this meeting. Still, the theological conservatives were split between Jones' followers, who opposed cooperation across denominations, and Falwell's followers, who supported such cooperation. Falwell claimed that he represented 80-85 percent of fundamentalists on this matter.[98] Falwell, Henry, Francis Schaefer, and others agreed that internal dissension strengthened the opposition. They even discussed stressing common ties with liberal evangelicals because of their belief in Biblical inerrancy.[99] Group leaders, rather than politicians, were responsible for minimizing the conflict between different religious sects.

The New Right also worked to minimize differences between sects. The 1982 SBC convention happened to be scheduled weeks after Reagan announced his support for a school prayer amendment, and McAteer wanted the nation's largest Protestant denomination to unite behind it. New Right leaders knew the chances of passing the

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[96] Quoted in Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 347.
[97] Hadden, Shupe, Hawdon, and Martin, "Why Jerry Falwell Killed the Moral Majority."

[98] Jones appeared to continue to oppose part of the Catholic political agenda, strongly protesting the Reagan administration's decision to recognize Vatican City (Bob Jones to Ronald Reagan, December 30 1983, Morton Blackwell Box 16, Reagan Library).
[99] "Minutes at home of Carl Henry," February 1, 1982, Jerry Falwell Papers, Series 1, Box 3-2.

amendment were small, but hoped to identify supporters and opponents of their agenda on record for the next election.[100] Previously, the SBC worried that school prayers might not reflect their own religious views and opposed attempts to institute them. Members of the New Right had not anticipated such objections from evangelical protestant sects.[101] At the convention, McAteer invited pastors who reframed school prayer as religious liberty, since children were barred from praying aloud to accommodate atheists. Several emphasized the secular humanist opposition to the amendment. In the end, the convention supported school prayer by a 3:1 margin, the first time it had ever supported school prayer.[102] (SBC President James Draper still wanted assurance that the amendment would prevent government employees from writing the prayers.[103]) New Right strategists were not only pressuring the White House to support their agenda, but also persuading religious sects to adopt a range of positions on cultural issues.

Although conservative groups fought side by side on a number of issues, they paid a price if they worked for political or religious moderation. Michael Horowitz, an Office of Management and Budget Counsel for Reagan, said that Howard Philips pressured him to force a government shutdown if Congress failed to remove funding for legal services. Horowitz believed such a shutdown would be unpopular – as it turned out to be when Newt Gingrich was House Speaker – and would interfere with his goal of building the Republican Party into a majority party. He claimed that pressing for a more extreme position, however, raised more money for Philips and others through direct mail,

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[100] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 233.
[101] Interview with Paul Weyrich, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[102] Williams, *Gods Own Party*, 201-202.
[103] Faith Whittlesey to M.B. Oglesby, February 13, 1984, Carolyn Sundseth Box 3, Reagan Library.

which he called an "enemy" of the Republican Party.[104] The Moral Majority's donations

declined 25 percent when Jerry Falwell endorsed the comparatively moderate candidacy

of George H.W. Bush in the Republican primaries in 1988, although the organization had

been losing influence and donations in preceding years. While other cultural

conservatives have borrowed the issue framing and grassroots tactics used by the

Christian Coalition, it eventually found itself isolated by its cultural moderation. FOF's

James Dobson declared that his group would distance itself from the Christian

Coalition.[105] Pat Buchanan, Gary Bauer, and the American Life League were appalled by

the its modest social agenda, and the Christian Action Network complained that it was

"so locked into Republican politics, they are continually forced to re-define themselves

based on the current political climate and who's in charge of the Republican party."[106]

Although the Christian Coalition was successful in recruiting members and raising

money in the 1990s, it has since faded into obscurity.

This chapter shows that groups with political agendas recognized the potential of

culturally conservative voters to change a party and perhaps the political landscape of

America. They self-consciously worked to realign the Republican Party by organizing

these voters into groups and guiding their strategies, and helping to mediate the

differences between groups. The next chapter will discuss the pressure they applied to

politicians during and after elections.

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[104] Interview with Michael Horowitz, April 25 2011.
[105] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 424-425, 456. Even in 1995, FOF had a mailing list of 3.5 million names (compared with the Christian Coalition's 1.3 million), and its self-titled radio broadcast was the third most popular in America.
[106] Watson, *The Christian Coalition*, 73-74.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EATING THE ELEPHANT, ONE BITE AT A TIME

Christian conservative groups were effective at infiltrating the Republican Party.
For the most part, politicians campaigned for culturally conservative votes *after*
conservative activists set up a network of politicized churches and organized advocacy
groups. There were differences between the cultural conservatives and other
conservatives, but as with civil rights and labor groups, the groups negotiated their
differences with little aid from politicians. Moreover, politicians straddled their demands
with those of moderates during and after elections and thereby enervated the party
transformation.

Cultural conservatives fought to gain representation in nominating contests, of
course, but continued their battles for representation well into presidential terms of office.
Remembering the maxim that "personnel is policy," they subjected presidential
appointments to heavy scrutiny. They were especially sensitive in the first Bush
administration, believing that high-ranking Reagan appointments restricted access to the
president in spite of his own policy preferences. By contrasting group responses to
presidential politics during the Reagan and Bush administrations, we gain an insight into
the level of representation groups strive for. Their behavior during the Bush
administration illustrates that they were unwilling to settle for a candidate who merely
professed loyalty. Instead, they demanded someone authentically committed to their
agenda, who would push it along in "off-the-record moments" below the radar of

watchdog groups.[1] Ambivalent about Bush, they forced him to reassert his policy

commitments more vocally than Reagan had.

Not all of their activity centered on the national government. Cultural

conservatives placed great emphasis on electing their members to school boards and city

councils, where they could influence local obscenity ordinances, sex education,

homeschooling, and book selection.[2] The Moral Majority took over the Republican Party

in Alaska in 1980.[3] One of the first chapters of the Christian Coalition organized in

Orange County over the issue of starting city council meetings with a prayer.[4] An early

manual even read "For…abortion, drugs, education-the future lies at the state and local

level."[5] Since many such elections were nonpartisan and there were few public debates

about issues, critics called this technique a "stealth strategy." Although state and local

issues were important to culturally conservative activists, this chapter will focus on

national elections. Given the non-partisan nature of local elections, they are only a means

for transforming a political party insofar as local members play a role in party affairs,

such as national conventions. Additionally, the most important goals of the cultural

conservatives could only be achieved at the national level. Cultural conservatives needed

more influence in the federal judiciary to affect such issues as school prayer, school

choice, and abortion.

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[1] Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Masket, Noel, and Zaller, "A Theory of Parties."
[2] See interviews with Jerry Falwell, Bobbie Kilberg, Ralph Reed, and Guy Rodgers, all in Martin Religious Right Research Collection; also see Williams, *God's Own Party*, 199. One study finds that most state Moral Majority chapters were inactive based on the organization's newsletter (Hadden, Shupe, Hawdon, and Martin, "Why Jerry Falwell Killed the Moral Majority"). An exception was the Illinois Moral Majority, which helped defeat the ERA and even affect legislation in other locations (Davis, "The Illusion of Power").
[3] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 129.
[4] Interview with Ralph Reed by unknown interview, October 23 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[5] Rozell and Wilcox, "The Second Coming."

The New Electoral Landscape

The 1978 congressional elections foreshadowed the tactics of 1980 as New Right organizations sponsored candidates who challenged liberal Congressmen in both parties. The elections also hinted at the tensions moderates and conservatives in the party would experience in the near future. In Iowa, church volunteers placed anti-abortion literature on cars at Catholic mass services on the Sunday before the general election, helping to unseat liberal Senator Richard Clark.[6] The New Right also fought to replace Baptist minister John Buchanan, an Alabama Republican who had voted to create the Department of Education, with a more conservative Republican. Though Buchanan prevailed in 1978, he was defeated in 1980 when Christians had registered 5,000 new voters in his district. (Buchanan later headed the "People for the American Way" to combat the influence of culturally conservative groups.[7]) New Right leaders were also willing to support Democrats when necessary to reduce the influence of liberal Republicans, hoping to use the Republican Party as a vehicle for obtaining their preferred policies. In 1976, NCPAC sponsored 20-30 Democrats, and Terry Dolan retrospectively thought they should have supported even more.[8] Howard Phillips even said that liberal Republicans were "more dangerous" than liberal Democrats.[9] In Massachusetts, Avi Nelson weakened Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, who won the Republican nomination but lost in the general election to Paul Tsongas. Philips also ran as a

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[6] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 117.
[7] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 35.
[8] Paul L. Martin, "The Conservatives' Drive for a Stronger Voice," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 11, 1977, 47. Viguerie told *US News and World Report* in 1979 that "I just think conservatives have made a mistake in the past by putting all their eggs in the Republican basket. After all, there are more conservatives today in the country who consider themselves members of the Democratic Party." Quoted in "Raising Millions of Dollars for Conservatives – The Way its Done."1979. *US News and World Report*. February 26.
[9] Interview with Howard Phillips, March 18, 2011.

Democrat in the Democratic Primary, mainly criticizing Brooke's record rather than his Democratic opponent, and was delighted with Brooke's ultimate defeat. Paul Weyrich campaigned for conservative Democrat Kent Hance against future president George W. Bush, who Weyrich viewed as a product of the "Eastern Establishment."[10] At the time, Bush had not undergone a "born-again" experience, and supported abortion rights.[11] The New Right also supported Jeffrey Bell's challenge to Clifford Case[12] in the New Jersey Republican primary. Bell defeated Case but lost to Bill Bradley in the general election. Phyllis Schlafly campaigned for a pro-life Democrat against "Rockefeller Republican" Senator Charles Percy.[13]

RNC Chair Bill Brock was furious with efforts to unseat or otherwise defeat liberal Republicans. He asked Terry Dolan "How can we defeat Democrats by attacking Republicans?...The more fundamental matter at hand…[is] the replacement of this Administration and its advocates in Congress." Part of Brock's response may have reflected his comparative moderation in politics. As an employee of the RNC, he was also far more circumscribed in his ability to criticize liberal Republicans. Republican seats lost during his tenure could be reported as a failure by the press, which would emphasize the number of Republicans who lost. Since a chair's tenure could be short if too many congressional seats are lost, chairs have an incentive not to lose seats in the current election even if more conservatives win in future elections. New Right leaders publicly criticized Brock for supporting liberal Republicans with funds raised from

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[10] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 168.
[11] Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, Chapter 3.
[12] In the 1950s, Clifford Case had publicly argued against North Dakota Karl Mundt that the Republican Party should ally with conservative Southerners. Case argued that both parties should contain both liberals and conservatives.
[13] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 11.

sharply conservative RNC letters. Writing to *NR* publisher William Rusher, Brock said

that it is "illustrative of the ilk, that neither you, nor Terry Dolan have taken the trouble to

spend even five minutes discussing with me your concerns…other than by the obvious

pleasure you gain in telling each other what demons we are."[14]

Brock invited Christian conservative leaders to meet presidential candidates and

express their concerns in 1979, but the New Right continued to distrust party leadership.

At the meeting, most conservatives continued to support Reagan despite polls showing

his relative extremism.[15] Conservatives asked conservative Texas governor John

Connally for his opinion about "secular humanism," and he said "well, I don't know

much about it, but it sounds good to me!" Many attendees originally sympathetic to

Connally shifted their support to Ronald Reagan.[16] As with past and future presidential

candidates, interest groups were willing to overlook aspects of a candidate's record that

ran contrary to their mission, prioritizing future cooperation. Reagan had signed an

abortion rights law and vetoed an anti-homosexual rights bill while governor of

California. Nevertheless, most of the well-known Christian conservative groups worked

to elect Reagan.

The Reagan campaign itself was aware of the boon fundamentalists and

evangelicals might provide. Campaign strategy notes stressed the importance of winning

their votes in many religious strongholds. A 1979 Reagan campaign memo noted that the

evangelical community "could be a gold mine, of millions of swing votes…hundreds of

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[14] William Brock to William Rusher, December 19, 1978, WFB III-38.
[15] Interview with Don Devine, June 14 2011.
[16] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 116.

thousands of precinct workers, and several millions in contributions."[17] Carroll Campbell

and Lee Atwater coauthored a strategy for winning the South reading that

> Their [evangelical Christian] potential is growing. Lower-income members, who have not
> been politically active in the past, are now being motivated from the pulpit in much the same
> way as the NAACP reaches its membership through the churches and the AFL-CIO through
> the precincts.[18]

A campaign brief for Spartanburg, South Carolina, pointed out that "there are 7,000

fundamentalist Christians in the area and a high percentage of these vote and work in

political campaigns."[19] Recognizing their importance, Reagan gave a speech and

provided a coffee klatch reception at Bob Jones University in January of 1980, although

Bob Jones, Jr. himself endorsed John Connally.[20] Don Devine reassured campaign

workers that Reagan's pro life stand would cost four percent of the vote from liberal

Republicans while gaining eight percent of the vote from pro life voters. In other words,

the number of single-issue pro life voters was twice that of single-issue pro choice

voters.[21] Records from Reagan's 1976 campaign do not show a comparable interest in

such voters. It is notable that Reagan's campaign had a more conscious strategy of

recruiting theological conservatives and abortion opponents in 1980, after conservative

activists organized visible political organizations for them.

     The chair of Reagan's National Voters Division admitted that he was unfamiliar

with the evangelical market.[22] Reagan asked former Arizona representative John Conlan

to obtain the support of 100 of the most important evangelical ministers in the country,

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[17] Memorandum to Charles Black/Andy Carter, April 30 1979, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 44.
[18] Carroll Campbell, Untitled, Undated, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 384.
[19] Memorandum, January 30 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 525.
[20] "GOP debaters politick in state," February 29, 1980, *Grenville News*; Peter Carlson, "Taking the Bob out of Bob Jones U," May 5, 2005, *The Washington Post*.
[21] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 8; Interview with Don Devine, June 14 2011.
[22] John Conlan to Ed Meese, May 15, 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 114.

and for a detailed strategy on winning the evangelical vote.[23] According to Conlan, the

campaign had won over "almost all the key leaders…but not the masses." The campaign

would need to obtain public endorsements, since religious organizations frequently forbid

explicit political endorsements. Conlan advised against advertising the endorsements to

general audiences to avoid competition with Carter:

> We should not provoke an endorsement battle, as the liberal media could step in and confuse lay voters by spreading confusion as to 'who are the real' Christian leaders. By 1984 the Christian leadership network will be in-place and tightly organized. But right now it isn't quite monolithic and disciplined.

