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# Conspiracy Theories in American History

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# Conspiracy Theories in American History

An Encyclopedia

Volume 1  
A–L

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## Foreword

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Though most of my professional writing has dealt with slavery and antislavery on a global scale, in the late 1950s I was struck by similar and almost hysterical patterns in the pre-Civil War American literature exposing the alleged conspiratorial dangers posed by the Freemasons, Catholics, and Mormons, three groups as different from one another as anyone could imagine. In 1960 I published a widely reprinted article on these “themes of counter-subversion.” In retrospect, I’m sure I was influenced by my distaste for McCarthyism and other forms of cold war extremism. Nine years later, having then written extensively on what I termed “the problem of slavery,” I sought in a public lecture series to *combine* the themes of conspiracy and slavery by examining some of the links and similarities between the southern view of abolitionists as subversives, the growing northern fear of a southern “Slave Power,” and the supposed plots against America beginning with the British crown and the French Illuminati and extending on to the Masons, Catholics, Wall Street bankers, Jews, Communists, and exponents of Black Power. (I also had the good fortune to be exchanging ideas and information with the great historian Richard Hofstadter, who in 1964 published a very influential essay, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.”) In 1971, two years after the appearance of my short book *The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style*, I edited a book of primary sources, *The Fear of Conspiracy*, which moved from the period of the American Revolution to debates over the

Vietnam War. In all of these writings I tried to emphasize that there *are* genuine conspiracies and that some of the voices of alarm, such as those raised against a southern Slave Power, were based on more than a grain of truth.

But Peter Knight’s *Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia* makes it clear that some of my other premises and assumptions in 1971 were somewhat naïve, especially in the sense of not realizing where we Americans were headed. In 1971, as in the 1960s, it simply seemed insightful to expose and compare patterns of American “paranoid” thinking from the Revolution to modern times, and to relate such exaggerated fears to the insecurity fostered by the explosive growth of what Alexis de Tocqueville imaginatively termed “individualism”—a dissolution of community that could easily promote a need to “breathe together,” to join in secret agreements, as suggested by the Latin root word “conspirare.” One can surely argue that a free, democratic society *requires* an attentive alertness to the misuses of power. If America originally freed itself from kings and tyrants, the nation was all the more vulnerable to demagogues and conspirators of various kinds. And from Lenin and Hitler on to various Third World rulers, we have repeatedly seen how conspirators can seize entire governments.

But as Peter Knight makes clear, I and others were wrong decades ago when we thought of “the paranoid style” as largely an aberration of the past, now represented by only a few crackpots and

extremists ranging from Robert Welch and the John Birch Society to people like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. We could not foresee that conspiracy theories, even regarding extraterrestrial creatures, would become “the lingua franca of many ordinary Americans.” We could not imagine what I might now term “the double-agent phenomenon,” in which my own attempt to define a paranoid response to a make-believe conspiracy could be perceived itself as part of a new ideological conspiracy! For example, if I produce documents to show that a given conspiracy does not exist, this may now be interpreted as a cover-up. As Peter Knight has put it: “Contemporary conspiracy culture is therefore always poised on the edge of an infinite abyss of suspicion. The prime-time conspiracy show, *The X-Files*, stylishly captures the possibility that we have entered what David Martin’s book on the CIA and the Cold War termed a ‘wilderness of mirrors’” (Knight, 27).

Although the cold war heightened awareness of spies, secret agents, and such governmental plots as Iran/Contra, the polarization of two Great Powers at least maintained clear boundaries, or pretended to maintain them. The sudden and unexpected collapse of communism and of a socialist alternative has clearly removed all limits and restraints for many oligarchs and plutocrats while also magnifying terrorism and undermining the

widespread presumption of historical progress that emboldened liberals and progressives from the time of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. There is surely much truth to Peter Knight’s conclusion that a world-weary pessimism and cynicism have created a widespread “default” mood of distrust, preparing so many Americans “to believe the worst about the world they live in.” As we’ve moved beyond Orwell’s 1984 and even beyond Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, it sometimes seems that history itself is the greatest conspirator of all.

David Brion Davis

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## Preface

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Conspiracy theories (and, from time to time, actual conspiracies) have played a vital role in shaping the course of American history, from the Puritans to the present. Although often dismissed as the delusions of extremists, the possibility of a conspiracy has repeatedly been at center stage in U.S. politics and culture. From the Revolutionary leaders' suspicions about British plots to the Anti-Masonic Party of the 1830s, and from the anticommunism of the 1950s to the alien abduction narratives of the 1990s, ideas of conspiracy have made a vital contribution, for better or for worse, to the story of U.S. political life. In short, conspiracy theories are a popular explanation of the workings of power, responsibility, and causality in the unfolding of events. They have appealed to both the Left and the Right, both the uneducated and intellectuals, and have been told both by and about those at the very heart of power. Sometimes they take the form of racist scapegoating, and at others counterattacks on the powerful. They have offered alternative explanations of a vast range of topics, from the economic to the religious, and the political to the cultural. They are sometimes without foundation, and at others beyond doubt. Moreover, as many commentators agree, conspiracy theories have long been identified as a peculiarly American obsession.

Although conspiracy theories have always been an important feature of the national scene, in the last few decades they have become astonishingly pervasive in popular culture and politics. Particularly since the political assassinations of the 1960s

and the revelations about the illegal activities of the intelligence agencies in the 1970s, many people on the liberal-left have come to see conspiracy as the normal operating procedure of U.S. government. At the same time, in recent years there has been a revival of right-wing fears about the encroaching influence of federal government and international organizations. A conspiratorial distrust of both the government and those outside the "in group" has been a perennial feature of U.S. politics, but in the last few decades it has become particularly pressing. Furthermore, the rhetoric of conspiracy has become part of the lingua franca of everyday American life and entertainment, from the cult television series *The X-Files* to the conspiracy-infused world of the Internet. This encyclopedia puts this recent flourishing into historical perspective.

Despite the pervasiveness of this culture of conspiracy, it is often difficult for scholars, students, and general readers to gain accurate and dispassionate information on both particular episodes and the overall history of U.S. political conspiracy theories. This encyclopedia is intended to provide a serious and comprehensive summary of all the major events, ideas, and figures of U.S. conspiracy thinking. It includes entries on both actual conspiracies and imagined conspiracies (or as far as historians can with any confidence determine the difference in particular cases). Given that much discussion of conspiracies is often hotly contested and politically charged, the aim of the present volume is to offer a rigorous, clear-sighted, and concise analysis of each issue. It is



intended neither to promote nor to dismiss various conspiracy theories (although some of the contributors make clear where they stand); instead, it places each item in a meaningful context.

### **Organization of the Encyclopedia**

This encyclopedia contains three sections. The first section provides a road map to the topic, with a narrative overview of conspiracies and conspiracy theories in U.S. history, and a summary of different theoretical approaches to studying the phenomenon. The second section contains alphabetical entries. These entries set out the historical, intellectual, and political context behind the conspiracy, conspiracy theory, event, person, or institution in question; provide (where relevant) a detailed explanation of the theory or episode itself; suggest the outline (where appropriate) of a critical analysis of the theory; and finally list references to important

sources and further reading. The final section of the encyclopedia contains approximately 100 excerpts (with brief headnotes) from original source documents that illustrate the range of conspiracies and conspiracy theories in U.S. history.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank all the contributors who have made this volume possible, as well as the writers who gave their permission to include extracts from their work in the final section. For their enthusiastic support and advice much gratitude is due in particular to David Brion Davis, Robert Goldberg, Jeff Pasley, and Larry Schweikart, as well as to Jim Ciment at ABC-CLIO for proposing the project in the first instance, and to Lindsay Porter. This encyclopedia is dedicated to Elspeth Alice Porter Knight.

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# Conspiracy Theories in America:

## A Historical Overview

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Conspiracy thinking is not U.S. born. The Latin word *conspirare*—to breathe together—suggests both drama and a deeply rooted past. The fear of conspiracy was a prominent feature on the mental maps of the first English settlers in the New World. Early colonists suspected both neighbors and strangers of secret alliances and dangerous plots. Subsequent waves of immigrants not only invigorated traditional beliefs, but expanded the pool of potential conspirators. Well into the twentieth century, Europeans would cue their American kin about the means and ends of conspiracy and its perpetrators.

Yet, conspiracy imaging has also adapted and developed traits reflective of the U.S. environment. It drew life from a sense of mission that convinced Americans of their special role in history. Rev. Jonathan Edwards explained: “When God is about to turn the earth into a paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some growth already, but in the wilderness” (Cherry, 58). President Woodrow Wilson was similarly mindful of the holy mandate. Presenting his League of Nation treaty to the U.S. Senate in 1919, he announced, “The stage is set, the destiny disclosed. It has come about by no plan of our conceiving, but by the hand of God who led us into this way. We cannot turn back” (Cherry, 294). God’s people, particularly Protestants, had to be on guard to realize their calling. Revolutionary success would raise aspirations of America’s purpose and would also awaken new conspirators eager to undermine the workings of

the republic at home and abroad. U.S. diversity contributed energy to the national dynamic, but at the same time it deepened suspicions of unfamiliar identities and gnawed at the sense of internal security. Resonating with core values and fueled by ethnic, racial, and religious differences, conspiracy thinking became a U.S. tradition.

When Puritans disembarked from the *Arbella* in 1630, they knew that the Massachusetts colony would soon be a battleground. Their errand into the wilderness was to raise a Bible commonwealth devoted to God’s commandments. “The God of Israel is among us,” Governor John Winthrop announced, and “we shall be as a city upon a hill,” offering the model of holiness that would surely regenerate the world (Winthrop, 38). The Puritans were just as certain that the enemies of the Lord were close at hand. Indian peoples, whether Pequots, Narragansetts, or Wampanoags, became actors in the supernatural drama, the minions of Satan who would wage savage war against the visible saints. Battling for the Lord against the Satanic conspiracy justified cruelty, and atrocities were common. Even the converted “praying” Indians could expect little quarter. Contested spaces and tribal names would change, but the cry of conspiracy, real and imagined, remained constant and echoed throughout the history of the westward movement.

If Indian peoples stood outside the walls, Satan also counted allies within. During the seventeenth century, New Englanders repeatedly heard and



believed the accusation of witchcraft, a reminder of the importance of their holy work. Magistrates presided over more than 240 cases, reviewing evidence that the Devil was “loose” in Massachusetts. He had, Boston minister Cotton Mather reported after consulting the Book of Revelation, “decoyed a fearful knot of proud, forward, ignorant, envious and malicious creatures, to list themselves in his horrid service” (Mather, 80–81). In making their “Diabolical Compact” with Satan, members of the “witch gang” were granted supernatural powers to torment God’s anointed and agitate their communities. Now they gathered at “prodigious *witch meetings*,” to “concert and consult” about “the methods of rooting out the Christian religion from this country” (Mather, 16, 19, 58, 70). In all, Puritan courts condemned thirty-six women and men to death. Those who confessed to escape the gallows only fueled the fire of conspiracy thinking.

Events in Salem village in 1691 and 1692 accounted for most of the victims. Over a period of ten months, forty-eight young girls denounced mainly isolated, middle-aged women of low social and economic status for “entertaining” Satan and attempting to lure them into a conspiracy. Proof of the plot was abundant. Repeatedly, townspeople witnessed the torment of the accusers who shrieked and writhed, tortured by invisible hands. Salem minister Samuel Parris drew the line sharply: “Here are but two parties in the world: the Lamb and his followers, and the dragon and his followers. . . . Here are no neuters. Everyone is on one side or the other” (Boyer and Nissenbaum, 175). Of the approximately 200 men and women charged in Salem, 20 were executed.

Witches troubled Americans less in the eighteenth century. New foes were not long in appearing. The citizens of New York City found that the enemy within the gate was a Trojan horse of their own making. In 1712, slaves rose in a “bloody conspiracy” to avenge “some hard usage” at the hands of their masters. Bound by a blood oath and armed with guns, knives, and hatchets, they set a fire to lure their white masters into a killing field. For the nine whites who died, twenty-one blacks were condemned to death: “Some were burnt,” wrote Gov-

ernor Robert Hunter, “others hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains. . . .” (Hofstadter and Wallace, 188). Events three decades later reflect the dance between the real and the imagined. In 1741, the rumor of black conspiracy was sufficient cause to hang proactively eighteen blacks and burn another eleven at the stake. The fear of slave conspiracies would fire white imaginations for more than a century, with actual plots swelling the power of countersubversives.

The chant of conspiracy offered the Revolutionary generation both explanation and a spur to action. Why had the British violated the peace that so long had characterized imperial-colonial relations? What design could be divined from the diverse parliamentary measures and taxes passed in the 1760s and 1770s? American newspaper editors, politicians, and clergymen searching for a rationale quickly rejected as groundless the empire’s avowed defense needs and requirements of administrative efficiency. More consistent with experience, they discerned a diabolical and willful pattern to events. In this, the colonists had learned their lessons well from England’s opposition leaders and a recent history scarred with Jacobite uprisings and French conspiracies. Liberty was in danger. Corrupt government ministers, arrogant in their power, were plotting to destroy the rights of Englishmen and women. Thomas Jefferson spoke for many: “a series of oppressions, begun at a distinguished period and pursued unalterably through every change of ministers, too plainly prove a deliberate and systemic plan of reducing us to slavery” (Bailyn, 119–120). When combined with the sense of American exceptionalism and traditional distrust of government, the image of conspiracy became vivid. In linking events, conspiracy thinking accelerated the rush to revolution.

Still, Americans would only cross the last bridge to independence when they convinced themselves that their king was not only aware of the plot, but a coconspirator. In sealing the connection, Thomas Jefferson enshrined conspiracy in the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming the people’s right to revolution “when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces

a design to reduce them under absolute despotism.” Americans more steeped in the Bible’s Book of Revelation would go further, identifying King George III as the Antichrist. They had discovered that the numerical conversion of the Hebrew and Greek translations of “royal supremacy in Great Britain” totaled 666. Across the Atlantic Ocean, British ministers similarly talked conspiracy to explain the changing fortunes of empire. Even the king was convinced that he had been the victim of a “desperate conspiracy” (Gruber, 370).

Conspiracy thinking did not abate when the British threat was turned aside. In the 1780s and 1790s, a struggle for control of the new republic played out in conspiratorial charge and countercharge. Political activists who curried favor by imagining their opponents as aristocratic counter-revolutionaries were tarred in reply as demagogic proponents of “mobocracy.” Shays’ Rebellion, the conflict over the ratification of the Constitution, and the Whiskey Rebellion provided abundant grist for countersubversives in an age flush with conspiracy explanations.

Nor was America immune to new foreign contagions. Particularly insidious to New England Federalists was the Order of the Illuminati, a secret society of free thinkers that preached resistance to state authority and vowed to destroy ecclesiastical power. Birthed in Bavaria in 1776 by professor of law Adam Weishaupt, the Illuminati was said to have penetrated France by means of the secret Freemason fraternal order and then engineered the French Revolution. The Order sighted the United States as the next target. Rev. Jedidiah Morse was among the first to sound the alarm, warning that “the world was in the grip of a secret revolutionary conspiracy” (Camp, 32). In words that were echoed during the red scare of the 1950s, Morse convinced listeners: “I now have in my possession complete and indubitable proof . . . an official, authenticated list of the names, ages, places of nativity, [and] professions of the officers and members of a society of *Illuminati*” (Johnson, 61).

Congress acted in the wake of the Illuminati scare and amid concerns that French intrigues in national politics had, in President John Adams’s words, placed

America “in a hazardous and afflictive position” (Stauffer, 229). In the summer of 1798 it passed the Alien Act, which authorized the president to arrest and expel foreign nationals involved “in any treasonable or secret machinations against the government.” The Sedition Act followed, limiting the freedoms of speech and press and setting fines and terms of imprisonment for those who “unlawfully combine or conspire together with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government” (Com-mager, 176–178). The threat did not match the response; the new republic would prove less fragile than its creators assumed. Somewhat more substantive was the abortive plot of Vice-President Aaron Burr to split the western territories from the United States. This scheme, too, would hardly break the surface of U.S. history.

Concerns about the Freemasons reappeared in the 1820s. In the “age of the common man,” a rapidly growing, exclusive, secret society ran counter to a prevailing ideology that rejected privilege and pretensions of superior status. The republic must be saved, proclaimed Vermont anti-Mason Edward Barber, from a “haughty aristocracy,” a “monster” that has sunk its “fangs into the bosom of the Constitution” (Goodman, 24). Suspicion ignited activism in 1826 when a New York Mason, William Morgan, who threatened to expose the secrets of his order, was kidnapped and murdered. Authorities were unable to solve the crime, sparking rumors that fraternal discipline had held them in check and allowed the guilty to escape justice. This touched off a mass movement that spread to New England and the Midwest and launched the first third party in U.S. history, the Anti-Masonic Party. The future was in the balance. Freemasonry, General William Wadsworth revealed, was the master plot: “. . . every revolution and conspiracy which had agitated Europe for the last fifty years may be distinctly traced [to it], and the secret workings of this all pervading order can be clearly seen” (Bernard, 430). Among the prominent Americans supporting the anti-Masonic movement were John Quincy Adams, William Lloyd Garrison, and Thurlow Weed.

Concurrent with the anti-Masonic furor, Americans added Mormons to the company of plotters.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was one of several U.S.-born sects that emerged from a region of New York burnt over by repeating waves of religious enthusiasm. It was not the preaching of communitarianism and End Times prophecy that differentiated Mormons in U.S. eyes, or their claim as the one true church. Rather, it was the vengeance of Mormon enterprise in building their city of God. Americans imagined Mormons as soldiers who moved in lockstep to the command of their prophet Joseph Smith. Converts to Mormonism seemed to have escaped from freedom, obeying orders to vote as a bloc and pooling financial resources for the church's good. The prophet's revival of the practice of polygamy affronted moral sensibilities and made the situation more urgent. A broad coalition of religious, political, and economic opponents forced the saints to flee New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, with haven finally found in Utah. Fear of the "Mormon Power" and its "ecclesiastical despotism" would not be quieted for decades and could still be felt at the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps a reflection of the true Americanism of the church, the index of the Book of Mormon contains one-half page of citations for "secret combinations" with appended supplementary references.

Even more appalling to Protestant Americans was the papist plot that flared in the decades before the Civil War. The "tyrant of the Tiber" had for centuries proven a tenacious adversary. Now he renewed the assault and "the cloven foot of this subtle foreign heresy," warned Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph and son of Rev. Jedidiah Morse, was pressing upon the neck of Protestant America (Morse, 89). Nativists accused Catholics of placing their allegiance to the pope above their loyalty to the United States. Catholics, enslaved by the secrets they had disclosed in the confessional, were herded to the polls and voted as commanded. Once the Catholic hierarchy had control of government, it would end the separation of church and state, ban the Bible, and destroy the freedoms of press, speech, and religion. The Irish immigration was an essential component of the papal conspiracy. Here were the foot soldiers of the pope's cru-

sade, ready to bully Protestants into submission while voting Catholics to power.

Fears of Masons, Mormons, and Catholics faded as the North and South drifted apart and toward civil war. In making sense of decades of sectional conflict rooted in economic difference and ideological divergence, leaders on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line found comfort in conspiracy thinking. Their newspapers, sermons, and stump speeches cut subversive images in bold relief, recasting the unintentional and coincidental as malevolent premeditation. Both northerners and southerners, finding these signals consistent with traditional beliefs and fears, were receptive and used them to assert sectional identities and mobilized energies for struggle. In a cycle of action and reaction, conspiracy charges frayed and eventually tore the bonds of union.

In the late 1830s abolitionists, opposing slavery as an immoral institution that robbed blacks of their humanity, initiated the attack on the slave power conspiracy. Large plantation owners and slaveholders, the "slaveocracy," were leveraging their wealth and power to intimidate the federal government and advance the slavery evil. These "Lords of the Lash," in league with the northern monied "Lords of the Loom," cried Wendell Phillips, had plotted slavery's expansion by annexing Texas, provoking the Mexican War, and organizing filibustering expeditions to secure new lands in Latin America (Nye, 80). In the 1850s, the abolitionists were joined in countersubversion by the more numerous antislavery activists. Unlike abolitionists who opposed slavery because of its consequences for black people, they focused on the slave power's conspiracy against white northerners. If not conspiracy, how could a long history of abuse of constitutional rights be explained? The House of Representatives' Gag Rule restricting the right of petition, mob attacks on the freedoms of speech and press, the banning of antislavery literature from the mails, and unwarranted searches in southern cities revealed the hidden hand raised against antislavery advocates. "Incidents are no longer incidents," concluded antislavery proponent Stephen Embro. "They are links in the chain of

demonstration, infallible, plain, conclusive” (Gienapp, 362).

The slave power also posed an economic threat. Western land beckoned to white yeomen farmers, offering a ladder of mobility. Yet without territorial curbs on the plantation system, the promise of economic opportunity was empty; northern farmers knew they could not compete against slave labor. The slaveocracy, however, would not accept restraints for it demanded virgin soil for cotton production and new markets for a surplus slave population. New slave states also maintained southern parity in the U.S. Senate and balanced the northern-dominated House of Representatives. Cunningly, slaveholders concealed their territorial ambitions behind a plan to build a transcontinental railroad and with northern confederates passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This legislation repealed the Missouri Compromise that had restricted slavery’s domain for thirty years. Land long closed to the advance of slavery had now opened. A sense of betrayal ignited indignation in meetings across the North. From these emerged the Republican Party, which stood on a platform of free soil, free labor, free men. Three years later, the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision prohibited Congress and its agents from restricting slavery in the territories. Many, including Abraham Lincoln, were convinced that the conspiracy had reached the highest levels of government. Powerful foes had besieged the Constitution and the northern economic future and northerners would surrender neither without a fight. The bloody war that followed would firm them in conspiracy thinking. Surely, Abraham Lincoln’s death by conspiracy in the final act of the Civil War was their irrefutable proof.

White southerners took pride in a distinctive way of life; Dixie was the land of large mansion houses where cotton was king. Slavery was their foundation and whites were convinced that it was God-given, scientifically sanctioned, and uniquely productive. The antislavery movement thus challenged the core of their community. Whether they owned slaves or not, the majority of southerners were determined to resist the threat to law,

property, and racial order. But the danger of “incendiary” abolitionist literature touched deeper fears. While they persuaded themselves that slaves were happy and docile, southerners armed for their lives in preparation for black insurrection. Those who spoke in countersubversive tones did not lack for examples. In spinning the incidents of conspiracy into a tight web, the South built solidarity and resolve. At the same time, it lost perspective and created a menace out of scale and more cohesive than the evidence allowed.

Southern newspapers were heavy with news of the conspiracy against slavery. North of the divide, men and women appeared to move collectively in disobedience to the fugitive slave laws and protection of the underground railroad conspiracy. Who promoted the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and then financed its stage production? How could the Republican Party advance so quickly? John Brown’s attempt to seize the government arsenal at Harper’s Ferry and incite slave insurrection could not have been planned and executed without an extended family of plotters. Southerners were certain that the wave of support that swept the North and raised Brown to heroic rank was manufactured and clear evidence of collusion. The danger was homegrown as well. In 1822, South Carolina authorities uncovered Denmark Vesey’s conspiracy and executed thirty-seven slaves. At least three slaves were convicted and hanged for the Charleston, South Carolina, Fire Scare of 1825–1826, during which a number of the city’s wooden buildings were torched. The bloodiest uprising occurred in Virginia in 1831. Sixty whites perished in Nat Turner’s rebellion and seventy slaves were summarily executed. A traumatized South would subsequently flinch at the very hint of black unrest. By 1861, the South had become an armed camp prepared to defend itself from enemies within and without.

Countersubversion continued to permeate national debate as the United States industrialized in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the Civil War did much to douse conspiracy thinking rooted in North/South sectionalism, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the South reflected the persistence of prewar patterns. Klansmen recast Reconstruction



legislation into a Radical Republican intrigue to turn slaves into masters and “Africanize” the South. The Klan conspiracy against federal policy would claim almost 1,000 lives, both black and white. A tough federal response smothered Klan terror in a wave of prosecutions. Martial law and the suspension of habeas corpus were necessary to remove the threat from South Carolina. In 1915, the Hollywood spectacular *Birth of a Nation* would reframe historical events to give credence to the Klan’s conspiratorial interpretation.

As the economic order changed, different visions of the future battled for power. Conspiracy would be a prominent theme in the competition. Capitalists denounced radicals for scheming to overthrow the government and cited as proof events like the Haymarket Square bombing in 1886 that left seven policemen dead. The radical response counted strikebreakers, Pinkerton detectives, and blacklists, among other union-busting tactics, on the roll of robber baron sins. Novelists like Ignatius Donnelly painted the conflict more vividly. In his book *Caesar’s Column*, published in 1890, Donnelly described the Brotherhood of Destruction, a secret society that rises to destroy the “abominable despotism” of the Hebrew-dominated aristocracy that has brought “the universal misery and wretchedness of the working class . . .” (Donnelly, 45, 124). The Populist Party platform of 1892 put U.S. economic problems in perspective, charging that “a vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world” (Commager, 143). The intrigue between Wall Street and European banking houses would await more explicit description in the twentieth century.

Economic plots did not replace traditional intrigues. Indian rebellions in the West, culminating in the Ghost Dance Movement of the 1890s, nourished white conspiracy thinking. Catholics’ allegiance to the pope still exposed them to Protestant charges of dual loyalty. A rising tide of immigration from southern and eastern Europe brought fresh troops to papist forces and raised new fears. In the 1890s, the American Protective Association would draw over half a million Americans to its

anti-Catholic banner with promises to curb immigration and fight papal power in politics. Nativists discerned the new immigrants’ complicity in other nefarious undertakings. Their drinking habits fed the arrogant “Liquor Power,” which prohibitionists charged with fixing prices, bribing judges, and controlling the “ballot box via the rum hole” (Ostrander, 66). Meanwhile, corrupt political machines, in league with the saloon menace, tightened their hold on city government with immigrant votes.

Conspiracy thinking spilled over into the new century. Progressive Era muckraking journalists, seeking to spur reform and sell magazines, published sensational and lurid exposés of a diversity of ills plaguing the United States. They targeted the white slave trade, corrupt labor unions, sweatshop abuses, child labor horrors, cover-ups of foul practices in the beef industry, and patent medicine scams. Their pens revealed that business conspiracies in restraint of trade barely scratched the surface of corporate treachery. Corruption even tainted the U.S. Senate. Certainly, the insinuation or discovery of secret deals and hidden cabals that gave their stories a conspiratorial spin enhanced the muckrakers’ appeal.

The entry of the United States into World War I doubled the guard against conspiracy. Hyphenated Americans were suspect, and Germans in particular were the focus of national fears. Former president Theodore Roosevelt worried about German Americans but had a more expansive view of the danger, refusing to define the menace by ethnicity. Thus, he netted U.S. senators who opposed intervention, dissenting native-born Americans, and the Hearst newspapers, which he accused of “play[ing] the Kaiser’s game.” Roosevelt wrote: “The Hun within our gates is the worst of the foes of our own household. . . . Whether he is pro-German, or poses as a pacifist, or a peace-at-any-price man, matters little. He is the enemy of the United States” (Roosevelt, 293–294). Disfranchisement and the establishment of internment camps were his solutions to the domestic threat. Some would dismiss this response as too lenient.

The radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) was considered even more dan-

gerous. Already suspect for its rhetoric of sabotage and class struggle, the IWW's opposition to a war for capitalists' profits drew the fire of government authorities, opinion makers, and local vigilantes. The Department of Justice quickly confronted "Imperial Wilhelm's Warriors," staging nationwide raids on IWW branches in September 1917 and arresting Wobblies for conspiracy to disrupt the war effort and antidraft agitation. On trial in Chicago, 101 IWW leaders faced charges of 17,500 offenses, with guilty verdicts sending thirty-five Wobblies to Leavenworth Penitentiary for five years, thirty-three for ten years, and fifteen for twenty years. Later trials brought seventy-three more convictions. In all, more than 2,000 Wobblies, socialists, and pacifists were trapped in the World War I witch-hunt that transformed dissent into subversion.

The pressure on dissidents did not ease during the red scare that followed the war. Bolshevik pleas to the workers of the world to throw off their chains and uproot the capitalist system had spurred U.S. resistance to the coming revolution. Prominent among those fanning the fears of conspiracy was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, who hoped to ride the antiradical wave into the White House. The danger, claimed Palmer, was extreme: "Like a prairie-fire, the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order. . . . It was eating its way into the homes of the American workman, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the secret corners of American homes." Palmer found the nucleus of the conspiracy in a "small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York" who were "under the criminal spell of Trotzky [sic] and Lenin" (Palmer, 174, 175, 180). In response, he created within the Justice Department a Bureau of Investigation charged with gathering information on all domestic radicals. Under J. Edgar Hoover's direction, a file index of 60,000 names was compiled. In November and December 1919 agents without arrest warrants organized coast-to-coast raids and jailed alleged radicals. In January 1920 more than 4,000 suspected communists were seized in coordinated raids in thirty-three cities.

A revived Ku Klux Klan waved the banner of countersubversion in the 1920s. Unlike the Klan of the post-Civil War years, this hooded movement was not primarily southern or terrorist. Preaching a multifaceted program based upon law and order, "100 Percent Americanism," and militant Protestantism, it enlisted nationally perhaps as many as six million men and women with the most powerful klaverns organized in Indiana, Colorado, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and California. In recruiting members, the Klan resurrected the specter of the Catholic conspiracy. The word again went out that the pope's puppets were preparing to advance their holy cause. On another front, the papists schemed to ruin the quality of the public schools and Romanize students by placing Catholics on school boards and employing them as teachers. "In the event of their success," wrote Klan sympathizer Alma White, "there would be a string of beads around every Protestant child's neck and a Roman Catholic catechism in his hand. 'Hail Mary, Mother of God,' would be on every child's lips and the idolatrous worship of dead saints a part of the daily program" (White 1925, 26).

The Klan recruiters exploited antisemitism, long a tradition in Europe and kindled in the United States by the immigration of two million Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe. Numbers alone heightened suspicion, but most provocative to Americans was an expanding Jewish economic and political sphere. Scornful of American values, the Jews planned to undermine Protestant hegemony. Well-organized "Hebrew syndicates" forced Protestants from positions of economic power. The motion picture industry, considered an early victim of the Jews, was seen as producing debauching films, commercializing the Sabbath, and luring Protestants from churches. Protestant women were warned of the lascivious Jews, "men in whose characters animal passions and greed are the predominant forces" (White 1928, 34). Some even believed that Jewish financiers were aiding the pope in the scheme to disinherit Protestant Americans.

Automobile manufacturer and U.S. folk hero Henry Ford corroborated the Klan's charges against the Jews. Ford based his ideas on the *Pro-*

*ocols of the Elders of Zion*, an account fabricated by the czarist secret police at the turn of the century of an alleged Jewish conspiracy against Christianity. To spread the word, Ford published the *Protocols*' claims in his newspaper the *Dearborn Independent* for ninety-one consecutive weeks and then compiled them in book form. He also Americanized the Jewish "program" for his readers: Darwinism, Bolshevism, control of the liquor traffic and prostitution, political machines, the spread of jazz, and the corruption of baseball. According to Ford, Jews were also guilty of dominating the slave trade and manipulating the South into secession in 1861, and he detected the Jewish hand in the recent world war: "International financiers are behind all wars. They are what is called the international Jew: German Jews, French Jews, English Jews, American Jews. I believe that in all those countries except our own the Jewish financier is supreme . . . here the Jew is a threat" (qtd. in Lee, 13). Jews were thus especially cunning for they not only ruled the world's economy, but with communism had mastered the proletariat. He even discovered that the traitor Benedict Arnold had Jewish associates and that the Rothschilds had financed the Hessians.

The Great Depression gave conspiracy thinking an economic twist, but involved the now usual suspects. At first, conspiracy theorists like radio priest Father Charles Coughlin blamed "plutocrats," and "money-changers," and other members of the economic elite for planning the crash: "The sands of intrigue and of evil machinations have filtered through the hour glass of their control" (Kazin, 119). Soon they borrowed from Henry Ford and Adolf Hitler. As outlined in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the Jews had brought economic ruin and were a step closer to world domination. The "Jew Deal" of President Franklin Roosevelt, born Rosenfeld, was not America's salvation but a continuation of the plot. With the support of mainstream business and political leaders, William Pelley of the Silver Shirts and Gerald L. K. Smith joined Coughlin in bringing charges of Jewish perfidy.

Domestic plotters did double duty in foreign intrigues. Revisionists reexamined the origins of

U.S. involvement in World War I and replaced Wilsonian idealism with cynical manipulation. Isolationists in the 1930s alleged that the public had been tricked into war by munitions makers and bankers anxious to protect their investments and to profit from the carnage. Not surprisingly, North Dakota Senator Gerald Nye's committee charged with reviewing the arms business found that the "merchants of death" had grown wealthy on war. Public opinion, however, took no note of obvious consequences, but instead confirmed conspiracy. Only a small leap in logic would be necessary to find Jewish fingerprints on the plot and revise it to fit current events.

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor closed the debate on intervention, but released new fears of conspiracy. Did President Roosevelt back-door the United States into the war against Germany by manipulating the Japanese into firing the first shot in the Pacific? Why did Washington delay in warning Pearl Harbor of the impending attack? Were Hawaii commanders Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short dismissed to cover up the plot? Charles Beard, who spiced his book on the constitutional convention with suggestions of elite intrigue, waded into the controversy early. Avoiding words like "conspiracy" and "plot," Beard nevertheless exposed presidential calculation. Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, he wrote, "were expecting if not actively seeking war; and having this expectation, they continued to 'maneuver' the Japanese and awaited the denouement" (Beard, 566). The prestige of Beard's prior work and the Yale University Press imprint gave his charges weight. Military comrades of Kimmel and Short came to their defense and blamed Washington for withholding vital information from Pearl Harbor despite having broken the Japanese diplomatic code. They also found it curious that U.S. aircraft carriers were conveniently away on maneuvers and out of harm's way on the day of the attack. Suspicious to other revisionists was the delay in opening the official investigation, the suppression of its findings for ten months, and then the final release of the report in 1945 with fifty-two pages withheld. During the cold war, critics who accused

Roosevelt of being soft on communism alleged that Pearl Harbor was sacrificed to ensure U.S. involvement in Europe and save his Russian pals. Most recently, John Toland has claimed that “The comedy of errors on the sixth and seventh [of December 1941] appears incredible. It only makes sense if it was a charade, and Roosevelt and the inner circle had known about the attack” (Toland, 321).

Leftists were similarly prone to conspiracy thinking. U.S. communists, like their counterparts in Moscow, repeatedly decried the international capitalist plot to destroy the Soviet Union and the proletariat’s vanguard. The subsequent Soviet alliance with the United States and Great Britain during World War II did little to ease concerns. Communists questioned Allied strategy, which delayed the opening of a second front against the Nazis in France until 1944 while the Soviets bore the brunt of the fighting. Asked party leaders: Was this a capitalist trick to bleed Russia white and leave her too weak to resist postwar imperialism?

Among the most vocal in crying conspiracy were federal authorities. Franklin Roosevelt set the administration’s tone, denouncing opponents of his foreign policy as “appeaser fifth columnists” in the service of a totalitarian world conspiracy (Horowitz, 185). He summoned J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and charged him with gathering information on the activities of U.S. fascists and Communists. Zealous FBI agents, on cue from their director and Justice Department prosecutors, fashioned a dragnet to trap prominent anti-Semites and right-wingers like Gerald Winrod, William Pelley, Lawrence Dennis, and Elizabeth Dilling. They and twenty-six others were indicted and tried for conspiracy to encourage insubordination in the armed forces and violation of the Smith Act, which made it illegal for anyone to advocate or even belong to an organization that advocated the overthrow by force of the U.S. government. This case ended in mistrial and the defendants were freed, but the government had exacted punishment in lost time and resources. Only Pelley, who in a previous trial had been found guilty of conspiracy to impair the war effort, would serve time in prison.

The federal government was more successful in its countersubversive action against Japanese Americans. In February 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, removing all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast to relocation camps in the interior. Guilty only by reason of ethnicity, 112,000 men, women, and children saw their liberties sacrificed to regional and national fears, both latent and current. California Attorney General Earl Warren, who would later serve as chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, made the case for evacuation. “I believe,” he testified, “that . . . the greatest danger to continental United States is that from well-organized sabotage and fifth-column activity.” He reported that a review of California landownership maps revealed “that it is more than just accident” that Japanese Americans had settled near airplane factories, manufacturing plants, dams, railroads, power lines, sugar refineries, and air bases. The absence of evidence of disloyalty or sabotage was, in fact, proof of their treachery: “I believe we are just being lulled into a false sense of security. . . . When, nobody knows of course, but we are approaching an invisible deadline” (Warren 11011–11012, 11018). Although challenged, the Supreme Court would uphold the presidential order and the countersubversive reasoning on which it was based.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the alarm of U.S. countersubversion grew louder and more insistent. A chorus of messengers gave warning, their pleas for defense merging, resonating, and reinforcing. Ignoring few leads, believers made conspiratorial puzzle pieces of Marilyn Monroe, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, Vietnam POWs, the moon landing, Watergate, Bill Clinton, Princess Diana, Y2K, and even the “man shortage” of the 1980s. In this context, five major plot lines drew legions of theorists, generated large media shares, and won significant mainstream support. They were the “Master” conspiracy that birthed the New World Order, the rise of the Antichrist, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the plot against black America, and the UFO incident at Roswell. The cries of these conspiracy theorists were especially urgent



for they were convinced that time was running out for the United States. The plotters had not only breached the walls of key institutions, but had taken control.

In the immediate postwar years, U.S. foreign policy setbacks and Communist advances in Europe and Asia gave opportunity to those who saw a conspiracy behind events. Led by Republican Party leaders, large numbers of Americans became certain that undercover Soviet agents and their sympathizers had infiltrated libraries, schools, universities, the motion picture industry, and even the highest levels of the federal government. With the lessening of cold war tensions and the election of Dwight Eisenhower to the presidency in 1952, public fears subsided. Some, however, believed that the threat had merely gone underground and thus had become more dangerous. This was the contention of businessman Robert Welch, who organized the ultra-right John Birch Society in 1959, vowing to roust hidden Communists who continued to undermine the United States from within.

In the 1960s, Welch revealed to his followers that his focus on Communist intrigue was misplaced; communism was merely a subplot of the “Master” conspiracy. He fingered the descendants of Adam Weishaupt and his Illuminati as the conspirators who sought to conquer the world. Financiers, government leaders, socialists, liberals, and Communists were merely pawns of an “inner core of conspiratorial power” whose members were “cunning and ruthless” and their reach “worldwide” (Welch, 3). Concealed behind their puppets, the identities of these “Insiders” were unknown even to Welch. With tentacles in international banking and trade, national political parties, and influential newspapers, the plotters engineered revolution, assassination, war, and depression to speed them to global dictatorship. Other manifestations of the plot were a rising divorce rate, birth control, pornography, civil rights agitation, and the fluoridation of water supplies. The United States was in the Insiders’ grasp, claimed Welch, and soon to become a province of what he called in 1972 the “New World Order.”

Birch Society members spread the alarm, narrowing the search for the Insiders to the members of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations and Trilateral Commission. Books, pamphlets, film, talk radio, and the Internet carried the message to the grass roots and by the end of the century members of militia units, Aryan Nations, the Ku Klux Klan, and skinhead brotherhoods had made the cause their own. In their hands, the conspiracy became another Jewish attempt to control the world. While mainstream Americans did not feel the intensity of these countersubversives, they had learned to be vigilant at the very mention of the New World Order.

The secular crusade against the New World Order drew strength from a conspiracy theory steeped in biblical imagery. Since the seventeenth century, Christian Americans have attempted to decode the Book of Revelation and discern not only the timing of Jesus’ Second Coming, but signs of the advent of the Antichrist or “beast.” After World War II, believers were sure that their generation had been chosen to see the cosmic drama unfold. Fixing attention was biblical prophecy become history when Jews ended their 2,000-year exile to reclaim Israel in 1948 and then capture Jerusalem in 1967. The faithful were alerted and knew the meaning of other signs—the worship of “false Christs,” lawlessness, violent storms, and intense earthquakes. Clearly, the millennium was at the door.

Taking his cue from those who exposed the Master conspiracy, Rev. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, spied the Antichrist lurking in the shadows, readying the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission as his vehicles to global power. Said Robertson, “He will be like a combination of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Genghis Khan, Mao Tse-Tung, and other dictators who have butchered millions of people.” The Antichrist, Robertson warned in 1984, was on the march in the United States: “The demons have what are called ‘principalities and powers.’ It is possible that a demon prince is in charge of New York, Detroit, and St. Louis” (Robertson, 116, 155). Others were convinced that the “mark” of the beast was already

affixed on the universal price code, smart cards, ATMs, microchip implants, and fiber optics.

Rev. Jerry Falwell, writer Hal Lindsey, and scores of conspiracy-minded evangelicals echoed Robertson, offering Rapture as the escape hatch to born-again Christians who sought to avoid the Tribulation reign of the beast. Their calls for repentance grew more intense as the countdown to the year 2000 approached, because they knew it had cosmic significance. The failure of the new millennium to end history did not break evangelical momentum. Eyes were now on 2007, the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Evangelists continue to sow seeds, opening more than 200 millennial websites, generating scores of new books and audio- and videotapes, and even producing full-length motion pictures that dramatize the End Times scenario.

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963 may be the most intensively studied event in U.S. history. It is flush with detail and offers hundreds of eyewitnesses, extensive ballistics evidence and autopsy results, and even a film that frames action to the split second. Bibliographies now count more than 3,000 entries, including films, plays, television programs, and a dozen newsletters. Conspiracy thinking permeates most of these efforts. Born of bereavement and drawing strength from the memory of a lost Camelot, conspiracy theories challenge the conclusion of the official account that indicted a lone gunman. Once conspiracists were convinced that they had exposed the cover-up, new theories and a counterhistory appeared. The assassination, they contend, was actually a coup d'état that robbed the nation of its future. Filmmaker Oliver Stone made the case in the motion picture *JFK*, released in 1991. Stone has the furtive character "X" reveal the conspiracy, tracing it to the White House, CIA, FBI, and the "military-industrial complex." Kennedy had to go because "he wanted to call off the moon race in favor of cooperation with the Soviets. He signed a treaty with the Soviets to ban nuclear testing, he refused to invade Cuba in '62, and he set out to withdraw from Vietnam. But that all ended on November 22, 1963" (Stone, 112).

Opinion surveys repeatedly testify to the success of countersubversive arguments, showing that for the large majority of Americans an assassination conspiracy is the conventional wisdom. The hold of conspiracy on the public mind was so great that a congressionally mandated commission created in the 1990s to declassify four million pages of documents could not close the case. The "magic bullet" and the "grassy knoll," conspiracy's shorthand terms, remained fixed in the national lexicon.

Some groups in modern America were especially prone to conspiracy thinking. Disproportionately among the vigilant were African Americans. Polls found that more than 60 percent of African Americans believed that the CIA had flooded their neighborhoods with drugs and one-third were convinced that government scientists had created the AIDS virus to ensure black genocide. On the streets, word passed that the Ku Klux Klan or the federal government had placed chemicals in food and drink to render black men sterile. Collaterally, opinion surveys have consistently shown that African Americans are twice as likely as whites to harbor strong biases against Jews.

For blacks whose place in U.S. society is often precarious, conspiracism not only offers self-protection and empowerment but reiterates shared values and asserts a collective defense. Conspiracy thinking has also been used as a weapon in the struggle for power in the black community. Most striking, it has been instrumental in the quest for authority of the Nation of Islam and particularly its leader Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan rallied support by confirming the conspiracy: "They're using chemical weapons, biological warfare, germ warfare already on black people. AIDS is not an accident any more than small pox was an accident with the Indians. Sending them blankets and killing them with disease. . . . You need to wake up and see that your life is threatened" (Gardell, 327). He detected, as well, a secret hand behind ghetto violence: "The Uzis, the AK-47s, your enemy is feeding you automatic weapons now. You don't make weapons, Brother. Where did you get the weapons? . . . This is all calculated. This is all part of the conspiracy" (Farrakhan). Farrakhan's rhetoric of countersubversion is a call to

battle that identifies friends and targets foes while marking off the distance from rival leaders and groups. Uncompromising before white power and its alleged black lackeys, Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam appear the community's most defiant and effective advocates, making them immune to challenge from within.

For those who believe that the earth has been visited by extraterrestrials, the Roswell incident is the holy grail, and many have joined in the search, making it the most studied event in UFO history. According to researchers, an alien craft crashed outside of Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947 and the federal government recovered the bodies of four extraterrestrials. Enhancing the drama of this story is the theme of conspiracy. Believers argue that Majestic 12 (MJ-12), a secret group within the federal government, is engaged in a plot to cover up the evidence of extraterrestrial contact. The number of individuals engaged in the conspiracy is large and the effort ongoing and thorough. According to authors Kevin Randle and Don Schmitt: "Files were altered. So were personnel records, along with assignments and various codings and code words. Changing serial numbers ensured that those searching later would not be able to locate those who were involved in the recovery. The trail was being carefully altered" (Goldberg, 200). Meanwhile, the plot continues with the federal authorities conspiring to discredit Roswell activists and deceive the public.

Roswell was, moreover, only the first instance of deception, setting the pattern for official denials about UFO sightings, abductions, cattle mutilations, crop circles, and even hidden alien bases. The story has been well packaged for popular consumption, but it was mainstream media experts who ensured that Roswell and these other signs of extraterrestrial contact spread from the community of UFO believers to a wider public. By the fiftieth anniversary of the Roswell incident in 1997, tabloids, cable television, and motion pictures had made the UFO phenomenon and Roswell not only icons of conspiracy but staples of U.S. popular culture.

This brief survey spotlights the centrality and persistence of conspiracy thinking in U.S. history.

Since their arrival, Americans have positioned themselves defensively to repel subversives—supernatural, extraterrestrial, and mundane. While repeatedly under siege, the perimeter holds fast and dangerous outsiders remain at bay. Sometimes, as in the 1850s, 1930s, and today, conspiracy theorists are convinced that the enemy has penetrated key institutions. Conspiracy thinking draws power by merging with and reinforcing traditional American values and beliefs: a sense of mission, Protestant supremacy, concern about encroachments on liberty, antielitism, maintenance of the racial order, and the sanctity of private property. In the midst of diversity, conspiracy theories nurture a sense of peoplehood while discovering the enemies of the American dream. The exposure of real plotters, meanwhile, acts to energize these beliefs and validate the images they birth. Critical to the tenacity and flexibility of countersubversive interpretations are their articulate champions. Politicians, religious leaders, journalists, government officials, and leading industrialists, along with other role models, have cleared a path for ordinary men and women. If the eccentrics among the conspiracy minded have received a disproportionate share of attention, it is necessary to remember that their mates inhabit all social, economic, and political groups.

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## Making Sense of Conspiracy Theories

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### **Defining the Terms “Conspiracy” and “Conspiracy Theory”**

At first sight it should be fairly easy to define the terms “conspiracy” and “conspiracy theory.” A straightforward definition of a conspiracy is when a small group of powerful people combine together in secret to plan and carry out an illegal or improper action, particularly one that alters the course of events. But the term is often used fairly loosely. We might wonder, for example, whether the activities of intelligence agencies involved in spying and carrying out covert missions count as conspiracies by this definition. They are by their very nature plotted in secret, and they are indeed intended to alter the shape of history, but we might wonder if the everyday machinations of, say, CIA agents constitute a conspiracy because they are merely doing their job. Only in some cases is it immediately obvious that their actions are illegal or improper, and hence a conspiracy rather than merely being a covert operation. The problem with making illegality or impropriety part of the definition of a conspiracy is that it depends who is defining what’s illegal or not. In the realm of the law it is comparatively straightforward to determine if something is a criminal conspiracy (it is illegal, for example, to engage in the kind of price-fixing that was uncovered in the fine-art auction industry in the 1990s, and hence it would be valid to say that the auction houses engaged in a conspiracy). But in the arena of history, there are no hard-and-fast rules of what is permissible or not. What to one person may look like a conspiracy to

alter the course of events, to others will seem merely the regular dog-eat-dog spectacle of political maneuvering.

The second problem with the term “conspiracy” is that it relies on a fairly strong notion of intention (often referred to as a sense of “agency” in theoretical discussions). A conspiracy is only a conspiracy, we might suppose, if the plotters fully intended to carry out that particular action and were quite aware of the consequences of it. So, for example, we might wonder whether there is a deliberate conspiracy by men to keep women in a subordinate position. It’s undeniable that historically women have found themselves thwarted in a variety of social, legal, and political ways, and it’s also undeniable that at least some men have actively approved of that situation, but the question remains whether men’s vague and perhaps even unspoken desire for supremacy is what has causally resulted in the oppression of women. Does a conspiracy have to involve not just the desire and intention to bring about a certain effect, but the proven fact of a causal connection? In other words, does a conspiracy always have to be conscious, deliberate, and explicitly stated, or can it emerge from the implicit, taken-for-granted assumptions and patterns of thought that slowly accumulate over time and that really do shape history? Most commentators would still insist that if the term “conspiracy” is to have any meaning at all, then it must involve deliberate agency. But some theorists have more recently begun to suggest that certain



states of affairs (for example, sexism and racism) are not merely the result of chance but are the perhaps unintended consequence of a series of attitudes and ways of behaving that together amount to something that *may as well have been* a conspiracy. You don't need to say it out loud for there to be a conspiracy, this theory suggests.

This problem with defining the nature of agency leads us to the even more tricky problem of coming up with a working definition of a conspiracy theory. At the most basic level, a conspiracy theory blames the current, undesirable state of affairs on a concerted conspiracy by a secret group. It is in effect an interpretation of history that claims that things aren't always what they seem, and that things haven't just tumbled out by coincidence in the normal, more-or-less random fashion, but that they have only got like this because someone with evil intentions planned it this way. However, the label "conspiracy theory" usually suggests that the interpretation offered is wrong. In effect the phrase is often not a neutral description of a form of historical analysis, as if it were just another form of historical theory alongside, say, postcolonial theory or feminist theory. Instead it usually carries an implicit accusation: there are undoubtedly conspiracy facts (the suggestion is), but in this case your view is just a conspiracy theory, a misleading speculation, and even woolly-headed thinking that verges on the mentally disturbed. Usually what lies behind the accusation is either a specific criticism that in this particular case the theory is wrong (for example, contrary to some conspiracy theories, President Roosevelt did not know in advance about the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor), or that the view of history put forward by conspiracy theories is always necessarily wrong (history in this view is not the result of a concerted plot but, to cite two popular positions, the fairly random and unpredictable interaction of countless individuals, or the predictable interplay of vast, impersonal structural forces). Looked at the other way, a conspiracy theory that has been proven (for example, that President Nixon and his aides plotted to disrupt the course of justice in the Watergate case) is usually called something else—investigative journalism, or just well-researched historical analysis. Usually no

one claims to believe in a conspiracy theory as such. The people accused of believing in conspiracy theories about the death of President Kennedy, for example, are very insistent that they are assassination researchers and not conspiracy buffs. It's only other people who are conspiracy theorists, the argument goes.

Some historians have come up with more elaborate definitions of conspiracy theory in order to make clear what is so distinctive about it. For example, Richard Hofstadter's classic study (1964) of what he termed the "paranoid style in American politics" recognized that there have indeed been actual conspiracies here or there in U.S. history, but that a conspiracy theorist believes that there is "a 'vast' or 'gigantic' conspiracy as *the motive force* in historical events" (Hofstadter, 29). According to this kind of view, conspiracy theory is more than just the odd speculation about clandestine causes; it is a way of looking at the world and historical events that sees conspiracies as the motor of history (in contrast to other theorists who have argued that, say, economics or ideas are the real engines pushing forward the wheel of history). Other commentators (e.g., Pipes, and Robins and Post) have recently pushed Hofstadter's definition even further, arguing that we need to make a distinction between "petty conspiracies," which merely involve fears about groups secretly scheming to gain local or small-scale advantage, and "world conspiracy theories," which involve warnings about a political takeover by a malign cabal with large-scale or even global aspirations to power. According to this theory, the reason for making the distinction is that only world conspiracy theories are worth studying because they are the kind that often lead to dangerous social and political movements such as Nazism and Stalinism.

These attempts to define what counts as a conspiracy theory are useful in that they draw attention to an important aspect of the phenomenon, particularly in some of its more prominent outbursts in U.S. history (anti-Catholicism in the nineteenth century, for example, took the form of warnings that the pope and his representatives were scheming to bring about worldwide domination of the Church in Rome). They also try to impose

some limits on the meaning of a term that is always threatening to creep far beyond any agreed usage. However, by limiting the definition in advance they are in danger of leaving out some examples of conspiratorial thought that have a lot in common with conspiracy theories. They also downplay what seems to be one of the important functions of conspiracy theory today, namely questioning how much we are in control of our own minds and our own actions through the debate over exactly what is to count as a conspiracy or not. (If a conspiracy theory serves no other purpose, it is often the way that nonprofessional historians try out ideas about the nature of historical change. Trying to decide what term to use to describe a state of affairs that looks just as if there were a conspiracy is part of the function of a conspiracy theory today.) Finally, as helpful as these definitions are in making the loose baggy monster of conspiracy theory more manageable, they also end up rigging the game so as to favor a particular theoretical take on the nature of the phenomenon.

There have certainly always been conspiracies of one kind or another in U.S. history. And there has undoubtedly always been some speculation about the role of secret plotters in that history, even if those speculations don't quite amount to a conspiracy theory according to some of the more restrictive definitions (or aren't necessarily to be condemned, as we shall see below). What is comparatively new, however, is the term "conspiracy theory" itself. The phrase first entered the supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1997, which is an indication of how much a buzzword it has become in recent decades. However, the entry suggests that the first recorded usage of the phrase was in an article in the *American Historical Review* in 1909, although it did not become familiar in academic writing until the 1950s (with the work of Karl Popper), and did not really become common currency until the 1960s. The belated coining of the phrase might be merely a case of historians latching on to a handy short-hand expression for an already well-known, coherent, and recurring phenomenon. It might, however, be the case that coming up with a label for the phenomenon actually

invents the phenomenon itself, in the sense that a new conceptual category turns what otherwise would have been a set of possibly quite diverse ideas into a coherent style of thought.

What's interesting about the phrase now is that the people who are accused (or sometimes *diagnosed*) of being conspiracy theorists are often well aware of the charge, and many an article on the Internet about, say, the New World Order begins with the disclaimer that "I know I'll be accused of being a conspiracy theorist, but . . ." The significance of this self-aware and often self-reflexive discussion of the very phrase used to describe the phenomenon is that it is beginning to change the nature of the phenomenon itself, especially in the realm of popular culture. The 1997 Hollywood blockbuster *Conspiracy Theory* (starring Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts) takes this self-consciousness to an extreme: whereas in the past a film might have merely had the name of a particular conspiracy as its title, in this case it bizarrely uses the generic term as its title. One thing that makes the historical study of conspiracy theories particularly challenging, then, is that determining what constitutes the phenomenon has become part of the phenomenon itself.

### **The United States and Conspiracy Theory: A Special Relationship?**

The United States has long had a fascination with conspiracies. As the entries and the primary source extracts in this encyclopedia make clear, the imagination or the detection of secret plotting has been a recurrent feature of U.S. history, albeit with more prominent outbursts in some periods than others. It's often suggested (not least by commentators outside the United States) that the nation has a particular affinity to conspiratorial thought, that conspiracy theory is a distinctively U.S. phenomenon. There are some good reasons to think that this is the case. It's arguable, for example, that a suspiciousness toward strangers and outsiders (or even just the frightening "wilderness" itself) is a dominant feature of the early Puritan settlers. Some critics have suggested that the Puritan habit of mind that sought signs and symptoms of the work



of the Almighty in tiny, everyday clues was just a short step away from a conspiratorial mentality that tried to read every event for its hidden meaning. In a similar vein, some historians have argued that the nature of the American Revolution has “conditioned Americans to think of resistance to a dark subversive force as the essential ingredient of their national identity” (Davis, 23), a view that is apparent in the catalog of suspicions about the intentions of the British government that are written into the Declaration of Independence itself. It is even plausible to suggest that the fear of sinister enemies, both real and imagined, both internal and external, was one of the most important factors that helped to shape the disparate British colonies into a united state. Another possible reason for the seeming close connection between America and conspiracy theory is America’s foundational sense of its unique, divinely ordained destiny, a sense of American exceptionalism that has helped to promote the feeling that any deflection from that manifest destiny must be the result of a concerted plot (by satanic forces in the early years, and by malign political agents in later times). Another version of this argument is that it is Americans’ traditional, republican faith in openness and democracy that has led them to be highly suspicious of any political maneuverings that smack of secrecy, elitism, or even of unnecessary involvement of intrusive federal government in the life of free individuals (see Wills). It has even been suggested that lack of a popular socialist tradition in the United States (in comparison with Europe) means that Americans are comparatively less likely to believe that history operates through the impersonal interaction of economic forces and social classes and more likely to believe that history is the product of individual agency, which is sometimes benign and transparent, and at others malign and covert. Finally, some historians have put forward the idea that more recently the United States has become the home of conspiracy theories because so many high-level, prominent conspiracies have been undertaken and uncovered since the 1960s.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to see that the United States does not have a monopoly on

conspiracy theories. Historians (e.g., Pipes, and Robins and Post) have pointed out that although U.S. politics might once have been dominated by the conspiratorial scapegoating of minorities and the alarmist imagination of invasive enemies (particularly in the nineteenth century), more recently conspiracy theory in the United States has been confined to inconsequential political sideshows or even been transformed into a form of entertainment or titillation. We might disagree with the idea that conspiracy theories have gone off the boil in the United States (not least because they seem to have become so publicly prominent), but it is certainly true that other countries have been and still are dangerously attracted to a conspiratorial mindset. Stalinist Russia or the present-day Middle East, for example, are both saturated with the rhetoric of conspiracy and plot. Although there is a danger in studying U.S. history in isolation because it tends to fall too easily into the trap of U.S. exceptionalism, conspiracy theories have undoubtedly played a vital role in U.S. history, and continue to occupy a prominent place in everyday politics and popular culture. But how exactly should we study them, and what theoretical approaches have been brought to bear on the phenomenon?

### Refutations

Probably the most straightforward approach to conspiracy theory has been to catalog the error of its ways instead of discussing it as a phenomenon or a symptom. In a series of essays published in the 1940s and 1950s the philosopher Karl Popper sought to refute conspiratorial interpretations of society and history as conceptually misguided. He defined the conspiracy theory of society as “the view that whatever happens in society—including things which as a rule people dislike, such as war, unemployment, poverty, shortages—are the results of direct design by some powerful individuals or group” (Popper, 341). Popper went on to argue that this view is necessarily false because it is inconceivable that such complex, global events are the result of specific intentions of individuals. This dismissal of conspiracy theory as a flawed understanding of history is based on the revolution in social thought

that began in the nineteenth century with thinkers such as Marx, Darwin, and Freud proposing (in very different ways) that humans are not consciously in control of their own individual or collective destinies but are the subject of large, impersonal historical forces. These views are the mainstay of what we now call the social sciences, and several commentators (e.g., Wood) have suggested that there is now no excuse for anyone to believe in a “personalized” view of history anymore.

This argument is sometimes given a specific, political twist (e.g., Albert). Although those on the left of the political spectrum might be tempted to believe in conspiracy theories (because they seem to name and blame traditional left-wing enemies such as corrupt government officials and corporate insiders for the mess we’re in), they should steer well clear of them. The reasoning is that the real agents of history are not individuals (however powerful they may seem) but more abstract institutional structures that transcend any individual intention: only by changing those structures of power that condoned and perhaps even encouraged such activities (rather than merely removing the guilty individuals who abused the system) can there be any hope of social change. In this view, a conspiracy theory that claims to have found the real hidden causes of events (even if they are proven true in some cases) will always in some measure be mistaking or perhaps even mystifying the real underlying causes of events that need to be understood in terms of institutions rather than individuals. Other commentators (e.g., Shermer), however, have not taken up a specific political stance, and have instead railed against the increasingly widespread belief in conspiracy theories as evidence of the dumbing down of the United States. These arguments often proceed from a skeptical, debunking position, and point out the inconsistencies and illogicalities in a variety of popular conspiracy theories.

### Paranoid Style

If some writers have tried to show up the flaws in conspiratorial thought, then others have sought to explain its prevalence in U.S. history. Perhaps the

most popular and influential approach has been to view the repeated imagination of conspiracies everywhere as evidence of what the historian Richard Hofstadter termed the “paranoid style in American politics.” This approach explains the presence of the rhetoric of conspiracy as a sign of something akin to a collective paranoia at work. It is not usually meant as a strict clinical diagnosis of the conspiracy theorist as delusional, but instead uses the psychological category of paranoia as a way of identifying the social phenomenon and then of explaining some of its features. This theory highlights features of conspiracy belief such as an ever escalating suspiciousness; a sense of persecution; the morbid projection onto the enemy of repressed fantasies that the believer may hold; the apocalyptic fears that a whole way of life is under threat; and the paradoxically comforting and grandiose sense that although a seemingly marginal player on the stage of history, you are in fact the center of attention—albeit as the object of a sinister plot against the group you belong to. According to the proponents of this view, the paranoid style is a prominent and recurring style in U.S. history, from the founding of the republic to the recurrence in the nineteenth century of conspiracy-minded scapegoating and nativism (the belief that the United States belongs to native-born white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and any newcomers from outside that group present a significant threat to the American way of life). The “paranoid style” explanation is at first sight an extremely compelling way to characterize (and condemn) the tendency to believe in conspiracy theories, even if it doesn’t fully succeed in explaining them because of the circularity of argument (for what is paranoia, if not a propensity to believe in conspiracy theories?). Its real contribution was in taking this style of thought seriously, and trying to find evidence of it in a wide range of U.S. culture.

This approach became popularized by historians such as Hofstadter and Bernard Bailyn in the 1960s, and can be seen in retrospect as partly a response to the excesses of the McCarthyite anti-communist witch-hunts of the 1950s. Although highlighting the recurrence of the often small-

minded, racist, and hateful paranoid mentality in U.S. history made for fairly depressing reading, these historians took some comfort from the fact that the repeated outbursts usually seemed to be confined to those on the margins of political power. Later theorists (e.g., Rogin) have challenged this last shred of comfort, arguing that it is not those excluded from the center of power who are paranoid but that the mainstream itself is deeply pathological in its repeated scapegoating of minorities throughout U.S. history. This view in effect says that the irrational fear of subversive enemies is not an occasional disruption of U.S. history, but is the default mode of that history.

In an important article written in 1982, the historian Gordon Wood put forward a more historically limited challenge to the psychohistorical claims that are at the heart of the “paranoid style” theory. He took issue with the idea that vast numbers of Americans, and some of the nation’s most important political leaders, are in some measure mentally disturbed. In particular Wood pointed out that a belief in history as the product of individual agency was understandably very common in the eighteenth century, and it was not illogical at the time to think that any seeming disturbance in the natural course of events was the result of a deliberate and secret scheme. However, Wood goes on to argue that, since the emergence of the social sciences in the later nineteenth century (that itself was a response to the vastly increased complexity of political and economic events in a world slowly becoming globalized), a belief in conspiracy as the engine of history has once again been a sign of poor thinking and perhaps even of the kind of social exclusion that borders on paranoia.

### **Moral Panics and Scapegoating**

An alternative explanation starts from the observation that conspiracy theories in America are usually told not by those on the margins of society but by the (comparatively) powerful *about* those on the margins. This view highlights those moments in American history when already victimized minorities (such as Jewish and Asian immigrants) have become the subject of conspiracy theories that pin

the blame on them for current social woes (such as unemployment). This approach sees conspiracy theory as part of the larger pattern of scapegoating, and focuses usually on right-wing and other antisemitic and racist hate groups.

An important component of this theory is its suggestion that conspiracy theories about blameless victims are often whipped up quite cynically as part of a larger campaign of popular hatred. In this respect the psychology of belief envisaged by this theory is very different from that proposed by the “paranoid style” school. In that model, the believers in conspiracy theory can’t help themselves and are in a sense victims of a style of thought that clouds their judgment, along the lines of succumbing to an epidemic mass hysteria. But the conspiracy-as-scapegoating theory suggests that believers—or at least the leaders of the groups that promote such beliefs—are merely spreading rumors without necessarily believing in them.

A further development of this theory puts forward the idea that sometimes people at the very center of power might create (or perhaps just cynically promote) a popular outburst of demonology in order to further their own political schemes. This view is sometimes known as the elitist theory of moral panics, because it suggests that the elite deliberately fuel moral panics in order to legitimate repressive measures that would otherwise be unacceptable. Like the scapegoating theory, this position has the advantage of not relying on unprovable assertions about the psychological makeup of those inclined to believe in conspiracy theories, and at its best it can offer compelling and historically nuanced accounts of the vested political and economic interests that are really being served by the promotion of conspiracy beliefs. For example, one interpretation of the antisocialist “red scares” of 1919–1920 is that they were not so much a spontaneous outburst of popular paranoia about an imagined threat to U.S. sovereignty as a convenient excuse that was seized upon by the authorities to bring in antilabor legislation that would have otherwise been deemed too repressive. However, with its emphasis on the ruthlessly efficient manipulation of mass belief, it leaves no room for understanding why so many people

come to accept conspiracy theories (are they all just dupes?), or what function those scaremongering stories might fulfill for the people who circulate them. Finally, this position is usually associated with left-leaning interpretations of history, but recently right-wing commentators have adapted it in their allegations that events such as the Oklahoma City bombing and even the attacks of September 11 were in fact carried out by agents of the government in order to soften up the public into accepting antiterrorist measures that these right-wing groups see as curbing individual liberty. As this admittedly extreme example suggests, however, the elitist theory of moral panic contains within it the seeds of a conspiratorial interpretation of history—albeit far more plausible in some cases than others.

### **The Function of Conspiracy Theories**

The approaches outlined so far all start from the assumption that conspiracy theories are false, hence the need for an explanation of why so many people should come to believe in such a distorted view of the world. An alternative approach, however, brackets off the question of whether the particular conspiracy theories are true or false (a distinction that some commentators suggest is becoming far harder to make), and instead investigates what function the conspiracy stories fulfill in the lives of the people and the groups who circulate them. This interpretation is concerned less with developing a theory about the underlying psychology of the “paranoid style” across time than with trying to account for the emergence of a particular belief at a particular historical moment by looking at its purpose rather than its meaning. In this respect it has much in common with the elitist theory of moral panics, but it differs in that it does not see the believers in conspiracy theory as unwitting dupes but as active shapers of theories that help them to make sense of a confusing world. It tends in effect to be a fairly charitable reading of popular beliefs. Where some critics would dismiss conspiracy theories as a failure to understand the complex processes of historical causation, this view argues that conspiracy theory is a kind of pop soci-

ology, a way of making sense of structure and agency in a time when official versions of events and more academic forms of explanation fail to capture the imagination of a disillusioned public.

Some practitioners of this cultural studies approach tune in to what conspiracy believers actually say by closely reading their writings and even by interviewing them. The aim is not so much to establish what the people consciously believe as to find out why, at a symbolic level, these beliefs make some kind of expressive sense at a particular historical moment. So, for example, in Bridget Brown’s study of alien abduction narratives (many of which have a conspiratorial twist involving government collusion) she both reads the main texts in the genre and interviews abductees. She draws attention, for example, to the way that abduction narratives often focus on fears about medical experimentation (particularly about sexual fertility), and locates these seemingly bizarre stories within the complex history of the increasing role of technology and unapproachable experts in medicine, and debates about the politics of abortion and other reproduction issues. Other examples (e.g., Knight, Spark) see the resurgence of conspiracy theories about the so-called New World Order and even theories about government collusion with aliens as a way of talking (in a displaced and distorted form) about issues such as globalization, and the loss of control of personal and national economic destiny. At bottom these kinds of densely historical accounts read conspiracy theories as symptomatic of larger fears that circulate through the culture at particular moments of stress. They suggest that even if the stories turn out to be not literally true then they still manage to capture and express—in however bizarre a fashion—a view of the contemporary world that is not without foundation. One effect of this approach is that the range of examples of what counts as a conspiracy theory worthy of the name and worthy of study has begun to expand. The “paranoid style” method was geared toward studying political movements, but some of the more recent studies of conspiracy theory have been interested in everyday popular beliefs that are not explicitly political, and often are manifested in the realm of culture. Some

commentators (e.g., Pipes) have argued that, even if in other countries conspiracy theory is still explicitly political, in the United States it has become thankfully relegated to the cultural realm. In contrast, the cultural studies approach claims that politics is now often carried out in the cultural realm, and so phenomena like conspiracy theories are not merely a sideshow but are part of the real action.

Although most of these cultural studies accounts remain fairly neutral in political terms, some have tried to assess whether conspiracy theories are reactionary or progressive. The traditional view (common to both the paranoid style and moral panic theories) is that conspiracy theories are nearly always bad news: if they're not immediately harmful in their promotion of scapegoating, then they produce a mystified view of the world that prevents people from focusing on what's really wrong with the world. However, with the emergence of a strand of conspiracy culture (since the assassinations of the 1960s and the revelations about the wrongdoings of the government in the 1970s) that seems at first sight to be politically progressive, some commentators have wondered whether conspiracy theories might now in this limited way have become part of a wider populist challenge to the status quo and the "official version" of events. For example, in her study of alien conspiracy theories the political scientist Jodi Dean argues that the proliferation of unsettling, logic-defying abduction narratives works to erode the boundary between the rational and the irrational, and that this blurring of distinctions feeds into the wider populist challenge to what is sometimes known as consensus reality. But other critics (e.g., Crews) have taken issue with such claims, pointing out that there is something disturbing about championing such beliefs as politically useful when in most cases they make the believers miserable. (Brown takes a halfway position, suggesting that although alien abductees find some measure of self-empowerment in telling their stories, at the same time those stories only serve to emphasize their lack of power in the face of nameless conspiring forces.) In his detailed and careful study of this new wave of conspiracy belief, Mark Fenster tackles head-on the

question of its political possibilities (and takes issue with the work of John Fiske in particular). He comes to the conclusion that as much as it might seem to be progressive in the way that it gives a voice to a populist resentment with the authorities (and most of his book is concerned with exploring this possibility), conspiracy theory at the end of the day is putting forward a distorted view of historical causation that ultimately leads people astray from real political engagement.

What these cultural studies approaches have in common is that they see conspiracy theories as being in dialog with their historical context (rather than just an occasional outburst of mass hysteria that is liable to crop up at any time more or less without reason). Coming from the slightly different perspective of anthropology, another related approach sees conspiracy theories as a form of urban legend or rumor. For example, the folklorist Patricia Turner has conducted field work to establish what conspiracy stories circulate in African American neighborhoods and has then categorized her findings and shown how they fit in with other fears and fantasies about racial interaction that permeate through the culture, and how they have long historical roots. In sum, all of the approaches outlined in this section aim to read conspiracy theories alongside (and in challenge to) other popular ways of making sense of the interconnectedness of the world and its events.

### **Conspiracy Theories since the 1960s**

The first wave of theorizing about conspiracy theories emerged in the wake of the outburst of anti-communist hysteria, and in some ways the models that were developed spoke to the need to make sense of that immediate past. Since the mid-1990s there has been a renewed interest (both by academics and journalists) in trying to explain conspiracy theories, and this can be seen as a result of the sudden emergence of a seemingly new and pervasive conspiracy culture that has as its most prominent emblem the television show *The X-Files*, but which in all likelihood dates back to the political turmoil of the 1960s in general and the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King in particular. Quite a few of these



recent studies have speculated that there has been some kind of shift in conspiracy theory since the 1960s or thereabouts.

One explanation for the increasing prominence of conspiracy theories in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century is that there have quite simply been more conspiracies, many of which have been uncovered. For example, the political scientist Ray Pratt suggests that it is no surprise that there are so many films about omnipresent surveillance and government corruption because there has been so much irrefutable evidence that the authorities really are up to no good. This kind of approach starts from the possibility that a fair measure of recent paranoia is fully justified.

Other critics argue that representations of conspiracy and paranoia in film and novels are not so much realist portrayals of what is really going on as they are distorted and stylized responses to a world that has become impossible to make sense of through traditional means. The literary critic Fredric Jameson has suggested that the conspiracy narratives of Hollywood films and popular thrillers are an expression of people's inability to make sense of how the world fits together in the age of globalization. He argues that people turn to these kinds of stories because they seem to offer a simplified handle on what is really going on in a postmodern world that, for many people, has disintegrated into incoherent and overwhelming fragmentation of media images and cultural styles that seem to jumble up past, present, and previously distinct cultures in one big global supermarket. In effect, conspiracy narratives offer people a way of threading together into a coherent and revelatory plot the endless flood of soundbites; but, warns Jameson, although these accounts may promise clarity, they only end up mystifying what's going on and so make the attempt to locate ourselves within it even harder.

A different way of looking at the nature of conspiracy theories in the age of postmodernity is offered by the literary critic Timothy Melley. Finding in his reading of a range of postwar American novels and works of social theory a recurrent sense of panic at the imagined threat to individual agency at the hands of conspiring forces, Melley draws two

conclusions. The first is that the obsession with protecting a sense of rugged selfhood (sometimes known as possessive individualism) has been a long-running theme in U.S. literature, philosophy, and politics. The second is that this obsession has taken on a new twist in recent times, as Americans have found themselves (as Jameson points out) under threat of disintegrating into incoherence amid all the profusion of conflicting styles and codes that make up our sense of individuality. People are paranoid, the argument goes, about becoming schizophrenic.

A different approach (e.g., Knight, Massumi) argues that there has been a shift in the nature and function of conspiracy theories since the 1960s and that it has intensified since the end of the cold war in the early 1990s. Whereas conspiracy theories once offered a paradoxically comforting sense of identity (only by knowing who your enemy is can you really know who you are, the theory goes), they now are unable to clearly identify a specific enemy or manageable threat and so no longer serve to bolster national or group coherence in the way they once did. Secure paranoia has in effect given way to insecure paranoia, as the clear-cut them-and-us political tensions of the cold war have given way to the more confusing geopolitics of global terrorism and other borderless threats such as pollution and disease that promote a permanent environment of risk and uncertainty. In the wake of September 11, it remains to be seen whether we are entering a new phase in the history of conspiracy theories in the United States, or whether that traumatic event will be interpreted in very familiar ways.

### **Conclusion**

As with other controversial social phenomena (such as religious faith or belief in science), the battle lines amid competing explanations are often deeply entrenched and politically motivated. Accounts that emphasize the dangers of the paranoid style and lament the gullibility of conspiracy theorists tend to (but do not always) emerge from a conservative view of human nature and history, whereas approaches that highlight the role that conspiracy theory plays in giving voice to popular grievances (however distorted) usually rely on a

more liberal understanding of society and culture. Often each camp is talking about a different set of examples, so that each theory makes sense only in its own context. Since conspiracy theories have taken on so many different guises in different historical periods, there is good reason to think that there is no one-size-fits-all theory that can encompass and explain all the dizzying variety.

Conspiracy theory seems to be mutating all the time, fulfilling diverse functions for different people at distinct historical moments, often in quite unpredictable ways. For example, some commentators (e.g., Kelly) have pointed how recently there seems to have been a convergence between, on the one hand, a revived version of traditional right-wing conspiracy theories that talk about the shadowy influence of unelected globalist groups like the Bilderbergers and the United Nations, and on the other a more countercultural attack on the influence of undemocratic forms of national and international institutions such as the CIA and the World Trade Organization. This kind of “fusion paranoia,” where Right meets Left, demands a rethink of traditional accounts of everyday politics and popular protest movements. Whichever interpretation you follow, what is becoming increasingly clear is that conspiracy theory can no longer be dismissed as a trivial sideshow to real politics, but has become a part of political and cultural life in the United States that demands to be taken seriously.

Peter Knight

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# A

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## Abolitionism

### Overview

Although great believers in the Slave Power Conspiracy and often party to anti-Catholic and other evangelically oriented conspiracy theories themselves, American abolitionists were also frequently accused of conspiracy, especially in the South but also in the North. Improbable as it may seem from a modern vantage point, the heroic opponents of slavery were commonly depicted in the terms reserved for conspiracy theory's most despicable villains, e.g., witches, Illuminati, and Communists. South Carolina's William Henry Drayton pictured "these conspirators . . . at their midnight meetings, where the bubbling cauldron of abolition was filled with its pestilential materials" (Davis, 35). An 1852 writer in *DeBow's Review* of New Orleans actually compared abolitionism with communism (then newly invented), seeing them both as part of a blasphemous, hypocritical foreign campaign to overturn a social order ordained by "the thought of God" Himself: "What means this darkly-shadowed caricature of good—this horrible disfigurement of Christian charity—which, but that it stalks in terrible reality before us, would seem like the mockery of some fearful dream?" (L.S.M., 509).

From the Haitian Revolution on, slave rebellions real and imagined had been widely blamed on abolitionists, sometimes for just inspiring slaves from afar but increasingly, over time, for direct "intermed-

dling" with them. Some southerners even charged abolitionists with their slaves' day-to-day insubordination, as well as the harsh discipline allegedly necessary to suppress this insubordination. Indeed, proslavery publicist Edmund Ruffin argued in 1857 that only "abolition action" prevented slaves from being "the most comfortable, contented, and happy laboring class in the world" (Ruffin, 549). Ruffin and other white southerners envisioned the abolitionists as a vast network of open agitators and allied secret agents who had fanned out across the South, undercover as salesman, ministers, and teachers, and coaxed slaves to escape or, better yet, slaughter their masters. "There is no neighborhood in the Southern States into which Yankees have not penetrated," claimed Ruffin, "and could freely operate as abolition agents" (Ruffin, 546). This was a ridiculously inaccurate statement, of course, since by the time this passage was written it had long since become illegal as well as unsafe in most of the South to oppose slavery or even unenthusiastically support it.

Abolitionists in the North spoke and wrote in public forums, but were always suspected of secret designs and hidden agendas. Funding and organizing the subversion of slavery in the South was one accusation. Others included complicity in a British plot to break up the Union and/or a secret neofederalist stratagem to destroy the Democratic Party. Not surprisingly, these antiabolitionist theories often came from the ranks of northern Democrats eager to retain the favor of their southern wing.

Before detailing some of the more specific beliefs about the abolitionists, it is vital to put them in more realistic perspective than antiabolitionists usually provided. The idea of abolitionist involvement in engineering servile rebellion was mostly a fantasy, even in the case of the one abolitionist, John Brown, who actually tried it. Radical abolitionists were commonly sincere religious pacifists. Before Brown's activities in the 1850s, almost no hard evidence exists of plots or nondefensive violence instigated by northern abolition activists. Abolitionists certainly protected fugitive slaves when they could, and aided some escapes in border regions and port cities, but they posed no physical and little economic threat to slaveholders, whose human and real property was worth more on the eve of the Civil War than it ever had been before. Moreover, radical abolitionists never enjoyed widespread political influence, and the charge that they dominated Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party (the so-called "Black Republicans") was both a partisan slur and an important part of the southern conspiracy theory about the northern antislavery sentiment.

The term "Black Republicans" also contained another connotation. It was the habit of all slavery's defenders (and their political allies) to conflate any degree of opposition to slavery with the most radical forms of abolitionism and egalitarianism they could imagine. So politicians and writers taking the much more widespread "free soil" position, opposing only slavery's further expansion, were treated as outright abolitionists, and those who showed any degree of concern for black rights were likely to be denounced as advocates of full social equality with blacks and "amalgamation" of the races.

It should be noted that the situation as described above took several decades of U.S. history to fully develop. Negative attitudes and outlandish beliefs about abolitionists had long circulated in areas like the lower South and the Caribbean, where the extremely large slave populations left whites feeling nervous and outnumbered. These conspiracy theories became far more widespread with the radicalization of antislavery that took place in the 1820s and 1830s.