Conlan suggested several events well-attended by evangelicals, including the SBC, the

NRB Convention, and the National Affairs Briefing.

(Insert Figure 8.1 about here)

The campaign created a "Voter Groups" division operated by Elizabeth Dole.

Dole oversaw a range of specialists who reached out to targeted populations, including

Hispanics, African Americans, Catholics, ethnic voters, and evangelical Christians. Dole

and others considered evangelical Christians an elusive target because many evangelical

publications and media outlets did not accept political advertising, and of those that did,

many were not in the states in which Reagan most needed their support. The budget

allocated for the evangelical Christians group ("religious groups"), however, was not

especially high (Figure 8.1). Part of the reason for the low budget was that the campaign

was confident that other organizations were registering evangelicals to vote and

mobilizing them on behalf of conservative causes. It is clear, however, that many

campaign organizers were worried about openly associating with evangelical Christians

and their causes. Only a small number of commercials were developed for evangelicals,

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[23] John Conlan to William Casey, April 24 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 307. Herb Ellingwood helped obtain the support (Memorandum from John Conlan, June 24 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 343).

emphasizing foreign policy and the economy rather than cultural issues. They were the same commercials used for other voter blocs, but the campaign hoped to reach churchgoers by airing these ads on Sunday morning between 9 and noon, before and after church services.[24] Reagan also wrote a chain letter for evangelicals that avoided controversial issues. The letter read "America has a need beyond the realm of the political however. The time has come to turn to God and reassert our trust in Him for our nation's healing." It emphasized the problems inflation and unemployment brought upon families, and only briefly mentioned school prayer and the "vendetta launched by Jimmy Carter's IRS."[25] Campaign posters for evangelical Christians focused on the economy, national defense, strong families and tuition tax credits without discussing more controversial issues.

Campaign staffers showed other signs of keeping distance from the evangelical voters. Regarding the evangelical Christian section of the Voter Groups division, Dole said that "We feel a need to operate this program on a very low key, even questioning whether an announcement should be made."[26] The campaign hired Bob Billings, the first executive of the Moral Majority, with glowing recommendations from Jerry Falwell, James Robison, Adrian Rogers, Pat Robertson, Bob Jones, Jr., and NAE President Robert Dugan.[27] Although these men differed in church doctrine, they all agreed on Billings' gift as a communicator and conciliatory figure. The Reagan campaign, however, carefully controlled his speaking schedule to a limited number of states. An internal memo read that "Bob should not talk to the secular press unless specifically authorized by

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[24] Eleanor Callahan to Max Hugel, September 17 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 312; untitled, undated, Box 228, Reagan Library Campaign Papers, Voter Groups folder.
[25] Ronald Reagan, "Christian Chain Letter," undated, Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 248.
[26] Elizabeth Dole to Bill Timmons, August 16 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 256.
[27] See their letters of recommendation in Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 343.

you, and you shouldn't authorize."[28] When Billings spoke to a secular newspaper,
Counsel Stanton Anderson complained "I thought we had him under wraps." Anderson
wrote "NO" in bold red letters when Billings notified that campaign of his plans to speak
to Dutch television. The campaign stopped the interview.[29]

Documents from the files of senior strategists only occasionally mention cultural
issues. Most strategy meeting minutes and memos on how to attack Carter and win the
South do not mention them at all. One senior strategist wrote that "All messages have
got to be tied back to leadership and the economy. These are two crucial areas to keep in
mind about the South."[30] The campaign used "political clearance forms" to identify
prominent citizens in each state who might help the campaign. Of the 36 remaining from
the Texas Campaign, only two of the forms indicated religious figures.[31] Likewise, the
campaign firmly refused to develop a Christian Voter Registration Program suggested by
Senior Adviser William Chasey. Another adviser, Max Hugel, warned "If this is to be
done at all, it would have to be done by the Christian movement itself – on their own. I
want to make absolutely certain that you fully understand that this is our position."[32]
According to Don Devine, Hugel was "very concerned about the negative aspects of
being associated with the Christian right."[33] In the end, Conlan was disappointed at the
mishandling of the "Christian voter marketplace" and the campaign's limited outreach.

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[28] See Stan Anderson's comments on Bob Billings to Max Hugel, September 26 1980, Reagan Library
Campaign Files Box 307. Billings visited Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, Mississippi,
Tennessee, and Louisiana.
[29] Stan Anderson's comments are written on a copy of "Reagan Visit Worries Staffers," *The Daily
Advance*, October 3 1980; Lorelei Kinder to Stan Anderson, October 9 1980, Reagan Library Campaign
Files Box 307.
[30] Daryl Borgquist to Tony Dolan, "Meeting with Craig King on Key Issues in the South," September 15
1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 867.
[31] Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 387, Texas Folder. One of them was James Robison.
[32] Max Hugel to William Chasey, August 19 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 307.
[33] Conversation with Don Devine, July 25, 2012.

A liaison responded that "in a national campaign…we must often compromise with differing views."[34]

Reagan's campaign spent more money and effort on Catholics and Eastern Orthodox voters (Figure 8.1). A strategy memo read that "The Catholic hierarchy, with its extensive system of contacts within these communications would be the ideal means of communicating Governor Reagan's views to the blue-collar electorate." As with evangelical voters, the campaign chose to avoid controversial issues when approaching these voters. According to one memo, Catholics already knew about the campaign's position on abortion and there was little need to emphasize the issue.[35] Commercials, chain letters, and posters emphasized tuition tax credits, inflation, and "peace through strength."[36] In one of the radio ads labeled "Traditional Values," the commercial read

> This year, (Polish, Italian, etc.) – Americans have a rare opportunity – they can elect a president who holds the same traditional values they do. Ronald Reagan knows that strong families and stable neighborhoods are the foundation of American Society. He believes that tuition tax credits should be available for parents who choose to send their children to parochial or private schools. And he believes that working Americans should not have their earnings and savings robbed by runaway inflation. Governor Reagan believes in peace through strength. He knows that many countries around the world look to America for leadership. But only a strong America – with a strong economy and a strong national defense – can provide that leadership. Governor Reagan knows that America's people have come from many lands. They have brought with them the best of their cultures, and their values.

A widely distributed letter from Reagan to Monsignor John Meyers discussed parental rights in education and the harm of inflation on parental budget, but not abortion, school prayer, or gay rights.[37]

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[34] John Conlan to Bill Timmons, October 22 1980; Bill Timmons to John Conlan, October 28 1980, both in Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 256.

[35] "Catholic Strategy 1980," author not listed, undated, Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 307.

[36] Reagan Library Campaign Papers Box 228, Voter Groups Activities Binder.

[37] Ronald Reagan to Monsignor John Meyers, September 19 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 312.

Senior campaign adviser Mike Deaver, who scheduled Reagan's campaign appearances, asserted that the campaign developed no infrastructure for various culturally conservative groups:

> I honestly can't tell you in my mind, anyway, or I don't think even in Reagan's mind, an attempt to go out and try to target that kind of a vote…There were organizations of Catholics for Reagan, Labor for Reagan, Pipe-Fitters for Reagan, all that kind-a stuff, and it all got into the mix, so that if we were going to Steubenville, Ohio and it was a…Catholic organization or area, we might meet with the representatives of that organization, and Reagan would talk with them about some of these things. But, it was another segment. And I don't think it was much different than what had gone on in politics…before that anyway.[38]

As demonstrated above, Deaver overstates the case. Still, the campaign depended greatly on outside organizations to rally cultural conservatives behind Reagan and provide a venue for Reagan to speak to these voters. Pat Robertson drew 200,000 for three days of prayer at a "Washington for Jesus" rally in April. Religious broadcaster James Robison, a harsh critic of abortion and gay rights, exhorted his audience to become politically active. One week before the Republican convention, the New Right held a convention of 1,000 representatives of over 30 groups, perhaps to impress their strength on the Republican convention.[39] In August, SBC president Adrian Rogers sponsored a "national affairs briefing" in front of a crowd of more than 10,000 Christians. At the event, Reagan blamed crime and drug abuse on the lack of moral teaching in the schools. Although the event was officially nonpartisan, Jerry Falwell told attendees to vote for the "Reagan of their choice."[40]

Churches proved to be a valuable site for distributing information and mobilizing voters. Christian Voice, the nation's eighth largest fundraiser among PACs in 1980, distributed candidate report cards at church services on the Sunday before election, which

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[38] Interview with Michael Deaver by unknown interviewer, October 7 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[39] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 29.
[40] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 117.

did not give candidates time to respond.[41] As Christian Voice's Gary Jarmin stated, "The beauty of it is that we don't have to organize these voters. They already have their own television networks, publications, schools, meeting places, and respected leaders who are sympathetic to our goals."[42] Many evangelical grassroots conservatives obtained organizational and speaking skills in church that served them well in political involvement.[43] Several MCs and presidential candidates used churches for organizations and leaflet distribution in the past. The New Right, however, attempted to involve voters in a broader conservative movement by using cultural issues as entry points.[44] Computerized direct mail, only available since the 1970s, gave Christian Right activities an advantage that single issue groups lacked in earlier generations.[45]

The Moral Majority also made effective use of voters gathered in church, and set up voter registration booths after church services.[46] Falwell had a list of 100,000 theologically conservative pastors nationwide that he compiled for callers asking for church referrals. He mailed them a voter registration kit and learned that between 25 and 75 percent of congregation memberships were not registered to vote.[47] Falwell told his viewers that not registering to vote was a sin that one must repent, and said that pastors should not hesitate to endorse candidates "right there in church on Sunday morning." It was not the first time Falwell brought politics to the pulpit – he had shocked many

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[41] Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 62-63. In at least one case I came across, MC report cards influenced MCs that wanted high ratings. California representative Christopher Cox was thought to be quixotic when he proposed abolishing the estate tax. When Americans for Tax Reform announced that supporting this measure counted for 10 points out of its 100 point conservative scale, Cox suddenly found himself with 100 cosponsors (Grover Norquist, interviewed by the author July 24, 2010).

[42] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 15.

[43] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 220.

[44] The Moral Majority asked churches to request volunteers for "right-to-life" organizations. Wald et al., "Churches as Political Communities," 532.

[45] Freedman, *The Religious Right and the Carter Administration*, 243.

[46] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 28.

[47] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27, 2011

Christians by endorsing Ford in his congregation in 1976. By the mid-1980s, conservative church involvement was expected.[48] Morton Blackwell said that "other theological conservatives saw what was happening, and probably noticed that lightning didn't strike Jerry Falwell."[49] Falwell's efforts to register new voters resulted in an estimated two million additional voters in 1980.[50] Voter turnout declined in all regions except for the South, the evangelical stronghold.[51] While one study finds that the overall registration among evangelicals remained largely constant among evangelicals from 1976 to 1988, it nonetheless showed that evangelical voter turnout increased greatly. In the South, 62 percent of evangelicals voted in 1976 compared with 77 percent in 1980, 70 percent in 1984, and 71 percent in 1988.[52] The Moral Majority's mobilization strategy extended beyond voter registration. Church bulletins requested volunteers for "right-to-life" organizations.[53] The organization ran primary challenges to candidates who disagreed with its positions, sometimes even using church buses to get supporters to the polls. At the congressional level, 40 of the 46 Senate and House candidates backed by the Moral Majority in 1980 won.[54] .

Likewise, CBN had obtained many names and addresses not by directly soliciting money on television, but by encouraging viewers to call in with stories of miracles, "salvation reports," prayer requests, and questions. Each phone call provided names, phone numbers, and addresses, if not small donations. It had a donor list of over 900,000

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[48] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 173-174, 127, 171.
[49] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27, 2011
[50] Lipset and Raab, "The Election and Evangelicals." Morton Blackwell stated that he would bet his life that the correct figure was at least 2 million, but was likely higher.
[51] Reichley, *Religion and American Public Life*, 321.
[52] Cromarties, *No Longer Exiles*, 94-95.
[53] Wald et al., "Churches as Political Communities," 532.
[54] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 380.

names.[55] A survey of Robertson donors in 1987 revealed that 30 percent of his donors had only become politically active in the past 10 years, compared with 7-12 percent of the other 1988 Republican contenders.[56] Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America organized prayer circles for its 600,000 mostly evangelical members, while also calling for social conservatism and anticommunism. These circles brought some people into politics who were more motivated by religion than by politics.[57] Schlafly also claims that her many evangelical followers were largely unregistered voters, although she was most active in swing states not known for large conservative Christian sects.[58]

A group of conservative Catholics hoped to persuade Reagan to support school choice in 1980, appalled by President Carter's reversal on the position. The Pope had recently forbid church officials from participating actively in politics, so three priests in the District of Columbia visited Catholic School superintendent Leonard DeFiore in his home and persuaded him to approach the Reagan campaign.[59] Although Reagan's position on the abortion issue was appealing, DeFiore explained to the campaign that Catholic families would find it difficult to vote Republican without appealing to them on more issues. DeFiore recalls that Reagan had not thought very much about school choice, given the relatively small Catholic population of California, but agreed that it was consistent with his philosophy of limited government and freedom of choice.

The National Catholic Education Association then promoted Ronald Reagan's campaign without endorsing him. Both Carter and Reagan were invited to speak to the

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[55] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous,*147; Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 14.
[56] Diamond, *Spiritual Warriors*, 81.
[57] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 290.
[58] Interview with Phyllis Schlafly on February 14, 2011.
[59] The priests were Father Jack Meyers, the NCEA president; Monsignor Ed Spiers, the part time director for Citizens for Educational Freedom; Father Don Shay (who had been in charge of RNC Catholic and Ethnic Vote Desk from the Ford administration until the Pope instructed Catholics not to be involved in partisan politics).

annual conference, but they knew Carter would turn down the invitation. Reagan's campaign asked DeFiore to work for the campaign, and DeFiore attended some of the New Right strategy meetings. DeFiore distributed a comparison of Reagan and Carter to school superintendents and the Knights of Columbus, hoping they would distribute the information to parents and members. A simple comparison of issues did not offend either group as partisan entanglement. The Reagan campaign hoped Catholics would vote for Reagan on the issues presented: tax exemptions, school choice, abortion, and social security benefits. Suburban "country club" Republicans were initially uninterested in Catholic education, which largely clustered around big cities, but became more sympathetic over the course of the 1980s, just as ethnic Democrats were becoming less prominent in the party.[60] Although the Reagan campaign invited a Catholic liaison to work for their candidate, Catholic groups showed more organizational foresight and initiative than the Reagan campaign had. Catholic groups were the first step in the increasingly precarious Democratic Party identification of Catholics.

As with postwar Democrats who campaigned among both white Southerners and African Americans, Reagan campaigned among cultural conservatives along with the moderate Republicans charged with excluding them from a major role in the party. Devine, though committed to a pro-life campaign, said that Reagan needed to nominate a moderate running mate such as Howard Barker or George Bush, and promise to appoint

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[60] Interview with Leonard DeFiore, March 24 2011. Not all Catholic groups backed Reagan. DeFiore claims that Reagan's anticommunism, along with the cultural issue positions, made Reagan an attractive candidate for the Knights of Columbus. The Catholic Bishops Conference was less receptive. Bishops largely regretted the Conference's support for the Vietnam War, and were wary of Reagan's aggressive foreign policy. Additionally, they emphasized the "social justice" issues including government safety nets. For ethnic parents sending their children to Catholic school, however, affordable Catholic education was more important, and a better means to upward mobility.

moderates to cabinet positions.[61] At the convention, Howard Phillips, Paul Weyrich,

Phyllis Schlafly, and Jerry Falwell met with Reagan to persuade him not to select Bush.

Bush supported abortion rights and called Reagan's opposition to ERA "backward

thinking."[62] The meeting indicated how mainstream the one-time outcasts had become.

Reagan explained that he already had conservative support and needed moderate support,

but assured them that Bush would support the conservative agenda wholeheartedly.[63]

When Bush agreed to support the entire Republican platform, including its opposition to

abortion, Falwell agreed to support him.

The 1980 Republican Party platform showed far greater concern with cultural

issues than the 1976 platform, and met the demands of culturally conservative groups. It

supported an anti-abortion amendment, opposed federal funding of abortions, and

committed the party to appointing antiabortion judges. Hundreds of delegates belonged

to the Moral Majority.[64] Unlike 1976, it did not support federal assistance for child care.

The Platform Committee voted down motions to recognize the right to differ on abortion

(by a vote of 75-18) and the ERA (by a vote of 90 to 9), even though the party had

supported the ERA at every previous convention since 1940. Mary Crisp, a supporter of

abortion rights and ERA, was forced out of her position as RNC co-chair.[65] Brock

reported that many Republicans went along with the antiabortion platform because

fighting the platform would attract far more attention. He said "A lot more people would

have seen the fight on the floor than would ever read the platform. And that's just about

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[61] Don Devine to Bill Casey, June 19, 1980, Ed Meese Box 103, Reagan Library.
[62] Wolbrecht, *Politics of Women's Rights*, 45.
[63] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 142.
[64] Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, 209.
[65] Rymph, *Republican Women*, 228.

what it came down to."[66] In fact, only 21 percent of the public was aware of support for a pro-life amendment.[67] While the Democratic Platform pledged to make "federal programs more sensitive to the needs of the family, in all its diverse forms," the Republican platform reaffirmed their "belief in the traditional role and values of the family in our society." It continued, "The importance of support of the mother and homemaker in maintaining the values of this country cannot be over-emphasized." Falwell said the 1980 platform as a whole was "identical to what we asked for a year ago and hoped we might get half."[68] The presidents of National Right to Life and Eagle Forum were also pleased.[69]

Reagan still met privately with a group of Republican feminists at the convention, illustrating the tendency of politicians to straddle opposing groups in a party. They were satisfied with his assurances to enforce antidiscrimination laws and appoint women to high office.[70] In the fall, Reagan worried about the "gender gap" in his support and appointed a "Women's Policy Board" to give him policy advice on women's issue. He appointed mostly ERA supporters to the board and advertised this in a press release.[71] He was also careful to say that he supported women's equality, but opposed the ERA for its particular means of achieving it. Reagan created a separate "Board on Family Policy," which espoused traditional gender roles, only after Phyllis Schlafly instructed her readers to refrain from working on Reagan's campaign to protest the Women's Policy Board.[72]

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[66] Sabonmatsu, *Democrats, Republicans, and the Politics of Women's Place*, 99.
[67] Layman, *The Great Divide*, 47.
[68] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 371
[69] Freeman, "Feminist Activities at the 1988 Republican Convention," 42-43.
[70] Rymph, *Republican Women*, 229.
[71] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 274.
[72] Katznelson and McClurg, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, 230.

In summary, the New Right strategists showed themselves willing to defy Republican Party operatives to transform the party. The figure they had rallied around since 1968, Ronald Reagan, finally gained the nomination and then the general election. While he agreed that evangelicals and Catholics were an important source of votes, he also tried to win over their opponents. Furthermore, conservative religious leaders and New Right strategists had built the organizational infrastructure to mobilize them for the election.

Crowding the Big Tent: Contesting the Party during the Reagan Presidency

In the end, Ronald Reagan's share of evangelical votes was 61 percent in 1980, two percent less than the 63 percent of support Reagan received from other white Protestants. Carter believed the evangelical votes in 1980 were an anomaly. But in 1984, Reagan received over 70 percent of their support, and most future Republicans were able to obtain at least as much (Figure 6.1).[73] Evangelicals had been less supportive of Republicans in the 1970s than African Americans had been in the 1930s, so the cultural conservative shift was comparatively sudden. Catholics voted 55-45 percent for Reagan, an inverse of the usual partisan division. Neither Reagan's personal convictions nor the support of conservative groups during the election were sufficient to motivate the Reagan administration to action. Conservative groups had to apply continuous pressure to the administration to sponsor or support their initiatives, either rhetorically or strategically. Reagan did not provide as much support as they wanted, but he was also careful to provide enough to avoid alienating them. Leaders of the New Right also argued that Reagan provided theological conservatives with something they seemed to value as much as policy gains: legitimacy. By meeting and appearing with their leaders, they occupied a

[73] Reichley, *Religion and American Public Life*, 324, 326.

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less peripheral space in American culture. Cal Thomas quipped "We were no longer the backwoods yahoos who wore blue suits and white socks."[74]

New Right operatives were alarmed at Reagan's appointments. In order to hire people with experience, Reagan often turned to moderates who had worked for the Nixon and Ford administrations.[75] He had also placated moderate Republicans by appointing James Baker III, who chaired rival George Bush's campaign, as Chief of Staff. Baker urged Reagan to minimize his pro-life position to obtain higher approval ratings, to Reagan's irritation.[76] Of Reagan's most influential advisers, only Counselor to the President Ed Meese was interested in cultural issues.[77] Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver worked to minimize the access of cultural conservatives to the White House. Deaver, a public relations expert, believed that Reagan's reelection was in jeopardy at the beginning and told anyone who wanted Reagan to address cultural issues:

> Unless you can show me how this thing plays to the economic-recovery issue, I don't wanna see it on my desk." And I would even go to the point of saying, "If you can't describe a visual for me on this"--in other words, "If you can't give me a venue which shows a sixty-second television sound bite that has to do with the economic recovery issue outta your shop on this request, don't even bother to bring it.

The Washington Post misquoted Deaver as saying the religious right would "be welcome in the White House, but they'd need to come in the back door." In response, Falwell met with the president, who asked him "Did you come in the back door today?" When

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[74] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 159.

[75] Blackwell consciously hired inexperienced but philosophically committed employees to build up their resumes for future executive office employment (Interview with Morton Blackwell by unknown interviewer, July 22, 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection).

[76] Interview with Faith Whittlesey by unknown interviewer, September 21 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[77] Interview with Michael Horowitz, April 25 2011. Christian School Action head Bill Billings, however, says that Meese underestimated the political strength of evangelicals and contributed to the president's isolation from them (Interview with Bill Billings by unknown interviewer, October 3 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection).

Falwell said no, Reagan responded "Feel free. That door is open." Falwell commented that "We never had any more problems with Deaver from that time on."[78]

Just the same, Faith Whitlessey, an evangelical who directed the Public Liaison office for two years, claimed that Baker and other senior staff members seldom showed up for rallies or luncheons for cultural conservative groups. The administration almost always turned down requests for Reagan to attend cultural conservative rallies, and sent moderate administration representatives to address cultural topics when television stations requested interviews. For example, senior advisers attempted to prevent Reagan from meeting with Catholic bishops. Someone had also donated copies of the antiabortion documentary *Silent Scream* to the White House. Whittlesey gained approval to distribute it to members of Congress, but there was a last-minute effort to stop the distribution.[79] Deaver admitted to routinely ignoring Whittlessey's requests, claiming that "I was absolutely convinced that we had to make the economic turnaround or he was going to be a one-term president. Unless we got a handle on that, it didn't make any difference about abortion or prayer in schools." Whittlessey herself was appointed ambassador to Switzerland in 1984, perhaps to satisfy moderate cabinet members who were annoyed by her inquiries.[80] Another evangelical, Carolyn Sundseth, claimed that "my devotion to my Christian religion was a little frightening to some of the people who supervised me."[81] Reagan had also offered Bob Billings the position of assistant secretary for non-public education, but on his first day, he learned someone else received

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[78] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 223.
[79] Interview with Faith Whittlesey by unknown interviewer, September 21 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[80] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 224-225, 235.
[81] Interview with Carolyn Sundseth by Bennett Singer, January 28, 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

the position. He reluctantly accepted a position as "special assistant" to the Education

Secretary. Later he learned that Catholic interests had vetoed his original position

because they did not want a fundamentalist protestant overseeing religious schools.[82]

An incident in 1983 illustrated the difficulty many Christian groups encountered

in reaching the president. Bill Billings, the head of Christian School Action, was unable

to convey an important issue to the president through Ed Meese in late 1983. A number

of parents in Nebraska were jailed before Christmas for sending their children to

unaccredited Christian schools. When Meese did not convey the message, Billings

approached Reverend Jesse Jackson, a candidate for the Democratic nomination. Despite

the political differences between Jackson and Christian School Action, Jackson

immediately brought about the release of the parents from jail. White House aides

worried that Christian conservatives might support an ordained minister, even an

otherwise liberal Democrat, in 1984. As soon as Billings held a press conference, the

White House called him. Billings later admitted he was bluffing to gain the

administration's attention, and his supporters would not have voted for Jackson.[83]

Most conservatives were disappointed with Reagan's supervision of Surgeon

General C. Everett Koop. Although they supported him at first because of his

antiabortion activism, they later viewed him as too supportive of the homosexual agenda

on AIDS. Koop complained after his departure that "Gary Bauer … was my nemesis in

Washington because he kept me from the president. He kept me from the cabinet and he

set up a wall of enmity between me and most of the people that surrounded Reagan

because he believed that anybody who had AIDS ought to die with it. That was God's

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[82] Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress*, 72.
[83] Interview with Bill Billings by unknown interviewer, October 3 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

punishment for them."[84] However, in 1988, Koop had authored a pamphlet on AIDS distributed to every household in America by the Center for Disease Control. The pamphlet candidly discussed sex and condoms over Bauer's objection. Bauer believed the pamphlet treated adolescent sex as inevitable, failed to report the failure rate of condoms, and used anatomical terms that would offend many parents.[85] Instead, it should have been targeted to "at-risk" populations. That year, Koop also published the Presidential Commission on HIV, which opposed discrimination against AIDS patients, over Bauer's strenuous objections.[86]

Constitutional jurisprudence impeded Reagan from enacting the cultural conservative agenda, so Christian conservatives paid close attention to judicial appointments. Constitutional amendments or new Supreme Court decisions were required to achieve prohibit abortion or permitting school prayer. Cultural conservatives could not simply favor legislation and executive orders to fully address their concerns. When Reagan attempted to close the gender gap in 1980 by promising to appoint a woman to the Supreme Court, he made a commitment that would interfere with their goals. In 1981, Reagan nominated Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court. O'Connor had supported abortion rights in the past and even NOW immediately called her appointment "a major victory for women's rights."

Conservative groups told Blackwell, the president's liaison, that the president does not "think this coalition contributed significantly to his election."[87] The Life Amendment Political Action Committee told the *New York Times* "We've been sold out"

[84] Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 63.
[85] Gary Bauer, "Analysis of AIDS Mailer," March 29 1988, Gary Bauer Box 1, Reagan Library.
[86] Gary Bauer to Donald McDonald, July 26 1988, Gary Bauer Box 1, Reagan Library..
[87] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 282

and National Right-to-Life Committee director Peter Gemma said "I'm not sure we'll defeat her, but we want to send the President a clear signal at how much of an insult this is." The president had asked for the approval of at least one major Christian conservative – Jerry Falwell. Reagan called Falwell personally one hour before O'Connor was announced publicly, and said "You've got to trust me, Jerry." Falwell agreed to comply if O'Connor was "satisfactory" on abortion at the confirmation hearings. The Moral Majority, however, had already released a critical statement to the press. Several Republican Senators, including Barry Goldwater and Bob Packwood, were outraged with the conservative reaction in general and the Moral Majority in particular.[88] O'Connor's appointment became moderating influence on the court, as her vote helped to avoid overturning *Roe v. Wade* in *Casey* v. *Planned Parenthood*. Had the Senate approved Robert Bork or Douglas Ginsberg as Supreme Court justices during Reagan's second term, however, *Roe v. Wade* would have almost certainly been overturned despite O'Connor's votes.