### **From Moderation to Radicalism in the American Abolition Movement**

Before the late 1820s, American abolitionism was almost painfully polite, tentative, and moderate. During the American Revolution, it came to be generally agreed outside the lower South that slavery was inconsistent with the egalitarian ideals of the Declaration of Independence and other revolutionary mission statements. The northern states abolished slavery in the years after the Revolution, though often by means of gradual emancipation laws that only freed the adult children of current slaves.

Quakers opposed slavery as a matter of conscience and lobbied for abolition during the First Congress, but without results. The bulk of antislavery activity in the early Republic was more Jeffersonian in approach, looking to end the international slave trade (which occurred in 1808) and find some means of phasing southern slavery out while minimizing economic and social disruptions. Slaveholders were to be compensated for their losses to abolition, and the creation of a large free black population would be avoided by sending former slaves to colonies in Africa or some other far-away place. This was the formula promoted by the early Republic's most prominent antislavery organization, the American Colonization Society, which counted James Madison, Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, and Francis Scott Key among its members and enjoyed the official aid of the U.S. government and navy.

Despite the moderation of these early efforts, the slaveholding politicians of the lower South reacted harshly to the idea of even discussing limitations on slavery. The Carolinas and Georgia forced special protections and extra representation for slavery to be built into the federal constitution. The Quakers petitioning the First Congress were accused by South Carolina's Aedanus Burke of being British spies who were "for bringing this country under a foreign yoke." During the same debate, southern congressmen made veiled threats to leave the newborn Union if such discussions continued, arguing that "every principle of policy and concern for . . .

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**LADIES' DEPARTMENT.**


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'Am I not a Woman and a Sister?'



**White Lady, happy, proud and free,  
Lend awhile thine ear to me ;  
Let the Negro Mother's wail  
Turn thy pale cheek still more pale.  
Can the Negro Mother joy  
Over this her captive boy,  
Which in bondage and in tears,  
For a life of wo she rears ?  
Though she bears a Mother's name,  
A Mother's rights she may not claim ;  
For the white man's will can part,  
Her darling from her bursting heart.**

**From the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.  
LETTERS ON SLAVERY.—No. III.**

Ladies' Department from "The Liberator," published by William Lloyd Garrison, 1849. (Bettmann/Corbis)

the peace and tranquility of the United States, concur to show the propriety of dropping the subject [of slavery], and letting it sleep where it is" (*Debates and Proceedings in Congress*).

When northern congressmen voted to exclude slavery from the new state of Missouri in 1820, much less than what the Quakers had asked, the uproar was far worse. Thomas Jefferson declared it "the knell of the Union" (Jefferson, 1434) and the Virginia capital was "agitated as if affected by all the Volcanic eruptions of Vesuvius" (Brown, 438).

Extremism in the defense of slavery was no vice, and moderation in the pursuit of abolition was increasingly not accepted as a virtue.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that black and many white abolitionists grew impatient with the moderate approach. Hence their rhetoric and tactics became much more radical beginning in the late 1820s. The new approach asked, in far less apologetic tones, for immediate, uncompensated abolition, without colonization, as a matter of moral right. Public notice of the shift in abolitionist thought was given by the appearance of three new abolitionist publications between 1827 and 1830: *Freedom's Journal*, the first African American newspaper; white abolitionist printer William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper *The Liberator*; and, especially, the 1829 pamphlet *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, by black used-clothing dealer David Walker. Walker and Garrison almost immediately became two of the most hated (and feared) men in all the South. Although the pamphlet itself was considerably less ferocious than its reputation, Walker's *Appeal* became notorious for its defense (as a last resort) of violent resistance to slavery, and for its then-unusually apocalyptic warnings about consequences of continued oppression of the black population: "I tell you Americans! that unless you speedily alter your course, you and your Country are gone!!!!" (Walker, 1829).

What frightened southerners even more was the fact that Walker, who came from the South but lived in Boston, actually managed to distribute some of his pamphlets in the South. A parcel of sixty copies arrived in Savannah, Georgia, in December 1829, just after the pamphlet was published, and more were soon found in the Carolinas, Virginia, and Louisiana. One of the antebellum South's frequent slave conspiracy panics quickly ensued. Numerous southern jurisdictions passed new laws against slave education and seditious or "incendiary" literature, of which North Carolina's was one of the harshest. Writing, publishing, or circulating any publication tending to "to excite insurrection, conspiracy, or resistance in the slaves or free Negroes" was made a crime punishable by a



year in prison and whipping for the first offense, and death for the second offense (Eaton, 124). Abolitionist activity actually became a capital crime in much of the South, and this was only the beginning of a decades-long campaign to purge ideological nonconformity from the region, at least as it pertained to slavery. Georgia newspaper editor Elijah Burritt had to flee for his life when it was discovered that he had received twenty copies of the *Appeal* at the post office.

Many southerners at the time, along with some historians, have suspected some connection between Walker's pamphlet and the 1831 Nat Turner slave rebellion in Virginia, in which fifty-five whites were killed. (Similar Walker links have been seen to a Christmas 1830 slave rebellion outside New Bern, North Carolina, but that outbreak was quickly and brutally suppressed before any whites came to harm.) Virginia governor John Floyd received a likely fraudulent letter from one "Nero" claiming that Turner's raid was only the beginning. "Many a white agent" like Burritt was already in place, Nero claimed, and the slaves were also enlisting the aid of the removal-threatened Indians in Georgia (Hinks, 132). The most concrete link between Walker's *Appeal* and Nat Turner was probably their common roots in the spiritual and political ferment that was roiling through American black communities around that time—there were serious slave uprisings in Jamaica and other Caribbean colonies during 1830 and 1831. Rumors of imminent abolition may have played a role in the unrest, but rumors hardly required a network of agents to spread.

David Walker died in 1830, but his legacy as chief bugbear of southern slaveholders was amply carried on by the rise of William Lloyd Garrison and other aggressive immediatists during the 1830s. Garrison's *Liberator* was read mostly by a small audience of free blacks, but its most provocative passages seem to have been broadcast widely. Garrison argued in vitriolic terms not only for abolition, but also racial equality and the enfranchisement of blacks, stands that made him, in the minds of many suspicious southerners, a sort of evil poster boy for the whole antislavery cause and possibly for all of northern culture.

Garrison promised he would be "as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice" in his campaign against slavery: "On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hand of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen" (Cain, 72). Later Garrison became even more infamous for denouncing the Constitution as "a covenant with death, an agreement with hell" because of its special favors for slavery. On at least one occasion Garrison publicly burned a copy of the document, endearing him to few northerners but burnishing his demonic credentials down south.

### **The Conspiracy Is in the Mail: The Furor over the Abolitionist Media Campaign**

The new radical abolitionists were by and large products of the Protestant religious revival known as the Second Great Awakening. Following the example of the evangelists who had spread the Awakening, abolitionists developed an aggressive, media-savvy campaign of "moral suasion" aimed at converting white Americans to their cause. The American Anti-Slavery Society was founded for this purpose in 1833, and well funded by wealthy businessmen such as the Tappan brothers of New York. The new abolitionists sent hundreds of petitions to Congress asking for the abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C., where there was no constitutional question of states rights to get in the way. At the same time, beginning in the mid-1830s, they unleashed a multimedia assault on American public opinion the likes of which no one had ever seen before. Antislavery newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, slave narratives, touring speakers, musicians, songs, plays, and novels were all thrown into mix. In the process, the abolitionists became probably the first political group of any kind to send what we now call direct mail solicitations, or junk mail, literature sent directly to citizens that the citizen did not request. Most controversially, the abolitionists sent their literature into the South, usually in defiance of local laws passed a few years earlier.

The southern reaction to this campaign showed the depth of slaveholders' fears about slavery. Even though slaves were 90–95 percent illiterate and alleged to be deeply loyal to their masters, southern leaders seemed to entertain the possibility that a few words on paper might bring down their whole house of cards. They became much more aggressive about taking the position that *any* discussion of slavery in any context was incredibly dangerous, a form of attempted murder against all southern whites. Abolitionist mailings were regarded in the same light that later generations would see letter bombs or pornographic “spam” e-mail. Northern capitalists were bankrolling the transmission of disruptive, alien values into decent American communities. Tennessee slaveholder and president Andrew Jackson thought that the abolitionists ought to “atone for this wicked attempt with their lives.” Southern postmasters refused to even handle the stuff, and matters were soon arranged politically so that they would not have to make the choice to violate their oaths of office.

In July 1835, the Charleston, South Carolina, postmaster put the abolitionist mailings in a separate bag, and that night a mob of so-called “Lynch Men,” led by former governor John Lyde Wilson, broke in and stole it. They then proceeded to make that “incendiary” literature live up to the term, making a bonfire with it that was cheered by some 2,000 spectators. Allegedly to protect the other less inflammatory mail, the Charleston postmaster asked that the postal service not accept further abolitionist mailings for the South into the system, and the postmaster in New York City, where the American Antislavery Society was based, agreed.

Postmaster General and Democratic political strategist Amos Kendall endorsed this decision and made it official policy. It was a federal crime to interfere with or refuse to deliver the mail, but Kendall argued that while federal officials had an obligation to execute the laws, they had a higher obligation to the communities in which they lived. If federal laws were “perverted” to destroy local communities, as the abolitionists allegedly had done, “it was patriotism to disregard” the laws (John, 271).

Southerners also began to insist that the North impose southern-style restrictions on abolitionist free speech. Between 1834 and 1837, the free states endured an intense wave of antiabolitionist rioting, much of it not spontaneous but orchestrated by Democratic politicians. Georgia Democrat John Forsyth wrote to New York presidential hopeful Martin Van Buren suggesting that “a little more mob discipline of the white incendiaries would be wholesome . . . A portion of the magician’s skill is required in this matter . . . and the sooner you set the imps to work the better” (Cole, 226).

Van Buren’s imps got to work. Beginning in 1834, they organized public meetings against abolitionism all over the North, and also orchestrated hundreds of riots and other acts of violence aimed at stopping the abolitionist media campaign, with abolitionist lecturers, meetings, and newspapers the primary targets. Not all of these attacks needed to be arranged, but it was frequently noted that many of the mobs consisted of not street thugs but pillars of the community, “gentlemen of property and standing” (Richards). The tragic culmination of this anticonspiracy conspiracy was the 1837 riot that killed one especially persistent abolitionist editor, Presbyterian minister Elijah P. Lovejoy, who was shot defending a new printing press—earlier mobs had destroyed three others—in Alton, Illinois.

The controversy only died down once abolitionism was once again forced partly back into the political closet. This was one goal of the mail ban, and the main objective of the so-called “gag rule” that Congress imposed from 1837 to 1844, automatically tabling all petitions about slavery and thus preventing their official consideration.

### **Toward the Civil War**

Though Congress was able to avoid the slavery issue until the Wilmot Proviso reopened it in 1846, neither the issue nor the abolitionists nor fear of the abolitionists went away until after the Civil War. During the late 1830s and 1840s, some anti-slavery activists became disenchanted with “moral suasion” and split with the Garrisonians, turning to the strategy of creating an antislavery political party. The political abolitionists also had difficulties



with the increasingly prominent role of nontraditional political actors—blacks and women—in the movement.

At the same time, southern fears of antislavery conspirators and southern intolerance of dissent grew worse by the year. No proselytizing was required to get in serious trouble with the proslavery thought vigilantes. In 1856, respected University of North Carolina professor Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick, and a colleague who defended him, were forced out of their jobs. Hedrick had admitted, in response to a question, that he might have voted for Republican candidate John C. Frémont, if Frémont had even been on the ballot.

As southern intransigence deepened and the Slave Power seemed to grow stronger, abolitionists became more attracted to the direct action strategies of which southerners had long suspected them. Yet while rescuing fugitive slaves or moving west to keep Kansas free became popular missions for some, the idea that “vile emissaries of abolition, working like the moles under the ground” (Eaton, 100), were out engineering rebellions and “stealing” large numbers of slaves remained chiefly a southern conspiracy theory.

The famed Underground Railroad, for instance, was promoted almost as heavily by *proslavery* editors and politicians as it was by the abolitionists. There really was a network of people in the North, especially in Ohio and other states near slave territory, who helped escaped slaves make their way north, but it was never as large, well organized, or elaborate as the term “Underground Railroad” suggests. The modern practice of designating historic homes of abolitionist sympathizers as “stations” along established “lines” exaggerates the historical reality. Abolitionists often used the new metaphor of a railroad to describe the coming of freedom as a train that was moving forward and could not be stopped—“Get Off the Track!” was a popular abolitionist song, especially as performed by the antislavery singing stars, the Hutchinson Family Singers. Abolitionist publications liked to tweak southern fears by running joke advertisements for fictitious railroads like the “Liberty Line,” with many veiled references to the aid that escaped

slaves would be given and a satirical drawing of blacks and whites riding in a literal train.

Once John Brown supplanted William Lloyd Garrison as chief abolitionist archetype in southern conspiracy theories after the 1859 raid on Harper’s Ferry, secession and civil war came to seem absolutely imperative to many southerners. Here was just what they always knew the abolitionists wanted. Brown’s plan for his “Provisional Army of the North” called for an armed assault on slavery in which a few northern whites and free blacks would set off a bloody race war. The plan failed dismally of course, but it had the backing of wealthy, important men back in New England. Moreover, Brown’s dignified behavior and passionate speeches against slavery at the trial and in newspaper interviews made him a hero in the North, confirming all southern fears about what little regard their countrymen had for their safety. Southerners had been chilled by some of the implements that Brown had with him when captured, such as hundreds of custom cast-iron pikes to be handed out to freed slaves, and a map full of mysterious marks at locations all over the South. Down South, these marks were widely interpreted as locations where Brown had slave allies or white agents planted and ready to strike.

The Harper’s Ferry raid and the North’s reaction to it set off a “crisis of fear” in many parts of the South that continued right through the beginning of the war. Vigilance committees in many localities launched a wave of further terror and repression against suspected abolitionists. Even talking to blacks, or *looking* like an abolitionist, became dangerous. A free black barber in Knoxville, Tennessee, was mistaken for Frederick Douglass and chased through the streets. A stonecutter working on the new South Carolina state capitol was whipped, tarred, feathered, and deported for a stray remark.

This was the mood of South Carolina when Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, in a four-way race that allowed to him to win even though he received no southern votes at all. With a Black Republican in the White House, paranoid South Carolinians saw no choice but to do what they had been threatening to do for years, secede from the Union. Only by separating from the Amer-

ican Republic could they be safe from the hordes of John Browns and pike-wielding blacks that Lincoln would surely send.

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**See also:** African Americans; Brown, John; Fugitive Slave Act; Slave Power; Slave Revolts; Turner, Nat.

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#### Abortion

Beginning with the prolonged campaign to outlaw abortion led by members of the American Medical Association in the 1860s and 1870s, antiabortion advocates in the United States have frequently used the rhetoric of conspiracy when talking about the practice. The language of conspiracy was used to describe not only the networks set up to provide abortions but also the ways that those who provided abortions allegedly conspired to conceal the "truth" about the practice and its supposed risks from pregnant women and from the general public.

After the 1973 Supreme Court rulings in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* struck down state laws criminalizing abortion, antiabortion activists endorsed a number of political strategies, some of which have been called conspiratorial by feminists and others who advocate abortion rights. Beginning in the 1980s, antiabortion leaders such as Randall Terry of Operation Rescue and Joseph Scheidler of the Pro-Life-Action Network recommended "direct action" campaigns targeting abortion providers. Demonstrations at facilities providing abortion became commonplace, as antiabortion advocates sought to dissuade women from seeking



Antiabortion protesters gather in front of the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on the sixteenth anniversary of the decision to legalize abortion, January 23, 1989. (Bettmann/Corbis)

abortions, using means ranging from silent vigils to physically preventing access to the clinic buildings. Since the leaders of these campaigns openly acknowledged that their goal was to drive abortion providers out of business, feminist organizations argued that they were committing criminal conspiracy against those providers.

In 1986, several women's health organizations filed suit in federal district court, using antitrust laws to charge members of antiabortion organizations with criminal conspiracy. In 1989, the feminist organizations added violations of the federal Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) laws to their charges against the antiabortion organizations. In 1998, a civil jury found the defendants in *NOW v. Scheidler* guilty of violating RICO laws. The defendants appealed the decision, and in 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that

the antiracketeering laws had been improperly used, nullifying the 1998 decision.

Abortion rights advocates also charge that the increase in acts of direct violence against abortion facilities after 1973 points to conspiratorial action by antiabortion activists. These acts of violence include hundreds of incidents of vandalism, arson and firebombing, the 1982 kidnapping of an abortion doctor and his wife, and a series of shootings at abortion clinics in the 1990s that resulted in seven deaths and a number of injuries. Additionally, between 1998 and 2001 hundreds of letters claiming to contain anthrax were mailed to abortion clinics around the United States, though they were found to be hoaxes. A number of these actions, including the 1982 kidnapping, a 1993 shooting, and the 1997 bombing of an abortion clinic and a gay bar, have been linked to an organization calling

itself the Army of God, which has published a manual outlining methods of vandalizing and bombing abortion facilities and taking credit for several fatal shootings of abortion providers. This manual, along with the alleged circulation on the Internet of a “hit list” of abortion providers, caused many to believe that the increase in violence against abortion providers in the 1990s was linked to a nationwide conspiracy of antiabortion extremists. A grand jury investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice from 1994 to 1996, however, found no definitive evidence of a national conspiracy.

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**See also:** RICO.

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### African Americans

Conspiracy theory, urban legend, and rumor have played an important role in African American culture from its beginnings. Recent decades have seen a spate of conspiracy theories emerge from the African American community concerning everything from the origin of AIDS to supposedly racist clothes designers and restaurant owners. Whatever the possible validity of these stories, these conspiracy theories have served as a way of voicing frustration and suspicion in an increasingly complex social world, one in which racism may not be condoned by the government, but is still acutely felt by many in the black community. But such stories are not products solely of their time; they emerge out

of a tradition that began with the first contact between Africans and Europeans.

As folklorist Patricia Turner notes in her book *I Heard It through the Grapevine*, a study of the role of rumor and legend in the African American community, the telling of conspiracy-minded stories has been a central way for blacks (and whites) to understand their circumstances. At the outset of the slave trade, for example, Africans who were taken aboard slave ships had difficulty comprehending both their immediate situation and their captors’ intentions. The one explanation they found plausible was that these strange-looking white men were cannibals searching for food. Likewise, the Europeans presumed that all Africans must be cannibals, given their seemingly primitive nature.

From this basis was born a long line of anecdotes, rumors, and beliefs (many of them well founded) among African Americans about the animosity that at least some whites bore toward them, and their powerlessness in the social, economic, and political systems in which they found themselves. In particular, a theme that emerges from the earliest rumors about European cannibalism and continues in recent years through the conspiracy theories about the spread of crack cocaine is the understanding that the black (usually male) body is a site of contention between blacks and whites.

### Historical Context for Conspiracy Theories

The events of U.S. history have provided a context in which such beliefs make sense: the institution of chattel slavery itself, in which the black body was the property of a white owner and could be worked and physically punished until it gave out; lynchings that became nearly common events in the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (often sparked by a suspicion that a black male had had, or intended to have, sexual relations with a white woman); the stories emerging from World War II of black soldiers being given particularly dangerous assignments more regularly than their white counterparts; the Tuskegee experiments in which black males were intentionally infected with syphilis; the willingness of law enforcement officers



in the South not only to deny rights to blacks, but also to attack demonstrators with fire hoses and dogs during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s; the disproportionate number of poor blacks sent to fight in Vietnam; and the ongoing incidents of police violence against blacks, particularly in the inner cities. In these cases, it isn't simply that blacks are the victims of racism, but that this racism fuels institutionalized physical attacks against individual African Americans, attacks that often end in death. The assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960s, as well as the Rodney King beating in 1991, have served as representative examples of the violence that may befall blacks who seem to defy or challenge the system.

### **A Century of Conspiracies**

The U.S. Civil War and the end of chattel slavery brought increased interaction among African Americans and whites, and with it an increasing number of conspiracy theories among both groups. In fact, one of the most persistent conspiracy theories to circulate in the African American community emerged at the time of emancipation. The threat of possible black ownership of southern land was used by the Confederacy to rally support for its cause among whites. Belief in this possibility spread so widely that by the time the war ended, many former slaves themselves were convinced that the federal government would supply them with a parcel of land. The promise of "40 acres and a mule" to each freed slave was never actually made, but the belief that the government both made and broke this promise became so entrenched in African American culture that it continues to be cited as evidence of the systematic betrayal of African Americans by the U.S. government.

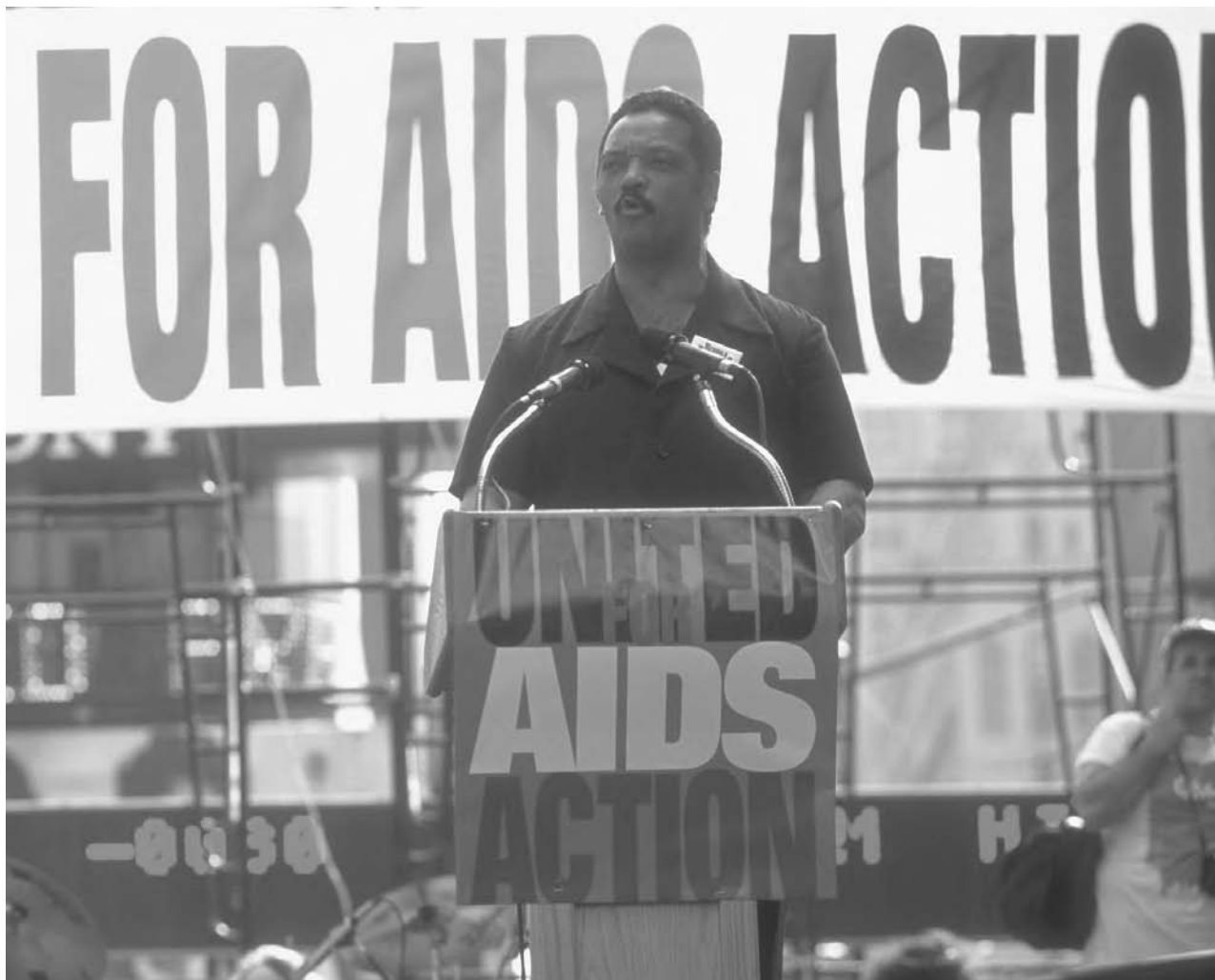
With the abolition of slavery came greater mobility and opportunities for African Americans. Yet, much of the underlying racism and animosity that had allowed slavery to exist in the first place remained. African Americans often found themselves in communities that did not welcome them. Inevitably, racial tensions arose from the fear, suspicion, and animosity felt by both blacks and whites in the postslavery United States.

The migration of many southern blacks during the late 1800s and early 1900s to the large urban areas of the North seems to have sparked a number of incidents in which conspiracy theory and racially motivated violence fueled each other. The riots of East St. Louis, Missouri (1917), and Chicago, Illinois (1919), were both precipitated in part by rumors of racial violence. In St. Louis, a meeting of white laborers concerned about losing their jobs to African Americans led to violence when rumors circulated that a black man had recently killed or assaulted whites (the rumors ranged from an accidental shooting of a white man to the murder of two white girls). A month of sporadic violence followed, with both blacks and whites believing that the other group was planning a wholesale massacre. When the violence erupted into a full-scale race riot, a large number of blacks were killed and mutilated by white mobs. The exact number of fatalities was itself the subject of conspiracy theories: many blacks felt that the official death toll was kept low to minimize the savagery of white violence, while some whites felt blacks were trying to inflate the list of fatalities by claiming that people who had fled the city had been killed and disposed of.

Similar rumors of violence sparked a race riot in Chicago in 1919. After weeks of growing racial tension and suspicion, violence erupted when a black boy drowned at a segregated beach when he accidentally drifted into the white swimming area. Some white bathers threw stones to drive him away, and although there was no evidence that any of these hit the boy, the rumor circulated among African Americans at the scene that the boy had been killed by rock-throwing whites while the police looked on. Several days of violence followed.

Race riots also emerged in Detroit, Michigan, in 1943, as well as Harlem, New York, in 1935 and 1943. Again, rumors of assault, rape, or murder of a member of one group by individuals of the other race served as the spark for the violence. And again, the rumors were found to be either baseless, or at least exaggerated.

These cases of rumors precipitating violence suggest that conspiracy theories have provided a way of giving shape and specificity to free-floating racial



Jesse Jackson, leader of the Rainbow Coalition, speaks at a United for AIDS Action demonstration in New York City. Fifty thousand people turned out for the 1992 event in Times Square. (ChromoSohm/Corbis)

anxieties within local communities. However, these rumors also contributed to conspiracy theory becoming a larger theme in African American political discourse. As Turner points out in her work, even blacks who did not have any specific knowledge of the riots in St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Harlem, or other similar events still were familiar with the themes expressed in the rumors that emerged from them: that the lives and bodies of blacks were not valued by whites and that violence by whites against blacks was seen as acceptable by society.

From early in the twentieth century, various African American leaders and groups have used

conspiracy theories to explain the larger subjection of blacks in U.S. society. Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and Louis Farrakhan, among many others, have suggested that the social, political, and economic struggles facing blacks were the result of concerted efforts by the white majority to keep them from their rightful place in society. Such theories became accepted tenets of more militant groups such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a series of conspiracy theories emerged from the African American community that suggested specific ways in which the racism

of U.S. society at large was still affecting blacks. One genre of theory involved supposed ties between companies that catered to the black community and racist organizations, particularly the Ku Klux Klan. One conspiracy theory suggested that the Troop Sport clothing company, a manufacturer of sportswear that was popular in urban areas, was owned and run by the KKK. Versions of this theory suggested that tags or messages hidden on or in the clothing contained racist threats and slurs. The shoe manufacturer Reebok was also alleged to have racist ties. It was suggested that the producer of popular athletic shoes was owned or financially tied to the white government of South Africa and supporters of apartheid.

A related theory emerged in 1991, claiming that Liz Claiborne, the founder of the clothing company of the same name, had appeared on Oprah Winfrey's talk show and made racist comments. She was alleged to have suggested that she did not make clothes for black women because they could not wear the same sizes as white women and that she simply did not like the idea of making clothes for blacks. Although Liz Claiborne had never appeared on Winfrey's show (and was no longer associated with the clothing company at the time of the rumor's appearance), the allegations were repeated as fact by many, including film director Spike Lee, who called for a boycott of Liz Claiborne clothing by African American women. A nearly identical theory surfaced a few years later, replacing Liz Claiborne with Tommy Hilfiger

A second genre of conspiracy theory also suggested links between businesses catering to the black community and racists, but added the assertion that these companies were not simply exploiting African Americans economically but also were causing them physical harm. These included the long-standing urban legend that Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants served rat meat to some customers. In this case, the allegation was that "Kentucky Fried Rat" was intentionally served to black customers.

Another fried chicken restaurant chain, Church's Fried Chicken, also became the subject of a conspiracy theory. It was suggested that the company (whose franchises were located primarily in urban areas and had a sizable black customer base) was

owned by racist whites who added an ingredient to the chicken that would cause black men to become sterile. A parallel theory held that the makers of Tropical Fantasy, a low-cost soft drink marketed principally in largely black urban areas, was owned by the KKK and added an ingredient to its product that would sterilize or cause impotence in black men. Yet another rumor suggested that Kool cigarettes contained an additive that caused sterility in black men.

Although no evidence emerged to confirm these rumors, they remained popular beliefs among many African Americans. Many cited the Tuskegee experiments on black men as evidence that attacks on African American males, particularly in ways that directly affected their reproductive capacity, were a way in which whites attempted to limit or destroy the African American population.

### **The Government as Enemy**

While the conspiracy theories involving private companies suggested ties between them and overtly racist organizations such as the KKK, other theories asserted that the U.S. government itself had genocidal ambitions against blacks. Such theories hark back to the time of institutionalized slavery when the government allowed African Americans to be bought and sold, as well as the "broken promise" of 40 acres and a mule. Contemporary visions of the government as the enemy of African Americans include the theory that the murders of several African American boys and young men in Atlanta from 1979 to 1981 were not the work of Wayne Williams, the black man accused and eventually convicted of the murders. These crimes were believed to have been part of a conspiracy planned by the Center for Disease Control, the FBI, and/or the CIA to collect interferon from the genitalia of black males for use in medical experiments (a theory that was deemed plausible by comedian/activist Dick Gregory and writer James Baldwin).

Other government-centered conspiracy legends include the allegations that poor black women who visit healthcare centers are routinely sterilized or given long-term birth-control implants without their knowledge, as a means of controlling the



black population. A more popular belief is that the AIDS virus is part of a government plan to target the inner cities with a deadly disease to limit their populations. The most widely circulated of such theories is the charge that drugs (crack cocaine in particular) were purposely introduced to inner-city communities by government agencies as a means to destroy the black community.

Variations of each of these conspiracy theories suggest a wide range of government culpability. Those suggesting a weak link between the federal government and conspiracies against African Americans suggest that the government, while not actually creating the problem (e.g., introducing the HIV virus or crack cocaine into the black community as biological weapons), has willingly allowed these crises to run their course without attempting to solve the problem. As long as these phenomena are primarily affecting black Americans, the reasoning goes, the government is content to practice a type of malevolent neglect.

Versions of these theories that suggest the strongest possible connection between the government and attacks against African Americans hold that not only are such acts a willful attempt at genocide, but that government agencies are actually demonic forces of supernatural evil. One such theory alleged that a numerological analysis of the name "Ronald Wilson Reagan" proves that the president was an agent of the Antichrist. Since each of his three names contains six letters (i.e., "666"), the president was linked to the mark of the beast as described in the Book of Revelation.

Another genre of conspiracy theory involving oppression of African Americans by the government suggests that the government often attacks the black community indirectly through discrediting high-profile leaders or groups. Again, such theories have historical precedents. It is now known that the FBI routinely carried out surveillance on civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and actively attempted to destabilize the Black Panthers. Such historical realities lend credence to suggestions that highly visible African Americans are subjected to disinformation campaigns conducted by largely white government agencies. When Washington,

D.C., mayor Marion Barry was arrested in a drug-related sting operation, it was suggested that he had been "set up" by whites who wanted to embarrass and harass influential African Americans.

Similar allegations surrounded the conviction of boxer Mike Tyson for rape.

During the riots in Los Angeles that followed the acquittal of the police officers charged with the beating of Rodney King, a widely circulated rumor suggested that the Los Angeles police were allowing the riots to continue in order to make the black community look bad. Perhaps the best-known example of this genre of conspiracy theory is that of the arrest and trial of O. J. Simpson for the murder of his ex-wife. Polls showed that many blacks believed the former football star had been framed by racist members of the Los Angeles Police Department.

A recurring theme in African American conspiracy theories is the physicality of the attacks they describe. The black body itself is portrayed as the site of struggle. The attack may involve the clothes that cover the body (e.g., the Troop Sport, Reebok, and Liz Claiborne theories), or may attack the body itself (e.g., the Church's Fried Chicken and Tropical Fantasy theories). The physical attacks range from indirect attempts at limiting the black population (as with the theories involving sterilization) to overt murder and genocide (as in the explanation for the Atlanta child murders and some versions of the AIDS-as-biological-weapon theory).

The theories involving crack cocaine and other drugs in some ways combine these various motifs. The drug trade economically exploits poor blacks. It also leads to their death in many cases (through overdoses, drug-related crime, etc.). Finally, it provides an excuse for institutional control of the black body, such as the incarceration of large numbers of African Americans (mostly young males) and mandatory drug tests for inner-city mothers as a prerequisite for prenatal care.

### **The Popularity and Ramifications of Conspiracy Theory**

Surveys suggest that conspiracy theories of one sort or another are taken seriously by a significant percentage of the African American population. The

Southern Christian Leadership Conference conducted a survey in 1991 in which 35 percent of the respondents believed that AIDS was a form of genocide, and another 30 percent said they were not sure. A poll done by the *New York Times* and WCBS-TV found that 77 percent of the black respondents felt that there was at least some truth to the allegation that the government targeted black elected officials for investigations as a way to discredit them. The same poll showed that 70 percent of black respondents believed the government intentionally allowed drugs into urban, largely black neighborhoods as a way of harming those who lived there.

The ramifications of this popularity of conspiracy theories among many African Americans are a point of debate among those who have studied the phenomenon. For some, the distortions and untruths they see at the heart of many such theories are stumbling blocks to true social and political progress. Conspiracy theories undermine the sense of empowerment and responsibility necessary to solve the actual problems. Occasionally, such as in the case of AIDS, the suspicion and misinformation communicated in conspiracy theories can have disastrous effects on both individuals and the larger community.

Others argue that conspiracy theory is a cultural practice that has played an important role in the continuing struggle of African Americans to understand their place in a society that is often hostile. Racism, particularly in its institutionalized forms, has been a conspiracy of sorts that has targeted people of African descent in America from the earliest days of colonial settlement.

Specific conspiracy theories may or may not be supported by the evidence, but even those that are demonstrably false are mistaken only in their particulars. They accurately describe the situation many blacks find themselves in and provide valuable social knowledge by making explicit (even if in a metaphorical manner) the very real forces of racism that must be recognized and overcome in order to succeed in society.

*Ted Remington*

**See also:** AIDS; Cocaine; Farrakhan, Louis; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam.

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## Agent Orange

A herbicide used as part of the of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam’s (MACV) 1962–1970 defoliation campaign in Vietnam, Agent Orange (along with Agents Blue, Green, Pink, Purple, and White) was utilized to reduce dense jungle foliage that might be used as enemy cover and to destroy food crops that might sustain Communist forces. As with the later Gulf War, Vietnam veterans have accused the government (and the companies that supplied the product) of allowing service personnel to be used as unwitting guinea pigs in the introduction of an untested chemical weapon, and then engaging in a cover-up about the extent of the problem.

The chemical became a technological fix in an attempt to wage an inexpensive and uncomplicated counterinsurgency campaign, in lieu of seriously addressing the problem of denying enemy access to food supplies and concealment by jungle foliage. In addition to its tactical uses, Agent Orange was also used in the clearing of U.S. base camp perimeters and other militarily sensitive areas. From 1965 to 1971, 3.2 percent of the cultivated land and 46.4 percent of the forest in Vietnam were sprayed with defoliants—approximately 3 percent of the Vietnamese population lived in defoliated areas. Of the herbicides used by the U.S. military, Agent Orange had the reputation of being one of the most effec-



A C-123 completes an Operation Ranchhand mission during the Vietnam War. The aerial spraying of herbicides such as Agent Orange, code-named Operation Ranchhand, led to health claims by veterans and civilians who suffered ill effects from exposure to the chemicals. (Department of Defense)

tive chemicals in defoliating inland and mangrove forests and the best herbicide for the rainy season (due to its oil-soluble composition). Due to this, between 1965 and 1970, approximately 11.2 million gallons of Agent Orange were dumped on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The majority of this was sprayed from specially equipped C-123 aircraft during Operation Ranchhand, with smaller amounts coming from helicopters, boats, trucks, and even

backpack-sized units worn by individual soldiers. Ranchhand defoliated approximately 4,747,587 acres of forest and destroyed 481,897 acres of crops.

Agent Orange contained the chemicals n-butyl esters of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T) as well as varying amounts of 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD), a member of the dioxin group. TCDD is considered to be one of the most toxic

chemicals known to mankind, with sufficient evidence of an association between exposure to the defoliant and chloracne, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and soft-tissue sarcoma. There is also suggestive evidence of an association between Agent Orange and respiratory cancers (lung, larynx, trachea), prostate cancer, multiple myeloma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, spina bifida, and porphyria cutanea tarda. The results of three epidemiological studies also suggest that a father's exposure to herbicides may put his children at a greater risk of being born with spina bifida.

In addition to untold numbers of Vietnamese civilians and soldiers, many U.S. military personnel were exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Vietnam veterans and their family members brought a class-action lawsuit against seven manufacturers of Agent Orange that was settled out of court by the establishment of a fund to compensate those exposed for any resulting disabilities. The total number of U.S. military personnel exposed to herbicides in Southeast Asia is unknown, but it is estimated that the number lies somewhere between 2.6 and 3.8 million.

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**See also:** Gulf War Syndrome.

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## AIDS

In the last twenty years, one of the most well-known, enduring, and highly contentious conspir-

acy theories has surrounded the emergence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Essentially, this theory proposes that HIV was a human-made virus and was either accidentally, or more likely deliberately, introduced into the human population. But beyond this consensus, AIDS conspiracy theories come in a wide variety of forms, especially around the objectives and targets of the conspiracy. Among the issues raised by AIDS conspiracy theories are the relation between science and politics, the history of chemical and biological warfare, race and genocide, and the effects of conspiracy theories in general on health, behavior, and politics.

Almost since the beginning of the AIDS crisis, conspiracy theories were among the explanations that were used to try to account for this new mysterious disease. While official virologists and others were isolating the HIV/HTLV virus in France and the United States, the account of its origin was (and still is) debated. The Green Monkey Hypothesis (the belief that the virus jumped species in Africa) was becoming dominant during late 1980s. Also receiving publicity at this time was the conspiracy-tinged conservative moralism that blamed the victims of AIDS for sinful behavior. But as far back as 1983 stickers appeared in gay urban districts (like the Castro area in San Francisco) proclaiming that AIDS emerged from a government laboratory, not the gay community. Helped along by the gay press and word of mouth, the theory that AIDS was human-made began to receive attention.

In 1984, the Indian newspaper the *New Delhi Patriot* charged that AIDS was a genetically engineered agent. Citing an anonymous U.S. anthropologist as well as U.S. Army research literature, the article asserted that HIV was created at the U.S. Army's Biological Warfare Laboratory at Fort Detrick, Maryland. About a year later, a Soviet journal picked up the story and began to cover the allegations regularly. This series, along with a *Pravda* cartoon depicting a U.S. scientist exchanging a vial containing the AIDS virus for money from a U.S. military man, made the AIDS conspiracy theory vulnerable to the charge of being Soviet disinformation. But soon a number of researchers and doctors on



both sides of the Iron Curtain began to investigate the murky origins of AIDS. The following sections elaborate the variety of conspiracy theories that emerged from these investigations.

### The Early Researchers

In 1986 East German scientists Jakob and Lilli Segal self-published a fifty-two-page pamphlet titled *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil*. In it they introduce the splice theory of HIV, which most subsequent conspiracy theories adopt. In essence, the splice theory argues that HIV is a result of the scientifically engineered, artificial splicing of two or more already existing viruses (both human and other animal). In the Segals' account, an artificial splice between a visna (sheep) virus and a human one (HTLV-1) produced HIV. The Segals claimed that this splice was performed at Fort Detrick, Maryland (the U.S. military base for chemical and biological weapons research and development), thereby introducing the chemical-biological warfare (CBW) context to explain AIDS. However, the Segals did not promote the idea that the virus was deliberately introduced into the general populace. They argued that the virus was tested on some U.S. prison inmates, who accidentally spread it to New York's gay community. The Segals blamed the epidemic on general U.S. malfeasance, especially the unethical use of scientific experiments, and called for more scientific research into the matter.

The Segals' claims were dismissed by some as KGB disinformation and embraced by others who used the research for their own theories. Perhaps the most infamous of these followers is Dr. William C. Douglass. His book, *AIDS: The End of Civilization*, accepted the visna/HTLV splice theory and its origin at Fort Detrick, but asserted that the virus was deliberately introduced into the populace. Douglass believed that AIDS was a Communist plot to destroy Western civilization, and that Soviet agents in the U.S. scientific and military communities were responsible for its creation. In addition, Douglass added the claim (which others subsequently picked up) that the World Health Organization (WHO) orchestrated HIV's spread in Africa, while the Center for Disease Control (CDC) was responsible for

its spread in the United States. He also asserted that AIDS could be contracted through casual contact (e.g., mosquitoes and saliva). Douglass's work concludes with a call to boost law-and-order measures in the United States (including quarantining HIV-positive people), dismantling the WHO and the United Nations, and fighting communism in general. In an ironic twist, the Segals' theory, which was labeled KGB propaganda by some, was turned into an *anticommunist* conspiracy theory.

Another influential conspiracy theorist in this vein is Dr. Robert Strecker, head of the Strecker Group. Strecker's major work is a low-budget video titled *The Strecker Memorandum*, which was made available via mail-order. The video primarily consists of Strecker lecturing to a handful of people (including the video's producer) and explaining his theory on a chalkboard. Strecker argues there that HIV is a result of a visna virus being spliced with a bovine (cow) virus, and that this new virus was deliberately introduced into the populace via vaccine programs by the WHO in Africa and the CDC in the United States. Strecker also promoted the casual contact model of the virus, believing that AIDS was contagious—a kind of viral cancer (and that there were at least six different varieties of AIDS). Strecker only insinuated that a Communist plot was behind AIDS, instead placing the history of unethical experimentation on humans in a CBW context. Strecker called for research into electromagnetic cures and a curtailing of intravenous drug use, sexual promiscuity, and blood products.

Both Strecker and Jakob Segal were interviewed for a *Sunday Express* (London) story on 26 October 1986. This British tabloid story was the first time a prominent Western paper had published an AIDS-as-biowarfare theory without ridicule, and it engendered a hostile response by the U.S. State Department (which accused the New Delhi newspaper that published the earlier AIDS biowarfare story of being a Communist front). Six months later, on 11 May 1987, the *Times* (London) carried a cover story linking AIDS to the WHO's African smallpox vaccine programs.

Strecker and the Segals influenced Dr. Alan Cantwell, who gave this conspiracy theory a new

political angle. Cantwell is perhaps the most prolific of AIDS conspiracy theorists, beginning with the books *AIDS: The Mystery and the Solution*, *AIDS and the Doctors of Death*, and *The Secret AIDS Genocide Plot* and continuing into the twenty-first century with numerous articles in publications such as *Paranoia* and *Steamshovel Press*. While Cantwell agrees that HIV was human-made (though he leaves the possibility open that it is an old virus), deliberately introduced into humans, and spread via the WHO and the CDC, he does not agree with the right-wing politics of some of his colleagues. Instead, Cantwell claims that the “military-medical-industrial complex” involved in CBW is responsible for AIDS. Cantwell introduces the idea that the objective of AIDS is genocide, especially against gays. He also adds that one of the side effects of this genocidal program is the introduction of a New World Order. Cantwell calls for better education, better health practitioners, and fighting back against power to stop the epidemic. In a similar vein, G. J. Kruprey (whose conspiracy research does not focus primarily on AIDS) has perhaps the hypothesis closest to a left-wing AIDS conspiracy theory. In his article “AIDS: Act of God or the Pentagon?” Kruprey follows Cantwell’s model, but adds that an AIDS panic could potentially justify the suspension of civil liberties and the installation of martial law. Kruprey states that a radical cure is needed, one that is not just medical, but political. A structural change in governing practices is required in which access and participation are opened up on a far more democratic scale.

While the early researchers came from a variety of medical professions, geographical locations, and political positions, what unites them is the fact that they criticize science’s connection to corruption and military research (CBW) yet rely on scientific evidence to prove their own conspiracy theories. In addition, most of the conspiracy theories cite the 1969 congressional testimony of Dr. Donald MacArthur, deputy director for the Department of Defense’s research and technology. Speaking to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations with regard to military chemical and biological warfare programs, MacArthur was speak-

ing on the subject of synthetic biological agents. Asked about the feasibility, time, and cost of producing a synthetic biological agent, MacArthur responded: “Within the next five to ten years, it would probably be possible to make a new infective microorganism which could differ in certain important aspects from any known disease causing organisms. Most important of these is that it might be refractory to the immunological and therapeutic processes upon which we depend to maintain our relative freedom from infectious disease.” For the conspiracy researchers, MacArthur was essentially calling for a new synthetic virus that would attack the human immune system, and his words predated the AIDS epidemic by ten years. This testimony, along with the general history of overt and covert biowarfare research (which became officially banned in the early 1970s, while becoming privatized for defense purposes), of scientific experimentation on unwitting subjects, and of calls for global population control, brings together the early conspiracy theories.

### The Nonviral Theories

Another set of theories emerged in the 1980s that have been classified as conspiracy theories, even though they share little with the above theories. These are the nonviral theories of AIDS, whose most well-known proponents are Dr. Peter Duesberg (*Why We Will Never Win the War on AIDS*, 1994, and *Inventing the AIDS Virus*, 1996), Jon Lauritsen (*The AIDS War: Propaganda, Profiteering and Genocide from the Medical Industrial Complex*, 1993), Jad Adams (*AIDS: The HIV Myth*, 1989), and Jon Rappaport (*AIDS, Incorporated: The Scandal of the Century*, 1988). Nonviral theories posit multifactorial causes of AIDS (combination of drugs, behavioral practices, social factors—malnutrition, pollution) and even multi-diseases (that AIDS is often a misdiagnosis of various other conditions). Purposeful targeting of groups is not usually a major component of nonviral theories. Rather than conspiracy, they emphasize collusion (medical, pharmaceutical, and governmental institutions) and cover-up (countervailing evidence is ignored and suppressed because it might threaten research funding and careers of mainstream scientists). These

nonviral theories concern the origins of AIDS, while AIDS conspiracy theories concern the origins of HIV. They often get lumped together with conspiracy theories because of their marginal, dissident status in the scientific community, along with their critical stance toward the corruption of that community.

### **African American Genocide Theories**

Probably the most publicized of AIDS conspiracy theories is the African American genocide theory. This theory in general claims that AIDS was created to exterminate blacks, both African Americans as well as Africans. It is a theory espoused by the Nation of Islam's medical director, by celebrities Spike Lee, Bill Cosby, and John Singleton, and by numerous radio talk-shows such as Black Liberation Radio. Representative texts of this theory include Haki R. Madhubuti's essay, "AIDS: the Purposeful Destruction of the Black World?" which appears in his 1990 book *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?*<sup>9</sup> Here Madhubuti uses the work of Douglass and Strecker, placing it in the context of the history of scientific experimentation on blacks (especially the Tuskegee experiment). In this version, CBW is linked to the systematic oppression of Africans around the world, and HIV is the latest weapon in this deliberate genocide.

African American genocide theories of AIDS have engendered the largest response to AIDS conspiracy theories. Health educators have cited these conspiracy theories as an obstacle to trust in their efforts. Most disturbing for the educators is the link between conspiracy theories and a belief in casual contact. A study on how suspicion of government activities regarding AIDS impacts on behavior was carried out by social psychologists Gregory M. Herek and John P. Capitanio. The study correlates AIDS-related distrust to beliefs about casual-contact transmission and to personal-risk reduction behaviors. It found that beliefs about casual contact were not related to beliefs in the genocidal purpose of AIDS, but the authors still speculated that the lack of trust in health educators springs from suspicions about malicious intent on the part of the government. In a separate study, Stephen Thomas and Sandra Crouse Quinn

argue that public health professionals must recognize that African Americans' belief in AIDS-as-genocide is a legitimate attitudinal barrier with an understandable basis in history (including the Tuskegee experiment). The authors call for a dialogue in order to develop and implement HIV education programs that are scientifically sound, culturally sensitive, and ethnically sensitive.

Health behavior has not been the only concern when it comes to African American conspiracy theories. Coupled with the CIA-crack conspiracy theory, the AIDS conspiracy account has been defined as part of "black paranoia," whether as a collective psychological state of mind or an "understandable" historical and social phenomenon. One politically inflected version of this approach is David Gilbert's 1996 cover story in *Covert Action Quarterly*, "Tracking the Real Genocide: AIDS—Conspiracy or Unnatural Disaster?" Gilbert's article makes the provocative claim that conspiracy theories are both politically disabling and health endangering. He provides a two-tiered critique of these beliefs—scientific and political (but focusing on the latter). By diverting attention from the social conditions and economic structures that shape the contemporary AIDS crisis, conspiracy theories perform a disservice to their promoters. Gilbert essentially argues that conspiracy theories contribute to the toll of unnecessary AIDS deaths. Unlike more mainstream criticisms of African American AIDS conspiracy theories, Gilbert's argument does not dismiss them as paranoid. He depicts them as misguided, but with deadly effects.

The responses to African American AIDS conspiracy theories demonstrate the response to AIDS conspiracy theories more generally. David Gilbert follows other political progressives' and activists' perspective in their concern over conspiracy theories. John S. James, an AIDS activist, argued in 1986 that germ warfare conspiracy theories were not useful. Even if the theories were proven true, according to James, the result would be punishing the guilty, not saving lives. Conspiracy theory distracts from a better use of political and educational activism, which is to inform the public about the neglect and mismanagement of treatment research.



When the *New York Native* folded in 1997, the gay news magazine was credited with pioneering AIDS coverage in the early 1980s, as well as criticized as a forum for conspiracy theories.

For James, as for many others, the conspiracy is a conspiracy of silence, a pattern of ignorance about and mismanagement of AIDS treatment research by scientists, government officials, doctors, and journalists. Cultural theorist and activist Simon Watney echoes this sentiment when he argues that AIDS may not be a conscious policy to exterminate gay men, but the long-term consequences of government action and inaction may have the same effects as if it were intentional. Watney suggests that origin stories may be irrelevant to the crisis. Moreover, for many activists, alternative origin stories have a strong link to oppressive reactionary agendas (e.g., Duesberg).

### Recent Developments

In the past few years, AIDS conspiracy theories have connected with other conspiracy theories, influenced political activism, and have gone global. Dr. Leonard Horowitz's tome *Emerging Viruses: AIDS and Ebola—Nature, Accident, or Intentional?* represents a synthesis of previous theories. Horowitz links the CBW context to black genocide, but the overall context is a history of U.S. political wrongdoing (including the Nazi roots of the CIA, intimidation of domestic dissenters, global population-control programs, and foreign-policy misconduct leading to a New World Order). Horowitz also founded and heads Tetrahedron, Inc., a nonprofit educational corporation, which provides employee assistance and education, professional development seminars, and health education products and programs, and organizes Horowitz's extensive lecture tours. He has implemented his conspiracy theory into an organization devoted to educational reform, political activism, and health awareness.

Another example of conspiracy theories affecting political activism is the case of the Brotherly Lovers, an AIDS activist group based in Pittsburgh, who have attempted to spearhead a class-action petition for a government investigation into the possible artificial, biowarfare origin of HIV.

AIDS conspiracy theories have also been integrated into other popular conspiracy theories. In an article entitled "The AIDS-ET Connection" Phillip S. Duke claims to furnish a unifying hypothesis about AIDS—the gray alien agenda. The goal of this agenda is to rid the earth of human life and establish an alien settlement. In this theory, AIDS has been deliberately introduced into the human population by these aliens as a way of freeing up space for colonization. Bill Cooper, prominent late U.S. conspiracy theorist, has also suggested that CBW may be part of an alien agenda.

Cooper's work is even more significant because in 2000 it was cited as an influence on a South African health minister's account of AIDS in Africa. At the same time, the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, controversially suggested that Duesberg's nonviral theory should be studied as a possible explanation for the continuing tragedy in Africa. Most recently, Edward Hooper's best-selling *The River* has created newfound controversy with its claims that HIV originated in the 1950s with the vaccination of over a million African children. Hooper does not claim that AIDS was deliberately created and spread by humans, but that an experimental form of oral polio vaccine was contaminated with SIV (the ancient simian equivalent of HIV), and this negligence led to the current AIDS epidemic.

### Responses

AIDS conspiracy theories raise the general issue of science in relation to both conspiracy theories and their critics. When is science questioned, and when is it cited as evidence? Such AIDS conspiracy theorists as Cantwell, Strecker, Douglass, and Horowitz have drifted away from conventional science to the marginal status of "renegade" scientists, but their narratives retain scientific techniques. They seek authority through their own pedigrees, they conduct research, and their reports contain the language and styles of citation and evidence employed in mainstream AIDS science. The most recent debates over Edward Hooper's *The River* revive the question of how alternative or dissident scientific accounts challenge and/or support conventional science.

In general, AIDS conspiracy theories are typically positioned as a distraction from real research and activism. But just as there are a variety of accounts that can be grouped under the term AIDS conspiracy theory, so are there a variety of responses to them. Some of the preceding sections have demonstrated a few of those responses (Gilbert, Fiske, James, Watney, the studies on behavior). Others include cultural analyst Peter Knight's analysis of AIDS conspiracy theories as they are related to cultural panics over the body in the 1980s and 1990s, and John Fiske's controversially sympathetic assessment of the AIDS-as-black-genocide account. Fiske calls the account a "counterknowledge," which involves reworking facts, events, and information the dominant knowledge has repressed or dismissed as insignificant. Above all, according to Fiske, a counterknowledge must be socially and politically motivated. Fiske proceeds with a series of close readings of radio talk-show dialogues, primarily culled from Black Liberation Radio. In these accounts, AIDS is folded into a genocidal framework, and it is this resonance with African American history and lived experience that Fiske argues is lacking among mainstream whites, and thus produces an aversion to the concept of genocide. Fiske does not simply affirm the truth of the genocide account. Ultimately he argues that when it comes to AIDS conspiracy theories, people need to examine their strategies of *disbelief*.

As cultural theorist Paula Treichler argues, conspiracy theories are part of the larger "epidemic of signification" that the AIDS epidemic has generated—an epidemic that must be examined, not ignored or casually dismissed. AIDS conspiracy theories crystallize the stakes involved in the overall problematization of conspiracy theories, especially with regard to the behavioral and political effects of conspiracy theories.

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**See also:** African Americans; Eugenics; Health Scares; New World Order.

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### Alien and Sedition Acts

Part of the most serious crackdown on peacetime dissent in U.S. history, mounted amid the most threatening crisis that the young nation ever faced, the Alien and Sedition Acts of the 1790s also comprised the most prominent "headline event" in U.S. history to be directly and openly rooted in fears of conspiracy.

### The XYZs of Political Paranoia in the 1790s

Although the young American republic was theoretically more stable and centralized than ever before, the first decade under the Constitution ratified in 1789 was fraught with political fears arising from both genuine threats and overreactions to wholly unexpected developments.

Perhaps the most important of these unexpected developments was the rapid emergence of political divisions that matured into parties competing to name the nation's chief executive, a circumstance unprecedented in world history. Although parties are now considered a basic aspect of U.S. democracy, this was far from intended by the founders.

Believing that a republic could never survive the strain of constant battles for power, and that good, trustworthy leaders would never want to engage in those battles, the framers of the Constitution intentionally designed the new system to prevent the development of political parties or any other kind of organized competition for control of the national government. The hope was that the increased size and diversity of the territory being governed, coupled with a multilayered structure of representation that included an appointed senate and an indirectly elected president, would make it impossible for the country's many local political factions and interests to organize themselves sufficiently to control the national government. Without the need to please or compete for public favor, learned, enlightened statesmen would be able to deliberate more or less in peace at the national capital, making wise, well-reasoned decisions for the good of all.

To the founders, parties and other forms of organized opposition to government were inherently conspiratorial, especially when a legitimate republican government existed. When the people already ruled, efforts to defeat or stymie their chosen leaders were considered plots against the people themselves by cabals of "artful and designing men" out for private gain, tyrannical power, or some other sinister purpose. Those who followed such evil leaders showed themselves to be mere "tools" or "dupes," unworthy of the rights of independent citizenship. In a comment that somewhat hyperbolically reflected the feelings of many colleagues, Thomas Jefferson expressed revulsion at the very idea of joining a political party: "Such an addiction is the last degradation of a free and moral agent. If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all."

Despite this deep aversion to parties, the choices facing the young nation were simply too momentous and too divisive to be contained by the makeshift structure that the framers had devised. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton came into conflict immediately over financial policy and broader matters such as the basic structure of the new government and the future character of the nation. Jefferson became convinced that Hamilton was the leader of a “corrupt squadron” who sought “to get rid of the limitations imposed by the constitution” with the “ultimate object” of “a change, from the present republican form of government, to that of a monarchy” modeled on Great Britain’s (Jefferson, 986). Hamilton, for his part, was equally certain that Jefferson and his lieutenant James Madison led “a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration, and . . . subversive of . . . good government and . . . the union, peace and happiness of the Country” (Hamilton, 738). Believing that they were fighting for the very soul of the new nation, Jefferson, Hamilton, and their respective allies instinctively reached out for support among their fellow politicians and the citizenry at large, eventually spawning a party conflict whether they intended to or not.

Unfortunately, U.S. politicians of the 1790s engaged in party politics without really ever learning to approve of the practice. They saw themselves as taking necessary if sometimes distasteful steps to save the republic, and their opponents as conspirators against it, plain and simple. Especially among the Federalist supporters of the Washington and Adams administration, there was no sense that there could be any such thing as a “loyal opposition,” and it was perhaps inevitable that steps would be taken to curb opposition to the government when the opportunity arose.

Political paranoia became far worse in the latter half of Washington’s presidency, when the French Revolution grew more radical and war broke out between France and Great Britain. The question of which side to take in the conflict, if any, came to define U.S. politics, and pushed foreign subversion

to the head of the list of fears. Although highly exaggerated in practice, fears of foreign subversion in this period were probably more plausible than at any other time in U.S. history. The United States was no world power in the 1790s, but occupied a situation much closer to those of developing or Third World nations during and after the cold war: small, weak, and subject to harsh buffeting by political, economic, and cultural winds coming from the more developed world.

Revolutionary France expected U.S. support as a sister republic and in return for France’s aid to the U.S. during the American Revolution. Beginning with “Citizen” Edmond Genet’s arrival in 1793, French envoys did their best to draw Americans into the conflict with Great Britain and influence American politics in favor of the French cause. Genet greeted crowds of well-wishers, handed out military commissions, and outfitted privateers, while later French ministers fed politically calculated information through friendly newspaper editors. The British kept a lower profile, but successfully pressed to keep the United States militarily neutral and commercially dependent on British trade (by means of the controversial Jay Treaty), while staying in secret, sometimes illicit, conflict with various U.S. officials. Republicans generally took the side of France, or opposed closer ties to Great Britain; the Federalists generally took the opposite approach, and increasingly regarded France as a dire threat to U.S. independence, the Christian religion, and everything else they held dear.

More important than what the French or British actually did was the growing conviction, within each of the emerging parties, that the other side was working, out of greed or fanaticism, in treasonous collusion with a foreign aggressor. Republicans regarded the Federalists as the “British party” and their leader Jefferson infamously labeled Washington, Hamilton, and Adams as traitors (in an inadvertently published letter), “men who were Samsons in the field & Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England” (Jefferson, 1037). However, the Federal-



ists gave far more than they got in this respect, calling their opponents “Jacobins” after the most radical, conspiratorial, and ultimately bloodthirsty faction of the French Revolution. This was equal parts a venomous partisan label and a sincere statement of who and what many Federalists thought was driving the opposition to their policies, an international revolutionary conspiracy.

Through the battles over Hamilton’s financial system, the French Revolution, and the Jay Treaty, the incipient party conflict had matured to the point of a contested presidential election by 1796, pitting Vice-President John Adams against former Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Deteriorating relations with France in the wake of the Jay Treaty, including attacks on U.S. shipping, French threats, and the distinct possibility of war, put the Federalists in a strong position. Adams won, and soon after the XYZ Affair inflamed the country against France and set up the belligerent national mood that made the Alien and Sedition Acts possible.

### **The Press, Immigration, and the Origins of the Alien and Sedition Acts**

The Alien and Sedition Acts were the domestic planks of an aggressive national security program passed by the Federalists in preparation for an all-out war against France that many of them desired but never managed to make happen. A military build-up was also put in motion, including the construction of a fleet of war-ships and a vastly enlarged army that included forces designed to rapidly mobilize against rebellious Americans as well as foreign invaders. This early homeland security legislation’s specific targets were determined by two aspects of the party conflict that disturbed the Federalists most: the role of the press and the role of immigrants in the growing popular opposition to the policies of Washington, Hamilton, and Adams, and in the democratization of U.S. political culture more generally.

The press was seen as a powerful political weapon that had fallen into the hands of conspirators, mercenaries, and fools. As the founders and other U.S. politicians perceived it, the press was the “great director of public opinion” and capable

of destroying any government by turning its own people against it. “Give to any set of men the command of the press, and you give them the command of the country,” declared an influential Pennsylvania Federalist (Addison, 1798, 18–19). Although still a relatively primitive medium by modern standards—a standard U.S. newspaper featured only four pages, filled haphazardly with a seemingly random assortment of miscellaneous material without real headlines or illustrations—newspapers (along with pamphlets) were thought to have been instrumental in bringing about both the American and French Revolutions, as well as numerous political developments in Great Britain. Founders on both sides of the 1790s political spectrum, including Jefferson, Hamilton, John Adams, and Samuel Adams, had relied on the press as their “political engine” during the movement for independence from Great Britain.

The founders began their new nation assuming that, with British tyranny defeated and republican government established, the press would now serve a more passive political role. It would build loyalty to the new regime, chiefly by providing the people with basic information about their government’s activities, such as copies of the laws that had been passed. As the first Washington administration gathered, it seemed more than enough when Boston businessman John Fenno showed up in the national capital and started the *Gazette of the United States* (the *G.U.S.*), a would-be national newspaper intended to “endear the general government to the people” (Pasley, 57) by printing documents and congressional proceedings, along with letters, essays, and even poetry hailing President Washington and Vice-President John Adams as gods among men.

When fundamental disagreements broke out among the leading founders, however, the press was quickly drawn into the growing partisan conflict. To those who saw Hamilton as a not-so-hidden hand guiding the country toward monarchy and aristocracy, the *G.U.S.* began to seem positively sinister, an organ for government propaganda that might be able to overbear the voters’ better judgment. Jefferson and Madison sought to

counter the influence of the *G.U.S.* by helping create a new Philadelphia newspaper, the *National Gazette*, to lead the public charge against Hamilton's policies. The editor, the poet Philip Freneau (a college friend of Madison's), was given a no-work job in Jefferson's office. The newspaper provided Jefferson with a surrogate that would fight in the war for public opinion and still allow him to remain above the fray and within the administration. When he was exposed as the *National Gazette's* sponsor and confronted by President Washington, Jefferson claimed that Freneau's paper had "saved our constitution" from Hamilton (Pasley, 72)

Although the *National Gazette* folded in 1793, it set a number of important precedents. In some places, it was the birthplace of the party system, since it was in the *National Gazette's* pages that the very idea of an opposition political party (as opposed to a mere group of like-minded legislators) was first floated. Again and again in the following century, politicians and parties looked to newspapers as their primary public combatants in the bruising battles that followed the Jefferson-Hamilton split. The Philadelphia *Aurora*, founded by a grandson of Benjamin Franklin, took over as the leading Jeffersonian paper, and around it developed a loose national network of local newspapers that spread the opposition movement's ideas around the country by copying from each other. Such newspaper networks became the primary means through which nineteenth-century U.S. parties sought to influence the U.S. public and a vital component of their campaigning.

The Federalists of the 1790s thought of themselves as the nation's rightful ruling class, "the wisest and best" rather than a political faction that had to compete for public favor and control of the government. The development of an opposition party and an opposition press was threatening, offensive, and patently a conspiracy. During the congressional debates on the Sedition Act, arch-conservative congressman John Allen of Connecticut read from a New York newspaper in which the strongest words used against President Adams were that he was "a person without patriotism, without philosophy" and "a mock Monarch." Allen flatly declared that, "If this be not a conspiracy against Government and

people," he did not know what a conspiracy was (*Debates and Proceedings in Congress*).

The opposition press was doubly or triply bad because of the fact it was largely manned by men that the aristocratically minded Federalists considered thoroughly unfit to "undertake the high task of enlightening the public mind." Whereas in colonial times most newspaper writing was done by men of education and social prestige—the lawyers, ministers, and merchants of the major towns—the political writing of 1790s fell increasingly to much lesser sorts of men, especially the generally self-educated artisan printers who produced the hundreds of new journals that popped up across the country. "Too many of our Gazettes," lamented Rev. Samuel Miller, "are in the hands of persons destitute at once of the urbanity of gentlemen, the information of scholars, and the principles of virtue" (Pasley, 198). The Alien and Sedition Acts' strongest supporters feared a kind of social and political subversion, in which worthy officials stood to lose their stations and reputations to upstarts and nobodies who would sling mud and rouse the rabble. "It is a mortifying observation;" Judge Alexander Addison wrote in one of many published charges to his grand jury, "that boys, blockheads, and ruffians, are often listened to, in preference to men of integrity, skill, and understanding" (Addison, 1800, 202–203).

Even more threatening than the printers were the immigrants. The British government harshly repressed the radical democracy movements that had grown up in England, Scotland, and Ireland in response to the French Revolution. Working-class journalists were among the most influential activists in those movements, and many of them were forced into exile during the mid-1790s to avoid mobs and jail. Not a few of these transatlantic "Jacobins," including the Alien and Sedition Acts victims James Thomson Callender, William Duane, and John Daly Burk, ended up in the port cities of the United States, doing the work they knew best, for Democratic Republican newspapers. Duane became editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora*, the Republicans' most widely read journal, and thus in many respects the national voice of the party.



Along with the refugee journalists came a politically noticeable number of other immigrants whom the Federalists found suspicious, especially the Irish who became a major presence in the capital city of Philadelphia during the 1790s. In the spring of 1797, Federalists tried to impose a tax on certificates of naturalization, hoping to keep out what Rep. Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts called the “hordes of wild Irishmen” who might “disturb our tranquility” (*Debates and Proceedings in Congress*). The Federalists’ prejudice ensured that the Irish and other recent immigrants would become an important voting bloc for their opponents.

Federalists feared that continued open, liberal policies on immigration, naturalization, and political dissent would allow the struggling monarchies of Europe to export their political troubles to the United States. As Otis put it, “the mass of vicious and disorganizing characters who could not live peaceably at home, and who, after unfurling the standard of rebellion in their own countries, might come hither to revolutionize ours” (*Debates and Proceedings in Congress*). Although it was true that men like Duane were having a tremendous political impact here, the Federalists envisioned the country as threatened with nothing less than anarchy, to be engineered by hardened Jacobin cadres and carried out by wild Irish mobs. Acerbic editor William Cobbett, as reactionary in the United States during this period as he was progressive in his later British years, painted the threat in his typically lurid palette:

From various causes these United States have become the resting place of ninety nine hundredths of the factious villains, which Great Britain and Ireland have vomited from their shores. They are all schooled in sedition, are adepts at their trade. . . . Nothing short of a state of rebellion can content these wretches. *All governments are to them alike hateful.* Like Lucifer, they carry a hell about with them in their own minds; and thus they prowl from country to country. (Cobbett, 253, 256)

Although Federalist worries were usually expressed in terms of generalized xenophobia, some full-blown conspiracy theories began to cir-

culate as well. It was almost assumed that Republican politicians and editors, from Jefferson on down, were allies or catspaws of the French, especially the most radical elements of the revolution. Federalist ministers in New England promoted the idea that the refugees and their allies were agents of the Bavarian Illuminati, accused in Europe of masterminding the French Revolution.

In Philadelphia, some Federalists accused the United Irish Society, a pan-religious group devoted to republicanism and Irish nationalism, of plotting revolution against the United States. In the critical interval between the XYZ revelations and the formulation of the Sedition Act, William Cobbett published a pamphlet, *Detection of a Conspiracy, Formed by the United Irishmen: with the Evident Intention of Aiding the Tyrants of France in Subverting the Government of the United States*, accusing the group’s just-organizing U.S. chapters of planning to gain critical positions in the government, so that the country might be simply handed over to the invading French. In Ireland, the United Irishmen really did conspire with the French, and the Philadelphia Irish community really did contain a number of sympathizers and exiled activists. Yet while these radical Irish republicans certainly hated the British and blamed the Federalists for seeming to side with Ireland’s oppressors, there is little evidence to suggest that they had any more sinister designs on the United States than the soon-to-be all-American goal of throwing the Federalist rascals out of office.

The majority of Congress in 1798 did not make this distinction between opposition politics and conspiracy. As they saw it, the Republicans were following exactly the formula that had turned France into “a general slaughterhouse.” At the beginning of the revolution in France, John Allen recounted in arguing for the sedition bill, “those loud and enthusiastic advocates for liberty and equality took special care to occupy and command all the presses.” By this means, the diabolical French revolutionaries gained control over “the poor, the ignorant, the passionate, and the vicious; over all these classes the freedom of the press shed its baneful effects, and the virtuous, the pacific, and the rich, were their victims.” Now that this

“plague” had reached the United States, the majority of the Fifth Congress vowed not to meet the same fate as the ancien regime in France: “The Jacobins of our country, too, sir, are determined to preserve in their hands the same weapon [the press]; it is our duty to wrest it from them” (*Debates And Proceedings in Congress*).

### **The Federalist “Reign of Terror”: Enactment and Enforcement of the Domestic Security Program**

The details of laws themselves can be found in many other sources. The three bills dealing with immigrants came first. The Naturalization Act, passing 18 June 1798, lengthened the period needed for citizenship (and full political rights) from five to fourteen years. The Alien Act and Alien Enemies Act, passing 25 June and 6 July respectively, gave the president sweeping powers to summarily imprison or deport suspicious aliens. The first Alien Act was perhaps the most appalling of the whole package. Even in peacetime, the law allowed the president to eject any alien he judged “dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States” or had “reasonable grounds to suspect are concerned in any treasonable or secret machinations against the government thereof.” No trial or evidence was required, and the alien’s only recourse was to apply to the president for a license allowing him or her to stay. Getting a license could require evidence showing and a bond guaranteeing “that no injury or danger to the United States will arise from suffering such alien to reside therein.” Fortunately, President Adams took a narrower view of his powers than Congress did, and never issued an order under the Alien Act.

The most infamous piece of the domestic security package came last. Although the transatlantic radicals working in the Republican press were the clear targets of the Alien Acts, the Sedition Act that finally passed on 14 July 1798 was even more blatantly political. Clearly intended to minimize Republican chances in the 1798 and 1800 elections by shutting down their most effective form of campaigning, the law was set to expire at the end of Adams’s term. It imposed penalties of up to \$2,000 and two years in prison on anyone who should

“write, print, utter, publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered, or published . . . any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States . . . with intent to defame the said government . . . or the said President, or to bring them . . . into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them the hatred of the good people of the United States.” The Federalists were careful to incorporate the most progressive legal standards available into the law, following the position laid down in the famous Zenger case from the colonial period. No one would be barred from saying or publishing anything before the fact; afterwards all bets were off. “The freedom of the press and opinions was never understood to give the right of publishing falsehoods and slanders,” John Allen explained, “nor of exciting sedition, insurrection, and slaughter, with impunity.”

This was state-of-the-art free press theory, but wholly inadequate for the functioning democracy that was trying to emerge in the 1790s. Although the Sedition Act was more lenient than similar laws in Europe, it nonetheless criminalized almost any criticism that might be made in protesting government policy or campaigning against an incumbent officer. It opened editors of opposition newspapers to court actions for almost any political essay or comment they might print, even a report of a public meeting, whether they wrote it or not. The Sedition Act allowed defendants to exonerate themselves in court by proving their assertions were true, but as Republican critics soon pointed out, political interpretations and opinion were almost impossible to conclusively prove or disprove. How would a Republican defendant prove in court, for instance, that John Adams was a man “without patriotism or philosophy”?

In practice, few Sedition Act defendants had much opportunity to try serious legal defenses under the act. The federal and northern state courts were dominated by Federalist judges, and they conducted the proceedings in a bitterly partisan manner. Judges interrupted the defense attorneys and often disallowed evidence and witnesses when defendants tried to prove their accusations

were true. Orations denouncing the Republicans and warning about the dangers of unchecked political criticism were given from the bench, with juries present.

Although falling a good deal short of a “reign of terror,” as the Republicans called it, the Sedition Act was vigorously enforced. Every major Republican newspaper was hit in some fashion, along with many of the minor ones. Some twenty-five people were arrested under the Sedition Act, and they and other Republican journalists and speakers were harassed in other ways as well, including boycotts, beatings, private lawsuits, and in one case a contempt of Congress charge that forced editor William Duane into hiding.

Secretary of State Timothy Pickering nominated himself the “scourge of Jacobinism,” and began implementing the laws even before they were passed, forcing the deportation of John Daly Burk, a United Irishmen turned New York Republican editor and playwright, as the law was being debated. Pickering and others then began searching the Republican press avidly for comments that could be prosecuted. Another early target was Benjamin Franklin Bache, founding editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora*. The administration had earlier tried and failed to convict Bache of treasonous dealings with the French, but on 26 June 1798, federal judge Richard Peters had him arrested on a common-law charge of seditious libel, despite a Supreme Court ruling just three months earlier that the federal courts had no jurisdiction. Bache was forced to post \$4,000 bail, an enormous sum for those days, but died of yellow fever before he could come to trial.

The first victim of the Sedition Act proper was Republican congressman Matthew Lyon of Vermont, who was particularly hated for having spit on a Federalist in retaliation for an insult and later fought back with fire tongs when the spat-upon gentleman tried to cane him on the House floor. Lyon got a \$1,000 fine and four months in a jail kept by his worst enemy, all for reading a letter against Federalist foreign policy during his campaign for reelection.

Similar or even harsher punishment was given to ordinary citizens who spoke out. In Massachusetts,

a drifter and former sailor named David Brown, a sort of village radical who gave speeches in taverns and occasionally wrote pamphlets, committed the awful crime of erecting a liberty pole with a political sign on it: “No stamp act, no sedition and no alien acts, no land tax. Downfall to the tyrants of America: peace and retirement to the President: long live the Vice President and the minority” (Smith, 260). Although he confessed and apologized, the penniless Brown was fined \$450 by Judge Samuel Chase and sentenced to eighteen months in prison.

Despite its eager enforcement, the Sedition Act must be judged a failure, even on its own terms. Although the prosecutions forced a few newspapers to suspend their operations, the Republican press more generally never missed a beat. The effect was quite the opposite in fact, as the Republicans filled their newspapers with horrifying accounts of their and others’ persecutions. Politically this was highly effective material that documented the Republican visions of the Federalists as tyrants and closet monarchists in league with the British. The refugee radicals were careful to point out the similarities between Federalist repression and the British government crackdown that had forced so many of them into exile. At the same time, the Sedition Act politicized many young printers, often turning even neutral publishers into active Republicans once it became clear that printing both political sides would not be tolerated by the authorities. The ironic end result of the Sedition Act was more Republican newspapers, not fewer, with seven or eight new journals a month popping up as the election of 1800 approached.

This hydra effect actually reinforced the Federalists’ conviction that conspiracy was afoot, but if so it was a conspiracy to which many of them had conceded defeat by 1800. By means of the expanding Republican press, wrote one Federalist writer in the Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, “people from the highest to the lowest” achieved “a perfect union of opinion” (Pasley, 188). Two of those opinions were that the Federalist crusade against Jacobin conspirators had to end, especially once the “Quasi-War” with France died in 1800, and

that a different set of leaders needed to be given command of the national government. Both of those things came to pass when Thomas Jefferson defeated John Adams in the presidential election, and took office 4 March 1801.

Jeffrey L. Pasley

**See also:** Democratic-Republican Societies; Genet, Citizen Edmond Charles; Hamilton, Alexander; Jefferson, Thomas; XYZ Affair; Zenger, John Peter.

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## American Indian Movement

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was a radical political organization established in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1968 by Native Americans. From 1968 through the early 1970s, the AIM was involved in numerous protests against the U.S. government, which were met with some general public support but severe government repression. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), along with other federal agencies, labeled the AIM a subversive, possibly Communist, and likely terrorist organization, and often dealt with the AIM, and as a consequence the general American Indian community, in ways that breached civil and human rights. They justified their actions by accusing the AIM of conspiring against the government and challenging the democratic nature of U.S. society with radical militancy. To this day, the AIM has some justification in seeing the federal government as conspiring to break apart traditional Indian communities, appropriate their land, and make politically active American Indians the target of government and judicial repression. The AIM continues to be a significant American Indian political organization, but the principal period of alleged conspiracies, activism, and repression took place between





Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Armed Indians sit back to back supporting one another and watching in all directions as members and supporters of the American Indian Movement (AIM) hold this small village. (Bettmann/Corbis)

1972 and 1976: during this time the domestic counterintelligence activities of the Nixon administration, coupled with increasing militancy by AIM activists, resulted in violent confrontations, most notably at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

The AIM was initially formed in the urban context of Minneapolis in a response to police brutality, and modeled itself on other radical militant movements of the later 1960s, most notably the Black Panthers. AIM chapters were rapidly established in other city centers and the AIM organized and participated in numerous protests, the first major protest being the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969. In 1972, the AIM organized the “Trail of Broken Treaties,” a protest in which many American Indians traveled to Washington, D.C., and occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) building. The building was vandalized and many

documents pertaining to American Indians taken. By this stage, the government was very suspicious of the AIM and its role in Indian protest. There were numerous FBI reports that labeled the AIM as a potentially seditious and insurrectionary organization (Castile, 118). By early 1973, actions to suppress the AIM were being put in motion and the movement was being labeled as “extremist” (Matthiessen, 55).

In 1973 Richard Wilson was elected to the leadership of the tribal government, with the support of the federal government. In June 1973, the AIM arrived at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation, at the request of those who protested his leadership. An armed confrontation began between the AIM and Wilson and his supporters, who were known as GOONs (Gunfighters of the Oglala Nation) and were young, armed Indian men backed by the federal government. The siege continued for

seventy-one days. After the siege ended, many AIM activists were indicted in a judicial attempt to destroy the movement; few convictions were secured. Meanwhile the Wilson government remained in place and GOONs terrorized many on the reservation. In 1974, Wilson was reelected as tribal president under somewhat dubious circumstances. The AIM continued its protest and set up an encampment in the reservation, which was subsequently attacked by GOONs and federal forces. One AIM activist was killed, as were two FBI agents—Jack Coler and Ronald Williams. Activists Bob Robideau, Darelle (Dino) Butler, and Leonard Peltier were charged with the murder of the two agents. Robideau and Butler were acquitted, but Peltier, tried separately, was found guilty and remains in prison to this day, despite charges of perjured evidence and other dubious aspects of the prosecution's case) (Matthiessen; Churchill and Vander Wall).

The death in 1976 of a young Native American woman, Anna Mae Aquash, was also controversial. She was found murdered in an execution style and the FBI undertook an investigation, but forensic procedures were questionable. The FBI accused the AIM of the murder, as there were rumors within the AIM that Aquash had infiltrated the organization for the FBI. While the truth remains unclear, the AIM has pointed to FBI involvement in the murder.