Reagan's initial legislative priorities also ruffled feathers on the right. The new president announced that the social agenda would have to be postponed because of the economic crisis of 1981. He did not even include tuition tax credits for religious schools in his 1981 budget. Although Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, many, such as Ways and Means Chair Dan Rostenkowski, came from Catholic districts where tuition tax credits would be popular. Nonetheless, it was not introduced in Reagan's first year, and tax credit proposals floundered in future years. The administration worried about raising the debt and incurring more opposition from public schools, whose funding

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[88] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 188-193.

was being cut.[89] Weyrich held a conference call with cultural conservative leaders and told them "This cannot be tolerated. If the idea that economic issues are more important than moral issues takes hold, then it says something about what we stand for." The leaders on the conference call, however, accepted that the economy was more important. According to Weyrich, they were so satisfied to have a president who would meet with them that they overlooked other shortcomings.[90] Charles Colson, author of Born Again, had served as a liaison to interest groups under President Nixon. He recalled

> We would invite them to the White House, wine and dine them, take them on cruises aboard the presidential yacht…Ironically, few were more easily impressed than religoius leaders. The very people who should have been immune to the worldly pomp seemed most vulnerable.[91]

Just as the NAACP's morale was lifted by meetings with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as Harry Truman, cultural conservatives felt like less of a "fringe" group.[92] Minkoff (1995) shows that concessions from government increase a movement's legitimacy and encourage the growth of related organizations.

In spite of an administrative staff largely unsympathetic to the cultural conservatives, Reagan eventually endorsed constitutional amendments on abortion and school prayer. Moral Majority Vice President warned that cultural conservatives would not vote in the 1982 midterm elections without working for an antiabortion amendment, and Reagan announced his support within weeks.[93] Education undersecretary Gary Bauer pointed out that an anti-abortion amendment would distract Catholic groups from pursuing policy goals on which they differed from the administration.[94] Another White House aide emphasized that "we should especially seek action on those measures that

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[89] Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress*, 99, 111.
[90] Cromartie, *No Longer Exiles*, 53
[91] Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power,* 70.
[92] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 118-121.
[93] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 200.
[94] Gary Bauer to Edwin Harper, March 23 1982, Stephen Galebach Box 1, Reagan Library.

can…divide Democrats between their radical feminist wing and their blue collar/pro-family base."[95] The administration announced support for a school prayer amendment in the rose garden, a public spectacle which led supporters to inundate MCs with an unmanageable volume of phone calls.[96] In the case of the antiabortion amendment, the administration provided tactical support in Congress. Reagan leaned on Senator Strom Thurmond to persuade Senator Orren Hatch to withdraw a competing amendment that would have ensured the failure of the original amendment.[97]

Congress was also able to pass marginal reforms with the administration's support. Aid to Families with Dependent Children was changed so that married couples were not excluded from its benefits. Senator Jesse Helms introduced one bill in 1982 to prevent the National Institute of Health from experimenting on aborted fetuses, and another to end health insurance coverage for abortions for federal employees. Reagan helped find votes to end the Senate filibusters.[98]

Conservative aides such as Pat Buchanan urged Reagan to use the "bully pulpit" more frequently on cultural issues. Although Reagan coauthored an antiabortion book, he rarely brought up cultural issues in State of the Union addresses. By addressing the March for Life by telephone, many supporters believed he acted with too much caution, even though it was a secret service directive.[99]

Reagan also had a mixed record with executive orders. In 1987, he signed executive order 12606 requiring "family impact statement" for all new federal programs.

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[95] Memorandum for Edwin Harper, October 13, 1982, Stephen Galebach Box 1, Reagan Library.
[96] Interview with Carolyn Sundseth by Bennett Singer, January 28, 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[97] Gary Jarmin to School Prayer Leaders, August 9, 1983, *Dee Jespen Box 1,* Reagan Library.
[98] Memorandum for Edwin Harper, October 13, 1982, Stephen Galebach Box 1, Reagan Library.
[99] Interview with Carolyn Sundseth by Bennett Singer, January 28, 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

However, he refrained from taking executive actions against the distribution of pornography. Senator Bill Armstrong advised Reagan to rescind licenses from more than 500 shops that distribute pornographic materials on military bases. Legal advisers worried about challenges in court, and Reagan did not act on the request. (This policy was not enacted until a Republican Congress passed a law in 1996.[100])

Despite the complaints about Reagan on the New Right, many allies helped mobilize evangelicals for his reelection. In 1984, Tim LaHaye headed the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV) to register voters likely to support Reagan. With a million dollar grant, it boasted a network of 350 field directors who conducted voter registration drives through churches. Low estimates indicate that the organization registered 200,000 new voters. The Reagan campaign, however, attempted to downplay ideology, stressing the country's optimism and robust economy. Blackwell said this hurt the effort of conservative groups to change the party or obtain a more pliable Congress, asking "if you're running on the theme that everything is wonderful, then why should you replace your Congressman?"[101]

The 1984 convention met the culturally conservative standards set at the 1980 convention. James Robison and Jerry Falwell offered the opening and closing prayers.[102] Women constituted 48 percent of the delegates, but Republican feminists general opted not to participate in the convention. Phyllis Schlafly testified against ERA even though a plank for ERA was never under consideration. A few feminists testified before the platform committee, but the committee mainly asked them about Geraldine Ferraro's

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[100]Arthur Culvahouse to Ronald Reagan, September 1988, Gary Bauer Box 3, Reagan Library.

[101] Interview with Morton Blackwell by unknown interviewer, July 22 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[102] Although officially nonpartisan, the organization distributed a "leadership manual" with an introduction written by Reagan.

finances.[103] The president's daughter, feminist Maureen Reagan, had been working to improve her father's standing with women, but was not invited to speak. Republicans believed that women were not homogenous voters and that a feminist approach was not needed to close the "gender gap." They hoped planks against spousal and child abuse would appeal to women, and enunciated strong opposition to various forms of pornography, which was thought to appeal to some feminists in addition to cultural conservatives.[104]

Reagan won overwhelmingly among evangelical voters in 1984, improving on his modest edge in 1980.[105] Notably, Republicans turned down LaHaye's offer to head a similar effort in the 1986 Congressional elections, in which the Republicans lost eight Senate seats. ACTV was damaged by journalistic exposes revealing that Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church provided much of the funding.[106] LaHaye said that Republicans were also "afraid of these evangelical Christians who, in some communities, were working to take over the Republican apparatus – which we had nothing to do with." An ABC poll showed that white evangelicals formed 17 percent of the voters in 1984, but only 12 percent in 1986.[107]

Republican candidates would find it increasingly difficult to ignore cultural conservatives. Regardless of whether Christian conservatives or the New Right were responsible for the 1980 victory, they claimed credit,[108] the media gave them credit, and groups on the left added to popular belief in their political efficacy in fundraising letters.

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[103] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 105.
[104] Wolbrecht, *Politics of Women's Rights*, 51-55.
[105] Part of the improvement was surely due to the opposition; Mondale, unlike Carter, was not an evangelical Christian.
[106] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 270.
[107] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 124.
[108] Jerry Falwell claimed credit for Reagan's election, and in 1994, the Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed claimed credit for half of the 52 House seat gain (Cohen, "Moral Victories," 107).

It was not until 1980 that the mobilization of theological conservatives gained publicity

from the press. *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* had two articles on "religion

in politics from March 1979 through February 1980, compared with sixty-eight for the

following year. *The New York Times*, likewise, had no articles for its "religion and

churches" subheading in 1979 but had eighteen in 1980.[109] The press' treatment of the

Moral Majority and Jerry Falwell, in particular, was reminiscent of the CIO PAC after

Roosevelt's admonition to "clear it with Sidney." Pollster Lou Harris declared that

"Reagan would have lost the election by one percentage point without the help of the

Moral Majority." In Reagan's campaign for reelection, both Walter Mondale and

Geraldine Ferraro singled out Falwell for criticism. In the second presidential debate,

Mondale said that when "Jerry Falwell announced that means they get at least two

justices of the Supreme Court – I think that's an abuse of faith in our country." Ferraro

repeated the criticism on the campaign trail.[110]

Republicans with national ambitions increasingly felt the need to win over

Christian conservatives. With the exception of Bob Dole, all of the Republican nominees

from 1976 to 2000 changed their original positions on abortion. Mitt Romney and Sam

Brownback changed their positions on abortion by the time they ran for president. Alan

Simpson and Tom Ridge were arguably rejected as running mates because of their

relative support for abortion. Shifts were also seen among congressional leaders such as

Republican Whip Bob Michel (on the Democratic side, Robert Byrd, Thomas "Tip"

O'Neill, Jim Wright, George Mitchell, Dick Gephardt, and David Bonior changed

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[109] Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress*, 43.
[110] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 242.

sides).[111] A Reagan administration memo noted that if Alaska Senator Ted Stevens wanted to be majority leader in 1984, "he had better vote for school prayer."[112] Stevens, who supported abortion rights, was defeated by the culturally conservative Bob Dole in the competition to succeed Howard Baker as Republican leader.

The Reagan administration's support for cultural conservatism manifested itself mainly through symbolic support and judicial appointments. For a party that had once been more likely to support the ERA, antiabortion and school prayer amendments were major steps in a new direction. Conservative groups never fully trusted many of Reagan's advisers, admonishing them to "let Reagan be Reagan." However, most trusted Reagan himself and believed he would advance a culturally conservative agenda when possible. The same would not hold true for his successor.

Indulgence without Commitment: The First Bush Administration

George H.W. Bush won the Republican nomination in 1988 largely by distancing himself from both his moderate supporters and his mainline religious background. Cultural conservatives had become such an important Republican constituency that the Bush campaign needed a clearly defined strategy for winning over evangelical Christians and fundamentalists. Just as Adlai Stevenson and John F. Kennedy hired insiders from the civil rights community to reach out to African American voters, the Bush campaign privileged operatives with access to the evangelical community. While Bush cleverly gained the trust of many evangelicals leading up to the Republican nominating contests, he refused to outline his political vision or define himself in ideological terms.

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[111] Many prominent Democrats with presidential ambitions also changed positions to become more supportive of abortion, including Jesse Jackson, Bob Kerrey, Sam Nunn, Paul Simon, and Dennis Kucinich (Karol, *Party Position Change in American Politics*, 74-76).
[112] Memo, Undated (1984), Carolyn Sundseth Box 3, Reagan Library.

Conservative groups therefore believed he would not push forward their agenda consistently, even though he was arguably as responsive to them as Reagan had been.

Reagan named Bush as his running mate in 1980 to appeal to moderates. As an upper class Episcopalian with an Ivy League education, Bush epitomized the "Eastern Establishment" that the New Right looked upon with contempt. Shortly into Reagan's term, however, Bush made significant strides in improving relations with conservatives. In 1981, he told *Conservative Digest* "I am going to be so close to Ronald Reagan that no one will be able to see day-light between us."[113] He changed his position on abortion between 1980 and 1988. Media consultant Roger Ailes advised Bush not to elaborate on his reasons for changing his position on abortion, and just state his position. As the campaign discovered in mock debates, any conceivable justification made him vulnerable to charges of disingenuous posturing.[114] In 1982, his future campaign manager, Lee Atwater, began writing strategy memos on winning the South in the 1984 and 1988 presidential primaries. Inspired by Clark Clifford's memo on the 1948 election, Atwater wrote a 40 page memorandum to Vice President Bush on December 19, 1984. Bush later told his ghostwriter, "Let me tell you something. It's all going to be over on Super Tuesday."[115] Special Projects Coordinator Bobbie Kilberg said that Atwater's Southern Strategy was not necessarily a strategy for winning Christian conservatives:

> this was a different breed of cat from that which he was used to dealing with…Lee didn't think the way the religious right thought; he didn't operate the way they did. And so, [their importance in the election] might have surprised him somewhat. But once he grasped it…he acted very quickly on it.[116]

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[113] Interview with Morton Blackwell by by unknown interviewer, July 22 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[114] Interview with Doug Wead by Brad Lichtenstein, March 18 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[115] Brady, *Bad Boy*, 120, 135, 141. Sally Atwater has not responded to requests for the memo.

[116] Interview with Bobbie Kilberg by unknown interviewer, November 20 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

Although Atwater was from South Carolina and familiar with the presence of evangelicals, his memorandum did not anticipate their importance in the campaign.

Doug Wead, one of the only evangelical Christians serving on the campaign, began writing 80-page strategy memos on winning over evangelicals and Catholics beginning in 1985.[117] Most members of the campaign lacked basic information common to evangelical Christians. Often, they misspelled religious terms and did not know who authored well-known passages in the Bible.[118] Wead said that at the grassroots level, evangelical Christians were more numerous and better organized than they had been in 1980 or 1984. In Ohio, for example, seven different groups organized under one umbrella organization. Given Bush's Episopelian background, Wead suggested developing a relationship with evangelical Christians years before the election, to avoid the appearance of a last-minute change-of-heart. He provided Bush with important books by C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer and advised him to refer to them in meetings with evangelicals. Anticipating that others would ask Bush if he were "born again," Wead suggested that Bush reply "I have accepted Jesus as my personal savior," but admit that he had not had a dramatic, life changing event. If Bush admitted to a born-again experience, evangelicals would wonder why it was revealed only recently.[119] Wead's strategy memos also warned about a "backlash" against an evangelical presence at the Republican convention, declaring that

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[117] The notes include "Vice President George Bush and the Evangelical Movement" on September 25, 1985; "The Vice President and the Evangelicals: A Strategy" on December 18, 1985; and a memo on Cardinal Law on January 22, 1986. Researchers have not been able to gain access to these documents through Freedom of Information Act requests, due to personal privacy issues (F-6 restriction).

[118] Interview with Doug Wead by Brad Lichtenstein, March 18 1996; Interview with Carolyn Sundseth by Bennett Singer, January 28, 1996, both in Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[119] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 263-264. Additionally, professing a born-again experience might alienate nonevangelicals

One Jesus bumper sticker on an attaché case is hardly noticed on the floor of fifteen thousand people in a Coliseum, but an NBC television camera with a zoom lens will show it to millions of people around the country. And…there's got to be a way to absorb new voters, new ideas…into the Party and make them part of the process without offending the rest of the country.