Historians and writers remain divided on several issues: to what extent can the AIM's militancy be justified, given the improvements in American Indian affairs initiated by the federal administrations of the period? To what extent was domestic counterintelligence willing to bend the rules and undertake illegal activities in their desire to break AIM? Was government activity prompted by greed over obtaining land for uranium and coal mining purposes?

Clearly, the government perceived the AIM as a threat. FBI memos dating from 1976 claimed the AIM was training for guerrilla warfare and was planning to blow up BIA buildings in South Dakota and to kill the state governor (Wylar, 198). Much of the government's activity was motivated by a determination to break the AIM apart, even if it meant

acting illegally, and was felt to be justified by these alleged plots by the AIM. That government and big business had an interest in the resources on American Indian land is also clear. The Wilson Pine Ridge government was amenable to this interest and willing to sell land rights. It was therefore essential to the federal government to keep Wilson in place, and this motivation played a part in its activities at Pine Ridge. While it is also true that the federal administrations of Johnson and Nixon made significant progress in helping American Indians and allowing some self-determination (Castile), militancy was not tolerated nor, it seems, was American Indian self-government that did not fall in line with federal interests.

The militancy of the AIM, and even the behavior of the GOONs, must be placed within the context of the conditions of American Indians at the time. Urban Indians had undergone massive social and cultural dislocation, as well as some detribalization, in being moved into cities, and it was from this context that the AIM emerged. Reservations were economically and socially depressed areas, with the GOONs made up of unemployed, angry young men. Divisions also ran deep between traditionalists and young radicals like the AIM. It was easy for the government to exploit such problems, which it did in the case of Pine Ridge. Mistrust between the federal government and American Indians, which had existed for decades, fed beliefs in conspiracies on both sides, and resulted in violence. While many of the facts remain uncertain, it is probably true to say that the federal government, rather than overcoming its fears of militancy and seeing the American Indian Movement as a genuine political organization borne of real social problems (caused largely by the federal government), instead encouraged a view of the AIM as a conspiratorial and seditious movement in order to protect its own interests. That the AIM saw the government as conspiring not only to attack it but also to destroy American Indian communities is perhaps not surprising.

*Amanda Laugesen*

**See also:** Native Americans.



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## American Protective Association

The American Protective Association (APA) was the largest anti-Catholic organization in the United States during the late 1880s and 1890s. The organization was founded as a secret order in Clinton, Iowa, on 13 March 1887, by Henry Francis Bowers. Its goal was to fight the perceived threat posed by Roman Catholicism in the United States, a threat that was often couched in conspiratorial terms. Bowers was a lawyer who had been elected to a number of county offices as a Republican. He also was a Mason, a member of the Blue Lodge, and a member of the thirty-second degree of the Scottish Rite. The incident that led to the creation of the APA was a local election in which a Protestant candidate believed he was defeated by the Catholic vote. The Bowers group met the Sunday after that election.

One of the central principles of the APA was support of the separation of church and state. The organization's members were particularly concerned about Catholicism infiltrating public schools. The APA's message proved popular. Soon after its founding, the organization grew, with chapters spreading through the Midwest. By 1891, there were branches in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The APA had 70,000 members in twenty states

in 1893. Increased immigration and an economic panic led to additional growth so that by 1896, the organization's peak year, it claimed 2.5 million members, spread across every state. Membership declined after the presidential election of 1896.

Most of the members of the APA were Republicans and, thus, Republican candidates had to give the organization serious consideration. In early 1896, the group attacked William McKinley, a potential Republican candidate for president. McKinley became a target because he failed to meet with members of the APA and to explain how he planned to implement their demands if he were elected. According to the organization's platform officeholders were not to appoint Catholics to any position. In spite of the support provided to McKinley when he ran for governor of Ohio in 1893, the APA spread rumors that he was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, that he took advice from the Catholic bishop of Columbus, and that he had two children in a convent. McKinley was elected president despite the rumors. The APA suffered internal disputes over endorsing McKinley and the organization began losing members because of the dissension.

Membership of the APA involved secret rituals. New members were required to swear a number of oaths while blindfolded. These oaths included promises not to employ a Catholic worker if a Protestant was available and not to go on strike with Catholics. The blindfold was then removed because the member had left "mental darkness," and he took a final vow. This vow included a denunciation of Roman Catholicism and the pope, and a pledge to protect the order and its members. The secret oath became public in an exposé published in the *St. Paul (Minnesota) Globe* in 1893. The U.S. Congress also proposed to investigate the APA after a former congressman, Henry M. Youmans of Michigan, claimed that his opponent in the 1892 election was a member of the organization. According to Youmans, membership in the APA invalidated his opponent's candidacy for Congress.

To build public support for their cause, members of the APA spread propaganda about Catholic goals for America. A pastoral letter, allegedly written by U.S. Catholic bishops, advocated the creation of a

Catholic political party and suggested that education and true faith were not compatible. A forged papal encyclical entitled "Instructions to Catholics" called on Catholics to take over the U.S. government because Protestants had forfeited all right to the country. According to the encyclical, the Catholic uprising was to take place "on or about the feast of Ignatius Loyola [31 July] in the year of our Lord, 1893," or on the date of the convening of the Catholic Congress at the Chicago World's Fair, 5 September. In the course of the uprising, Catholics were to exterminate all heretics (i.e., non-Catholics) found in the United States.

The American Protective Association became largely moribund by 1900. The organization did not completely disappear until 1911 with the death of its founder and leader, Henry Bowers. Throughout its existence, no record exists of violence against Catholics by members of the APA, but the group was effective in making many Americans fearful of the Catholic Church. Although the APA ceased to exist, anti-Catholicism continued in the United States through the early decades of the 1900s.

*John David Rausch, Jr.*

**See also:** Anti-Catholicism.

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## American Revolution

The conviction that the English colonial policies of the 1760s and 1770s constituted a conspiracy to enslave America played a major role in the outbreak of the American Revolution.

### American Conspiracy Theories

Beginning around 1763, a series of political conflicts between England and its American colonies prompted American critics to protest in conspiracy-minded rhetoric. The call in 1763 of some Anglican leaders to install a bishop in America was met in Massachusetts with angry protests that this amounted to an ecclesiastical conspiracy to destroy



Thomas Hutchinson was the colonial governor of Massachusetts at the outbreak of the American Revolution. Between 1765 and 1774, he came to symbolize those loyal to Britain in Massachusetts. (Circer, Hayward, ed., *Dictionary of American Portraits*, 1967)

religious freedom. Two years later, the Stamp Act of 1765 shocked and baffled many colonists. The measure called for a stamp tax on all paper used for purposes ranging from wills to playing cards, without consultation of or ratification by the colonial assemblies. While many colonists were still willing to concede Parliament the right to raise money from the colonies, the heavy-handed measure trampled American traditions of self-government and cherished concepts of representation and liberty. Already several critics charged that this could only be an early step in a larger plan designed by

schemers within the English government in order to destroy the rights of Englishmen in America. Some even felt that the Stamp Act's real goal was to foment a rebellion in America, which would subsequently be crushed militarily and allow a despotic government to be installed.

Even though the Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 as a result of colonial protests, the crisis was soon continued by the passage of the Townshend duties in 1767, which continued other forms of taxation. Colonial critics became more and more convinced that the successive crises were not the result of a misunderstanding or a normal political conflict over negotiable interests, but were deliberately designed by a powerful group in the English government in order to bring America to its knees. Their suspicions were furthered through the controversy surrounding John Wilkes, a radical English opposition leader, whose election to Parliament was widely applauded in the American colonies. However, Wilkes was imprisoned and repeatedly denied his seat in the House of Commons, while a riot of some of his followers was met with gunfire that killed several. When troops stationed in Boston shot several protesters in the so-called Boston Massacre in 1770, colonial critics drew a parallel and concluded that opposition voices both in England and in the colonies were being permanently silenced.

Things came to a head when, in reaction to the Boston Tea Party of 1773, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts in order to discipline Massachusetts. These measures were widely called the Intolerable Acts and interpreted as a deliberate effort to choke the colonies economically, abolish the rule of law and trial by jury, and prepare the American colonies for direct despotic rule. By 1774 many prominent and moderate colonial leaders including Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, George Mason, and John Dickinson, were convinced that English policies were deliberately designed to end political freedom in America. The Continental Congress itself endorsed such an interpretation in its 1774 Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which vehemently protested against "such acts and measures as have been adopted since the last war,

which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America." Shortly thereafter, the first shots of the Revolutionary War were fired, and in 1776 the American states declared their independence, arguing that a "long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them to absolute despotism."

Who were the alleged conspirators? John Adams and Josiah Quincy identified Thomas Hutchinson, the governor of Massachusetts as a focal point of the conspiracy. Quincy even accused Hutchinson of being the originator of all the measures against America, but most conspiracy-minded critics felt that colonial officials could at best be the pawns of much more powerful figures in England. The person most often identified as the source of the troubles for both the colonies and England was John Stuart, Earl of Bute, prime minister from 1762 to 1763, the former tutor of young George III, and the alleged lover of the dowager Princess Augusta. The conspiracy theory argued that Bute, even though he had to leave office in 1763 under public pressure, had used his influence on the king to form a secret party that in reality controlled appointments to office as well as the general policy of Great Britain; he had also used his power to get even with his old enemy John Wilkes. Subjecting the American colonies to despotic rule was only the first step in doing the same thing in England.

### English Conspiracy Theories

Such views were not limited to America. In England, too, a number of prominent intellectuals and politicians asked themselves why the country was in such turmoil despite the fact that it had just won the Seven Years' War and faced no devastating problems. Whether sympathetic to or contemptuous of the American colonies, these thinkers identified similar causes for the troubles. Horace Walpole subscribed to the Earl of Bute theory. Edmund Burke, in his 1770 essay "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents," also argued that a hidden faction, a "double cabinet," pulled the strings in Great Britain. William Pitt, the veteran politician and steadfast ally of the American colonies, looked toward the intrigues of rich mer-

chants involved in the Asia trade for the source of government corruption.

Of course, not all conspiracy theories in England ran parallel to those in America. One very popular explanation of the crisis vis-à-vis the American colonies was that from at least 1760 onward, a group of American conspirators had, for their own profit and aggrandizement, purposefully orchestrated events with the treasonous goal of independence in mind. Proponents of this conspiracy theory included Francis Bernard, the governor of Massachusetts from 1760 to 1769, as well as his successor Thomas Hutchinson. In fact, this interpretation won the highest endorsement possible from George III himself, who in 1775 informed Parliament: “The authors and promoters of this desperate conspiracy have in the conduct of it derived great advantage from the difference of our intentions and theirs. They meant only to amuse, by vague expressions of attachment to the parent state and the strongest protestations of loyalty to me, whilst they were preparing for a general revolt” (Bailyn, 153).

In late 1775, the king’s statement was probably right: the colonies were headed almost inexorably toward independence. But in the 1760s and the early 1770s, attachment to the crown was still strong in America. There was no premeditated plan to bring about independence through a series of escalating crises, as George III and others charged. Likewise, there was no coherent plot to abolish liberty in the American colonies. To be sure, prime ministers from George Grenville onward certainly wanted to set a precedent of taxation in the colonies. Most leading politicians were either ignorant or contemptuous of traditions of self-government in the colonies. The king and most parliamentary leaders wanted to reorganize the empire into a more coherent system, and thus had no intention of returning to the era of salutary neglect. Nevertheless, the taxation and reform measures of the 1760s and 1770s had limited and specific purposes; they did not constitute a deliberate design to destroy the rights of Englishmen. Rather, the American Revolution can best be understood as a series of conflicts and misunderstandings, dur-

ing which the political differences between England and its colonies became ever clearer, and the stakes ever higher, to the point where a full-scale revolution was the result.

Nevertheless, the ubiquity of conspiracy-minded explanations for the American Revolution is startling, but explainable. Theories of political conspiracy were a staple of eighteenth-century British political discourse, and preceded the American Revolution. English radicals often charged that a secret faction had formed a ministerial conspiracy that worked toward the consolidation of power and the subversion of traditional English liberties. Much of the political theory of the Real Whig tradition in England was geared toward a general attitude of suspicion, lest liberty be destroyed by designing men. In fact, most contemporary observers expected conspiracy and corruption to seep into any political system, even the revered English constitution; only through constant vigilance could such decay be prevented or at least delayed. At the same time, eighteenth-century philosophy was built on the premise that all effects had specific and identifiable causes. In the case of political effects, these causes were expected to lie with individual intentions, not abstract social forces or uncontrollable political dynamics. So if the colonists perceived negative effects from English policies, while at the same time Parliament asserted that they had the empire’s best interest at heart, the colonists interpreted this discrepancy as the deliberate deception of a malevolent conspiracy. Conspiracy theorists on both sides simply interpreted events in the political and intellectual framework of their time.

*Markus Hünemörder*

**See also:** Boston Massacre; Boston Tea Party; Coercive Acts; Quebec Act; Stamp Act.

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### Anarchists

Anarchism is a philosophy of social change that emerged as an international movement in the mid-nineteenth century and saw its heyday in the early twentieth century. The anarchist movement as a whole advocated the eradication of the state and believed that individuals would capably provide their own order. The state, with its centralized mechanisms of control (whether socialist or democratic), was seen as inevitably coercive. In the United States the anarchist movement was interpreted as a leftist conspiracy to use aggression to eradicate law and order. Labor union strikes, a series of assassinations of European monarchs carried out by anarchists, and the Bolshevik Revolution accelerated fears that the movement intended to induce worldwide uprisings and chaos. Within the movement, anarchists of various ideological persuasions promoted diverse methods of carrying out revolutionary activity. They supported actions ranging from peaceful protest, publications, and delivering speeches, to violence.

The philosophy gained appeal in the United States through opposition to the ills of industrialization. Many anarchists expressed concern over issues such as wage slavery, the suffering experienced by recent immigrants, war and conscription, and a perceived trampling of individual rights. Anarchist figureheads sought especially to disseminate their message among the U.S. working classes. This activity was largely perceived by certain power structures—trusts, police, and government—as a threat to democracy in the United States. Anarchism was increasingly seen as a monolithic leftist conspiracy: all anarchists were potential bomb throwers or assassins, and the ideology was interchangeably lumped together with communism and socialism. Although many anarchists, specifically anarcho-communists, adopted some Communist and socialist principles, anarchist values in many ways clashed with these ideas (particularly the idea of the state as purveyor of social and economic organization).

In the wake of the Haymarket affair of 1886, anarchists in the United States were popularly por-

trayed as terrorists (Woodcock, 464). In his analysis of the anarchist movement published after the trial, Michael Schaack, captain of the Chicago Police, argued that: “Let none mistake either the purpose or the devotion of these fanatics, nor their growing strength. This is methodic—not a haphazard conspiracy. The ferment in Russia is controlled by the same heads and the same hands as the activity in Chicago. There is a cold-blooded, calculating purpose behind this revolt, manipulating every part of it, the world over, to a common and ruinous end” (Schaack, 688). The men executed in connection with the Haymarket bombing had no direct involvement with the incident, and became martyrs for U.S. anarchists, inspiring many important people in the movement’s history to become actively involved. Emma Goldman, for example, was arguably the most famous and influential anarchist figure in twentieth-century America (Avrich, 165).

Many U.S. anarchists were immigrants and suffered prejudicial treatment as a result. This was particularly evident during the “red scare” of 1919–1920, when anarchists were deported under the 1918 Immigration Act (Morton, 98). It was also in this sociopolitical climate that Italian American anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were tried and executed for murder in a controversial and, many believed, unfair trial.

Fears of an anarchist conspiracy were justifiable in some respects. Anarchists openly preached revolution through anarchist newspapers, books, lectures, and through affiliations with labor groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Johann Most advocated *attentat*—“propaganda-by-the-deed”—and published instructions for making bombs, encouraging their use to spark revolt (Trautmann). Alexander Berkman, an influential figure in the movement, attempted to assassinate Henry Clay Frick because of Frick’s handling of the Homestead Strike of 1892, during which Carnegie steel mill workers were shot. A drifter who claimed that he was an anarchist assassinated popular president William McKinley in 1901. However, violent deeds were carried out

independently and caused controversy even within the anarchist movement among those who advocated violence as a justifiable means of bringing about the revolution, and those who denounced violent acts as unjustifiable under any circumstances. Emma Goldman expressed sympathy for both McKinley's assassin and Berkman, publicly acknowledging their actions as desperate responses to an oppressive system (Morton, 34–35). Following McKinley's assassination, foreign anarchists were legally prohibited from entering the United States (Woodcock, 464–465).

Most scholars (e.g., Woodcock) agree that the classical period of anarchism as a vital social movement ended by the 1930s due to the movement's failure to bring about revolutionary change and its lack of a clearly defined vision of the form society should take. Although anarchism is no longer involved in, for example, large-scale labor disputes, modern interpretations of anarchism persist in social activist groups of various persuasions. However, anarchists are no longer popularly perceived as a viable threat to democracy in post-cold war America.

*Tania Boster*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Haymarket Bombing; Industrial Workers of the World; Red Scare; Red Summer of 1919; Sacco and Vanzetti.

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### Anti-Catholicism

Anti-Catholicism constituted one of the nation's earliest and most virulent conspiratorial fears. It continues to linger in the very heart of U.S. popular culture, appearing in radio, television, music, and now on the Internet. Based in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on Rome's supposed political power, antipathy toward Roman Catholicism has since the 1960s insisted that Catholicism threatens the most basic tenet of U.S. identity: the personal freedom of the individual.

Roman Catholicism represents the perpetual "Other" whose very mysteriousness and difference maintains a certain distance from U.S. life. Over the centuries this distance has exhibited a rather protean nature to where "anti-Catholicism" serves as a canvas on which non-Catholic Americans paint their hostilities. During the colonial period, anti-Catholicism continued on U.S. soil religious and political conflicts that began in Europe. During the antebellum period, anti-Catholicism represented the epitome of mental and physical slavery that social reform movements sought to undo, much like their crusades for temperance and slavery abolition. Catholicism's ready identity with different ethnic groups—Irish and German at first, then Italians, Poles, and French-Canadians after the Civil War—underlined the Church's inherent foreign character. During World War I Catholicism appeared to many Americans as a traitorous community in their midst. Only with John Kennedy's successful presidential campaign in 1960 did anti-Catholicism shift to more individual concerns. Now Catholicism is viewed as the last religious tradition capable of inhibiting the personal growth and self-awareness of many Americans.

According to this view, Catholics, despite whatever claims they might make about their Americanness, harbor a hidden agenda that they seek to impose on all other Americans. Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., once remarked that anti-Catholicism was "the only remaining acceptable prejudice." Schlesinger pointed his comment toward the nation's educated elite, but the point could be extended much further. The idea that Roman



# **ROMAN CATHOLIC DYNAMITES BATH PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

**THE GREATEST PREMEDITATED MURDER OF  
CHILDREN SINCE THE ST. BARTHOLOMEW  
MASSACRE MURDERING 30,000 FRENCH  
PROTESTANTS**

## **Newspapers Suppress Known Facts**

**THE KNIGHTS of the KU KLUX KLAN, DEFENDER  
OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRODUCES THE  
FACTS**

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### **BATH, MICHIGAN, PUBLIC SCHOOL TRAGEDY**

Andrew P. Kehoe, Roman Catholic, after much premeditation, evidenced through the preparation and explosion of huge amounts of dynamite, planned to take the lives of 250 pupils and teachers. This explosion occurred May 18, 1927. Immediately thereafter, search was made for bodies of the dead and injured and upon completion of the survey it was found that 45 adults and children had lost their lives and many others seriously wounded, with sufficient unexploded dynamite found in the structure to have wrecked the entire village had it responded.

Catholicism represents a threat to U.S. culture has taken many forms, including a few by Catholics themselves. Mistrust and fear of Catholicism's hierarchical structures and theological positions continue to animate U.S. life.

### **Roots in Protestantism and English Puritanism**

Animosity toward Roman Catholicism is deeply rooted in the history of western Europe as well as that of Christian thought. The apocalyptic imagery of the "Whore of Babylon" in the Book of Revelation points toward the city of Rome itself. While early Christianity read Revelation as a coded text against pagan Rome, the generations that followed often understood the Scriptures as leveling divine judgment against Christian Rome as well. Rome's spiritual tyranny over Christians enjoyed demonic, not heavenly, support. English Puritanism took the argument even further. Seeking to purify the Church of England of anything remotely Catholic, anti-Roman animosity became a measure of one's faith. In other words, resistance to Roman Catholicism constituted a bedrock duty of all *real* English Christians. The martyrdom of English Protestants during the reign of Queen Mary (reigned 1553–1558) foretold the future if Catholics achieved power. Elizabethan Puritanism held that Catholicism constituted a threat to English politics as well as the nation's spiritual climate. The Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and later the Jacobite uprisings indicated that Catholics seeking the throne also sought to return England, through force if necessary, to Rome.

### **Colonial Expressions**

The English colonies in the New World reflected these conflicts with Catholic powers. Consequently, many colonies possessed legislation that limited worship opportunities and sometimes voting rights for Catholics. Some, such as Massachusetts, threatened death by hanging to anyone revealed as a Catholic priest, and even though Maryland was founded as a haven for Catholics, it quickly came under Anglican control, too. English Protestant colonists felt surrounded by Catholic

colonial powers France and Spain. They therefore sought to ensure that their own spaces were utterly free of any Catholic contagion.

### **Fear of the Immigrant in the Nineteenth Century**

The disease metaphor became quite popular during the nineteenth century, for Roman Catholicism appeared as metastasizing tumor. Waves of immigrants from Germany and Ireland beginning in the 1820s accelerated the growth of the Catholic Church. While internally the Church faced growing ethnic conflicts (e.g., German parishes occasionally refused the English-speaking Irish priest assigned them by an Irish bishop), non-Catholic Americans perceived Roman Catholicism as a foreign monolith poised to overthrow the young nation's democratic system. It seemed that Catholicism was assuredly un-American. The Church lacked democratic procedures for acknowledging authority, its worship practices seemed clearly at odds with scriptural guidelines, it had attempted the forcible reconversion of Protestants, and its members in the United States were almost entirely nonnative immigrants. Consequently, anti-Catholics acquired the label "nativists" for their insistence that the foreign-born could not claim to be Americans. Since the Catholic hierarchy often established parishes with specific national identities (e.g., naming parishes after a nation's patron saint, such as St. Patrick), Catholicism seemed to prevent its members from "Americanizing" completely. The Americanization issue continued to pester Catholic leaders through the nineteenth century. After the Civil War, immigration shifted from western Europe to southern and eastern Europe. Catholics from these regions—Italians, Portuguese, Poles, Slavs, and French-Canadians from Quebec—appeared to be even more resistant to Americanization than the Germans and Irish.

Beyond the immigration issues, Catholicism posed a significant question to U.S. identity. If the nation became filled primarily with Christians belonging to a foreign faith (since the pope, ensconced at Rome, controlled Catholicism), what would become of U.S. institutions like democracy,

free enterprise, and freedom of worship? The nativist response took two paths: political opposition and popular culture. Both paths took inspiration from the Puritan slogan “No Popery.”

The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, better known as the “Know-Nothing” Party because when asked about their political activities they claimed to “know nothing,” sought to elect candidates to local, state, and national offices who would ensure that the United States remained a Protestant and democratic country. In 1852 Know-Nothings won election victories nationwide, especially in Massachusetts where the governor and all higher commonwealth officials were affiliated. Know-Nothings diluted some of their political power by joining larger national parties such as the Republicans. Similarly, social reformers interested in abolishing southern slavery and the liquor trade often regarded Catholicism as the epitome of enslavement, subscribing to the view that being Catholic subjected one to physical as well as spiritual slavery. Many Catholics, it was felt, particularly the Irish, seemed unable to turn away from liquor’s appeal. Reforming U.S. life began, therefore, with opposition to the further growth of Roman Catholicism. Another battleground was the public school system. In the early 1840s, following the complaints of Catholic parents, New York Protestants joined forces to ensure that public schools continued teaching with the King James Version of the Bible.

The mysteriousness of Catholic convent life fostered one of the strongest anti-Catholic messages. Tales of “escaped nuns,” young women claiming that they had been abducted into convent life, proved wildly popular throughout the nation. Some were published, the most popular of which was *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, a fictitious account of a young woman’s abduction into a Montreal convent. Many “escaped nun” tales featured the sexual depravity and rigid secrecy of the Catholic male clergy. Not only did Catholicism threaten the nation’s political economy, individual Americans stood in danger of being the victim of Catholic “press-gangs” hell-bent on increasing the Church’s membership. In the 1840s a lecture circuit featuring

Monk and other escaped nuns, as well as theatrical plays, developed the theme.

As a result, the arrival of Catholic immigrants occasionally resulted in violence. Lyman Beecher’s 1835 “Plea for the West,” a speech in which he claimed Catholics were settling western lands far faster than Protestants and thus threatened to cut off U.S. expansion, resulted in a mob burning an Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. In 1844 Philadelphia nativists rioted following rumors that local Catholic parishes were stockpiling weapons for possible rebellious activity. Thirteen people died and over fifty were wounded in the violence. Violence threatened in St. Louis and New York, but did not materialize. The Civil War offered a respite from anti-Catholic attitudes, as Catholics served in both armies (notably Union general Philip Sheridan) and religious sisters served in medical roles. Even then northern nativists questioned Catholic loyalty when, in 1863, large numbers of Irish immigrants participated in violent draft riots in New York City.

Political cartoonist Thomas Nash captured the anti-Catholic message in an 1871 *Harper’s Weekly* drawing. It depicted Catholic bishops as aggressive alligators coming ashore to attack Protestant America, suggesting that Tammany Hall was a new Vatican and that Irish immigrant politicians threatened to dismantle public schools. During the 1880s and 1890s, the American Protective Association (APA) resurrected the Know-Nothing cause. Predominantly located in the Midwest, the APA utilized the same rhetoric but failed to generate the same interest. It did succeed in casting suspicion on emerging labor unions, often filled with and led by Catholics, and other radical political movements. In the 1880s and 1890s nativist politicians, particularly within the Republican Party, sought to curtail immigration to limit increasing Catholic power in urban areas. Scientific racism informed these efforts, “proving” that Anglo-Saxons—who were overwhelmingly Protestant—enjoyed biological as well as cultural and religious superiority over the newer Catholic immigrants. Immigration restriction continued to be an issue until Congress established strict limits,

aimed primarily at immigrants from Catholic and Jewish areas of eastern and southern Europe, in the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924.

### The Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s

The Ku Klux Klan reemerged in 1915 as the primary vehicle for anti-Catholic nativism. By the early 1920s, the Klan had become popular across the nation. Committed to “100 percent Americanism,” the Klan sought to limit the powers of the now well-established Catholic community. Klan recruiters pursued Protestant clergy, and the Klan moved to reinforce its view of traditional U.S. morality. This included supporting Prohibition, segregation, Protestant-oriented public schools, strikebusting, and boycotting Catholic (and Jewish) businesses. Significantly, this incarnation of the Klan saw the largest membership numbers, and the 1920s Klan enjoyed national, not merely southern, popularity. Klan voters helped elect sympathetic politicians and passed anti-Catholic measures in Maine, Indiana, and Oregon, as well as other states. Klansmen fought with Catholic groups in working-class urban neighborhoods in Ohio, New Jersey, and Illinois. The Klan resurrected stories of “captured nuns” like *Maria Monk*. It also circulated a fictitious oath—much like *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—purportedly taken by the Knights of Columbus wherein they pledged to murder Protestant babies and undermine the Protestant political establishment. However, the Klan’s popularity quickly shrank after scandals emerged concerning Klan leadership, especially Indiana’s grand dragon, David C. Stephenson. The Klan enjoyed a mini-revival during the 1928 presidential election, stirring up opposition to the Democratic candidate, New York’s Catholic and anti-Prohibition governor, Alfred E. Smith.

### Contemporary Expressions

With the 1925 Scopes trial in Tennessee, evangelical Protestantism shrank away from public scrutiny, thus silencing an important source of anti-Catholic rhetoric. Evangelical opposition to Catholicism remains to this day, but never incites the same level

of popular support. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which inaugurated landmark changes in Catholic liturgy and theology (especially concerning non-Catholics), indicated the Church’s new willingness to converse with, instead of repressing, other religious perspectives. The Catholic Church also expressed its appreciation of democratic political processes.

In this new situation, those advocating anti-Catholic views, ironically, have often spoken from liberal, not conservative, perspectives. Paul Blanshard’s wildly popular *Catholic Power and American Democracy* (published in 1948) expressed the point quite clearly: Catholics voted according to clerical direction, instead of individual decision, and this threatened U.S. democratic institutions. Through utterly democratic processes, the Catholic Church could mobilize its members to limit the religious and political freedoms of other Americans. Although he had studied to be a Congregational minister, Blanshard affiliated himself more closely with secular humanist groups. He believed his argument was nonsectarian since it applied to the political freedoms of all Americans. Blanshard’s work received praise from mainstream newspapers as well as from leading academics, such as John Dewey. This recalled the antebellum social reformers who feared Catholicism’s social and political influences, not its theological foundations.

Blanshard’s legacy resurfaced in the 1970s and 1980s when Vatican authorities silenced American Catholic academics such as moral theologian Charles Curran. Catholic threats to personal freedom, especially concerning sexuality, have been explored in U.S. popular culture, ranging from the videos of the singer Madonna to television shows such as *Ally McBeal*. Much like Blanshard’s earlier work, these receive far less criticism from Protestants than from Catholics. The latest expressions of anti-Catholicism use widely accessible language and assumptions to question the Church’s (and individual Catholics’) views on abortion, sexuality, and personal freedom. The hysterical fears of *Maria Monk* might have faded, but there remains a sense that Catholicism, much like Nash’s cartoon,



threatens to overwhelm freedoms and values that non-Catholic Americans hold dear.

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**See also:** American Protective Association; Coughlin, Father Charles; Know-Nothings; Ku Klux Klan; Nativism.

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**Anticommunism**

If cold war foreign policy manifested itself in mutual hostility between East and West, the nuclear arms race, and a commitment to methods of covert subversion, its prosecution at home was based on the premise of aggressive anticommunism. Although not a new phenomenon, the identification and systematic elimination of the U.S. Left reached its peak of judicial action and social acceptance during the 1940s and 1950s. The rise to prominence of several key figures, including Senator Joseph McCarthy and President Harry Truman, future President Richard Nixon, and J. Edgar Hoover, coincided with a postwar political and social climate in which extreme forms of radicalism—preeminently left-wing radicalism—were deemed unacceptable. More than that, as a series of high-profile legal proceedings made clear, the combined forces of domestic leftism were widely alleged to be antithetical to, if not *in league against*,

the American way of life. After the peak of anti-communist militancy in the mid-1950s, there followed a period when the campaign was forced to move underground and to deploy covert strategies of subversion that ironically paralleled the conspiratorial tactics of the Communists whose destruction they sought.

**From “Red Scare” to the “Red Decade”**

If the threat of communism was greatly exaggerated by its adversaries, it was certainly not wholly falsified. In large part, the problem derived from the Communist Party (CPUSA)’s characteristically conspiratorial methods of organization and operation, and its apparent total reliance on the Soviet Union in matters of policy and practice. The movement was explicitly structured according to Lenin’s valued principles of hierarchy, secrecy, and total commitment to the cause. Communist initiates or “cadres,” many of them drawn from the immigrant working class, were expected to spend long hours studying the central texts of Marxism and organizing profile- and fund-raising activities for the party. Moreover, as recent revelations from the Soviet archives and files of the top-secret Venona Project have confirmed, the CPUSA was, from its inception, led by a top echelon of men and women who pledged allegiance to the leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Many of these figures sought in Soviet communism a model of discipline and radicalism with which to energize and coordinate the diverse struggles of labor unions and organizations like the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) against the dominant power of U.S. capitalism. When the CPUSA finally emerged out of bitter factional conflict in 1919, it was with both the political and financial backing of the Kremlin. With this support, however, came the understanding that, regardless of more pressing local concerns, the party would unwaveringly toe the line arrived at by the Soviet-led Communist International (Comintern).

It was also this traditional connection to the Soviet Union that would place the party in the greatest danger during periods of fervent anticommunism. In the early 1920s, for instance, with most



of Europe still reeling from World War I, and with Bolshevik anticapitalist rhetoric and labor unrest at their most incendiary, membership of the CPUSA was considered by many in the U.S. legal and political establishment to be in itself an act of sedition. Capitalizing on their tendency toward conservatism and countersubversion, J. Edgar Hoover, then an aspiring Justice Department official, found powerful allies in the industrial, commercial, and law-enforcement communities with whom he launched a vicious counterattack against the radicals and striking workers. One long-term result of the so-called red scare was the creation of a network of prominent anticommunists whose experience and expertise would prove vital during the much broader assault on the U.S. Left during the postwar years.

Before these powers could prevail, however, there followed a period of relative success for the domestic Communist movement. As the nucleus of a huge “popular front” against European fascism throughout the 1930s, the CPUSA presided over a period that soon came to be known as the “red decade.” From the Depression years until the era of social restitution brought about by President Roosevelt’s New Deal policies, the Communist-led U.S. Left defined the political agenda, campaigning for everything from workers’ rights to the protection of young blacks against the scourge of lynching in the South. Crucially important was the Soviet Union’s resistance to the forces of fascism personified in the figures of Hitler, Mussolini, and General Franco in Spain, and the international antifascist coalition coordinated by the Comintern. Involvement in the Spanish Civil War provided many U.S. leftists with the life-changing experience of radicalization. It should be stressed, though, that support for traditionally leftist causes was not limited to membership of the Communist Party in this period. With a proactive, liberally inclined president in the White House, the Left’s popular agenda was matched by an administration firmly committed to social equality and labor reform, in stark contrast to the laissez-faire monopoly capitalism favored by successive governments during the 1920s. While very far from a leftist him-

self, President Roosevelt surrounded himself with an extensive and powerful fraternity of liberal and left-inclined advisors, bureaucrats, and legislators—some of them “fellow-travelers” at the fringe of the Communist Party’s orbit—who manned the many administrative committees and working groups that epitomized the New Deal era. Throughout this period, for obvious reasons, the conservative, anticommunist community remained largely in the background of policy-formation.

### **The Conspiracy of Communism**

If the anticommunist network was notable by its absence during the prewar years, its roots had been struck deep. In-fighting on the Left between supporters of Stalin and exiled Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, together with the nonaggression pact between Nazi Germany and Stalin’s Russia in 1939, provided the perfect alibi for conservatives at home to sign into law the Smith Act of 1940. By making illegal any group that advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government, this legal instrument effectively outlawed the CPUSA and many of its affiliates. Meanwhile, the international Left movement suffered a series of external shocks that would render it increasingly vulnerable to further assault. Perhaps most important were revelations from inside the Soviet Union of Stalin’s brutal purges both of the Soviet high command and of millions of ordinary Russians. The horror of such stories, too shocking and numerous to ignore, combined with the dramatic volte-face of the Nazi-Soviet pact, led many Communists to desert the party in the United States and worldwide. Thus, as Maurice Isserman argues in *Which Side Were You On?*<sup>2</sup> (1982), the prewar Popular Front coalition was already fragmenting and the CPUSA was already a much-weakened force by the end of World War II.

Central to the growth of anticommunism in the 1940s and 1950s were the changed realities signaled by the onset of the cold war. In these first few years after the cessation of hostilities, many of the constituent elements that would come to define the cold war era were established, both at home and abroad. The keynote of the period was struck

in 1946 by Prime Minister Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in which the British wartime leader delineated a world divided between the democratic West and the communist countries dominated by Stalin's autocratic rule. From this point forward, it was clear that the Western powers' new enemies would be the Soviet states to the east, and that communism would now replace fascism as the principal ideological adversary of the United States. Taking their cue from the mutual hostility and brinkmanship that prevailed on the international front, the newly resurgent anticommunist contingent set about eliminating the domestic Left movement. The campaign was prosecuted with a violence and fervor that has led commentators such as playwright Arthur Miller to liken the era to that of the witch-hunts in Salem, Massachusetts, during the late seventeenth century.

Much of the hysteria surrounding the persecution of U.S. Communists may be attributed to the terms of engagement established early on in a series of pivotal legal trials. Throughout the late 1940s, many members of the preexisting anticommunist network testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)—itself created in 1938 to counter the threat of espionage during wartime—and other similar organs, to the seditious anti-Americanism of the CPUSA and to the treachery of its members and affiliates. A list of the principal actors in this drama, which captivated the public imagination, reads like a "who's who" of the heroes and villains of the early cold war years: HUAC members and prosecutors such as Senator Joseph McCarthy, his chief counsel Roy Cohn, future President Richard Nixon, Senator Patrick McCarran, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, together with prominent former Communists and "friendly witnesses" like Elizabeth Bentley, Louis Budenz, Whittaker Chambers, Benjamin Mandel, and J. B. Matthews. With the aim of "reveal[ing] the diabolic machinations of sinister figures engaged in un-American activities" (Hoover, HUAC Testimony, 1947; in Schrecker 1994), these men and women dominated both the political agenda and the popular headlines of the era. Their ascendancy, supported by many sympathetic figures in the administrations of Presi-

dents Truman and Eisenhower (not least of all Truman himself), did more than simply destroy the U.S. Left movement. Their accusations of widespread Soviet penetration also had the effect of eroding support for, and breaking the hegemony of, Roosevelt's New Deal establishment.

The success of the anticommunist campaign on a political and legal level was underscored by an equally critical effort among conservative, liberal, and reformed leftist academics, journalists, and social scientists to provide the intellectual justification for the persecution of U.S. communists. To use the title of a study by one such theorist, there was a great desire in these years to identify and comprehend the "Appeals of Communism" so that self-appointed social engineers might then be able to eliminate them from U.S. society (Almond et al.). At the opposite extreme to these "scientific" or psychological interpretations were the writings of former party members like Whittaker Chambers and Louis Budenz for whom communism was nothing less than a secular faith locked in fatal struggle with the forces of Western democracy and religion. For both groups, however, the desired result tended to be the same: the isolation of the Communist "virus" from daily life and the immunization of society against its future threat. This rhetoric of infection was widely reflected in the popular culture of the day, from the sensationalist tabloid and television reporting of infamous trials like the Hiss-Chambers case and the Rosenberg spy scandal, to the proliferation of movies like *I Married a Communist* (dir. Jack Gross 1949) and *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (dir. Gordon Douglas 1951), or science fictions such as *Invaders from Mars* (dir. William Menzies 1953) and *Night of the Living Dead* (dir. Don Siegel 1955), which dealt metaphorically with the paranoia and hysteria of the witch-hunts. As one historian has recently written, "most of the entertainment that reached the nation's living rooms during the 1950s supported the status quo" (Schrecker 1998).

If the epithet "McCarthyism" has commonly been used to characterize the era, then this is undoubtedly because the Wisconsin senator was the single most infamous and influential anticommunist crusader.

For a brief period between 1950 and 1954, McCarthy's dogged investigation of leftist infiltration within the government, labor unions, entertainment industry, and military seemed to epitomize both the specificity—it was McCarthy who first popularized the wholesale naming of names and the use of “blacklists”—and the ruthlessness of the campaign. On the other hand, it is true that, by the spring of 1954, with the nation under the new government of President Eisenhower, the mood had changed to such an extent that McCarthy's own methods came under the spotlight of a Senate investigation. Nevertheless, in method and outlook, McCarthy most closely resembled the witch-hunters of an earlier age and so represented the clearest symptom of that “psychosocial” disorder that important contemporary commentators like Daniel Bell, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Richard Hofstadter identified as instrumental to the prosecution of the campaign. For these critics, the rise of McCarthy and his fellow zealots was, like earlier populist movements of both right and left, sustained by the strong reactionary tendency among the “unenlightened” moral majority in U.S. society. It is now clear, however, that the campaign was more widespread than the epithet of “McCarthyism” implies. Certainly, many more individuals were involved, and in a more partisan way than was thought at the time, as recent studies of figures like Hoover, Nixon, and McCarran have proved. In effect, the early 1950s saw the reappearance of an already-strong, conservative anticommunist fraternity whose influence extended through all areas of U.S. life, but which had been held in check during Roosevelt's New Deal. No less important was the reformulation and retrenchment of liberalism after World War II. In the works of prominent philosophers and political theorists like Schlesinger, J. K. Galbraith, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and in the outlook and membership of powerful organizations and lobbying groups like the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the outlines of a new concept of “consensus politics” began to emerge. By its very nature, this form of cold war liberalism tended to place extremism of both left



U.S. senator Joseph McCarthy earned the dubious distinction of having his name become synonymous with character assassination and guilt by association for political gain. His unsubstantiated but politically popular charges that the U.S. government was infiltrated with communist agents during the early 1950s became known as McCarthyism. (Library of Congress)

and right outside its purview and thereby to stigmatize both as equal threats to the status quo. Instead, the proponents of consensus politics insisted on shared assumptions of the ultimate wisdom of Western capitalism and the importance of “custom and community sentiment” (Hyman).

### **Anticommunism after the 1950s**

Toward the end of the 1950s, the anticommunist coalition, like the Popular Front before it, began to

fragment. This was undoubtedly due in part to McCarthy's ignominious fall from grace, but also to the détente of the early Kennedy years, and the emergence of a "new left" whose ideological trajectory was beginning to depart from the Marxism of the Communist "Old Left." Again, like the movement it aimed to destroy, militant anticommunism did not disappear, however. Instead, it changed form, sought new targets, and went underground. As the New Left began to galvanize around emotive causes like civil rights, solidarity with Castro's Cuba, and, in due course, opposition to the war in Vietnam, so the forces of the Right developed new methods of opposing their enemies. In the climate of superficial openness and accountability fostered by the new, young Kennedy administration, these methods were necessarily secret. The techniques of covert surveillance and subversion became the chosen modus operandi of newly empowered strata within the existing anti-communist network. Hoover's FBI and the CIA were more powerful than ever, especially after Nixon's election to the presidency. Indeed, the period from 1968 to 1974 saw an unprecedented growth in covert countersubversion operations by groups linked with one or other of the two agencies that controlled intelligence, the vast majority of them targeted at leftist groups at home and abroad whose very presence allegedly posed a threat to the stability of U.S. society. Such groups included the governments of sovereign nations like Castro's Cuba, New Left organizations like the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC) and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and off-shoots of the civil rights movement like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party (BPP), and the Weather Underground, many of which suffered not only the routine humiliation of McCarthyite court hearings, but also the intervention of new branches of the anti-communist network like the FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO).

As certain conspiracy theorists such as Peter Dale Scott argued at the time, the dramatic Watergate scandal of 1974 showed just how far the personnel and assumptions of the intelligence com-

munity, most of them derived from the early cold war years, had penetrated the Nixon White House. Thereafter, the strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act and the work of investigative journalists and historians allowed for a critical reappraisal of the earlier period and of the conspiratorial actions of central figures like Hoover, Nixon, and McCarthy. Nevertheless, this process of reassessment could not prevent a return to the dark days of the "high cold war" during the 1980s when President Reagan's confrontational foreign policy and sanction of covert operations in Latin America and elsewhere provided a sharp reminder that many of the causes of anti-communist paranoia remained active. Not since the immediate postwar period, however, has domestic anti-communism dominated the political and cultural agenda to the exclusion of all else. As Richard Powers's biography of J. Edgar Hoover confirmed, the characteristic approaches of many anti-communists in those crucial early years were often indistinguishable from those of the Communist "conspiracy" they sought to eliminate from U.S. life.

*Dorian Hayes*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Atomic Secrets; Central Intelligence Agency; Chambers, Whittaker; COINTELPRO; Cold War; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hiss, Alger; Hollywood 10; Hoover, J. Edgar; House Un-American Activities Committee; Industrial Workers of the World; McCarthy, Joseph; MK-ULTRA; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Red Scare; Roosevelt, Franklin D.; Sacco and Vanzetti; Venona Project.

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### Anti-Federalists

The United States was founded on conspiracy theories. Whiggish colonists started a revolution convinced that unscrupulous British ministers were deliberately undermining traditional English liberties. With independence secured, liberty was again threatened in 1787–1788, this time from within. An urban, largely commercial group, known as the Federalists, were conspiring to further their own pecuniary interests and enforce domestic tranquility by creating a new constitution in secret session. The Anti-Federalists, their opponents, used a common U.S. idiom—the conspiracy theory—to articulate their defense of decentralized government.

The Anti-Federalists were a loose collection of usually small-scale farmers and paper-money advocates who were generally suspicious of financiers, lawyers, merchants, and powerful landowners. They were strongest in rural areas and in the largest and most influential states: Massachusetts,

New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. It was from those states that they drew their most able partisans: Sam Adams, James Warren, George Clinton, George Mason, Samuel Bryan, Patrick Henry, and Richard Henry Lee. There was no organized Anti-Federalism in the way that the Constitution was written in committee or that Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay co-wrote the *Federalist Papers*. Instead, they represented a common American belief that what they called “consolidated government” (and modern Americans call “big government”) followed the interests of the elite at the expense of the common man.

### Intellectual Context

Americans inherited several predominantly English intellectual traditions that made conspiracy theories an intrinsic part of the rhetoric of early American political discourse. The radical Whigs of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England suspected the crown and its advisers of perpetually scheming to undermine English liberties. Moral philosophy, a product of the Enlightenment that sought to explain human interactions mechanistically, made humans directly responsible for all events, no matter how complex. Any unpopular act of Parliament or a provincial assembly, order of the king, or action of a provincial governor, regardless of how benignly or rationally conceived, could therefore be attributed to sinister motives. Religion also contributed to the matrix. The dissenting Protestantism of most colonists inculcated in many a watchfulness of their religious liberties—liberties that had been denied their fathers and brethren in England and on the European continent. All these made the colonists, as they put it, “jealous of”—that is, protective of, suspiciously watchful for—their liberties. In the greatest sustained debate in U.S. history, Anti-Federalists drew heavily on this intellectual heritage. They cited repeatedly the French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu, who insisted that republics could only be small. Anonymous Anti-Federalist essayists styled themselves “Cato,” “Algernon Sydney,” or “Brutus,” who slew the tyrannical Julius Caesar. Others wrote under names glorifying ordinary Americans: “A Federal



Farmer,” “A Countryman,” or “An Officer of the Late Continental Army.”

### Constitutional Conspiracy

The drafting and debating of the Constitution in 1787–1788 did little to convince the Anti-Federalists of the opposition’s virtues. Two New York delegates to the Constitutional Convention walked out, protesting that the Convention would not revise the Articles of Confederation as it was so summoned, but would create a new constitution. The New York Anti-Federalist polemicist Cato complained that these now dubious proceedings had taken place behind closed doors. Prominent Anti-Federalists complained of a suddenly dismal mail service. Newspaper editors, overwhelmingly Federalists, left Anti-Federalist editorials or rebuttals on press-room floors or grossly misrepresented opposition views. The prominent *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that Virginia Anti-Federalist and Revolutionary War statesman Patrick Henry was working for ratification. The Federalist *New-Hampshire Spy* told a heavily Anti-Federalist state that nary an opponent of the Constitution existed in all of New England.

The questionable manner in which the Constitution was born and the misrepresentation of its support inevitably led some Americans to doubt the beneficent motives of its authors. Anti-Federalists often concluded that the Constitution had been drafted to fashion a government run by the elite to enslave the common folk. The “Federal Farmer” of Pennsylvania saw in the Constitution a monarchy waiting to happen because so many of the wealthy were believed to be secretly attached to the principles of monarchy and aristocracy. George Mason of Virginia, the most intelligent and respected of the Anti-Federalists, predicted in a widely circulated pamphlet that a government under the proposed Constitution would waver between aristocracy and monarchy, finally culminating in one or the other.

### Anti-Federalist Objections

The source of Anti-Federal apprehension was the fear of centralized authority. The new Constitution seemed to many Anti-Federalists a throwback to its

colonial past with an unresponsive king, locally irresponsible provincial governors, and an unrepresentative Parliament that taxed at will. The Federalists proposed a national constitution that would supersede the individual state constitutions, which hitherto had been the equals of the Articles of Confederation. The implications of ending a truly federal system seemed ominous. “Brutus” of New York, the ablest of the Anti-Federalist theorists, worried that under the “necessary and proper” clause of Section 8, article 1 of the proposed Constitution, congress would possess absolute power and consolidate all state governments into one executive, legislature, and judiciary.

Nothing could prevent an aggrandizing national government from destroying civil liberties. The three branches of the proposed government would invariably function as a de facto aristocracy and monopolize power. Where Federalists saw checks and balances, Anti-Federalists foresaw juntas destroying public liberties. The executive, without term limits, with appointment, pardon, and veto powers, and in control of the military, would become an unrestrained “President-General” in league with the long-tenured Senate. Together, they would make war and peace as they saw fit, usurping national and state laws with international treaties. The House of Representatives, the most democratic feature of the new Constitution, was hardly representative enough for most Anti-Federalists, as only the elite would serve here. And the Supreme Court, appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, would be composed of judges beholden to their benefactors, interpreting laws and treaties accordingly. As the Constitution said nothing about preserving English common law, the courts would no longer check legislative and executive excesses, the “Federal Farmer” warned, but would now be part of them. A small coterie of like-minded men would make, interpret, and enforce the laws. Several Anti-Federalists remarked that so much power had been granted to the rulers in the proposed Constitution that there was no need for the ambitious to seize more. The Anti-Federalists also assumed that republics could only exist on a small scale. It was a lesson of history that republics must be near the

people, where local interests were closely guarded and local justice properly administered. Partly this was a sectional issue. How could a Virginian determine the interests of a New Yorker? Would not the more populous, urban, commercial North dominate the new government and enact policies to the detriment of the agrarian, slave holding South? The problem of a consolidated national government making uniform immigration laws was obvious, even among northern states. James Winthrop of Massachusetts, writing under the pseudonym Agrippa, found his state moral, pious, manly, and prosperous because of its long-standing restrictions on immigration. Impious and immoral Pennsylvania, conversely, had traded piety for prosperity by allowing anyone to emigrate. A distant, unrepresentative government was hardly preferred over provincialism.

### Bill of Rights

Despite these serious protestations against the proposed Constitution, some Anti-Federalist fears could be assuaged with a bill of rights guaranteeing civil liberties and states' rights. Here was the great contribution of Anti-Federalist conspiracy concerns. Ever jealous to protect their rights and the rights of state governments, they made it clear in numerous essays, letters, and speeches that some basic protection of the natural rights of citizens had to be included in any constitution for it to be accepted. Nothing in the proposed constitution guaranteed, among other things, freedom of religion, the press, and arms; trial by jury; and the reservation to the states of all unenumerated powers. Failure to include such provisions convinced most Anti-Federalists that their counterparts were conspiring to wreck democracy. In the end, the Constitution was ratified because Federalists promised that the first Congress under the new plan would take up the business of adding a bill of rights to the new Constitution. Enough Anti-Federalists—barely enough in key states like New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia—took them at their word. The new Constitution was ratified by the necessary nine of the thirteen state legislatures by July 1788. The Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments, the

product of conspiratorial warnings—was added four years later.

James Fisher

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### Anti-Masonic Party

Following the American Revolution, some critics began to voice their suspicions of Freemasonry as a secret society, and these concerns eventually led to the formation of the Anti-Masonic Party in the late 1820s.

Modern Freemasonry began in 1717 in England as a social organization built on the ancient traditions of the medieval masons' guild. It developed its own social hierarchy, with a complex system of lodges, titles, and rituals, and within a few years it began to spread abroad, coming to America by 1730. Over the next century, its aims of social camaraderie and moral education attracted a largely middle-class membership in America that eventually numbered in the tens of thousands, including such luminaries as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and other political and military leaders of the day. However, in the later eighteenth century critics voiced concerns about its overtly English origins, and its use of grandiose

titles (which was said to smack of discredited European aristocracy). Especially suspect was its strict code of secrecy, which was claimed to be enforced by the threat of a brutal death and to be nothing less than a cover for a foreign plot and moral debauchery.

After the French Revolution, many Americans became alarmed over the excesses of the new French government and its seeming rejection of the religious establishment, and paranoia over supposed ties between Freemasonry and France superseded earlier doubts about the society's English origins. In 1798, the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, a conservative Massachusetts pastor opposed to French ideas, delivered a sermon that linked Freemasonry to the evils of the French Revolution by way of a conspiracy theory that a secret society of Illuminated Masons, or Illuminati, had been formed in Germany to overthrow the institutions of government and church, and that Freemasonry was a secret society working to spread that subversion to the United States. Since some members of his own congregation were Masons, Morse was careful to distinguish between good and bad Masons, as did later anti-Masons, but the idea that their fellow citizens were part of a foreign plot proved hard to swallow for most Americans. Although the clamor over the Illuminati conspiracy did not last long, it did serve as a precursor to the more pronounced outbreak of anti-Masonry yet to come.

The event that led directly to the creation of the Anti-Masonic Party was the abduction and apparent murder in 1826 of Captain William Morgan of Batavia, New York. Having announced his plans to publish a book that would expose the secrets of Freemasonry, Morgan was seized by parties unknown and taken to Fort Niagara. From there he disappeared forever, and the later discovery of a body fed speculation that he had been murdered, although the body could not be positively identified as his. When those suspected of foul play went on trial, they were exonerated or given light sentences, inspiring a number of anti-Masonic groups to conduct their own private inquiries. A conspiracy theory about Morgan's demise was formulated and widely distributed, including claims that

prominent Masons had abducted and murdered him and, through their social and political influence, allowed the guilty parties to avoid punishment for the crime and induced the press to remain silent about the true facts of the case. An anti-Masonic social movement quickly sprang up, first in New York and then in other northeastern states, and attracted members especially from the agricultural classes, who mistrusted the largely middle-class Masons, and among church members who saw Freemasonry as a rival to organized religion. The anti-Masons especially objected to the secrecy practiced by Freemasonry, arguing that it was incompatible with democratic principles and served as a shield for the various illegal acts and outrageous plots of which Masons were suspected. Thus was born the first of a succession of nativist movements that spread through the United States in the nineteenth century, each with its own brand of prejudice.

Having emerged as the first widespread social movement in the history of the United States, anti-Masonry transformed itself into the first of America's third parties as it attracted support from those who were politically opposed to President Andrew Jackson, a Mason. Among the leading anti-Masons in New York were Thurlow Weed, a journalist who took over the editorship of the *Anti-Masonic Enquirer* in 1829, and William Seward, who would later become Abraham Lincoln's secretary of state. Anti-Masons started their own newspapers, organized local and state societies, and in 1832 ran their own candidate, William Wirt, for president of the United States against Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay, also a prominent Mason. A former U.S. attorney general, Wirt doubted that Clay could win, and hoped that his own candidacy would unite the opponents of Jackson, but in the Electoral College he succeeded in carrying only the state of Vermont, where the anti-Masons established themselves as the largest political party. A quarter of New Englanders voted anti-Masonic, but the poor national showing of the anti-Masons in the election of 1832 led to their rapid deterioration as a movement. Some of their younger leaders, Weed and Seward among them, joined the new Whig Party and even-

usually went on to become prominent members of the Republican Party, where a moral fervor against slavery substituted for their earlier antipathy to Freemasonry. The anti-Masons provided a model, flawed as it was, for those who would cast suspicion on secret societies, and in the mysterious fate of William Morgan they found inspiration for a complex conspiracy theory that could bear comparison with those surrounding U.S. political assassinations of the late twentieth century; but for all their efforts, they did little to endanger the existence of Freemasonry.

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**See also:** Freemasonry; Morgan, William; Morse, Jedidiah.

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### Anti-Rent War

Did the National Reform Association (NRA) and the Whig Party conspire against wealthy landowners in the 1840s to win votes from farmers along the Hudson River, or did the tenants use these groups to achieve their own goal of acquiring land? More likely, the relationship was mutually beneficial.

The farmers had been protesting years before the NRA and the Whigs began to help them. Economic conditions following the panic of 1837, and the death of the “Good Patron” Stephen Van Rensselaer III in 1839, led his sons, Stephen IV and William, to try to collect \$200,000 in overdue rents from the tenants on their father’s New York estates in eleven counties, including Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Rensselaer, and Schoharie. The farmers

refused to pay. They claimed that the land was not as productive as it used to be and that the landlord privileges were excessive. Since the price of wheat had increased over the years, the requirement to pay ten to fourteen bushels in addition to \$40 to \$65 per farm was too much. They wanted to renegotiate the leases or to purchase the land for \$2.00 to \$2.50 per acre, to revoke the landlord’s water, mill, and mineral rights, and to have the landlord forgive back rents for all tenants unable to borrow money. Stephen agreed to surrender his quarter sales for \$30.00 per farm or for \$2.00 per year, to give up his mineral rights, and to sell his poorer quality land for \$5.00 per acre, if a tenant paid all back rent. This angered the farmers, and on 4 July 1839, they drafted a declaration of independence.

During the ensuing months, farmers intimidated those who attempted to evict them. When Albany County Under Sheriff Amos Adams failed to heed a warning not to serve a writ on Isaac Hungerford, someone destroyed the sheriff’s wagon and harness and clipped his horses’ tails and manes. Crowds forced other law officers to throw their writs of eviction into barrels of blazing tar, armed themselves with sticks, and chased deputies away from their farms. On 2 December, Sheriff Michael Artcher gathered a citizen posse of 500, including former New York Governor William Marcy and John Van Buren, son of former President Martin Van Buren. When they reached a hamlet at the foot of the Helderberg Mountains, 1,600 men armed with clubs threatened them and they retreated. The tenants deployed two Revolutionary War field pieces to defend themselves. Governor William H. Seward dispatched three uniformed companies of the state militia, appealed to the tenants to put down their arms, and pledged to take their grievances to the state legislature. But the legislature took no action other than suggesting that, perhaps, the state use its power of eminent domain to force the landlords to sell at a fair price. Further negotiations failed and sheriffs continued their attempts to evict tenants.

In 1842 the NRA sent Thomas Devyr to help the tenants form an Anti-Rent Association with the goal of persuading the state to assist them. Organization flourished and on 18 January 1844, 25,000 tenants





The Anti-Rent War in New York State. Cartoon depicting an attack on the sheriff of Albany. (Bettmann/Corbis)

petitioned the legislature. A select committee of Whig representatives from the affected counties reported that the leases were onerous and repugnant, that the system stifled agricultural incentive, and the titles of the Patroons' heirs were questionable. But

the Judiciary Committee concluded that the tenants should purchase the land at the asking price.

The tenants intensified efforts to organize, this time with an auxiliary secret army. Ten thousand disguised themselves as "Indians," donning sheepskin



masks and calico skirts and calling themselves to arms with the sound of a tin horn. They tarred and feathered deputies, intimidated tenants willing to pay their rent, frightened the Patroon's heirs, and shot to death two persons who favored the rents. The legislature passed an act to prevent persons from appearing in public disguised and armed.

On 12 March 1844, Delaware County Under Sheriff Osman N. Steele with 50 men defeated 100 "Indians" and arrested several who were convicted and sent to prison. Agitation increased and on 7 August, when Steele attempted to sell the property of Moses Earle to pay his back rent of \$64, someone in the crowd fired shots, killing the sheriff. This triggered a violent backlash against the anti-renters and led Governor Silas Wright to proclaim the county in a state of insurrection. Authorities arrested 242 men, convicted 2 of murder and sentenced them to death, sentenced 4 to life in prison and 13 to lesser terms, and fined 51. On 22 November, the governor commuted the death sentences to life in prison and asked the legislature to tax incomes from rent and to limit the duration of all future leases. The legislature passed the tax. Then, in February 1847, newly elected Whig Governor John Young pardoned 18 anti-rent prisoners and Stephen Van Rensselaer offered to sell some of his land for \$2 per acre.

When voters elected more anti-rent candidates in 1848, the legislature directed Attorney General Ambrose Jordan to test the Patroon's title in court. He filed eleven cases against Stephen, who lost in lower court but won on appeal. Then, in 1852, the court of appeals unanimously upheld a new case declaring quarter sales illegal and void. Finally, Stephen sold his west Albany lands in 1853 and his East Manor in 1857.

Some incidents occurred even later. In 1860 William Witbeck shot and killed Deputy Sheriff William Griggs when the latter attempted to evict him for back rent. In 1865 "Indians" abused a man who purchased a farm from a person who had been evicted. And as late as 1866 a sheriff had to call for reinforcements when seventy-five armed men accosted him for attempting to evict a farmer.

*JeDon A. Emenhiser*

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## Antisemitism

The concept of antisemitism refers to two distinct kinds of prejudice and hostility against Jews. It denotes both an essentially premodern hatred against Judaism as a religion and a cultural community, and a more modern, racist and economic aversion to practically all of Jewish ethnicity or heritage. Both types of antisemitism regard Jews as a uniform group with inherent characteristics and predilections, whether they are derived from religion, from historical-cultural development, or from the supposed racial essence of a people. The older type of antisemitism formed a part of the worldview of several Western and Middle Eastern religions since before the Common Era and was perpetuated through patristic, medieval Catholic, and early Protestant church doctrine. The latter type has proliferated with the elaboration of those modern industrial, economic, and democratic structures with which disproportionate numbers of Jewish people have been associated. In the United States both generic forms of antisemitism have existed throughout the country's history, marginal in numbers but pervasive in the ethos of several extremist groups and fluidly imbedded in mass popular culture. Both forms of antisemitism have also yielded to various conspiracy theories throughout U.S. history. This has been the case especially in the period after the 1870s when several overarching conspiracist syntheses have been constructed and broadcast by antisemitic ideologues and publicists.

## Christian Antisemitism in Colonial and Antebellum America

In the colonial period of American history and in the early Republic antisemitic prejudice rarely resulted in full-blown conspiracy theory. Much of

those periods' public doctrine was, however, underlain by a traditional Christian public theology that incorporated a deeply ambivalent and frequently adversarial attitude toward Jews and Judaism. These attitudes abided, were reformulated, and significantly contributed to the content of later, more modern forms of antisemitic conspiracism. Among Christian motifs with powerful conspiracist resonance were the concepts of original sin, of the Fall of Man, and the supposedly continual temporal struggle between forces of good and evil, of Christ and of Antichrist. These motifs tended to envisage this worldly existence as a space characterized by human rebellion and hubris, rooted in the Fall, and in a free will wrongly employed, which amounted to a conspiracy against a divinely set and ultimately triumphant order. Given its supersessionary outlook (i.e., a belief that the Christian religion had now rightfully replaced or "superseded" Judaism), such a worldview not surprisingly supported and became enmeshed with antisemitism. Supersessionary beliefs were grounded in antisemitism by early Christian writings, and later by Catholic canon law and early Protestant texts, much of which tended to associate postbiblical Jews and Judaism with satanic forces and to imagine a Jewish desire to destroy Christians and Christianity. Such underlying, cosmic conspiracy beliefs were particularly strong in the Puritan Protestant forms of Christianity that were prevalent in the United States of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These tended to predict a future apocalypse in which Christianity came to take over the world from its supposed infidel or Judaic grasp.

Given that for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of U.S. citizens identified with some form of Christian religion, the nation was particularly predisposed for varied syntheses of religion, conspiracism, and antisemitism. Although a strong pro-semitic strand also existed from the beginning of the Christian experience in the United States, many leading Protestant clergymen of the colonial and early republican periods did proffer a public theology along antisemitic lines conducive of conspiracism. Some of these clergy,

such as the colonial New England divines John Winthrop and Cotton and Increase Mather, denounced Jews as "the synagogue of the Antichrist," and accused them of supposedly using magic and witchcraft in an anti-Christian, satanically inspired campaign. Others accused Jews, Roman Catholics, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians of a joint conspiracy to foist an established, apostate church on the United States. Also, popular myths dating back to the medieval age continued to circulate well into the nineteenth century about Jewish anti-Christian practices such as the poisoning of wells, the drinking of Christian blood, and the desecration of the Holy Communion wafers, as well as about Talmudic prayers for the annihilation of all Christians. On occasion these myths found expression through the idiom of conspiracy, but more often this so-called chimerical antisemitism restrained itself to a more general and unsystematic, politically unorganized prejudice. For the most part, the conspiracies pointed out were taken to be local and contextual on the one hand, and universal but transcendental on the other hand.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, this kind of a religion-based conspiracist attitude did not, however, tend to lend itself to political conspiracy theory. As far as such theory existed, it was more likely still to be directed against the British, the French, and the Roman Catholics, or against such secret societies as the Freemasons, than against observant Jews. This was the case especially with the conspiracist polemic that briefly followed the French Revolution in 1789 and in which some leading Protestant clergy for the first time broached the so-called Illuminati conspiracy theory, later to be suffused with antisemitism. In what were the first theories ever constructed about a universal, systematically led political conspiracy, the Illuminati were taken to be the world conspiracist hub of Enlightenment philosophers, Freemasons, and of several occult anti-Christian secret societies, and as such the organization primarily responsible for the French Revolution and for all subsequent subversive and anti-Christian agitation. The major European theorists who con-

structed that all-inclusive theory sometimes claimed that Jews were to be found at the core of its subversive apparatus and that Jews in particular were the ones ultimately directing it. Some U.S. conspiracy theorists alluded to such accusations, first made in 1806, and they sometimes formed part of the mostly anti-Catholic and anti-Masonic agitation of the early- and mid-nineteenth-century mass political movements, the Anti-Masonic Party and the Know-Nothing (American) Party. However, such claims were not generally accepted at the time, and also the French Revolution's contemporary U.S. critics tended to regard its conspiratorial aspects as largely unconnected with Judaism or Jewishness.

All in all, in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there rarely resulted anti-semitic action comparable to that which was endemic in contemporary European societies. Although residual discrimination in office holding and sometimes in voting and landowning rights continued in some states into the nineteenth century, on the whole antisemitic prejudice in the United States remained weak. Its conspiracist aspects were weaker still, residing mostly in general and diffuse suppositions about a cosmic conspiracy by those refusing to accept Christianity.

### **Modern Political and Economic Antisemitism**

It was only with the arrival in the late nineteenth century of two additional sets of influences—modern finance capitalism and modern racist theory—that the materials were all in place for the emergence of a fully developed antisemitic conspiracy theory. In its consistent, generic form this theory came to accuse all Jews, as a group, of having colluded to take unfair advantage of the economic and political power that, after late-nineteenth-century Jewish emancipation, was for the first time formally available to them. Given that this generic theory issued from secular, economic, and racist speculations, the prescriptiveness for antisemitic conspiracy theory of Christian attitudes would seem to be open to question. Yet it remains equally true that antecedent Christian prejudices had

already predisposed many in the Gentile world so to configure all subsequent threats to traditional religio-political valuations and structures that Jews were accorded a central role.

In the United States and in Western Europe this modern, economic, and racist form of antisemitism emerged after about 1870. It was by that time that most Western European Jews had achieved full political emancipation and civil rights and had suddenly become socially and politically more prominent than ever. Jewish representation in the financial and commercial sectors was by that time already disproportionate. According to so-called interactionist models of antisemitism, this multiple new conspicuousness of Jews called forth intensified European animosity toward them. The same process was at work in the United States, even though political emancipation had taken place much earlier. For the late-nineteenth-century rise of the Jews was patent in the United States as well, partially because of the arrival of great numbers of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and partially because of Jewish prominence in the new class of finance capitalists that emerged after the Civil War. The unprecedentedly swift and pervasive period of industrialization, urbanization, and economic centralization that also followed the Civil War generated new economic dislocations and anxieties just as Jews became more prominent and seemed more than others to benefit from the changes. For those so minded, it proved irresistible not to trace that conjunction to a secret financial cabal that was malevolent, foreign, international, and Jewish.

From the early Republic onward some U.S. anti-semites had voiced concerns over what they perceived as Jewish power in international finance and commerce far in excess of what their numbers should have indicated. Late-eighteenth-century plans for the construction of an American Bank had been denounced as a secular Jewish conspiracy, and similar charges had reemerged at regular intervals throughout the nineteenth century. During the Civil War they had enjoyed a particular revival, and the commander of the Union armies, General Ulysses S. Grant, had at one point tried to evict all Jews from areas under his control because

of their purportedly disloyal commercial activities. On the Confederate side similar, inverted charges had been made against the Jewish secretary of state Judah Benjamin and against others said to conspire against the Confederacy and on behalf of international financiers and moneylenders. With the palpable rise of American-Jewish banking interests that took place from the late nineteenth century onward, these kinds of charges multiplied and intensified manifold.

Most conspicuous in the discourse of various left-wing populist and agricultural protest movements, such as the Populist Party, this new economic antisemitism issued in a variety of full-blown conspiracy theories in the 1870s through the 1890s. In these conspiracy theories all the perceived evils of modern capitalism and industrialism were ascribed to Jews, because of their supposed racial/religious bent for exploitation and, on a more precise level, because of the purported machinations of identifiable Jewish financiers. The latter type of theories tended to center around the supposed power of the Rothschild banking family and those of its U.S. agents that were central in various reconstruction and public debt refinancing schemes after the Civil War, as well as in an essentially imperialist defense of their investments abroad. The economic dislocations attendant on these schemes were highly disruptive of traditional agrarian communities, and in the western and southern areas most affected they tended to be blamed on a cabal of Jewish financiers acting in collusion with corrupted Gentile politicians. This strand of left-wing antisemitism reached something of a culmination in the 1890s campaigns for the free coinage of silver (and against imperialism) by the Democratic presidential candidate William J. Bryan. Affiliated motifs could still be detected after World War I in various anti-internationalist, isolationist, and social reformatory forms of discourse.

On the political right, as well as elsewhere, these conspiracist speculations were further focused by the new racist, eugenicist, and social Darwinist theories, which made their appearance at about the same time. No major race theorist emerged in the United States, but a more generally orienting racist

paradigm came to characterize much of the intellectual discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both right-wing and left-wing intellectuals traversed racist arguments, claiming that some inherent, genetically acquired racial imperative drove Jews toward a quest for world domination and generally to reprehensible financial and commercial activities. Elitist literary antisemites further accused Jews of having a baneful, corrupting influence on the aesthetic and moral standards of U.S. life through their financial dealings and through the control that they allegedly acquired in early-twentieth-century print media and in the Hollywood film industry. These elitist antisemites tended to regard both of these kinds of supposedly Jewish influence as somehow racially grounded and possibly conspiracist in nature; certainly international and pervasive.

A fusion of these right- and left-wing tracks of racist antisemitism was never effected, but in the United States no less than in Europe they separately continued to color much of public discussion throughout the twentieth century. On the whole, the Left's racist conspiracism tended to remain altogether more implied and unsystematic, directed against international bankers in general, while the right-wing version moved ever closer to structured and highly ossified universal conspiracy theories.

### **Antisemitism and Twentieth-Century Illuminati Theory**

In the wake of World War I right-wing conspiracy theorists revived and brought up to date the older theories on the Illuminati. It was then that antisemitism was, for the first time, placed into the very center of the Illuminati theory. Its full-blown twentieth-century forms tended to be adaptations from the writings of Nesta Webster, a British pioneer of the study of the Illuminati whose many publications were widely circulated in the English-speaking world from 1918 onward. It was she, more than any other, who framed the twentieth-century interpretive matrix that made secular and revolutionary Jews the controlling and directing power behind the Illuminati. Claiming that the originally Masonic organization had been taken

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over at some point by an inner cabal of influential Jewish financiers, philosophers, and Reform rabbis, Webster and her conspiracist followers portrayed all, apparently unrelated forms of subversion as deliberately chosen, complementary tracks of a core Jewish conspiracy.

This reformulation of the Illuminati theory found favor primarily because of the need to explain Russian Bolshevism, the apparent overrepresentation of Jews in it, and the purported interest of international financiers to trade with the Bolsheviks and to have them recognized by the Western powers. The concurrent radicalization of Western labor movements and of colonial nationalists provided further causes for concern for many on the right, as did the creation of the League of Nations as a new supranational authority invested with a radical social program. This multiple coincidence could not readily be explained in traditional, nonconspiracist ways, least of all by those already steeped in Christian conspiracist thought-forms and interested in continued adherence to traditional religio-political authorities. In the tumultuous aftermath of World War I, all of these developments were instead increasingly interpreted from the Illuminati theory and pronounced different tracks in the campaign for world control of the Illuminati's core of Jewish financiers.

The 1920 republication of the so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* provided crucial added documentation for this new version of the Illuminati theory. *Protocols* contained a relatively precise program of action that fitted in with earlier predictions and could be presented by conspiracy theorists as the exposed twentieth-century plan of Illuminati action. Although the document was actually a forgery created by czarist secret police, the authenticity of the *Protocols* as a secret Jewish document was vouched for by a wide range of apparently respectable commentators. Various abridgements and commentaries of the *Protocols* quickly spread in the United States. Especially influential among them were those broadcast in the *Dearborn Independent* and the book *The International Jew* (1921) by the industrialist Henry Ford. He became the primary popular disseminator of Illuminati conspir-

acism in the United States and, more than anyone else, was responsible for the unprecedented spread and popular acceptance of the Jew-Bolshevik equation, which coincided with his period of greatest antisemitic activity, the years 1920–1927. A range of lesser known and less influential U.S. antisemites further popularized the Jew-Bolshevik collusion before and after Ford's public recanting in 1927. From the Catholic radio priest Father Coughlin to the Silver Shirts of William D. Pelley and from the Defenders of the Christian Faith of Gerald D. Winrod to Gerald L. K. Smith's Christian Nationalist Crusade, these populist antisemites benefited from and used the anxieties of the Great Depression to incorporate in 1920s generic conspiracy theory such subsequent developments as the New Deal, or "Jew Deal," and the United Nations. More than a hundred new antisemitic organizations were created in the 1930s, most of them rooted in this kind of conspiracism.

In the 1930s and 1940s, speculations on the Illuminati also found their way to the exegesis of many prominent Christian fundamentalist leaders. Especially important in this regard was William B. Riley, the Baptist founder and head of the World Christian Fundamentals Association, who commanded an important position in Christian print and radio media and in various fundamentalist organizations, and could thus powerfully exert himself in the spreading and popularizing of antisemitic attitudes. Riley primed the early cold-war generation of fundamentalist leaders and made sure that Christian fundamentalist theology accommodated secular Illuminati conspiracism within the older framework of Christian prophecy thought. He, his disciples, and others like him endorsed the Illuminati theory, accepted *Protocols* as largely authentic, and accentuated the purported Jewishness of international communism. Believing in the imminence of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and in a preceding anti-Christian world empire, these fundamentalists tended also to portray the League of Nations and the UN as prefigurations of the coming anti-Christian world power and to oppose them as such. They further assumed that secular Jews, in particular, played a central role in this anti-Christian world power and



that it operated along the lines sketched out in the *Protocols*.

Renditions of Illuminati theory thus shaped by fundamentalism were used by many religious and secular antisemites throughout the interwar and cold-war periods. To them, it cohered the apparently unrelated, subversionary, and anti-Christian movements of religious and cultural modernism, international communism, liberal internationalism, colonial nationalism, and, originally, Zionism. Each was presented as but one track in the world conspiracy of secular Jews and their allies, each designed in its different way to weaken the temporal power of Christianity, and each directed by an immensely powerful inner cabal of conspirators. Because of its malleable and inclusive nature, such a compound conspiracy theory proved appealing to many on the political and religious right, usable in a range of anticommunist and antimodernist campaigns from the 1940s to the early 1990s.

By any gauge, antisemitism precipitously declined in the United States during the cold war. The antisemitic aspects of anticommunist conspiracy theory tended to become ever more rarely voiced and explicit, more and more silent and implied. Yet behind much of the anticommunist clamor of the cold war the old antisemitic prejudices still operated.

### **Post-Cold War Trends**

No marked weakening of the various antisemitic conspiracy theories was noticeable immediately after the cold war, even though one of their main rationales was removed by the implosion of the Soviet Union and of international communism. Also, the increasingly consensual aversion felt toward antisemitism that the crimes of the Holocaust had generated in Western societies made it increasingly difficult for conspiracists to maintain the overtly antisemitic complexion of their theory. Yet its essence remained unchanged. Conspiracy theorists' concerns were hardly alleviated by the ending of the cold war, for they saw in it the collapse of only one overt aspect of a still ongoing conspiracy. After the cold war conspiracist discourse centered increasingly on international organizations, such as the UN,

the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, which were now portrayed as the residual aspects of the one single conspiracy of which international communism had been another aspect. The supposedly Jewish character of that conspiracy's inner cabal was now referenced more through general allusions to international finance than through direct naming, but the antisemitic element remained at the core of the theory, as did, frequently, the Illuminati.

One new constituency for antisemitic conspiracism received much public attention from the 1980s onward, but its theories did not contain anything new. This was the antisemitism apparent in the African American community, most glaringly in the Nation of Islam movement. Its leaders, and other prominent African American antisemites, revisited all the customary religious, economic, and racist conspiracy theories, but it was manifest that the core motifs of antisemitic conspiracy theory had remained remarkably uniform and unchanged from their first appearance.

Throughout its long history in the United States, antisemitism has yielded itself to conspiracism, whether premised on antecedent religious prejudices or more interactionist prompters. Its religious and secular forms alike have tended to coalesce around a number of slightly different but essentially homogeneous permutations of the so-called Illuminati conspiracy theory. This theory has proved to be one of the most persistent containers of antisemitism ever, not least because its malleable and all-inclusive nature can be used to accommodate widely dissimilar forms of economic, religious, racist, or political anxiety. For most Americans, a general predisposition toward conspiracist explanations came from originally Christian forms of anti-Jewish prejudice, and the Illuminati theory was situated into this context as a secularized form of millennialist speculation. Gradually, its appearance became emphatically anticommunist and anti-internationalist and its antisemitic roots increasingly obscured. However, there was no doubt but that secular conspiracy belief, especially when allied with prophecy belief, was a mainstay of much of U.S. popular and extremist

thought well into the post-cold war era. Nor was there much doubt that such conspiracism was predicated on presuppositions and paradigms originally derived from religious and racist antisemitic speculation.

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**See also:** Barruel, Abbé; Illuminati; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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## Apocalypticism

Conspiracy theories are sometimes generated through an apocalyptic worldview. An apocalypse is an approaching significant transformation that will mark a new phase of human experience. Those anticipating the apocalypse can passively wait for the event or actively promote its arrival. They can dream of the dawning of the Age of Aquarius or fear the nightmare of a terminal nuclear wasteland.

The terms “apocalypse,” “revelation,” and “prophecy” share common root words related to the uncovering of hidden truths—a core claim of conspiracy theories. Apocalypticism is a major feature of Christianity, but the tradition has deep roots in Zoroastrianism and Judaism and can be found in Islam, Hinduism, and other religions. Today the influence of the apocalyptic mindset has emerged from these religious traditions and transmuted into a dizzying array of secular beliefs.

Apocalyptic movements often anticipate the betrayal of an idealized community by secret

malevolent forces conspiring against the common good. Those persons sounding the warning urge immediate and drastic measures to stop the secret conspiracy from achieving its sinister goals. Episodes of this type of apocalyptic conspiracism appear periodically throughout U.S. history: witch-hunts in Salem in the 1600s; fears of “alien” sedition in the late 1700s; claims of plots by Freemasons or Catholics in the 1800s; allegations of a Jewish banking cabal behind the Federal Reserve in the early 1900s; and the anticommunist witch-hunts of the cold-war 1950s. Historian Richard Hofstadter studied U.S. anti-Masonic movements of the 1800s and wrote of the “apocalyptic and absolutist framework” of those warning of the claimed conspiracy (Hofstadter, 17). He developed the theory that conspiracy thinking in U.S. right-wing movements represented a “paranoid style” in U.S. politics. According to Hofstadter, “the central preconception of the paranoid style [is the belief in the] existence of a vast, insidious, preternaturally effective international conspiratorial network designed to perpetrate acts of the most fiendish character” (Hofstadter, 14). He argued that grandiose conspiracy theories were constructed when a conspiracism channeled a sense of persecution and hostility into apocalyptic claims that were overheated, overly suspicious, and overaggressive.

Damian Thompson looked at Hofstadter’s thesis and concluded he was right to emphasize the “startling affinities between the paranoid style and apocalyptic belief,” especially the demonization of opponents and “the sense of time running out.” But Thompson felt Hofstadter “stopped short of making a more direct connection between the two. He did not consider the possibility that the paranoia he identified actually derived from apocalyptic belief; that the people who spread scare stories about Catholics, Masons, Illuminati and Communists” had been primed by the dramatic conspiracist narrative of the End Times popular among Protestants in the United States. Thompson argued that “the persistence of such belief in the United States rather than Europe surely explains why the paranoid style seems so quintessentially American” (Thompson, 307–308).

In the 1950s academics postulated that those who join dissident social movements (and sometimes circulate conspiracy theories) are psychologically unbalanced. Phrases such as “lunatic fringe,” “extremists of the left and right,” and “wing nuts” gained popular usage—especially to dismiss the activism of the 1960s. This view is sometimes called the classical or pluralist school, represented by authors such as Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset. Critics of the classical school call it the “centrist/extremist theory” because it glorifies an idealized center and implicitly defends the status quo, shielding the powerful from popular complaints. Hofstadter actually drew a distinction between the psychological and the sociological in his work, but for years the idea that paranoid-sounding conspiracy theories were a sign of mental illness reigned supreme as an influential concept, especially in mainstream media.

Since the 1980s academic theories about social movements have stressed their rational and strategic nature, portraying dissidents as people seeking the redress of grievances by collectively mobilizing resources and exploiting political opportunities. All dissident movements involve some form of apocalypticism with their narrative of speaking truth to power and demands for a transformation of existing relationships that enforce dominance and oppression. Investigative reporters are practicing a form of apocalypticism when they uncover criminal conspiracies and malfeasance by political and business leaders.

Some analysts argue that when dissidents develop the more spectacular and dubious conspiracy theories, it is a misdirected attempt to understand and challenge the actual power and privilege of dominant groups (Fenster). This type of conspiracism is a narrative form of scapegoating where the apocalyptic style is used to demonize targeted groups as wholly evil, and to valorize as a hero the person sounding the warning about the malevolent plot (Berlet and Lyons, 9). There is increasing attention to the apocalyptic style in the study of history, sociology, and political science; and it has a long pedigree in studies of religion and literature. As an applied way of seeing the world, however, it is as old as the Bible.

### Revelation

In Western culture, apocalypticism traces back to the Book of Revelation, the last book in the New Testament in the Bible. Revelation contains a prophetic story of God’s wrath caused by the rising tide of greed, sloth, lust, and sin in general. As a warning, God orders the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse to spread wars, diseases, civil strife, and natural disasters.

Satan seizes this time of chaos to send in the Antichrist, who appears in human form as a popular world leader, promising peace through the building of one worldwide government. His accomplice, the False Prophet, urges all world religions to unite. A rumor is spread that the popular world leader is actually the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Some Christians are fooled.

The real aim, however, is the total destruction of Christianity. Once the evil Antichrist gains control of the world through a conspiracy involving betrayal by popular political and religious leaders, the storm troopers of Satan start to track down true Christians. When caught, the Christians not fooled by the Antichrist are told they must accept the mark of the beast—666—as proof they have renounced their earlier beliefs. If they refuse, they are rounded up, tortured, and murdered. God eventually intervenes, and there is a huge battle on the plains of Armageddon in the Middle East. Good triumphs over evil, ushering in a millennium of Christian rule.

Many Christians see the Book of Revelation in metaphoric terms, but others read it as a God-given script in which they must play a role when the time comes. While apocalyptic millennialism based on the Book of Revelation is more prevalent in Protestantism, it exists in Catholic subcultures as well.

### Christian Apocalyptic Millennialism

Most contemporary Protestant Christian fundamentalists are premillennialists, believing the Second Coming of Christ starts a thousand-year period of Christian rule. Some Protestant fundamentalists are postmillennialists who believe that godly Christian men must seize control of society and rule for



Albrecht Durer's drawing depicting the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1498. (Bettmann/Corbis)

one thousand years before Christ returns. The most militant of these are the Christian Reconstructionists. The terms “millennialist” and “millenarian” are often used interchangeably to describe social and political movements that are apocalyptic and seek the ideal society. The concept is used regularly in anthropology, where an early and influential study looked at millenarian “Cargo Cults” that emerged in the Pacific Islands in the 1940s and 1950s.

It is the demonizing version of apocalyptic Christian millennialism that has played a major role in establishing conspiracism as a key frame of reference in European cultures—and later in the new colonies of the Americas. The problem starts when apocalyptic Christians in Europe started viewing current world events as “signs of the End Times,”

and then scapegoated those with whom they disagreed as agents of the Antichrist. This dynamic drew on the ancient tradition of dualism or Manicheism, in which the world is seen as a stage for a struggle between absolute good and absolute evil. The cast of players is composed of “Us” versus “Them.” This divisive process is sometimes called the creation of the apocalyptic “Other.”

For Christians, Jews were often cast in the role of the “Other.” As early as the second century, Christians portrayed Jews as in league with the Antichrist. Twelfth-century Christians blamed Jews for the ritual murder of children, poisoning of wells, desecration of communion bread and wine, and other heinous acts. During the Inquisitions that followed in later centuries, the apocalyptic scapegoating of Jews was often tied to a claim that they were engaged in a vast evil conspiracy. This process was repeated during the sixteenth century, and can be found in the anti-Jewish writings of Martin Luther, for whom the Reformation was a necessary purifying prelude to what he saw as the approaching End Times.

The conspiracist reading of Revelation became a central apocalyptic narrative in the political discourse of Christians. The image that reverberated down through the centuries was of a vast global conspiracy involving high government officials betraying the decent productive citizens, while subversive parasitic agents gnawed away at society from below.

### Freemasons, Jews, and Communists

When the theories of the Enlightenment began to popularize the notion of the separation of church and state and the inherent rights of the individual, those intellectuals who defended the unrestrained prerogatives of church-state oligarchies were quick to cast their critics in the role of subversive conspirators. In the 1790s John Robison and Abbé Augustin Barruel claimed that the revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment—and the French Revolution—were part of a plot networked through lodges of Freemasons. The alleged culprits were the Illuminati, members of a philosophical study group started by a Bavarian free-thinker named



Adam Weishaupt. Both Robison's and Barruel's books are apocalyptic in a generic sense, but excited readers quickly wove their themes into vividly apocalyptic scenarios.

In the early 1900s, charges that the Freemasons controlled the banks, the press, politics, and the government were rewritten into an antisemitic hoax document claiming a Jewish world conspiracy. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* first appeared in Russia as a creation of the czarist secret police, and its most popular early version specifically linked Jews to the conspiratorial machinations of the Antichrist. The *Protocols* argues that behind the Freemason conspiracy is an even more secret conspiracy run by rabbis.

Implicit in both the anti-Masonic and antisemitic conspiracist narratives, as they were first modified for U.S. consumption, is the theme that the United States is essentially a Christian nation threatened with subversion by anti-Christian secret elites with allies in high places. The secular version of U.S. conspiracism omits the overtly religious references and simply looks for betrayal by political and religious leaders. Conspiracist movements in the United States derived their specific narratives from these historic roots, ranging from mildly generic to harshly antisemitic.

Godless communism was the central conspiracy scapegoat for many conservative Christians in the twentieth century. The rise of U.S. Protestant Fundamentalism in the early 1900s coincided with a secular political attack on bolshevism and anarchism as un-American. Defense of democracy and capitalism became interwoven. This buttressed support for the Palmer Raids in late 1919 and 1920, during which socialist and anarchist labor organizers were accused of plotting an apocalyptic campaign of bombing and insurrection. Projecting their apocalyptic fears into action, the government launched a countersubversive campaign that deported thousands of immigrants from Italy and Russia based on the false perception that they were all part of a conspiracy of criminal sedition.

Events such as the establishment of the Federal Reserve System and the income tax were woven into Christian apocalyptic conspiracism, and flour-

ished during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. These were sometimes portrayed as part of the efforts of the Antichrist to socialize and collectivize all societies under a one-world government as prophesied in Revelation. Christian evangelical tracts discussing the relationship between communism and the apocalyptic End Times were popular from the 1920s through the 1960s. Different subcultures could easily weave in claims that behind the evil of the "red menace" were Freemasons, Jews, or both. Later it was the UN, the Trilateral Commission, or other scapegoats.

### Apocalypticism and Fundamentalism

Hal Lindsey reignited Protestant apocalyptic speculation in 1970 with his book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which sold 19 million copies. U.S. Protestant fundamentalists were the main audience for this and the many apocalyptic books that followed. The original use of the term "fundamentalism" referred to a populist theological protest movement that arose within U.S. Protestantism in the early twentieth century. Fundamentalism was a reaction against mainline Protestant denominations in the United States such as Presbyterians and Baptists and, to a lesser extent, Methodists, Episcopalians, and others. Leaders of these major denominations were accused of selling out the Protestant faith by forging a compromise with the ideas of the Enlightenment and modernism. In the early 1900s conservative critics of this denominational leadership developed voluminous lists of what they considered the fundamental beliefs required for people to consider themselves Christian—thus the term "fundamentalism."

The term is now used to describe similar but not identical religious renewal movements in other religious traditions, including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Fundamentalism is often confused with orthodoxy and traditionalism. Fundamentalists claim to be restoring the "true" religion by returning to "traditional" beliefs and enforcing orthodoxy—the set of theological doctrines approved of as sound and correct by a faith's religious leaders. In fact, while fundamentalist movements claim to be restoring tradition and orthodoxy, they actually cre-



ate a new version of an existing religion based on a mythic and romanticized past.

There is a basic apocalyptic framework common across religious fundamentalist movements—the idea that a struggle between good and evil is reaching a crucial moment in history. One way to mobilize people to join a religious fundamentalist movement is to claim that the idealized Godly society is being subverted by an evil conspiracy. This raises the stakes in the anticipated apocalyptic confrontation.

Fuller ties the Christian millennialist viewpoint to the larger issues of demonization and scapegoating when he argues that “Many efforts to name the Antichrist appear to be rooted in the psychological need to project one’s ‘unacceptable’ tendencies onto a demonic enemy. It is the Antichrist, not oneself, who must be held responsible for wayward desires. And with so many aspects of modern American life potentially luring individuals into nonbiblical thoughts or desires, it is no wonder that many people believe that the Antichrist has camouflaged himself to better work his conspiracies against the faithful” (Fuller, 168).

While many dissident movements (religious or secular) are in some sense apocalyptic, not all such movements utilize demonization and scapegoating to construct conspiracy theories. Even those Christians who think the End Times are imminent do not automatically succumb to conspiracism. There is a deep division within modern Christianity between those Christians who identify evil with specific persons and groups such as Muslims, feminists, or homosexuals and those Christians who see evil as the will to dominate and oppress. The distinction cuts across theological and political lines. Some of the most vocal critics of apocalyptic demonization and conspiracist scapegoating come from within Christianity, such as Gregory S. Camp or Dale Aukerman.

### Apocalyptic New World Order

When European communism began to collapse in the late 1980s, many Christian conspiracists simply shifted their attention to another godless philosophy—secular humanism. The attack on liberal secular humanism gave new life to fundamentalist

conspiracy theory. On the one hand, the secular humanist conspiracy could be tied to the outward manifestations of the Satanic End Times, while on the other, a conservative critique of liberalism and moral relativism that omitted overt references to prophetic passages in Revelation could be crafted.

Apocalypticism remained central in both versions as a call for a return to “traditional” values as the only way to stave off the impending collapse of society. This came to be known as the Culture Wars.

As the calendar year 2000 approached, scores of books aimed at Christian evangelicals warned of the coming apocalypse and many contained elaborate conspiracy scenarios involving the Antichrist, the Freemasons, the UN, computers, universal price codes, and corporate globalization. Jeremiah Films produces videos with conservative Christian apocalyptic theology emerging in the form of conspiracist claims. The 1993 video *The Crash—The Coming Financial Collapse of America* comes in two versions: one with a secular doomsday scenario and a Christian version featuring Biblical prophesy. Jeremiah Films distributed several videos claiming vast conspiracies by the Clinton administration, including allegations that the president had his aide Vince Foster assassinated.

Preparing to survive the coming apocalypse is the basis of the survivalist subculture that stores food and conducts self-defense training. Conspiracism, apocalypticism, and survivalism are a potent stew. The tragic shootout between federal agents and the Weaver family in Idaho in 1992 involved government misconduct and a failure to understand the power of apocalyptic belief. The Weavers were survivalists because they were followers of Christian Identity, a theology rejected by all mainstream Christians that claims the United States is the Promised Land and white Christians are God’s chosen people. The neo-Nazi version of Identity claims Jews are Satanic agents, and sometimes followers arm themselves for what they believe is an imminent apocalyptic race war. The Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, was a survivalist center, and leader David Koresh was decoding Revelation as an End Times script. The failure of government

officials to understand this dynamic resulted in many needless deaths in 1993.

Spurred by anger over these events, the Patriot movement developed an armed wing, known as citizen militias, which briefly flourished in the mid-1990s. Patriot social movements involve as many as 5 million Americans who believe that the government is manipulated by subversive secret elites and is planning to use law enforcement or military force to repress political rights. The militias circulated an elaborate conspiracy theory about betrayal by secret internationalist elites that is a standard narrative of right-wing populist movements in the United States. A popular speaker in these circles is Robert K. Spear, author of *Surviving Global Slavery: Living under the New World Order*. Spear believed the formation of armed Christian communities was necessary to avoid the mark of the beast in the coming End Times.

The approach of the year 2000 seemed to stimulate apocalyptic excitement in a variety of groups. The Aum Shinrikyo sect turned its apocalypticism outward with a deadly 1995 Sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway. The Heaven's Gate mass suicide in 1997 merged millennial apocalyptic visions from the Bible, the prophecies of Nostradamus, and the literary genre of science fiction. Also turning its apocalypticism inward, between 1994 and 1997 the Order of the Solar Temple staged group suicides in Canada, France, and Switzerland. Other self-fulfilling apocalyptic events include the People's Temple suicide/murders engineered in 1978 by Jim Jones in Guyana; and the Ugandan doomsday sect Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, where in the year 2000 some 1,000 devotees were murdered by the sects' leaders.

Apocalypticism as a style can also be detected in doomsday scenarios circulated by some sectors of the environmental and antinuclear movements, although they point out that nuclear devastation or our atmosphere turning into toxic soup would effectively mean the end of time for the species that are aware of it. That would truly be apocalyptic, but no one would be left to appreciate the irony.

Chip Berlet

**See also:** Anti-Masonic Party; Antisemitism; Aryan Nations; Barruel, Abbé; Cold War; Federal Reserve Bank; Freemasonry; Illuminati; Militias; Millenarianism; Millerites; One-World Government; Red Scare; Robison, John; United Nations; Universal Price Codes; Waco.

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## Area 51

Made famous by the movie *Independence Day*, Area 51 is a classified military base in Nevada near Groom Lake that is the home to the most advanced aircraft and weapons testing by the United States. It is an irony that this highly “secret” base is well-known enough that tourists know where it is—although the tight security provided by the Wackenhut corporation ensures that few get close enough to see much. Area 51 (also called “Dreamland,” for Data Repository and Electronic Amassing Management) covers 38,500 acres of land northwest of Las Vegas near Rachel, Nevada, and close to the old Nellis, Nevada, test range. It is nestled within several mountain ranges that provide still more privacy and security. Nevertheless, television news shows such as *Sightings* and *Strange Universe* have produced features on Area 51. Up to 5,000 personnel per day are flown in on chartered aircraft; the lands surrounding the base feature motion sensors, security cameras, and constant patrols by the Wackenhut guards.

In 1955, the government gave Lockheed Aircraft’s designer of the U-2 spy plane the task of finding a test base, and after looking at three locations, he selected Groom Lake. Operations commenced later that year under the name “Paradise Ranch” or simply “The Ranch.” It was officially designated Area 51 in 1958 by the Atomic Energy Commission, but in 1970 the United States Air Force (USAF) took over operations at Groom Lake, and it is currently administered by the Air

Force Flight Test Facility at Edwards Air Force Base. The USAF is known to have tested the F-117 Stealth fighter there, and likely the B-2 Spirit bomber was also tested at Area 51. In the 1970s, Soviet MiG aircraft were taken there and examined. A number of programs that eventually did not produce working aircraft or weapons also were tested there, including cruise missile variants, the Lockheed Darkstar unmanned vehicle, stealth helicopters, and the Osprey. Lights in the sky have been seen from a distance on many nights, which some observers attribute to proton beam systems.

Some claim more than U.S. aircraft are tested there. Robert Lazar, a videotape producer who claims to have worked at Area 51, tells lecture audiences that the facility tests alien spaceships and “reverse-engineers” extraterrestrial technology under the supervision of the mysterious government body “Majestic 12.” One of the more extravagant claims is that the government is holding aliens—either living or dead—at the base. (A similar claim is made about Hangar 18 at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.) In some cases, these aliens help humans decipher and decode the technology, from which, it is alleged, we have reverse-engineered microwave ovens, cellular phones, and computers.

More exotic technologies are also tested there, according to Lazar and others. The “Pumpkin Seed” and Aurora aircraft have supposedly been operating out of Area 51 for years. But the difficulties associated with reverse-engineering even earthly technologies are substantial. Even the Soviet Union found it difficult to work backward from captured U.S. aircraft. The notion that humans could create useful weapons or equipment from the debris of an alien vessel is based on the presumption that it would not be so advanced as to defeat any attempts to understand it.

Still others maintain that not only have the aliens helped us reverse-engineer technology, but they actually have taken up residence in the towns surrounding Area 51, such as Rachel and Little A’Le’Inn. According to this view, the aliens act as extraterrestrial flight instructors for humans, possibly in exchange for access to human subjects upon

whom they conduct tests. More recently, an offshoot of this theory claims that conflict broke out between the humans and aliens, which resulted in complete alien dominance of the base at Area 51. Thus, the base and others like it (the supposed alien hideouts at Laguna Cartagena, Puerto Rico, and Archuleta Mesa in New Mexico) have become alien enclaves that humans may not enter. This was to provide the foundation for a worldwide takeover of all humans.

The region around Area 51 is home to “Ufomin-dand Aliens on Earth,” a small company that specializes in “investigating” the Groom Lake facility. Regardless of the size of the facility and the known operations, the U.S. government refuses to acknowledge the existence of the base.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Aurora.

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**Arnold, Benedict**

A military commander during the American Revolution, Benedict Arnold (1741–1801) felt that he had been insufficiently rewarded for his service. In revenge and in order to advance his own flagging career, Arnold conspired with the loyalists to betray General Washington by surrendering West Point to the British in September 1780, but the plot was foiled.

Son of a prominent Connecticut and Rhode Island founding family, Benedict Arnold had the advantages of a sound Latin education and family support to establish him in a druggist and book-selling business, as well as a good marriage to Margaret Mansfield, the daughter of a prosperous neighbor. Arnold, however, evidenced a wild streak, running away at age fifteen to join Connecticut troops fighting the French in the Seven Years’ War, and engaging in Caribbean trade as the

master of a cargo ship. Arnold also served as the captain of the governor of Connecticut’s guard, a position he held when news of Lexington and Concord reached him in 1775.

Against the advice of the governor, Arnold assembled volunteers, armed them from colony stores, and marched them to Boston to aid in the struggle. With the support of Dr. Benjamin Warren, Arnold secured a colonel’s commission from Massachusetts and raised more than 400 men for an assault on Fort Ticonderoga. En route, he joined with Ethan Allen and his Vermont men and tried to assume command over both groups. When Allen refused, Arnold rankled, but went along as a volunteer. He was particularly upset that the Connecticut legislature rewarded Allen for this success by giving him command of the captured fort. Arnold then proposed a daring winter raid on Quebec, and led a force of approximately 1,000 men across northern Maine with few supplies, an achievement that soured when the force proved unable to take Quebec, even with reinforcements from American-captured Montreal. Although badly wounded in the leg, Arnold oversaw the U.S. withdrawal from Canada, and in a brilliant delaying tactic, engaged the British in the Battle of Valcour Island in Lake Champlain, preventing a British invasion of New England that year.

Although promoted to brigadier for his actions, Arnold resented the politics of the revolution, which demanded men of less ability but from more powerful colonies be given commands. As a supporter of Washington, Arnold also ran afoul of the members of the Conway cabal, who stalled his promotion and accused him of misusing army property. Learning of a British army marching south into New York, Washington dispatched Arnold to join Generals Philip Schuyler and Horatio Gates. Arnold commanded the left wing at the Battle of Saratoga, and, acting against the more cautious Gates’s orders, broke the British advance by rushing onto the field to rally his men, and was again wounded in the leg.

Washington rewarded the now crippled Arnold with command of the recently recaptured city of Philadelphia, where he quickly gathered a willing



audience of British loyalists and disgruntled rebels to hear his complaints against the Continental Congress and fellow commanders: no recognition for his heroic service, the promotion of junior and less competent men, and endless politics and petty gestures. Living beyond his means, Arnold courted the daughter of William Shippen, a prominent loyalist, and picked fights with the executive council of Pennsylvania. Joseph Reed, the head of the council, twice brought Arnold to court-martial, and although Arnold was acquitted of all but two trivial charges and praised by Washington, he felt betrayed by the government he had served at such great cost to himself.

While in Philadelphia, Arnold met Beverly Robinson and made contact with British officer John André, a former suitor of Arnold's fiancée (and later second wife), Margaret Shippen. Arnold saw an opportunity to salvage his own career and the failing cause of the revolution by aiding a British victory, for which he expected lavish rewards and a peace treaty that would offer the colonies the privileges they demanded in the negotiations of 1775. Citing historical instances, including that of General Monck, who engineered the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, Arnold convinced himself that his motives were of the highest order. He then asked for and received command of the key Hudson River fortress of West Point, with the object of betraying it to the British. Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander in New York, promised Arnold 50,000 dollars in gold, and the commission of a British brigadier-general.

André conferred with Arnold near West Point on the night of 20 September 1780, and the two men agreed that the fort should fall as General Washington returned from Hartford, where he was scheduled to meet with the French commander Rochambeau. The West Point garrison should be deployed inefficiently and the British allowed to take control with as few casualties as possible. Clinton's men were to attack as Washington approached, with the aim of possibly capturing the commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary army and his forces. Unfortunately, André had to leave this meeting by land, carrying written reports of the



Colonel Benedict Arnold, who commanded the provincial troops sent against Quebec, and was wounded in storming that city under General Montgomery. (Library of Congress)

fort's defenses in his boots, and using a false pass in the name of "John Anderton." Going against his instructions from Clinton, André exchanged his officer's greatcoat and scarlet uniform coat for a borrowed American jacket (this disguise ultimately led to André being hanged as a spy, rather than as a British officer).

At Tarrytown, three militiamen stopped André, and captured him after André wrongly assumed them to be loyalists and identified himself. André then attempted to convince them he was a double agent, acting on a pass from Arnold, but the militiamen, flushed with their triumphant capture, searched him enthusiastically, revealing the West Point plans. The local commander, sensing a conspiracy, refused to send André to Arnold, but sent a letter to West Point asking for instructions. Meanwhile, Washington's entourage arrived and



was eating breakfast with the Arnolds when the warning letter arrived. Arnold paused to say good-bye to his wife before taking one of his guest's horses and escaping to the barge *Vulture*, moored down the river, which rowed him to New York City and the safety of Clinton's headquarters. Margaret Shippen Arnold stalled Washington by falling into hysterics when he arrived, having received a letter from André himself fully confessing the plan.

Arnold was stunned to be treated shabbily by Clinton, who disliked Arnold personally and blamed him for the death of André, Clinton's adjutant, and did not reward him for the failed venture. Now in British pay, and with the rank of brigadier, Arnold led a raid into Virginia in 1781, but accomplished little. In 1782, he arranged to reunite with his wife and spent the winter in London, where he was reviled as a turncoat despite being praised by King George III. After the revolution ended, Arnold attempted to start a trading business in New Brunswick, but this failed, and he retired permanently to London on his army pension. Arnold's last years were spent in bitterness at his treatment by the British and resentment at the failure of his plan to emerge as the savior of America.

Margaret Sankey

**See also:** American Revolution; Conway Cabal.

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## Aryan Nations

Aryan Nations was founded by Richard Girnt Butler in the 1970s as the political arm of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, part of the religious movement called Christian Identity. Aryan Warriors, as they are called, believe it is their duty to

fight for the preservation of the Aryan race against the scourge of international Jewish communism, which they believe seeks the destruction of the white race. Butler was an associate of Wesley Swift—the founder of the original Church of Jesus Christ Christian in 1946 and Christian Identity's most successful proponent. Butler's goal for Aryan Nations has long been to build a white homeland in the northwest of the United States. Aryan Nations reached its peak of popularity and influence in the mid-1980s, following years of inflation, sluggish economic growth, and the farm crisis. The group occupied a forty-acre compound in northern Idaho, which was known by many in the survivalist right as the international headquarters of white nationalism. By 1986, Aryan Nations claimed over 6,000 members nationwide, had created eighteen state offices, and began hosting the Aryan World Congress, an annual convention of Ku Klux Klan members, skinheads, and various other neo-Nazis. Like most Identity Christians, Butler preaches that only Aryans are descended from Adam and are engaged in a millennial struggle against the forces of darkness, the Jews.

Jews are the literal children of Satan, the descendants of Cain, who was the offspring of Eve's physical seduction by Satan. By controlling the international banking system and promoting such practices as abortion and intermarriage, "world Jewry" is gradually forcing the extinction of the white race. According to the Aryan Nations platform, "The Jew is like a destroying virus that attacks our racial body to destroy our Aryan culture and the purity of our Race." Consequently, Aryan Warriors prepare for a coming race war, "a day of reckoning" when the enemy will be defeated and Christ will establish his true kingdom on earth. In 2000, Aryan Nations was forced into bankruptcy and the sale of its compound and name after a jury awarded over six million dollars in a lawsuit brought by Victoria and Jason Keenan. The Keenans claimed that they had been assaulted and shot at by security guards outside the Aryan Nations Idaho compound. Although its future is in doubt, several former Aryan Nations members have founded splinter groups, and the aging Butler,



Richard G. Butler, standing below two crosses and an Aryan Nations flag, is the founder of Aryan Nations, Church of Jesus Christ Christian. (Jeff Green/Corbis)

now well into his seventies, has named a successor and insists the group will rebuild.

*Jeff Insko*

**See also:** Christian Identity; Zionist Occupied Government.

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## Asian Americans

Like other minorities, Asian Americans have repeatedly been the target of conspiracy-infused scapegoating. The term “yellow peril” was first

used to refer to Chinese and later Japanese immigration in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was rapidly extended to all Asians seen as a threat to Western Christian civilization. This conspiracy-minded fear gave birth to an imagery soon exploited by the media (press, cartoonists, dime novels, comics, and motion pictures) of legions of Asians sweeping into the country, to destroy the white man, and take his job and his women.

The roots of the “yellow peril” can be traced back to the time of Attila the Hun and the subsequent sacking of Rome by the Barbarians, and much later to Genghis Khan and Mongolian invasions of Europe, whose inhabitants lived under the threat of invasion. These deeply ingrained fears were passed on from one generation to the other,

and crossed the Atlantic, to be revived in nineteenth-century America.

In the United States, the “yellow peril” needs to be considered as part of the general ideology of nativism, which was strengthened by the large numbers of immigrants entering the country during the nineteenth century. In the case of Asians, the immigration of Chinese laborers—coolies—started in the 1840s, accelerating with the 1849 gold rush in California. In 1852, over 20,000 Chinese, mostly from the Canton area, immigrated to work in gold mines. A new flow started in the late 1860s, when the U.S. government signed the Burlingame Treaty (1868), which opened the doors to Chinese workers, wanted to build the transcontinental railroad.

As many historians and wise contemporaries noted, if they did come to the United States in search of work, it was because work was available and there were Americans ready to employ them. Their attitude toward work and willingness to take lower wages fueled a debate on whether cheap labor led to economic instability.

Moreover, as it became rapidly apparent that many Asians were settling permanently in the United States, the fear of miscegenation appeared, a term coined in Irish newspapers, condemning interracial marriage and the deleterious effects of sexual contact between the races.

### “A Rotten Race”

In California the idea of excluding the Chinese was part of the wider ideology of nativism. When it entered the Union as a free state in 1850, California made attempts to legislate against the entrance of nonwhites, meaning blacks and Asians. In the 1850s, the Chinese outnumbered blacks—4,000 black residents and 47,000 Chinese—and were seen as a greater threat. As an example of one of many discriminatory measures, the California Supreme Court ruled in 1854 that the Chinese could not testify in court against a white person.

They were gradually driven out of mining and agriculture; when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, the Chinese turned to occupations (manufacturing, laundering, and domestic

jobs) where they competed with the Irish, another recent immigrant group, who were instrumental in developing the “yellow peril” obsession.

Consequently, at the national level, U.S. legislators devoted a lot of energy to controlling Asian immigration, in spite of the opposition of the supporters of the “open” tradition inaugurated by the 1790 Naturalization Act. Although this act explicitly stated that naturalization was only possible for “free white persons,” it was targeted at blacks and not Asians, then considered as belonging to the “white” category. In 1870, the act was amended to include blacks while excluding Asians, considered as “aliens ineligible to citizenship.” In 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act made the naturalization of Chinese people impossible, and closed the gates. An 1884 amendment tightened both exclusions.

There remained the problem of those Chinese immigrants already residing in the United States. A series of race riots starting in California spread to Washington territory, Wyoming, and New York. Now the threat was no longer new immigration but miscegenation.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States defeated the Spanish in the 1898 Spanish-American war. Although the acquisition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines satisfied the imperialists, many Americans were alarmed at the prospect of all those members of “inferior races” likely to enter the United States. The fear of “yellow peril” led to more restrictions on immigration, especially when another Asian community, the Japanese, was unexpectedly and brutally brought to the fore by international developments in the Far East. In 1905 the Japanese defeated the Russian fleet at Port-Arthur, thus winning the Russo-Japanese War in what was publicized by the Japanese and sorely experienced by the Westerners as the first time Asian military power triumphed over Western power. Consequently Japan lost its special exemption from immigration restrictions into the United States, which had allowed the first Japanese immigrants to go to Hawaii to work on sugar plantations, quickly followed by others who came to mainland cities, especially in the far West. They had arrived with the hope of making a

better life for themselves but often faced racial prejudice.

In 1908, a gentleman's agreement signed by Japan and the United States prohibited Japanese laborers from entering the country. It was followed in 1913 and 1920 by the California Alien Land Laws, which prevented Asian immigrants from purchasing or leasing land. Finally, in 1922, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Ozawa v. United States* that first-generation Japanese immigrants were not eligible for citizenship, and in 1924 the Exclusion Act halted Japanese immigration altogether until 1965.

By 1920 there were well over 100,000 Japanese immigrants on the U.S. mainland, facing anti-Japanese feeling and discriminatory laws. With World War II came concentration camps, when Japanese Americans were interned in prison camps in California and other states because of fears that they would commit sabotage.

The news of mounting discrimination against Japanese immigrants and their descendants was received with shock in Japan, and perceived as humiliating, especially since Japan had been striving to convince the United States that it was a friendly nation. This definitely contributed to the degradation of Japanese and American diplomatic relations. Only in 1988 did the U.S. Congress issue a formal apology to wartime internees of Japanese ancestry.

Concerning the fear of interracial marriage, Congress passed the 1922 Cable Act, which revoked the citizenship of any woman who married a foreign national. By 1952, twenty-nine of the forty-eight states had antimiscegenation laws forbidding marriage between "whites" and "nonwhites."

At the end of World War II when China fell to communism, the idea of the "yellow peril" was superimposed on the threat of the "red menace," which symbolically had the effect of locating the source of the peril no longer at home but abroad. However, in the 1980s, the notion of a "yellow peril" was revived as an internal danger through the fear of Japanese companies seeking to control the U.S. economy, and Hollywood in particular.

*Aïssatou Sy-Wonyu*

**See also:** Japanese Americans; Nativism; Red Scare.

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## Atomic Secrets

Although there are imagined conspiracies, there are also real conspiracies, and Soviet atomic spying belongs to the second category. There was a large-scale espionage apparatus reaching into at least three countries—the United States, Great Britain, and Canada—during the Cold War. Historians of the 1960s and 1970s tended to dismiss the accusations of spying as products of popular paranoia during the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s. More recently, however, with the release of formerly unavailable U.S. intelligence documents and files from the Soviet Union, some historians and commentators have begun to reassess the accusations of atomic spying, arguing that the case has finally been proven; others remain convinced that the original charges were exaggerated or fabricated.

The beginning of the story dates back to late 1940, when Leonid Kvasnikov of the scientific and





Soviet spy and physicist Klaus Fuchs. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis)

intelligence section of the NKVD (the Communist secret police) noted a flurry of publications in Western scientific journals dealing with atomic energy following the German chemist Otto Hahn's successful splitting of the uranium atom. Kvasnikov instructed NKVD agents abroad to keep a watch for developments in that area.

The most important response came in September 1941—most likely from John Cairncross, then private secretary to the British government's top scientific adviser and one of the "Cambridge Five" recruited as Soviet spies in the 1930s—telling of British plans to develop an atomic bomb. Further details about these plans were supplied by a German Communist émigré scientist working in Britain named Klaus Fuchs. The upshot was that

Kvasnikov was sent to New York at the end of 1942 to head up atomic spying in the United States.

Lax (or worse) British security procedures that failed to follow up reports about Fuchs's Communist ties allowed him to be transferred to the Manhattan Project's atom bomb building program at Los Alamos in New Mexico. Fuchs was probably the most important source supplying the Soviets information about how to overcome the technical problems of producing the plutonium bomb. Although he provided data about the proposed hydrogen bomb, his contribution to the Soviets in that area was not as significant.

Fuchs was not the only Soviet spy at Los Alamos, but U.S. security officials made the mistake of dealing quietly via dismissal or transfer with those suspected of passing on information. The public at large remained ignorant of the problem until the defection in September 1945 of Igor Gouzenko, a code clerk at the Soviet embassy in Ottawa, Canada. The data turned over by Gouzenko revealed a Soviet espionage network headed by the two top leaders of the Canadian Communist Party that included Alan Nunn May, a British physicist working for the Canadian atomic research program.

Despite the Gouzenko revelations, the search for atomic spies did not move into high gear until after the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb in August 1949. U.S. investigators focused their attention on Fuchs, who had by this time returned to Britain. Under questioning, Fuchs confessed in early 1950 to his own spying—but with one exception refused to name others involved. And even regarding that one exception—his contact in the United States, Harry Gold—Fuchs did not take the initiative but simply confirmed his identity after Gold had become suspect from other sources.

The reputation of British counterintelligence was further tarnished when the Italian-born physicist Bruno Pontecorvo and his wife defected to the Soviets in August-September 1950. An even more devastating blow was the flight behind the Iron Curtain in May 1951 of two of the "Cambridge Five"—diplomats Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess. Maclean was the bigger Soviet prize



because he had been the representative of the British embassy in Washington, D.C., dealing with the political aspects of atomic energy.

### The Rosenbergs

By this time, the major focus of action had shifted to the United States, with the arrest on 23 May 1950 of Harry Gold. Gold's confession implicated David Greenglass, who had worked as a mechanic at Los Alamos, and his wife Ruth. They implicated David's sister, Ethel Rosenberg, and her husband Julius. The trial and execution (19 June 1953) of the Rosenbergs remains controversial because of complaints about the bias of the presiding judge, prejudicial actions by the prosecution, and the excessiveness of the penalty. Many on the Left have argued (and continue to argue) that the Rosenbergs were the victims of a deliberate government conspiracy to frame them (or, in a lesser charge, that the government succumbed to the public hysteria in pushing for the death penalty), but in the eyes of most historians there now remains no question about Julius Rosenberg's guilt. More doubtful is how active a role had been played by his wife. She appears to have been included in the prosecution as a lever to pressure Rosenberg into naming others, and the Greenglasses—who were the government's major witnesses—changed their testimony about her involvement only on the eve of the trial. On the other hand, Julius could have saved his life and hers by cooperating with the government had he not put his loyalty to the Stalinist regime first.

An even more valuable Soviet informant was Theodore A. (Ted) Hall, who had come to Los Alamos in 1944 as a nineteen-year-old scientific prodigy. At least as Hall would later tell the story, he had not been recruited, but had approached the Soviets on his own initiative because he felt that a United States monopoly of the atomic bomb would be a threat to the world. Although Hall came under suspicion, the Federal Bureau of Investigation lacked sufficient hard evidence for an arrest before he and his wife left for Britain. There he built a successful career as a scientist. His definitive exposure would not come until the 1990s.

The one major actor accused of spying whose guilt remains open to question is J. Robert Oppenheimer, who had headed the Los Alamos project. Oppenheimer's opposition to building the hydrogen bomb reinforced suspicions about his loyalty growing out of his close personal ties with Communists and fellow travelers. Hearings in 1954 resulted in the revocation of his security clearance. Although Oppenheimer's defenders charge that he was the victim of a baseless witch-hunt, new evidence shows that at a minimum, he had been guilty of failing to inform security officials fully about Soviet infiltration efforts of which he had knowledge.

One of the difficulties in countering Soviet atomic espionage was that the culprits were ideologically motivated rather than spies-for-hire. Thus, few would cooperate even when caught and even fewer would express any regret. Although Fuchs pretended to do so, he left for East Germany after his release, announced that he was still a loyal Marxist, and went on to become director of the East German Central Institute for Nuclear Physics.

Estimates of the contribution made by espionage to speeding up the building of the Soviet atomic bomb range from a minimum of eighteen months to a maximum of five years. And except for the Rosenbergs none of the guilty suffered punishment commensurate with the enormity of their crimes. Even those imprisoned—such as May, Fuchs, David Greenglass, and Gold—served no more than part of their sentences before release. Ruth Greenglass avoided prosecution because of a deal struck by her husband in return for his testimony. At least two of Julius Rosenberg's accomplices—Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant—fled the country and successfully disappeared. None of the "Cambridge Five" spent a day of prison time. Worst, Anatoly Yatskov, Kvasnikov's successor as top Soviet atomic spy master in the United States, would boast that at most half of his spy network had been uncovered.

*John Braeman*

**See also:** Anticomunism; Hiss, Alger; House Un-American Activities Committee; Venona Project.

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**Aurora**

Following the initial research and development of a hypersonic “scramjet”-powered aircraft in the early 1980s, and the funding of the National Aerospace Plane (NASP) in 1984 (often mischaracterized as the “Orient Express”), rumors began to swirl that either the Air Force or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had already funded a secret, ultrafast aircraft code named “Aurora.” Adding to the rumors, the SR-71 Blackbird was retired in the 1980s, leaving the United States ostensibly with no human-piloted supersonic spy aircraft.

*Popular Science* frequently ran artists’ illustrations of a “secret, hypersonic jet” that was supposedly based at Area 51 near Groom Lake, Nevada—the site of the Defense Department’s most classified projects. The aircraft’s proposed propulsion was as shrouded in mystery as its existence. NASP was to use a supersonic combustion ramjet, which requires no moving parts to achieve compression of the air as a turbojet does, but instead

relies on the forward speed of air coming through the intake to a funnel to compress the air, known as “scramjet.” This itself constituted a major obstacle in the program, because no wind tunnel even existed to test any article at a speed beyond Mach 8, while tunnels capable of testing larger articles for longer times could only generate winds up to Mach 5. (NASP was intended to fly at Mach 25, while Aurora, according to the magazine accounts, was supposedly capable of Mach 10.) Thus, the concept for building the aerospace plane as an entire aircraft system in the first place rested, in part, on the premise that to “test it you had to fly it.”

The “Pumpkin Seed,” another propulsion system linked to Aurora, involved a shock-wave pulse engine in which the exploding fuel propelled the aircraft through the sky at hypersonic speeds by exerting pressure on the aircraft’s flattened body, as when one squeezes a pumpkin seed between the thumb and forefinger. The “Pumpkin Seed” supposedly released a telltale vapor trail of smoke in puffs, much like a cigarette, rather than a steady stream. The more widely held view of the propulsion system of any secret spy plane involved the scramjet, which needed another engine to get it up to supersonic speeds, at which point the scramjet could take over. A scramjet, in the most simplistic sense, is a funnel that compresses air going into the intake. The compression of the air forces it through the engine at vastly faster speeds, like putting one’s thumb over the end of a hose to accelerate the stream of water. Igniting and combusting the fuel is a monumental task, compared to lighting a match in a hurricane. To facilitate combustion and airflow, the entire aircraft must become part of the engine design, with the forebody an intake and the aft section an exhaust. Eventually, most experts agreed a “lifting body” design (wide and flat, with short, stubby wings) was desirable.

If observers reported seeing a “Pumpkin Seed” aircraft that supposedly was the Aurora, another variant of the “secret hypersonic jet” story involved diverted funding from the NASP program. According to this well-circulated view, NASP was a front program to channel money to the real hypersonic program, the Aurora. In this theory, NASP was

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deliberately underfunded so as to keep it barely operable while the real support went to the black hypersonic program. Artist conceptions of Auroras appeared, usually with text claiming they were already in existence and conducting spy operations. Most of these reports placed the speeds at between Mach 6 and Mach 10. And yet another variant of the story had the Aurora as a stealth aircraft—something extremely difficult to accomplish at the speeds credited to it.

Meanwhile, NASP found its funding cut repeatedly, until the goal of constructing an actual aircraft—even a subscale vehicle, which partially used rocket power—was abandoned. By that time, the Air Force and NASA still struggled with a scaled-down project to fly a scramjet atop a Minuteman missile, and even that was canceled. When NASP ended in 1995, it had failed to build any full-sized scramjet engines, let alone an aircraft powered by a scramjet. The NASP/scramjet technology was divided into three smaller programs, including the X-33 and Hyper-X programs.

Rumors, however, continued to circulate about a new hypersonic spy plane called the Aurora. As early as 1992, the *Wall Street Journal* ran the headline “Evidence Points to Secret U.S. Spy Plane,” and a year later, *Popular Science* touted a “Secret Mach 6 Spy Plane.” Starting in 1994, *Popular Science* frequently ran articles on “the Secrets of Groom Lake.” That year, the Federation of American Scientists alleged that NASP money was diverted for Aurora,

claiming that Aurora’s budget was “hidden in plain sight” with the aerospace plane. In fact, the NASP budget was minuscule compared to the technological challenge. By 1990, according to the original 1986 plans, the program was to have been at \$1 billion per year and was increasing. Instead, it was at \$250 million and falling—an amount that could not fund any serious technology, let alone a “super secret spy plane.” A more significant issue for the proponents of the Aurora to address was the lack of progress on any kind of scramjet engines. Numerous tests, at dozens of Air Force and NASA labs associated with NASP by 1995, had yet to get scramjet engines to generate thrust over drag. Moreover, the tests that had been conducted involved running scramjets at fractions of seconds. Whereas the Blackbird utilized existing technology, improved by important innovations, moving an aircraft to the Mach 6–Mach 10 levels would have required an order-of-magnitude leap in technology not present in U.S. aeronautics in the 1990s.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Area 51.

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## **B-25 Ghost Bomber**

On 31 January 1956, a Mitchell B-25 Bomber en route to Olmstead Air Force Base near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, ran out of fuel over the Pittsburgh area. The pilot was forced to ditch the plane in the Monongahela River near Homestead, Pennsylvania, after failing to make it to the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. The plane disappeared beneath the water and was never seen again. Eyewitnesses soon came forward, claiming that the plane had been secretly removed from the river at night. Rumors and speculations about the bomber's secret cargo spread quickly in the cold-war climate of industrial western Pennsylvania.

Flight B-25N No. 44-29125 originated at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, on 30 January. After an overnight stop at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, the flight continued to Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan. At Selfridge the plane was supposed to refuel, but it was discovered that it would take three hours. The crew believed that they had enough fuel to reach Olmstead, so they departed at 2:43 P.M. without refueling. Over western Pennsylvania the fuel ran out and the pilot ditched in the Monongahela River at approximately 4:10 P.M. Recovery attempts began soon after, and the police and people working by the river rescued four crew members. The other two crew members drowned and their bodies were recovered later that year. Reports of a fifth and even a sixth man being pulled from the water circulated immediately, with newspaper stories appearing to verify this account.

According to the official record, the fifth man was a rescuer who went into the river to help, but others believed he was a secret passenger. Initially, the Coast Guard supervised the attempts to retrieve the aircraft, but on 9 February the operation was taken over by the Army Corps of Engineers. They searched for two weeks, but the plane was never located.

After the crash, many people came forward claiming to have seen the covert removal of the aircraft. Most of these accounts describe the removal of the plane by unidentified government agents in the middle of the night. These accounts often describe the plane being cut apart and loaded on a barge or train to be shipped off to a local military base. Proponents of the secret removal theory cite a variety of evidence other than eyewitness reports to prove their case. It has been pointed out that it is difficult to lose a plane that is 12 feet tall with a 70-foot wingspan in a river that has an average depth of 20–25 feet and a width of between 800 and 1,000 feet. In all other aircraft accidents involving the river, the planes have been recovered quickly. Witnesses to the salvage operation reported seeing a helicopter fly over the crash site with a Geiger counter. They also point to problems in the official Air Force accident report. It contains discrepancies in the flight manifests and the cause factor analysis, and vital parts of the account of the crash are blacked out. Questions have also been raised about the original weight of the aircraft. This led to speculation that the weight of the secret cargo caused



the crew to underestimate the amount of fuel needed. Several researchers have suggested that the secret cargo was some type of nerve gas or chemical weapon, since there were experiments with chemical weapons conducted in Oklahoma at the time. Other theories about the makeup of the cargo include atomic materials, secret or state-of-the-art communications and radar technology, Mafia money, a Russian defector, Howard Hughes, and even Las Vegas showgirls.

In the late 1990s, new scientific searches for the plane have been conducted with the use of side scan sonar and divers. The B-25 Recovery Group and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania have speculated that the plane may rest in a 40-foot-deep gravel pit on the bottom of the Monongahela River, which has been filled in with silt since the time of the accident. All of their searches to date have been unsuccessful, and some view this as further proof that there was a secret removal of the aircraft.

*Thomas White*

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### Bacon's Rebellion

In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon led a group of planters, small landholders, indentured servants, and slaves first in defiance of, then in assault on the colonial government of Virginia. Accusing the royal governor Sir William Berkeley, his cousin by marriage, of conspiring with hostile Native Americans to enrich himself and his cronies, Bacon and his adherents launched a campaign of genocidal violence along

the frontier, plundered the estates of Berkeley's supporters, and burned the colonial capital, Jamestown, to the ground. Berkeley, who fled the capital and only returned when British troops arrived to restore order after the rebellion's failure, accused his rebellious relation of a conspiracy to overthrow the government of Virginia.

As in most agrarian resistance movements in colonial America, Bacon's Rebellion found its roots in a mix of economic, regional, and racial tensions. In the 1660s and 1670s, the pressure of former indentured servants migrating west in search of land and independence escalated social and political tensions along the colony's western frontiers. The context of falling tobacco prices, declining opportunities for landownership, high taxes, lack of political representation, and political favoritism in the Indian trade cemented an unlikely alliance of small landowners, frontier planters, indentured servants, and slaves. The depredations of the Anglo-Dutch wars underscored a climate of violent political struggle. The resulting instability threatened dangerous consequences and opened the way for a demagogic insurrection.

In 1675, a dispute between indigenous Doegs and a frontier farmer touched off a series of bloody attacks, providing a catalyst for the conflicts and resentments within Virginia's colonial population. Bacon forced a commission from Berkeley, raised a vigilante force, and launched a campaign of indiscriminate reprisals against indigenous people, butchering innocent Susquehannocks alongside enemy Doegs. Threatened by Bacon's disobedience, the governor called the colony's first election in fifteen years. Bacon was elected to the House of Burgesses, but Berkeley had him arrested when he arrived in Jamestown to take his seat. Berkeley soon released Bacon, sending him out to recruit an anti-Indian militia and defend the frontiers. When Bacon took his commission as a mandate for the large-scale slaughter of the region's native peoples, Berkeley reversed his position and declared Bacon a traitor.

Accusing Berkeley of sacrificing the safety of European settlers in the interest of kickbacks and profits from the Indian trade, and fearing that Berkeley and his followers were conspiring to

assassinate him, Bacon made true his traitor's label, turning his force on the capital. His militias looted and pillaged the properties of Berkeley supporters, burning the capital to the ground in the process. Bacon and his men gained de facto control over the colony until his untimely death from dysentery in October 1676.

Bacon's Rebellion proved the largest and most successful rebellion in colonial history before the American Revolution. Whether the act of a power-hungry political opportunist or a freedom fighter (albeit of a staunchly undemocratic character), Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion foreshadowed growing socioeconomic and political tensions in the developing colonies—an environment ripe for resistance, revolt, and intrigue.

*James Carrott*

**See also:** Native Americans; Slave Revolts.

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### Banco Nazionale del Lavoro

An Italian bank with alleged conspiracy connections to BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International), the Vatican, George H. W. Bush, the Bank of England, and the Gulf War, Banco Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) is viewed as partially responsible for funding Saddam Hussein's military buildup. BNL, according to the theorists, is partially owned by the Vatican and is also viewed as a source for laundering drug money. In fact, BNL, which is the largest Italian bank in terms of deposits, is 96 percent government owned. As of 1990, it had more than \$100 billion in assets worldwide, and as one of the Italian banks to open offices in Ethiopia during the era of Italian occupation, BNL had important connections in the Arab world. In the United States, BNL had

offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami.

Most of the conspiracy criticism stems from lending made by the Atlanta, Georgia, branch of the BNL—coincidentally the same city in which BCCI conducted its operations—between 1983 and 1990. According to Representative Henry Gonzalez (D-TX) of the House Banking Committee, BNL made over \$3 billion in unauthorized loans to Saddam Hussein's Iraq. In addition, the Reagan-Bush administrations authorized more than \$5 billion in loan guarantees to Iraq. Even some of the unauthorized loans, critics claimed, were indirectly supported by the Department of Agriculture. At the time the loans were made, the U.S. government considered Iraq the "lesser of two evils" compared to its arch-enemy, Iran, and therefore decided it was desirable to prop up the Iraqi dictator.

Still, as Gonzalez charged, BNL was not just another regulatory failure, but was a failure of U.S. foreign policy in that it linked loans to Iraq's military buildup. (This, of course, was common practice in virtually all administrations—numerous Communist and otherwise hostile states received U.S. aid on a regular basis). However, critics went further than the standard complaints about giving away money to "America's enemies." In 1991, Sherman Skolnick and others claimed that BNL was suppressing bank records of Hussein's "private business partner," President George Bush, through oil "kickbacks."

Actually, it was the government that began the investigation into BNL's illegal activities, starting with a 1989 "raid" on BNL offices in Atlanta that revealed an "off books" lending operation to Iraq that had been occurring since 1987. These transactions were recorded in separate, secret books that recorded the money laundering as "commodities" financing. It was through these commodities financing arrangements that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Foreign Agricultural Service, began to make short-term credit guarantees to eligible nations. Iraq had begun to acquire U.S. commodities under the program in 1983, even before diplomatic relations were fully restored, mainly in an effort by the Reagan administration to provide a

barrier to the threat coming from Iran's jihad. But as soon as Hussein invaded Kuwait, all Iraqi agricultural loans were suspended.

Even critics such as Gonzalez admitted that the fraudulent use of the USDA loan guarantees was not known until after August 1989, at which time investigators found that Iraq had falsified the types of commodities it purchased; overstated the costs (to funnel money into the military); and shifted financing costs onto still other lending programs. In addition, Iraq worked a "scam" on the Import-Export Bank from 1987 to 1990, skimming off yet another \$300 million. Congress, under Rep. Gonzalez, launched an investigation of BNL in 1990. According to Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, the public airing of the details of the cases brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office "raises the prospect that culpable parties will elude prosecution." Using the same language later used by Janet Reno in her many "no-comments" about the campaign finance irregularities of the Clinton-Gore administrations, Thornburgh claimed that congressional interference in "ongoing criminal investigations" would jeopardize the prosecution of guilty individuals.

BNL's "conspiracy heritage" did not suffer from its connections to Henry Kissinger, whose legal firm represented the bank during the 1980s in international sales and contracts. As an international bank, BNL also had contacts to the Bank of England, the Federal Reserve Board, BCCI, and the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano in Italy in 1982. The Ambrosiano failure is viewed by some conspiracists as particularly important because it had CIA connections, as well as links to the Mafia, the Masons, and the U.S. Savings and Loan scandal. One website manages to tie together cocaine, the Masons, the mob, all the banking scandals, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, and the Barings (though, interestingly enough, not the Rothschilds or the Rockefellers).

*Larry Schweikart*

**See also:** Savings and Loan Crisis.

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**Bank of Credit and Commerce International**

Known as the "Outlaw Bank," the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) was established in the Middle East in 1972 as the Third World's first multinational bank after failing to acquire the Chelsea National Bank in New York. Some contended that the British were behind the bank as part of their "long-standing scheme" (according to conspiracy researcher Sherman Skolnick) to overthrow the U.S. government. Others viewed with suspicion the bank's Third World connections to Middle Eastern investors—it was founded by Agha Hasa Abedi, a Pakistani Muslim Shiite-turned-Sufi financial advisor, and dealt extensively with renegade Muslim governments. The bank's activities were made all the more suspicious by the close connection of BCCI to Washington insiders such as former Carter administration official Bert Lance.

BCCI was more than a bank. As the authors of *The Outlaw Bank* observed, BCCI "possessed its very own diplomatic corps, intelligence network, and private army, its own shipping and commodities trading companies" (Beaty and Gwynne). BCCI's size and scope of operations threatened to make it a heavyweight even among existing multinational corporations. Unlike General Motors or Mitsubishi—both technically multinational corporations—BCCI had no national allegiance and the managers operated as though they were free from any constraints of national sovereignty.

Abedi, who was trained as a banker, was allied with Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan of the United Arab Emirates, who funneled money into Abedi's Pakistani bank. In the early 1970s, with Zayed's support, Abedi met with U.S. bankers from the Bank of America to present his concept for a Third World bank with offices in the Middle East, London, and Luxembourg. Bloated with oil profits, Middle Eastern governments were looking for places to deposit their "petrodollars" that would be safe and generate a return. Forming the Bank of Credit and Commerce International in 1972, Abedi used numerous front men to attempt to purchase Chelsea National Bank in New York before regulators stopped the acquisition. BCCI then opened a Cayman Islands subsidiary in 1976.

The following year Abedi first met T. Bertram "Bert" Lance, the budget director in Jimmy Carter's administration. Lance had been the chief executive officer of National Bank of Georgia—the largest lender to Carter's Georgia peanut business—and Lance had been indicted, then found innocent, of several financial improprieties while at National Bank. Abedi and Lance developed a relationship in which Lance served as an "advisor" to Abedi, specifically when it came to acquiring Financial General Bankshares, a Washington bankholding company. Lance mentioned that his own National Bank of Georgia was up for sale, and Abedi orchestrated a purchase for the bank (and Lance's 12 percent interest in it) through a front man, Ghaith Pharaon, in 1978. The new owners also acquired Clark Clifford, former secretary of defense, as BCCI's lawyer. BCCI was already skirting legality in its surface operations.

Below the surface, the bank was financing arms trade, drug smuggling, and a host of other illegal activities, laundering the money through front operations. BCCI agents were involved in bribery, fraud, grand larceny, and tax evasion. It illegally acquired First American Bank of New York through front agents in 1982, and Independence Bank of Encino (California) in 1985, concealing the ownership of the subsidiaries from the government. Regulators raised concerns that Abedi or other unnamed individuals were in fact issuing all

the orders for BCCI's U.S. subsidiaries. In 1985 the CIA issued a report warning that BCCI had obtained control of First American, a point that was finally admitted in public in 1988.

The scope of BCCI's illegal activities, and its apparent flouting of U.S. banking law, should have provoked a response from either the executive or legislative branches, but no such response came. Finally, in 1989, the New York Police Department launched an investigation of BCCI. Trials and audits produced evidence that BCCI was involved in money laundering, was in debt nearly \$2 billion, and that the key stockholders were all Middle Eastern investors, including Sheikh Zayed. Juries in several states convicted BCCI officials on a variety of charges, and Treasury and FBI agents seized BCCI offices and assets.

The Federal Reserve authorities overlooked or ignored BCCI activities until other parts of the justice system had cracked down, leading to further charges of "insider" favoritism. In 1991, a coordinated offensive by regulators in several countries shut down BCCI operations and froze more than \$20 billion in BCCI funds, accounting for 75 percent of the total. U.S. regulators from the Federal Reserve and the Treasury required BCCI to divest itself of any U.S. banks purchased illegally, and later that year the Federal Reserve fined BCCI \$200 million. BCCI principal officers were arrested and convicted of money laundering, bribery, larceny, and other charges.

BCCI had engaged in a wide range of illegal activities, but it had also provided a financial front for sensitive financial and weapons transfers that the government wanted to keep off the record. The bank assisted Adnan Kashoggi in financing the sale of arms to Iran as part of the Iran-Contra scandal. It also became involved in the Banco Nazionale del Lavoro in Atlanta, which loaned Iraq's Saddam Hussein some \$600 million. Hussein used the money, as well as funds from agricultural loans, to acquire weapons. In 1990, Hussein invaded Kuwait and had to be driven out in the Gulf War. Both the CIA and the Justice Department accused the other of failing sufficiently to investigate the bank. In fact, the Justice Department did not realize the magnitude of



the criminal activity with which it was dealing, and the CIA had an interest in keeping some of its operations quiet.

In 1991, BCCI was effectively bankrupt, although neither Price Waterhouse, the accounting firm that audited BCCI, nor the government of Abu Dhabi, made public the bank's troubles, costing depositors millions of dollars. The following year, Congress completed its investigation of how BCCI went under, concluding that the failure to appreciate the bank's criminal activities was attributed to "gaps" in the regulations and to an army of well-financed lawyers. Even though BCCI has been out of business, conspiracy theorists such as Sherman Skolnick contend that it continues to operate through shadow organizations or through established institutions such as the Bank of England. BCCI's extensive clientele, its vast sums of unregulated money, and its insider U.S. political partners made it a natural for conspiracy theories of all types.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Banco Nazionale del Lavoro; Federal Reserve Bank.

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## Bank of England

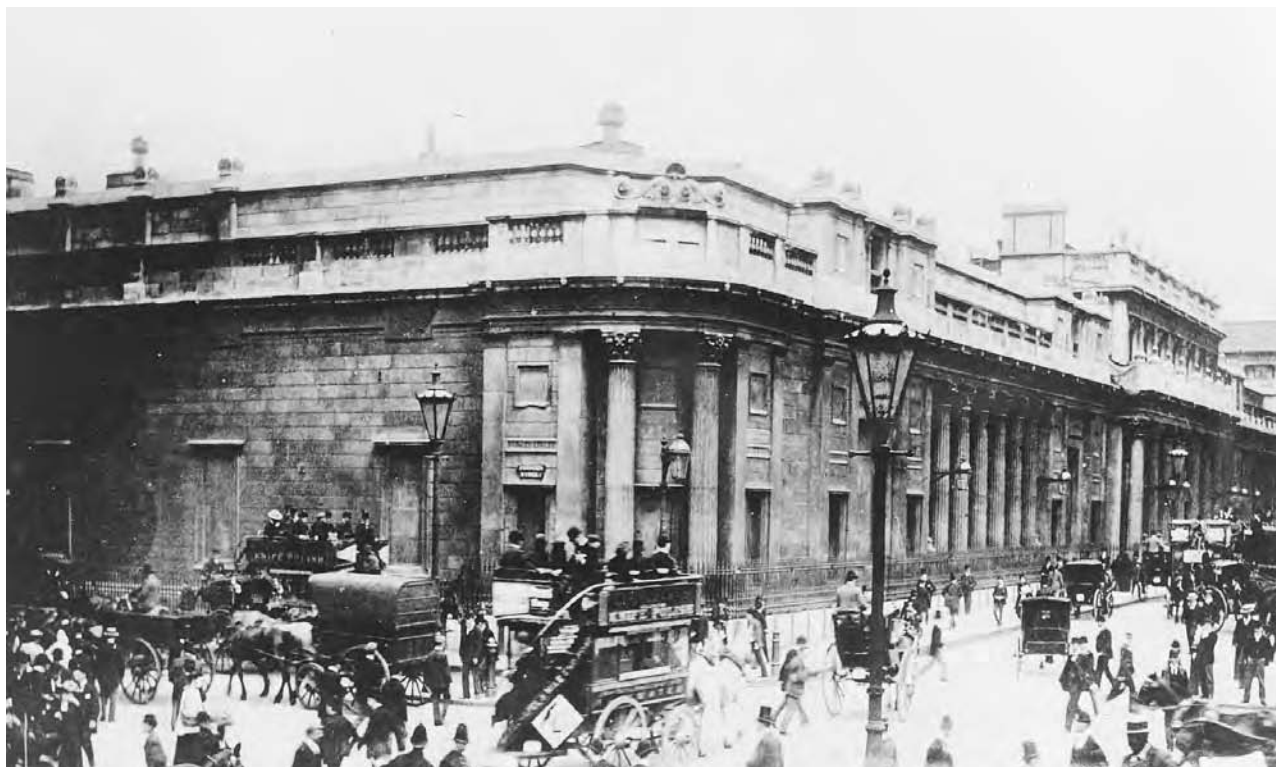
Like the Bank of the United States and the Federal Reserve System, the Bank of England was the focus of numerous conspiracy theories almost from the time of its founding in 1694 through the Tonnage Act. William of Orange, the king of England, who needed money for a war in France, authorized the formation of a bank under the act that had the authority to issue notes, using the loans against the crown as collateral. The Bank was privately owned, but, according to conspiracy theorists, the names of

the founders were kept secret, although the names of all stock subscribers appeared in the subscription book.

A myriad of complaints about the Bank's operations arose, and to even reference all of them would border on the impossible. Among the main criticisms by the conspiracy theorists were the supposed inconvertibility of the notes into gold and silver ("paper money created out of thin air," as Pat Robertson claimed); connections with the Rothschild family; a pipeline to stolen gold supplied by Dutch thieves; and manipulations of the international financial system in concert with the Federal Reserve, Jews, and/or the Vatican. Among the many attacks on the Bank of England were theories that the Bank was a pawn in the hands of a Jewish cabal whose intention was to split Christianity, or that the monarchy had simply confiscated the gold of the London goldsmiths. One version included allegations that the king had obtained the capital from the Bank through taxation, while another claimed it was (as with other central banks) controlling the economy through its manipulation of the money supply, even as early as 1700. Through the Bank, then, secret groups could control the monarchy and thus control England.

In more recent years, the Bank of England has become one of the villains in the New World Order conspiracy theories, usually aligned with either the Federal Reserve, the Rockefellers/Rothschilds, or Jews. In this view, the Bank of England as early as 300 years ago had been used by conspirators to control international finances outside of parliamentary scrutiny (despite the fact that it was nationalized by the British government in 1946). Even the nationalization of the Bank, though, has been viewed as a continuation of the conspiracy, with the Bank now powerful enough to demand that the government incorporate it into the official levers of power. Eustace Mullins argues that the Federal Reserve was a puppet of an international banking elite tied to the Bank of England: "The most powerful men in the United States were themselves answerable to another power, a foreign power, and a power which had been steadfastly seeking to extend its control over the young republic."





Bank of England. (Library of Congress)

lic since its very inception. The power was the financial power of England, centered in the London Branch of the House of Rothschild” (Mullins, 47–48).

Related to this view of the Bank of England is the notion that the Rockefellers, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers, and others have used the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England to manipulate the money supplies of democratic nations. According to these theories, which take several forms, the Rockefellers (and/or Trilateralists) have filled the boards of the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England with “their people” and thus control the supply of money, generating inflation to support political candidates or forcing deflation on the economy to benefit rich lenders. These views, as seen in the web sites of J. Orlin Grabbe and Sherman Skolnick, often contain contradictory positions on gold, which has traditionally been seen by conspiracy theorists as the “firewall” against inflationary government spending. Current con-

spiracy theorists have now sought to include gold manipulations by the Federal Reserve and/or Bank of England within the broader allegations about control of the money supply. In another version, the British royal family’s intermarriage to Jews gave the Rothschilds an open door to control the Bank of England, and hence the world’s financial structure.

Paranoia about the Bank of England led evangelist Pat Robertson, in his book *The New World Order*, to claim that the Bank was originally established to issue fiat money without genuine gold backing—money “created out of thin air,” as he said. In these charges, Robertson echoed the Depression-era Catholic radio priest, Father Charles Coughlin, who likewise distorted the nature and origins of the Bank of England.

Early Americans also feared that the Bank of England had secret investors in the First and Second Banks of the United States, or that it routinely caused panics or depressions in North America. In

fact, the panic of 1837 *can* indirectly be traced to the Bank of England, but only insofar as the Bank raised interest rates *after* silver shipments from Mexico to the United States dried up, thus diminishing the flow of silver from the United States to China, then on to England where the silver was held as a reserve. However, at worst the Bank was an unwilling actor in a drama that began in Mexico. England was the last Western nation to leave the gold standard during the Great Depression, saving the United States, and by clinging to the gold standard the United States put its banking system in mortal danger—a threat that was only alleviated when Franklin Roosevelt took the country off gold in the 1930s.

Although the conspiracy-minded still see the Bank of England as a threat, the ascension of New York over London as the world's money center in World War I and the creation of the Federal Reserve System have to a large degree provided a new source of conspiracy angst, the Federal Reserve. Modern conspiracy theorists must carefully weave the Bank of England's shadowy power in with the more obvious role played by the Federal Reserve.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Bilderbergers; British Royal Family; Coughlin, Father Charles; Federal Reserve Bank; Robertson, Pat; Rockefeller Family; Trilateral Commission.

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## Bank of the United States

Seen as an instrument of British interests, the Bank of the United States (BUS) was the most powerful single financial institution in the nation, and thus was the target of those who suspected that foreigners, especially the British, engaged in "shadow control" of the bank. After the First BUS had its charter expire, and was subsequently replaced by the Second BUS (1816), the new bank became the object of a different conspiracy view in which the "monied interests" sought control over the "common man" through the Bank.

As part of his *Report on Public Credit*, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton recommended creation of a national bank to hold the nation's deposits, make loans to the new government of the United States, and to provide a source of stability for the nation's money supply. Based on the model of the Bank of North America, the Bank of the United States was chartered by Congress in January 1791 for twenty years with a capital stock of \$10 million, of which \$2 million was to be paid in gold. The government subscribed to one-fifth of the capital stock, and the remainder of the Bank's ownership was in private hands. In addition to holding government deposits, the BUS had another important advantage over all future privately owned banks, in that it was authorized to open branches in several states. Among the cities to obtain BUS branches were Norfolk, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans. Operations at the main branch in Philadelphia commenced in 1792.

It took only a few hours on 4 July 1791, for subscribers to snatch up shares of BUS stock. One-third were members of Congress, and many more were public officials. Thomas Willing, Robert Morris's partner, was the president. Despite the clear and obvious representation in ownership by powerful Americans, the Bank immediately came under suspicion of being in the control of "foreign interests." These attacks remained particularly acute until 1800, when Thomas Jefferson was elected president. Jefferson, an opponent of the Bank, nevertheless did not ask for repeal of the Bank charter with his new Republican Congress, nor did his allies





A satire on Andrew Jackson's campaign to destroy the Bank of the United States and its support among state banks. Jackson (on the left), Martin Van Buren, and Jack Downing struggle against a snake with heads representing the states. (Library of Congress)

introduce such a bill. Rather, he ordered the sale of all government interest in the bank, while at the same time he cut the national debt and thus diminished the Bank's portfolio of government securities.

For the next several years, the BUS produced respectable earnings of 8–10 percent for its stockholders, kept a large reserve, and was operated effectively, if secretly. The Treasury had the authority to require regular reports, but did not, and none were offered. This secrecy, combined with growing anti-British feelings and the corollary suspicion that British investors controlled large portions of the stock, placed the recharter of the BUS in peril in 1811.

By that time, the new president of the United States, James Madison, who was a former Federalist, found himself in conflict with many of the Republicans in Congress. Tensions with England had grown so strong that the recharter bill narrowly failed in both houses despite support from the (by then many) state-chartered banks. Soon thereafter, the United States was again at war with Great Britain.

Following the War of 1812, banknote circulation rose from \$45 million to \$68 million, generated by some 246 state-chartered private banks. Pressures on reserves (in which banks had to redeem their paper banknotes in gold or silver "specie") mounted

until, in August 1814, the banks had to “suspend” specie payments—that is, refuse to pay gold and silver for notes. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Dallas, who had supported a new national bank, used the episode to argue for chartering a Second Bank of the United States. In January 1815, before the War of 1812 ended, Congress had passed a new charter, which Madison vetoed, contending that it did not meet the government’s needs for loans.

However, Congress redrafted the bill and in April 1816 submitted a new charter, which was similar to that of the First BUS. Important differences included a larger capital stock (\$35 million) and there were new locations for branches, but the operations resembled the earlier bank’s. Like the First BUS, the headquarters was in Philadelphia, and like the previous institution, the Second BUS was 80 percent privately owned. Stephen Girard of Philadelphia subscribed to \$3 million and William Jones, a Republican from Pennsylvania, was the first president.

Jones’s leadership proved less than inspiring, and after the Bank found its liquid draining away, Congress investigated the operations and accused Jones of mismanagement. After Jones resigned in 1819, South Carolinian Langdon Cheves took over and immediately began calling in loans. Although a recession set in, Cheves managed to right the Bank and to put it on a firm footing, earning a number of enemies along the way.

Critics who favored “loose money” began to attack the bank—most notably Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who called it “the monster.” When Cheves was replaced by Philadelphian Nicholas Biddle in 1823, supporters of the Bank hoped the criticism would end. Biddle managed the Bank well—perhaps too well, as the BUS gained influence and political power far beyond what the First BUS ever held. By 1828, when Tennesseean Andrew Jackson was elected president, he had a history of antipathy toward banks. Nevertheless, early indications were that he would not act unfavorably toward the Bank. Biddle, overestimating his own political support and underestimating Jackson’s popularity, dramatically sought to recharter the BUS in 1832, some four years before its

renewal day. He counted on the fact that Jackson would not risk the wrath of the public in an election year, but badly misjudged Jackson, who saw the Bank as his main campaign foil. Picking up the old “monster” tag, and using still other descriptions such as “the hydra,” Jackson vetoed the recharter bill and then made the veto stick. Furthermore, the public supported him.

Central to Jackson’s “war” on the BUS was his political rhetoric—whether he believed it or not remains a matter of controversy among historians—that the Bank represented the “elites” and involved undue foreign control. Jackson’s speeches touched a long-held U.S. suspicion of speculators and investors, especially if they were foreigners. Playing to a British “conspiracy” to control U.S. financial markets, Jackson succeeded in withdrawing the deposits of the U.S. government from the BUS in 1833, depriving the Bank of one of its two primary advantages over other institutions. When the Bank’s national charter expired, it got a charter from Pennsylvania, but with none of the power it once had. By 1840, the former Bank of the United States was out of business, and subsequent scholars have failed to identify any substantial foreign control that was exerted over its operations.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Bank War.

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## Bank War

Charges that the Second Bank of the United States (BUS) had fallen into the hands of “moneyed interests” (an unusual choice of labels, given that it was a bank) had led to growing hostility and opposition to the Bank by some Americans during the Jackson

era. There were already many who still remembered the panic of 1819 and the severe contraction initiated by the president of the Second BUS, Langdon Cheves, in an effort to save the institution. He succeeded by calling in loans and foreclosing on property, then selling the land when prices returned. Cheves's efforts, though, alienated many toward banks altogether. One of those who blamed banks for his own financial misdealings was Andrew Jackson, elected president in 1828.

Jackson, the "Hero of New Orleans," had grown up with a hatred for the British, suffering a wound as a teenager from an English officer during the Revolution. Most of Jackson's career had taken place in Tennessee courthouses or on campaigns with the army against American Indians or British troops. He thus had orchestrated a strong anti-Washington sentiment in the nation, which he translated into a suspicion of anything big and powerful. In a sense, he was the first populist president, who saw evil in moneyed elites, big business, and above all large financial institutions. Jackson's understanding of economics and finances largely came from reading a book on the South Sea Bubble and from the advice of William Gouge in his *Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States* (1833). Gouge was convinced that paper money was an intrinsic evil, and that only "hard money," or a gold circulating medium, would engender prosperity.

By the time Jackson won the presidency, the number of banks in the United States had grown almost geometrically. Under most circumstances, a bank received its charter (its right to conduct business) from the state legislature after submitting a petition from citizens explaining the "public good" such a business would bring to local communities. Charters at the state level no longer automatically entailed monopoly status for the bearer, but did carry important advantages, such as limited liability and, for banks, the authority to issue paper "notes" or money. Each bank could (in theory) print notes in proportion to its paid-in capital, which (again, in theory) consisted of gold and silver coin, called "specie." But banks routinely issued far more notes than they had specie in their vaults. It was, after all, how they turned a profit, by issuing the notes in the

form of loans whose repayments exceeded the small interest they paid on deposits.

Few—especially Jackson—understood banking as it operated at that time. Banks maintained some specie reserve, because at any time customers might demand their notes be "redeemed" in specie. Any bank that could not redeem its notes was subject to immediate closure by the state legislature, although few banks were ever required to shut down, mostly because when one bank was in trouble, all of them were in trouble, and no legislatures (except Arkansas and Wisconsin, in 1837) banned banks altogether. What kept the system running was trust in the bank's notes, not the actual gold or silver in the safe. Thus, in an ironic twist, the healthier a bank, the *lower* its specie reserves, while banks that were more suspect to runs would have to maintain more specie in their vaults.

One exception to this state-governed structure stood out: the Second Bank of the United States, which, like its predecessor, had numerous important advantages over its state-level competitors. As the depository for the funds of the United States government, the BUS had an enormous deposit base, which meant that it had far more money to lend than any other bank. It also was empowered to open branches in states designated by Congress: the Second BUS had branches in Chillicothe, Ohio, New Orleans, Louisiana, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New York, and so on. The advantages offered by branches were twofold. First, branches made the bank truly a national institution. When it came to currency, this gave it a significant edge, in that, for example, a local New Orleans bank's notes might trade "at par" (face value) in New Orleans and the surrounding area, but the further one got from the bank, the more difficult it became to redeem the notes, making them trade at a "discount." This was not the case with BUS money. Since BUS offices were relatively well distributed throughout the country, it was not difficult to redeem BUS notes in any region. Likewise, the ubiquity of BUS notes gave them more credibility and popularity than local banknotes, which added a premium to their value.

One might think that these advantages over state banks would have made the BUS an enemy of local



institutions, and thus fair game for Andrew Jackson's campaign to destroy it. In reality, however, most state banks saw the BUS as a source of stability that kept out poorly capitalized or badly run banks. The BUS could police the system to a degree, by staging "raids" in which a local BUS cashier might, in the process of exchange, collect the notes of a state-chartered bank and then surprise the local bank's staff by presenting a large amount of notes for redemption. The local bank would have to have BUS notes or specie equal to the amount demanded, or risk charter revocation by the state legislature. Some have argued that the discipline brought on by this threat fostered hostility to the BUS by state-chartered banks, but the large numbers of petitions that came into Congress by such local banks during the Bank War testify to the contrary: by and large, local bankers liked the presence of the BUS.

Within this context, the actual causes of the Bank War lay in the personalities of Jackson and the president of the Second BUS, Philadelphian Nicholas Biddle, who had succeeded Cheves. Biddle had built the BUS into a powerful force, which made it a prominent target for Jackson. An excellent banker, Biddle had the support of the most powerful men in the Senate—Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John Calhoun—but misjudged the popular appeal that Jackson could muster against an "elite" institution. Thinking Jackson, in an election year, would not dare oppose a solid institution that had meant much to U.S. business, Biddle's supporters submitted a recharter bill for the Bank four years before the charter expired. Where Biddle saw economic reason and common sense, the emotion-driven Jackson saw an election issue. He vetoed the recharter bill, calling the Bank a "monster." Claiming that "The bank, Mr. Van Buren, is trying to kill me, but *I will kill it*," he railed against "monopolies and exclusive privileges" (Remini, 16). Playing on popular sentiment against "moneyed men," Jackson claimed that Clay, among others, had received BUS loans, while other Jackson supporters raised the canard used against the First Bank of the United States that control of the Bank was in the hands of "foreign" (largely British) investors. Cartoons portrayed Jack-

son as the champion of the common man battling a many-headed hydra of wealthy-looking men in top hats.

The stunned Bank forces found that they did not have the votes to override Jackson's veto, and while they were still reeling from that setback, Jackson delivered another. He withdrew all government deposits from the Bank, stripping it of its most important competitive advantage. Jackson stuffed those funds in state banks whose management was loyal to him, known as "Pet Banks." Now a shell, the BUS could do little, and in 1836, when its national charter expired, Biddle obtained a charter from the State of Pennsylvania, only to have the bank hammered in the panic of 1837, and eventually close.

For more than a century, pundits and historians accepted that what happened next was the result of Jackson's "war." Land prices shot up, which scholars attributed to the inflationary issues by the local banks now unrestrained by the threat of BUS "raids." Jackson responded to this inflation by passing the Specie Circular (1836), which required that all federal land be paid for in specie. This, in turn (according to the long-held view) caused a crash in land values and brought on the panic of 1837. The story was internally consistent, and was generally accepted by virtually all U.S. historians well into the 1960s. Indeed, Robert Remini's classic on the affair, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*, still accepted this view as late as 1967, even when other evidence had become available. In the early 1960s, new economics approaches, called econometrics, that used large data samples manipulated by computers, made it possible to examine the claims about the BUS and Jackson's role with statistical evidence. Richard Timberlake, Jr., and then Peter Temin discovered independently that the inflation had occurred completely apart from the activities of the Bank War—that Mexican silver imports that formed the specie reserve in banks had soared in the early 1830s. Likewise, they showed, those silver inflows dried up quickly by 1836, instigating the panic.

The Bank War made good theater, and enabled pro-Jackson historians such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Robert Remini to create a myth about Jack-

son fighting for the common man, but it was only that, a myth. Jackson favored a large central government as much as his predecessor, John Quincy Adams, but wanted the levers of government in the hands of the Democrats, not the Whigs or Federalists. He greatly expanded executive power at the federal level, and his forces in Congress sought to enact sweeping new laws against currency issue by any bank. In the end, Jackson did not hate banks, but only banks that were not under the control of his party. Nevertheless, the image of a sword-wielding Jackson, slashing away at an octopus representing “big business” and “big money,” remains a popular one to this day.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Bank of the United States.

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### Barruel, Abbé

French ex-Jesuit Abbé Augustin de Barruel (1741–1820) has the dubious honor of being the father of modern conspiracy theory. His four-volume *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* contains all the elements that continue to characterize conspiracy narratives today including “evidence” of a shadowy cabal orchestrating world events behind the scenes and “proof” of a direct lineage of malfeasance stretching from antiquity to the present. According to David Brion Davis, Barruel’s *Memoirs* represent the first “rigorous” application of conspir-

acy theories, and as such were highly influential on his and subsequent generations.

Barruel became a Jesuit in 1756, but by 1762 anti-Jesuit feeling in France had become so strong he was to leave his homeland to travel for several years, returning only in 1773 when he left the church at the time the order was suppressed. The events of the French Revolution caused him to take refuge in England in 1792, during which time he met John Robison, the Scottish scientist whose *Proofs of a Conspiracy* would be published the same year as the first volume of Barruel’s *Memoirs* in 1798.

In the *Memoirs*, Barruel claimed the French Revolution was brought about intentionally by secret societies, which included the Jacobins, the Freemasons, and the Illuminati and Enlightenment thinkers, including Voltaire, Diderot, and the *philosophes*. In Barruel’s mind, the antimonarchy, anticlergy *philosophes* were the direct descendents of the secret medieval guilds who made up the order of the Freemasons. Presenting an accessible explanation for the causes of the French Revolution, the *Memoirs* were extremely influential and were translated into nine languages by 1812; the French edition remained continuously in print until 1837.