Wead anticipated a challenge by an evangelical in the Republican primaries, possibly by Pat Robertson. When Pat Robertson entered the race and quickly registered 5,000 precinct captains in Michigan, members of the campaign thought of Wead as a "seer" and reread his memos. Both Atwater and Bush told Wead they knew of very few Robertson supporters in Michigan. Bush said, "I've talked to every county Chairman up there, and they don't know of a single person who's supporting Robertson. I can't figure it out." Wead replied, "I can't figure it out either, Mr. Vice President, but apparently they live in two separate worlds, and were not talking to each other. But they're out there." Atwater ultimately dispatched Wead to the South and offered him carte blanche in campaign funding and strategic autonomy.[120]

Bush met with Jerry Falwell in 1986 and declared that he represents a "moral vision" that "America is in crying need of," prompting several moderate supporters to predict that he will lose the moderate support and with it the 1988 Republican primaries. Bush replied that he found himself "far closer to Dr. Falwell than to his most liberal critics."[121] A few months later, Falwell endorsed Bush, declaring that of the remaining Republican candidates, Jack Kemp lacked Bush's experience and Robert Dole was "lukewarm on social issues." He added that Pat Robertson's candidacy could harm the evangelical cause.[122] In the same year, Bush also made a widely-applauded appearance on Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power" and a televised special with Billy Graham, viewed

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[120] Interview with Doug Wead by Brad Lichtenstein, March 18 1996, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[121] See Vice Presidential Box 13, Folder 9, George Bush Library. Bush is quoted in George Bush to Mrs. Douglas Bryant, March 6, 1986.
[122] Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 299.

by far more people than CBN's "700 Club."[123] Wead prepared a list of evangelicals to meet in Iowa, Michigan, and New Hampshire, and wrote magazine articles about Bush for the *Christian Herald* and *Baptist Index*.[124] Between 1986 and 1989, Bush met with more than 1,000 evangelical leaders listed in a Wead memo entitled "targets."[125] Bush even hired Ed McAteer for his campaign, though he was dismissed after Pat Robertson dropped out of the primary contest.[126]

Most of Bush's serious rivals recognized the need to win over Christian conservatives and hired specialists for this sector of the public. Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole was well-positioned to win over cultural conservatives. Dole had been opposed to abortion years before Bush and helped win passage for the antiabortion platform in 1976. A campaign plan developed in May, 1987, emphasized the importance of recruiting fundamentalist and pro-life groups in states with early primaries, noting their "good organizational strength and skills at the local level."[127] The Dole campaign, like the Bush campaign, hired operatives specifically to seek support among evangelical sects and family values voters, and recruited volunteers from Right-to-Life Conventions. Bob Billings, the first executive of the Moral Majority, chaired "Evangelicals for Dole" and persuaded Southside Baptist Fellowship President William Pennell to write a letter to 7,000 preachers. Dole also purchased radio ads on Christian radio in urban areas.[128] For the most part, the campaign found that their campaign was too late. Between Bush,

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[123] Doug Wead to Ron Kaufman, May 13, 1986, Office of the Chief of Staff, Vice Presidential Files, George Bush Library. .
[124] Bill Phillips to Craig Fuller, March 10 1986, Vice Presidential Files Subseries FG022-FG600-02, George Bush Library.
[125] Doug Wead, "Suggested Telephone Responses to Evangelical Callers Criticizing the President's FCC appointments," July 31 1989, Box Alpha File D, James Dobson File, George Bush Library.
[126] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 423.
[127] Bo Denysyk, "Coalition Development Preliminary Campaign Plan," May 1987, Box 27, Robert Dole Archives.
[128] "Evangelicals for Dole," January 12 1988, Box 28, Robert Dole Archives.

Kemp, and Robertson, most of the important Southern activists had already committed themselves to a candidate. In South Carolina, a field report confided that

> The biggest weakness currently facing this campaign in South Carolina is the lack of identifiable supporters and organization either at the Congressional District or statewide level…[In the district containing Bob Jones University], Kemp has organized the Jones people (fundamentalists). Robertson has organized the non-Jones born-agains (Charismatics), and the Bush people have the few remaining party regulars.

Dole ultimately won the endorsement of Senator Strom Thurmond but failed to obtain almost any other high-level endorsements.[129] He sought Jesse Helm's endorsement by fighting to support anticommunists in Mozambique, but Helms remained neutral.[130] In Iowa, Dole's victory was eclipsed in press reports by the unexpected second-place finish of Pat Robertson.

Robertson provided serious competition for evangelical votes in the 1988 contest, but even Robertson often found himself outmaneuvered. Many Baptists continued to be weary of Charismatics such as Robertson, who believed in faith-healing and speaking in tongues. When Walter Quinn organized a reception of prominent evangelicals for Robertson in February of 1986, the most famous invitees did not appear because the vice president invited them to meet with him on the same day. Ben Armstrong, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jerry Falwell, among others, met with Bush.[131] Gospel film executive Billy Zeoli endorsed Bush despite receiving a $194,000 grant from CBN.[132] Moral Majority Director Ed Dobson, and Jesse Helms aide Carl Anderson, agreed with Falwell that Robertson could harm the evangelical agenda. Anderson argued that critics would accuse him of basing public policy on his religious beliefs, and he could not base his

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[129] H.E. Mann, "Field Report," May 4 1987; Memorandum from H. Clay Collins, June 4 1987, both in Box 31, Robert Dole Archives.
[130] Memorandum from John Davis, December 14 1987, Box 31, Robert Dole Archives.
[131] Walter Quinn to George Bush, February 7, 1986, Vice Presidential Files VO 005, George Bush Library. At this point, Robertson's candidacy was rumored, but not confirmed.
[132] Doug Wead to Ron Kaufman, May 13, 1986, Office of the Chief of Staff, Vice Presidential Files, George Bush Library.

policy on any other grounds without losing support from evangelical followers. Doug Wead identified the South's 215 largest evangelical churches and sent delegates to report on Robertson's support in the congregations. If any of the churches offered support for Robertson, the Bush campaign asked well-positioned Bush supporters in the congregation to approach the pastor. According to Wead, they would say, "I notice you had tables out in the vestibule last Sunday for Robertson. I'd like to put a table out there for Bush." Most pastors would respond "Nope, this is a church, not a political organization. We're not going to do that. We can't do it for everybody, so we're not going to do it for anybody." This firewall usually resulted in shutting down in-house appeals to Robertson and neutralized his challenge. It "involved a lot of finances, building relationships, a lot of work. But that turned out to be one of our most effective projects."[133]

Robertson also showed considerable strength in Michigan two years before the nomination contest. Bush's Midwest Regional Director, Mary Matalin, gerrymandered Michigan's districts to favor Bush. Robertson's supporters unsuccessfully challenged the plan in court and held separate rump conventions, expecting them to be honored at the national convention. In an effort at reconciliation, Bush campaign leaders offered Robertson's delegates valued seats at the convention, to the chagrin of actual party delegates.[134]

As the New Orleans convention approached, some cultural conservatives were still skeptical of the vice-president. In a series of meetings with conservative women's groups, the Bush campaign appeared to support federal day care. Bush staffer Lindsay Johnson also announced that Bush supported an antiabortion amendment providing

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[133] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 279, 289.
[134] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 285, 291.

exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother. When antiabortion activists

resisted, Johnson responded "Since it's not a clean-cut issue, it doesn't pick up

anybody…so we won't discuss it within any coalition…We want a broad base and we

don't want to lose anybody."[135] Former RNC chair Mary Louise Smith and a few other

feminists also won a child care program in the platform, but it was conjoined with a more

conservative statement on family values. It declared that "the family's most important

function is to raise the next generation of Americans, handing on to them the Judeo-

Christian values of Western Civilization" and affirmed "the best care for most children,

especially in the early years, is parental." For the most part, Bush disappointed feminists

who hoped for a more moderate platform. When abortion rights were debated at the 1988

convention, Bush workers told delegates that voting for an antiabortion platform was a

test of delegate loyalty to the nominee.[136] The platform committee voted down efforts to

eliminate anti-abortion language or revert to the comparatively mild 1976 platform

(unlike 1984, the motions were put to a vote). The platform read that the "unborn child

has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed," which suggested

that no exceptions would be made for the health of the mother. A feminist delegate

proposed removing the last four words, noting that Bush favored such exceptions, but it

was defeated 55-32.[137]

Opinion polls showed that a majority of Americans came to view Falwell

negatively, and by 1988, several religious broadcaster scandals made political association

with Falwell more risky. Wead decided that excluding Falwell and other religious

broadcasters would provide them with ample time to give interviews and appear before

[135] Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatives*, 292.
[136] Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, 109
[137] Wolbrecht, *Politics of Women's Rights*, 55-60.

the public. Instead, they were invited to the convention and expected to attend numerous

meetings so that they had no free time in their schedules.[138] This kept them from drawing

attention to themselves and their support for Bush in press interviews. Over the summer

of 1988, Bush invited 40 evangelical leaders to his home to discuss possible vice-

presidential appointments. He ultimately reassured them with the appointment of Indiana

Senator Dan Quayle as his running mate. Amway founder Richard DeVos, a longtime

financier of conservative causes, had suggested Quayle. Weyrich claimed that "Dan

Quayle was picked as vice president precisely because Robertson had been in the race.

Had he not been in the race, you would have gotten some liberal vice-presidential

nominee—Alan Simpson, maybe."[139] Former SBC President Adrian Rogers supported

Jack Kemp and Bill Bright suggested Elizabeth Dole, both of whom received cabinet

appointments.[140]

Political strategy only took Bush's political fortunes so far. Once elected, Bush

faced a constant struggle to maintain the support of cultural conservatives, even though

his record was hardly more mixed than the Reagan administration. Ultimately, by

stopping short of supporting cultural conservatives on several important issues, Bush was

forced to offer complete support during the 1992 campaign. As a member of the "Eastern

Establishment," Bush's conservative beliefs on a range of issues were more in doubt than

were those of his predecessor.

Although Bush had appointed social conservatives such as Quayle, Kemp, and

Dole to important positions, evangelicals gathered and united in opposition to Bush's

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[138] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 293-294.

[139] Martin, *With God on Our Side*, 294.

[140] Richard Thornburgh was retained as attorney general with James Dobson's strong backing. Doug Wead, "Suggested Telephone Responses to Evangelical Callers Criticizing the President's FCC appointments," July 31 1989, Box Alpha File D, James Dobson File, George Bush Library.

executive appointments. He appointed Baker as secretary of state and a pro choice doctor

as secretary of health and human services. In one telephone conference between

evangelical leaders, they discussed approaching Southern Democrats as an alternative to

Republicans. FOF President James Dobson said "I don't trust them anymore,"

complaining that the presidents' FCC appointments were not made in consultation with

family values groups, and none of them had a record in fighting indecent broadcasting.[141]

Alan Sikes, in particular, was known to favor deregulation of the airwaves. One

Robertson campaigner said that "Republicans think evangelicals are married to the

Republican Party. Well, we're not married, we're engaged and we just caught them in

adultery." McAteer threatened to "go somewhere else." He continued, "those people

who joined Reagan in '80…can flip around again" in response to the low appointment

rate in the Bush administration.[142]

Bush further alienated the evangelical community by refusing to dismiss the

National Endowment for the Arts Chairman, John Frohnmayer, when national news

revealed that the government funded sexually explicit and religiously provocative art.

Bush called on Frohnmayer to "take leadership," but consistently opposed content control

for government-funded art. Congress passed a law requiring that grants be made in

accordance with "general standards of decency" in response to the controversy, but

Frohnmayer refused to interpret the law broadly. NAE President Robert Dugan wrote to

Bush that "a cultural war is raging in this country between those who strongly believe in

the traditional values that made us the greatest country on Earth and the nihilism of some

who reject those values…Failure to take corrective action at this latest outrage can only

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[141] Memorandum from Doug Wead to David Demarest, July 19 1989; James Dobson to John Sununu, July 7 1989, both in Box Alpha File D, James Dobson File, George Bush Library.
[142] Dan Hoover, "Evangelicals disenchanted over treatment by the GOP," *Greenville News*, July 27 1989.

signal…a slap in the face of millions of evangelicals who placed their trust in you by their votes."[143] Bush did not ask for Frohnmayer's resignation until 1992.