The first two volumes of the *Memoirs* lay the blame for the French Revolution specifically at the feet of the French Enlightenment thinkers, whose alarming philosophy espoused, among other things, a breaking down of national boundaries, overthrowing the monarchy, and establishing a democracy based on merit. Volumes three and four trace the historical antecedents for these schools of thought, finding that the Illuminati ultimately pull the strings:

The secrets of the Lodges constitute the basis of the Revolution under the title of *the Rights of Man*. The first article declares *man to be equal and free*; that *the principle of all sovereignty essentially resides in the people*; and that *law is nothing more than the expression of the general will*. Such had been for nearly half a century the doctrines of Argenson, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire. These

principles of pride and revolt had long since been the ground-work of the mysteries of every class of Sophister, Occult Mason, or Illuminee; and now they decorate the title page of the revolutionary code. (Barruel 1799b, vol. 4: 397)

This fear of Enlightenment thinking struck a particular chord in the nascent United States, where Barruel's and Robison's texts were cited as proof, indeed, of the dangers threatening the new republic. New England clergyman Rev. Jedidiah Morse was instrumental in bringing anti-Illuminati feeling into the political sphere with his series of sermons in 1797–1799, which cited the French Revolution as proof of the dangers of radical thought, and neatly aligned Jeffersonian politics with the Illuminati.

Although later Barruel's position would change, the first edition of the *Memoirs* is not antisemitic, nor does it contain any reference to Judaism; at the time the Jewish community in France was marginalized, with no political influence, and therefore was not perceived as a threat. Events after the revolution would change that: the French National Assembly in 1791 ended legal restrictions on Jews, which was seen by many as incontestable proof that, as the revolution directly benefited the Jewish community, it must have been caused by Jewish plotting. At this time Barruel's antisemitic views had not been published, but such was his profile and influence that his verbal endorsement of them was enough to guarantee their acceptance as truth. Jews began to be seen as the ultimate power behind all secret societies, leading to the confused notion that the Freemasons were Jewish (see Pipes), and, ultimately, to the creation in the early twentieth century of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the forged document purporting to outline secret Jewish rituals.

Barruel was not without his detractors, but responded to his critics using many of the tactics of later conspiracist thinking. The preface to volume four defends his position at length, using the very fact of his critics' existence as further proof of the Jacobin/Illuminati plot (an argument along the lines of "you think that because that's what the Jacobins want you to think"); if all else failed, Barruel simply

accused his critics of being members of the Illuminati themselves. In a series of letters defending his position against the philosopher Montesquieu, Barruel concludes the philosopher is clearly an Illuminee for disagreeing with him (Barruel 1798–1799a, vol. 4: 409).

Barruel's text was vastly influential and impossible for his contemporaries to ignore; even his detractors were forced to take him seriously enough to refute his arguments at length, and the *Memoirs* were written about and discussed by leading literary and philosophical figures of the day, including Shelly, Thomas de Quincey and Edmund Burke in England, and George Sand and Gerard de Nerval in France. As Pipes states, the book's combination of secret societies and antisemitism set the "template" for conspiracy fears that exists to this day. The book has rarely been out of print, and continues to have its supporters among right-wing conspiracist groups such as the John Birch Society. Its most recent publishers market the book as an accurate historical document, and describe Barruel as "one of the few authors on the French Revolution to be specific in the people he names, the intrigues he recounts, and the supporting documentation he provides" (www.amazon.com). However, the last word should be given to Thomas Jefferson, who, on reading the book when it was first published, dismissed it as "the ravings of a Bedlamite."

Lindsay Porter

**See also:** Freemasonry; Illuminati; Morse, Jedidiah; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Robison, John.

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## Bay of Pigs Invasion

Situated on the southern coast of Cuba, the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs) was the location on 17 April 1961 of a failed invasion of the island by Cuban exiles hostile to the "Marxist" government of Fidel Castro, which had taken power in January 1959. The invasion, which was orchestrated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and approved by President John F. Kennedy, was just one episode in the broader "conspiracy" to provoke confrontation with Cuba that had been initiated under Kennedy's predecessor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and that continued to operate, after the Bay of Pigs, through and beyond the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Intending to raise support among the islanders and lead a coup against Castro, the invasion force instead encountered heavy resistance from the Cuban army, and was defeated within two days. Commentators disagree on the number of casualties involved, but most accounts agree that around 100 of the Cuban exiles were killed, and that around 1,200 were taken prisoner. "Bay of Pigs" quickly became a byword for the most embarrassing incident in the history of the U.S. intelligence organizations. Indeed, in a secret memorandum by Kennedy aide Richard Goodwin that was made public in 2001, Goodwin noted a conversation with the Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, who had thanked him for the "great political victory" the CIA had handed the Castro regime.

CIA plans for an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro exiles had been under way for some time before Eisenhower suspended diplomatic relations with Castro in January 1961. By March 1960 Eisenhower had resolved to overthrow the Cuban gov-

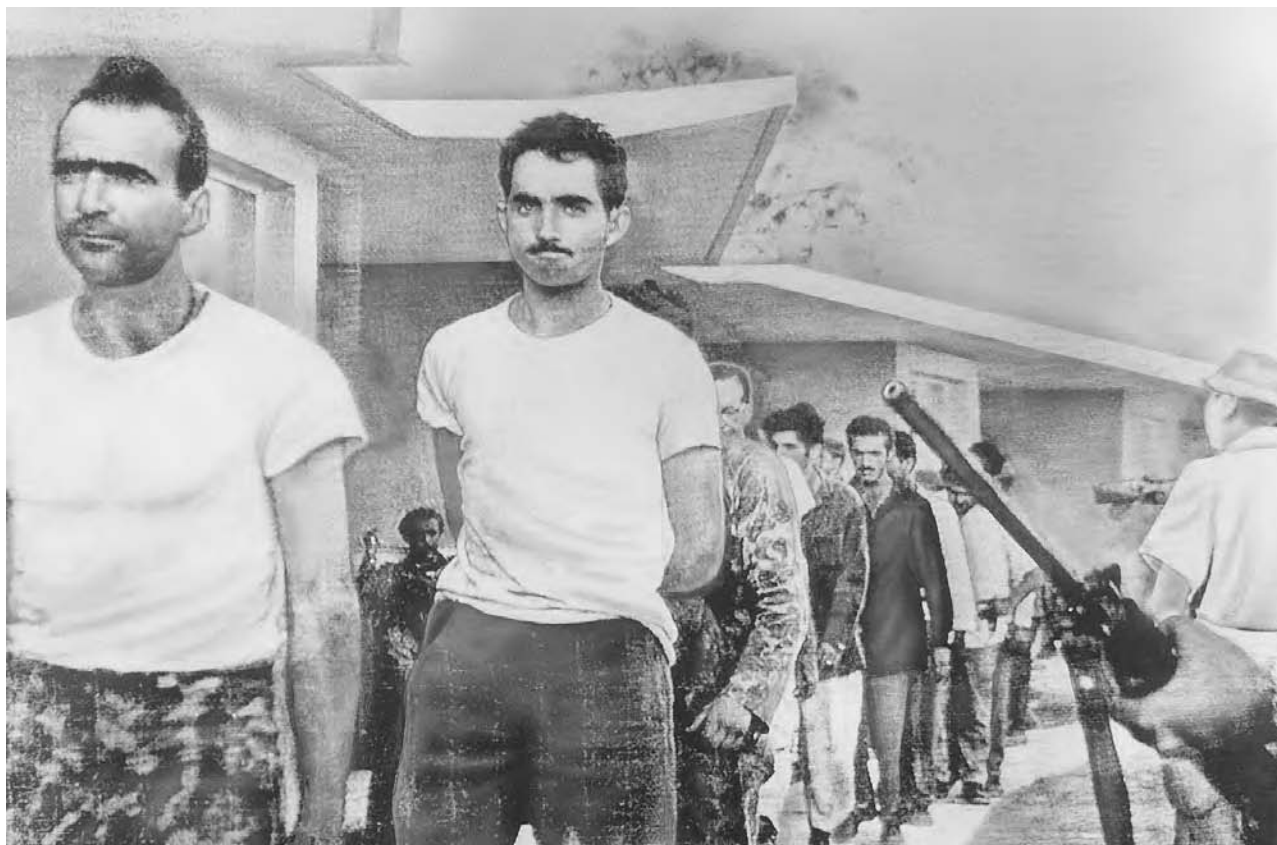
ernment, and had formally endorsed a CIA plan ("A Program of Covert Action against the Castro Regime") whose aim was to oust Castro in such a manner as to avoid the appearance of U.S. intervention. In keeping with the objectives of the "Program of Covert Action," the Bay of Pigs invasion was modeled on a previous coup staged by the CIA in Guatemala in 1954, where U.S.-led aggression against the left-wing President Jacobo Arbenz was presented as the work of disgruntled exiles, and where U.S. forces made extensive use of radio propaganda to mobilize local support for the coup.

Despite the acute embarrassment caused by the Bay of Pigs, the U.S. military and intelligence services followed the failed invasion with an astonishing set of covert initiatives designed to discredit Castro and provoke military confrontation with Cuba. These initiatives, code-named Operation Northwoods, included plans to assassinate Cuban exiles, attack the U.S. Navy, and commit acts of terrorism in major U.S. cities, in order to blame the aggression on Cuba and generate support for military action against the Castro regime. Operation Northwoods was formally endorsed by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, but was rejected by the Kennedy administration in 1962. Determined to reverse their humiliation at the Bay of Pigs, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff continued to plot scenarios (or "pretexts") that would justify U.S. action against Cuba. These included plans to provoke the shooting down of U.S. spy planes over Cuban air space, the possibility of stimulating a Cuban attack on U.S. forces stationed on the island at the Guantanamo Bay naval base, and forcing other Latin American countries into armed confrontation with Castro.

## The Bay of Pigs and the Assassination of JFK

The Bay of Pigs has been linked with two of the most momentous U.S. conspiracy theories of the twentieth century: the conspiracy (or multiple conspiracies) to assassinate President John F. Kennedy, and the Watergate conspiracy, which would lead to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. Among the CIA operatives who helped plan the Bay of Pigs was E. Howard Hunt, who would later be





Watched by armed guards, grim-faced invaders are marched off to prison from temporary quarters at Giron Beach, Las Villas province, after their capture by Castro forces. (Bettmann/Corbis)

sentenced to thirty-five years in prison for his part in the break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate building. In the early days of the Watergate investigation, Hunt's involvement, and rumors that the break-in was staged by anti-Castro Cubans monitoring the "pro-Castro" stance of candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, led to links being established in some conspiracy theories between the Bay of Pigs and Watergate.

More enduring links have been explored between the Bay of Pigs and the Kennedy assassination. Although Kennedy followed Eisenhower in approving plans for the invasion of Cuba, his reluctance to deploy U.S. air-power in support of the operation made him enemies in the military and

the CIA, where his caution, and his desire to avoid implicating the United States in the attack, were seen as the principal factors behind the dismal failure of the mission. One conspiracy theory about the Kennedy assassination, a version famously played out in Don DeLillo's novel *Libra* and Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*, suggests that Kennedy was killed by the CIA and/or by anti-Castro exiles, who were resentful of the manner in which the president had dealt with the Cuban issue during and after the Bay of Pigs invasion. Another version views Kennedy's assassination as a revenge-killing carried out by agents of the Castro regime in response to the attempted invasion of their island and the numerous U.S. plots to kill Castro.

*David Holloway*



**See also:** Castro, Fidel; Central Intelligence Agency; Cold War; Cuban Missile Crisis; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Liddy, G. Gordon; Nixon, Richard; Pentagon Papers; Red Scare; Stone, Oliver; Warren Commission.

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### Beam, Louis

Louis Beam first came to public attention in 1981 during a conflict between white and Vietnamese fishermen in Galveston Bay, Texas. The Texas Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, led by Beam, became involved in the conflict and, following a court case in which the Klan was instructed to cease harassing the Vietnamese, Beam became increasingly active nationally as an advocate of what he described as the “Fifth Era Klan.” The most recent period of Klan activity, which Beam defined as the fourth era, had failed, he argued, because its leaders did not understand that the only hope of bringing about racial victory was to abandon the idea of a mass movement and return to its roots as an armed underground organization. Beam’s writings on the subject, which included the outline of a points system to be awarded depending on the importance of the individual assassinated, raised his profile within the extreme Right and in the late 1980s he was among those tried unsuccessfully for seditious conspiracy in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He continued, however, to espouse the need for political violence and in 1992, in the final issue of his magazine, *The Seditonist*, published what would prove to be his most important article, “Leaderless Resistance.”

The article argued that the only way to defeat the federal government was to avoid centralized organizations as these were easily infiltrated. Instead mili-

tants should return to the approach pioneered in the original American Revolution, in which the committees of correspondence that had organized resistance to the British had functioned as independent cells. A second American Revolution would once again need to take up leaderless resistance. Coming as it did immediately before the killing of Christian Identity believer Vicki Weaver by an FBI sniper, the article was the subject of discussion at a gathering of “Christian men” organized by Identity leader Pete Peters later in the year. In 1993, Beam, himself an Identity adherent, was at Waco, Texas, during the FBI siege of the Branch Davidian religious community that culminated in the burning to death of over seventy adults and children. Two subsequent events were to raise Beam’s profile still further. First, following the emergence of the citizen militias in 1994, his article on leaderless resistance began to enjoy an increased circulation. More importantly, the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma the following year led to the claim that it had been the result of a conspiracy involving a group following Beam’s strategy. This claim was not only made by critics of the militias but also circulated among sections of the Patriot movement. Beam himself, however, saw the most likely explanation of the Oklahoma bombing in the same light as did many Patriots, as a federal government conspiracy intended to crush opposition and bring about a police state.

An early exponent of the notion of a Zionist Occupation Government, Beam told the court during the Fort Smith trial that his writings had been intended to expose the conspiracy that controlled the United States. Writing in the 1990s, he claimed that multiculturalism was being used by the same bankers who had sponsored the Bolshevik Revolution in order to destroy national identity and create a New World Order. Despite ill-health and suggestions that he has become less committed to anti-semitism, he has continued to be active, and in 1999 declared his support for antiglobalization protesters at Seattle. New alliances, he predicted, would form between those who had described themselves as conservatives and those who had seen themselves as progressives. “The New American

Patriot will be neither left nor right, just a freeman fighting for liberty.”

Martin Durham

**See also:** Antisemitism; Christian Identity; Ku Klux Klan; Militias; New World Order; Oklahoma City Bombing; Waco

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**Bell, Art**

Art Bell's late-night radio talk-show *Coast to Coast AM* is the most popular of the late night shows on the radio and has been ranked the fourth most popular of all radio shows in the United States. Its recurring themes are the paranormal, weather and earth changes, UFOs and alien abductions, and governmental attempts to hide the truth about extraterrestrial visits and NASA explorations from the public. Bell, whose politics are Libertarian rather than right-wing Republican, rarely engages in political discussions that are not associated with the show's main focus.

Bell, who was born 17 June 1945, in Jacksonville, North Carolina, has spent almost his entire career in radio. In his early years he was a rock music disk jockey who in 1978 became the host of a late-night talk-show called *West Coast AM* on KDWN in Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1988 Bell, with the help of Alan Corbeth, renamed the show *Coast to Coast AM* and syndicated it through the Chancellor Broadcasting Company, moving its broadcast from the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas to his home in Pahrump, Nevada. *Coast to Coast AM*, which began with a total of 17 radio stations located in the western United States, now has over 500 affiliates in the

United States and Canada and an estimated audience of 10 million listeners.

Bell's most well-known conspiracy theorist guest is Richard C. Hoagland, who claims that NASA has an entirely secret alternative research agenda kept hidden from the citizens of the United States, and that NASA has fought to prevent the world knowing about an earlier presence of life on Mars. Other frequent guests include Kathleen Keating, who claims to know the identity of the Antichrist and predicts that a coup in the Vatican will unseat Pope John Paul II, and Major Ed Dames, a proponent of remote viewing who has proposed a myriad of secret schemes and cover-ups. Writer Whitley Strieber, the author of the alien abduction narrative *Communion*, who believes that UFO witnesses are being silenced by various means, was also a frequent guest before taking over Bell's other radio show, *Dreamland*. Area 51, the government base that remains cloaked in secrecy, is located very close to Bell's home and is also a favorite topic for the show. Bell's show airs from 1 A.M. to 6 A.M., Eastern Standard Time, and he typically allows his guests a great deal of freedom to propound their ideas before soliciting callers to question them.

*Coast to Coast AM* was implicated in the suicide of the thirty-nine members of the Heaven's Gate cult in 1997 when an amateur astronomer informed Bell's audience that a vehicle was flying behind the Hale-Bopp comet; this claim was validated on the air by Dr. Courtney Brown, a proponent of the reputed psychic phenomenon of "remote viewing." Although the Heaven's Gate cult denied this connection to their actions and Bell revealed that Brown had used incorrect evidence for his statement, the media continued to link Bell's show with the tragedy.

Art Bell's personal and professional life has also been the source of speculation and conspiracy theory. In October 1998 he announced he was leaving *Coast to Coast AM* permanently but returned weeks later, refusing to reveal the reason for his absence. The media subsequently reported his son's molestation by an HIV-positive teacher in Nye County, Nevada, an event that led to Bell's retirement in April 2000 when he sued a Nashville,

Tennessee, short-wave radio station for broadcasting slanderous information that he was a child molester. After this suit was settled he returned to *Coast to Coast AM* in February 2001.

Bell is the author of four books, *The Art of Talk* (1995), *The Quickening* (1997), *The Source* (with Brad Steiger) (1999), and *The Coming Global Superstorm* (with Whitley Strieber) (1999), and publishes a monthly magazine called *After Dark* that presents issues discussed on his program. He has been interviewed on a number of television programs, including *The Today Show* and *Larry King Live*, and has been featured on an episode of *Dark Skies*, a show about the governmental cover-up of extraterrestrial life on earth, and on *Millennium*, when he played himself.

*Angela Hague*

**See also:** Area 51; Moon Landings; UFOs.

## Berg, Alan

On 18 June 1984, controversial Jewish radio talk-show host Alan Berg was assassinated in the driveway of his Denver home. Berg's belligerent, confrontational style was carried by Denver's KOA radio and reached thirty-eight states during the evening hours. The eclectic range of topics included subjects such as gun control, homosexuality, race relations, and Christianity. Always willing to enrage the caller as well as his listeners, Berg became one of the most popular radio personalities in the country. He also became one of the most hated men in the country by the conspiratorial white supremacist movement.

In the spring of 1984, a militant subgroup of the Aryan Nation led by Robert Mathews, known as the Order or the Silent Brotherhood, began what it referred to as "Step 5," a code name for its assassination hit list. The list began with Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center, followed by Norman Lear, the liberal television producer, and then Alan Berg. Berg's radio show gave him a nightly platform to belittle Aryan Nation and its cause, and thus made him a prime target.

On 18 June Berg recorded a radio show questioning the pope's comment that sex for pleasure is sinful. Berg argued that nothing in the Bible supported this claim, and although he purposely misinterpreted the pope's statement, he used it as the basis for an hour-long attack on Catholics and the pope in his usual controversial style. During the show, Mathews and his men arrived in Denver.

Weeks earlier, Mathews had sent one of the few women he trusted to KOA radio station under the pretext of writing a college paper. While there, she acquired information on Berg's appearance, his schedule, what type of car he drove, where he parked, and where he lived. The plan was simple: ambush Berg at his home.

Mathews and two of his followers, David Lane and Bruce Pierce, parked across the street from Berg's home and waited for him to return. At approximately 9:20 P.M., Berg pulled his VW Beetle into his driveway. As he was getting out of the car, Lane pulled in behind Berg's car, blocking him in. Mathews opened the rear door for Pierce, who opened fire with a .45-caliber MAC 10, killing Berg. Mathews and Pierce jumped back into their car and Lane sped down the street.

In December 1984, after a massive manhunt, the FBI cornered Mathews in a house on Whidbey Island, off the coast of Washington. After a two-day standoff the FBI fired an M-79 Starburst in the house, causing a fire. Defiantly, Mathews remained in the burning house firing his gun until he succumbed to the flames. The other members of the Order were eventually captured and in November 1987 David Lane and Bruce Pierce were found guilty of the murder of Alan Berg and sentenced to 150 years in prison.

*Kenneth L. Mullen*

**See also:** Aryan Nations.

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### **Biddle, Nicholas**

As director of the Second Bank of the United States, and proponent of a centralized financial system for the United States, Nicholas Biddle (1786–1844) was the target of accusations that he led a conspiracy of wealthy aristocrats to control the national economy. Biddle, born in Philadelphia in 1786, was everything that President Andrew Jackson considered dangerous—a graduate of Princeton, editor of a literary journal and of several volumes of the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, and, as a young man, a secretary to the U.S diplomatic mission to czarist Russia. All of Biddle’s experiences, especially exposure to the economic chaos of early-nineteenth-century Russia, and the vast infrastructure demanded by the opening of the American West, led him to believe that the United States needed the strength of a central bank.

Biddle, who had been on the board of directors since 1819, took control of the bank in 1823. From its chartering in 1816, the Second Bank was mired in controversy, sparking the Supreme Court case *McCulloch vs. Maryland*, in which Congress was shown to have the legal power to charter the institution. The economic panic of 1819, while not caused by the establishment of the bank, was largely blamed on the bank by unhappy small farmers, westerners, and supporters of state banks. Biddle believed that the bank’s director should be apolitical, but when opposition to his institution surged he sought allies in Congress, including Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. Biddle and his supporters agreed that the nation needed ready access to funds capable of supporting large-scale military actions, like that waged in the War of 1812, and favored strict regulation of state banks.

Knowing that 1832 was a critical election year, Biddle asked Andrew Jackson to renew the bank’s charter, although it would not expire until 1836.



Portrait of Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States from 1822 to 1839. (Corbis)

Bank supporters counted on election campaigning to force Jackson into signing, so that he would not lose support in states that benefited from the bank, such as Pennsylvania, where the bank had its headquarters. Instead of seeing this as an economic opportunity for the nation, Jackson interpreted the request as a threat from the bank against presidential power. As a champion of the “people,” Jackson leapt at the chance to attack an unpopular institution that many small farmers and frontier people thought limited their economic opportunities and was thought to be dominated by eastern, elitist conspirators who sought to profit for themselves. After Congress passed a bill that would recharter the Second Bank of the United States, Jackson vetoed it, citing a vast conspiracy of old-money interests acting against the common voters of the nation.

When Jackson won reelection, Biddle and his followers were unable to summon enough votes to override the veto, and launched into a plan to force



the government to recognize the value of the bank. Biddle instructed the bank's branches not to curtail making loans, an action that caused an economic slump in 1834. Jackson hit back by ordering his acting secretary of the treasury, Roger Taney, to withdraw federal deposits from the bank and place them in state "pet" banks. Two previous secretaries had refused this order, and Jackson dismissed and replaced them, finally finding an obedient servant in Taney. Biddle mustered congressional support for a censure of the president on the ground that he was obliged by the bank's charter to deposit federal funds, and the Senate refused to confirm Taney as the official secretary of the treasury. The charter ran out in 1836, shutting down national bank operation (it continued its existence as the State Bank of Pennsylvania), and Biddle retired in defeat to his estate, Andalusia, where he channeled his interests into breeding race horses, Guernsey cattle, and grapes.

Biddle lost the "Bank War" to Andrew Jackson, and his own network of support could not match the power of the executive branch of the government, especially when Jackson campaigned by accusing the wealthy and educated Biddle of subverting the financial infrastructure of the government against the common man. However, Biddle took no pleasure in the subsequent economic crisis, the panic of 1837, created by uncontrolled paper money issued by the state banks, and he died in 1844, still championing the cause of a centralized monetary system.

*Margaret Sankey*

**See also:** Bank of the United States; Bank War; Jackson, Andrew.

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## Bilderbergers

Named after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, Holland, where the first meeting took place in May 1954, the Bilderbergers form an unofficial, secretive group set up in the first years of the cold war to foster communication and cooperation between Europe and the United States. Leading businessmen and political figures hoped to further the aims of liberal democratic capitalism, protecting it from what they saw as communism's imperialist aspirations. Critics who accuse the Bilderbergers of conspiracy claim the group constitutes an invisible, shadow government, and that this secret government's goals involve the destruction of the nation-state, the creation of a single currency, and the foundation of a New World Order led by a single world-government.

Reference to "the Bilderbergers" generally means those who have attended at least one of the meetings, but there is no set list of members as such. Rather, the group's steering committee (including figures such as the former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger and Canadian media-mogul Conrad Black) is in charge of deciding who will attend the meeting in any given year. The list of those who have attended Bilderberger meetings is impressive, including leading politicians and military figures, businessmen and bankers, and lawyers and academics (see [www.bilderberg.org](http://www.bilderberg.org) for complete lists). The first meeting was not only attended by high-ranking CIA officials, but was financed in part by the CIA as well. Also, which is important for a certain strain of anti-old world conspiracy theory, the group allowed members of Western European royal families to reclaim the political power they had abdicated through constitutional reform.

The Bilderbergers claim that their limitation of press coverage and overall secrecy is necessary in order to ensure an environment of openness and freedom of speech during the meetings. In this age of media proliferation, it is truly stunning that they manage to retain such a low profile, with nearly none of the members ever agreeing to be interviewed on the subject of the meetings. Many anti-Bilderbergers see this high level of secrecy as sure evidence of a conspiracy.



In the minds of some, further evidence of conspiracy can be found in the Bilderbergers' ties to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)—an extremely high percentage of U.S. Bilderbergers are also members of the CFR—and to the Trilateral Commission, which was founded from within the Bilderberg meetings by David Rockefeller (Gill, 137). Even mainstream writers often suggest that U.S. Bilderbergers may well be contravening the Logan Act, which makes it illegal for U.S. citizens to negotiate with foreign powers without being granted the authority to do so by the U.S. government.

Many argue that future heads of state are hand-picked by the Bilderbergers. It is no coincidence, they charge, that Bill Clinton attended the 1991 meeting and went on to become president the following year, or that Tony Blair attended in 1993 and became the Labour Party's leader a year later, ultimately becoming Britain's prime minister in the 1997 election. Furthermore, the policies made by the parties of the left in both Britain and the United States during the 1990s—policies that proved highly successful in capturing “moderate” voters—seem to be in line with the policies of the Bilderberger group, particularly those that favor the promotion of economic globalization (i.e., the New World Order).

When faced with the impressive list of attendees, no one would dispute the fact that the Bilderbergers wield immense political and economic power; the question is, rather, whether or not this obvious power is best described as a conspiracy or secret world government. The forces of international capitalism are indeed powerful, and, as even mainstream theorists have argued, the forces of globalization create interconnected networks of power that operate just the way a conspiracy to create a New World Order would (see, for example, Michael Hardt and Antonia Negri's book, *Empire*). Furthermore, by their own admission, the Bilderbergers are out to promote the advance of global capitalism. So it is fair to ask exactly what makes anti-Bilderbergers “merely” conspiracy theorists.

For many, anti-Bilderbergers are designated conspiracy theorists because of their reliance on an array of concepts, rhetorical figures, and, perhaps most importantly, targets that are often to be found in

other “extremist” theories. As with other conspiracy theories, anti-Bilderberger rhetoric focuses on an international cabal run by the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds, and many would argue that the choice of these two families as targets is no accident. Critics of these “international bankers” and “secret governments” tend to draw their metaphors, figures, and arguments from a vast conceptual reservoir that includes, among other things, attacks on the so-called Jewish-Masonic world conspiracy. Whether or not anti-Bilderberger writings are manifestly antisemitic groups highly attuned to the language of antisemitism (such as the Anti-Defamation League) often detect antisemitism in certain code words (i.e., the Rothschilds, “international bankers,” etc.). When labeled antisemitic by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the conspiracy theorists ask: if there *were* a conspiracy of international bankers that *was* orchestrating world events, how on earth are we to investigate it and critique it other than by using terms such as “international bankers”? In the eyes of the anti-Bilderbergers, the ADL may be unwittingly (or wittingly) playing into the hands of the Bilderbergers. Yet in the very virulence of their attacks on the ADL and international Jewish bankers, the right-wing anti-Bilderbergers often seem to betray their true intentions (see [www.bilderberg.org/jewish.htm](http://www.bilderberg.org/jewish.htm)).

Marlon Kuzmick

**See also:** Council on Foreign Relations; New World Order; One-World Government; Trilateral Commission.

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## Black Helicopters

The “black helicopter” came to public prominence as part of the conspiracy theories of a New World

Order, which were much reported upon as the core belief of the U.S. militia movement that rapidly arose in the western United States in the early 1990s. Stories of unidentified black helicopters seen flying over rural areas and accounts of menacing encounters with the craft and their occupants were soon being incorporated into the unfolding narrative of a monster plot involving the federal government and the imminent takeover of the United States by the United Nations. The conspiracy website *Parascope* invited people to report sightings of black helicopters; a typical example (from “Nighthawk” dated August 1996) read: “Our Texas Air Guard flies [sic] very dark green copters with no markings on them and they look black from a distance. I believe they are up to no good. Why are they unmarked? They also have some in Montgomery county to the North of here which used Infer-red scans to search for missing people among other things.” The alleged sightings were numerous enough by 1994 that the popular conspiracy author Jim Keith compiled a book called *Black Helicopters over America*; his thesis was revealed by its subtitle: *Strikeforce for the New World Order*. Before long, the black helicopter became synonymous with crackpot conspiracy beliefs, and sightings were familiar enough to be parodied in satirical TV shows such as *South Park* and *King of the Hill*.

However, to understand the phenomenon it has to be noted that the helicopter’s potential as a platform for surveillance (and firepower) is genuine, and had already been amply demonstrated in the Vietnam War. After the war the same potential was deployed at home by U.S. police forces (with the color of helicopters changing from olive to blue) and, as Mike Davis notes in *City of Quartz*, the 1980s saw the urban ghettos of the United States progressively becoming “Vietnamized.” Therefore, to imagine the helicopter as an agent of malign state power is based on real foundations, if ones rarely experienced by white citizens. Nevertheless, the militias were not the first rural Americans to claim such sightings. The initial sightings were made in the early 1970s, again in the West, by ranchers, and formed part of their claim that

strange wounds found on dead cattle were the result of the secret testing of bioweapons by the military. Helicopters seen overhead were quickly associated with this, and soon it was alleged that to do their deeds they masqueraded as UFOs at night. Before long this became inverted and some argued that the mutilations (or “mutes”) were genuinely of extraterrestrial origin—the staunchest advocate being Linda Moulton Howe, author of *Alien Harvest*. As a result, the sightings soon were plugged into the rich mix of conspiracy beliefs already holding sway in 1980s U.S. ufology. As Curtis Peebles put it, it was soon established among advocates that there existed “an immense conspiracy theory [including] not only UFOs and mutes, but the Kennedy assassinations, exotic test aircraft, secret treaties, underground cities, international bankers, shadowy ‘whistle blowers’ and the Jews” (Peebles, 224).

Clearly, then, the sightings of the 1990s inherited much from the first generation, but what of the core constituents of the phenomenon and their meaning? Why black? Black is now the color of covert authority favored by special units, and in the national security lexicon it also attaches to budgets and projects so very secret they aren’t even acknowledged to exist, for instance as was true for years of the Stealth fighter and bomber. Why rural locations, and what was being seen (for both generations)? Some of the sightings were obviously misidentifications of civilian helicopters (all silhouettes seeming black), but it does appear likely that some were of genuinely unmarked aircraft operated by the Drug Enforcement Agency, on the prowl for backwoods marijuana plantations. However, as Nighthawk’s mundane sighting shows, others were likely of military vehicles (actually gray) engaged in training, and in the imagination of the militias a recursion typical of conspiracy theory can be seen: the military have to train in rural areas; the militias are a rural movement believing in a conspiracy involving the government and military; thus the presence of helicopters in rural areas proves that the military are up to no good and are even targeting the militias. The prominence of the black helicopter perhaps therefore represents an

imaginative inversion of an oppressive reality that inner-city African Americans genuinely experience—a “wannabe victimization” that seeks to re-center the rural and marginalized.

However, like much militia belief, this stance was prompted by the events at Ruby Ridge and Waco, during which many FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and military helicopters were seen, which led to further militia actions that then stimulated antiterrorist responses from these agencies. It is a fact that special units do exist and train with helicopters for domestic action, as recent exercises and the use of military helicopters in border patrols have shown. Notably, though, a divide exists between those believers who claim that the black helicopters are from real covert units such as the army’s 160th Special Aviation Regiment and those who consider them to be the inherently unidentifiable agents of the United Nations—or worse. Ultimately, then, to see the black helicopter is to enter a world where the potential capabilities of a real technology are being extrapolated, and where the actual (and sometimes necessarily secret) activities of the military are fantasized about in a framework that imagines their focus is on Americans. Thus, it seems likely that after September 11 and with the context of “homeland security” the black helicopter will keep and even gain an audience.

*Alasdair Spark*

**See also:** Cattle Mutilations; Militias; New World Order.

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### **Black Panthers**

A militant black activist organization established in the 1960s, the Black Panther Party put forward an analysis of institutional racism in the United States that had conspiratorial overtones, while at the same time it was the subject of conspiracy theories told by white conservatives who feared that the party constituted an armed conspiracy against U.S. institutions.

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1966 in North Oakland, California. In the aftermath of the recent uprisings in Watts, Harlem, Chicago, and Detroit, Newton and Seale had come to question the effectiveness of the civil rights movement. Examining the situation in their own backyard—an exodus of manufacturing jobs to the Oakland suburbs and even overseas (replaced by jobs in the commerce and finance sectors that required high levels of education and skill) and a shortage of affordable housing (from 1955 to the early 1960s, over 7,000 low-income housing units were destroyed, and few of them were replaced)—they began to believe that the movement was not properly addressing these issues of economic change and inequality and thus questioned how best to proceed.

For many black nationalists, the answer to this query was a call for racial separatism, while traditional liberals continued to press for greater integration and the passage of new legal civil rights guarantees. It was within this volatile ideological milieu that the BPP called for “revolutionary intercommunalism” (Newton, 9), a distinctively “socialist and Marxist” (Newton, 27) ideology that rejected both the concept of separatism as well as the gradualism that accompanied liberal calls for change, and placed the civil rights struggle in a more global context. Stating that since the United States was no longer a nation but an empire, they argued that the sovereignty of all countries had been called into question. “Their self-determination, economic

determination, and cultural determination,” Newton explained, “has been transformed by the imperialists and the ruling cycle.” These transformations and phenomena required the Panthers to call themselves “intercommunalists” (rather than “internationalists”) because “nations have been transformed into communities of the world” (Newton, 29). Such a focus led to attention on the inequities of capitalism on the local level, as the Panthers saw African American neighborhoods as such communities within the U.S. empire. Party members established armed police patrols (which the Panthers are perhaps best known for), free breakfast programs for children, health clinics, escort and transportation services for senior citizen housing project residents, and clothing and shoe programs for community members across the country. These programs were seen as explicitly protecting the community from the dangers of imperialism, providing a local wall of self-defense against the larger forces that maintained the U.S. empire.

As one might expect, such a sweeping ideology lent itself to conspiracy theory, particularly as the BPP continued to face hostility from the very forces it wished to overthrow. By 1970, the BPP was referring to the United States as “a barbaric organization controlled and operated by avaricious, sadistic, bloodthirsty thieves” (qtd. in Foner, 268). There was, as the New York Black Panthers explained, a “Government Conspiracy” (qtd. in Foner, 208) that sought to eliminate all of those who dared to question the inhuman capitalistic system. Not surprisingly, it was those institutions that the Panthers interacted with on the local level that were most often implicated in these conspiratorial theories. Police officers and court officials were tangible symbols of “the most ruthless system in the world,” a system that attempted to cover up instances of cruelty, inequality, and outright brutality through the propagation of the “big lie” of U.S. freedom and equality. Such actions showed that “[t]he ‘Amerikkkan system of justice’ is a hideous sham and a revolting farce” (qtd. in Foner, 203). In the face of such a wide-ranging conspiracy, the Panthers felt that they had little choice but to topple these institutions wholesale.



Eldridge Cleaver led a life of transformations: youthful years of crime and imprisonment; a decade as a famous African American activist and writer; a period of exile; and his last years as an outspoken and conservative Christian. (Library of Congress)

Yet there was strong evidence to support the Panthers’ turn to conspiracy thinking, primarily in the shape of the governmental response to the party. Seeing the Panthers themselves as leaders of a grand conspiracy against the United States government, such organizations as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Justice Department, and even the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) launched an assault on the Panthers that would be enough to make any group fall victim to paranoia. On 8 September 1968, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover announced that the Black Panther Party was “the greatest threat to the internal security of the country,” and called for the bureau to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” the BPP (Newton, 1; 9). By June 1969 the FBI was investigating all forty-two Panther chapters



and approximately 1,200 members and sympathizers in order “to obtain evidence of possible violation of federal and local laws.” This effort included the examination of every aspect of Panther affairs, from financial records to the publication of Black Panther newsletters and flyers. The FBI even conducted a survey to determine “how many members are on welfare” (O’Reilly, 298). The Panthers also found themselves the target of numerous COINTELPRO (the infamous FBI counterintelligence program) investigations. Of the 295 documented actions taken by COINTELPRO to disrupt African American groups, 233 were specifically directed toward destruction of the Party (Newton, 53). And when such covert counterintelligence programs could not fully curtail the activities of the BPP, the government had little trouble resorting to overt violence, as seen in the 1969 murder of Chicago Black Panther Fred Hampton, at the hands of the FBI and the Chicago police force (Jones, 372–373).

Such acts of violence and intimidation weakened the infrastructure of the BPP across the country, and the party, by the early 1980s, ceased to be a vital political force on the national scene. However, the party left a legacy that, throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and even 1990s, influenced such groups and individuals as the white radical Weathermen, the Philadelphia-based MOVE organization, and even academics and students who called upon their universities to institute black studies programs and departments. Perhaps most important, the BPP, by calling attention to the government-mandated attacks against it, made it clear that it was not only outsider groups that relied heavily on conspiracy thinking. Such thinking was now something practiced by our own government, a revelation that led many U.S. citizens to take a more cynical and pessimistic view of the U.S. state.

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**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; COINTELPRO; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar; Income Tax and the Internal Revenue Service; Weathermen.

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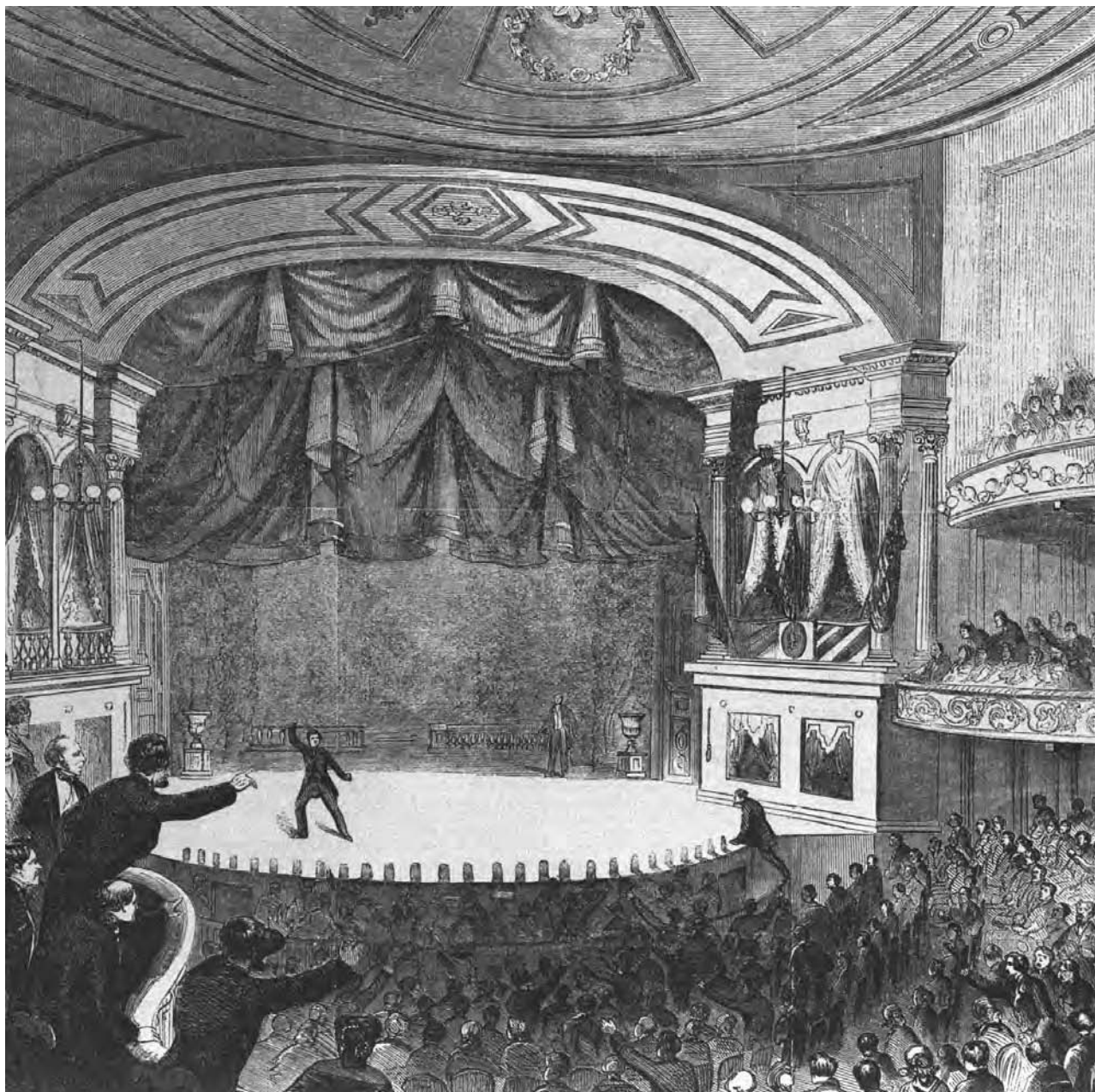
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**Booth, John Wilkes**

The legend surrounding President Abraham Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth, was that Booth was not killed on the Garrett farmstead in northern Virginia in 1865 as is commonly believed, but that he eluded his pursuers and lived on as a fugitive for decades afterwards. Belief in John Wilkes Booth’s escape implicitly asserts a government cover-up and as such it has been tied to various conspiracy theories surrounding Lincoln’s assassination. Despite the best efforts of official and self-appointed historical custodians to dismiss the story as trivial nonsense, it keeps resurfacing. The most recent episode occurred in the 1990s when a group led by an amateur historian from Silver Spring, Maryland, attempted to have Booth’s corpse exhumed in order to determine whether it was his or not. The case drew nationwide media coverage and reached the Maryland Superior Court before the group’s petition was denied. They continue to search for what they believe to be Booth’s real body—the carnival mummy of an Oklahoma drifter known as David George embalmed in 1903.

Over the years the story has appeared in many versions, not all of which agree on the specifics of the escape or Booth’s subsequent life. In its main outline, the case for Booth’s survival hinges on the identity of the person shot by Boston Corbett in the Garrett barn in the early morning of 26 April 1865. Most historians are satisfied that the person struck by Corbett’s fatal shot was Lincoln’s assassin. Legend adherents, however, point out the inconsistencies in the government’s evidence and appeal





Actor and assassin John Wilkes Booth runs across the stage of Ford's Theater after having shot President Abraham Lincoln. A man climbs up on stage to pursue him. (Corbis)

to the retrospective accounts of eyewitnesses who claimed the hair of the person shot was reddish, not raven black like Booth's. They assert the body in the barn was that of a Virginia farmhand named Ruddy or Rowdy, or a former Confederate officer named Boyd.

The different versions of the legend reflect its many sources, which included the workings of the northern popular imagination in the wake of Lincoln's shooting; Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's insistence on maintaining absolute secrecy in the matter of Booth's burial; southern accounts following

the Civil War; the claims of individuals purporting to be Booth; and the retrospective accounts of veterans near the end of the nineteenth century. The legend enjoyed its greatest exposure in U.S. popular culture during the 1920s and 1930s, with the display of Booth's alleged mummy in carnival sideshows across the West and Midwest and the appearance of the story in national periodicals including *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was also the subject of several popular literary works that drew from earlier sources to either debunk or defend the legend.

One of the story's most interesting features is the extent to which the traumatized northern public imagined Booth's escape even before he was captured. Newspapers reported Booth sightings in Chicago, New York, and Reading, Pennsylvania. In addition to the sightings, accounts of the assassin stressed his ability to defy detection and linked him to mythical figures including Cain and the Wandering Jew, both of whom wandered the earth as punishment for their misdeeds. Edwin Stanton's insistence on preventing any measure of recognition to Booth or his corpse was intended to deny southern sympathizers the means to celebrate. His awareness of the symbolic power of the assassin's corpse backfired, however, as the secrecy surrounding its handling fed rumors that it was not, in fact, Booth's. Secret Service chief Lafayette Baker's deliberate misleading of the press regarding the burial was recorded on the cover of *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* for 29 May 1865: the woodcut engraving shows two men in a rowboat lowering a shrouded body into the Potomac River. Later it was revealed the body had been buried under the floor of an army storehouse in Washington, D.C.

During Reconstruction, the legend took on a different guise as accounts of Booth sightings in foreign lands appeared in newspapers. These placed the assassin in Ceylon, China, Mexico, and the South Seas. The theme common to these accounts was the figure of Booth as an honorable, intelligent, and cultured gentleman. He did not appear remorseful for his deed and the locations in which he was sighted paralleled the locations of the actual Confederate exodus. In its southern variant the legend appears to have served as a symbolic means

of vindication or final revenge. There is also evidence of multiple oral traditions in the South concerning his escape, and the story may have served as part of the larger phenomenon of exile, which historian Gaines Foster believes served defeated white southerners as a psychological salve. By the end of the century, the southern variant was joined to the original northern versions in Finis L. Bates's *Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* (1907). Drawing from both southern traditions and the retrospective accounts of capture eyewitnesses, Bates crafted a reconciliationist version of the legend: Booth remained the honorable and cultured southern gentleman, but he was remorseful for his deed and suffered from his guilt. This treatment accorded well with the temper of the times, which witnessed the reunion of the white North and South. It was also Bates who launched the posthumous carnival career of an alcoholic drifter named David George as the Booth mummy.

C. Wyatt Evans

**See also:** Lincoln, Abraham, Assassination of.

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#### Boston Massacre

On 5 March 1770, five members of a Boston crowd, who had been harassing a British sentry with taunts and snowballs, were shot and killed by a squad of British soldiers, led by Captain Thomas Preston. Six others were wounded in the shooting. For fifteen years after the event, Bostonians com-

memorated its anniversary until it was replaced by 4 July celebrations of American independence. Patriot propagandists immediately seized on the deaths, calling the encounter a “massacre.” Word of the engagement spread quickly throughout the colonies. To the colonists, this further reaffirmed their fears of a British conspiracy to deprive them of their liberties and dominate not only Boston, but all of the colonies.

The massacre was the culmination of steadily heightening tensions in the city between Bostonians and British soldiers. The troops had been stationed there in the fall of 1768 to help customs officials uphold the Townshend duties. City residents resented the presence of the troops and chafed under the challenges and searches by armed British sentries on the city streets. They did not understand why it was necessary to station troops in the city. Throwing snowballs was just one of many ways the colonists struck back at the occupying army. Working-class citizens competed for scarce jobs with the redcoats, who sought part-time employment during their off-duty hours, and were willing to work for less than the prevailing wage. This led to particularly tense relations between the troops and working-class Bostonians, who led and comprised the majority of the Boston crowds. This was certainly the case on the cold, moonless night of 5 March. John Adams recalled that the group gathered outside of the barracks on King Street was composed of “a motley rabble of saucy boys, negroes, mulattoes, Irish teagues, and outlandish Jack tars” (Zobel, 292). All five of the dead were members of Boston’s working-class population. One, Crispus Attucks, was a seaman of black and/or Indian ancestry.

Nor was the engagement of 5 March an isolated event. One month before, eleven-year-old Christopher Sneider had been shot and killed by a customs informer, Ebenezer Richardson, who had fired two shots into a crowd that had gathered outside of his home. Sneider’s funeral, on 26 February, was attended by thousands of the city’s residents. Just a few days prior to the massacre, a brawl broke out between a group of ropemakers and British soldiers. One of the ropemakers had taunted a soldier

seeking employment. The insulted redcoat returned with several of his compatriots to redress the affront and a fight ensued. A Boston shoemaker who was in the crowd the day of the massacre recalled that several of the soldiers from the brawl just days before were among those who confronted the crowd on 5 March.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, Governor Thomas Hutchinson was forced to remove all of the British troops from the city to Castle William, located on an island in the harbor. In an attempt to demonstrate the impartiality of local justice, John Adams and Josiah Quincy, two prominent leaders of the patriot movement, defended Captain Preston along with eight of his men who were also accused of firing into the crowd. The prosecution mustered little evidence. No one positively identified Preston as either giving the order to fire or himself firing, and he and six of his men were acquitted. Two of the soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter, branded on the hand, and released. It is still not known who fired first or even if an official order to open fire was given. With the troops out of Boston and all of the Townshend duties except the tax on tea repealed, tensions in the city relaxed.

However, the Boston Massacre had politicized broad segments of the city’s population, as well as moderates throughout the colonies, against the British. The use of violence against Britons living in Boston reinforced the colonists’ belief that the British government, in both London and America, was conspiring against them.

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**See also:** American Revolution.

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### Boston Tea Party

British colonists saw the 16 December 1773 Boston Tea Party as justified resistance to a conspiracy that threatened their freedom. The relationship between the North American colonies and the British government had changed dramatically since its victory in the Seven Years' War against France a decade earlier. The expense of maintaining a global empire had increased substantially. Britain's national debt nearly doubled during the war years and costs further escalated when the government decided to station regular troops in North America to protect its expanded territory. Facing growing resistance to taxation at home, British ministers, beginning with George Grenville, concluded that they must make the empire more efficient and raise revenue in the colonies. Most colonists, however, interpreted efforts to enforce customs regulations and taxes like the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties as elements in a grand scheme to take away their rights. They demonstrated their concerns through petitions and publications, economic boycotts, and crowd actions, all of which led to the repeal of most of those taxes.

### Background

The remaining tax was on tea, a commodity widely consumed in the colonies. However, many colonists drank smuggled tea imported from Dutch sources. This circumstance contributed heavily to a growing financial crisis facing the British East India Company. In an effort to help the troubled company, raise revenue, and confirm Parliament's right to tax the colonies, Prime Minister Frederick North gained passage of the Tea Act in May 1773. This law allowed the company to ship its tea directly to the colonies and consign the commodity to its own agents, reducing company costs. Although the tea continued to carry a tax of three pence per pound, the price would be less than that of smuggled tea.

Opposition to the Tea Act arose first in Philadelphia and New York, where merchants who had been smuggling tea faced a serious loss of business. They raised arguments that others soon incorporated into their conspiratorial analysis of British actions. The merchants contended that the monop-

oly given the East India Company for the distribution of tea would be a precedent for all foreign trade. They also argued that the Tea Act was a sinister ploy to deceive the colonists into accepting the tea tax through a lower price for a favorite beverage. In response to threats of rough treatment from mass meetings and numerous widely circulated broadsides, tea consignees in Philadelphia and New York, as well as Charleston, South Carolina, resigned.

Boston radicals did not immediately respond because they were preoccupied with a scandal involving Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson. They had published some of the governor's letters, revealing his belief in the need to abridge the colonists' English liberties in certain circumstances. The letters confirmed for many that Hutchinson was a coconspirator in the plan to enslave them. In response, the Massachusetts House of Representatives dispatched a petition to the king demanding his recall. When Bostonians shifted their attention to the issue of taxed tea in October, they swiftly united. Both the *Boston Gazette* and a town meeting called upon the tea consignees, including two of Governor Hutchinson's sons, to resign. The consignees refused to do so, and there the matter stood until the arrival of the *Dartmouth*, the first of three tea ships, on 28 November. Imperial law required that the tea duty be paid before the cargo could be unloaded and if not paid within twenty days (by 17 December), the cargo could be seized. On 29 and 30 November, mass meetings of perhaps 5,000 people instructed the consignees, who had fled to the well-fortified Castle William in Boston Harbor, to return their cargoes. Over the next several days, citizens in neighboring towns joined Bostonians in this demand, all to no avail. Following a third mass meeting two weeks later, Boston's leading radical, Samuel Adams, led a delegation to customs officials demanding that the tea ships be permitted to leave without paying the duty. However, he met with a firm refusal.

### The Tea Party and Its Consequences

On 16 December, a day before the tea could be seized by customs officials, over 5,000 people crowded into Old South Church and ordered Fran-



American colonists cheer as demonstrators dressed as Indians throw tea from British ships. (Bettmann/Corbis)

cis Rotch, the owner of the *Dartmouth*, to ask Governor Hutchinson for a customs clearance. When Rotch returned with word of the governor's refusal, Samuel Adams announced nothing more could be done to save the country. This was an apparent signal for three groups of men to proceed to Griffin's Wharf, where the three tea ships had anchored, and throw the tea overboard. Barely disguised as "Mohawks," the men methodically threw about 90,000 pounds of tea into the harbor without harming any crew members or customs officials. They destroyed no other property and punished those who attempted to take some of the tea. They and 2,000 witnesses saw these actions as an essential defense of the colonists' liberties.

Drawing upon the work of several generations of English dissenting writers, notably the early-eighteenth-century essayists John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, colonists of the 1770s saw liberty and power in perpetual conflict. In that context, they

viewed all the actions taken by the British government as unacceptable extensions of power, as part of an effort to subvert their liberties. Destroying the tea, in the colonists' view, was a measured and appropriate response to an insidious attempt to induce them to become complicit in their own slavery by paying a tax imposed without their approval.

If anyone doubted their wisdom, Boston radicals simply pointed to the British government's response to the tea's destruction. When word reached London of the Boston Tea Party, Parliament rapidly passed the Coercive Acts to punish the town of Boston and the colony of Massachusetts Bay. The port of Boston was closed, town meetings could be held only with the royal government's permission, the Crown would appoint members of the Council, and troops could be quartered in empty private dwellings. The Coercive Acts convinced many colonists that united action was necessary. If the British government could take away the liberties of



the people of Massachusetts, the liberties of all were at risk. Persuaded that royal officials were intent upon the destruction of self-government, twelve colonies responded to a call for a Continental Congress to assemble in Philadelphia in September 1774, a step that ultimately led to revolution.

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**See also:** American Revolution; Coercive Acts; Quebec Act.

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## British Royal Family

The British royal family has been the source of numerous conspiracy theories throughout U.S. history. The late colonial and Revolutionary War eras in America were the most prolific periods for conspiracies involving British royals. The bitter struggle for independence established a context in which the general popular opinion in America at this time held, as one pair of historians recently noted, “chronic suspicion of all things British” (Elkins and McKittrick, 432).

Figures like Benedict Arnold (who fought for the Americans in the War of Independence but then defected to the British) represent the very real danger faced by loyalists for their unpatriotic actions, which often fueled popular intrigue. Yet, during this time there existed substantial loyalty to Britain throughout the colonies, and in some this was the majority sentiment. In 1766 in Delaware, for example, about half of the 37,000-strong population were in opposition to war with Britain. This group of loyalists was important because it formed a political and cultural countercurrent that would come to dominate politically after the war.

The British royal family has been viewed as a source of conspiracy and intrigue since the early

years of the republic, and in particular the attitude of King George III toward the colonists has long haunted the American popular mind. Reparations for loyalists and British creditors were among the important negotiating points for John Jay in his securing of the 1783 Treaty between the United States and Great Britain. But in the partisan debate over the treaty, opponents made clear their perceived collusion of Jay and the Federalists with the English Crown and wealthy British interests, such that Fisher Ames, in defense of the treaty, asserted that not even a treaty that “left King George his island” and “stipulated he pay rent on it” would suffice critics (qtd. in Hancock, 1).

The publication of *The Address of the People of England to the Inhabitants of America* by Sir John Dalrymple revealed the explicit design of the Crown to develop an aristocratic strata of American society loyal not only to the King’s government but to the Tory social order as well. The historian Gordon Wood noted the effect was that “every successive step by the Crown, under the guise of a corrupt and pliant Parliament, only confirmed American fears of a despotic conspiracy against freedom” (Wood, 42). And during his presidency, George Washington held serious reservations about British motives surrounding subversive and secretive policies designed to negatively impact American interests. Examples include British Order in Council 6 in November 1793, Pinckney’s dispatch to Randolph on 25 November 1793, and the Dorchester speech in March 1794. Ironically, it would later be the partisan opposition of the Federalists that would echo these same concerns for conspiracies emanating from designs by the British Crown, but allege the Federalists with complicity.

One great conspiracy during the Washington administration involved the allegation that John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and others in the Federalist Party were secretly planning to institute a monarchy modeled on the British Crown in America. The issues of monarchy and aristocratic titles continued to be controversial and the source of continued conspiracy speculation during the presidency of John Adams. Adams was so impacted by these allegations that he made distinct statements to clearly demonstrate his loyalty to existing

American constitutional institutions during his Inaugural Address. Adams was responding to charges such as those made by the journalist James Callender, who authored *The Prospect before Us*, and for which he was later convicted under the Alien and Sedition Acts. In *The Prospect before Us*, Callender accused Adams of “being a toady to English interests, and of wishing to install a monarchy in the U.S.” (qtd. in Rhenquist, 48).

After the early nineteenth century, the British Royal family and British interests and society generally became a less attractive subject of paranoid partisans or conspiracy theorists. The “special relationship” between the United States and Britain developed and their shared language, common heritage, and cultural, political, and economic interests made them natural allies—indeed the closest of allies, as the United States replaced Britain as the hegemonic power in the West, and assumed maintenance of Western order in the international system. The British royal family have become popular media figures in the United States and a major U.S. tourist asset for Britain.

This relationship has not precluded the continued development of extremist conspiracy theories at the margins of American society today. Among the most bizarre conspiracy theories to emerge in recent years is the claim by A-Albionic Consulting and Research, based in Ferndale, Michigan, that the British royal family is in a secret struggle with the Vatican, dating back to the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth, when Protestants and Catholics were in conflict all over Europe. A-Albionic alleges that the British royal family and their Jewish internationalist allies are controlling the world supply of drugs and money, and wielding subversive influence over world affairs. Additionally, the political organization of Lyndon LaRouche has echoed these British royal conspiracy plots in their political communications in recent times.

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**See also:** American Revolution; Arnold, Benedict; LaRouche, Lyndon.

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## Brown, John

John Brown led an unspectacular life until he was well into his fifties, when he began leading violent antislavery activity in the Midwest. This reached its culmination when he conspired with six northern abolitionists and attempted to lead a slave insurrection in the South by raiding the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Although it is unclear whether Brown believed he could actually begin an insurrection, he did succeed in pushing the issue of slavery to the boiling point. The violence at Harper's Ferry, which caused southern fears of future conspiracies, would be one of the key events that set the Civil War in motion.

Brown was born on 9 May 1800 in Torrington, Connecticut. Five years later, the family moved to Ohio's Western Reserve, where Brown grew up, absorbing his father's Calvinism, strict discipline,

and hatred of slavery. Brown worked a variety of jobs in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, including tanning and sheep-farming, and during his life fathered some twenty children. He was never successful in any of his business ventures and in 1842 he declared bankruptcy. In 1848, Brown moved his family, more or less permanently, to North Elba, New York.

In 1848, for a short-lived abolitionist newspaper called *The Ram's Horn*, Brown published a satirical essay, "Sambo's Mistakes," in which the narrator assumes the persona of a Negro who looks back on a life wasted in submissiveness to whites. Around this time, Brown's thoughts on slavery began to turn increasingly activist and violent—unlike most abolitionists, he had never made a commitment to nonviolence. He had met Frederick Douglass for the first time the previous year and told him of his plans to free the slaves. Though Douglass would later decline Brown's offer to join him in raiding Harper's Ferry (on the grounds that such a plan was "suicidal"), there is strong evidence that Brown caused Douglass to rethink his own nonviolent abolitionism. Responding to the Fugitive Slave Act compromise of 1850, which attempted to appease slaveholders and ease North-South tensions, Brown founded the League of Gileadites in 1851, which authorized its forty-four black members to murder slavecatchers.

By the time he attended an 1855 convention of abolitionists in Syracuse, New York, Brown had become an abolitionist zealot who increasingly identified himself and his cause with those of the Old Testament warriors. Later that year, he moved to Kansas (leaving his wife and younger children in North Elba), where six of his sons and a son-in-law had taken up claims on land. Near Pottawatomie in May 1856, in retaliation for the murder of Free-Soilers by proslavery men, Brown, with three of his sons and a few other men, abducted five proslavery settlers and murdered them, some by broadsword. Neither Brown nor the other men were ever indicted for the massacre. "Captain Brown," with his small company of Free-State raiders, continued participating in other militant antislavery maneuvers in the Kansas bushwhacking wars of the 1850s.

In December 1858, Brown and his men, in concert with another company led by Aaron Stevens, went into Missouri, ransacked proslavery homes, and freed eleven slaves.

Earlier that year, while in Boston, Brown met secretly with six northern backers of his scheme to invade the South: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Theodore Parker, Samuel Gridley Howe, George L. Stearns, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, and Gerrit Smith. The six backers diverted funds in various ways to support Brown, even though Brown did not supply them with many specific plans; other than a vague notion of attracting slaves as he moved southward from Appalachia, Brown apparently *had* no developed plan. All ardent abolitionists, the Secret Six (as they came to be known) thought that even if Brown failed to incite a slave insurrection, his operations, whatever they were, would ignite the powder keg of a civil war that would lead to the end of slavery.

Renting a farm across the Potomac River from Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), in 1859, Brown planned to seize the federal arsenal there and arm the area slaves that he expected to rise up in the wake of the raid. Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry seems to have been doomed from the start: Brown's army—twenty-two men, including Brown, three of his sons, and five blacks—was too small to carry out an invasion of the South. He had little or no definite idea about what to do after overtaking the arsenal, nor did he let the nearby slaves know he expected them to join him after he had taken control.

The actual raid started out as well as Brown could have hoped: he and his men killed the mayor of Harper's Ferry, took some townspeople hostage, and easily captured the lightly guarded armory complex on the evening of 16 October. But only a few slaves were rounded up by Brown's men for the insurrection, and one of Brown's men shot a free black railroad worker. The next morning, locals began sniping at Brown and his men, and Maryland's militia occupied the town. By afternoon, eight of the raiders, including two of Brown's sons, were killed. That night, the marines, commanded by Robert E. Lee and J.E.B. Stuart, arrived, attacked

with a battering ram, and captured Brown and his men.

To head off a possible lynching, the state of Virginia quickly indicted, tried, and convicted Brown of treason, murder, and fomenting insurrection. Brown rejected his counsel's pleas of insanity and was hanged on 2 December in Charleston. Six of his raiders were hanged at later dates. Brown had left documents in a Maryland farmhouse implicating the Secret Six. Political squabbles ensued after Brown's execution; the proslavery Democrats (erroneously) believed that the Republicans had something to do with Brown's raid. By a combination of the incompetence of the Senate investigative committee and the false testimony of Howe and Stearns (the only two of the Secret Six to show up for questioning), no conspiracy was found, and no one outside of Brown and his raiders was indicted.

Though Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry was a failure in execution, it further polarized an already divided country. Brown's raid made southerners afraid that an insurrection by "Black Republicans" was imminent. Secessionist newspapers alleged that Lincoln, if elected in 1860, would, like Brown, incite slaves to insurrection and violence. For many northerners, Brown was a martyr, a portent of a larger war to end slavery.

*Bryan L. Moore*

**See also:** Abolitionism; Fugitive Slave Act.

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### Brown Scare

The rise of Nazism and the advent of World War II in Europe increased concerns about collective security in the United States. In the context of economic depression, populist demagogues gained mass followings by identifying scapegoats and promising simple solutions. Given the proliferating

numbers of antisemitic and pro-fascist groups and rumors of armed conspiracies against the government, many liberals became anxious about the potential for fascism in the United States. Influential educators, philanthropists, social scientists, and government bureaucrats questioned the U.S. public's capacity for making responsible choices, because they believed that totalitarian propagandists were deceiving the public with manipulative propaganda. Although Nazi espionage activity was badly flawed, fears about the persuasive power of Nazi propaganda led to restrictions on freedom of association and communication in the United States.

Employing the politics of guilt-by-association, liberal and leftist activists denounced far-right agitators, isolationists, and anticommunists as Fifth Columnist conspirators. They sponsored forums, issued newsletters, and mustered demonstrations against those whom they opposed. They warned that con men could dupe Americans, that fascism would triumph in disguise. Respectable journalists and influential columnists repeated their claims. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and state un-American committees were created to monitor such activities, and subversive organizations were required to register with the government. Reacting to conservative charges that New Dealers were abetting the Communist conspiracy in the United States, meanwhile, leftists attempted to link conservatives to antisemitic agitators. In the context of this "brown scare" (a term modeled on the anticommunist red scare), the Roosevelt administration manipulated fears about Nazi spies and saboteurs, prosecuting antisemitic agitators for seditious conspiracy, and charging that isolationists were un-American. In the campaign against foreign subversion, a coercive state apparatus developed, one that would subordinate the government's role as a protector of liberties to that of maintainer of security.

The brown scare materialized, in part, because Fifth Column fears were based upon plausible assumptions. Memories of German sabotage operations during World War I had not yet receded, and German nationals did play a role in the Nazi



conquests of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Endeavoring to draw the United States closer to the Allies, British intelligence uncovered Nazi covert activities in the Western Hemisphere and generated rumors about potential subversion in the United States. U.S. government investigators broke several Nazi spy rings, exposed clumsy Nazi propaganda efforts, and, after Pearl Harbor, thwarted sabotage missions. Some rightist groups did advocate violence and overthrow of the U.S. government, and some even established contact with the Nazi regime. In 1941, a Justice Department investigation revealed that George Silvester Viereck, a Reich propaganda agent, had written several speeches for Senator Ernest Lundeen. With the help of George Hill, a press clerk for Representative Hamilton Fish, Viereck had also secured thousands of congressional frank envelopes, which they used to mail 50,000 reprints from isolationist speeches and *Congressional Record* excerpts.

Nazi propaganda efforts aimed at recruiting German Americans to a Fifth Column, however, met with utter failure. The Friends of the New Germany, a front organization that endeavored to take over or influence German American community groups and newspapers, only managed to draw in about 5,000–10,000 German citizens and recently naturalized emigrés between 1933 and 1935. The group's coercive tactics infuriated German Americans, drawing negative press coverage and government investigators. Responding to a Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League report on German propaganda, a federal grand jury indicted Friends leader Heinz Spanknoebel for failing to register as a foreign agent, and he left the country in October 1933.

Members of the Teutonia Society formed the German-American Bund, which, unlike Teutonia, received no finances from and had no political ties to Berlin. In 1935, the organization was revitalized under the management of Fritz Julius Kuhn, a recently naturalized citizen who lied about his personal relationship with Hitler in order to gain political standing. Although the Bund aimed to raise support for the Nazi regime, the group posed little

threat to internal security, because an embarrassed Nazi regime repudiated it and, more importantly, the group failed to mobilize support among German Americans. Congressman Samuel Dickstein, however, charged that Kuhn commanded 20,000 followers, a tenth of whom were preparing for military combat. Representative John Martin declared that those who sympathized with the Bund were traitors. In 1938, thirty-eight Bundists on Long Island were convicted of failing to register as members of an oath-bound organization. Convicted of larceny and forgery, Kuhn was imprisoned in December 1939. The 2,000 or so remaining Bundists struggled along until Pearl Harbor under a successor, Wilhelm Kunze, who really was a contact for a German espionage ring.

The U.S. demagogue who most clearly expressed sympathy for the Nazi cause was William D. Pelley. Like Kuhn, Pelley claimed that the White House was part of the international Bolshevik conspiracy and that a Jewish oligarchy controlled U.S. diplomacy. By 1934 he had recruited about 15,000 people to his Silver Shirts, a paramilitary organization that promised to reorganize society along racialist and military lines. Pelley established contact with Nazi propaganda agencies and his Silver Shirts distributed copies of *Mein Kampf* as well as reprints from Julius Striecher's *Der Sturmer*. Despite his admiration for military hierarchy and his advocacy of Jewish ghettoization, however, Pelley's antisemitism derived from U.S. populist traditions. Despite the lack of any ties between Pelley and the Hitler regime beyond the exchange of literature and letters, the Silver Shirts, like the Bund and a host of other antisemitic agitators, were pursued by the FBI and exposed by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Another oft-mentioned Hitler-sympathizer was Gerald Winrod. A nativist preacher from Kansas, Winrod had been assailing liberal theology, Darwinism, and changing social mores since 1925. He embraced conspiratorial antisemitism after traveling to Europe in 1934. As his preaching became increasingly antisemitic, subscriptions to his *Defender* publication, where he lauded the Third Reich as a bulwark against communism, rose from

60,000 in 1934 to 110,000 by 1938. Winrod's anti-semitism, however, remained theological, not racial, and he continued to promote conversion as a solution to the Jewish problem. His dispensationalist theology—he believed that Jews would unite with a flesh and blood Antichrist whom he expected to appear imminently—was far removed from Nazi ideology. Like Pelley, he celebrated U.S. notions of individualism, the producer ethic, and the gospel of success.

Both Winrod and Pelley, then, grounded their undemocratic politics and bigotry in U.S. traditions. While each either exchanged literature with German propagandists, the Bund, or each other, neither accepted any money from the Nazi regime. Their criticism of the New Deal as a usurpation of power was directly opposed to the National Socialist model of government. Their reputation as Nazis then, also owes as much to countersubversive fears that antisemitism and paramilitary trappings signaled Fifth Column activity, as to any substantive threat that their organizations posed to Republican institutions or the development of racial tolerance in the period leading up to World War II.

Nevertheless, these and other far-right demagogues met with mail censorship, fund freezing, repatriation, denaturalization, and prosecution. In 1936, Roosevelt ordered the FBI to begin surveillance and in 1938 he gave the Bureau authority to compile files on groups such as the Silver Shirts, the Knights of the White Camellia, and the Christian Front. The FBI also began compiling a custodial detention index of persons with Nazi or Communist tendencies. Agents attended antiwar demonstrations, examined education and employment records, opened first-class mail, and, after receiving authorization in May 1940, began electronic surveillance. The administration also gave the Catholic Church hierarchy a choice that month: silence anti-Roosevelt radio broadcaster Father Charles Coughlin or watch a sedition trial. Coughlin was silenced.

When Senator Burton Wheeler used his congressional frank to distribute postcards purchased by the isolationist America First organization, Secretary of War Henry Stimson charged that Wheeler was “coming very close to the line of subversive

activities against the United States, if not treason” (Smith, 170). When Charles Lindberg listed Jews as among the three most powerful forces promoting the war in September 1941, the Friends of Democracy called America First a Nazi front, and asked whether Lindberg was a Nazi. Lindberg was no Nazi, or even an antisemite, but by this time even intimations of antisemitism could be equated with Nazism. Roosevelt had already branded Lindberg a “copperhead” and a “modern Vallandigham,” but the Des Moines speech did irreparable harm to the isolationist cause (Smith, 176).

Dissatisfied with an FBI report that America First received no illicit funding, FDR urged Attorney General Nicholas Biddle to bring the issue to a grand jury. In early 1942, the Justice Department produced indictments, under the Espionage Act, of twenty-one far-right opponents of the war, charging them with conspiring to destroy morale in the U.S. armed forces. The prosecution attempted to link antisemitic agitators such as Pelley and Winrod to George Silvester Viereck and former Bund leaders. It focused on similarities between fourteen themes selected from Nazi propaganda and statements made or published by the defendants. Although the case ultimately ended in a mistrial, it achieved its underlying purpose by forcing the accused to hire lawyers, raise bail, and languish in jail.

The brown scare had three important implications. First, isolationism became an epithet during World War II and until the late 1960s; interventionism became virtually unassailable. Second, the FBI gained the power to investigate subversive activity, ultimately leading to the creation of a national security state. Finally, during the cold war, academics translated brown scare motifs and misunderstandings into social science idiom. Anxieties about extremism came to color subsequent academic debates about such diverse phenomena as McCarthyism, white supremacy, the Christian Right, and the militia movement, contributing to consensus narratives of U.S. history, and the use of psychiatric theory to explain unpopular ideologies and political behaviors.

*John Drabble*

**See also:** German Americans and World War I; House Un-American Activities Committee; Silver Shirts.

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**Brussell, Mae**

Mae Brussell was a broadcaster and influential figure in the conspiracy research community that began to emerge after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. She was born in Beverly Hills in 1922, the daughter of a prominent Los Angeles rabbi and granddaughter of the founder of the I. Magnin department stores. Brussell lived as an affluent housewife with five children, until the shooting of alleged Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald live on television prompted her into investigating the assassination. She quickly became dissatisfied with the official government conclusion that the murder had been the work of a lone assassin. She began reading and cross-referencing the complete 26-volume report of the Warren Commission, and started amassing a large collection of newspaper clippings, articles, and books relating to what she came to believe was a vast conspiracy that since World War II has been turning the United States into a fascist regime. Her argument was partly based on information that was emerging at the time about "Operation Paperclip," the U.S. government's wartime plan to rescue Nazi rocket scientists after World War II, but its conclusions went well beyond the commonly established facts. Brussell presented her ideas on a weekly radio show, *Dialogue: Conspiracy* (later called *World Watchers International*), on KLRB, a local station in Carmel, California, her new home. During the 1970s and 1980s she wrote much-discussed

articles outlining her thesis in, for example, Paul Krassner's countercultural magazine, *The Realist*, and *Hustler* editor Larry Flynt's new venture, *Rebel* magazine ("The Nazi Connection to the John F. Kennedy Assassination"). In 1983 Brussell's radio show moved to KAZU in Pacific Grove, California, where she continued until her death from cancer in 1988. In keeping with her theory of a wide-reaching conspiracy within the U.S. establishment, Brussell speculated that her cancer had been induced by the CIA, but no evidence ever emerged. After her death various factions within the assassination research community sought to establish a permanent archive of Brussell's writings, notes, and clippings (which began to take on a legendary status), but to date there is only a limited website.

*Peter Knight*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Warren Commission Report.

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## Bryan, William Jennings

An eloquent speaker of Populist tendencies, William Jennings Bryan (D-NE) delivered one of the most famous conspiracy speeches of all time to the Democratic convention in 1896 when he warned big business and those favoring the gold standard, "You shall not crucify mankind on a cross of gold." Bryan lost the presidential contest to the advocate of the gold standard, Republican William McKinley, essentially ending the bimetallism debate in the United States that had characterized the Progressive era and served as a unifying point for the Populist Party.

Bryan was born in Salem, Illinois, studied law at Union College of Law, and practiced in Jacksonville, Illinois, before moving to Lincoln, Nebraska. There, he became active in Democratic Party politics and

by the 1890s joined the free silver movement that sought to force the federal government to purchase western silver at inflated prices to expand the money supply. He won election to Congress in 1890, but in 1894 was defeated in his Senate campaign. At the Democratic convention, where Bryan became a political star, he was one of several pro-silver voices, but clearly the most theatrical. He had honed his oratorical skills by a series of speaking tours and Chatauqua lectures, and even in defeat to McKinley, Bryan remained the undisputed leader of the Democratic Party.

Like other silver advocates, Bryan thought a conspiracy of Wall Street bankers and easterners had forced the gold standard upon debtors to increase in real terms the amount they repaid. In addition, however, antisemitism was widespread in the Populist Party, from which Bryan drew much of his support. Concerns over "Jewish moneyed interests" in New York had aligned many antisemites against the gold standard, and Bryan used what some conspiracy theorists see as coded language to speak to those concerns.

In foreign affairs, however, Bryan toed the anti-conspiracy line as an anti-imperialist, resisting U.S. intervention in Cuba. (Even then, his position did not please some Populist supporters, who thought he could have done more. Therefore, in L. Frank Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* [1900], which is widely viewed as a parable on Populism, most analysts see the Cowardly Lion as representing Bryan.) Bryan's oratory and his grass-roots support kept him a perennial candidate for the presidency, which he lost to McKinley again in 1900, and to Taft in 1908.

By 1912, a new political star in the Democratic Party had risen, Woodrow Wilson, and at the convention that year, Bryan threw his support behind him. Partly as a reward, Bryan received an appointment as Secretary of State in the Wilson administration. Given Bryan's support for easy money policies, which were viewed as a response to one conspiracy, it is ironic that he joined an administration that presided over the creation of the Federal Reserve Board, which was criticized by conspiracy





1915 portrait of William Jennings Bryan. Photo by Hartsook. (Bettmann/Corbis)

theorists as inflationary. In the area of foreign affairs, Bryan with his noninterventionist views began to clash with the president, who saw in the 1915 sinking of the liner *Lusitania* a cause of war. Bryan resigned from Wilson's cabinet because of the president's response to Germany over the incident, fearing that it committed the nation to war. Conspiracy theorists tie Wilson's desire for intervention to a variety of forces, including control by the Bank of England, the British monarchy, or other shadowy characters somehow related to preservation of the gold standard and/or Anglo-American relations. Thus, Bryan, the voice of silver and peace, could not long survive in such a setting. After the war, Bryan opposed the Treaty of Versailles unless it contained

the "Lodge Reservations" that kept the United States out of the League of Nations.

Bryan next became famous for his involvement in the Scopes Trial, which was far outside the debates over silver or European intervention. John T. Scopes was a teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, who violated Tennessee law that prohibited the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools. Bryan served as assistant prosecutor in the case and, during the course of the trial, took the stand as an expert on the Bible. According to the mythology generated by Arthur Miller's play, *Inherit the Wind*, H. L. Mencken's newspaper columns, and F. L. Allen's history of the 1920s, *Only Yesterday*, the defense attorney, Clarence Darrow, embarrassed Bryan and thereby (it was claimed) discredited the anti-evolution position. Subsequent research has shown that only the East Coast media substantially portrayed the popular version of the events, and that *local* news coverage thought that Bryan held his ground well in the exchanges. (Scopes was indeed found guilty.)

The Scopes Monkey Trial generated a strain of conspiracy thinking among creationist groups, who have seen the media as deliberately distorting the evidence of evolution based on the developments of the trial. A different conspiracy of sorts involved the publicity surrounding the trial itself—a meeting called the "Drugstore Conspiracy." George W. Rappelyea, a local mine owner and coal company operator, saw an opportunity to promote the city of Dayton. He gathered some of the leading figures of Dayton for a meeting in a local drugstore, whereupon Rappelyea agreed to fund Scopes to challenge the evolution law and to bring in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to provide the national attention. During the trial, fraudulent evidence on the Piltdown Man and the Nebraska Man was introduced as a confirmation of evolution. Bryan died in Dayton, not long after the trial, having crossed the lines between several major conspiracy movements in U.S. history—the gold standard, the British manipulation of U.S. foreign affairs, and the "creation/evolution" debate.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Gold Standard.

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## Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) is a tax-collecting, enforcement, and regulatory arm of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It is the government agency with responsibility for administering America's federal alcohol, tobacco, and firearms laws, as well as federal laws relating to commercial arson and explosives. It is because of its role in regulating these areas—especially the nation's firearms laws—that the BATF has often been embroiled in allegations of conspiracy.

BATF headquarters are in Washington, D.C., but most of its personnel and many of its operations are decentralized in regional offices throughout the United States, and even a few stations overseas. The bureau traces its roots back to the 1790s, but its earliest twentieth-century form is to be found in the Prohibition Unit established within the Bureau of Internal Revenue of the Treasury Department in 1920 to enforce the ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol enacted by the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act in 1919. (The most famous member of the Prohibition Unit was Elliot Ness, the “T-man” who helped topple Chicago mobster Al Capone on tax-evasion charges.) The agency has undergone many changes of name and responsibilities since the 1920s, and it was given its present title in 1972.