President Bush also courted grief from Christian conservatives when several homosexuals appeared at a White House ceremony to celebrate the signing of a "hate crime" bill. Chief of Staff John Sununu invited delegations from more than a dozen groups who had fought to sign the bill, which included some gay and lesbian groups. Wead, Bush's liaison to evangelicals, was dismissed from his post for privately sending letters saying that members of his staff were serving him poorly by inviting gay rights groups to the ceremony.[144]

Bush's aides hoped to maintain a balance of power between competing evangelical and cultural conservative groups, but found that some of the groups were beyond the administration's control. Wead had grave reservations about Bush appearing before the National Religious Broadcaster's (NRB) annual convention in his first year of office. Wead said that NRB was becoming "cocky" and published that Bush would attend without asking the president-elect. Secondly, attending might be especially controversial because of a number of religious broadcaster scandals brought to light in the previous year. Finally, Wead reminded Bush that presidents bestow power on organizations by attending their conventions, and it was better for the president to appear at different places so that no one organization possessed too much power. President Carter's religious liaison, Bob Maddox, advised Wead "Oh, he has to go. We were very, very, mistaken to have turned him down in 1977. It would be a bad signal not to go this

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[143] Doug Wead to Robert Billings, April 4 1990; Robert Dugan to George Bush, undated 1990, both in Subject Files Federal Gogvernment 203-02 – National Endowment for the Arts (199973), George Bush Library.
[144] Interview with Bobbie Kilberg, November 20 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

time." Governor John Ashcroft agreed that NRB was becoming too powerful but said that if Bush "wants to get re-elected he ought to go." Bearing in mind that no other event draws as many "powerful conservative leaders" in one place, Bush attended in accordance with Wead's revised recommendation.[145] Bush also spoke via a loudspeaker to the March for Life in 1989, even though the organization was not helpful to him during the 1988 campaign, and other antiabortion organizations were.[146]

Bush, like Reagan, faced constitutional constraints in pursuing the most ambitious goals of cultural conservatives. There was little he could do with a solidly Democratic Congress. The Supreme Court was a more promising venue. Following the *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* case in 1989, the administration argued in related court cases that there was no constitutional basis for *Roe v. Wade,* but ultimately stopped short of overturning the decision.[147] Supreme Court appointment David Souter would later cast many votes opposed to the preferences of cultural conservatives, but at the time of his appointment in 1990, he was supported by evangelicals. Presented with a Democratic Congress, Bush did not think it was possible to nominate a conservative with a track record to replace Justice William Brennan. Bush was assured by Chief of Staff John Sununu that Souter would vote with the Court's conservative wing despite his unclear record. Sununu told a group of conservatives "This is a home run – and the ball is still ascending. In fact, it's just about to leave earth orbit." Pat Robertson wrote to Sununu that "The Souter appointment was brilliant. I noticed your previous comment that 'when

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[145] Doug Wead to John Sununu, January 11 1989, P2/P5 Box 8 (2321), George Bush Library. Reagan had spoken to NRB both as a candidate and as president.
[146] David Demarest, "Briefing for the President," January 23, 1989, P2/P5 Box 17 (5002), George Bush Library.
[147] Tony Schall (Assistant Attorney General), P2/P5 Box 33 (OA 11363), George Bush Library.

you are old and gray people will say that this was your finest act.'"[148] According to

Blackwell, the Bush White House also fought harder for the appointment of Clarence

Thomas than the Reagan White House had for Robert Bork.[149]

Notwithstanding his judicial appointments, Bush's record on cultural issues

created room for insurgent candidate Pat Buchanan in the 1992 Republican presidential

primary. Pat Robertson, who had supported Bush since the Gulf War, endorsed Bush, but

80 percent of his television-show callers supported Buchanan.[150] Bush met with

evangelical leaders to shore up their support but did not redeem his record on the arts

controversy. He refused to say on or after a television news show with Barbara Walters

that he would exclude open homosexuals from his cabinet.[151] Even Quayle was widely

criticized for saying that the Bush campaign would not discriminate against homosexuals

on "Larry King Live," after an employee alleged he was dismissed for being gay.[152]

Falwell and Beverly LaHaye supported the president but the SBC and NAE continued to

express their opposition, and chided evangelicals who endorsed Bush.[153]

Many commentators viewed the conservative speaker list and platform at the

1992 Republican convention as an effort to regain the trust of evangelicals in the wake of

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[148] Pat McGuigan to John Sununu, undated, Box P2/P5 16,281-16550 (Document 16,375); Pat Robertson to John Sununu, July 23, 1990, Subject File, Federal Government (OA/ID 17636); also see James Dobson to George Bush, November 23 1992, Box Alpha File D, James Dobson File, all in George Bush Library.

[149] Blackwell remembered that "George Bush was absolutely determined that Clarence Thomas was going to be confirmed by the United States Senate, and if there had been a similar determination where the whole White House operation was committed to the confirmation of Judge Robert Bork, he would have been confirmed. But it was of a lesser priority, uh, then; the Reagan adminis- tration put a lesser priority on confirmation of Bork than did the Bush administration for the confirmation of Clarence Thomas (Interview with Morton Blackwell by by unknown interviewer , July 22, 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection).

[150] Les Csorba to Constance Horner, March 16 1992, Alpha File R (Pat Robertson Folder), George Bush Library.

[151] Morris Champmann to George Bush, July 9 1992, White House Office of Public Liaison, Leigh Ann Metzger Series (OA/ID 06887-06888), George Bush Library.

[152] Interview with Bobbie Kilberg, November 20, 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.

[153] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 195.

doubts produced by Bush's mixed record.[154] Gary Bauer, Beverly LaHaye, and Morton

Blackwell served on the "RNC for Life" committee and actively encouraged abortion

opponents to serve as delegates and platform committee members. Three-hundred of the

2,209 delegates to the Republican Convention were Christian Coalition members, which

constituted a fraction larger than Americans for Democratic Action possessed at the 1948

Democratic National Convention. A survey of delegates revealed that 52 percent were

either members of or sympathetic to the "Christian Right."[155] On the platform

committee, 20 of the 107 platform committee members belonged to the Christian

Coalition.[156] Pat Buchanan, who had pugnaciously criticized Bush during the primaries,

was invited to give an unedited convention speech if he endorsed Bush. In the speech, he

linked the 1992 election to the "religious war going on in our country." Pat Robertson

said that Governor Clinton had a "radical" plan to destroy the American family.

Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld, popular in his own state, was booed for supporting

abortion rights in his speech.[157]

The Bush campaign offered little resistance to the cultural conservatives at the

convention. Christian Coalition director Ralph Reed speculated that the campaign could

no longer campaign on the economy or win over economic conservatives, so it focused

on "family values." Because cultural conservatives never believed that Bush shared their

values, the campaign had to exaggerate the message:

> [After President Bush approved a tax increase and a civil rights bill], the only card…the Bush
> campaign had left to play was the social-conservative moral issue, "family values" card. And they
> played it very well. But the problem was…with people who don't really believe it on their own,

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[154] Interview with Morton Blackwell by by unknown interviewer, July 22 1995, Martin Religious Right
Research Collection.

[155] Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 2.

[156] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 198.

[157] Jo Freeman, "Feminism vs. Family Values: Women at the 1992 Democratic and Republican
Conventions," *PS: Political Science and Politics 26:1* (March 1993), 22.

you have to say it louder than you might otherwise say so. If…you've been neglecting your spouse for the last decade, you might feel it necessary to shower her with or him with four dozen roses. But if you've been a faithful and loving husband or wife forever, a simple "I love you" will do. Well, the Bush campaign found it necessary because of a real problem with conservatives in its own Party to send the equivalent of four dozen roses, and that became known as the Houston Convention.

Christian Action Network President Martin Mawyer claims that his group had approached the campaign about gay rights early in 1992 and was told changing the platform would be difficult. Mawyer approached Ralph Reed for advice on how to present amendments and passed the amendments with no apparent resistance from the Bush campaign.[158] While the 1988 platform said nothing about gay rights, the 1992 platform committee adopted a number of planks against same-sex partner rights, and criticized corporations who had cut off funding for the Boy Scouts, who refused to employ homosexuals as scout leaders. The platform committee also resisted any change to the party's previous planks on abortion. An effort to make an exception for rape or incest was defeated by voice vote.[159] The platform supported limited legal protection for home schooling and "Operation Rescue," which blockaded abortion clinics. School prayer planks that had previously supported "rich religious pluralism" were reworded to read "our Judeo-Christian heritage." Criticism from the SBC and NAE seemed to subside with the passage of a platform opposed to gay rights.[160] The Christian Coalition commented that "nobody thought we could do better than 1988 but this platform is more precise." Robertson pronounced the platform as "the most conservative platform in decades."[161]

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[158] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 201.

[159] Wolbrecht, *The Politics of Women's Rights*, 64.

[160] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 195. Oldfield bases this on an interview with NAE's Robert Dugan.

[161] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 203.

When advocacy groups and political organizations consider a politician as one of their own, they trust that the politician will fight on their behalf without constant scrutiny. For politicians they do not trust, qualified statements and framing are looked upon with suspicion. When they are not sure about a politician, that politician needs to reassure them to the point that moderate members of the public notice, and his positions drift out of the median voter's "blind spot." Bush's son, George W. Bush, managed to win the loyalty of the cultural conservatives, without giving them a prominent voice at the 2000 convention, in part because they were convinced that he was a born-again Christian. Neither Pat Robertson nor Jerry Falwell received a speaking slot.

After the First Bush Administration

Many journalists claimed that the poor image of cultural conservatives at the 1992 convention signaled the waning of their influence. However, Republicans with national ambitions continued to view them as a constituency needed for the nomination. In 1996, Republican presidential contenders Lamar Alexander, Pat Buchanan, Richard Lugar, Bob Dole, and Phil Gramm all spoke to the Christian Coalition convention.[162] Buchanan won New Hampshire running to the right of most of his competitors on cultural issues, but floundered in South Carolina, where Dole supporters won with the help of Pat Robertson and the South Carolina Christian Coalition. The Christian Coalition's executive director, Ralph Reed, did not want the Coalition to be labeled as "extremist" for supporting Buchanan, while also performing what he called a "delicate dance" to encourage the "activism and energy" in the Buchanan campaign. Reed added that Christian conservatives "must do more than 'send a message.'…They must win elections. They

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[162] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 220.

must govern." [163] Dole wrapped up the nomination quickly but avoided cultural issues.

Dole wanted a "tolerance" statement in the platform to welcome different views in the

Republican Party, but paid little attention to who was on the platform committee.[164] The

Christian Coalition distributed wireless devices to link 102 floor whips to a

"Communications Command Center" that would coordinate strategy. In heated sessions,

Phyllis Schlafly and the Christian Coalition blocked Dole's effort to moderate the

abortion plank, and the tolerance issue simply prolonged the debate and drew more

attention to the issue.[165] Dole carried only 41 percent of the popular vote, with

evangelical turnout six percent lower than it had been in 1992. James Dobson claimed

that Dole lost partly because Dole did not show proper deference to cultural

conservatives. Reed noted that evangelicals contributed to the Republicans continuing

control of Congress.[166]

The 2000 election was no different. The ultimate Republican nominee, George

W. Bush, had met with the New Right's Council for National Policy in October of 1999

and solidified his conservative positions on cultural issues. Furthermore, Bush was an

evangelical Christian, and not a mainline Protestant like his father. Bush said that he let

drinking problems risk his career and marriage until he had a born-again experience in

1984. At an early Republican debate, Bush responded to a question about which

philosopher he most identified with by answering "Christ, because he changed my heart."

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[163] Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 82-83.
[164] Dole faced opposition from Bob Jones University, however. Crichtlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 297; interview with Don Devine, June 14 1996.
[165] Smidt and Penning, *Sojourners in the Wilderness*, 41. Dole announced that he had not read the platform and was not bound by it. His running mate, Jack Kemp, had solid support among Christian conservatives, but emphasized economic issues during the election (Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 56, 83).
[166] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 241.

James Robison, who had withdrawn from politics after the 1980 election,[167] was convinced of Bush's sincerity and introduced him to a dozen national evangelical leaders.[168] In 2000, the directors of the Christian Coalition and National Right to Life Committee defended Bush against conservatives who believed he would be as unreliable as his father had been. Even James Dobson refused to endorse his longtime associate, Gary Bauer, against Bush.[169] When Bauer endorsed McCain, who showed little interest in winning over conservative Christians, Dobson released a statement attacking McCain's record and even comparing his character to that of President Clinton. Pat Robertson recorded a phone message that was forwarded to many Republicans during the South Carolina primary, arguing that Bush had stronger pro-life credentials.[170] Bush had also gained the endorsement of Grover Norquist, one of the conservative movement's foremost facilitators. Bush campaign strategist Karl Rove had known Norquist for twenty years and invited him for a face-to-face meeting in Texas in 1998. Norquist left the meeting convinced of Bush's commitment to conservatism, and Bush sent a delegate to Wednesday meetings to stay in touch with the movement's agenda.[171] As president, Bush sent his Public Liaison Tim Goeglien, future Family Research Council President, to the meetings every week. In the general election, the Democratic ticket of Al Gore and Joe Lieberman reminded voters that both scrupulously attended their respective religious services, but Bush still won 74 percent of evangelical voters.[172]

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[167] Interview with James Robison by unknown interviewer, October 27 1995, Martin Religious Right Research Collection.
[168] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 246-247.
[169] Cohen et al, *The Party Decides*, 220-225.
[170] Wilcox and Robinson, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, 111.
[171] Medvetz, "The Strength of Weekly Ties: Relations of Material and Symbolic Exchange in the Conservative Movement," 350.
[172] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 248-250.

All things considered, historian Daniel Williams called the Bush administration the "most overtly evangelical in American history." Although moderates Christie Todd Whitman and Colin Powell were appointed to Bush's cabinet, his attorney general, national security adviser, education secretary, and health and human services secretary had strong ties to the evangelical Christian community. Bush frequently prayed and discussed his born-again experiences at the White House, and 40 percent of his staff attended weekly Bible studies or prayer meetings.[173] The Family Research Council and Christian Coalition experienced sagging membership and contributions during Bush's first term, but several of their leaders formed the "Arlington Group" to unite cultural conservatives behind an amendment outlawing gay marriage. With the Massachusetts Supreme Court declaring marriage a right and the Supreme Court declaring anti-sodomy laws unconstitutional, James Dobson said the amendment was "our D-Day, our Gettysburg, our Stalingrad."[174] Gay marriage was such a salient issue that FOF was willing to lay off several staffers in their successful fight to repeal gay marriage in California in 2008.[175] Leading up to 2004, Bush had resisted the issue and supported the right of states to recognize civil unions. In January, the Arlington Group presented Bush's strategist Karl Rove with an ultimatum to support the Federal Marriage Amendment in the State of the Union address. Bush criticized judges practicing judicial activism on the marriage issue, but this did not go far enough for conservative activistss. The Arlington Group renewed pressure and in February, Bush supported the amendment, still clarifying he was in favor of allowing states to have civil unions.

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[173] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 252.
[174] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 257.
[175] Cara Degette, November 17 2008, "More layoffs at Focus on the Family," *The Colorado Independent*.

Cultural conservatives played a prominent role in Bush's reelection. Leaders of the NAE and the Arlington Group held weekly conference calls with Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and Tim Goeglein, Bush's liaison to conservative groups. Dobson set aside his usual reservations about endorsements and endorsed the Republican nominee. The Bush campaign held a "pastor's reception" at the SBC and the SBC's outgoing president hosted a reception at the 2004 Republican Convention. Conservative Megachurch pastors mobilized their congregations behind the Federal Marriage Amendment, and in doing so, ensured that voters sympathetic to Bush would show up at the polls.[176]

Layman and Hussey (2007) find that Bush's personal religious views played little role in the 2000 and 2004 election. Instead, evangelicals who attended church regularly had been committed Republicans since the 1990s. Bush performed better among evangelicals who attended church less frequently, but mainly because they were attracted to his foreign policy. While Bush may have received levels of support among committed evangelicals comparable to earlier Republicans, it is notable that he was able to do that without offering the kind of reassurance his father had offered with the 1992 convention and John McCain had with his running mate. Furthermore, Rudy Giuliani's inability to gain traction in the 2008 election, and James Dobson's threat to support a third party, reveals that evangelical group leaders may withhold support from nominees who do not demonstrate credible commitment to their cause. Bush was able to demonstrate such commitment partly by being an evangelical.

In conclusion, culturally conservative groups continued to play a strong role in the Republican Party after the widely-criticized 1992 Convention. Even as particular

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[176] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 258-261.

organizations fell, other groups rise to take their place. Ambitious Republicans still need

to meet a baseline of approval from Christian conservative groups, perhaps explaining

why the culturally liberal Rudy Giuliani lost his early lead in the polls in the 2008

Republican nomination contest. The nominee in 2008, Senator John McCain, compared

Christian conservative leaders to union bosses when he ran for the Republican

nomination in 2000. They were "agents of intolerance," and Falwell and Robertson had

an "evil influence" on the party. In 2006, McCain changed his posture and declared that

"I believe [the Christian right has] a right to be a part of our party."[177] Although

McCain's ties to Christian conservatives remained tenuous, he appointed Alaska

Governor Sarah Palin, who strongly opposed abortion and supported the teaching of

creationism in schools, as his running mate.

Alternative Explanations

As with the civil rights transformation of the Democratic Party, it is worth

considering the role of pundits in shaping the conservative trajectory of the Republican

Party. Well before gay rights and abortion were public issues, there were several

attempts by pundits and radio show hosts to convince theological conservatives to be

political conservatives.   J. Howard Pew, a premier financier of conservative causes until

his death in 1971, argued for the necessity of both religious and political conservatism.

Pew said "Christianity and freedom are inexorably tied together" and "New Dealism,

Socialism, and Communism are substantially the same thing—and all of them are the

very antithesis of Christianity." Pew did not believe in working directly to shape political

parties. He primarily directed his funding into written arguments for his position,

declaring in the 1950s, "For 20 years I have been convinced we never would accomplish

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[177] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 251.

336

anything worth while by merely changing the party in power…If we want to save America, we must do it by changing the minds and hearts of our people." Together with Henry Regnery, Pew created the magazine *Human Events* in 1944 to fight despotism, uphold "Christian principles," and fight the threat to the "American heritage."[178] Pew also donated to the bipartisan "Spiritual Mobilization," which embraced both piety and conservative politics in its publications. Pew and Billy Graham started the magazine *Christianity Today,* provided free of charge to ministers.

Most of Pew's efforts had little impact outside of the intellectual community. Businessmen feared that donations to Spiritual Mobilization would earn them reputations as propagandists. Religious leaders feared that participation in Pew's groups would cause observers to view them as tainted by business influence.[179] According to future New Right strategist Richard Viguerie, Pew and others of his generation were hampered by a lack of alternative media, such as direct mail, cable television, and the internet.[180] Among intellectuals, his invocation of religion led some nonreligious conservative intellectuals to feign religious sentiment to gain Pew's favor. Russell Kirk noted that the president of the Old Right "Intercollegiate Society of Individualists," injected religion in his appeals. Kirk wrote that "[Frank] Chodorov, an atheist, now tosses in an occasional condescending reference to God, in the hope of pleasing Mr. J. Howard Pew."[181]

NR editor William F. Buckley helped organize several conservative organizations, but none of them were responsible for the cultural conservative realignment. After the Supreme Court declared school prayer unconstitutional in 1961,

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[178] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 74-75, 129.
[179] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 161.
[180] Interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20 2011.
[181] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 206.

Buckley sought religious adherents from multiple sects to resist the secularization of society. He helped handpick the leaders of the "Committee for Religious Liberty," which recruited a Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leader to promote a unified front.[182] The organization had a short lifespan and the issue failed to produce realignment on its own; evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Catholics did not identify as Republicans until much later.

Some conservative leaders view "fusionism" as the set of ideas bringing about Reagan's election and the growing conservatism of the Republican Party.[183] *NR* book review editor Frank Meyer articulated fusionism, as it was later dubbed by others, to bring together economic libertarians and foreign policy conservatives. Meyer argued that freedom for the individual and "the knowledge that has emerged over the ages" were both important to Western Civilization. The Judeo Christian ethic was a part of Western values, and one could not have freedom without Western values.[184] Most of my interviewees argue that fusionism did not anticipate contemporary Christian conservatism, including leaders from organizations that *NR* was heavily involved with. Former ACU president Mickey Edwards said "I think Frank Meyer if he could would hurl lightning bolts at you for asking the question."[185] In 1969, when someone in an audience asked Meyer what his position was on abortion, Meyer indicated that he had not

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[182] Part of Buckley's motivation was to organize a responsible conservative movement before conspiratorial conservative groups like the John Birch Society (JBS) and Bill James Hargis' Christian Crusade organized one. WFB to Lewis Strauss, July 12, 1962, WFB I-27; on Buckley's prominent role in the organization, see WFB to Bishop Phillip Hannan, July 16, 1963, WFB I-27.

[183] In my first interview with Tim Goeglin (head of FOF's Washington, D.C. branch), he declared that fusionism defined the three-legged stool in the Reagan coalition. In my second interview, he acknowledged that it was developed in response to communism and encroachments on economic freedom, and it was not designed with cultural issues in mind

[184] Interview with his son, Eugene Meyer (President of the Federalist Society), March 2 2011. Meyer indicated his father never liked the term fusionism, because one does not fuse these fundamental truths together. Rather, they were both true in the same way that "the sun rises" and "sunlight leads to sunburn" are both true.

[185] Interview with Mickey Edwards, March 15 2011.

thought of the issue before then and came up with an answer on the spur of the moment.[186] Former Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) president Jim Lacy, who considered himself a fusionist, agreed that Christian conservative values were far more sectarian than the traditional values associated with fusionism. Lacy complained that contemporary Christian conservatives have done the Republican Party a disservice by "desecularizing the party."[187]

Buckley helped to create the ACU as a "responsible" conservative counterpart to JBS. Even in an organization largely created by NR, fusionism was not a defining ideology. When three ACU leaders proclaimed Frank Meyer the "head of intellectual activities," other members were disgusted. Buckley and William Rusher agreed that fusionism did not command such universal assent, and acted to repair the damage.[188] ACU's annual conference, CPAC, was divided on the abortion issue leading up to and following *Roe v. Wade*. Former ACU President David Keene recalls that the CPAC attendees in the early 1970s were mostly pro choice,[189] and another observer recalls that the ACU annual conference was evenly divided on the abortion issue.[190]

There was a similar split among *NR* readers. Buckley informed other *NR* writers that the magazine was consciously attempting to change the views of its readers on abortion as early as 1973. The Catholic editor wrote "We are trying to persuade a lot of our readers on the abortion issue. At least 50 per cent of them don't agree with us."[191] Much of the intellectual energy among Catholics in the 1960s took place in the Catholic

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[186] Interview with Eugene Meyer, March 2 2011.
[187] Interview with Jim Lacy, July 16, 2010.
[188] William Rusher to WFB, March 1, 1966, WFB Papers.
[189] Interview with David Keene, June 3 2011.
[190] McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, 8.
[191] WFB to James McFadden, April 4, 1973, WFB II 66.

left. Buckley lamented that no conservative Catholic publications existed, but plenty liberal or radical publications flourished: *Commonweal, The Sign, Ave Maria, The Critic, The Catholic World, Ramparts*, and *Continuum*.[192] Without any Catholic publications linking Catholic theology and conservative politics, Catholics voters still shifted in a conservative direction in the near future.

Buckley and other conservatives helped create YAF in 1960 to provide an outlet for conservative college students. Even though ACCC President Carl McIntire served on the Board, YAF, like ACU, did not focus on cultural issues. In 1969, the organization faced serious internal struggles between "traditionalist" and "anarcho-libertarian" factions. The Vietnam War and the draft, not contemporary cultural issues, produced the rift.[193] Jim Lacy recalled that in the 1970s, few conservatives spent any time on cultural issues and most focused on anticommunism and the Panama Canal Treaty.[194]

Francis Schaeffer was a seminal intellectual influence on Christian conservatism, yet he was not consistently conservative on political issues. Most of the cadre of Southern Baptists responsible for the conservative ascendancy in 1979 had read Schaeffer, but very few of the moderates or liberals were aware of him.[195] Three interest group leaders – Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye, and Pat Robertson – all claimed that Schaeffer was one of their favorite authors. Falwell distributed 62,000 copies of Schaeffer's book and LaHaye dedicated one of his own books to Schaeffer.[196] Schaeffer

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[192] WFB to Pat Manion, February 1 1965, WFB I 35. Buckley explained that although *NR* featured many Catholic authors, it was a secular publication and could not write with "specifically Catholic presuppositions."

[193] *NR* Publisher William Rusher described the split as a "gigantic iceberg of controversy, which has been bedeviling the organization in recent years" (William Rusher to Roger Milliken, June 4 1970, William Rusher Papers 59).

[194] Jim Lacy, interviewed by the author July 16, 2010.

[195] Hankins, *Uneasy in Bablyon*, Chapter 1.

[196] Williams, "From the Pews to the Polls," 224.

had seen Falwell's broadcast and called him on the phone to urge his involvement in politics; Falwell wrote "Dr. Schaffer shattered that world of isolation," and "pushed me into the arena and told me to put on the gloves."[197] He originally was a pastor in Carl McIntire's fundamentalist Bible Presbyterian Church, but had a crisis of faith while traveling through Europe, and came to favor an ecumenical approach to religion. Diverse people – including leftists and countercultural travelers – visited his new home in the Swiss Alps for his philosophical insight. Schaeffer was in favor of economic regulations to benefit the poor, gun control, and government regulations to protect the environment. However, he was culturally conservative, and wrote a survey of secular humanism to warn readers of the growing danger of secularism.

This sketch of the conservative intellectual movements suggests that, as with the NAACP and the CIO, conservative interest group leaders borrowed selectively from intellectuals. They flourished by conjoining some of their ideas with ideas from other sources in a way that capitalized on current issues for organizational advantage. Since organizational leaders apply intellectual theories to particular issues, without embracing the whole intellectual bundle of issues or their rationale, one questions whether "reflective equilibrium" directs the activities of interest groups or parties. Certainly, Schaeffer's position on antipoverty programs and environmentalism did not persuade most of the followers who cited him on cultural issues.

Conclusion

Conservative groups attempted to move the Republican Party rightward on cultural issues from the 1970s through the current decade. At times, they pushed Republican politicians outside of the "blind spot" of the voters and caused Republicans to

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[197] Quoted in Williams, *God's Own Party*, 173.

lose elections. Politicians and party leaders, on the other hand, resisted their efforts and moved to the center insofar as it was in the "blind spot" of the cultural conservatives in their coalition. With few exceptions, they were unwilling to campaign against liberal Republican politicians or push for conservative cultural policies without being prodded by interest groups. Many Republicans (even conservatives) resisted the new additions to the party and were forced to change due to primary challenges.

Like the unions who helped transform the Democratic Party into a more liberal party during the 1940s, churches registered and activated many previously unregistered voters. Weyrich summarized the contribution of Christian manpower "The Religious Right has always been the ones with the troops. The New Right had some ability to raise money, but it had very little ability to recruit new voters by themselves." Both unions and Christian conservative groups gather like-minded people into a building on a regular basis. Both expose people to political perspectives in the process of offering other benefits. Both found it easiest to influence their party nominations in districts where their party was weak.[198] Religious institutions can make group appeals to Christian or Jewish values just as unions can makes appeals to union solidarity. Churches arguably have an even more respectful audience than unions due to the voluntary nature of the membership.[199] As a spokesman for Newt Gingrich said, "The organized Christian vote is roughly to the Republican Party today what organized labor was to the Democrats. It brings similar resources: people, money and ideological convictions."[200]

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[198] Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous*, 102, 131.
[199] Wald et al., "Churches as Political Communities," 531.
[200] Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 398.

Figure 8.1: Campaign Funding for Voter Groups, October 31, 1980[201]
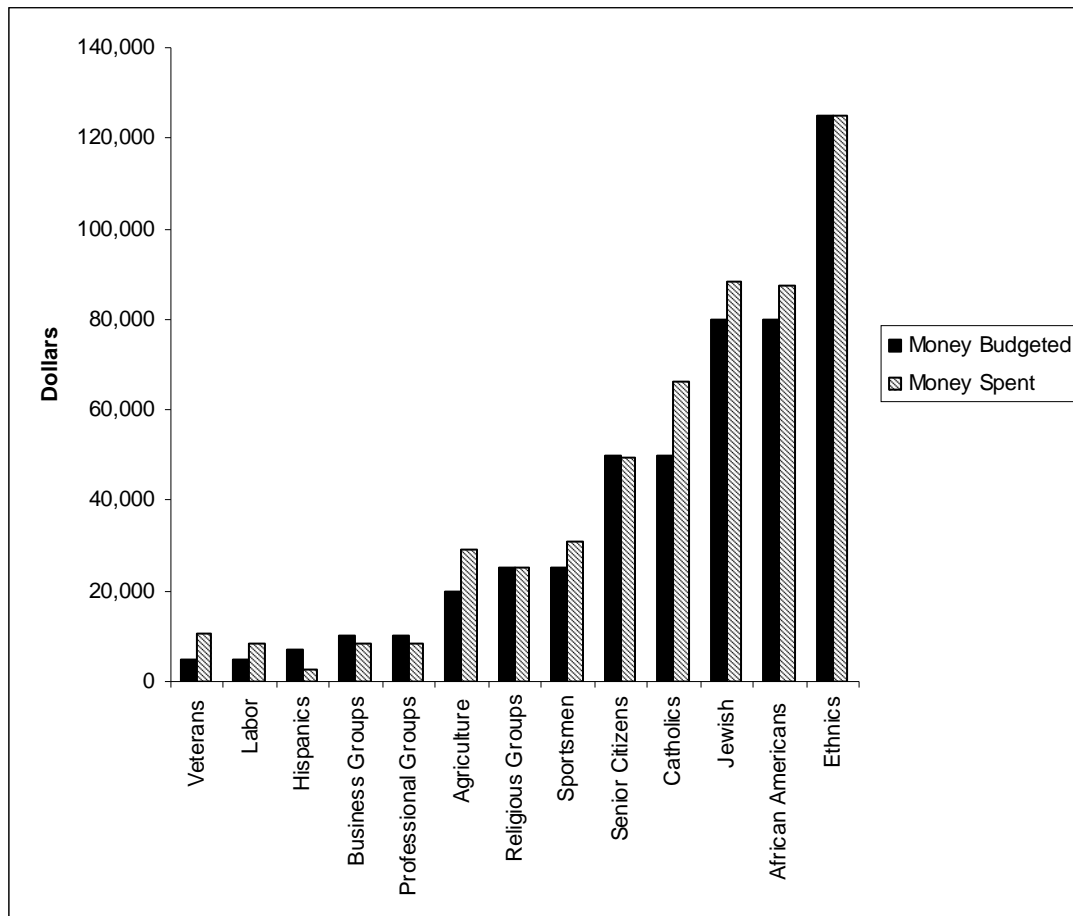
Note 1: Budget allocations varied with incoming donations and budgets from different dates use somewhat different figures. This figure uses the totals from the last dated budget. The campaign also spent over $100,000 on the Hispanic Voter Group section, but using mostly RNC funds.