Suspicious about the BATF's alleged involvement in conspiratorial activities have been particularly pronounced since the passage of the Gun Control Act in 1968, which gave the agency extra responsibilities for enforcing the nation's gun laws. Indeed, it is matters connected with gun regulation such as licensing, gun tracing, illegal firearms possession, and transportation rather than any of its other responsibilities that have provoked the most controversy and concern. The BATF has often been attacked by gun rights organizations such as the National Rifle Association, Gun Owners of America, the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, and, since the mid-1990s, various parts of the militia movement, for example. Such groups routinely criticize the BATF as an “out-of-control,” “rogue agency” harassing innocent gun owners and dealers. Nor are they alone in this. In 1995, Representative Harold Volkmer called the BATF “One of the most Rambo-rogue law enforcement agencies in the United States” (Spitzer, 128). Some gun rights advocates even go so far as to portray the bureau as an organization filled with agents whose real, if hidden, purpose is to disarm the United States.

During the 1990s, the BATF was subject to other conspiratorial accusations largely as a consequence of its involvement in the events at Ruby Ridge in Idaho in 1991 and Waco, Texas, in 1993. The BATF was the agency that entrapped Randy Weaver into selling an illegal sawn-off shotgun to one of its undercover informants in January 1991 in the hope of turning Weaver into an informer against the white-supremacist Aryan Nations group. It was also the agency responsible for the initial raid on the Mount Carmel complex on 28 February 1993 in an attempt to serve a search warrant on David Koresh, in which four BATF agents and five Branch Davidians were killed. For much of the Patriot movement, the actions of the BATF (along with those of the FBI) at Ruby Ridge and Waco were evidence of the dangerous and threatening militarization of U.S. law enforcement. They were seen as pointing the way toward a planned

crackdown on the rights of gun owners and of dissident voices in the United States in general.

In the spring of 1995 there were widespread rumors that BATF raids to arrest militia leaders and other prominent Patriots were being planned for 25 March. Although some Patriots such as Linda Thompson of the American Justice Federation and “Acting Adjunct General” of the Unorganized Militia of the United States dismissed the rumors as a hoax, others, including Jon Roland of the Texas Constitutional Militia, and the publications the *Spotlight* and the *Resister*, regarded the raids as the beginning of the federal government’s planned oppression and a possible prelude to a declaration of martial law throughout the United States. Representative Steve Stockman wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno with his concerns on 22 March. No BATF raid occurred, but another person who responded to the rumors was Timothy McVeigh; they were instrumental in convincing McVeigh to carry out the Oklahoma City bombing of 19 April 1995.

There are other, more specific conspiracy theories surrounding the BATF’s involvement with the events at Waco. For example, Linda Thompson’s video *Waco II: The Big Lie Continues* alleges that three of the four BATF agents who died in the initial raid on Mount Carmel had been bodyguards to President Clinton, and that these agents had been shot “execution style” during the “cover” provided by the raid in order to stop them from revealing what they knew about his activities (Stern, 63). Another conspiratorial explanation for the failure of the initial raid on the Branch Davidians has been posited by the Waco Holocaust Electronic Museum. It regards the deaths of the four BATF agents as a pretext to justify the subsequent siege of the religious sect so that a national response plan for a future military and police occupation of U.S. society could be tested.

A Treasury Department report into the events at Waco was highly critical of the BATF’s mishandling of the initial raid and of misleading post-raid statements made by some of the bureau’s supervisors. An investigation by Special Counsel John C. Danforth issued in November 2000 concluded that

government agents did not engage in a massive conspiracy and cover-up at Waco.

One of the reasons why Timothy McVeigh chose to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was his hatred of the BATF, a hatred that stemmed both from the agency’s role in enforcing America’s firearms laws and its specific involvement with events at Ruby Ridge and Waco. McVeigh’s criteria for a potential “attack site” (Herbeck and Michel, 167) required that it be a government building housing at least two of three federal law enforcement agencies from the BATF, FBI, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The Murrah Building contained the regional offices of the BATF, the DEA, and—a “bonus” in McVeigh’s view—the Secret Service (Herbeck and Michel, 167).

The BATF was one of the agencies responsible for investigating the Oklahoma City bombing and for securing the conviction of McVeigh and his coconspirator Terry Nichols. Yet for many members of the Patriot movement and other conspiracists the BATF is itself implicated in the bombing. Conspiracy theories expressed by many Patriot groups contend that the BATF had prior warning of the bombing, but chose not to do anything about it, other than make sure that its own agents weren’t in their offices at the time when the bomb (or bombs) went off; that the bombing was a sting operation that went wrong and which has been subsequently covered up; and that McVeigh was a BATF “patsy” being used as part of a larger plan to use the bombing to oppress gun-owners, militia members, and other Patriots.

D. J. Mulloy

**See also:** Federal Emergency Management Agency; Oklahoma City Bombing; Ruby Ridge; Waco.

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## Burr, Aaron

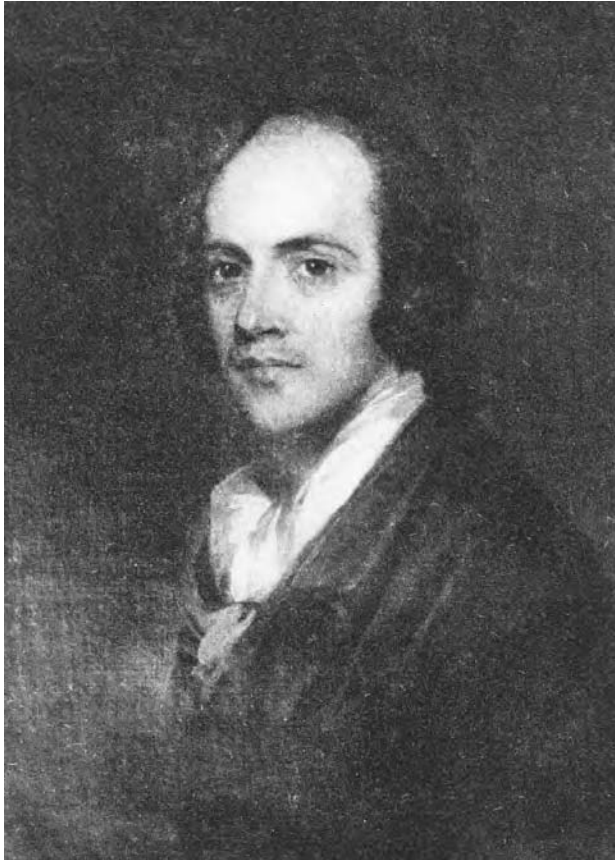
Since many of the conspirators burned much of the evidence before the Aaron Burr treason trial in 1807, the Burr conspiracy has remained shrouded in mystery. Although it may never be known exactly what Burr was planning, or conspiring, in the West in the early 1800s, sufficient evidence still remains that supports the view that Burr, upset at the current demise of his political career, sought to instigate a rebellion in the newly acquired Louisiana Territory with the aim of setting up a new empire in which he could assume a leadership role.

Burr had a notable family history. His grandfather was Colonial America's noted Great Awakening

preacher, Jonathan Edwards. Burr's father, Jonathan Edwards the younger, was president of Princeton University. Besides having an impressive lineage, Burr was intelligent, talented, and ambitious. During the American Revolution, he served in the Continental Army. After the war, he studied law and then later practiced in New York. Entering politics in New York in 1789, he served in a variety of offices, including state assemblyman, state attorney general, and U.S. senator. Having assumed a position of political prominence, he threw his hat in the ring in the presidential election of 1800. The election resulted in a tie, with Burr and Thomas Jefferson winning seventy-three electoral votes each. At that time, the United States Constitution stated that whoever won the election would become president and the candidate who came in second would become vice-president. After the election was deferred to the House of Representatives, Burr was extremely disappointed, because Thomas Jefferson won the race after Federalist Alexander Hamilton, who felt that Jefferson was the least of the two Republican evils, threw his support behind Jefferson. Vice-President Burr, well aware that Hamilton's political bargaining had been the deciding factor in his failed bid for the presidency, developed a deep resentment of Hamilton. In 1804, as Jefferson's second presidential election was looming, Jefferson rejected Burr as a running mate. Burr, still hoping to stay in the political arena, ran for the governorship of New York. However, after it became painfully apparent that Hamilton had once again foiled Burr's political ambitions, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. Most accounts say that Hamilton fired into the air while Burr fired directly at his target, fatally wounding Hamilton. Hamilton's death signaled the end of Burr's political career, and it also led to indictments for murder in New York and New Jersey.

To Burr, in great debt and wishing to put himself beyond the reach of the authorities, the recently acquired Louisiana Territory seemed like the logical place to run to. Burr was aware that many Federalists held the opinion that the Louisiana Territory had been an illegal purchase by the United States, because Napoleon Bonaparte, who had sold it, had no power to do so. At the time of the transaction, the





Aaron Burr. (Library of Congress)

territory was occupied by Spanish troops. It was not until months after the sale that French troops briefly took possession of the land. What is more, Napoleon had acquired the land from Spain under an agreement that stated that, in return, he would give Tuscany to the son-in-law of Charles IV. Napoleon had, in fact, never fulfilled his side of the bargain. Furthermore, Charles IV had secured a signed pledge from Napoleon that the territory would never be peacefully handed over to a third nation. Not only was the purchase on shaky ground according to many, but many Federalists also opposed it, because they feared that the new territory would add southwest agricultural states to the union, which could upset the political balance by diminishing political power in the northeast industrial and commercial states. Consequently, Burr felt that he could secure sufficient support in the United States to support a

rebellion and ultimate separation of the Louisiana Territory from the Union.

Upon reaching the West, Burr shared his vision with an old friend, U.S. military commander General James Wilkinson. The meeting spurred Burr on, and he secured a loan from a trusting wealthy Irishman named Harman Blennerhassett, which he used to purchase the Bastrop grant on the Ouachita River in Louisiana, which he intended to use as a base of operations. Once physical preparations had begun, Burr sought military support for his plan as well. He began by appealing to British agents to send the British Navy to help him blockade the port of New Orleans, but the British were not interested in supporting Burr's plan. In the meantime, Burr was able to rally together a very well equipped local army of about sixty men. Furthermore, in 1806, Burr traveled through Lexington, Kentucky, recruiting even more soldiers for his army. Having secured a base and a small army, Burr attempted to gain political support in the United States. As it turned out, Burr's political connections paid off, and General Wilkinson was appointed governor of the Louisiana Territory. Encouraged by recent events, Burr intensified his appeals for support from Federalists and Republicans. Although many Federalists despised Jefferson's administration and many Republicans regretted the Louisiana Purchase for political reasons, very few of them felt that treason was justified. As word of Burr's requests spread, therefore, some citizens sent letters to Jefferson accusing Burr of treason, but none of these letters caught Jefferson's attention as much as the one sent by Governor Wilkinson. Wilkinson, a secret agent for Spain, it seems, had realized that Burr's scheme was doomed, because it lacked enough popular support, and he attempted to turn Burr in as a way of separating himself from the conspiracy. Jefferson wasted no time and ordered Burr's arrest.

After getting word that Wilkinson had double-crossed him, Burr began to dabble with the idea of invading Mexico and creating a new republic, which he could rule over as emperor. But Burr was arrested as he attempted to flee to Florida. He was promptly charged with treason by the grand jury,

and tried in Richmond, Virginia. Chief Justice John Marshall, who was decidedly biased in Burr's favor, served as the presiding judge in the trial. Marshall's allegiance to Burr was made apparent when he attended a dinner given by the chief defense team at which Burr was present. On the other hand, Jefferson, who was adamantly in favor of Burr's conviction, promised pardons to coconspirators willing to testify against Burr. Marshall, in turn, made the conviction difficult by adopting a very rigid interpretation of treason, which required the testimony of two credible first-hand witnesses of Burr's treasonous activities. In the end, Burr was acquitted of treason, because the prosecution was unable to supply two witnesses to the crime. After the trial, still being sought for Hamilton's murder, Burr borrowed some money from friends and sailed to Europe. During the next four years, he traveled through England, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and France seeking support for his new plan to conquer Florida. Unable to find willing partners or investors, Burr returned to New York in 1812 to practice law and remained a private citizen for the rest of his life.

*Rolando Avila*

**See also:** Hamilton, Alexander; Jefferson, Thomas.

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### Burroughs, William S.

Throughout the body of his work, the experimental writer Burroughs presented conspiracies and conspiracy theories whose agents comprise right-wing governments, fascist police, repressive medical and

psychiatric institutions, corporations and media conglomerates, parasitic mutants and aliens, and, perhaps most pervasive of all, language itself. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1914, Burroughs graduated from Harvard University in 1936, and briefly attended medical school in Vienna, Austria, and later the Harvard graduate school of anthropology. After a short service in the U.S. Army, Burroughs moved to New York City where he became friends with Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Along with other figures such as Gregory Corso and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, this group would later be recognized—despite their divergent writing styles—as the core of the Beat literary movement. It was also in New York that Burroughs met his wife Joan Vollmer Adams, whom Burroughs later killed in an accidental shooting. It was this event, Burroughs would later say, that motivated him to become a writer.

Burroughs was the grandson of W. S. Burroughs, inventor of the Burroughs Adding Machine and founder of what became the Burroughs Corporation. The Burroughs fortune provided the author with a small stipend that allowed him, from 1948 on, to live in Mexico City, Tangier, Paris, and London. As much as Burroughs's famous lifelong heroin use, this extensive travel provided the subject matter and inspiration for his work, which is characterized by a frenetic, fantastical, and picaresque style of diverse locations and time periods, along with science fiction-influenced reimaginings of the past and the present. Burroughs's first novel, *Junky* (1953), was published in his mid-thirties under the name of William Lee. It is a first-person reportorial account of his life as a junkie in New York, and displays little of the stylistic experimentation that Burroughs became famous for in *Naked Lunch* (1959). It does, however, inaugurate his lifelong fascination with the criminal underworld and his often "hardboiled" writing style. Published by the notorious Olympia Press, *Naked Lunch* crystallized many of Burroughs's surreal and sexually violent obsessions, such as young boys ejaculating while being hanged, secret agents and otherworldly organizations, and real and imagined drugs such as aquatic centipede meat and Mugwump jism. It also introduced Burroughs's use of "routines," which were short, seemingly improvised

stories of a satirical, often grotesque nature. The 1962 publication of *Naked Lunch* in the United States led to its being banned in Boston, Massachusetts, and a trial in which the novel was deemed obscene, a decision that was later repealed.

After *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs began composing novels using the cut-up method (also known as the cut-up and fold-in method). Similar to a technique proposed by the dadaist Tristan Tzara when he suggested he would write a poem by pulling words from a hat, and later by Burroughs's friend Brion Gysin, the cut-up method involved splicing his own writing as well as that of others into fragments, and recombining the pieces to create a new text. Burroughs constructed a trilogy of novels using this method, namely *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962), and *Nova Express* (1964). Through the use of the cut-up method, the regular intermixing of generic styles and dislocations of time, space, and subject, and the satirical use of "routines," Burroughs's work was increasingly concerned with overcoming and sometimes redeploing various modes of power and control. The cut-up method served not only to make random associations but to reveal hidden connections. Thus it was not so much an effort toward schizophrenic fragmentation but a surrealist and perhaps "paranoid" attempt to unmask the hidden meanings in language. Critics have often read Burroughs's work as an attempt to escape a language that had been taken over by corporate, governmental, and intergalactic forces. Drug addiction was reimagined as "the junk virus" and Burroughs began to explore the nature of addiction not merely to drugs, but to images, causality, language, and power.

Questions of agency are frequently refigured as narratives about "secret agents" in which characters are represented as agents of a particular organization or group, or simply as agents of the belief system that has imprinted itself on them. These agents infiltrate each other's organizations, take on disguises and then forget their original identities, work as double or triple agents, and become involved in conspiracies so obtuse that they are often unsure for whom they are working. Burroughs's representation of conspiracy regularly

extends to the phantasmagoric, in which the agents of conspiracy are presented in biological terms, as parasitic, viral, and insectile. The effect of such conspiracies often involves the transformation of humans into mutated organisms defined by their particular addiction or group. The conflict between various "controllers" and those who would be controlled recurs throughout Burroughs's novels, such as the alien conspiracy known as the Nova Mob, and the Nova Police who struggle against them.

In the 1980s, Burroughs published an apocalyptic trilogy, made up of *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), *Place of Dead Roads* (1984), and *The Western Lands* (1987). These utopian/dystopian fictions thread together various story lines of gay pirate utopias, Westerns, and Egyptian mythology. In 1991, *The Naked Lunch* was made into a film by David Cronenberg, but as had become customary by this time, the film dealt as much with the biography and mythology of Burroughs's life as it did the contents of his best-known novel. In a similar fashion, Gus Van Sant had used the mythology of Burroughs's life in his film *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989), in which Burroughs played a defrocked junkie priest with a paternal relationship to the lead protagonist.

Burroughs's influence on the worlds of punk and underground music was apparent from the 1970s onward, with The Velvet Underground, David Bowie, and Patti Smith, among others, citing him as an important influence, and other bands taking on names inspired by his books such as Steely Dan and The Nova Conspiracy. Even the genre of Heavy Metal was inspired by Burroughs's literary appropriation of the scientific category. In the 1990s, numerous musical collaborations were released, further cementing his status as an underground icon and elder statesman of the counter-culture. These releases included *Dead City Radio* (1990), with collaborative tracks by John Cale and Sonic Youth, a collaborative album with the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy called *Spare Ass Annie and Other Tales* (1993), and another with Kurt Cobain, entitled *The "Priest" They Called Him* (1992). In his final years, Burroughs wrote little, publishing *My Education: A Book of Dreams*

and *Ghost of Chance* in 1995, but he continued to shotgun paint, exhibiting his works in the United States and across Europe.

Tony Elias

**See also:** Corporations; Cronenberg, David; Drugs; Mind Control; Paranoia; Pynchon, Thomas.

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## Bush, George

George Herbert Walker Bush served as the forty-first president of the United States from 1989 to 1993. Bush's connections to groups ranging from the Skull and Bones Society to the CIA have made him a suspicious figure in the eyes of many conspiracy theorists, but it was his declaration of an imminent New World Order at the outset of the Gulf War that gave him a central position in quasi-apocalyptic theories of the coming one-world government.

At the forefront of anti-Bush literature is the Lyndon LaRouche group. LaRouche himself strongly attacked Bush during the 1980 presidential campaign (and thereafter), and two of LaRouche's associates, Webster Tarpley and Anton Chaitkin, have written an unauthorized version of George Bush's life that questions every aspect of the former president's official biography—including his supposed status as a war hero (Tarpley and Chaitkin, 108ff). They suggest that any biographical sketch of Bush that mentions his arriving in Texas in a red Studebaker—another story they deem apocryphal—is merely a regurgitation of the few authorized “facts” the Bush family has offered the public. For the LaRouche group, Bush's true story involves connections to Nazi bankers, international cabals, the East Coast elite, and, generally, “insiders” of all varieties.

Bush's connections to the networks of power in the United States are indeed stunning. He served as U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations from 1971 to 1973, as the first chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in China from 1974 to 1975, and as director of the CIA from 1975 to 1976. By 1979, Bush had become a member of the board of the Council on Foreign Relations and a member of the Trilateral Commission, in both groups (as well as in his diplomatic capacity in China) dealing closely with Henry Kissinger, a black mark indeed as far as Bush's so-called extremist critics are concerned. To this list one could add two more connections that raise red flags for conspiracy theorists: Bush's membership in the Skull and Bones Society while at Yale in the 1940s, and his membership (again along with Kissinger) in the Bohemian Grove group that meets annually to perform “pagan rituals” in the forest north of San Francisco.

In Bush's first year as vice-president, John Hinckley Jr. shot Ronald Reagan, and, as far as some Bush critics are concerned, the peculiar circumstances surrounding the assassination attempt seem to implicate Bush. In spite of the fact that Hinckley had not yet been properly questioned, officials almost immediately came to the conclusion that he had acted alone. Furthermore, no one had yet investigated the fact that George Bush's son Neil was planning to have dinner with John Hinckley Jr.'s brother Scott on the night following the assassination attempt. This fact was not so much covered up as it was completely ignored. Also ignored, according to the LaRouche group, is the fact that the Hinckley family were major contributors to George Bush's presidential campaign. These facts together are taken as evidence that Hinckley may well have been a Manchurian Candidate, a product of the MK-ULTRA program that was supposedly terminated by 1973, two years before Bush became CIA director (Tarpley and Chaitkin, 375ff). Hinckley's parents recall notes their son wrote while in prison that describe an “imaginary conspiracy” to assassinate the president, but again the LaRouche group charges that these notes have been wrongly suppressed.





George Bush, Sr., in 1990. (Downing Larry/Corbis Sygma)

While Reagan was recovering in the hospital—and while Bush was in charge of the government—an attempt was made on Pope John Paul II’s life. Tarpley and Chaitkin imply that Bush may well have had something to do with this, or at least with a subsequent cover-up, writing: “It was as if a new and malignant evil had erupted onto the world stage, and was asserting its presence with an unprecedented violence and terror” (380).

Bush was elected president in 1988, and soon thereafter spoke the words that have made him the *bête noire* of all those who suspect the “insiders” of preparing to subject U.S. citizens to an evil one-

world government. On 11 September 1990, George Bush addressed Congress and announced the coming of “a New World Order” that would guarantee unprecedented peace and prosperity through international cooperation. The LaRouche group and others see this New World Order as nothing less than universal slavery—the complete subjugation of the rights of the individual (and of the individual nation) in the face of a totalitarian international government (the UN as presently constituted is merely the first step in this progression). More mainstream journalists, of course, would see this New World Order as a function of impersonal forces of globalization, rather than as the product of a conscious Masonic world-conspiracy.

Even after leaving office, Bush has not ceased to be the object of critique and speculation. Those who depict Bush as having political power that is all but supernatural in scope were offered another spectacle that seemed to prove their theories in the 2000 presidential election. Bush’s son, George W. Bush, became the forty-third president (they now refer to each other in private as forty-one and forty-three) in spite of a noticeable lack of political savvy and a complete lack of the foreign policy knowledge that marked his father’s political career. Even mainstream journalists began to wonder whether or not a vast right-wing conspiracy involving the Supreme Court was behind the final result.

*Marlon Kuzmick*

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Iran-Contra; Kissinger, Henry; Larouche, Lyndon; mk-ultra; New World Order; Skull and Bones Society; Trilateral Commission.

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## **Cambodia, Secret Bombing of**

At the height of the Vietnam War U.S. bombers were secretly ordered to bomb what were believed to be strategic targets in neutral Cambodia. The existence and extent of those missions were officially denied and covered up at the highest levels for several years.

Cambodia emerged from French colonial rule in 1953 under the leadership of Prince-turned-Chief of State Norodom Sihanouk. After cultivating an alliance with the United States, Sihanouk broke off formal relations. After ascertaining that the neighboring Republic of Vietnam (RVN) would eventually fall to Communists from North Vietnam and insurgents within the nation itself. As a result, he also turned a blind eye to Vietnamese Communists who set up bases on Cambodian territory in order to evade U.S. forces. For these concessions, Sihanouk did not have to worry about Vietnamese forces aiding the small Communist Khmer Rouge insurgency that was opposing his regime. In response to Sihanouk's lax border policy, beginning in 1966, U.S. Special Forces and South Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troops began engaging in classified ground missions into Cambodia known as Operation Daniel Boone.

On 9 February 1969, less than one month after the inauguration of President Richard Nixon, General Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. forces in South Vietnam, related that the headquarters of enemy forces operating in South Vietnam had been located in the jungles of Cambodia. Abrams stated

that a U.S. attack on Central Office for South Vietnam base camps (COSVN HQ) would have a crippling effect on future Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army hostile actions in South Vietnam. Abrams's report, which came at a time when the administration was already hinting to South Vietnam of a withdrawal of U.S. troops, seemed to provide a long-term military solution without additional ground troop involvement. Soon, Abrams received word that his proposal was garnering serious consideration by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and that his message had been seen by President Nixon himself. After five weeks of discussion and debate in Washington, a plan was approved that called for forty-eight sorties against COSVN HQ as well as twelve strikes against targets within South Vietnam that were nowhere near the true objective. The actual target of the operation, code-named Breakfast, was to be concealed and treated as if it were simply a standard bombing attack on enemy targets in South Vietnam. Published information would indicate that the bombing took place within the RVN and, if questioned by the press about air strikes in Cambodia, a U.S. spokesman would state that sorties adjacent to the Cambodian border did take place, that he had no other information on the subject, and that he would look into the question.

Just before takeoff, the pilots and navigators of the Strategic Air Command's B-52 bombers executing Breakfast were told by their commanding officers that they would be bombing Cambodia, not South Vietnam. During the night raid, the B-52s

dropped their payloads into forty-eight separate areas in the neutral nation of Cambodia. Daniel Boone teams dispatched immediately following the bombing, in order to capture supposedly dazed enemy troops, found themselves under heavy fire, providing the justification for future attacks on Cambodia. Over the next fourteen months, the Nixon administration secretly authorized 3,630 raids, collectively known as Operation Menu, on fourteen suspected North Vietnamese Army and Vietcong bases inside the Cambodian border. Beginning in May 1970, the U.S. Army and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) launched a formal ground invasion into the officially neutral nation of Cambodia.

In 1973, the covert bombing raids were fully disclosed; however, both Nixon and Henry Kissinger (who at the time of the bombing had been serving as a National Security Affairs adviser) maintained that the sorties were undertaken with the encouragement of President Sihanouk. They further argued that the bombed areas were not inhabited by Cambodians and were legitimate military targets. Now serving as secretary of state, Kissinger stated the attacks were not a bombing of Cambodia or its people per se, but of enemy troops located within Cambodia. Yet, as early as April 1969, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had informed the Nixon administration of considerable numbers of Cambodians living within the COSVN HQ sanctuary areas.

As early as one week after the Breakfast mission, the *New York Times* reported that Abrams had requested air strikes against areas in Cambodia. On 9 May 1969, Pentagon correspondent William Beecher stated that U.S. air raids against ammo dumps and base camps in Cambodia had definitely taken place. While the report sparked little appreciable public interest and no federal inquiries at the time, the same account, four years later, generated limited calls for impeachment. Further, Beecher's pronouncement prompted the Nixon administration to ask FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to ascertain how word of the bombing was leaked. The illegal FBI wiretaps placed on Kissinger's assistant for planning, Morton Halperin (the man suspected of passing on the information), became the first of

Nixon's abuses of power that came to be known collectively as the Watergate scandal.

*Nicholas Turse*

**See also:** Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kissinger, Henry; Nixon, Richard; Watergate.

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**Castro, Fidel**

After seizing power in Cuba on 1 January 1959, Fidel Castro quickly became America's closest enemy. He gradually introduced a Communist system on the island, just ninety miles from the United States, nationalizing business and heavily repressing opposition. Thousands fled to Florida and these anti-Castro Cubans became the main source of opposition to his rule within the United States. Right-wingers, including businessmen who had had property nationalized, also became vocal opponents as Cuba increasingly became friendly with the Soviet Union, culminating in the decision to put nuclear missiles on the island.

The U.S. government pursued a number of plans to unseat Castro, most notably the Bay of Pigs invasion on 17 April 1961. The plan was initiated by the CIA under President Eisenhower, but it was his successor, John F. Kennedy, who approved it. A group of 1,500 exiles landed on Cuba, but the Cuban army quickly defeated them—Kennedy had refused to authorize U.S. air support and the Cubans were expecting the invasion as the exiles' training had been widely reported in the press. The failed inva-



Cuban Premier Fidel Castro gestures with his finger while addressing U.N. General Assembly during his first visit to the United States in nineteen years, 12 October 1979. (Bettmann/Corbis)

sion led to criticism of Kennedy from conservatives and renewed pressure within the administration to get rid of Castro. The president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, took charge of a new campaign to destabilize and/or assassinate the Cuban leader. Operation Mongoose was launched in late 1961 and was a CIA-run plan to destabilize the Cuban economy through acts of sabotage. There were also attempts at assassinating Castro and suggestions of bizarre schemes such as poisoning Castro to make his famous beard fall out.

In 1962, the pressure against Cuba came to a head with the Cuban Missile Crisis. The nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union over Cuba led to a U.S. pledge of non-invasion that ultimately strengthened Castro's position. However, the director of the CIA, Richard Helms, later told the Church Commission in 1975 that the CIA had continued to plot against Castro until 1965. It was unclear whether or not Kennedy

or Lyndon Johnson, his successor, knew about these plans as Helms stated that he had acted on presidential hints and felt no need to go into detail with them.

The CIA and other parts of the intelligence community have also been accused of involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy, partly because of his perceived failings over Cuba. The lack of air support for the Bay of Pigs invasion and the non-invasion pledge following the Cuban Missile Crisis were seen as having provoked them into orchestrating the assassination. Similarly, anti-Castro Cubans, including some then under training for a future invasion, provided a possible source of manpower to carry out any plan. This, however, largely remains a source of speculation and, indeed, Castro himself was widely seen as a probable sponsor of the assassination in the years immediately after it. The idea has lost credence, though, as Castro was seemingly on the path to better relations with Kennedy and it is unlikely that he would have preferred the more stringently anticommunist Johnson as president.

*Neil Denslow*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Bay of Pigs Invasion; Cold War; Cuban Missile Crisis; Johnson, Lyndon B.; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of.

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## Cattle Mutilations

When large numbers of cattle were found dead on the Great Plains during the 1970s, many ranchers and law enforcement officials refused to believe that the deaths had come from natural causes. Alleging that the animals had been weirdly mutilated—their bodies drained of blood, and their sex organs removed with so-called surgical precision—conspiracy theorists attributed the actions to one of three outside forces. Satanic cults were suspected of killing the cattle to obtain animal organs and blood



for their devil-worship ceremonies; extraterrestrial aliens were suspected of killing the cattle to further their understanding of terrestrial mammals; and clandestine federal agencies were suspected of killing the cattle as part of top-secret experiments in chemical and/or biological warfare. Although nearly every scientific report on this phenomenon has concluded that the deaths were perfectly natural, and that the animals' postmortem condition could be attributed to the usual scavengers (e.g., coyotes, badgers, vultures, crows, and blowflies), conspiracy theorists have regarded these mundane explanations as clumsy attempts to cover up the much more ominous sources of the cattle mutilations.

Interestingly, one of the first such mutilations was not of a cow, but rather a horse named Lady (also known as Snippy), a three-year-old Appaloosa that was found dead on 9 September 1967 in southern Colorado. Its heart and other internal organs were missing, and its skin was stripped from the neck up; but no blood could be detected on the ground nearby, and neither footprints nor animal tracks were found near the body. Local ranchers asked how the heart could be removed without leaving at least some trace of blood on the ground. If the culprits were predators, why were there no teeth marks or wounds with jagged edges? Just a few months earlier, there had been reports of strange lights in the night sky, leading Lady's owners to suspect that aliens had been at work.

Over the next decade, reports of similar mutilations spread widely across the Great Plains, particularly in the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. The total number of mutilations nationwide is unknown, though estimates have ranged from several hundred to ten thousand. As a result, several states began their own investigations, and the U.S. Department of Justice provided funding for the most exhaustive report, *Operation Animal Mutilation*, conducted in 1979–1980 for the state of New Mexico by Kenneth Rommel, a retired agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Uncovering no evidence that satanists, aliens, or covert federal agencies were at work, Rommel found only natural explanations. The cows had died

from common viruses or other bovine diseases, from eating poisonous plants, or perhaps even from lightning. Because the dead animal might not be found for a day or two, gas would build up in their carcasses, causing not only the stretching of tissue, but also the explosion of soft internal organs. The animals' blood would coagulate at the bottom of the carcass, making it appear as if the blood had been entirely drained. And as natural scavengers from both air and land conducted their post-mortem feasts, the surfaces left behind were surprisingly smooth, making it appear as if the work had been done with surgical precision.

Needless to say, many conspiracy theorists have refused to accept Rommel's conclusions. The early 1970s were the years when allegations of satanic cults became more widespread in the United States, particularly in the wake of the murders committed by Charles Manson and the Sons of Satan. It seemed logical to connect the two phenomena. Satanists were supposedly killing the animals so they could continue to practice their ritual sacrifices. The blood was drained so they could drink it, perhaps mixing it with drugs to induce hallucinations. The sexual organs were removed so they could use them for copulation and other fertility rituals.

Speculation shifted from satanists to aliens in the mid-1970s when crop circles were discovered in fields not far from some of the mutilated cattle. Again it seemed logical to connect the two phenomena, since the aliens' use of UFOs would explain why there were never any tracks left near the scene, and the aliens' advanced medical technology would explain why the mutilations appeared to be performed with surgical precision. The alien theory was given a significant boost by Linda Moulton Howe, a television journalist and former Miss America contestant, who produced *A Strange Harvest* for national broadcast in 1980. In books and subsequent television programs, Howe has continued to suggest that the aliens who are supposedly abducting human beings and performing medical probes on them are the same fiends who are mutilating cattle for similar experimentation.

Conspiracy theorists who favor the satanists have one thing in common with those who favor the

aliens: a belief that the federal government knows the truth—and has even been closely monitoring these activities—but is covering it up. Explanations for the government cover-up vary, but other conspiracy theorists have attributed the cattle mutilations to the federal government itself. Troops and military equipment were shifted following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam in 1973 to remote locations in the Great Plains and other areas of the American West. The use of sophisticated military equipment, including the federal government's infamous black helicopters, would explain how the cattle were mutilated without leaving any evidence behind. The U.S. government's campaign to develop biological and/or chemical warfare would require testing these weapons against the cattle found on nearby ranches. Why the government would not simply purchase its own cattle to conduct these top-secret experiments remains a mystery.

*James I. Deutsch*

**See also:** Manson, Charles; Satanic Ritual Abuse; UFOs.

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## Central Intelligence Agency

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) occupies a central place in U.S. conspiracy theory. In its efforts to acquire intelligence relevant to U.S. strategic interests, the CIA has created a vast web of infor-

mation sources, from foreign double agents to the most prestigious of U.S. universities, and this expansive network offers the innumerable connections, coincidences, and causal links upon which conspiracy theory thrives. Furthermore, the CIA's work has historically extended beyond mere intelligence gathering. In addition to espionage and counterespionage, the Agency undertook numerous covert actions around the world, researched drugs and behavioral modification (or "mind control"), and even planned (and perhaps executed) the assassinations of foreign operatives and heads of state. As the government agency charged with the duty of secretly conspiring, the CIA has been involved in numerous well-publicized conspiracies, and, consequently, has opened the door for ever greater flights of fancy on the part of conspiracy theorists who see CIA involvement everywhere. For along with the many conspiracies with which the CIA has been incontrovertibly linked, there are many more such theories that are either fantasized or "not yet proven," depending on one's point of view.

To be sure, the CIA has not been merely the passive target of conspiracy theory. As an organization, the CIA seems to be constitutively structured by paranoia—one cannot be a good spy without being a little bit suspicious, after all. The cold war, in particular, produced a type of paranoia that seems different only in degree, rather than in kind, from that of the anti-CIA conspiracy theorists that the Agency routinely dismisses as crackpot extremists. The crucial difference between the CIA and the average conspiracy buff, however, is that the former has the power and the will to *act* on its theories.

## The Beginning of the CIA and Cold War Paranoia

The CIA was established by the National Security Act of 1947. Very much a postwar operation, its creation and structure bear the traces of U.S. reaction to World War II and the new political realities generated by the war's conclusion. Politicians were especially wary of creating a secret police force; with memories of the German Gestapo in mind, the division between foreign intelligence (the CIA) and domestic policing and investigation (the FBI)

was believed to be crucial. Furthermore, there were questions as to whether the CIA, a peacetime organization, should be granted the same authority as its wartime predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), when it came to subversive operations against foreign powers. The ability to execute covert operations was effectively granted, however, in the Central Intelligence Act of 1949, which gave the director of Central Intelligence authority to finance operations he deemed necessary, without giving an account to Congress. In the end, of course, the CIA's involvement in botched covert action abroad and surveillance at home was to cause it great grief, particularly in the 1970s.

It soon became evident that the CIA's major antagonist was the Soviet Union, and the vast majority of the Agency's activities during the cold war were linked to the Soviet threat in one way or another. The CIA had become a major player in America's overall strategic posture during the cold war. Since the United States could not compete with the Soviet Union when it came to conventional warfare—the Soviets' advantage when it came to sheer manpower was insurmountable—U.S. defense strategy involved nuclear deterrence combined with covert action by the CIA. The CIA thus became a major player in global politics, and both the CIA and the KGB tended to see their adversary's conspiring hands behind every event. Sometimes, this was indeed the case, as when in elections such as Italy's in 1948 the CIA and the Communists financed opposing candidates. The structure of this type of secret warfare lends itself to paranoia, and the CIA's responses to the Soviet threat often seem to have been as infected with delusional paranoia as any of the conspiracy theories the CIA routinely dismisses as irrational or extremist.

### **Covert Operations**

No doubt one of the reasons for the CIA's prominence in so many conspiracy theories is the fact that conspiracy is one of the CIA's key jobs—"covert action" is the term for this particular job, and, at times, the CIA has done it rather well. Though the Agency always ensures that it main-

tains "plausible deniability," its actions are often discovered after the fact.

In August 1953, for example, the Iranian government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq was overthrown and an imperial government, led by the Shah, was set up. Former CIA agents claim that the coup was engineered by the small force of five Agency officers secretly ensconced in a Tehran basement with \$1 million in funds as their sole weapon (used to organize paid street mobs among other things). This particular CIA conspiracy managed to keep the vast oil resources of Iran from being nationalized, securing the strategically important energy for the West, and gaining U.S. oil companies (Gulf, Standard, Texaco, and Mobil) a healthy share of Iranian oil rights.

This pattern was to repeat itself elsewhere. In Guatemala in 1954, the CIA helped to overthrow a democratically elected president, Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, replacing him with a dictator, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas. The CIA's involvement in the coup helped the United Fruit Company immensely, as that company feared that the new government might cut down on their Guatemalan profits. In 1970, the democratically elected leader of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was deposed and replaced with the pro-American Marshal Lon Nol. In September 1973, revolutionary forces assisted by the CIA overthrew the socialist government of Chile and killed the country's democratically elected leader, Salvador Allende.

Of course, not all attempted covert operations were successful. Attempted coups in Indonesia in 1958 and North Vietnam in 1954 did not proceed as planned, and the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 was an utter failure. Most disastrously for the CIA, the Bay of Pigs fiasco gained much more press than any of the Agency's successes (for obvious reasons). This negative publicity led to an increase in CIA-related conspiracy theories and an overall depreciation in the Agency's international prestige. Also diminishing the CIA's international reputation were rumors of numerous assassination plots the Agency had hatched, if not actually executed, throughout the years. Allegations that the CIA had a hand in Che Guevara's death have never been proven

beyond doubt, but the CIA's explorations of plans to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo are now well known (Jeffreys-Jones, 96ff).

In time, critics began to charge that the CIA was expending too much of its resources on covert action at the expense of intelligence, which was, after all, its primary purpose. Furthermore, public distaste for the sorts of regimes the CIA tended to support created great controversy. Ultimately, President Gerald Ford claimed that the CIA should use covert action only to support well-established democracies and banned assassination completely.

### **Behavior Modification**

One could argue that the CIA's own "paranoia" lay behind the Agency's extensive research into behavioral modification. Faced with phenomena such as the Communist show trials and the confessions signed by U.S. prisoners of war in Korea (in both cases individuals seemed brainwashed into confessing to crimes they did not commit), the CIA became convinced that the Soviets had developed mind-control techniques, and thus that the United States had better develop these same techniques as a matter of national security.

In Projects Artichoke, MK-ULTRA, and MK-SEARCH, the latter two under the leadership of the now infamous Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA investigated the operational potential of marijuana, LSD, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, electroshock therapy, and even, more surprisingly, parapsychological possibilities such as telekinesis, precognition, and telepathy. In one experiment, Project Artichoke head Morse Allen hypnotized two of his secretaries and commanded one to shoot the other with a nearby pistol. The secretary took the unloaded gun and pulled the trigger. These experiments within the Agency were quite common, with MK-ULTRA agents at one point agreeing to slip each other LSD at any time to observe its effects when administered by surprise. Ultimately, however, it was obviously more desirable to get test-subjects from the outside world, particularly for those experiments that the

CIA agents wouldn't dare perform on themselves. On one front, the CIA began to fund research in universities and drug treatment programs. In some such programs mental patients were kept on daily doses of LSD for up to seventy-seven consecutive days. On another front, the CIA continued itself to perform experiments on unwitting subjects, now luring prostitutes and small-time criminals back to apartments in which they would be slipped the drug and observed. Ultimately, in Operation Midnight Climax, the prostitutes were recruited and offered cash to lure clients back to the apartments, where the CIA could perform drug experiments and also collect information on "perverse" sexual practices that might later have operational value.

The CIA was clearly exceeding its authority in performing these operations on domestic soil, and, as the facts of these experiments slowly leaked out, those who believed the CIA to be nothing but an insidious, control-oriented conspiracy of sorts were provided with ample proof of their theories.

### **From JFK to the Senate Inquiry— the Rising Tide of Public Suspicion**

In 1967 Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney, launched his own investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Not satisfied with the Warren Commission's inquiry two years earlier, Garrison was convinced that the assassination had been a conspiracy, that Oswald was not the lone gunman. Garrison charged New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw with masterminding the plot, but as the investigation wore on, it became clear that Garrison believed more powerful forces lay behind the tragic series of events—specifically, the CIA and the "military-industrial complex." Answering conspiracy theory with conspiracy theory, the CIA began to entertain the possibility that Garrison was in league with the KGB. And even today, according to an extensive article published in its own intelligence journal, the Agency suspects that the supposed link between the CIA and the JFK assassination was itself the result of an extensive Communist disinformation operation involving socialist-leaning newspapers from Rome to Canada (see Holland).



Even if Garrison was merely, in the words of a pro-CIA historian, “a mendacious district attorney adept at manipulating the *Zeitgeist* of the late 60s” (Holland), it was a sign of things to come for the CIA. The 1970s saw a wave of stunning revelations concerning the CIA’s activities at home and abroad (including the covert operations and behavioral modification programs mentioned above). A series of high-profile government inquiries kept the CIA on the front pages for years: the Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States in 1975 (“The Rockefeller Commission”); the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (“The Church Commission”); the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence’s hearings on the MK-ULTRA program in 1977; and the 1979 report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. These hearings—the transcripts of which are publicly available—provided key information for historians and conspiracy buffs alike. Furthermore, the sheer strangeness of many of the stories contributed to the general belief that the CIA was capable of anything, and, thus, expanded the possible range of CIA-related conspiracy theory. The public discovered that the CIA wanted to cause Castro’s beard to fall out, assuming that this would rob him of his powerful “machismo.” The Agency also considered soaking one of his cigars in LSD. They dreamed up school-boy antics like stink bombs and diarrhea stimulation as ways of embarrassing foreign leaders. Even animals were not safe—CIA-funded scientists performed lobotomies on apes and stuck them in sensory deprivation chambers; they cut the heads off of monkeys, attempting to surgically attach them to other monkeys; agents even trained dolphins to attack enemy divers with large hypodermic needles armed with compressed air containers. The hyperbolic strangeness of these activities seemed to invite the public to come up with ever wilder conspiracy theories.

### **Proliferating Conspiracy Theories**

As CIA activities became more widely publicized, it became easier and easier for foreign politicians to accuse the CIA of meddling. CIA involvement in the

deposition of Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, for instance, has been disputed, but the book Sihanouk wrote in exile, *My War with the CIA*, found a receptive audience because the CIA’s known activities made the Sihanouk scenario seem quite likely. To be fair, the CIA has a difficult time defending itself, since most of its documents are classified; furthermore, even when it releases documents, large sections are invariably blacked out, leading to ever greater suspicion on the part of the reader.

As the keeper of the country’s deepest secrets, the CIA is inevitably implicated in a whole host of “unexplained” phenomena and wild suspicions. The CIA, founded the same year of the supposed alien landing in Roswell, New Mexico, has been accused both of covering up the existence of extraterrestrial life *and* of having manufactured UFO hysteria as a “tool for cold war psychological warfare” (Haines). While MK-ULTRA as a project is in the past, theories about CIA mind control have reinvented themselves for the twenty-first century, with some arguing that the CIA is secretly implanting microchips inside human bodies (often in the skull) as a way of tracking and controlling individuals.

Both at home and abroad, the CIA has become a wonderfully useful subject for conspiracy theorists, capable of connecting what is seemingly unconnected, of explaining the unexplained (in Hollywood today its use as such is prevalent to the point of cliché). And with its increasing budget, power, and overall significance following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the proliferation of CIA-related conspiracy theories shows no signs of abating.

*Marlon Kuzmick*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Bay of Pigs Invasion; Castro, Fidel; Cold War; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; LSD; *The Manchurian Candidate*; MK-ULTRA; Pentagon Papers.

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### Chambers, Whittaker

Whittaker Chambers was one of the most important and controversial witnesses used by prosecutors in their postwar campaign to root out Communists and leftists suspected of infiltrating President Roosevelt's New Deal government in the 1930s and 1940s. Chambers's single most significant act was to testify at length against his former friend, prominent State Department official Alger Hiss. He also appeared frequently before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to corroborate the accusations of fellow anticommunist witnesses such as Elizabeth Bentley, Benjamin Gitlow, Louis Budenz, and Hede Massing.

#### From Communist to Anticommunist

Chambers was born in Brooklyn in 1901. Chambers's parents (a commercial artist and cartoonist) did not enjoy a happy marriage. Not long after his father's early death (and his brother's suicide), Chambers ran away to Washington, D.C., where he worked as a laborer on the railways. A gifted but erratic student, he would eventually enter Columbia University and study under the celebrated English instructor Mark Van Doren, but it was his experience during the earlier period, and his reading of Marx and Lenin, that brought Chambers into contact with several key members of the Communist Party (CPUSA), including future general secretary William Foster, James Cannon, and Joseph Freeman. Looking back on his decision to join the party in 1925 from the perspective of his compelling 1953 autobiography, *Witness*, Chambers

claimed that he had found in Marxism a "practical program, a vision, and a faith" with which to answer the "crises of history" unfolding around him. Throughout the "red decade" (late 1920s–1930s), Chambers enjoyed swift progress up the ranks first of the open party and then the underground Soviet espionage apparatus that coordinated and directed its actions. In 1935, he was appointed to the prestigious position of chief editor of the CPUSA's *Daily Worker*. Ironically, it was from this privileged perspective that Chambers began to discern the corruption of Communist ideals that would finally lead to his apostasy from the movement in 1937–1938. In common with contemporaries and fellow McCarthyites like Gitlow, Bentley, and Austrian expatriate Arthur Koestler, Chambers's faith in the Left was destroyed as a result of the Stalinist purges in the USSR, the Nazi–Soviet pact, and the resulting internecine warfare among members of the U.S. Left.

Although the exact date of his disengagement from the movement remains uncertain, it is clear that, from the late 1930s, Chambers had begun secreting microfilms and documents that he would eventually use to expose the treachery of former Communist comrades embedded within various branches of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. Throughout the 1940s, Chambers, as a former highly placed member of the Communist underground, was increasingly called on by the FBI to corroborate the charges of other defectors. As a result of this process, he came to believe that Roosevelt's liberal New Deal program (and its successor, Truman's "Fair Deal") had been thoroughly compromised by the penetration of Communist ideas and personnel. Like other proponents of McCarthyism such as FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, future president Richard Nixon, Senator Patrick McCarran, and McCarthy himself, Chambers viewed the New Deal as little more than a covert socialist revolution led by an elite of leftist intellectuals masquerading as liberals. Together with the written and verbal pronouncements of these and other figures, Chambers's testimony, in *Witness* and before numerous grand juries and congressional committees, and his many articles



Whittaker Chambers leaving federal court, 18 November 1949. (Library of Congress)

for magazines like *Time*, were instrumental in identifying the formative influence of Communist thought on the drift of pre-war public policy and the threat of Communist conspiracy in the cold war public consciousness.

### **The Hiss-Chambers Trials**

Chambers's single most crucial act, however, was to detail Alger Hiss's activities on behalf of the Soviet intelligence apparatus during his appointment in the State Department and his participation at the pivotal superpower conference in Yalta at the end of World War II. From his first appearance before HUAC in August 1948 when Hiss was accused of membership in the CPUSA, Chambers maintained the pressure on his former friend. From 1948–1950, he doggedly continued the campaign in spite of Hiss's denial that he had ever known his accuser, and the charges of slander Hiss brought against him. Indeed, it was in his pretrial deposition during the

latter case that Chambers unexpectedly broadened his allegations, accusing Hiss of stealing State Department documents and passing them to him for transmission to Moscow. It was these documents, stored by Chambers among the produce at his Maryland farm, which became popularly known as the "Pumpkin Papers." Although this first trial ended in a hung jury, a conviction was finally secured when professional ex-communist witness Hede Massing appeared at the retrial the following year to corroborate Chambers's claim. Hiss was sentenced to five years in prison.

Coinciding with the 1949 trial of the CPUSA leadership by HUAC, the Hiss–Chambers case captivated the public imagination and occupied far more column inches than any other in the years before the Rosenberg scandal (1952–1954). This was undoubtedly due in part to the impressive and apparently unimpeachable record of the accused and the entire network of officials whom he seemed to represent—in the words of one contemporary commentator, the case effectively put the New Deal generation on trial. No less important was the fact that several of the key hearings were televised nationwide, something unprecedented in the 1950s. For the most part, Chambers appeared temperamentally ill-suited to such widespread exposure, as his retreat to a solitary life on the remote Maryland farm proved. Nevertheless, after the furor died down, he continued to work as an editor and staff writer for *Time* and *Life* magazines and the *National Review*; examples of his provocative, always opinionated reflections on cold war politics were recently anthologized in *Ghosts on the Roof* (1996). Chambers died of a heart attack in 1961, having renewed his pledge to the Quaker faith of his childhood. As *Witness* makes clear, it was this return of the spiritual dimension to his life that offered a sustaining counterweight to the trauma of his apostasy from the Communist movement.

### **Continuing Controversy over Chambers's Legacy**

By the time of his death Chambers's life and its legacy were already the subject of bitter debate. For the cold war conservative constituency, many of

whom, like Philip Rahv and Leslie Fiedler, shared their hero's leftist past, Chambers represented the acceptable, literate face of uncompromising anti-communism, without any of McCarthy's demagoguery. (It is worth noting that Chambers privately condemned McCarthy's bullying courtroom tactics.) Richard Nixon, another powerful conservative supporter and key prosecutor in the Hiss trials, would later admit that his close involvement in the development of Chambers's case helped secure the broad base of support for his presidential campaigns against John F. Kennedy in 1960 and Robert Kennedy in 1968. Indeed, the very principles of the so-called New Right that began to surface during the 1950s were premised on the same rejection of the reformist social agenda advocated by the liberal establishment under Roosevelt and Truman that had actuated Chambers's assault on Hiss. Another beneficiary of this growing tide of right-wing sentiment was Californian Republican Ronald Reagan, who, as president, awarded Chambers a posthumous Medal of Freedom in 1984, citing him as a bastion of "virtue and freedom" against the "brooding terrors of [the] age." Both Reagan and Nixon, as well as *National Review* founder William Buckley, were all at one time members of the so-called Pumpkin Papers Irregulars, a group formed with the sole aim of maintaining Chambers's esteemed reputation in conservative political and cultural circles. No less significant in this regard was Allen Weinstein's much-lauded (and recently republished) study of the case, *Perjury* (1978; 1997), in which, after a judicious inquiry into all available sources, and starting from his strong belief in Hiss's innocence, the author concluded that the vast majority of Chambers's accusations were true. The support of these prominent figures seemed justified when, in the late 1990s, Soviet archives were opened and many files from the Venona Project were declassified. Suddenly, there was an abundance of evidence apparently proving that Chambers had been correct both in his assertion that Hiss was a Soviet agent and that a Communist conspiracy had successfully penetrated many departments of the Roosevelt administration and continued unimpeded during Truman's presidency.

In the face of this torrent of hostility and accusation, Hiss continued to maintain his innocence. In this, he had many powerful supporters among liberals and former government officials who were not prepared to see the very real political and social gains made during the Roosevelt era tainted and compromised by the accusation of Communist infiltration. In fact, the backlash against Chambers had already begun during the trials when Hiss and various sections of the media joined forces to portray Chambers as a psychopath and habitual liar. Whatever the truth of this diagnosis, for someone like future Kennedy special advisor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., or a liberal commentator like Granville Hicks, Chambers's rigid view of the irreconcilable conflict between left and right was far too absolute, leaving at the center a dangerous breeding ground for intolerance and extremism. For those further to the left, including the CPUSA and the Socialist Workers' Party, the growing convergence of interests among figures like Chambers, Nixon, and McCarthy began to resemble a neoconservative conspiracy whose aim was to discredit the New Deal establishment and those who came under the banner of its Popular Front during the 1930s. In their view, Hiss, like the Rosenbergs a few years later, came to represent a scapegoat used to legitimize the ascendancy of the New Right. The validity of this argument seemed finally to have been borne out when Soviet intelligence archivist General Dmitri Volkogonov claimed in 1992 that he had found no evidence in the KGB's cold war files to prove Chambers's allegations against Hiss. However, more revelations from the archives and the Venona files have further complicated the issue and once again tipped the balance in favor of Chambers's account. In recent years, The Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based right-wing think tank, celebrated the centenary of Chambers's birth with a glowing tribute to a "man of courage and faith," while the conservative-inclined Regnery Publishing house has continued its long-term project to bring his huge body of political and cultural journalism to a wider public. What this proves is that Chambers's contested legacy continues to reflect the shifts of public and political estimation



of the significance of the threat of Communist subversion and conspiracy during the cold war.

*Dorian Hayes*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Atomic Secrets; Cold War; Federal Bureau of Investigation; House Un-American Activities Committee; Hiss, Alger; Venona Project.

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**Chappaquiddick**

On the night of 18 July 1969, Mary Jo Kopechne died when the car in which she was riding plunged off a low bridge on the Massachusetts island of Chappaquiddick and landed on its roof in the water below. Senator Edward M. Kennedy reported to local police the following morning that he had been driving the car at the time of the accident. Charged with leaving the scene of an accident, he pleaded guilty and was given a suspended sentence. A coroner's inquest into Kopechne's death held in January 1970 and a subsequent grand jury investigation held in March of that year produced no new legal devel-

opments. The last official result of the case was the revocation of Kennedy's driver's license in May 1970 after a routine fatal-accident investigation by the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The hearing examiner, like the judge who had sentenced Kennedy, concluded that he had been driving too fast.

Kennedy made no public statement until the week following the accident, when he spoke in a live television broadcast from his home. He stated in that broadcast, and has maintained ever since, that he was driving (but not intoxicated) on the night of the accident and that after the car went into the water he made vigorous (but unsuccessful) efforts to rescue Kopechne. All conspiracy theories about the accident reject this version of events. The theories fall into three groups that allege, respectively, a conspiracy to place blame on Kennedy, a conspiracy to divert blame from Kennedy, and a conspiracy to cover up an earlier crime by staging the "accident."

**The Setting and the Accident**

The island of Martha's Vineyard lies seven miles off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts. It is divided into six towns, of which Edgartown (at the far eastern end of the island) is the oldest, largest, and most visibly prosperous. Chappaquiddick, where the accident took place, is a political and cultural appendage of Edgartown. Functionally an island itself, it is separated from Edgartown proper by a 500-foot-wide channel crossed by a small, bargelike car ferry. The eastern edge of Chappaquiddick is a long, straight ocean beach backed by a narrow body of water known as Poucha Pond. Dyke Bridge, the site of the accident, arches over the pond, connecting Chappaquiddick's small road system to the parking lot behind the beach. The bridge (since demolished and rebuilt) angled 27 degrees to the left of the road leading to it. It had, in 1969, only 4-inch strips of timber to mark the edges of its deck.

Kennedy and Kopechne—a former member of Senator Robert F. Kennedy's staff—arrived separately at a party held at a rented cottage on Chappaquiddick on the night of 18 July. Leaving the cottage together shortly before 12:45 A.M., they drove

north in a black 1967 Oldsmobile 88 toward Chappaquiddick's main intersection. A left turn at the intersection, following Chappaquiddick's sole paved road, would have taken them to the ferry landing—their intended destination, according to Kennedy. Instead, upon reaching the intersection, they turned right onto the gravel road leading to Dyke Bridge and the beach beyond. Deputy Sheriff Christopher Look, a Chappaquiddick resident on his way home, reached the intersection at the same time and witnessed the turn. Moments later, the car carrying Kennedy and Kopechne reached the bridge and failed to negotiate it. Traveling at 20–25 miles per hour, it jumped the low guard rails and ran off the right side of the bridge, hitting the water on its right side and rolling inverted as it sank into 8–10 feet of water. Kennedy, apparently washed out of the car by the in-rushing water, escaped. Kopechne, trapped as the car rolled over, drowned.

### **Conspiracy to Blame Kennedy**

Heir to the greatest political dynasty in twentieth-century U.S. history, Edward Kennedy was considered a strong contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972. The accident effectively ended his chances of winning the nomination, and he announced in 1970 that he would not run. Conspiracy theorists of the political Left speculated, as a result, that the “accident” had been staged by agents of the Right to achieve precisely that goal. Kennedy, according to this theory, was kidnapped, drugged, placed in the car with Kopechne, and pushed off the bridge—leaving him (if he survived) to explain why he was headed for a deserted beach at midnight with a woman who was not his wife. Allegations of right-wing involvement in the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 and leading presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 lent a measure of plausibility to such theories. So, after 1973, did revelations that the Nixon administration had employed “dirty tricks,” some of them illegal, against its political enemies.

Few believers in a right-wing framing of Kennedy have developed the theory in depth. The principal exception is R. B. Cutler, 1973 whose self-published book *You, The Jury* outlines a complex scenario

involving three separate groups of agents and a Kennedy look-alike used as a temporary decoy. Cutler's book blames the framing on unspecified individuals or organizations determined to bar Kennedy from the presidency. Richard Nixon, his aides, and his sympathizers are never named as coconspirators, but readers are left free to infer their involvement.

The limited popularity of frame-up theories about the accident is due in part to their fundamental implausibility. Why, critics reasonably ask, would Kennedy not protest that he was being framed? Why would he plead guilty before a local judge the week after the accident? Why would he publicly admit guilt in his televised speech later the same day? Why, in other words, would Kennedy do the conspirators' work for them by confessing to a reputation-damaging act that he knew he did not commit?

### **Conspiracy to Shield Kennedy**

The most widely held conspiracy theories about the accident propose that Kennedy conspired with others to cover up the true extent of his guilt. Their popularity reflects the widespread sentiment that the wealthy, the powerful, and the well-connected can easily escape punishment for their crimes. The Kennedy family possessed wealth, power, and connections in abundance, and their willingness to use all three to their advantage is well established. The perceived incongruity of crime and punishment in the Chappaquiddick case—a two-month suspended sentence for acts resulting in the death of a young woman—led many to conclude that wealth and privilege had triumphed again. These perceptions ran especially strong among longtime residents of Martha's Vineyard, fueled by suspicion of wealthy, privileged vacationers from the mainland.

One variation of this theory has Kennedy conspiring with associates to craft an “official” story about the accident that would minimize his guilt. *Washington Post* columnist Jack Anderson suggested in 1969, for example, that Kennedy asked Joseph Gargan and Hugh Markham—two longtime associates who were also at the party—to lie to police and say that Gargan or Kopechne herself had been at the wheel of the car. Leo Damore gave

the theory new life in his 1988 book *Senatorial Privilege*. Many residents of Martha's Vineyard see evidence of a similar conspiracy in Kennedy's claims that he turned toward the bridge without realizing it, dived on the wreck in an effort to save Kopechne, and later swam the channel separating Chappaquiddick from Edgartown. They believe that the claims are patently absurd—a heroic fiction created by Kennedy and others to cover an uglier reality in which Kennedy, drunk, fled the scene of the accident and used his connections to slip back quietly to his Edgartown hotel without rousing the ferryman and attracting attention.

A second variation of the theory suggests that the Kennedy family used their wealth, power, or political connections to subvert, divert, or obstruct official investigations of the accident. Commentators who believe in such a conspiracy argue that the postaccident investigations were inadequate at best and negligent at worst—failings best explained not by disinterest but by active tampering. Why, they ask, did the Edgartown police not thoroughly search the area around the accident scene for telltale physical evidence? Why did the state police lieutenant who headed the investigation for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts fail to question key witnesses and discourage the district attorney from ordering an autopsy? Why did the judge in charge of the grand jury investigation set the ground rules in such ways that virtually guaranteed it would be ineffective? The slipshod investigation and prosecution were, they argue, orchestrated by Kennedy and others in a series of phone calls made in the time between the accident and the first report of it to the police. The extent of the family's power over Massachusetts politics made it possible for them to quickly and efficiently subvert the criminal justice system.

Theories about conspiracies to conceal the nature of Kennedy's offense and deflect the full force of the law from him are the least spectacular of the three types. They are also the most plausible: the investigation was, in retrospect, seriously flawed. Conspiracy-theory critics such as James Lange and Katherine DeWitt have noted, however, that the flaws are not in themselves proof of conspiracy. They can be explained equally well by

more mundane causes: incompetence, laziness, the distraction of more pressing cases, or the biases of particular individuals.

### **Conspiracy to Stage the Incident**

The third type of conspiracy theory combines elements of the first two types. Like the first type of theory, it proposes that the accident was staged; like the second, it accuses Kennedy of conspiring to cover up the true extent of his guilt. Specifically, the third type of theory suggests that Kennedy and several close friends engineered the "accident" in order to cover up other misdeeds.

Kenneth Kappel, in his 1989 book *Chappaquiddick Revealed*, begins with the premise that Kennedy must have been drunk by the time he and Kopechne got into the car. He suggests that an alcohol-impaired Kennedy ran the car off the road (not the bridge), causing it to roll over, leaving Kennedy hurt and Kopechne unconscious. Kennedy and several friends, believing that Kopechne was already dead, righted the car and pushed it off the bridge into the pond in order to hide the evidence long enough for Kennedy to sober up. Kopechne regained consciousness after the car hit the pond and, unable to escape, drowned. Kappel's theory thus has Kennedy and his coconspirators unintentionally committing manslaughter in the process of trying to hide the much less (legally) serious crime of drunken driving.

A second variation of this theory takes it significantly further, positing that Kennedy murdered Kopechne and then drove (or pushed) the car off the bridge to conceal the fact. Many commentators on the accident assume that (despite his denials) Kennedy had or sought sex with Kopechne. Adherents of the murder-cover-up theory frequently expand that assumption into the speculation that the couple had a prior sexual encounter that left Kopechne pregnant. Pregnancy would, the adherents argue, provide Kennedy with a motive for the alleged murder and cover-up. Zad Rust's 1971 book *Teddy Bare* strongly implies—but, presumably to avoid a libel suit, does not explicitly claim—both pregnancy and murder, covered up by a staged accident.

Neither Kappel, nor Rust, nor any of the less prominent advocates of such theories can ade-

quately account for *how* Kennedy and a few friends could push the car into the water. The bridge's 4-inch-high rails—though no barrier to a vehicle driven at 20 miles per hour—would be a substantial obstacle to a 2-ton vehicle being pushed uphill by three or four men struggling to find purchase on a dirt-and-gravel road in casual shoes. Nor can such theories account for the dark tire marks that law enforcement officers observed on the bridge deck the morning after the accident. The marks suggest a car skidding with locked brakes—an image fully compatible with an accident, but virtually impossible to stage on the spur of the moment. Allegations that Kopechne was strangled to death are equally difficult to reconcile with the failure of the local medical examiner to find any marks on her throat when he examined her body the morning after the accident. Allegations that she was pregnant by Kennedy are equally dubious, and equally inconsistent with established facts.

A. Bowdoin Van Riper

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of; Nixon, Richard.

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## Chicago 7

Originally beginning as the Chicago 8, this group of political dissidents was charged with conspiracy, in particular for allegedly crossing state lines with “the intent to incite, organize, promote, encourage,

participate in, and carry on a riot and to commit acts of violence in furtherance of a riot . . .” during the 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Chicago, Illinois. Charged under a then new federal antiriot law, the so-called H. Rap Brown Act, the eight defendants went on trial 24 September 1969 in what became one of the most celebrated court cases of the Vietnam era.

The composition of the group suggested the federal government was attempting to put the entire “Movement” on trial, as those charged were a virtual who's who of U.S. radicalism: Yippie leaders Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin; Tom Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); the cochairs of the National Mobilization to End the War—Rennie Davis and David Dellinger (who was also the pacifist editor of *Liberation* magazine); Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale; and academic activists John Froines and Lee Weiner. Seale, who had played a relatively small role in the events during the DNC and was only cited for one violation in the indictment (a single speech made in Chicago's Lincoln Park), eventually saw his case severed from the other defendants—but not before being physically restrained in the courtroom, at the order of Judge Julius Hoffman. While Seale's participation in the proceedings was brief, the image of the Black Panther leader, bound, gagged, and shackled in leg irons became one of the most enduring symbols of the trial.

Aside from the spectacle of Seale's bondage, the trial proceedings were a raucous affair, with the defendants trading insults with the judge and the prosecutors, creating outlandish disturbances, and attempting to concentrate on the political issues important to the Movement, namely the Vietnam War, racism, and government repression, instead of pertinent legal matters. Yippies Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin provided the majority of the trial's fireworks with Abbie refusing to be known by “Hoffman” (claiming the judge had disgraced the name), blowing kisses to the jurors, using outrageous props, often laughing out loud, making disruptive speeches, dancing around the courtroom, and, along with Jerry Rubin, even dressing in judicial robes in mockery of the court.





The Chicago 7 and their two original trial attorneys pose in the lobby of the Dirksen Federal Building in Chicago during a break in their trial, 31 October 1973. Left to right: John Froines, attorney William Kunstler, David Dellinger, Lee Weiner, Tom Hayden, attorney Leonard Weinglass, Jerry Rubin, Rennie Davis, and Abbie Hoffman, holding his two-year-old-son, America. (Bettmann/Corbis)

During the five-month legal battle, the defendants succeeded in forcing the court to hear testimony from poet Allen Ginsberg, folksingers Arlo Guthrie, Phil Ochs, “Country Joe” McDonald, Pete Seeger, and Judy Collins, author Norman Mailer, comedian Dick Gregory, and LSD-guru Timothy Leary among others. Chicago mayor William Daley also took the stand to testify and even evinced a smile when Abbie Hoffman suggested the two of them could settle everything by stepping outside the courtroom. Courtroom surprises were not always a result of the defendants’ actions, however, as the prosecution succeeded in shocking Jerry Rubin by introducing his DNC bodyguard as an undercover informant and prosecution witness. Yippie and editor of the underground newspaper

the *Realist*, Paul Krassner, a defense witness, succeeded in angering members of the Chicago 7, the prosecution, and the court by testifying while on an LSD trip.

At the conclusion of the trial, in February 1970, the jury found all of the defendants not guilty of charges of conspiracy, but with the exception of John Froines and Lee Weiner they were found guilty of intent to riot. Judge Hoffman also ruled that the defendants and their attorneys, William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass, were guilty of a total of 175 counts of contempt. Kunstler and Weinglass were sentenced to four- and two-year prison terms respectively, while their clients each received five-year sentences and \$5,000 fines. In 1972, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals over-

turned the criminal convictions of the Chicago 7 and all but thirteen of the contempt charges were eventually dismissed. The appellate court based its decisions on Judge Hoffman's openly antagonistic attitude toward the defense and his refusal to allow for sufficient inquiry into jury biases. Further, the court determined that Judge Hoffman and the prosecutors had knowledge of the FBI's electronic surveillance of the Chicago 7's defense attorneys, which it suggested would most likely have allowed for reversal of the convictions upon appeal.

Nicholas Turse

**See also:** Yippies.

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### Christian Identity

Christian Identity is a loosely organized religious movement associated with a number of small fundamentalist churches and extreme right-wing political and religious groups in the United States. By the last three decades of the twentieth century, Identity had become the religion of choice for a number of conspiracy-minded survivalists, millennialists, and neo-Nazi groups, like Aryan Nations,

The Order—responsible for a wave of crime in the American West in the 1980s, including the murder of Denver radio host Alan Berg in 1984—and some factions of the Ku Klux Klan. Because it is not an organized denomination, there is some variation in Identity doctrine among its many churches and groups, but most share its core beliefs: that Anglo-Saxons are the true descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and hence God's chosen people; that Jews are the literal offspring of a sexual liaison between Satan and Eve in the Garden of Eden; and that, as a result, Anglo-Saxons are locked in battle over the redemption of humankind against a global Jewish conspiracy intent on the eradication of white Christians and complete worldwide domination.

Christian Identity has its roots in British-Israelism, a benign religious movement founded in Victorian England by John Wilson. In his *Lectures on Our Israelitish Origin* (1840), Wilson sought to prove empirically that the lost tribes of Israel migrated from the East over the Caucasus mountains and eventually settled in northern Europe. In Wilson's view, however, Jews were not the enemy. Rather, they were fellow Israelites, though members of a different tribe. British-Israelism made its way to North America in the late nineteenth century and first gained broad appeal in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. The spread of British-Israelism in the United States was due largely to the efforts of Howard Rand, a former construction worker turned British-Israelism organizer, and William J. Cameron, editor of Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent*, which published some of the period's most explicit antisemitic writings, including "The International Jew," the first widespread U.S. popularization of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Thus in the United States, British-Israelism came increasingly to be linked with extreme right-wing politics: nativism, racism, and, especially, antisemitism. From this strand of the British-Israelist movement in the United States, Christian Identity emerged.

Drawing on scriptural authority and especially biblical prophecy, Identity followers view all of human history as a conspiracy by Jews to subvert Christianity and establish Satan's kingdom on earth.

In the writings of post–World War II Identity leaders such as Gerald L. K. Smith and Wesley Swift, the international Jewish conspiracy to control the world begins at creation. Jews are not only distinct from Saxons, they are the direct descendants of Cain, the son of Eve’s seduction by Satan. Saxons, on the other hand, are descended from Adam’s son Abel and are the true Israelites. The Jews are merely impostors performing the work of Satan to eliminate the true Israelites just as Cain, the progenitor of modern Jews, killed Abel. Identity followers believe World Jewry is behind the persecution of Jesus, the ritual killing of Christians at the Roman Colosseum, the invasion of Western Europe by Ghengis Khan to destroy Christian civilization, and Napoleon’s attempt to conquer the world. As foretold in the Book of Revelation, the final stage of the Jewish plot begins in the twentieth century with the Jewish-backed Communist revolution in Russia, Jewish control over the international banking system and especially the Federal Reserve Corporation, and the establishment of such international organizations as the United Nations and the Council on Foreign Relations. Much of Identity doctrine, such as the schism in the Nation of Israel in the tenth century B.C. that separated the southern tribes from the ten northern tribes, follows scholarly orthodoxy. However, scholars reject Identity’s “two-seeds” theory of Genesis as well as a number of other spurious practices upon which Identity doctrine relies: numerology, pyramidology, and a form of philology based upon similarities in the sounds of words. Because the movement lacks a central organization, the number of Identity Christians is difficult to determine, but it continues to be the religious orientation of choice for white supremacist groups in the United States.

Jeffrey Insko

**See also:** Antisemitism; Aryan Nations; Ford, Henry; One-World Government; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Smith, Gerald L. K.

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**Website**

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**Christian Science**

A prominent but secretive religious sect founded in the nineteenth century, Christian Science has often been at the center of conspiratorial speculation. In the period after the Civil War the United States was a breeding ground for new religious movements. Of these, Christian Science (formally known as The Church of Christ, Scientist) was one of the most successful. Since the 1960s the church has become influential in the United States and beyond through the publication of its newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and through some of its members being in positions of power (e.g., Nixon aides H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman). After the failed attempt to establish a cable television channel in the 1980s, the church was beset by financial difficulties and scandals in the 1990s, including reports that it had borrowed from its own pension fund.

Known for the belief that only the mind and spirit exist in reality, and that pain, disease, and even death are illusions, Christian Scientists practice religious healing in place of medical intervention, a policy that recently has been the subject of much controversy after the deaths of several children whose parents allegedly followed these tenets.

The sect was founded in the late nineteenth century by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) after she experienced a spontaneous healing. Eddy had suffered from frequent mental and physical disorders throughout her first four decades. After undergoing treatment by Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, a mesmerist and faith healer, Eddy began to find relief from her ailments. After Quimby’s death, in 1866, Eddy emerged as a teacher and healer.

Eddy’s early attempts to gather a following were fraught with disappointment, but despite setbacks, the determined Eddy pushed on. In 1875 she published *Science and Health* and followed it with *The Key to the Scriptures* in 1883. These provided the base for the new religion. From 1881 to 1889, new practitioners were trained at the Massachusetts



Metaphysical College. These disciples then returned home to heal the sick and spread the new religion. In 1892, she established The Mother Church to coordinate and centralize authority in her far-flung sect. The result of Eddy's reorganization coupled with a trained and loyal cadre of followers fanning out across the nation led to an exponential growth of Christian Science in the late nineteenth century.

As the cult prospered, suspicions about it began to multiply. Clergy and laymen began to attack the sect in general and Eddy in particular. Mark Twain was among the more famous critics of the new denomination. The seemingly sudden explosion of Christian Science led Twain to worry that by sheer force of numbers it would control the U.S. Congress by the 1930s. Churchmen saw not only a danger of losing members (many lost congregants in mass exoduses) but the undermining of modern civilization by such a mystical and pantheistic religion. Detractors believed that the Christian Science denial of the existence of sin and the body would destroy the moral fabric of society by undercutting all morality. Many suspected that Eddy's use of the Bible was just a cover to hide the diabolic nature of her teachings.

Adding to the critics' concerns was the sect's penchant for secrecy. No one outside the ruling elite even knew how many members belonged to the denomination. The church's bylaws prohibited the release of membership numbers outside the organization. Financial matters were a closely guarded secret. Even today, official records of the church are largely off limits to nonmember researchers.

Many suspicions about Christian Science centered on the habits of its controversial founder. During her lifetime Eddy refused to relinquish any power over the governance of the sect. All high officials were responsible to her alone. Only her writings (which many felt had been either plagiarized from Quimby or ghostwritten by her disciples), along with select passages from the Bible, were to be used in worship. Eddy's authoritarianism and her statements led critics to charge that she actually saw herself as equal with (if not above) Jesus and, in effect, a deity. Even if this was not her



Mary Baker Eddy founded the religion of Christian Science and established the Church of Christ, Scientist, one of the United States' fastest-growing religious institutions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Library of Congress)

intention, opponents felt that Eddy's deification would eventually be the result of her teachings.

For a potential deity and a believer in the nonexistence of anything except the mind, Eddy appeared very materialistic to her critics. She was obsessive about copyrighting virtually every communiqué she wrote and amassed a fortune of over two million dollars—though during her lifetime it was suspected of being much higher. Eddy and her church were accused of being charlatans and hucksters—bilking the ignorant and weak out of their money for a cure that could not be had without the Christian Science-trained healer.



A final concern of the opponents of Christian Science was that its mystic cures were a danger to the health of its “patients.” For obvious reasons, medical professionals were most concerned with these alleged healing practices. Individual doctors and the American Medical Association attacked the sect as a danger, especially to infants as well as to the community at large, as the inadvertent spreader of communicative diseases through its hostility to vaccinations.

Opponents of Christian Science need not have worried. Although the sect has survived to the present day, it has not posed the danger to society that critics predicted. Its estimated worldwide membership is 150,000 scattered among 2,600 branch churches. Most nonmembers’ only knowledge of the sect is in the form of the newspaper it publishes, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the “Reading Rooms” placed in conspicuous locations by the branch churches—reminders of a more vibrant and “dangerous” Christian Science.

*Enoch Baker*

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### Church of the SubGenius

The Church of the SubGenius is either an extremely sinister cult, or (much more likely) an extremely elaborate practical joke feeding on the subculture of conspiracy theory. The Church claims to reveal the truth according to J. R. “Bob” Dobbs: an alien, known as JHVH-1, had been masquerading as G-D but now wanted it revealed that there was a conspiracy created by normal people to deplete the “slack” (the opportunity to effortlessly achieve your goals) of the so-called “abnormal” people, known as SubGeniuses. To this end a church was developed, one that gleefully takes

money and teaches through poster and flyer art, “devival” meetings, and recorded rants (first broadcast on community radio stations and through tape trading, now available on-line). The primary icon of the SubGenius movement is the trademarked illustration of “Bob’s” head, that of a middle-aged, smiling white man smoking a pipe, who looks as though he was cut out of a 1950s advertisement.

The SubGenius concept was created by Doug Smith (now known as the Reverend Ivan Stang) and Philo Drummond in the early 1980s, and word was spread through flyers and pamphlets. Thirty dollars would buy salvation, redemption, and the opportunity to put “Reverend” before your name. This fee has subsequently been paid by close to 10,000 people over the years.

In effect the Church has created a satiric commentary on religious observance and domination, conspiracy theory, and conventional morality. The “Rapture” of orthodox Christian faith is replaced by the “Rupture,” revivals are replaced by “devivals,” and so on. SubGenii gather to rant about the world and everything in it, as they waited for the coming of the Aliens on X-Day, 4 July 1998.

In the late 1990s it appeared as though the Church would have to meet a crisis as X-Day approached. 4 July 1998 was to be the day that the aliens returned, and SubGenius “clenches” the world over would gather and hold parties every year in anticipation. The parties still continue, although they are known as X-Day plus the number of years following 1998, e.g., 2002 is known as XXXXX-Day. Many excuses have been offered by loyal SubGenii as to why the aliens did not arrive, including the suggestion that they had done so, but that the visit was either not noticed, or erased from our minds by superior technology. But, according to the Church, it is quite likely their absence was the point, because then excuses *could* be made. The SubGenii exist as an excuse to have a good time and thumb their nose at organized religion and orderly behavior, as well as themselves. Every SubGenius clench is required to have a member who does not believe, and the core belief of the movement is to believe nothing and everything, preferably at the same time; or, to paraphrase the

Church itself, the SubGenius are either a joke masquerading as a religion, or a religion masquerading as a joke. Whichever they truly are would not make much of a difference.

*Solomon Davidoff*

**See also:** Scientology.

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### Civil Rights Movement

Comprising some of the most momentous and tumultuous episodes and events in the history of the United States since abolition, the civil rights movement, not surprisingly, is associated with numerous conspiracy theories that issued (and continue to issue) from a diverse cross-section of political, ideological, and social viewpoints. The most significant conspiracy theories regarding this area of interest concern the alleged Communist ties of the civil rights movement; the systemic disenfranchisement of African Americans; covert and illegal operations of the government to countervail the efforts of civil rights groups; and ambiguities surrounding the assassinations of key civil rights leaders Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

The civil rights movement in the United States must first and foremost be understood in terms of the civil, political, and juridical struggles to achieve racial equality and full citizenship rights for African Americans. Known also as the "Black Freedom Movement," the "Negro Revolution," and the "Second Reconstruction," the civil rights movement was, at the outset, a challenge to the legally and socially sanctioned system of racial segregation. This was called the Jim Crow system and was introduced at the level of state law by secessionist South-

ern Democrats ("Dixiecrats") as a means of retarding and reversing the advances made by African Americans during the Reconstruction era after the Civil War. The Supreme Court later sanctioned the legitimacy of Jim Crow practices in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case (1896), which upheld segregation in railroad cars. Beyond its policies and practices of racial segregation, the Jim Crow system also engendered and sought to maintain the political and social disenfranchisement of African Americans through the systematic denial of voting rights, access to adequate education, and ownership of real estate. In response, individuals and organizations comprising the civil rights movement staged and otherwise participated in protest marches, boycotts, and physical violations of segregation laws. Notwithstanding the continuing debate about both the actual date of its inception, and whether or not its objectives have indeed been fully realized, the civil rights movement is commonly recorded to have been inaugurated by the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 and concluded with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

#### The Civil Rights Movement and Perceived Threats of Secularism and Communism

The increasing frequency of confrontations triggered by various constituents of the civil rights movement was accompanied by a growing body of opinion that a Communist conspiracy was behind not only domestic attempts at advancing the social and political status of African Americans, but also the mounting demands for decolonization worldwide. As early as 1958, the then director of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover had stated that "[t]he Negro situation is being exploited fully and continuously by Communists on a national scale" (Davis, 319). While not purely speculative, since many Communist writers openly praised and voiced support for civil rights endeavors and identities, this statement was indicative of a greater store of anxieties entertained by many political and religious factions of the conservative Right.

Influenced by and drawing from the rhetoric of white and Christian supremacy, as well as the enduring collective anticommunism suspicions generated



Civil rights activists occupying a lunchroom counter during a sit-in. (Library of Congress)

by McCarthyism and the context of the cold war, fundamentalist Christian groups such as the Christian Crusade led by Billy James Hargis were convinced that African Americans had not been averse toward segregation until they were suborned by non-Christian (or, “godless”) radicals. In the widely distributed *Communist America, Must It Be?* (1960) Hargis charged the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Supreme Court as being composed of “Communist-front supporters” or otherwise linked to pro-communist subversive plots to undermine and dispossess “patriotic Christian-American people.” Other prominent voices of the Christian Crusade included figures such as David Nobel, who talked of conspiratorial plots hatched by civil rights groups to replace the (Christian) “American way of

life” with “primitive” and sexually licentious secularism. Similar, though less hyperbolic, views were circulated by political figures such as Medford Evans from the Conservative Society of America. In the influential article “Civil Rights Myths and Communist Realities” (1963), for example, Evans asserted that not only was Martin Luther King, Jr., an instrument of communism, but that the comparatively conservative NAACP was effectively an organization operated by Communist forces.

In a bid to dispel public fears, a statement was issued by then Attorney General Robert Kennedy on 25 July 1963, which expressly denied the existence of any evidence implicating any of the heads of the primary civil rights groups to be Communists or “Communist-controlled.” Nevertheless, for many individuals and collectives, the pervasive belief in the existence of surreptitious collusions between organizations of the civil rights movement

and both domestic and international forces of communism could not be gainsaid. For certain sectors of the population, it could be argued that denials such as Kennedy's actually served to fuel the imaginations and apprehensions about the conspiratorial possibilities underlying any organized efforts to promote diversity and racial equality. For example, the very popular underground novel *The Turner Diaries* (1980), written by white supremacist William Pierce under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald, futuristically portrays a heroic white supremacist insurrection against an "oppressive" racially diverse government called "The System."

### **Conspiracies against Civil Rights Groups and Individuals**

At the other end of the spectrum, in focusing upon the systemic nature of the disenfranchisement of African Americans and other cultural minority groups, radical perspectives including those of the predominantly European-American New Left and certain factions of the civil rights movement increasingly perceived the entrenched and institutionalized racial hegemony in the United States as a form of internal colonialism. This domestic mode of colonialism was depicted by proponents such as Malcolm X from the Nation of Islam (and later the Organization of Afro-American Unity), Stokely Carmichael, and Charles V. Hamilton as a totalitarian, neo-imperialistic structure that subjugated black (and other minority) Americans and that was closely linked to U.S. economic and military exploitation and domination of developing countries. While this portrayal cannot be understood strictly in terms of conspiracy theory discourse, it nevertheless served as an ideological and theoretical framework upon which claims about the conspiratorial nature of white privilege in the United States could be based. For example, the widely read pulp fiction novellas of the 1960s and 1970s by underground African American writer Iceberg Slim drew greatly upon the ideological paradigms of Black Power while representing the federal government and the ruling white classes, both conservative and liberal, as white supremacists conspiring to maintain the economic, political, and social subjugation of black Americans.

While more broadly defined accounts of covert white supremacist plots enjoyed some popularity during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s and beyond, public fascination in the United States and worldwide continues to be transfixed by conspiracy theories surrounding particular events, organizations, and political figures associated with the civil rights movement. Perhaps the most durable of these theories concern the assassinations of two of the most prominent black leaders in the political history of the United States: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X (*née* Malcolm Little; also known later by his adopted religious name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz). Regardless of whether the civil rights movement is officially defunct or not, conspiracy theories appending the deaths of King and Malcolm X continue to circulate. In both cases, almost all of those theories implicate in the assassinations, to varying degrees, the federal government. This is not surprising since both King and Malcolm X (and by and large, all known organizations associated with the civil rights movement) were closely monitored by government agencies throughout most of their respective careers. Moreover, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover made no secret of his glaring contempt and anxiety toward the agendas and aspirations of civil rights groups and individuals. Hoover not only believed that the civil rights movement threatened the societal stability of the United States, but because of their perceived potential as "black messiahs," Hoover harbored great apprehensions toward influential African American figures such as King, Malcolm X, and the Nation of Islam's leader Elijah Muhammed. Until it was exposed in early 1971, the FBI-launched Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) functioned beyond legal restrictions to, in Hoover's own words, "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit and otherwise neutralize" groups and individuals associated with the civil rights movement. The covert, systemic, and illegal operations of COINTELPRO directed against opponents to the government's domestic and foreign policies were revealed in the 1970s by Senate and House committee inquiries to involve not only the FBI, but also the CIA, the United States Army Intelligence, the White House, the office of the attorney general, and



even local and state law enforcement. Known targets of COINTELPRO included the American Indian Movement, the Communist Party, the Socialist Worker's Party, black nationalist groups, and many members of the New Left (comprising the Students for a Democratic Society, and a broad range of anti-war, antiracist, feminist, lesbian and gay, and environmentalist groups).

*Matthew Cleveland*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Black Panthers; COINTELPRO; Farrakhan, Louis; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, Edgar J.; King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; Malcolm X, Assassination of; Nation of Islam.

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## Clan of the Mystic Confederacy

Predating the multitude of the monetary and political conspiracies fomented later in the nineteenth century by such organizations as the Knights of the White Camellia and the Ku Klux Klan was the Clan of the Mystic Confederacy, created and organized in 1832. The Confederacy, as it became known in 1834, was composed of outlaws, gangsters, and gamblers, located in Arkansas and known as confederates. The men were from thirteen states, all south of the Mason-Dixon line and "transienters who traveled from place to place" (Walton, 55). This gang was governed by a Grand Council that was made up of "100 senior outlaws and an army of 1500 'striker' and 'undercover agents' who worked among the slaves" (Messick and Goldblatt, 24). The group was headed

by John Murrell (a.k.a. "Murrel" and "Murel"), a convicted slave trader and horse thief, originally from Tennessee. The clan's goal was to gain political power in cities along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and, of course, to obtain wealth in the process.

The Confederacy conspired to achieve these ends by stealing slaves, holding them, and labeling them as runaways; and then selling them and keeping the money for the spread and operation of the clan. If a confederate could find out about a particular disappearance for which a reward was offered, the confederate would inform the owner that he had found the slave, claim the reward, but then sell the slave to someone else. Eventually, following an informer's testimony to the police in 1835, Murrell himself was arrested.

While he was jailed, Murrell decided to promulgate still another conspiracy to incite a revolt that would take place on Christmas Day 1835. (The date would later be changed to 4 July 1836.) This revolt would involve slaves and 2,000 of Murrell's men. The revolutionaries planned first to kill the slave masters and then to continue the attack in neighboring towns, recruiting other slaves to the revolt along the way. The aim was for the Confederacy to take over the governments of such cities as Natchez, Mississippi. One of the incentives for the slaves was each man would be able to "pick out a white woman for himself" (McGowan, 2). The conspiracy was discovered, however, and some of those responsible confessed and told of their roles not only in the conspiracy, but in the Mystic Confederacy itself. Some of those accused of participating in the conspiracy were hanged, owing to circumstantial evidence or guilt by association. As the planned revolt collapsed, cities and towns aware of the conspiracy informed the participants, especially gamblers, that they had twenty-four hours to leave the area, or else suffer the consequences. With Murrell in prison, he did not have enough power to continue either his conspiracies or the Mystic Confederacy, and upon his release from prison, the Confederacy disbanded.

*Karen Holleran*

**See also:** Fugitive Slave Act; Ku Klux Klan.

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**Clinton, Bill and Hillary**

William Jefferson Clinton, forty-second president of the United States (1993–2001), and his wife Hillary Rodham Clinton were accused by conspiracy theorists, most of them conservative Republicans, of a multitude of misdeeds including drug-dealing, covering up a murderous attack in Waco, lying about their role in the Whitewater scandal, and of killing numerous troublesome witnesses.

Conspiracy theorists' eagerness to investigate the Clintons had several origins. In his acceptance speech to the 1992 Democratic National Convention, Clinton professed his admiration for Carroll Quigley, author of *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (1966) and famous in conspiracy circles for claiming that the world was run by a secret circle of well-connected financiers. This was seen as a proof that Clinton himself was part of the world-governing cabal. The Monica Lewinsky scandal, during which Internet dirt-diggers such as Matt Drudge proved to be right while Clinton lied, gave added credence to other conspiracy theories. Bill Clinton's alleged deviousness and lack of honesty, his support for abortion rights and gays in the military, and his wife's image as a power-hungry lesbian harpy created a multitude of Clinton-haters eager to uncover, or to fabricate, stories proving their involvement in sinister plots. The Internet, which became widely used during Clinton's two terms in office, provided a perfect medium for the propagation of such conspiracy theories.

One conspiracy theory dates back to Clinton's years as governor of Arkansas (1978–1980 and 1982–1992), when drug dealer Barry Seal smuggled drugs into a small airfield in Mena, Arkansas. Authors such as Joel Bainerman, in *The Crimes of a President* (1992), later claimed that the Mena operation was part of a larger federal plot to train and fund Nicaraguan contras. When Clinton refused to launch a state grand jury investigation of the alleged Mena conspiracy, he was accused of being a part of the plot as well. Larry Nichols, a former employee of the state of Arkansas whom Clinton had fired, claimed in numerous interviews to media sources that he had evidence that Clinton used the Mena airport for drug smuggling, and that Clinton intended to kill Nichols for that reason.

On 19 April 1993, FBI troops attacked the embattled Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. Federal authorities blamed the building's occupants for starting the fire that killed sect leader David Koresh and eighty of his followers during the assault, but various documentaries, such as the Oscar-nominated *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* (1997), argued that the FBI used canisters of flammable gases, then ignited them inadvertently and that Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno subsequently conspired to cover up this fatal blunder. A variant of the theory also concludes that three of the four agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms who died in a firefight at the compound on 28 February 1993 were former Clinton bodyguards that he sent to Waco to be killed.

Other theories blame Clinton for scores of murders besides the victims of the Waco standoff. Dave Emory, in his syndicated radio program *One Step Beyond*, calculated that the mortality rate in the Clinton administration was such that it could not be explained by a simple statistical coincidence. Internet sites kept a running list of the "Clinton Body Count," which included Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, whose plane crashed in Croatia on 3 April 1996 (missing X-ray shots of his head allegedly prove that he was shot to cover up secret technological transfers to China).

The *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, at the urging of its owner, conservative multimillionaire Richard



U.S. President Bill Clinton and First Lady Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton attend a Senate swearing-in reception 3 January 2001 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Hillary Clinton was sworn in to the U.S. Senate on Capitol Hill earlier in the day. (AFP/Corbis)

Scaife, published numerous stories by Christopher Rudy claiming that White House Counsel Vince Foster, who officially killed himself on 20 July 1993 in Fort Marcy Park, Virginia, was in fact murdered. Foster was a former partner in Hillary Clinton's Rose Law Firm and his personal files disappeared from his office shortly after his suicide, so Clinton enemies accused the presidential couple of killing Foster to cover up their involvement in the White-water property-dealing scandal. Another theory, publicized by Sherman K. Skolnick in his *Conspiracy Nation* Internet newsletter, claims that Foster was spying for Israel's Mossad and that he killed himself after Hillary Clinton confronted him with evidence of his treason.

Christian Coalition member Pat Robertson, in his *700 Club* televised talk show, and reporter Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, helped

propagate Foster conspiracy theories by giving an aura of respectability to them. A 1994 Time-CNN poll showed that only 35 percent of Americans believed that Foster killed himself, proving that the murder theory's audience was wider than the circle of conservative Republicans, libertarians, and religious fundamentalists spreading other Clinton conspiracy theories.

In May 1994, Rev. Jerry Falwell's cable television show, *Old Time Gospel Hour*, repeatedly broadcast excerpts from filmmaker Pat Matrisciana's *Clinton Chronicles*, in which she accused Clinton of murdering, among others, Arkansas investigator Jerry Parks to prevent him from publicizing evidence of Clinton's sexual affairs. A reported 300,000 copies of the film were sold on Falwell's shows and other venues.

Federal investigators have so far failed to prove any connection between Clinton and the various

murders listed on the “body count,” including Foster’s. Concerned by the many conspiracy theories involving her and her husband, Hillary Clinton claimed on 27 January 1998 that there was a “vast right-wing conspiracy” to undermine their credibility. This conspiracy, hatched by the Republican National Committee, included the “Arkansas Project,” in which Scaife spent millions of dollars to dig up scandals dating from Clinton’s years in Arkansas, and on legal help provided to Paula Jones in her sexual harassment lawsuit aimed at Clinton.

*Philippe R. Girard*

**See also:** Clinton Body Count; Foster, Vince; Scaife, Richard Mellon; Waco; Whitewater.

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### Clinton Body Count

The “Clinton Body Count” conspiracy theory postulates that the deaths of dozens of Americans allegedly associated with former president William Jefferson Clinton can only be explained as homicides. The underlying assumption of the conspiracy theory is that the mortality rate among friends and associates of Clinton is higher than what would be

predicted by the laws of statistical probability. Conspiracy theorists use the term “Arkanicide” (based on Clinton’s home state) to describe the allegedly mysterious deaths. The sinister version of the conspiracy theory posits that Clinton played a direct role in the murder of some or all of his associates. The more benign version argues that individuals or groups working without the knowledge or approval of Clinton are responsible for the deaths. Admitting an inability to link Clinton to many of the deaths, Linda Thompson, who developed the original body count list, hypothesized that “people trying to control the president” are responsible for the deaths.

The Clinton Body Count originated as a list of thirty-four suicides, accidental deaths, and unsolved murders posted by Thompson in 1994 on a website entitled “The Clinton Body Count: Coincidence or the Kiss of Death.” Thompson is a conservative activist who quit her one-year-old Indianapolis general law practice in 1993 in order to start and run the American Justice Federation. According to Thompson, Clinton was directly connected to twenty-eight of the thirty-four individuals on her list. Thompson described as “collateral deaths” an additional four people on the list who allegedly died because of their relationship with an associate of Clinton’s, and also included on the list two individuals (James Bunch and John Wilson) with a possible connection to Clinton.

Former Republican representative William Dannemeyer brought the conspiracy theory to the attention of the U.S. political elite by mailing a letter to the congressional leadership, with copies going to all the members of both chambers of Congress in 1994. In the letter Dannemeyer identified twenty-four individuals associated with Clinton who had died under “other than natural circumstances.” Most of the names listed by Dannemeyer in the letter could be found on the website maintained by Thompson. Arguing that the number of suspicious deaths “has reached a total that can only be described as frightening,” Dannemeyer called for congressional hearings into the deaths.

Pat Matrisciana, founder and president of Jeremiah Films, brought the conspiracy theory into U.S.



popular culture by producing and distributing several videos that accused Clinton of complicity in the murders. *Bill and Hillary's Circle of Power* and *The Clinton Chronicles* are two videos produced and distributed by Matrisciana that propagate the conspiracy theory. Jerry Falwell, who founded the Moral Majority and is a leader of the Religious Right, helped Matrisciana promote and distribute two of the videos. Falwell promoted *Circle of Power* on his cable television show for four consecutive weeks and helped Matrisciana sell more than 60,000 copies of *The Clinton Chronicles*. To date, Matrisciana has sold an estimated 300,000 copies of *The Clinton Chronicles*.

Talk radio has also played a role in promoting the conspiracy theory. Stan Solomon claims that Thompson first announced the list on his conservative talk-radio show. Gary Park, whose murdered father was the head of Clinton's gubernatorial security team, has spoken on approximately 2,000 conservative talk-radio shows. Larry Nichols, who was one of the narrators on *The Clinton Chronicles*, has also been a very popular guest on the talk-radio circuit.

According to Thompson, there are three possible types of victims: an insider, a New World Order, or a bodyguard. An "insider" is a person with a close personal relationship to Clinton or his inner circle of business associates. A "New World Order" is someone who had planned, observed, or opposed Clinton's plans to use U.S. military personnel in domestic or United Nations military operations. A "bodyguard" is an individual responsible for protecting or escorting Clinton during or after his first presidential campaign.

Deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown are the two most prominent individuals included in every variation of the list. On 20 July 1993, U.S. Park Police discovered the body of Vince Foster in Fort Marcy Park with a single gunshot wound. Secretary Brown, along with thirty-four other passengers and crew members, died when the air force jet transporting them from Tuzla, Bosnia, to Dubrovnik, Croatia, crashed into a mountainside on 3 April 1996. Despite the fact that Independent Counsels Robert Fiske and Kenneth Starr ruled that Foster

had killed himself, some conspiracy researchers continue to speculate that someone may have murdered Vince Foster. Even though the air force released a twenty-one-volume crash report that blamed flawed procedures and crew errors for the crash, conspiracy theorists still believe that Clinton ordered the murder of Brown in order to assure his silence about possible illegal acts.

Opponents of the Clinton Body Count conspiracy theory offer several criticisms. First, many of the individuals on the list have little or no apparent connection to Clinton. For example, James Bunch, who appeared on the original list, supposedly had a "little black book" with names of influential Texans who had hired Texas prostitutes. Thompson fails to explain the connection between Bunch and Clinton, who has never lived in Texas. Proponents of the conspiracy theory also fail to offer a sufficiently believable motive for Clinton to authorize the murders of many of the individuals on the list. For example, four members of Marine Helicopter Squadron One, who are responsible for transporting the president, died on 19 May 1993 when their helicopter crashed during a routine maintenance-evaluation flight. Marine spokesperson Chief Warrant Officer Robert Jenks blamed the incorrect installation of a spindle pin for the crash. Thompson placed the four men who died in the crash on the Clinton Body Count list even while admitting that she did not know Clinton's motive for the supposed murder. Thompson speculated that the men "could have been privy to information about Clinton's plan for Bosnia" without offering any details. The Clinton Body Count conspiracy theory also ignores one of the realities of national politics, which is that public figures, such as the president of the United States, are going to have a larger circle of friends and acquaintances than the average citizen.

Chris McHorney

**See also:** Clinton, Bill and Hillary; Foster, Vince.

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## Cocaine

On 18–20 August 1996, the *San José Mercury News* published a three-part series of articles titled “Dark Alliance,” in which allegations were made about a conspiracy among the federal government, Central American political operatives, and California drug dealers that resulted in the introduction and spread of crack cocaine among the black community. The series seemed to confirm the long-standing suspicions of many African Americans that the federal government had played a role in the creation of the drug problems faced in the inner cities.

Crack cocaine had first come to the public’s attention in the mid-1980s. This new form of the drug was less expensive than powder cocaine, allowing it to become a drug of choice for poor urban drug users for the first time. Although use of crack cocaine remained limited largely to the inner city, its appearance kindled fears of a widespread drug epidemic across the nation. The resulting “crack scare” associated the drug with a wide array of existing and potential social problems. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations made drugs, and crack cocaine in particular, a high-priority target for federal law enforcement.

### Historical Context of the Crack Cocaine Conspiracy Theory

The crack scare and its association with existing social, political, and economic problems was not unprecedented in U.S. history. The triangulation of existing social worries, the use of a drug perceived as dangerous, and the association of this drug with certain marginalized social or ethnic groups had appeared several times before. This phenomenon can be traced at least as far back as the temperance and prohibition movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when racial, social, and political strife was often blamed by both corporate and middle-class America on alcohol and its use by recent immigrants who made up the working class. On a smaller scale, the same constellation of anxiety, drugs, and “undesirables” was involved in the opium scares of the late nineteenth century, when a recession hit following the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Immigrant Chinese who

had come to the country to work on the railroad became a source of anxiety for the white middle class when their service was done. The practice of opium smoking, which some of the Chinese had brought with them, was suspected as an important factor in alleged criminal activity by Chinese immigrants, and this led to the first laws criminalizing opium in the United States. The first laws against cocaine and marijuana were also results of this dynamic when their use was associated with a variety of groups seen as undesirable, including Mexicans, African Americans, criminals, prostitutes, and transients. Despite the fact that the social ills that concerned lawmakers had little or nothing to do directly with these drugs or the groups with whom they were associated, the linking of specific drugs with marginalized groups raised the fear that middle-class youth would fall victim (directly or indirectly) to the ravages of these drugs and those that used them.

In the case of crack cocaine, the social fears surrounding the drug resulted in new laws and sentencing guidelines that targeted dealers and users of the drug. Possession of crack generally led to longer jail sentences than a comparable amount of powder cocaine. There was a significant rise in drug arrests, a disproportionate number of which were of African American men. In addition to the effects of crack itself on inner-city communities, governmental policies were perceived by many blacks as assisting in the destruction of the inner cities under the guise of protecting them. It was in this context that rumors about possible government connections to the appearance of crack cocaine first appeared. Such rumors, however, remained largely contained to segments of the African American community. Not until the appearance of the “Dark Alliance” series did these rumors gain a national audience.

In the series, author Gary Webb suggested that during the early to mid-1980s, the CIA allowed and encouraged Contra rebel forces from Nicaragua to distribute a new form of cocaine, crack, in the Los Angeles area in order to finance the ongoing struggle against the Communist government of that country. A series of charges, allegations, and denials erupted in the weeks and months that followed the



Demonstration against the CIA. (Koester Axel/Corbis Sygma)

publication of the articles. Town meetings were organized, political and social leaders of the black community held forth on television talk shows, talk-radio pundits took up the topic with abandon, and congressional hearings were held. While the “Dark Alliance” series brought about a reexamination of the drug problem and the plight of those living in U.S. inner cities, this public interest diminished over time, particularly after the editor of the *San José Mercury News* published a column that called into question the validity of some of the charges made in the original series.

At first glance, it is perhaps mystifying that the series would have caused the furor it did. The scope of the series was fairly narrow. Webb focused on the story of a notorious Los Angeles drug dealer named “Freeway Ricky” Ross and two Nicaraguan refugees, Oscar Danilo Blandon and Juan Norwin Meneses. Webb stated that the two Nicaraguans (both of whom were vehemently anti-Sandinista)

not only participated in the drug trade, but, through Ross, became the primary source of crack cocaine in Los Angeles, and ultimately many other urban centers in the United States. Moreover, Webb implied that Menses and Blandon used profits from crack sales to fund the covert war against the Sandinistas during the 1980s and did so with the knowledge and approval, if not the outright assistance, of the CIA.

Despite the inflammatory nature of its allegations, the “Dark Alliance” series did little to prove that the “conspiracy” went beyond the specific individuals mentioned in the articles. Nowhere in the series did Webb specifically state that the CIA was actively involved in drug dealing or offer concrete proof that the CIA even knew about such activity when it was occurring. Rather, Webb focused strictly on the drug dealings of Blandon and Meneses and implied that the CIA must have known about their activities given that they worked

for (as Webb put it) a “CIA-run army” in Central America. Even if such allegations were true, it would in no way show that drug running was a primary mode of funding the Contras, let alone that the CIA was actually involved in funneling drugs to the inner city.

Despite the inferential leaps necessary to conclude that, based on the evidence presented in the “Dark Alliance” series, the CIA was directly responsible for the introduction of crack to urban America, the reaction from sections of the African American community was immediate and loud. Within weeks of the series’ publication, the implied allegations were taken up by the black media, and calls were made by African American politicians and other public figures for official inquiries into the actions of the CIA.

The strength of this response is even more difficult to explain given the fact that the “Dark Alliance” series was not the first time allegations linking the CIA and drug trafficking had been made and investigated in a national forum. Charges that the government had colluded with drug runners had been made for many years. Various groups alleged that the United States government had participated in the heroin trade during the Vietnam War as part of the “Golden Triangle” of drug trade in Southeast Asia. These charges came not only from the political Left, but also from members of the radical Right such as James “Bo” Gritz, a hero to many in the militia movement in the United States.

Specific charges involving cocaine smuggling and Central America had also been made previously, and they had been examined in some depth. Allegations about the connections between the Contras and drugs were made by Associated Press reporters Robert Parry and Brian Barger in 1985. Several newspapers, including the *San Francisco Examiner*, also explored the possibility of such a connection in the years that followed. Congress itself examined the issue in a Senate subcommittee in 1989. The subcommittee’s report stated that the United States had at times ignored drug trafficking activity by those it considered foreign policy allies.

Yet, these charges did not create the same level of controversy as the “Dark Alliance” series.

Through the late 1980s and into the 1990s, the contention that drugs, and crack cocaine in particular, had been brought into the country with the complicity of the federal government was limited largely to urban legends circulating among the African American community.

### **Reception and Impact of the “Dark Alliance” Series**

One contributing factor for the impact of the “Dark Alliance” series was the specifics of the charges. While the narrowness of the series’ focus might have made it more difficult to suggest that it was proof of a government-wide conspiracy, the details of the charges and the evidence behind them made them more plausible. The series named names, locations, and times that could serve as a framework on which to hang already-existing charges of conspiracy. Now, rather than simply “the government,” specific people could be accused. Demands for inquiries could be more focused. Investigations could be more specific.

That this particular incarnation of the link between the government and drugs came from a mainstream and respected newspaper also lent credence to the charges. The charges could no longer be written off as simply the paranoid conspiracy theories of people who had not truly examined the available facts. Even if one doubted the conclusions of the series, it could not be denied that Webb had amassed a large number of facts that, if interpreted in certain ways, suggested government knowledge or participation in drug running. That Webb was white also added to the sense that the series was independent confirmation of long-held relatively private suspicions among African Americans.

A third factor was the availability of alternative media, particularly the Internet. In the weeks and months that followed, Websites, e-mail lists, online magazines, and talk-radio shows aimed at African American audiences repeated and elaborated on the “Dark Alliance” series. Without relying on standard media outlets, the allegations could be disseminated across the nation. Use of the Internet by African Americans rose markedly in the wake of the “Dark Alliance” series. Within weeks, there were 2,500 separate Websites with links to the



online version of the series. These links, as well as other evidence or accusations, could be put together by anyone with access to a computer, and the end result was a website that could look every bit as professional and authoritative as that of a large newspaper, a scholarly journal, or even a government agency. This gave a new sense of authority to the ethos of the conspiracy narratives.

Finally, the fact that the charges were made in such a public and specific way made those outside the African American community aware of the them. A much larger audience that had been unaware of the allegations of government drug running became engaged in the dialogue about the conspiracy narrative. The “Dark Alliance” series not only brought what had been urban legend to national attention, but it broadened the discussion of other issues such as the plight of the inner cities, the war on drugs, the disparate sentencing of crack and powder cocaine dealers, and the warehousing of young black males in the nation’s prisons. If these issues were not resolved, they were at least discussed—and these discussions were unlikely to have taken place without the force of specific allegations.

Eventually, the spread of the story became a story in itself, ensuring that the series’ content was reported in media outlets ranging from the *New York Times* to *The National Review*.

The wide publication of the “Dark Alliance” series, along with the public discussion of its implications, led to government action of various forms. Several members of Congress, including Maxine Waters, Kweisi Mfume, Mel Watt, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Elijah Cummings, and John Conyers, called for government investigations into the charges. The result was the Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference titled “Cocaine, Contras, and the CIA: How They Introduced Crack into the Inner City,” which drew an audience of 2,000. Within weeks of the publication of the “Dark Alliance” series, investigations were begun into the possible connection between the CIA and the crack cocaine trade by the Justice Department, Congress, and the CIA itself. In the case of the various congressional hearings into the matter, members of the African American community were able to participate not simply through

their elected representatives, but personally. A hearing sponsored by Representative Juanita McDonald on 20 October 1996, in Los Angeles, drew an audience of more than 500 residents from Compton and South Central Los Angeles, who interrupted the proceedings several times with cheers and boos, heckling witnesses from law enforcement agencies who testified that they had no evidence of CIA involvement with drug dealing, and cheering when Ricky Ross spoke to the hearing via telephone from prison and accused the CIA of “the destruction of my community.”

A similar scene was played out in Washington, D.C., four days later at a hearing before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence chaired by Senator Arlen Specter, which was called to look into the allegations of CIA involvement in the crack trade. Drawn in part by calls from local black radio station WOL-AM to take advantage of an opportunity to make their voices heard, 300 local residents filled the hearing room. When Fredrick Hitz, the CIA’s top internal investigator, responded in a way that displeased the crowd, they jeered him so vocally that Senator Specter threatened to clear the room if the outbursts continued.

The most dramatic gathering, however, included the appearance of CIA director John Deutch at a town hall in South Central Los Angeles on 17 November 1996. The often rowdy meeting represented the high-water mark for the CIA/crack conspiracy narrative’s political life on the national stage. Hosted by Representative McDonald, the event was also attended by Representatives Julian Dixon and Jane Harman, a former colleague of Deutch’s when they served together in the Carter administration. The town hall meeting was broadcast on television by C-SPAN and drew ABC News’ *Nightline* television show, which broadcast from the site of the town hall after the meeting.

Attended by over 800 Los Angeles residents, the town hall allowed individuals from the inner city literally to point an accusatory finger at a figure who represented, if not embodied, the power they felt was responsible for the introduction of crack and its related problems to their community. This tone was set early on by Representative McDonald

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herself in her opening remarks, in which she said, “It is not up to us to prove that the CIA was involved in drug trafficking in South Central Los Angeles . . . rather, it is up to them to prove they were not.”

When Deutch was introduced, it was clear that the crowd was skeptical. Boos mixed with applause as Deutch began his remarks. Deutch addressed the audience, assuring them that the CIA had done much in the fight against drugs, that there was no evidence of a conspiracy, but that there would be a thorough investigation. The hostility continued after he was finished and took questions from the audience. Several questioners drew comparisons between the spread of crack and the Tuskegee experiments or the slave trade. Others accused Deutch, as a representative of the government, of destroying inner-city communities and killing children through the introduction of crack cocaine. Others, while not specifically accusing the government of destroying the inner cities, implied the federal government’s culpability by insisting that action be taken by the government to rebuild the inner cities and create jobs.

Some audience members chastised Representative McDonald for bringing Deutch into the community in the first place, claiming the event would lead to no concrete action and would signal the end of media interest in the story (a prediction that to some extent proved prophetic). In its most rowdy moments, the town hall degenerated into profanity-laced diatribes and at least one open call for revolution as the only possible solution to oppression by the government. The town hall meeting ended as it had begun, with a mixture of boos and applause for Deutch.

If the town hall didn’t provide a productive forum for ideas, it did accomplish one goal that in some ways was just as important: it represented an acknowledgment by the CIA (and the government in general) of the grievances of the inner-city community. Even in sending Deutch to Los Angeles to deny the accusations, the CIA tacitly admitted the validity of the collective voice of protest from that community (although not the validity of the charges made with that voice). The town hall represented

the power of the coalesced narrative of conspiracy to win attention from those beyond the community in the media, the government, and the public at large.

The Los Angeles town hall was, in many ways, the zenith of the post-“Dark Alliance” media blitz. The CIA’s internal investigation of the charges was extended well beyond the original sixty days. With any official resolution of the charges postponed indefinitely, a few politicians such as Maxine Waters, and some advocacy groups, such as “Crack the CIA,” continued to speak about the charges and call for the government to release all documents and findings concerning a possible connection between the CIA and crack dealing. Despite these efforts, however, the story began to recede from the headlines.

What news attention was paid to the story increasingly dwelt on the journalistic ethics of the *San José Mercury News* in publishing a series that strongly implied a CIA connection to crack cocaine without actually providing hard evidence to support the claim. This reached a crescendo in May 1997, nine months after the “Dark Alliance” series was published, when Jerry Ceppos, the editor of the paper, published a column in which he apologized for running the series in its original form. While clearly stating that he felt the story was valuable and that many of the basic assertions in the story were supported by the facts, Ceppos said the series went too far with a number of its implications, particularly those that suggested a direct link between the crack trade and the CIA and that the crack problem’s origins could be traced to the trio of Blandon, Meneses, and Ross.

This was a blow to the political efficacy of the CIA/crack narrative, a fact recognized by those who believed in the truth of that narrative. Numerous Internet postings on web pages devoted to the conspiracy allegations bemoaned the “cowardice” of Ceppos for backing away from the story. While pointing out that Ceppos never suggested the bulk of the story was untrue or even unsubstantiated, many anti-CIA activists rightly noted that the mainstream press was portraying Ceppos’s statement as tantamount to a retraction and that the public would most likely see the allegations as the

stuff of “conspiracy nuts.” Indeed, media attention continued to dwindle. When the CIA finally released the report of its internal investigation in January 1998, it found no evidence of a link between CIA activities in Central America and the import or creation of crack cocaine. With that, the story largely disappeared from the national scene, apart from the occasional speech in Congress by Representative Waters claiming that the investigation was not adequate and that more needed to be done.

*Ted Remington*

**See also:** African Americans; AIDS; Farrakhan, Louis; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam.

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## Coercive Acts

In response to the Boston Tea Party, the British Parliament in March 1774 passed a series of punitive laws known as the Coercive Acts, which many colonists interpreted as a deliberate conspiracy against their rights. As a part of the protests against British taxation, Bostonians had in December 1773 destroyed a large shipment of tea, in open defiance of Governor Thomas Hutchinson and all British authority. Since this protest was only the latest in an escalating series that would eventually lead to the American Revolution, the administration of Oliver, Lord North planned to make an example of

unruly Massachusetts in the hope of getting the American colonies back in line. While these measures were officially known as the Coercive Acts, colonists critical of British policies since 1763 typically dubbed them the Intolerable Acts.

The Coercive Acts consisted of four laws. The Boston Port Act shut down Boston Harbor until restitution was made for the destroyed tea and King George III decided it was safe to reopen the harbor. In the Massachusetts Government Act, Parliament decreed that the colonial council should be appointed by the king. The law also forbade the traditional town meetings from debating anything other than local matters. The Justice Act allowed for the trial of British officials and their subordinates in another colony or Great Britain, if the governor decided a fair trial was not possible in Massachusetts. Finally, the Quartering Act allowed the governor to requisition unoccupied public buildings for the housing of troops. A fifth law, the Quebec Act, was unconnected to the Coercive Acts but critical colonists perceived it as part of the Intolerable Acts as well. This measure organized the colony of Quebec, only recently acquired from France as the result of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). The Quebec Act allowed the Catholic Church to retain many aspects of being the established church in the predominantly Catholic colony. It also upheld French civil law, which differed considerably from English common law; for example, it did not include trial by jury.

For American patriots, the Coercive Acts in conjunction with the Quebec Act amounted to no less than an outright conspiracy to eradicate traditional liberties in America. In their interpretation, the laws enabled the British government to choke the colonies economically by closing down the ports, dissolve representative government and regional traditions of political autonomy, and quarter soldiers in private homes and have them kill political dissidents at will. Trial would take place in England where the soldiers would be acquitted. Finally, this conspiracy theory continued, Quebec would serve as an example for a tyrannical government of colonial America, eliminating traditional boundaries, destroying religious liberty, and imposing alien laws that did away with sacred rights like trial by jury.

Many of these charges were quite unfounded. The Quebec Act was quite unrelated to the events in Massachusetts, and the Quartering Act did not actually allow for the quartering of soldiers in private homes. This erroneous interpretation nevertheless found its way into twentieth-century U.S. schoolbooks. On the other hand, the Coercive Acts certainly did aim at curbing the political autonomy of Massachusetts, and they reduced participatory elements of the political system and imposed harsh economic sanctions. The idea was to single out Massachusetts and by extension discipline the other colonies. However, while the North administration's intention for the Coercive Acts was limited and specific, many colonists' interpretations were vast and alarmed.

Instead of intimidating the other colonies, the Coercive Acts prompted them to declare their solidarity with Massachusetts. The First Continental Congress convened as a response to the crisis and decided upon general nonimportation of English goods. In its Declaration of Colonial Rights and Grievances, the Congress echoed a conspiratorial interpretation of British policy by denouncing it as "a system formed to enslave America." The ill will generated by the Coercive Acts controversy contributed substantially to the outbreak of the American Revolution.

*Markus Hünemörder*

**See also:** American Revolution; Boston Tea Party; Quebec Act.

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## **COINTELPRO**

COINTELPRO, FBI-speak for Counterintelligence Program, was the bureaucratic designation for the FBI's clandestine and illegal program of political repression directed against dissenters from the 1950s to the 1970s. The most dangerous manifestation of J.

Edgar Hoover's countersubversive and antidemocratic ideology during his fifty-year reign as director of the FBI, COINTELPRO was designed "to divide, conquer, weaken" and otherwise disrupt a wide variety of social movements through the use of intimidation, surveillance, and "dirty tricks." Thousands of individual COINTELPROS were carried out under several general headings: Espionage; Communist Party (CPUSA); Socialist Workers Party (SWP); Disruption of White Hate Groups; New Left; and Black Extremists. However, in its common usage, the term "COINTELPRO" has come to signify the entire context of secret counterrevolutionary action directed against the social-democratic and civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. When activists and congressional investigators exposed the actions of COINTELPRO in the 1970s, it publicly revealed just how closely the FBI resembled a totalitarian political police and sparked the most significant backlash against the Bureau in its history.

## **Development of Repressive Techniques**

The formation of COINTELPRO represents a consolidation and expansion of the federal government's repressive apparatus, most of which had been in place since the FBI's founding in the early 1920s. The innovation of COINTELPRO in the 1950s over its predecessor COMINFIL (Communist Infiltration Program) was the FBI's turn to active disruption rather than mere infiltration and harassment of dissident groups. To this end, the Bureau developed a standard repertoire of techniques.

COINTELPRO made careful use of "a cooperative news media" to "leak" disinformation about political groups. Agents engaged in basic acts of sabotage such as canceling meetings, disrupting speaking engagements, and interfering with party fund-raising. COINTELPRO compiled and shared blacklist information with employers and landlords. COINTELPRO made harassment arrests designed not to convict activists for criminal violations, but to isolate leaders like black activist Angela Davis and force their supporters to refocus the movement's financial and political resources into legal defenses. When prosecutions occurred, COINTELPRO fabricated evidence, extorted testimony, and covered up possibly exculpatory



evidence. Such judicial abuses of the FBI's investigative capacity were rampant during the trial of the Chicago 7 in the late 1960s.

Inducing "paranoia" in targeted political groups was a stated goal of COINTELPRO, as revealed in one FBI document that unequivocally states its desire to "enhance the paranoia endemic in [New Left] circles, and will further serve to get the point across that there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 1990b). To this end, COINTELPRO employed both simple forms of surveillance such as warrantless wiretaps and electronic bugging, as well as more invasive forms such as break-ins, known as "black-bag jobs," human tails, and mail opening. COINTELPRO ran an enormous domestic spy-ring composed of thousands of informants, infiltrators, and agents provocateurs. Paid by the Bureau to join political groups, these infiltrators either provided inside information or provoked members into committing radical acts that could be used to generate bad publicity or to justify police crackdowns. COINTELPRO sent bogus letters and fake flyers, known as "black propaganda," designed to create personal splits, exacerbate political factionalism, or pit competing groups against one another. A particularly insidious form of black propaganda was known as "snitch-jacketing," in which the Bureau worked to cast suspicion on targeted individuals for being a spy or Bureau informant with the intention of isolating or provoking reprisals against the target by his or her former comrades. These forms of black propaganda proved especially effective at weakening both the Communist Party (CPUSA) and the Black Panther Party (BPP). At its most extreme, COINTELPRO has been—rarely but nonetheless directly—involved in assassinations, including the murders of Chicago BPP leader Fred Hampton and American Indian Movement (AIM) member Anna Mae Aquash.

In the end, the secrecy surrounding COINTELPRO may speak the loudest: all of these techniques are either illegal or were widely abused and represent the structured and systematic violation of the civil liberties of citizens engaging in constitutionally protected activities.

### **A History of Abuses**

According to FBI documents made public in the mid-1970s, the first directives to carry the COINTELPRO heading were issued in 1956 and targeted what was left of the CPUSA. In the total of 1,388 COINTELPRO actions implemented against the CPUSA between 1956 and 1971, nearly all of the tactics outlined above were developed and "field-tested," pitting the vast resources of Hoover's political police against an already moribund Communist group. Despite its weakness as an organization, the CPUSA was targeted by the most colorful and potentially murderous COINTELPRO of all time under the name "Operation Hoodwink." The operation was approved in October 1966 and maintained for several years, during which the FBI sent forged letters and leaflets with the aim of provoking a fight between the CPUSA and the Cosa Nostra over labor issues in the Brooklyn dockyards. The obvious intention of Operation Hoodwink was to encourage mob leaders to "neutralize" key CPUSA members, but while there is no evidence that any Communists were "rubbed out" as a result, it is not for lack of trying by the FBI.

The first extension of COINTELPRO beyond the surviving "Old Left" came in the early 1960s, when the FBI began actions against the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and the southern-based civil rights movement, especially its leader Martin Luther King, Jr. In the words of a published COINTELPRO document, "the Bureau wishes to disrupt the activities of these organizations and is not interested in mere harassment" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 1990b).

Hoover's commitment to white supremacy has been well documented, and he took a direct interest in the FBI's campaign to disrupt the civil rights movement, which he regarded as nothing less than a Communist conspiracy. Hoover held a personal vendetta against King, whom he repeatedly referred to as a "burrhead" possessed by "obsessive degenerate sexual urges." When King publicly accused Hoover of refusing to protect civil rights activists from violence, Hoover attacked King as "the most notorious liar in the country." Hoover

placed King under full-time surveillance, infiltrated the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), unleashed a public smear campaign, and even went so far as to try to blackmail King into committing suicide. Such evidence substantiates King's claim that "they are out to get me, to harass me, break my spirit" (Garrow). Today, King's family continues to cite Hoover's campaign against the civil rights leader as circumstantial evidence of Bureau involvement in King's assassination.

The project code-named "COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups," involving the infiltration of the southern Ku Klux Klan during the 1950s and 1960s, further reveals the racist and reactionary goals of the Bureau during the upheavals of those decades. Despite the fact that the Bureau claimed to have over 2,000 informants in the Klan, roughly equal to 20 percent of the total KKK membership across the South in 1965—including a significant portion of Klan leadership—the FBI was unwilling and supposedly unable to prevent Klan violence against civil rights activists. Instead of investigating the murders of at least thirty-five civil rights workers, the Bureau actively harassed and investigated the victims, who they believed, in the words of one Klan leader and FBI informant, represented a "nigger-commie invasion." Eventually, the Bureau did make some progress in disrupting the Klan, but only after the civil rights movement had achieved significant legislative victories in 1964 and 1965.

As the southern civil rights movement gave birth to a wide range of social-democratic, civil rights, and national liberation struggles—including Black Power organizations like the BPP, indigenous groups like the AIM, the student New Left, and the feminist movement—COINTELPRO grew more aggressive under the combined forces of Hoover and Nixon.

The FBI document that inaugurated the project headed "COINTELPRO: Black Nationalist-Hate Groups" clearly expresses its intentions: "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leaders, spokesmen,

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
**Memorandum**  
 TO: Mr. W. C. Sullivan  
 FROM: C. D. Brennan  
 SUBJECT: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM  
 INTERNAL SECURITY  
 DISRUPTION OF THE NEW LEFT

Colonia  
 MAY 9/68

Our Nation is undergoing an era of disruption and violence caused to a large extent by various individuals generally connected with the New Left. Some of these activists urge revolution in America and call for the defeat of the United States in Vietnam. They continually and falsely allege police brutality and do not hesitate to utilize unlawful acts to further their so-called causes. The New Left has on many occasions viciously and scurrilously attacked the Director and the Bureau in an attempt to hamper our investigation of it and to drive us off the college campuses. With this in mind, it is our recommendation that a new Counterintelligence Program be designed to neutralize the New Left and the Key Activists. The Key Activists are those individuals who are the moving forces behind the New Left and on whom we have intensified our investigations.

The purpose of this program is to expose, disrupt and otherwise neutralize the activities of this group and persons connected with it. It is hoped that with this new program their violent and illegal activities may be reduced if not curtailed.

General instructions are being furnished to all offices relating to the purpose and administration of this new program. Briefly, these instructions require all offices to submit an analysis of possible counterintelligence operations on the New Left and on the Key Activists on or before 6/1/68, including any specific recommendations for action. Thereafter, all offices will submit a 90-day status letter setting forth a summary of their accomplishments and future plans. Each office will maintain a pending case and assign experienced

Belonging  
 MGT-15  
 44-3888  
 MAY 21 1968  
 CONTINUED - OVER

1 - Mr. Felt  
 1 - Mr. DeLoach  
 1 - Mr. W. C. Sullivan  
 1 - [redacted]  
 1 - [redacted]

Memo from C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, 9 May 1968. (Federal Bureau of Investigation)

membership, and supporters" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 1990b). The FBI's covert war on the BPP began with the extensive infiltration of the Panthers by informers and provocateurs. COINTELPRO had great success with "snitch-jacket" campaigns against Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver (who fled the country), and Geronimo Pratt (who was successfully framed for a murder that the FBI's own surveillance later exonerated him of after he spent over twenty-five years in prison). Forged cartoons and flyers sent by the FBI to spark fights between the BPP and another group known as United Slaves resulted in the deaths by shooting of Panthers Jon Huggins and Bunchy Carter in 1969. Most violently of all, the FBI engineered the assassination of Fred Hampton and BPP Field Marshal George Jackson

in San Quentin prison in 1971. Following Hoover's explicit directive to "prevent the rise of another black 'messiah,'" the nineteen-year-old Hampton was targeted because of his amazing success at transforming Chicago street gang members into community activists. Based entirely on evidence provided by an FBI informant, the Chicago police raided Hampton's house early on the morning of 4 December 1969, killing both Hampton and fellow Panther Marc Clark as they slept in their beds, injuring several others, and arresting all the survivors for assaulting the police. Though these murders were officially declared "justifiable" at the time, a 1983 judgment determined that there had been an active government "conspiracy to deny Hampton, Clark, and the BPP plaintiffs their civil rights" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 1990b).

The highest concentration of COINTELPRO actions were directed against members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the early 1970s. The AIM sought to restore pride in traditional Indian culture, to confront white America with its denied history of genocide against indigenous people, and to fight for their collective rights as sovereign nations. The FBI's campaign began after the AIM seriously embarrassed the Nixon administration in the highly publicized takeovers of Alcatraz Island in 1969 and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1972. After the AIM shifted its organizational focus back to the reservation, leading to the second siege of Wounded Knee in 1973, the FBI began a bloody struggle to disrupt and destroy the group. In the end, dozens of AIM activists were killed and imprisoned, and Leonard Peltier was successfully convicted for the murder of two FBI agents based on forged evidence, extorted testimony, an illegal extradition from Canada, and judicial intimidation.

Beginning shortly after the student takeover of Columbia University in 1968, the "COINTELPRO-New Left" project targeted the full range of student and anti-Vietnam protest groups, including Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the Weathermen, and several feminist groups, both radical and mainstream. Movement leaders, including all members of the Chicago 7, were explicitly targeted by COIN-

TELPRO as well as pediatrician Benjamin Spock, Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, feminist leader Betty Friedan, and even Beatles member John Lennon. Special efforts were made to prevent cross-racial coalitions, especially an alliance between SDS, the Weathermen, and the BPP. Provocateurs played a key role in disrupting the New Left. The most famous New Left provocateur was known as "Tommy the Traveler" (Thomas Tongyai), who was paid by the FBI to move from college to college in upstate New York posing as a radical member of SDS and encouraging students to kill cops and blow up buildings. When a group of students actually took his advice and destroyed the ROTC office at Hobart College, Tommy's cover was blown. Hundreds of similar cases have been documented on campuses across the country in the 1960s. In the end, COINTELPRO proved quite effective at distorting the message and public image of New Left groups, hastening their fragmentation, accentuating their suspiciousness, and facilitating their decline.

However, the New Left finally gave COINTELPRO its comeuppance. The existence of COINTELPRO remained an official secret until 8 March 1971, when a group of activists calling itself the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI broke into the FBI's office in Media, Pennsylvania, and "liberated" a large number of files. When the group published several of these documents with the COINTELPRO heading, Hoover immediately discontinued the program to prevent "embarrassment to the Bureau." After Hoover's death, the Church Committee began a major investigation of the FBI. Aided by the passage of the Freedom of Information Act, the American people have now gained a fuller picture of the FBI's history and its role as a political police. Indeed, the extent of COINTELPRO activity is still being exposed, as evidenced by the recent revelation of FBI infiltration of the women's movement. As one columnist for the *Washington Post* explained in the mid-1970s after the revelations of COINTELPRO and similar lawlessness by the CIA, "American society has gone buggy on conspiracy theories of late because so many nasty demonstrations of the real thing have turned up" (Don-

ner). Despite the significant exposures, the major media and congressional investigators chose to blame FBI “abuses” on the “excesses” of the recently deceased Hoover, and, in the end, no substantial reforms or checks were instituted.

Although the FBI officially terminated COINTELPRO in the 1970s, scholars and activists have argued that the FBI continues its practice of spying on and disrupting social-democratic and civil rights organizations, including antinuclear and Third-World solidarity groups in the 1980s, radical environmentalist organizations in the 1990s, and the current global justice movement.

Michael Cohen

**See also:** American Indian Movement; Anticommunism; Black Panthers; Chicago 7; Civil Rights Movement; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar; King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; Ku Klux Klan; LSD; Nation of Islam; Nixon, Richard; Pentagon Papers; Students for a Democratic Society; Weathermen.

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## Cold War

A broad consensus agrees that the period of cold war lasted from the end of World War II until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989, although some historians maintain that the seeds of conflict were discernible in the Western response to the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The cold war was a strategic and ideological conflict between the Western powers led by the United States and the Communist bloc dominated by Soviet Russia. The conflict was driven by each side's deep suspicion of the other and by an extreme and often exaggerated perception of the threat their actions posed to geopolitical stability.

An apparent reluctance to engage in open conflict on a global scale meant that both sides sought to advance their cause through other means, including diplomatic noncooperation, strategic alliance, economic sanction, espionage, propaganda, and arms proliferation. Another common strategy as the conflict escalated was the resort to “proxy” intervention, in which the larger opposition between East and West was played out on distant battlefields in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Broadly speaking, the conflict was premised on entrenched differences of ideology, principle, and perception between the Communist states and the capitalist, democratic West. For this reason, the huge military, diplomatic, and industrial efforts were necessarily underscored by a vast “struggle for the minds and wills of men” throughout the cold war.

The basic ideological antipathy between East and West during the early or “high-cold war” era was articulated in a wide range of texts, from high profile addresses by successive U.S. presidents and their political and cultural representatives, to confidential policy papers and strategic directives (Crockatt). The cumulative effect of this huge mass



of public and private utterance was the establishment in the United States of a pervasive discourse of conspiracy and threat in which the Soviet Union was commonly characterized as aggressive and expansionist in its foreign policy and repressive and totalitarian at home. While we now know beyond doubt that much of this was indeed the case—Stalin’s brutal regime with its endemic purges and gulags was the very opposite of a democracy—it is also clear that the volatile state of international relations was intensified by U.S. anticommunist propaganda at home and intervention abroad. Together with parallel efforts by the Communist Information Bureau (COMINFORM) in the Soviet Union, U.S. propaganda and counterrevolutionary techniques tended to rule out the possibility of negotiation and had the effect of increasing international tension to a level of perpetual crisis.

### **The Origins and Conduct of U.S. Foreign Policy during the “High Cold War”**

The policies of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations during the high-cold war period—roughly from 1945 until the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960—effectively mapped out the strategic direction of, and also legitimated, the discursive climate in which successive presidents from Kennedy to Reagan would operate for the next three decades. It was, however, the British wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill, who most succinctly delineated the new world order and the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union when he declared at Fulton, Missouri, in March 1946, that Soviet imperialism had drawn “an iron curtain” across the continent of Europe. In identifying not only the political and ideological, but also the spiritual dimensions of the threat facing the West, Churchill gave voice to a refrain that would soon resound through the corridors of power in the West.

The top echelons of U.S. foreign policy—from Secretary of State James Byrnes; his successor Dean Acheson; key Foreign Service officers stationed in the Soviet Union like Ambassador Averell Harriman and his successor George Kennan; and all the way up to President Truman himself—began to perceive their former ally in the East as a

direct “challenge and peril to Christian civilization.” If one single document may be credited with instituting the cold war worldview in U.S. political life, as well as with the introduction of the apocalyptic vocabulary that would soon characterize all utterances across the range of foreign and domestic policy, it was the so-called Long Telegram sent by Kennan from his post in Moscow to Secretary Byrnes in Washington on 22 February 1946. Many prominent commentators in the United States and Western Europe, including Kennan himself, had long stressed the incompatibility of Soviet communism and Western capitalism. Now Kennan’s telegram provided an apparently definitive explanation, identifying the czarist legacy of imperialism in Russia and its apotheosis in Stalin’s drive for world domination. It was clear from the huge volume of contemporary references to Kennan’s most inflammatory conclusions, that a “new orthodoxy” was about to grip the Washington establishment (Walker). According to this new orthodoxy, all Soviet efforts on “an international plane” would henceforth be perceived as “negative and destructive in character, designed to tear down sources of strength beyond Soviet control” (Kennan).

Proceeding from the conclusions of the Long Telegram, the policymaking machinery of the executive branch swung into action. Within only twelve months, Congress released \$400 million to shore up the vulnerable Greek and Turkish economies against the apparent danger of those countries falling to Communist coups d’état like their neighbors in Eastern Europe. This unprecedented, preemptive move, which reversed decades of cherished U.S. “isolationism,” was premised on President Truman’s belief that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures,” and revealed very clearly just how pervasive had been the influence of Kennan’s uncompromising interpretation of Soviet foreign policy. Events in Europe, Asia, and the Far East served to confirm Americans’ worst fears. Between 1946 and 1950, repressive Communist regimes came to power in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, thus bringing those countries within the

Soviet “sphere of influence,” and powerful domestic Left movements came to prominence in Greece, France, and Italy. Accordingly, the “loss” of China to Mao Tse-tung’s Communist insurgents—a “loss” that was blamed on treacherous leftist elements within the U.S. State Department’s Far East office by McCarthy and others—and the Soviet blockade of West Berlin were met with a relentless hardening of U.S. foreign policy. The increasing firmness of the U.S. response can be charted in initiatives ranging from Secretary of State George Marshall’s plan for economic recovery in Europe (announced in June 1947)—a program that Stalin viewed, with some justice, as a conspiratorial means of flooding the war-torn continent with U.S. capital—to the establishment of what would soon become vitally important weapons in the U.S. cold war arsenal such as the CIA, the National Security Council (NSC), and the U.S.-dominated North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO; all 1947). Perhaps most far-reaching of all was the eventual acceptance by Congress and executive branches alike of the conclusions of NSC memorandum no. 68 (NSC-68; 1950), which one historian of the period describes as “the supreme documentary symbol of the cold war” (Lucas). In NSC-68 the principle of “containment”—another Kennan coinage—became the justification both for the “stockpiling” of a huge nuclear deterrent and for the pursuit of a so-called arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union under the terms of which many billions of dollars were committed by both sides to the development of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) technology, atomic weapons, and the space program.

It was in defense of the United States’ self-appointed “responsibility of world leadership,” (NSC-68) and of a repressive, unrepresentative, but crucially noncommunist regime that South Korea became the first of many U.S. theaters of “proxy” conflict with the Soviet Union in the summer of 1950. As Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles implied in their aggressive campaign rhetoric of “rolling back” the Soviet and Chinese advance, U.S. intervention in Korea signaled the institutionalization of the cold war as a “system of international control” (Walker).

### “Red Menace” and the Rhetoric of Conspiracy

Crucial to U.S. prosecution of the cold war was the strategic deployment of the findings of certain key policy-documents—including the Long Telegram, the text of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NSC-68—which became statements of apparently unarguable truth in an atmosphere otherwise characterized by fear, uncertainty, global confrontation, and propaganda. The language of these documents made recurrent use of an elaborate repertoire of vocabulary and metaphor to which elected and independent representatives alike had frequent recourse in their public pronouncements and utterances. Thus, in this oppressive discursive climate—and lent weight by the domestic anticommunist crusade—the “fundamental design” of the Kremlin’s “grim oligarchy” was inevitably portrayed as being bent on “the ultimate elimination of any effective opposition to their authority,” while the “fundamental purpose” of the United States was always in transparent defense of “the idea of freedom” and democracy (NSC-68, 1950).

Both camps soon came to view the enemy as not just antipathetic to, but in league against them. In effect, this self-perpetuating and wholly enclosing discursive system represented the elevation of widespread conspiracy theorizing to an unprecedented level of political legitimacy. Certainly, this pan-social susceptibility to conspiratorial interpretation during the cold war helps account for the extraordinary celebrity enjoyed by rabid anticommunists like Senator Joseph McCarthy, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, Vice-President Richard Nixon, and star witnesses such as Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley. Such an atmosphere also goes some way toward explaining the enormous commercial success of exaggerated, allegorical depictions of the “red menace” in popular contemporary movies and fictions such as *I Married a Communist* (Dir. Jack Gross, 1949), *Invaders from Mars* (Dir. William Menzies, 1953), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Dir. Don Siegel, 1956), and Richard Condon’s novel, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959). As a matter of course, vocabulary and methods developed in



Chatting before their tour of the American National Exhibition in Moscow on 24 July 1959, are American and Soviet dignitaries, U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon, Soviet President Kliment Voroshilov, and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. During the tour, Nixon and Khrushchev engaged in a running debate in the presence of hundreds of reporters and officials on subjects ranging from washing machines to rockets. (Bettmann/Corbis)

the geopolitical sphere were vigorously—and profitably—reapplied on the home front; likewise the vital importance of the domestic anticommunist campaign was constantly reinforced by events on the global stage. This reciprocal process has been likened by some cultural historians to a kind of “feedback loop,” and by others to a species of modern “hysterical epidemic” (Showalter).

### **The U.S. Government in Conspiracy during the Later Years of the Cold War**

The fervent pitch of political discourse during the early cold war years was undoubtedly conducive to popular fears of a Communist conspiracy on the home front, in former strongholds of New Deal progressivism such as the trade union movement and the Hollywood movie industry, and abroad in the actions of seemingly inscrutable cultures like the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and North Vietnam. In this climate it is hardly surprising that for the first fifteen years after World War II there was very little public dissent from the prevailing consensus of support for U.S. anticommunism in the public sphere. This is not to say, however, that there was *no* resistance. Both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations faced intense criticism from what remained of the U.S. Left, which continued to argue from a largely prewar perspective. For these conspiracy theorists of the “Old Left,” blame for the cold war lay squarely with the forces of militarism and imperialism in Washington, whose interests were directly antagonistic to those of the working masses. It is interesting to note that this basic proposition, stripped of its Marxist agenda, lies at the root of a good deal of contemporary conspiracy-thinking—both popular and scholarly, in print and on the Internet—so much of which starts from a basic suspicion of the U.S. establishment.

It took several years and a complex series of developments for large numbers of Americans to begin to turn away from the external conspiracy posited during the cold war and to focus instead on the responsibility borne by their own leaders at home. Among these developments were, ironically, the grim predictions of an outgoing president, the inauguration of the young and apparently radical

figure of John F. Kennedy in his place, and the latter’s subsequent tragic death. Gradually, a popular and dynamic opposition movement peopled by civil rights activists, “New Leftists,” pacifists, and countercultural gurus began to rediscover the writings of their predecessors, and to point an accusing finger at the dangerously unchecked power and converging interests of their own ruling elite.

For all his professed commitment to a new era of global harmony and the partial success of his gestures toward diplomacy between the superpowers, President Kennedy was, in the final analysis, no less dedicated a cold warrior than Truman or Eisenhower had been. As conspiracy-minded critics on the Left like Norman Mailer and Corliss Lamont recognized at the time, Kennedy’s deployment of the forces of U.S. intelligence and covert operations against socialist regimes in Cuba and elsewhere relied upon a further expansion of the already extensive mandate of largely unaccountable branches of the “invisible government,” such as the CIA and military intelligence. Predictably, the rhetoric used by Kennedy and his new team of advisors to justify this policy invoked the ever-present threat of Communist expansion. This time, however, the rhetoric was more strident, the desire to roll back communism, particularly in the Third World, more urgent than ever. Potent symbols of this increased intensity were the construction of the Berlin Wall—that most concrete embodiment of the intractable opposition between East and West—in 1961, and the tense brinkmanship of the Cuban Missile Crisis the following year.

The obsessive cold war worldview of Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon Johnson, found expression in his rapid escalation of U.S. commitment of air power and troops in Southeast Asia. Like its precursor in Korea, the Vietnam War reminded many that the underlying assumption and overriding priority of U.S. foreign policy during the 1960s remained the prevention of the onward march of Communist expansion. However, the disastrous adventures in Vietnam and other Asian states also ushered in an era of unprecedented popular revolt against these guiding assumptions. As both Johnson and his successor, Richard Nixon, later acknowledged, it



became quite clear during the late 1960s and early 1970s that the ruling elite could no longer command society-wide support for their policies and for the conspiratorial interpretation of the Communist threat on which they were based. Indeed, for many groups and individuals, including the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Black Panther Party (BPP), Eldridge Cleaver, Carl Oglesby, and Jerry Rubin, all of whom rose to prominence as critics of the government in this period, it was no longer “alien” external forces who were in league against them, but the very establishment of government itself. From that point forward, virtually every U.S. foreign policy initiative with discernible origins in the high-cold war era met with resistance from a vocal protest movement at home. For these dissenters the conspiratorial hand of the “military-industrial complex” and big business was discernible behind everything from the bombing of North Vietnam and Cambodia, through revelations of institutional foul play during the Watergate investigations, to the massive nuclear rearmament program and “Reagan Doctrine” of the 1980s. (Indeed, the latter drew self-consciously on the precedent set by the Truman administration to sanction intervention on the side of anticommunist forces in Nicaragua, Grenada, Afghanistan, and Angola.) Many of these dire suspicions have since been borne out by legal and scholarly investigation into scandals like the covert CIA funding of Nicaraguan drug-runners, Panamanian dictators, and General Pinochet’s corrupt and repressive regime in Chile.

### **The Cold War as a Source of Contemporary Conspiracy Culture**

The huge upsurge in conspiracy-thinking over the past twenty to thirty years has been indebted to veterans of that pioneering generation of social critics who came to the fore during the 1960s, including Noam Chomsky, Herbert Marcuse, Norman Mailer, Tom Hayden, and Black Power leaders like Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael. Many of these theorists began their careers exposing the activities of a Washington elite of planners, advisors, and policymakers in the State and Defense Depart-

ments, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), NSC, CIA, and FBI for their lack of accountability and for the dramatic failure of U.S. domestic policy and foreign interventions in Cuba, Vietnam, and elsewhere. The work of these critics, and of others at the further fringes of the late-1960s counterculture may now be seen to have set in motion conspiratorial interpretations of a whole panoply of postwar policies and developments. Nowadays, conspiratorial interpretations of the cold war period incorporate everything from the dryly political to the frankly bizarre. These range from the counterculture’s generalized challenge to cold war norms of thought and behavior, through the Black Panthers’ exposure of the conspiracy of white supremacy and radical feminism’s critique of institutionalized and domestic chauvinism, to recurrent suspicions of the sinister interconnections between Washington and the international “shadow government” like the Bilderberg group and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and of the more baroque techniques allegedly used during the cold war such as assassination plots, psychological warfare, mind-control experiments, and investigations into possible UFO landings.

Fears of the conspiratorial power and influence wielded by a shady “deep political” elite during the cold war were partially borne out by the findings of the Select Committee on Intelligence Activities in 1976, and more recently by the opening of archives related to the various intelligence agencies. What these disclosures made clear was something long-suspected by opponents of the U.S. government, which is to say that U.S. foreign policy in the early postwar period was dominated by an inner caucus of dedicated and virtually omnipotent cold warriors. The huge extent of this group’s power and their continuing resistance to public scrutiny undoubtedly validates claims made by conspiracy theorists like Peter Dale Scott, Anthony Summers, and John Newman who discern the outlines of a system that “habitually resorts to decision-making and enforcement procedures outside as well as inside those publicly sanctioned by law and society” (Scott). If the many heterogeneous manifestations of contemporary U.S. conspiracy culture have any single feature

in common, it is that they all seek to confront, sometimes explicitly, sometimes not, previously held “truths” developed by the “power elite” during the cold war. In this way, the original McCarthyite premise that the United States was besieged by “aliens” without and subversives within has been inverted so that the very forces mobilized in the name of the cold war crusade—forces that were quickly naturalized as vital and integral components of that campaign—have come to represent the greatest threat both to the domestic order and to geopolitical stability. It now seems most likely, as Richard Powers and Daniel Moynihan argue in *Secrecy: The American Experience* (1998), that the U.S. cold war campaign was driven by an all-powerful bureaucracy within the CIA and other organizations who had a vested interest in systematically overestimating the threat posed by the Soviet Union and its agents to the United States, and in maintaining a veneer of secrecy that vastly increased the sense of public unease and propensity to conspiratorial interpretations of the outside world.

*Dorian Hayes*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Area 51; Atomic Secrets; Bay of Pigs Invasion; Bilderbergers; Black Panthers; Central Intelligence Agency; Chambers, Whittaker; COINTELPRO; Council on Foreign Relations; Cuban Missile Crisis; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hiss, Alger; Hoover, J. Edgar; House Un-American Activities Committee; LSD; Mailer, Norman; *The Manchurian Candidate*; McCarthy, Joseph; Mind Control; Students for a Democratic Society; Watergate.

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## Constitution, U.S.

The Constitution of the United States of America was, at the time of its ratification in 1787–1788, the focus of a conspiracy theory that interpreted the new political system as a deliberate effort to reverse the liberty won in the American Revolution. Contemporary conspiracy theories concerned with the Constitution, however, are more likely to see a plot to enforce an illegal, centralist interpretation of the Constitution, while at the same time clinging to the individual liberties asserted in the Bill of Rights.

### Radical Anti-Federalists and Constitutional Ratification

When the U.S. Constitution was drafted in Philadelphia in 1787 and subsequently ratified by conventions in the several states, it replaced the existing political system of the Articles of Confederation, which mandated a very limited form of federal government and left most powers to the states. A vocal group of nationalist politicians had long argued in favor of a stronger federal government, and had successfully persuaded Congress to call for a Federal Convention in order to revise the Articles of Confederation. Fearing a nationalist plot, some prominent revolutionary leaders like Samuel Adams protested against the Federal Convention and declined to serve as delegates; Patrick Henry refused to participate because he “smelt a rat.” Their fears were proven partially right when the Convention produced not a revision of the Articles of Confederation, but an entirely new constitution.

Drawing on revolutionary traditions, opponents of the Constitution—known during the ratification years as Anti-Federalists—argued that centralized power was inherently corrupt and that the Constitution would serve to eliminate the states’ autonomy along with individual liberty. In a worst-case scenario they feared this would create the despotic government that Americans had fought the British

to prevent. Radical Anti-Federalists went so far as to interpret the Constitution as the tool of a conspiracy fomented by the Society of the Cincinnati, an organization of veteran Revolutionary War officers, to introduce a hereditary aristocracy or even a monarchy in the United States. Such radical and also more moderate charges had considerable impact on the ratification procedure. In several states, the Constitution was ratified by a narrow majority, and only after urging various changes that were later condensed into the Bill of Rights of 1791.

### Contemporary Conspiracy Theories of Constitutional Decay

In the more than two hundred years since ratification, the Constitution has grown into one of the most venerated symbols of the United States, to the point where it is practically impossible to reject the Constitution and still make a claim to patriotism. As a result, contemporary conspiracy-minded critics of strong federal power typically do not attack the Constitution per se, but put forward conspiracy theories that claim the Constitution has been deliberately misinterpreted, subverted, or ignored, to the point where the result is harmful to the freedom of U.S. citizens. Such conspiracy theories of constitutional subversion are most typically endorsed by right-wing religious or libertarian groups and individuals, who feel that the federal government in the course of the twentieth century became the tool of secularism, social collectivism, feminism, multiculturalism, and racial equality.

In *The Constitution: Fact or Fiction*, Eugene Schroder of Colorado claimed that the U.S. Constitution has effectively been suspended since 1933. Franklin D. Roosevelt allegedly assumed emergency powers that have been expanded by successive administrations, who justified increased executive federal power with the necessities of World War II and the cold war. Consequently, Schroder claimed, Americans have lived under martial law for many decades. Likewise, members of the diverse militia movement that came to the attention of the U.S. Congress in the 1990s often argue that while they are patriots who believe in the Constitution, the political order of the United

States has been perverted away from its original meaning. These critics point to legal abortions, gun-control laws, federal social programs, and the United Nations as signs of such corruption, and in many cases claim it to be the work of Jewish or Satanic conspirators. Some groups, such as the Posse Comitatus, react with oppositional readings of the Constitution, claiming the right of sovereign citizenship and accepting no legitimate government above the county level. At the same time, it is often claimed that no constitutional amendments beyond the first ten are actually valid.

The Bill of Rights plays a central role in the conspiracy theories and fears of the contemporary Right. While many groups and activists reject the structure of the federal government, or at least its contemporary role, they are highly concerned about freedom of speech and freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, and the protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, which are guaranteed by the First, Second, and Fourth Amendments, respectively. Activists point to the actions of federal law enforcement at Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho, as examples of the suspension of constitutional rights by a conspiratorial elite deeply entrenched in the power structure of the federal government. The Second Amendment is often seen as the constitutional right most attacked by conspiratorial forces. Even though the amendment was originally intended in order to guarantee the states some military autonomy, activist groups like the National Rifle Association insist on an unrestricted individual right to bear arms. In the conspiracy theories of the militia movement and other right-wing and libertarian groups, it is one of the most urgent interests of conspirators in the federal government to disarm the U.S. people through gun-control legislation and the use of federal law enforcement agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

The eighteenth- and twentieth-century conspiracy theories about the Constitution stem from similar roots. While radical Anti-Federalists attacked the Constitution itself, contemporary right-wing and libertarian conspiracy theorists attack the present-day constitutional reality. They offer an

alternative reading of the Constitution that revolves strongly around the Bill of Rights, which was a major Anti-Federalist achievement in the first place. However, while conspiracy-minded radicals constituted only a slight minority of Anti-Federalists and eventually reconciled themselves to the new political system, the ubiquity of conspiracy theory among the contemporary Right does not seem to offer a similar perspective.

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**See also:** American Revolution; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; Militias; National Rifle Association; Posse Comitatus; Ruby Ridge Incident; Society of the Cincinnati; Waco.

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#### Contrails

A contrail, also known as a chemtrail, is a type of cloud that is formed from the vapor contained in the exhaust of a jet when it is flying at high enough altitudes for cold temperatures to cause the vapor to turn into ice crystals like cirrus clouds. These clouds are called "contrails" (short for "condensation trails") and look like lines in the sky. They are also called "chemtrails," because it is alleged that chemicals are sprayed deliberately into the atmosphere in order to conduct experiments involving weather control or communications systems or to test compounds on the human populations and natural life below.

Activists who highlight the issue usually allege that epidemics of flu-like illnesses follow sightings of contrail patterns; sometimes the symptoms



include diarrhea, listlessness, and fevers. Entering “contrail” and/or “chemtrail” into a search engine reveals hundreds of websites that report on the issue, providing eyewitness accounts and photographs taken all over North America, with some reports from Australia and Europe; there are no books on the subject to date. Reports on contrails are carried by dedicated websites, such as *Chemtrails Central*, and also by many sites of a right-wing/“Patriot” nature, such as *Chemtrails over America (COA)*, which carries articles originally published in the *Spotlight* and is closely linked to its successor organization, the *American Free Press*.

Mainstream news agencies rarely report on concerns over contrails, and when they do it is in terms of antigovernment “paranoia.” When *USA Today* ran a contrail story it likened the story to something out of *The X-Files*, arguing that it was only those who are suspicious of the government who believe that lines in the sky are evidence of malfeasance. Some suggested that they are trying to slow down global warming with compounds that reflect sunlight into the sky. More ominous theories suggested a government campaign to weed out the old and sick. The report concluded, “Nothing is ‘out there’ except water vapor and ice crystals, say irritated scientists who study contrails.” An atmospheric scientist was quoted as saying that the issue is “Conspiracy nonsense. . . . These things are at 30,000 to 40,000 feet in the atmosphere. They’re tiny particles. They’re not going to affect anyone.” Nevertheless, in June 2001 a group called Ohio Citizens Against Chemtrails staged a protest outside the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in Dayton, Ohio.

There are essentially five different types of application that may be implicated by contrail evidence. The first is the high-altitude spraying of aerosols that will help block the sun’s radiation, thus addressing the problems associated with holes in the ozone layer of the earth’s atmosphere and global warming. The second is a military program called the Radio Frequency Mission Planner (RFMP), which allows 3-D images of would-be battle scenes to be viewed on computer screens. This requires atmospheric “ducting” of radar waves, which can be achieved over land only

through the spraying of a barium salt aerosol; straight lines of ducting material in the air may also facilitate high-frequency communications along the path of the contrail. Such systems were allegedly used during the Gulf War, according to *COA*. The third application involves weather manipulation, again using barium salts, utilizing HAARP technology and microwaves. *COA* believes that the Jet Stream has been controlled in this way and that such technology allows a military to “bring any country to its knees without firing a shot.” Declassified minutes from an Air Ministry meeting held in the War Office in Britain in 1953 indicated that military planners have thought along the same lines. They also considered “seeding” clouds before using nuclear weapons, in order to widen the area of radiation contamination on enemy soil. Fourth, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) involves the testing of biological detection and decontamination systems. Chemicals including barium salt and polymer fibers have caused human illnesses and diseases, which can be assessed by scientists. Fifth, it has been suggested that the testing of a new generation of high-altitude jets by the U.S. Air Force (code-named Aurora) may cause contrails. These jets, apparently able to reach Mach 6, use a new type of propulsion system called Pulse Wave Detonation Engine (PWDE), which causes unusual types of contrails.

Some radio hosts have given sympathetic hearings to those who claim that sickness often follows the sighting of extensive contrail patterns in the sky; both Art Bell and Jeff Rense have sections of their websites dedicated to the subject. The *American Reporter* (12 January 1999) carried an article in which a Washington State resident was quoted as speculating whether ethylene dibromide, a highly toxic component of JP-8 jet fuel, is making people sick. The report stated, “Similar incidents over Las Vegas last year prompted a U.S. Air Force spokesman to explain that the military aircraft were ‘dumping fuel’ before landing.” The same Washington resident was also cited in a report in the *Daily Telegraph* (London), 31 January 1999. The website *Conspiracy Planet* suggests that “these trails do not dissipate as vapor trails do, but rather

spread, eventually forming a cloud that sometimes fill the sky for days with the residues of the materials being released.” The same site linked the spate of stillbirths of horses in Kentucky during the summer of 2001 to chemtrail spraying by high-altitude military aircraft.

Concern over contrails appears to tie in with more deep-rooted suspicion toward government. The antisemitic publication the *Spotlight* claimed that “chemtrails are part of a massive top-secret military research and development project, possibly linked to the United Nations.” The report refers to the findings of a group of experts (unnamed in this report, but presumably the same ones listed on the COA website) who concluded that both military and commercial aircraft are being used to disperse chemical substances for a project known as Operation Cloverleaf. This project apparently brings together scientists from around the world under the auspices of an organization known only as Commission G. The *Spotlight’s* experts linked this research to the “nationwide epidemic increase in cases of asthma, allergies, and upper respiratory illnesses, including pneumonia.” The report betrayed something of a scattergun approach, also linking the issue to the development of radar cloaking technology, biological weapons, weather modification as a military weapon, space weaponry, and the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Project (HAARP), first developed by Nicola Tesla, and again linked to the United Nations. HAARP ionospheric “heaters” are used to heat and modify the ionosphere and the results are evaluated at various U.S. Air Force bases and universities. A researcher is quoted explaining, “Precipitation suppression and enhancement are strategies being refined specifically for implementation in the conduct of future wars.” The report also alleges that “potential chemical and electrical influence on human behavior from above, a super-MK-ULTRA-mind-control program” is being developed.

It is beyond doubt that “cloud seeding” experiments have taken place in the past: between 1949 and 1955 the British Royal Air Force conducted Operation Cumulus, in which chemicals provided by ICI, including salt, dry ice, and silver iodide, were sprayed on clouds in order to produce rain

(although this was denied by the Ministry of Defense until papers were declassified in 2001). In 1952 one of these experiments caused a flash flood in the village of Lymouth, Devon, in which thirty-five people were killed.

*Nigel James*

**See also:** MK-ULTRA; United Nations.

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## The Conway Cabal

The Conway Cabal was a conspiratorial attempt to remove General George Washington as the Continental Army’s commander-in-chief in favor of General Horatio Gates, thus setting the stage for a negotiated settlement to end the American Revolution during the fall and winter of 1777 and 1778. Washington and his closest allies in Congress recognized it as an attempt to end the war without first securing a British recognition of American independence. The effort to remove General Washington came at a crucial time during the war. Since taking on the assignment as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, Washington had few successes to call his own, with the exception of two minor victories at Trenton and Princeton in the winter of 1776–1777. As the spring campaigns

began, British General John Burgoyne launched an ambitious plan to sever New England from the rest of the new country, while General William Howe set his sights on the American capital, Philadelphia. The ensuing British occupation of Philadelphia established a situation conducive toward a negotiated end of the war, something that both General Howe and the more conservative members of Congress desired. Such goals withered away as it became increasingly apparent that Washington and his closest allies in Congress were not going to allow for a negotiated settlement that did not first recognize American independence.

Opposition against Washington in Congress had been brewing for some time. Members of the New England delegation were critical of the general's inability to achieve a decisive victory against the British. As the war entered its second year, their criticism became increasingly loud, as they made it abundantly clear that the time had come for a new commander-in-chief. Following British General John Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in October 1777, Washington's strongest congressional critics became convinced that they had found the man to replace him—General Horatio Gates, the “hero of Saratoga.” Gates's newfound status as savior of the Revolution enhanced the ambitions of many men who surrounded him, and they hoped to advance their own careers on the general's coattails. Thomas Conway, whose name was later given to the conspiracy, was one such individual. Conway was of Irish-French origin, and he received a commission in the Continental Army from Silas Deane, an American diplomat stationed in France. Deane, much to Washington's chagrin, started awarding positions to a large coterie of foreign officers in the Continental Army without the prior approval of Washington or Congress. General Thomas Conway was one such individual who sought advancement, but soon realized that his opportunities were limited as long as Washington was commander-in-chief. Conway gravitated toward those who rallied around General Horatio Gates, who also had influential friends in Congress. In late October 1777, Conway addressed a letter to Gates that contained disparaging references to Washington's abilities as

a military leader, stating, “heaven has been determined to save your country; or a weak General and bad Councilors would have ruined it.” When the existence of the letter was brought to Washington's attention, he confronted Gates and the conspiracy began to unravel, but the matter was not put to rest completely until the beginning of spring 1778.

The concerns raised by members of the New England delegation and the ambitions of men like Thomas Conway played into the interests of the more conservative members of Congress who believed that a negotiated settlement was the best that the Americans could hope to achieve. Washington and his allies in Congress, however, represented the biggest obstacles in their path. Many of these individuals already had close ties with Horatio Gates, and they were convinced that he would be more supportive of seeking a negotiated peace with the British. Gates's identification as the “hero of Saratoga” made him a strong candidate to replace Washington.