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[201] Eleanor Callahan to Peter Dailey, October 31 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 228. Several figures for spending on Hispanic voters were listed in the Memorandum from Peter Dailey to Max Hugel, October 21 1980, Reagan Library Campaign Files Box 312.

CONCLUSION

During the Great Depression, America consisted of parties that were liberal on some issues and conservative on others. The Democrats consisted of liberal Northerners who favored both civil rights and progressive economics, as well as Southerners who opposed civil rights liberals at every turn. The Republicans were dominated by economic conservatives and social moderates, and still hoped to regain the allegiance of African Americans. By the 1970s, the Democrats had clearly become the party of civil rights, but were once again divided on other social issues. Feminists and gay rights organizations fought to lead the party in a new direction even though their foremost opponents, evangelical Christians, tended to vote for Democrats. The Republican Party was, if anything, associated with mainline religious denominations, and took moderate positions on new cultural issues.

Today, the parties have sorted on all counts. Nearly everyone recognizes the Democratic Party as the party of economic liberals, civil rights liberals, and cultural liberals. Meanwhile, the Republican Party is no longer just the party of business, but the party of theological conservatives and conservative white Southerners. But politicians played a relatively small role in initiating the party transformations. Highly motivated groups plotted to transform the parties years before mainstream politicians accepted their new vision for the party. They developed broad coalitions capable of influencing primary battles and nominations on their own, with very little help from established politicians. Entrenched politicians often resisted new influences in the party even when they

advanced the party's electoral fortunes. Groups also worked with each other to ensure continued cooperation in spite of subtle differences and organizational niches.

My topic raises several questions for democratic theorists. In both of my case studies, underrepresented minorities obtained a prominent position in one of the two major parties, bringing America closer to the ideal of universal representation. However, they did so not by persuading the median voter of their views, but through superior organization and political savvy. No one was keeping the median voter away from the polls, but intense activists took advantage of their less intense beliefs and inattention to politics. Political candidates, the public face of parties, were not the agents of party transformation and the resulting policy changes. Although the representation of political minorities is normally celebrated by supporters of democracy, their entry into the parties are accompanied by a shift in party positions away from the median voter. My research suggests an opaque political system that belies pretensions to pure representation.

Casual observation suggests that American politics shows no sign of changing at the time of this writing. Parties still show great reluctance to challenge their own officeholders. South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint was sharply criticized for raising $7.5 million for the midterm elections of 2010 and using it to support conservative challengers to "content-free" incumbent Republicans. One Congressional aid anonymously reported that "If on Nov. 3 there are two or three seats in Democratic control that otherwise would have been Republican victories, then that anger will come back up to the surface and there will be consequences," without specifying the consequences.[202] Apparently stirred

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[202] Bolton, Alexander. 2010. "Senator DeMint relishes his role as kingmaker.' *The Hill.* September 15. http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/119115-sen-demint-relishes-role-as-kingmaker

by these criticisms, DeMint promised to target only Democrats with funds raised for 2012.[203]

Intense groups still attempt to change parties by fighting for more pure party nominees, even if that sometimes means losing the general election. The Tea Party threatens moderate Republicans with primary challenges and has succeeded in many cases. In the Republican primaries for the Delaware Senate seat in 2010, for example, Tea Party favorite Christine O'Donnell defeated former Delaware Governor Michael Castle, only to lose to the Democratic nominee in November. Leadership Institute President Morton Blackwell said that conservative activists had no regrets about supporting O'Donnell. Castle might have won, he said, but "he would have been a thorn in Republican's flesh forever."[204] In a Tea Party meeting in Corpus Christie, Texas, a Tea Party leader allowed a politician to attend meetings of her organization, but told him, "you don't talk, you listen to us."[205]

Shifting to the Democratic Party, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker curtailed the collective bargaining rights of teacher's unions to reduce manage state expenses, and survived a recall attempt initiated by the unions. Looking ahead, similar initiatives could shift the balance of power between the two parties, and the shape of the Democratic Party. Intense, organized groups such as teacher's unions have traditionally provided funding and manpower that the Democratic Party has depended on, and nudged the party in a liberal direction.

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[203] Raju, Manu. 2010. "DeMint assures colleagues he won't back primary challengers." *Politico*. December 2. http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1210/45891.html. Blackwell says that the promise was somewhat easier to make given the large number of seats vacated by Democrats, but that the "heat" placed on him seems to have had some effect. Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27 2011.
[204] Interview with Morton Blackwell, April 27 2011.
[205] Interview with Richard Viguerie, January 20 2011.

Given the normative importance and continuing relevance of the research question posed in this dissertation, I will summarize the arguments and evidence presented in earlier chapters. In the first chapter, I provided theoretical reasons for believing that groups within parties would be more likely than politicians to be agents of change. Politicians tend to accept parties as they are, augmenting them only when new voters do not conflict with existing groups in the party. If they do welcome groups in the party that are opposed by existing groups, they tend to straddle the differences in order to maximize votes. Moderation seldom begets transformation, however. Unpopular groups usually have little representation in either party, and realize that obtaining representation is a long-term process. They are therefore willing to challenge their preferred party and push it in more extreme directions even when this jeopardizes affiliated politicians in the general election. The relationship between parties and groups has been explored by many political scientists, but it was largely ignored for decades after Schattschneider's death. I proposed advancing this line of inquiry through historical methods, researching the role of politicians and groups in the two most important transformations of the twentieth century.

Chapter Two discusses the first of these two cases, in which the Democratic Party became the party of civil rights. Prior to this transformation, African Americans had little representation in either party. The most prestigious civil rights organization, the NAACP, tried to influence both parties at first. It preferred the economic policies of the Democratic Party but realized that their civil rights proposals would meet with fierce resistance from the Southern wing of the party. Throughout the Great Depression, the

NAACP resisted becoming an organization focused on working class issues or partisan politics. Unions were becoming increasingly powerful forces in the Democratic Party, but many African American institutions, including the NAACP, hesitated to cast their lot with them even when they promised to improve race relations. During the next decade, the NAACP clearly expanded the scope of its work to include working with unions. Chapter Three outlines the reasons for their change. The NAACP was well aware that the CIO and its liberal allies were working to change the Democratic Party into one that promoted both economic and civil rights liberalism. It worked carefully with these groups even as Republican politicians made bolder promises than Democratic politicians. The NAACP also received significant funding from the CIO, and hoped that cooperation would facilitate the transition of more African Americans into the growing unionized sector of the economy. For the CIO, African Americans could help win elections for candidates broadly supportive of labor rights and their other organizational goals. By working closely with the NAACP, the CIO could promote its civil rights policies as truly representing the interests of African Americans. Together, their focus on the FEPC helped to further estrange African Americans from the Republican Party. African Americans were assets in some organizing drives and liabilities in others, but it is clear that the CIO desired them as political allies.

Chapter Four explains how, once established, the CIO-NAACP transformed the Democratic Party. At first, President Truman was willing to fight for the bold ambitions of the liberal-labor alliance, but later decided to straddle the issue to placate the white South. At the 1948 convention, liberal groups initiated a platform fight to reassert Truman's original zeal for civil rights, against the efforts of the Truman administration

itself. This was a conscious move to marginalize Southern influence within the party. Chapter Five shows that the Democratic Party never backpedaled from the promises of the 1948 convention. In contests from 1952 through 1960, politicians with national ambitions realized that they needed to win the support of the liberal-labor wing of the party. Civil rights were a litmus test for that wing. This culminated in the election of 1960, when both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson distanced themselves from their Southern ties in order to win party nominations.

The second case study is introduced in Chapter Six. In the 1970s, cultural liberals fought for gay rights, abortion rights, and equal rights for women. Although the Republican Party had traditionally been the party of liberal Protestant sects, most of the proponents of cultural liberalism fought for influence in the Democratic Party. These issues, as well as related cultural lifestyle issues, animated cultural conservatives. Catholics and evangelicals traditionally identified with the Democratic Party but found that their social agenda was increasingly opposed by party leaders. In the next chapter, I described how the New Right observed that cultural conservatives were increasingly marginal in the Democratic Party, and mobilized them to influence the Republican Party in a more conservative direction. Chapter Eight shows that by the 1980s, cultural conservatism was a litmus test for Republicans seeking positions of national leadership. Republican presidential contestants needed formalized strategies to win over the evangelical vote in nominating contests, just as Democratic presidential contestants had with the African American vote by the 1950s. Politicians did not prioritize culturally conservative votes over the votes of moderates until conservative groups organized them and facilitated alliances across religious sects and between different kinds of

conservatives. Many longstanding Republicans, in fact, sought to minimize the role of theological conservatives in primary battles and the Reagan administration.

Further Research

As with African Americans, cultural liberals did not initially have influence in the Democratic Party, and their struggle to gain influence is a case study that awaits further research. The last word has not been written about cultural conservatives, either. Many important documents from the Reagan and Bush administrations have not been released to the public through Freedom of Information Act requests, such as Doug Wead's memorandums on winning evangelical votes in the 1988 election. The records of Jesse Helms, the most important Republican MC in the cultural conservative transformation, are still being processed. Paul Weyrich, arguably the most important New Right strategist, kept a diary all of his adult life and wrote in it every night, but the diary will not be made public for many years. Likewise, William Rusher's diary at the Library of Congress has not been opened to the public.

Both of the case studies outlined in this dissertation are cases where groups were successful at infiltrating parties. One might shed further light on what is necessary and/or sufficient to transform a party by observing cases in which groups sought entrance to a different party but was successfully kept at the margins. Additionally, there are cases in which groups sought to lure other groups away from their existing party, and failed. The efforts of conservative groups to lure workers away from the Democratic Party by advertising a trade-off between jobs and the environment appears to be a promising case.

Another task for future research is the comparative weight of ideas and organizational interests in group behavior. My dissertation was not written with this

research question in mind, but illuminates the topic nonetheless. The following is meant to sketch the evidence encountered while researching this dissertation. It does not offer a systematic test of this important issue. The most powerful group examined, the CIO, was both ideological and self-interested. Its ideas of a full employment economy, economic justice, and racial equality inspired many of the members, leaders, and groups allied with the CIO. At the same time, the CIO looked out for its own interests as it tried to unionize more workplaces in competition with other unions. Many of its members added to its funding and manpower resources in the process of fighting for higher pay, benefits, and job security, and cared little for ideology. The NAACP was consistently motivated by the issue of racial equality, but its decision to expand beyond purely racial issues into working class issues was driven largely by the need to maintain or expand the organization. In the case of cultural conservatives, it is not clear that the *National Review (NR)*, the most important conservative publication in America, presaged the cultural conservative awakening in politics. The 1960s witnessed the growth of liberal religious publications, but of course, religious conservatives and conservative sects have grown much faster than liberal sects ever since. "Fusionists" and other intellectuals who valued tradition created common ground with theological conservatives, but hardly provided the intellectual basis for their political beliefs. In 1973, only a few years before the proliferation of conservative Christian organizations, the elite readers of *NR* had not come to a consensus on abortion. Part of Noel's (2012) evidence is that intellectual consensuses precede party consensuses on political issues. I did not find this pattern in the case studies employed in my research. Black newspapers became supportive of labor unions around the same time as civil rights interest groups, while *NR* editorialized against

351

abortion nearly at the same time that New Right groups wanted to conjoin economic conservatism with cultural conservatism. The biographical data on the organizational leaders discussed in my research shows that they incorporated ideas from books when it benefited their organizations, but it is less clear that they would follow the ideas if they led to serious costs.

One interpretation of the intellectual history is that intellectuals persuaded group leaders to adopt their intellectual positions, but it is also possible that interest group employees rise to the top of the organization because they already believe in intellectual positions that happen to be consistent with group interests. Another possibility is that ideological pundits unify the mass public behind their constellation of issue positions and/or rationale for those positions, and interest group leaders have to follow ideological pundits to avoid splitting their natural base of support in the mass public. If anything, however, the cases presented above show interest group leaders to be more attuned to ideological pundits than rank-and-file members of the organizations, who were more divided on issues such as labor and abortion. Pundit ideologies may be seen as bundles of issue positions on a shelf. Organizations seem to select from these bundles as it advances leader interests and organizational interest, ignoring the philosophical rationale for these bundles when their implications hurt the organization.

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One thing that this study makes clear is the comparatively passive role politicians play in two major party transformations, at least compared with organized groups outside of the party. Schattschneider compared parties succumbing to pressure groups to whales

timidly swimming away from schools of minnows,[206] but it would be more appropriate to say that parties are nothing more than schools of different fish. Unpopular groups resemble schools that are dissatisfied with the existing feeding grounds and force the entrenched schools to move on to new ones. The decision to side with one party or another depends on which school of fish is more likely to help them chase away the entrenched school. In politics, groups are "first to the party." They bring marginalized groups into the party coalition, creating lasting effects on party nominations and public policy.

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[206] Schattschneider, *Party Government*, 197.

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