The conspiracy unraveled as Washington and his allies in Congress closed ranks and resisted any serious attempt to remove him as commander-in-chief. The divergent and conflicting interests of those who desired Washington's removal prevented them from mounting a sustained challenge against the general. They were united only by their shared desire to remove Washington as commander-in-chief, but they sought this goal for opposing reasons—the general's New England critics thought that by replacing Washington with Gates, independence would be assured; the conservatives in Congress thought that by removing Washington, the stage would be set for a negotiated end to the war. Consequently the conspiracy failed.

*J. Kent McGaughy*

**See also:** American Revolution.

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## Copperheads

Northern Democratic critics of the Lincoln administration's policy during the Civil War were known as Copperheads and were repeatedly linked to conspiracies to disrupt northern military operations and to help establish the independence of the Confederate States of America.

Named after the venomous snake, Copperheads were considered traitors to the Union and were accused by Republicans of creating a civil war within the Civil War. While many Democrats were critical of Republican policies pursued during the war, the vast majority of Democrats remained loyal to the Union cause. Seeking partisan advantage at the polls, many Republican political leaders transformed Democratic criticism of the war into disloyalty. Associating the Democrats with such secret societies as the Knights of the Golden Circle, the Order of American Knights, and the Sons of Liberty, Republicans repeatedly linked the Democratic Party with alleged conspiracies to disrupt the war effort and permanently divide the nation.

Democratic dissent about Republican war policies was not fictitious. While Democrats had rallied to the flag in the aftermath of the firing on Fort Sumter, Republican policies on emancipation and civil liberties quickly raised doubts about the effect the war was having on U.S. society. President Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, issued shortly after the battle of Antietam, caused Democratic politicians and newspaper editors to vigorously criticize the administration's war policies. Believing in the "Constitution as it is and the Union as it was," leading Democratic politicians such as Ohio's Clement Vallandigham and Indiana's Daniel W. Voorhees charged that the war was now being waged for racial equality. Democratic newspaper editors, such as Charles Lanphier of the *Illinois State Register*, Samuel Medary of the Columbus, Ohio, *Crisis*, and Wilbur Storey of the Chicago *Times* raised the issue of racial amalgamation along

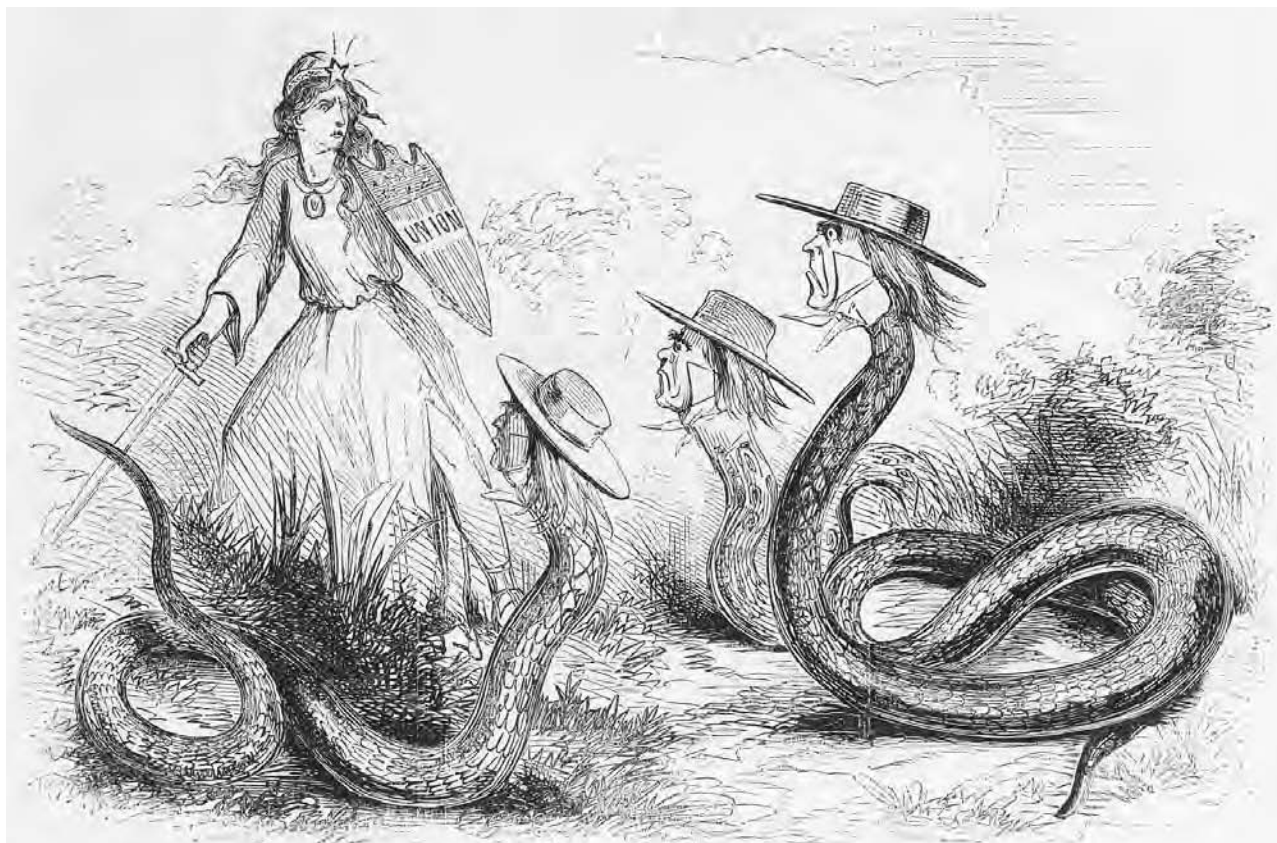
with the threat of economic displacement for white, particularly Irish, workers. President Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus along with the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of a few prominent Democrats, such as Dennis Mahoney, editor of the Dubuque, Iowa, *Herald*, raised fears that U.S. traditions of individual rights were being supplanted by military despotism.

Economic depression in the agricultural lower Midwest also fueled Democratic dissent. With the closing of the Mississippi River, traditional trading routes between the South and the lower Midwest were disrupted. Farmers now had to ship their product to market via the Great Lakes and northern railroads. Rising railroad rates cut into agricultural profits and raised complaints that the interests of the farming Midwest were being sacrificed to northern capitalists. Combined with such measures as the Morrill Tariff, there emerged a robust western sectionalism, articulated by Vallandigham, Ohio's Samuel "Sunset" Cox, Senator William A. Richardson of Illinois, and Daniel Voorhees, that was highly critical of "Puritan" New England and northern manufacturing interests.

From practically the war's beginning, eager Republican newspaper editors and politicians attempted to profit from Democratic war criticism by painting the entire party as treasonous. One strategy was to accuse Democrats of membership in so-called secret or dark lantern societies. The alleged treasonous societies were the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC), the Order of American Knights (OAK), and a reconstituted Sons of Liberty (SOL). The Golden Circle was the invention of George W. L. Blickley, a no-account drifter born in Virginia who migrated to Cincinnati in the 1850s. The Order of American Knights was the brainchild of Phineas G. Wright, a New York native who was living in St. Louis when the Civil War erupted. Harrison Dodd, a respectable Indianapolis Democrat who felt Democrats needed to counteract Republican propaganda, founded the Sons of Liberty.

Republican newspaper editors, politicians, and Union military officers wildly exaggerated the membership in all of these organizations. For instance,





Editorial cartoon showing three caricatured Copperheads advancing on Columbia, who holds a shield labeled “Union” and a sword. (Library of Congress)

through the skillful propagandizing of Republican governors Oliver Morton (Indiana) and Richard Yates (Illinois), the Knights of the Golden Circle was said to have thousands of members in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; yet hardly any actual local organizations were known to exist. Similarly, as a result of an exposé written by John Sanderson, an aide to General William S. Rosecrans stationed in St. Louis, the Order of American Knights was portrayed as a mass organization with thousands of dedicated members. In reality, the OAK had a few, isolated cells (temples) located in the Midwest. Few, if any, prominent Democrats belonged to these shadowy organizations.

Unlike the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Order of American Knights, the Sons of Liberty had slightly more credible membership. Formed to counteract the Republican Union League, the Sons were modeled after the patriotic organization of

the American Revolution. A number of prominent Democrats were associated with the Sons of Liberty including Clement Vallandigham and S. Corning Judd, a popular Illinois Democrat. Concerned that constitutional liberty might be a casualty of the war, the main function of the Sons of Liberty was to protect republicanism from the excesses of civil war. Unfortunately the ill-timed actions of a few foolhardy Democrats along with the eager propagandizing of Republican publicists gave credibility to allegations of Democratic treason in such “plots” as the Northwest Confederacy and the Camp Douglas uprising.

Charges that Democratic conspirators were plotting to separate the Midwestern states from New England and form a Northwest Confederacy was a common charge against the Democrats during the war. Since 1864 was an election year, Republicans

played up alleged plots of Democratic disloyalty for partisan gain. One Republican governor eager to seize opportunity was Oliver Morton of Indiana. Using evidence gathered by Colonel Henry Carrington, Morton had a prominent group of Indiana Democrats—Harrison Dodd and seven associates—arrested and charged with treason. Eventually four Democrats—Lambdin P. Milligan, William Bowles, Stephen Horsey, and Andrew Humphrey—were tried before a military court (while charged, Dodd escaped and fled to Canada). While Felix Stidger, a disreputable informant in the pay of Carrington, manufactured the majority of the evidence, the military tribunal nevertheless convicted the defendants and sentenced them to death. The Indianapolis treason trials gave Indiana Republicans a decided advantage in the fall campaign.

Similarly the so-called Camp Douglas conspiracy relied on manufactured evidence skillfully elicited by unsuspecting and, in some cases, unintelligent Democrats. The brainchild of Chicago *Tribune* president William Deacon Bross, the “Camp Douglas conspiracy” was the alleged attempt of local Democrats, aided and abetted by Confederate agents, to free thousands of Confederate prisoners of war held at Camp Douglas in Chicago. The conspiracy theory grew and was nurtured by I. Winslow Ayers, a sleazy opportunist who hoped to profit from his untruthful allegations. Eventually over 100 Democrats were arrested in Chicago in late 1864. In a highly publicized treason trial conducted in Cincinnati in January 1865, only eight defendants were charged: George St. Leger Grenfell, Benjamin Anderson, Vincent Marmaduke, George Cantrell, Charles T. Daniel, Charles Walsh, Buckner Morris, and Richard T. Semmes. Tried before a military tribunal, only five of the defendants were convicted, and only one, St. Leger Grenfell, was sentenced to death.

In fact, no one convicted in any of the treason trials was executed. No doubt realizing the essential sham character of the trial, President Andrew Johnson eventually reduced death sentences to life imprisonment for the defendants of the Indianapolis treason trials—Milligan, Bowles, and Horsey (Humphrey had been freed earlier). In response to

a suit filed by Milligan, on 3 April, the Supreme Court handed down *ex parte Milligan*, which denied the legitimacy of military tribunals when civilian courts were functioning. The three defendants were subsequently released on 12 April 1866. Similarly, the Cincinnati Treason Trials defendants found a measure of vindication. Of the five convicted defendants, one committed suicide (Anderson) and one (Daniels) escaped. Two defendants were eventually pardoned and St. Leger Grenfell's death sentence was changed to life imprisonment. The actions of federal officials after the war were a candid acknowledgment of excesses committed in the name of patriotism during the war.

For many years after the war, historians largely accepted the Republican verdict that the Democratic Party constituted a disloyal minority. While a few Democrats did belong to secret societies and openly supported the Confederacy, the vast majority were loyal supporters of the war and patriotic citizens. Opposed to emancipation and fiercely committed to constitutional liberties, most Copperheads were not conspirators but a respectable opposition party.

Bruce Tap

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### Corporations

The corporation is a modern-day Frankenstein's monster at the heart of many contemporary versions of conspiracy. It is easy enough to demonstrate that many corporations avoid tax, fix prices through cartels, knowingly sell dangerous products,

engage in industrial espionage, deliberately mislead people through their advertising, and covertly attempt to influence state policies (Punch). It is also evident that the majority of film representations of corporations—*Wall Street*, *Robocop*, *Other People's Money*, and *Erin Brockovich*, to name but a few—generally present corporations as Machiavellian places in which dirty deals are done behind closed doors (Parker). What is more difficult is to establish that corporations are actually key conspirators in destabilizing states that have policies that are hostile to corporate interests, or even engineer wars in order to sell more weapons. This is an area where the boundaries between enthusiastic business practice and illegal activity, as well as the boundaries between the state and the corporation, are difficult to distinguish.

Corporations are fictional entities, legally constructed nonhumans that are exempt from some of the laws of a particular state. Like similar words—“company,” “organization,” “association”—“corporation” is a word that refers to the collective activity of a group of individuals, usually those engaged in some form of commercial business. (Note that the root of the word “conspiracy” comes from “breathing *together*”—again suggesting a collective activity.) Given that within capitalist societies this collective activity is usually aimed at maximizing profitability, it is hardly surprising that corporations should often be regarded as quasi-conspiratorial arrangements almost by definition. It is “common sense” that corporations are primarily motivated by making profits, so whatever else they claim (about caring for customers, employees, the environment, and so on) is likely to be no more than a public relations exercise.

The first English corporations were charitable institutions (hospitals, schools, and churches), which used the legal framework of incorporation to avoid death duties and other taxes. Having a license from the Crown meant that, in certain defined circumstances—which did not initially include profit making—they would be treated as different from the people who inhabited them. When, by the end of the sixteenth century, similar charters were awarded to trade associations, this gradually led to

the construction of large profit-making companies of shareholders such as the Company of Merchants Adventurers (1505), and, perhaps the best known, the East India Company with its vast transnational reach.

While the Judeo-Christian world exemplifies a sustained suspicion of businesspeople and their organizations, from the moneylenders in the temple to Shylock's pound of flesh, it is in the United States of the late nineteenth century that contemporary corporate conspiracism fully emerges. Ambrose Bierce, in his *Devil's Dictionary* of 1911, defined the corporation as “An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility” (Bierce, 49). At that time, the organization of the U.S. economy under the control of various corporate alliances known as “trusts” ensured that prices for producer and consumer goods were set in smoke-filled rooms and profits guaranteed. After World War I had ended, the Great Depression, the stock market crash, muckraking journalism, and substantial attempts at union organization by the Industrial Workers of the World and the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations), together with violent resistance to the corporate vested interests, all turned this sense of unease into widespread social concern. The brave promise of a United States of social opportunity now sees the “little guy” suffering under the new yoke of big organization. Social commentary books such as Matthew Josephson's *The Robber Barons* (1934) and many fictional works all took aim at the new decadent U.S. aristocracy.

“In short order the railroad presidents, the copper barons, the big dry-goods merchants and the steel masters became Senators, ruling in the highest councils of the national government, and sometimes scattered twenty-dollar gold pieces to the newsboys of Washington. But they also became in even greater number lay leaders of churches, trustees of universities, partners or owners of newspapers or press services and figures of fashionable, cultured society” (Josephson qtd. in Beder, 53). Ultimately, this diagnosis resulted in the New Deal administration that attempted to enforce antitrust legislation, unemployment insurance, and a whole host of new regulatory bodies. The rise of



the Progressive Party and the “trustbusters”—the movement agitating against the industrial trusts—was in some sense a response to the widespread sense of corruption and collusion, and the perception that both big business and big politics were effectively in each other’s pockets.

Although corporate conspiracism seems to have faded somewhat after World War II, the reemergence of common ideas about corporate conspiracies in the 1970s is sometimes explained with respect to the end of a broadly Keynesian welfare state. It is also clear that the boundaries between big money and big politics were again becoming permeable. The activities of Eisenhower’s “military-industrial complex” in making profits from U.S. foreign policy, and the counterculture’s demonology of all matters associated with the “one-dimensional society” of “organization man” (Whyte; Marcuse) set the scene for a renewed suspicion of corporations that has lasted up to the present day. In academic work in the social sciences, the popularity of metaphors like “McDonaldization” or “Coca-Colonization,” combined with the enduring attraction of Marxist or Weberian models of the state as a mediator of corporate power, has meant that (outside the business school) corporations are generally regarded with considerable hostility and scepticism.

In political and economic terms the 1970s saw the beginning of the collapse of the social contract and a return to the mode of permanent crisis which had characterized the 1930s and 1940s. Margaret Thatcher talked of “rolling back the state” and “giving managers the right to manage” while Ronald Reagan promised to “get government off the backs of the people.” It seemed that big business had undergone its short period of rehabilitation, and was now once again ready to challenge the rights of workers (whether air traffic controllers or miners) and the right of the state to regulate corporate activities. Or, perhaps as Noam Chomsky argues, this was merely the public justification. The postwar period illustrated that corporations had learned that they could use the shelter of the state to shore up their political legitimacy at the same time that they were “feeding at the public trough” (Chomsky, 120). So this period was characterized by simulta-

neous protectionism and intervention—massive “defense” spending combined with state subsidy and/or tax relief to industries that were under threat. None of these policies actually changed much in the 1970s; the corporate trough remained full while the language of market liberalism became more strident and self-righteous (Frank).

The rise of concerns about business ethics and social responsibility from the 1980s onward reflected both liberal concerns about business power, as well as a variety of attempts by corporations to claim the language of ethics and turn it to a profit. Managers and organizations were now falling over each other to make glossy public statements about equal opportunities policies; gender, age, and ethnicity issues; social cost accounting; environmental responsibility; community involvement and sponsorship; business scandals; whistleblowing; consumer redress; corporate governance, and so on. There were also, of course, plenty of consultants willing to help formulate these statements. Market liberals and theologians likewise rapidly developed a stream of ideas that stressed spirituality, soul, and the moral foundations of market institutions in favor of “back to basics” values rooted in notions of community and responsibility. In parallel, and over the last twenty years or so, business ethics has become an accepted part of the business school canon. Ethics is becoming a big business itself, part of a long public relations campaign to relegitimize business in the face of widespread public unease.

The latest version of corporations as conspiratorial can be found in the contemporary anticorporate and anticapitalist protest movements. From the 1970s onward, the Bretton Woods consensus (the postwar international agreement on exchange rates) was beginning to be unpicked and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began acting as the emissaries of structural readjustment to market forces. Although there were many attempts to expose corporate power in relation to global hegemony from the 1970s onward (Barnet and Müller; Barnet and Cavanagh), it was the 1999 “Battle in Seattle” that brought these ideas to a much wider public. Since then, a rainbow



alliance of activists have summit-hopped their way around the meetings of the World Trade Organization and associated bodies in order to expose the extent to which corporations are increasingly displacing states and their citizens in most areas of decision making. The attempt to liberalize global trade, sometimes misleadingly given the catchall term “globalization,” has provoked massive discontent from left-wing radicals to right-wing protectionist nationalists (Spark). Critics suggest that terms such as “liberalization” and “free trade” actually translate into the right of powerful corporations to determine state policies and prevent any local attempts to protect wage rates, local skills, and levels of taxation (Klein; Monbiot). The “freedom” being engineered by and for these global corporations is one that allows them to exploit any natural resource, labor force, or form of intellectual property in order to make their profits.

From the Robber Barons to the global corporations, there exists a century-long lineage of suspicion about corporate activities, although it is difficult to disentangle legitimate concern from wild speculation. There are some well-known and documented cases in which it is obvious that corporations acted to cover up decisions and activities that were both immoral and illegal. For example, in the 1970s the Ford company calculated that it was cheaper to pay compensation to relatives and victims of its badly designed Pinto model than to pay for a major redesign of the car’s electrical system (Punch, 23). On the other hand, there are examples of lobbying that is legitimate, yet suspicious. George W. Bush’s decision to pull out of the global warming agreements in 2001 was almost certainly related to the fact that his campaign had been substantially financed by fossil-fuel corporations. There are also examples of corporations doing business with highly oppressive governments, or even assisting with intervention in political matters. In any case, the divide between legality and illegality is unclear and possibly unhelpful. If it is accepted that corporations are silently taking over the functions of democratic states, then perhaps legal distinctions are themselves compromised by hegemonic understandings of the proper role of business.

In some senses, these are matters of representation and trust. The widespread acceptance of conspiracy tales about corporations simply reflects the fact that big business is not widely trusted. It is assumed that senior decision-makers in business are motivated by money and career considerations, so any story that involves the suggestion of dirty dealing is treated as possible, if not probable. The image of a shark in a suit sitting at the top of his skyscraper is a powerful one in many contemporary films and novels. In some sense, these “masters of the universe” do live in a different world to the majority of the world’s population. As A. Starr puts it, everybody knows there is a conspiracy, and understands the self-interest of the conspiracists, but what galls is the level of deceit about such matters (Starr, 8). Hence the shadowy activities of groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations, Bilderbergers, U.S. Business Roundtable, Trilateral Commission, World Economic Forum, Conférence de Montréal, and Transatlantic Business Dialogue are themselves treated as a self-evident threat. Rather excitingly, “they” are organizing against “us,” so exposing the conspiracy becomes a kind of moral crusade in itself (Smith). It is a small step from these “facts” to suggesting that “they” are also responsible for concealing the secret of the everlasting lightbulb, or sponsoring the assassinations of politicians who are hostile to their interests. Or indeed, that corporate domination reflects the interests of a cabal of rich Jews or Masons who are silently organizing a new world order (Spark). In a real sense, corporations are conspiratorial. The questions that remain concern the content of the conspiracies, and whether the citizens of democratic states should regard these as legitimate business practices or dangerously antidemocratic symptoms of corporate rule.

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**See also:** Bilderbergers; Council on Foreign Relations; Trilateral Commission.

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### Coughlin, Father Charles

Charles E. Coughlin (1891–1979), a Catholic priest and extraordinarily popular radio personality, contributed significantly to nationalist antisemitism in the United States before World War II. Coughlin asserted that covert Jewish economic interests had led directly to the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, and World War II. Coughlin

believed the same forces were responsible for later silencing him. Coughlin's use of the radio in these accusations has won him notoriety as the inventor of "hate radio" (Warren). Coughlin's use of radio broadcast his antisemitism to an audience far broader than enjoyed by earlier demagogues. Long after his popularity passed, Coughlin's theories about the "international Jewish banking conspiracy" continued to thrive among U.S. right-wing movements.

Charles Edward was born in Hamilton, Ontario, on 22 October 1891, an only child to devoutly Catholic parents. The church and his mother dominated young Charles's life. Ordained in 1916, Coughlin joined the Basilian religious order and performed standard clerical duties in Catholic parishes in southern Ontario. In 1923 Coughlin left the Basilians and moved to suburban Detroit.

### Radio Career and Politics

In 1926 Coughlin received an appointment to a lackluster parish in Royal Oak, Michigan, a small suburb north of Detroit. The parish suffered from low membership, inadequate facilities, and Ku Klux Klan harassment. Through the help of a parishioner, Coughlin began *The Little Flower* radio program (named after the parish's patron saint, St. Therese of Liesieux) to raise funds. Coughlin's histrionic speaking abilities quickly generated interest, and the show expanded in radio markets around the Midwest. Within a year Coughlin broadcast his shows nationwide.

Coughlin's early broadcasts featured an ironic spirit. As his popularity grew, Coughlin began exploring the roots of social ills such as anti-Catholic bigotry. Mail streamed into the Royal Oak parish, causing Coughlin to hire additional secretaries to manage it. During the Great Depression economic issues appeared in each weekly broadcast. Coughlin excoriated business interests for bleeding the working class of its savings and his popularity consequently soared. The United States was a Christian nation, Coughlin claimed, and Americans had certain rights granted by God and the Constitution, such as personal autonomy, private property, and the right to work. Anything threatening these rights was not only unpatriotic but also quite demonic. In the



The Hippodrome furnished the stage for this demonstration on 29 October 1936, when Father Charles E. Coughlin, a Detroit radio priest, addressed 6,000 adherents to his National Union for Social Justice. He is shown speaking at the podium. (Bettmann/Corbis)

early 1930s Coughlin created *Social Justice*, a publication containing his broadcasts and other articles sympathetic to Catholic social reform, to further spread his message (Brinkley; Warren).

During the 1932 election Coughlin proclaimed Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only candidate possessing the skills needed to resuscitate the nation. Coughlin fancied himself as one of FDR's field representatives. The more Coughlin pushed for a federal administrative role, though, the more the Roosevelt administration rebuffed him. During 1934, Coughlin's broadcasts shifted quickly from praising to criticizing Roosevelt and the New Deal. Coughlin claimed that Roosevelt's big business connections threatened the very roots of representative democracy. By encouraging his radio audience to write congressional members, Coughlin secured the defeat of Roosevelt's 1935 attempt to join the World Court as well as the 1938 federal reorganization bill.

Gerald L. K. Smith, an evangelical minister and one of Huey Long's organizers in Louisiana, convinced Coughlin to unite his immense radio following and populist program with Francis Townsend's nationwide pension project for elderly Americans. Coughlin and Smith created the National Union Party (NUP) to organize their supporters into a third political party. Speculation suggested that the NUP possessed ample ability to challenge the Roosevelt juggernaut in 1936. As a priest, Coughlin could not run for office, so he and Smith chose North Dakota congressman William Lemke instead. However, support quickly eroded, Roosevelt swept to victory, and Coughlin and Smith parted ways acrimoniously (Jeanson; Warren). The National Union for Social Justice, which Coughlin had founded in 1934, continued to pursue a Catholic approach to the nation's social and economic reform. Coughlin maintained singular control over the National Union's agenda so that it expressed thoroughly Catholic interpretations of populist solutions.

### **Antisemitism and Catholicism**

U.S. Catholicism's unreconciled message of U.S. materialism and suffering Christianity hastened

Coughlin's descent to join Smith in antisemitic demagoguery. Coughlin praised Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime for its success in limiting Jewish influence on German national interests. Although his popularity shrank during the late 1930s, even after Germany's Kristallnacht Coughlin still enjoyed millions of supporters. Much of Coughlin's popular support came from Catholics who felt the priest was their only advocate within the church. He was the one priest willing to criticize the bishops for their extravagant lifestyles (Fisher, 78–80).

Coughlin's Irish heritage provided the intellectual framework for his antisemitism. The writings of Dennis Fahey, a priest who taught Catholic philosophy and social thought in Dublin, blamed social and economic upheavals on Jewish conspiracy. Besides killing Jesus Christ, Fahey argued, Jews were responsible for the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, industrialization's social problems, and the League of Nations (Athans). Coughlin quickly incorporated Fahey's antisemitism into his radio broadcasts and *Social Justice* articles, as the National Union Party suffered its embarrassing election defeat. In 1938 the magazine reprinted *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. When cautioned about its authenticity, Coughlin merely claimed that the document, forgery or not, accurately predicted global events. His radio broadcasts continued to draw connections between the Depression in the United States, armed conflict in Europe, and international Jewish finance.

Coughlin was rumored to have several economic and political contacts with Nazi figures in the United States and Germany. As the United States entered World War II, Coughlin insisted that Jews had started the conflict to advance their own agenda. As federal authorities and Coughlin's own clerical superiors moved to silence him, the priest alternated between expressions of militant defiance and meek acquiescence. Coughlin believed that he was the victim of covert forces committed to his destruction. Christ had thrown moneylenders out of the Temple, and consequently had been crucified; Coughlin portrayed his silencing along similar lines. Coughlin's remaining audience, composed mostly of German and Irish Catholics in



the urban Northeast, only strengthened its resolve to support the priest (Fisher, 77–78, 186, 236–7).

### Silencing and End of Career

Coughlin's popularity and unrelenting anti-semitism caused consternation among the church's authorities. Catholics had faced significant anti-Catholic animosity as recently as the 1920s, which Coughlin's early broadcasts noticeably diminished. As Coughlin focused more on politics and anti-semitism, church leaders sought to distinguish official teachings from Coughlin's personal position. However, Detroit's Catholic bishop, Michael Gallagher, deflected much of the criticism. After Gallagher's death in 1937, Detroit's new bishop, Edward Mooney, sought repeatedly to silence Coughlin, forcing his radio program off the air in 1940. Members of Christian Front, a nationwide organization Coughlin founded for young Catholic men, were arrested for antigovernment conspiracies and gang violence in Jewish neighborhoods. In 1942 *Social Justice* ceased publication, and Mooney prohibited Coughlin from speaking or writing on any political matter. Coughlin returned to suburban Detroit's anonymity. While he deflected allegations of racism during the 1960s, Coughlin has since been noted as an early precursor to white separatist movements and Holocaust revisionism (Kaplan, 67–71; Warren, 5–6). His violence-tinged antisemitic rhetoric concerning the international Jewish conspiracy helps explain the connection. Coughlin died in Royal Oak, Michigan, on 27 October 1979.

Jeffrey Marlett

**See also:** Antisemitism.

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### Council on Foreign Relations

Founded at the close of World War I, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) is an influential organization devoted to the study of foreign policy. Ever since 1952, when Emmanuel Josephson's *Rockefeller Internationalist: The Man Who Misrules the World* proclaimed the CFR's New York office to be nothing less than the center and symbol of the sinister "Rockefeller–Soviet Axis," right-wing opponents of the group—the John Birch Society (JBS) in particular—have viewed the CFR as a conspiratorial cabal with designs on global power. Although the fall of the Iron Curtain necessitated modification to the theory of a CFR-Communist conspiracy, the JBS still argues that the Council is really a group of "establishment Insiders" intent on creating a socialist "One World Government." CFR members are well positioned for this coup, as they can be found in the highest positions of the government (Henry Kissinger, George Bush, and Bill Clinton); finance (the Rockefellers and innumerable New York bankers); the legal world (Supreme Court Justices O'Connor, Ginsburg, and Breyer); and the media (editors of the *New York Times* and network news anchors); not to mention in other secret cabals such as the Trilateral Commission and the Bohemian Grove group. According to the conspiracy theorists, contemporary political developments such as the liberalization of global trade (e.g., NAFTA, GATT) and the rise of the United Nations are the first steps toward the CFR's ultimate goals: the end of national sovereignty and the enslavement of the entire world under the banner of their centralized, all-powerful "world government." In this "New World Order," U.S. military forces will be employed as oppressive

agents of the global supergovernment—UN “peace-keeping” missions are merely the tip of this iceberg.

To be fair, there are a great many “charges” that members of the CFR would not care to dispute, but the Council’s outlook on the New World Order is radically different from that of the JBS because of the historical context out of which the whole idea developed. When the CFR was founded in 1919, Woodrow Wilson’s quest for a utopian international community constituted the starting point for many CFR members’ views on U.S. foreign policy. If World War I was to be the “war to end all wars,” it was essential to produce a new international community that could ease the tensions between nation-states before serious conflicts erupted. What was needed, argued the Wilsonians, was less jingoistic nationalism and more international cooperation; a movement toward creating “One World” from the divided, fractured world of 1919 (and, indeed, since this was prior to the rabid anticommunism of the cold war, some members thought in terms of a “socialist” world order, which was to become immensely unpopular three decades on). Of course, for a variety of reasons, lack of full U.S. participation being one, the League of Nations never fulfilled this role, and within a decade Europe was quickly descending into another era of bloodshed. The Council’s investigations into the causes of World War II only reinforced the Wilsonian ideals of many members. The division of the world’s great powers combined with rampant nationalism had produced the preconditions for fascism, genocide, and the near total destruction of Europe. Supporters of the CFR today would argue that the Council’s advocacy for a New World Order must be understood in this context, and that the movement toward international cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations heralds an era of increasing peace and prosperity rather than an Orwellian nightmare. “Mainstream” critics and historians of the CFR like Robert Schulzinger (who actually suggests that much of the Council’s work is cliché-ridden and ineffectual) argue that the Council’s ideas merely *mirror* the transformations brought on by globalization, and that to read the similarity between the CFR’s ideas

and global developments as involving a causal link is simply a mistake.

Thus, as far as the New World Order goes, it seems as though one man’s secular utopia is another man’s apocalypse; the division between the two perspectives is completely unbridgeable, and the apocalyptic side of the divide is inevitably dismissed by mainstream culture as “extreme.” The charge of elitism, however—the claim that the CFR is a network of “insiders” that form an all-powerful East Coast “establishment”—is less easily dispelled, since the CFR is quite *self-consciously* elitist. The CFR argues that international relations should be studied by serious, dispassionate minds free from the taint of impurities such as nationalism. At the outset of the cold war, for instance, George Kennan published his now infamous “X” article in the CFR’s journal, *Foreign Affairs*, and raised so much public hysteria surrounding the Soviet menace that the Council began to fear that the issue of U.S.-Soviet relations would be hijacked by demagogues (and, in view of what loomed on the horizon in McCarthyism, perhaps this fear was not misplaced). If the CFR is “secretive,” argue its proponents, it is because sometimes heightened public consciousness actually works against the proper ends of international politics. Even mainstream academics, however—people who would themselves no doubt be designated “insiders” by the JBS—might well argue that while the CFR’s cultivation of its status as an elite organization may not accurately be termed conspiratorial, it is not at all clear that it represents a positive development in U.S. political culture.

*Marlon Kuzmick*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Bush, George; Cold War; John Birch Society; Kissinger, Henry; New World Order; One-World Government; Trilateral Commission.

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### **Covert Action Quarterly**

The Washington, D.C.-based magazine *Covert Action Quarterly* (CAQ) began publishing in 1978 under the title of *Covert Action Information Bulletin* (CAIB). The magazine has developed a following not as a conspiracy-theory-related publication, but as a source for reliable, consistent, and accurate investigative reporting. Originally, CAQ was a watchdog journal that focused on the abuses and activities of the CIA, yet it has gradually evolved into a more general, progressive investigative magazine. While almost every issue of CAIB focused on the CIA, detailing its activities in Central America and Southeast Asia, in the domestic media, and on university campuses, CAQ has covered a wider range of domestic and international political issues with stories and occasionally entire issues on surveillance technologies, the U.S. prison system, the environment, mad cow disease, AIDS, ECHELON, Bill Clinton, media cover-ups, Iraqi sanctions, and the drug war. Contributing authors have included intellectuals, writers, and activists such as Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Michael Parenti, Sara Flounders, Philip Agee, John Pilger, Ramsey Clark, Leonard Peltier, Allen Ginsberg, Diana Johnstone, Laura Flanders, Edward S. Herman, and Ward Churchill.

CAQ was cofounded and copublished by Ellen Ray, William Schaap, and Louis Wolf, along with former CIA agents such as James and Elsie Wilcott, and Philip Agee, author of *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. Following in the tradition of *CounterSpy Magazine* (1973–1984), with whom CAQ's publishers originally worked, highlights of CAIB included the notorious "Naming Names" column, which printed the names of CIA officers under diplomatic cover. These were tracked

through exhaustive research in the State Department Biographic Register and various domestic and international diplomatic lists. This column, and others like it, came to an end in 1982 when the Intelligence Identities Protection Act was signed into law by Ronald Reagan. CAIB had to end the "Naming Names" column, but more significantly, the act required that magazines such as CAQ be more wary about the names they published within the articles of their contributors. This was particularly significant after December 1975 when Richard S. Welch, a CIA station chief, was assassinated in Athens, Greece. *CounterSpy* was criticized by both the CIA and the press for its exposure of the agent's name.

In 1992, Issue 43, *Covert Action Information Bulletin* changed its name to the current *Covert Action Quarterly* ("Recommended by Noam Chomsky; targeted by the CIA"), a 64–70-page magazine published four times a year. CAQ had a reputation for beating to the punch more mainstream standard-bearers, such as the *New York Times*. In 1995, it covered the genocide in Rwanda and U.S. complicity in those events, years before any other publication cared to notice; it ran in-depth investigative articles on the rise of homegrown militias before the Oklahoma bombing; and it was the first U.S. publication to reveal the existence of ECHELON (the security agencies' surveillance software). CAQ has been the regular recipient of the annual Project Censored awards for the Top 25 Censored Stories. The magazine has often had several articles on the list, such as in 1997 with Karl Grossman's "Risking the World: Nuclear Proliferation in Space," John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton's "The Public Relations Industry's Secret War on Activists," and David Burnham's "White-Collar Crime: Whitewash at the Justice Department."

In 1998, CAQ's staff (comprising its editor of nine years, Terry Allen, associate editor Sanho Tree, and staff member Barbara Neuwirth) were dismissed by mail and without notice in a manner that seriously damaged the magazine's reputation, particularly since the magazine was at its strongest during these years. The conduct of the publishers was

strongly criticized in newsgroups and on mailing lists, in articles in the *Washington City Paper* and the *Village Voice*, and by writers like Christopher Hitchens and Alexander Cockburn, who called the publishers “So-called leftists act[ing] like people from the Fortune 500” (Ripley, 12). While the management suggested that the firings were due to interpersonal issues, editors Allen and Tree disagreed, claiming that the differences cut along political and editorial lines. In a widely distributed letter, Allen asserted that the publishers unsuccessfully attempted to have its editors publish articles that presented the Serbs as blameless victims of genocide and that denied the existence of concentration camps under Milosevic, and one that professed to expose Hitler’s secret bunker in Antarctica. The publishers also took issue with an article that affectionately described Fidel Castro as a “nice old fart.” They also attempted to print articles that dealt with issues in a more conspiratorial fashion, thus playing out the traditional tension between conspiracy theory and the investigative reporting of governmental and corporate malfeasance.

Following a 2001 lawsuit between the publishers, the magazine’s electronic and print rights were split between its publishers, yet both the paper and online versions ([www.covertactionquarterly.org](http://www.covertactionquarterly.org) and [www.covertaction.org](http://www.covertaction.org)) have remained dormant since their inception. Following the firings, CAQ lost both its contributor base and its ability to organize itself, eventually leading to the demise of the magazine. Excluding an issue assembled by the publishers, and another edited by Rory O’Neill (April–June 2001), who was consequently fired by the publishers, CAQ has not published regularly since the 1998 “purge.”

*Tony Elias*

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Pentagon Papers.

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### Crédit Mobilier Scandal

As with many other conspiracy theories, the Crédit Mobilier scandal involved large sums of money being controlled by “elites” or “special interests.” The Crédit Mobilier company of the United States originated as a construction company to help construct the Union Pacific Railroad. Oakes Ames, Thomas C. Durant, and others formed the company in 1864 out of an existing Pennsylvania charter as the Pennsylvania Fiscal Agency. Ames and other Union Pacific investors headed the new firm, meaning that they could sell contracts from the railroad to their own company.

Union Pacific bonds, which were to sell at \$100 per share, in fact sold well below that. To cover the costs of construction, Durant and Ames founded Crédit Mobilier, in which the railroad would give grossly inflated construction contracts to the company and Crédit Mobilier would use those contracts to purchase Union Pacific stock at par value. Ames then resold the stock on the open market at market prices, covering the difference with some of the inflated construction costs. In 1867, for example, Ames assigned contracts for the construction of nearly 670 miles of railroad that brought the Crédit Mobilier owners between \$7 and \$23 million and left the railroad in financial trouble.

Ames ensured the acquiescence of Congress by bribing the members through stock offers: Ames (who was also a U.S. congressman) sold shares of the railroad at a discount to other lawmakers, even allowing them to purchase the stock on credit, paying for the stock out of the dividends earned by the securities. Sending a list of names to receive stock to an associate, Ames made certain to enlist the services of Representatives Schuyler Colfax and James A. Garfield and Senator James W. Patterson, although Ames’s list soon found its way into Charles Dana’s newspaper, the *New York Sun*. Publication of the “preferred customer” list set off a firestorm in 1872—an election year.



Congress undertook an investigation of the company. Already, allegations circulated about President Ulysses Grant's involvement in the "Gold Corner" of 1869 (an attempt by speculators to "corner" the market in gold and thus manipulate prices), while the Reconstruction governments being established in the South were gaining a reputation for graft. Bribing public officials to build railroads, or to benefit from existing routes, was nothing new. For two decades, Cornelius Vanderbilt had battled Jay Gould, Daniel Drew, and Jim Fisk over several railroads, especially the New York Harlem Railroad. But, as one contemporary writer observed about *Crédit Mobilier*, "there was a film of decency thrown over the transaction by Mr. Ames," and many members of Congress willingly accepted the shares.

Famous railroader Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific Railroad—the other end of the transcontinental—and other important "captains of industry" were called to testify before Congress about construction costs. Although Congress issued a pair of reports, which tarnished the reputations of Colfax, Patterson, and Rep. James Brooks of New York, as well as Ames, only Brooks and Ames were censured, and no one was prosecuted. Brooks, ironically, had only received his position as a government director on the railroad after he, as a former Whig, had come out in opposition to the impeachment of the Democratic president, Andrew Johnson. Since the *Crédit Mobilier* scandal occurred on Grant's watch, and was followed by the "Whiskey Ring" (the resignation of Grant's secretary of war for accepting kickbacks), the "salary grab," and other scandals, the episode damaged Grant's public image. *Crédit Mobilier* also made a permanent enemy of cartoonist Thomas Nast, who lost \$329 in the scandal, and who supported the Democratic Party after that.

A larger problem stemmed from the federal funding of the railroads through the subsidy system, which encouraged graft and corruption. The government gave land grants to transcontinental railroads to sell as a means to raise construction cash. However, the grants were based on miles of rail laid, ensuring that both the Union and Central

Pacific Railroads would lay far more track than needed to link them together. Indeed, at times, the railroads built away from each other, delaying the connection in order to continue receiving funds. This stood in stark contrast to James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad, which received no federal subsidies, and which did not suffer financially in the panic of 1873. More than the delays in building the Union and Central Pacific Railroads; more than the circuitous routes they used; and more than their ultimate financial distress caused by their original privileged subsidized positions, the *Crédit Mobilier* scandal revealed the dangers of linking large-scale business projects with the government, outside the control of the market and the discipline of prices.

For the conspiracy-minded, however, the bribery of public officials dovetailed with the influence of such shadowy forces as the Bank of England or the Masons. *Crédit Mobilier* also implicated Grant, weakening his presidency. Coming on the heels of the infamous "Tweed Ring" (the network of political and financial corruption in New York City presided over by William Tweed from the 1860s), *Crédit Mobilier* convinced many that government was corrupt at every level.

Larry Schweikart

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#### Cronenberg, David

David Cronenberg is a Canadian film director whose work features horror and science-fiction narratives in which characters find themselves transformed by some viral, technological, or phar-

maceutical agent. Such “mutations” are frequently caused by conspiratorial corporations and produce paranoid psychological states and violent outcomes. Cronenberg’s unnerving films have explored the ways in which biological horror and pleasure intermix by portraying transformations that are both sexually charged and pathological.

Born in Toronto, Canada, on 15 March 1943, Cronenberg has had a career mostly spent in Canada. While attending the University of Toronto as an English student, Cronenberg made two short films, *Transfer* (1966) and *From the Drain* (1967). He also began two short features, *Stereo* (1969) and *Crimes of the Future* (1970), in which his distinctive sensibility began to emerge. The subjects that were explored in these films, such as medical and psychological experimentation, sexual ambiguity and metamorphosis, violence and torture, would recur and find development in all his later work. The auteurist nature of Cronenberg’s work—in which he tended to fill the roles of writer, director, cinematographer, and editor—was also already evident.

In 1975, Cronenberg’s first feature film, *The Parasite Murders* (a.k.a., *They Came from Within, Shivers*), was released. *Shivers* (as it is now generally known) tells the story of a doctor who produces a parasite that transforms its hosts into sex-obsessed psychotics. The film is set in a secluded apartment complex that becomes the setting for the eventual epidemic. Like Cronenberg’s *Rabid* (1976), the outbreak of a virus and the ensuing community-wide panic drive the plot of the film. While this reiterates the familiar social paranoia that informed historical events such as the witch-hunts of Salem or even the McCarthy period, these plots focus more particularly upon the personal transformation of individuals into some new stage of being, or what is referred to in *Videodrome* as the “New Flesh.” These scenarios are often represented with ambivalence, in which characters both welcome and abhor the venereal transformations wreaked upon their bodies. The recurring subject of what Cronenberg has called “creative cancers” (Rodley, 80) has been reinterpreted and remade throughout his films, particularly because this “takeover” of his characters’ identities is never sim-

ply the result of an external agent (though this is often the catalyst) but a result of their bodies turning against themselves.

*Scanners* (1981) tells the story of Cameron Vale, a homeless man with telepathic and telekinetic psychic powers. He is recruited by a recently attacked corporation with its own Scanner program to infiltrate a Scanner conspiracy with plans for global conquest. The scanners are a product of a mass-marketed pharmaceutical (“ephemerol”) developed by the scientist who recruited Vale, and the conspiracy they are fighting is producing a new generation of “Scanner soldiers.” The play of conspiracy and counterconspiracy in *Scanners*, which recurs throughout Cronenberg’s films, presents an ethically uncertain universe in which no side is entirely good or evil, and where characters are usually implicated in, if not responsible for, their own destruction.

Recognized by most critics as Cronenberg’s masterpiece, *Videodrome* (1983) introduces us to Max Renn, a cable television executive who discovers an obscure cable transmission of sadomasochistic films. In his quest to purchase the snufflike offerings of the Videodrome channel, Renn falls victim to the subliminal content embedded in the films, losing his ability to distinguish reality from fantasy. Eventually, he discovers that he has been the unsuspecting guinea pig in a right-wing plot to take over a sexually depraved North America through these transmissions. As with many of Cronenberg’s films, *Videodrome* uses an unreliable protagonist whose perspective becomes progressively more delusional. Without the aid of an omniscient perspective, the audience is left to navigate between the paranoid vision of the protagonist and the supposed “reality” of the conspiracy that affects it. The Borgesian reality-games of *Videodrome* repeat themselves in *eXistenZ* (1999), which uses the future of virtual reality gaming as its premise for a world of shifting realities. Both films espouse similar theories regarding the media and the manner in which it has become a part of the human nervous system, affecting and transforming reality.

Cronenberg’s direction of *The Dead Zone* (1983), based on the novel by Stephen King, is the most

explicitly “political” of his conspiracy narratives as well as one of the few successful adaptations of Stephen King’s work. Based on material other than his own, *The Dead Zone* was not immediately identifiable as a Cronenberg film since it is particularly unmarked by his usual filmic obsessions. It is in some ways a “classic” conspiracy tale, dealing with a psychic character who becomes an assassin in order to prevent the election of a presidential candidate he believes will one day start a nuclear war.

The strong influence of William S. Burroughs on Cronenberg’s films—apparent in their shared fascination with conspiracy, biological mutation, and parasitism—led to his direction of *Naked Lunch* (1991). Though the film did not attempt to present the reputedly unfilmable novel by Burroughs, it based itself in the mythology of Burroughs’s work and the biographic details of his life, amalgamating the worlds of New York junkies, pest controllers, and Beat writers, with that of American expatriates and conspiratorial plots in Tangier. While Cronenberg has authored the screenplays for most of his films, his interest in the work of underground writers led to his direction of a film version of J. G. Ballard’s *Crash* (1996), for which he won the Jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

Because the majority of Cronenberg’s films are characterized by visceral depictions of the body and rely on gruesome special effects, critical appreciation of Cronenberg’s work as something more than exploitation cinema took some time. Though Cronenberg’s work has never become a part of the mainstream, the early criticism of his films as exploitation has developed into a recognition of the director as someone intimately concerned with telling stories about the human body, disease, and transformation.

Tony Elias

**See also:** Burroughs, William S.; Corporations; Drugs; Paranoia.

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## Cuban Missile Crisis

On 22 October 1962, President Kennedy made a television address announcing a blockade of the Communist island of Cuba. The broadcast followed seven days of meetings held by the National Security Council Executive Committee (ExComm), a group of advisors specially convened by the president in response to the discovery of Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba. The “quarantine” was to prevent further equipment from reaching the island and its announcement caused the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, to stop his ships. There then followed an exchange of letters and secret back-channel negotiations that resulted in a deal. The missiles would be removed in exchange for a public U.S. pledge of noninvasion; a secret second part, involving the removal of U.S. Jupiter missiles in Italy and Turkey, was only revealed later.

Few conspiracy theories regarding the crisis itself have been given much credence by Western historians. During the cold war, Russian writers (e.g., Nechayev, 1987) argued that there had never been any missiles in Cuba and that the CIA had doctored photographs. However, glasnost and the opening up of the Soviet archives provided plenty of evidence that there were actually more missiles on the island than the United States thought. It has also been suggested that the peaceful resolution of the crisis and the withdrawal of missiles from Italy and Turkey were part of the reason for the assassination of President Kennedy. Elements within the military and the CIA are said to have seen Kennedy’s refusal to fight as a sign of weakness and defeat. Coupled with the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the noninvasion pledge, Kennedy greatly angered anti-Castro Cubans as well as businessmen whose assets in Cuba were nationalized.

Members of ExComm and Kennedy’s inner circle also took part in a conspiracy of silence and misinformation to protect the president and his brother, Bobby, over the resolution of the crisis. Aside from not revealing the deal to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey and Italy, insiders also distorted key events in the crisis to portray the Kennedys more favorably. In particular, Kennedy aide Theodore Sorenson secretly edited Bobby



Debate on the Cuban Missile Crisis at the United Nations on 25 October 1962. During the meeting, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson confronted Soviet ambassador Valerian Zorin about the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. (Corel Corporation)

Kennedy's posthumously published diary of the crisis, *Thirteen Days*, making it seem that Bobby had led the anti-air strike faction in ExComm, and that he and Sorenson had devised the solution that solved the crisis. Key meetings with the Soviet ambassador were also misrepresented. Similarly, another aide waited thirty years before revealing that the president had been prepared to ask the secretary general of the UN to impose a peaceful resolution.

*Neil Denslow*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Bay of Pigs Invasion; Castro, Fidel; Cold War; Johnson, Lyndon B.; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of.

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## DeLillo, Don

Don DeLillo, the distinguished contemporary U.S. novelist, is the author of thirteen novels—including *Amazons* (1980), a pseudonymously penned novel by Cleo Birdwell—and two plays. His many awards include the National Book Award for *White Noise* (1985), the PEN/Faulkner award for *Mao II* (1991), and in 2000, the William Dean Howells Medal for *Underworld* (1997). DeLillo is also the first American to receive the Jerusalem Prize (1999) in recognition of his complete works that, in the words of the prize committee, “express the theme of the freedom of the individual in society” (*Time*).

DeLillo’s novels are prescient critiques of U.S. culture, engaging specifically U.S. subjects like cultural materialism, sports hysteria, rock music, terror and violence, conspiracies, waste, post–World War II U.S. history, corporate America, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. DeLillo’s works are prophetic as they apprehend and explore latent U.S. ills before they achieve privileged status in the media. DeLillo understands that many U.S. predilections are connected as *Underworld* claims: “everything is connected in the end” (826). For his acute perceptions DeLillo has been dismissed by the *New York Times Review of Books* as the “chief shaman of the paranoid school of American fiction” (Begley, 303), and detractors criticize him for his tenacious exhuming of Americana and for creating what Bruce Bawer calls, “conspiracy-happy protagonists” (35). Speaking with Anthony DeCurtis on the *Zapruder* film, DeLillo remarked that “the strongest

feeling I took away from that moment is the feeling that the shot came from the front and not from the rear” (291). From this comment, and its implication of an alternative to the Warren Commission’s findings, critics immediately branded him as a conspiracy theorist writing fiction. It is not surprising that DeLillo’s artistic integrity has invited such criticism. DeLillo’s work is perhaps better understood as daring, exploring the underside or undercurrent of U.S. history and culture. DeLillo’s significance emerges from his willingness to explore alternatives to the mainstream consensus and to address the unaccountability of the many, intricate connections—cosmic, quotidian, and profound—of chance and coincidence in modern and contemporary America.

Much of DeLillo’s writing underscores what he calls in his first novel, *Americana* (1971), the “true power of the image” (12), particularly media images. For DeLillo, no image is more penetrating and culture-altering than frame 313 of the *Zapruder* film, the frame capturing the precise moment of Kennedy’s assassination. The assassination is so pervasive in U.S. culture and so significant for DeLillo that he has asserted in an interview with Adam Begley that U.S. history seems “engineered” since then (303), and that it even “invented” him as a writer (DeCurtis, 285). This is not to say that DeLillo views history as necessarily controlled as part of a massive military-industrial conspiracy, but that he has charted a collective shift in U.S. consciousness since 22 November 1963. Moreover, a corollary of DeLillo’s works is that

they call for a more critical appraisal of our cultural media images by pointing to and critiquing prominent images, like the famous picture of Lee Harvey Oswald holding a Manlicher rifle and purportedly Communist journals. It has been alleged that the photo was adulterated with Oswald's head inserted afterward.

DeLillo has found resonance and connectivity in parallel U.S. events since JFK. He has further tailored his fiction for, and written perspicacious essays on, seemingly disparate events like Oswald's death (*Libra*), shot simultaneously by television cameras and Jack Ruby's pistol, and the Ronald Reagan assassination attempt with, as he writes in "American Blood," its "choreography of gesture" of Secret Service agents flourishing drawn weapons (24). DeLillo here shrewdly notes that Americans are so culturally steeped in the lore of JFK's assassination that even Reagan's agents displayed a palpably self-conscious awareness of the gravity of their videotaped moment as the drama unfolded, and that event's historical antecedence in JFK's assassination. In an age of ubiquitous video cameras and amateur-video footage, DeLillo contends that it is no longer possible to live without an urgent self-conscious awareness, even during the mundane happenings of common existence. For DeLillo, the United States unalterably changed in 5.6 seconds at Dallas's Dealey Plaza. Connecting subsequent events with the Kennedy assassination is not paranoid, as DeLillo's detractors have claimed. Rather, it demonstrates a circumspect understanding of the power of U.S. media images, and how no event after JFK can be performed without reference to the assassination on some level.

His work often returns to doublings and mirrored events. In *Libra*, Oswald and Kennedy's lives are linked; DeLillo himself claims an affinity for Oswald, noting that they lived close to each other as children in the Bronx. The basis for DeLillo's largest and perhaps most complex novel, *Underworld*, is the 4 October 1951 *New York Times*' double headline of "Giants capture pennant" and "Soviets explode atomic bomb." The headlines' interpenetrating "shot-heard-around-the-world" resonance and synchronicity is just one of many

chance events of twentieth-century America that engage DeLillo. For DeLillo, our age is increasingly technologically bounded, and while these gains are beneficial they are also bewildering and isolating. DeLillo's fiction, then, operates as a counter to U.S. existential loneliness and despair. His fiction is a restorative by turning our collective attention back to the ordinary elements of human life, noting the sometimes alarming moments of conjunction in disparate episodes. Finding these instances of revelation and transcendence in seemingly typical junctures is a hallmark of his fiction.

Timothy Jacobs

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Ruby, Jack; Warren Commission.

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## Democratic-Republican Societies

Democratic-Republican Societies were popular associations that existed in the United States from around 1793 to 1799. The impetus behind these short-lived societies was a stated desire to guard against the government conspiring against the people. In 1792, Philip Freneau, an early Republican newspaper editor, summarized that defensive and mistrusting sentiment in his *National Gazette* when he spoke of the need for such societies "for the purpose of watching over the rights of the people, and giving an early alarm in case of governmental encroachments thereupon." Such groups he considered "absolutely necessary in every coun-

try, where the people wish to preserve an uncorrupted legislation" (*National Gazette*, 25 July 1792). The Charleston Society stated their founding principle clearly: they had only "one general purpose, that of watching narrowly public characters" to guard against encroachments on the rights and liberties gained during the American Revolution. The Democratic Society of the City of New York declared in its 1794 constitution "THAT all legitimate power resides in *the People*" (Foner, 151). Societies, of which there were about fifty, were formed in rural and urban settings, in all but two states. Especially active and important groups were formed in Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Members, of which there were thousands, were varied in their social status and occupations, and were drawn from many ranks of society, counting in their numbers artisans and farmers, but also doctors and lawyers, and other professionals. Members were also diverse in terms of their religious and political affiliations, even including some Federalists.

As U.S. political culture became increasingly polarized in the mid-1790s, Democratic-Republican Societies were at the heart of debate about the nature of the early American Republic. Members toasted the French Revolution at their meetings, waxed enthusiastically in newspaper articles published in the expanding press, and warmly greeted Citizen Edmund Charles Genet, the French ambassador, when he visited the United States in 1793. The societies also tended to be mistrusting of the second Federalist administration of President George Washington, which they thought aimed to expand the powers of the national government, especially the executive branch, and to encroach upon the liberties of the common man. Many Federalists came to believe that the societies themselves were conspiring to overthrow the government, a theory that was often broadcast in newspapers of the day like John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* or from pulpits like that of David Osgood of Medford, Massachusetts. Parallels were drawn between the Democratic-Republican Societies and the Jacobin Clubs of the French Revolution. Charges against the Democratic Societies

became more pronounced and were leveled with more conviction after the outbreak of the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania in 1794. Historians are not yet agreed on the exact role of the societies and their members in that insurrection. There was a degree of overlap between society membership and the Whiskey Rebels, but a lack of solid evidence means the precise connections may never be known with certainty. To many at the time, however, a lack of solid evidence did not seem to matter. Washington thought that blame for the insurrection lay squarely on the shoulders of the societies. The rebellion, he wrote, was "the first formidable fruit of the Democratic Societies" (Allen, 593). In a famous statement, Washington spoke of certain "self-created Societies" which had "spread themselves over this country, have been laboring incessantly to sow the seeds of distrust, jealousy, and of course discontent; thereby hoping to effect some revolution in the government" (Allen, 603). Democratic-Republican Societies increasingly came under criticism as being hotbeds of conspiracy, a view summarized by a critic in the *Kentucky Gazette* when he described the Democratic Society of Kentucky as a "horrible sink of treason,—that hateful synagogue of anarchy,—that odious conclave of tumult,—that frightful cathedral of discord,—that poisonous garden of conspiracy,—that hellish school of rebellion and opposition to all regular and well-balanced authority" (31 August 1793). By 1796 membership in most Democratic-Republican Societies was waning and by 1800 they had all but disappeared, although their spirit lived on, in part, through the Republican Party they helped bring to power.

Mark G. Spencer

**See also:** Genet, Citizen Edmond Charles; Whiskey Rebellion.

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### Dick, Philip K.

The speculative fiction of Philip K. Dick (1928–1982) transformed the paranoid plots of 1930s–1950s pulp fiction about conspiratorial threats from outside by infusing them with anxieties emerging in the 1960s–1970s regarding the disintegration of psychological structures under the pressure of postmodernity (the turning of every last realm of public and private life into a commodity; disinformation produced by media elites; the construction of a consensus reality through manufactured illusion; technologies of behavior modification). Dick's most important books—*Time Out of Joint* (1959), *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), *Ubik* (1969), *A Maze of Death* (1970), *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), *The Divine Invasion* (1981), *Valis* (1981), *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (1982)—extrapolate the idea of revelation, the ideological nucleus of the conspiracy genre, into something at once sublime, uncanny, and insidious. The humdrum lives of his "little guy" protagonists are totally disrupted as they discover themselves implicated in "an intricate, sustained illusion-system of massive proportion" (*The Game Players of Titan*, 110). Nightmarish disclosures that cannot be rationalized away to maintain the illusion of free will, in combination with the suggestion that the paranoid nightmares might be not fantasies but glimpses of the vast underlying system of society, incompletely comprehended, allow Dick's conspiracy narratives to function simultaneously as case-

studies of paranoia and as allegorical critiques satirizing the totalitarian tendencies of postwar U.S. capitalism. Rehearsing the various mechanisms and detours of paranoia, Dick's protagonists proceed to construct more and more elaborate explanatory models in compensatory response to profound feelings of personal insubstantiality and social impotence.

Dick reconceived the common science fiction device of the "pocket universe"—a discrete microcosmic enclave of incubated ignorance—as a virtual reality perpetrated by governmental or corporate media. He presciently depicted dystopian near-future societies characterized by systems of simulation that serve to control the population by infiltrating consciousness and structuring the individual's sense of self. Plots concerning the capture of audiences and markets by oligarchic networks render in fictional terms his recognition of how an emerging society of the spectacle was beginning to induce people to invest in hegemonic models of the world that were against their best interests.

Dick's deeply ambivalent work typically merges the angst-ridden folklore of mind control (e.g., the implantation of false memories) with the superficially more hopeful folklore of alternate realities (e.g., via drug-enhanced psi powers). By blurring the demarcation between "actual" events and psychic processes, and thereby surrendering cognitive suppositions to endless permutation, Dick's destabilizing narratives throw into question all criteria for establishing credibility or future action. For example, *A Scanner Darkly* depicts the gradual blurring of demarcated role-identities as a police undercover agent is required to surveil a drug user/dealer he had been pretending to be, but in fact has now become. Here the unimpeachable founding premise, so dear to conspiracy theory, is tinged for comic effect with digressive thought processes typically conducted by certain pharmaceuticals: "'I mean, it's my theory that I did it,' Barri said. 'Under posthypnotic suggestion, evidently. With an amnesia block. . . . Possibly . . . to cause dissension to break out [about] whom we can trust, who is our enemy, and like that'" (*A Scanner Darkly*, 53).

The compulsively suspicious scrutiny applied by Dick's protagonists to their circumstances typically effects an uncanny return of metaphysical speculation in accord with his validation of pop culture: "the symbols of the divine show up in our world initially at the trash stratum" (*Valis*, 212). As Dick's critique of capitalist production-consumption regimes became increasingly absorbed in indeterminacy, the conspiratorial agendas of oligarchies were personified as entrepreneurial trickster demigods. In *Ubik* a ubiquitously promoted product approximates deity in promising to be all things to all people, although—as "a further hoax, to bewilder them that much more" (*Ubik*, 212)—it might not exist at all. Similarly, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* concerns a battle for the market between two hallucinogenic drugs, Can-D, a palliative, and Chew-Z, a wafer that seems to place the receiver in communion with a demonic higher reality.

Like so much of U.S. conspiracy thinking, Dick's paranoid scenarios ultimately situate the economic and the political on essentially gnostic metaphysical foundations ("I think we're living in some other world than what we see" [*Time Out of Joint*, 138]). Like their creator, Dick's protagonists live in a universe of intimations, visitations, and epiphanies. And like him, they seem to be inspired by the thought of being conspired against because conspiracy makes you feel that you are at the center of the universe. Goaded by the violent incursions of indiscernible political or commercial power, their complicity resides in the ingenious way they reconstruct their daily existence by linking seemingly incongruent phenomena and events. Obsessively scanning the environment for clues and traces of unseen powers, they speculate themselves into cul de sacs, where they repeatedly revisit unsolvable enigmas: "The clues we are getting don't give us a solution; they only show us how far-reaching the wrongness is. . . . [They have] introduced confusion rather than verification. . . . What's it mean? . . . Ragle found himself poking through reality. . . . a splitting rent opening up, a great gash" (*Time Out of Joint*, 180).

Dick's speculative fictions almost uniquely occupy the nexus where various "high" and "low"

traditions of U.S. conspiracy thinking and paranoid world-designs converge. More accessible because less densely allusive than Melville or Pynchon, Dick tapped the conversation between U.S. vernacular and popular cultures, overhearing subliminally encoded communiqués of sublime revelation and subversive admonition. For this reason his ideas seem comparable to those of other eccentric autodidacts of the U.S. tradition of carnivalesque metaphysics: Charles Fort's assurance that "we are property"; Richard Shaver's account of malign robots inhabiting "the Hollow Earth"; Elijah Muhammad's revelation that the white race was devolved from the black by a cosmic "big head scientist" [*sic*]; L. Ron Hubbard's claim that humans derive from incorporeal entities who became entrapped and self-forgetful while playing at "the game" of incarnation. However, Dick's bouts with psychological dysfunction, legendary binges on mind-altering substances, and heartfelt terror of FBI cooptation lend existential authenticity to his (knowingly) outrageous conspiratorial fabrications. In 1974 he reputedly received coded pictographic revelations beamed from a "Vast Active Living Intelligence System"—an event fictionalized in *Valis*, his magnum opus. The *Exegesis*, a two-million-word, 1,000+ page commentary on this experience develops the premise that time/space are delusional—an experimental labyrinth devised as a game by higher beings. Dick sporadically believed he had been contacted by the original, now immortal, Christian resistor to the tyranny of the Roman Empire, who had come into Watergate America to help bring down Richard Nixon ("The Savior woke me temporarily, & temporarily I remembered my true nature & task, through the saving gnosis, but I must be silent, because of the true, secret, transtemporal early Christians at work, hidden among us as ordinary humans" [Sutin 1995, 288]).

His more radical epiphanies notwithstanding, Dick's vision of how consensus reality might be produced by the conspiratorial manipulation of simulacra has passed into the mainstream through Hollywood films based on his novels (*Total Recall*, *Blade Runner*, *Minority Report*) or reflecting the appropriation of his conceptual paradigm (*Capricorn One*,

*The Truman Show*, *The Matrix*). His analysis has much in common with postmodern practitioners of “the hermeneutics of suspicion” such as Jean Baudrillard and Frederic Jameson, who have praised his work.

David Brottman

**See also:** Film and Conspiracy Theory; Mind Control; Paranoia.

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**Disunion, Fears of**

The 1780s seemed to many to be a truly critical period for the newly independent United States. By 1787 proposals for disunion had circulated throughout the states, and suspicions of disunionist conspiracy gripped the nation. Between 1781 and 1788, when the country functioned under the Articles of Confederation, economic dislocation and diplomatic difficulties converged to threaten the survival of the fledgling nation. Domestic political stalemate rendered Congress unable to take corrective measures. The thirteen states simply could not agree on a course of action. As the decade progressed, the states divided into regional factions, and fears grew that the country would break apart into regional political entities.

**Regional Factionalism**

The American regions had always perceived differences among themselves. Virginians and Massa-

chusetts Puritans were already trading insults by the 1650s, and throughout the colonial period people stressed the forces of climate, geography, economy, religion, manners, and customs that bound them together within each region but differentiated them from their extraregional neighbors. New England, the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and the western frontier all brought different, and often opposing, needs and expectations to the confederation government. By 1787 it seemed to many that such differences simply could not be resolved, that one government could not serve the needs of all. Despite increasing similarities of all regions over the eighteenth century, opposing regional interests and identities had fully crystallized by the time of independence, and people from different regions began to see each other as enemies.

Flare-ups of regional tension occurred throughout the decade. Alexander Hamilton noted in 1781 that support for the war tended to be regional in correspondence to the area under duress by British forces at any given time. Early in 1783, as Congress debated the perpetual problem of revenue, accusations flew that certain states were benefiting at the expense of others. Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts warned that states with common interests were seeking their own confederation because of the impasse. James Madison of Virginia clearly understood that Gorham was talking about regional divisions, for he worried to his fellow Virginian Edmund Randolph that such an occurrence would make the southern states easy prey for New England. Regional hostility exploded in 1786 over diplomatic negotiations with Spain. Southerners insisted that Spain grant the United States navigation rights to the Mississippi River, while New Englanders sought commercial privileges with the European nation. When Spain offered a commercial treaty at the expense of navigation rights, New Englanders favored the arrangement, while southerners believed that New England was literally trying to sell them down the river. For their part, when the South blocked passage of the proposed treaty, New Englanders fumed that the South meant to strangle their commercial lifeline.

### Fears of Disunionist Conspiracy

The idea that separate governments might better serve the American regions received increasing attention in New England during the confederation period. At first used as a warning in an attempt to garner interregional cooperation, some New Englanders seriously contemplated the benefits of separate governments based on regional affiliation. They pointed to the opposing interests of the regions and the resulting political stalemate. New England alone, however, could pursue its own interests without southern interference. Following up on Gorham's 1783 remark in Congress, Massachusetts politicians wrote among themselves in 1785 about the possibilities of regional confederations within the Articles government. During the diplomatic crisis of 1786, their tone became more serious as the concerned leaders began to contemplate outright disunion in their correspondence.

Such contemplation inflamed the fears of those who perceived a disunionist conspiracy. During the heated debate over diplomacy in 1786 James Monroe of Virginia began a letter campaign to warn fellow Virginians of intrigue. Men in Massachusetts were scheming, he proclaimed. Plans were underfoot to break up the United States into regional governments. Should circumstances progress far enough, he asserted, it would be necessary for the South to go to war with New England over Philadelphia, a commercial center the South badly needed. Monroe was not alone in his fears. The respected Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush wrote to an English correspondent that autumn of specific plans to divide the union into three confederacies, Eastern, Middle, and Southern. In late 1786 and early 1787, political leaders from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia worried among themselves about the prospect of disunion and competing regional governments, and David Humphries of Connecticut shared similar concerns with George Washington. Even foreign observers noted the possibility. As early as 1784 Richard Champion, a British writer, predicted that the United States would break up into three distinct republics, and advocated a foreign policy based on the prospect. Regarding the regional stalemate over Spanish

diplomacy in 1786, the French minister to the United States wrote his government that the South and New England were engaged in a power struggle. He suggested that navigation of the Mississippi River provided only the occasion, not the cause, of the regional hostility and disunionist schemes.

Providing further fodder for conspiracy theories of disunion, concrete proposals for breaking up the United States into several governments circulated in the spring of 1787 in the newspapers of all states. The articles asserted that the regional divisions of climate and geography could never be overcome by positive law, and therefore the regions should form separate political entities. Specifically directed to the upcoming Philadelphia Convention, one recommended that the convention consider regional governments, rather than revising or replacing the Articles of Confederation. In Philadelphia, the delegates did not consider disunion, but made continual reference to the possibility as the undesirable alternative.

At the Philadelphia Convention, the idea of disunionist conspiracy provided a bogeyman to attack. Perceptions of conspiracy fears also shaped the ratification debates. Federalists asserted that failure to ratify the new Constitution would result in disunion, new regional power structures, and interregional competition and warfare. Thus Anti-Federalists, Federalists claimed, supported disunion because they argued against ratification. Anti-Federalists protested their innocence, but fears of disunion lay deep enough for Federalists to continue to use the issue, and they often focused their arguments more on the evils of disunion than the virtues of the proposed Constitution. The accusations of disunionist conspiracy subsided with ratification, but continued to surface throughout the early years of the Republic, most notably in the turmoil occasioned by the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts, the Hartford Convention of 1814, the nullification crisis of 1832, and in the decade preceding the Civil War.

*Cheryl Collins*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Anti-Federalists; Hamilton, Alexander; Hartford Convention; Nullification; Slave Power.



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### Dollar Bill

The unique and esoteric symbolism of the Great Seal on the dollar bill has long been the subject of speculation and debate among conspiracy theorists. Many have linked the origin of the familiar symbols to the Masons or other secret or occult societies. The incorporation of these symbols into the Great Seal of the United States of America has been viewed as a sign that secret societies are controlling the nation and are attempting to assert control over the world.

After signing the Declaration of Independence, the Second Continental Congress decided that a seal should be designed for the new nation. After several years and the formation of several committees, the design was approved in June 1782. Members of the committee that selected the Great Seal included Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. Franklin and Adams were Masons, as were many of the nation's founders (including George Washington). The exact number of Masons among the founders has been a matter of debate. Some Masonic historians and conspiracy theorists view the Freemasons as the driving force behind the American Revolution and believe that they continue secretly to influence the U.S. government to the present. It is only natural, then, that the Great Seal would symbolize the Masonic brotherhood.

The front of the seal, which is on the right-hand side of the back of the dollar bill, depicts an eagle

holding an olive branch and arrows. The eagle has been the traditional symbol of American liberty for generations, but there has been speculation that the eagle was originally supposed to be a phoenix. The phoenix, which represents rebirth, dates to the time of the ancient Egyptians and has also been an important symbol in Masonic ceremonies and mythology. It represents being initiated and reborn into the Masonic brotherhood as well as being reborn into wisdom. The phoenix is the symbol of the thirty-third degree of Masonry, the highest level members of the Scottish Rite of Masonry can obtain. In occult circles, the phoenix is associated with the lost civilization of Atlantis. Early depictions of the Great Seal show a bird with a long, narrow neck and a tuft of feathers on the back of the head. While this description is very different from that of a bald eagle, it fits the traditional description of a phoenix. Conspiracy proponents believe the bird on the early seal was a phoenix. The presence of the phoenix is thought to have implied that the United States would become a new Atlantis guided by the Masons. The phoenix/eagle on the seal has thirty-two feathers on the right wing and thirty-three on the left, symbolizing again the highest levels of Scottish Rite Masonry. The bird's nine tail feathers are thought to represent the nine orders of the York Rite of Masonry. The scroll in the mouth of the phoenix/eagle is inscribed with the familiar phrase "E Pluribus Unum," which translates as "From Many to One." Usually this phrase has been assumed to refer to the uniting of the thirteen former colonies. It has also been said to reference the rise of monotheism. Conspiracy theorists see a double meaning in this phrase and believe it also represents the unity of the brotherhood of Masons and their plans to bring the entire world under the control of one secret organization. In later attempts to downplay the Masonic imagery in the eyes of the public, the eagle slowly replaced the phoenix, but the tuft of feathers is still visible on the back of the eagle's head.

The other side of the Great Seal, which is on the left-hand side of the back of the dollar bill, has been considered even more controversial. In the center of the seal is a pyramid without a capstone. Above it, in a triangle, floats the "All Seeing Eye of God," projecting rays of light. The unfinished pyra-

mid plays a major role in the symbolism of the Masons. The pyramid without a top represents the loss of ancient wisdom and the connection to God. When a person obtains the rank of Master Mason, they themselves become the capstone and a link to the divine. The pyramid also signifies the release of the Israelites from Egypt and is viewed as a symbol of freedom. Across the base of the pyramid on the seal is the date 1776 in Roman numerals, the year American independence was declared. A double meaning has also been attributed to this date, as 1776 was also the year the Illuminati, another secret society, was formed in Bavaria. Two sayings appear on the back of the seal. "Annuet Coeptis," which translates as "He Favors Our Undertakings," appears above the pyramid and the "All Seeing Eye." Across the bottom of the seal it reads "Novus Ordo Seclorum" or "New Order of the Ages." Among conspiracy theorists, this has been considered proof of the existence of the "New World Order," which is thought to be a network of secret societies and organizations with cross-membership that is working to create a world government controlled by a handful of powerful elites.

The number thirteen has a recurring role in the symbolism of the Great Seal. In the cloud above the eagle's head are thirteen stars. There are thirteen arrows in one of the eagle's talons and an olive branch with thirteen leaves in the other. The shield has thirteen stripes. The pyramid is made up of thirteen levels including the "All Seeing Eye." Both "E Pluribus Unum" and "Annuet Coeptis" contain thirteen letters. Despite the number thirteen's obvious symbolic connection to the thirteen original colonies, the recurring number has been viewed with suspicion. The number thirteen has numerous occult meanings, both positive and negative.

On the front of the dollar bill, unconnected with the Great Seal, is another supposed symbol of Freemasonry. The seal of the United States Treasury Department contains the Scales of Justice, a key, and a square. All three of these items are considered to be important Masonic symbols used in initiation ceremonies. Many conspiracy theorists agree that the Freemasons and the New World Order conspirators control the world's leading

financial institutions and use them to exert their will, and the Masonic and occult symbolism on the dollar bill is viewed as proof of this. Conventional historians tend to make a different interpretation. While most agree that there are elements of Masonic influence on the Great Seal of the United States, they believe that these elements were used, intentionally or unintentionally, because of their familiarity to the creators.

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**See also:** Anti-Masonic Party; Freemasonry; Illuminati; New World Order.

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### Domestic Terrorism

Since the mid-1990s domestic terrorism has been strongly associated with conspiracy theories. While acts of domestic terrorism have no necessary relationship to conspiracy theories, the two have been linked in two major ways. First, conspiracy theories have been defined as causes for, or leading to, domestic terrorism. In this thinking, particular conspiracy beliefs *lead* to acts of domestic terrorism. Second, a number of conspiracy theories have arisen *about* acts of domestic terrorism. In other words, conspiracy theories provide explanations for what is behind terrorism. Because of both of these aspects, there is a strong link between domestic terrorism and conspiracy theories.

#### Definitions

The terms "terrorism" and "terrorist" have been used to describe a wide range of violent actions against societies and governments. One of the major



Nothing but rubble remains of the front side of the destroyed Federal Building in the Oklahoma City bombing aftermath. On 19 April 1995, a fuel-and-fertilizer truck bomb exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, killing 168 people. Timothy McVeigh was convicted on first-degree murder charges for the worst terror attack on U.S. soil up to that time. (Ralf-Finn Hestoft/CORBIS SABA)

definitional difficulties associated with domestic terrorism, regardless of the connection to conspiracy theories, is coming up with a clear and rigorous meaning that is consensual. There is no clear agreement on what domestic terrorism is. For example, an armed and violent political organization can be classified as a terrorist group or as freedom fighters, depending on the political perspective of the classifier. Also, there are differing opinions whether the notion of domestic terrorism applies solely to actions carried out by ordinary individuals, or to actions carried out by the state and its agents.

In addition, there are also at least two ways of defining “domestic.” It could mean a violent political act that takes place within the national borders of the United States, the most famous example being the 11 September 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center. Even though the alleged terrorist network responsible for the act was interna-

tional in nature, the fact that it happened on U.S. soil makes it an act of domestic terrorism. The other definition of “domestic” requires that the perpetrators themselves be citizens of the nation under attack. The most famous case here is the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building, carried out by Timothy McVeigh, a U.S. citizen. With all of these differences it is no wonder that Richard E. Rubinstein, director of the Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, once argued that a “definition of terrorism is hopeless . . . terrorism is just violence that you don’t like.”

The United States Department of Justice defines domestic terrorism as “the unlawful use of force or violence, committed by a group(s) of two or more individuals, against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” This definition has

been modified to accent the target of domestic terrorism, namely, civilians or noncombatants.

### History

While domestic terrorism may seem to be a twentieth-century (if not 1990s) phenomenon, history provides numerous acts that could fit the definition. The word “terror” can at least be traced back to the Reign of Terror conducted after the French Revolution in 1789, in which thousands were executed in order to prevent and intimidate counter-revolutionary forces. In U.S. history, the Boston Tea Party has been viewed as a terrorist act, insofar as it was a public display of violence and destruction to achieve political and social ends (anti-British taxation). The American Revolution itself, in this view, depended on domestic terrorism against British colonizers to accomplish its goals.

A variety of rebellions arose in the first 100 years of the United States that could be characterized as terrorist. The Whiskey Rebellion tax revolt, suppressed by federal troops in 1794, was a case where military forces brutally responded to a violent uprising. During the mid-1800s, religious fundamentalism became violent, especially in the case of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons). Mormon insurrections were frequent in the Midwest and in Utah, as the beliefs and practices of the church (especially polygamy) clashed with dominant Christian beliefs and local laws. Rebellious Mormons ambushed and slaughtered over 100 California-bound migrants, which provoked a military response by President James Buchanan. Mormon protestors employed guerrilla tactics against the federal troops.

During the Civil War, wartime tactics that easily fall under the category of “domestic terrorism” were employed by both sides. After the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan was formed in order to enact vigilante justice and protect white southerners. Their tactics, including the burning of crosses, property destruction, obstructing blacks from voting, beatings, and lynchings were all designed to intimidate citizens (as well as government officials) through terror. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, labor struggles often included

elements of terror. From anarchist assassinations and bombings to the company-hired strikebreaking Pinkertons, violence and intimidation were tactics employed to further political and social ends.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, extreme protest took on a new character. The wave of demonstrations and riots sometimes turned violent, often with provocation by police forces (as, for example, during the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention). At Kent State University in 1970, four demonstrators were shot dead by National Guard troops. The Vietnam War period also saw the rise of antiestablishment and antiracist organizations that at times resorted to violence to further their goals. Premier among them was the Weather Underground Organization (formerly the Weathermen), who were blamed for a series of bombings (including the U.S. Capitol building), bank robberies, and shootings during this era. Their attempt to instigate a socialist revolution through violent provocation also included the jailbreak of Timothy Leary. Also active during this time was the Symbionese Liberation Army, whose claim to fame was the kidnapping and recruitment (or brainwashing, depending on your perspective) of Patty Hearst, granddaughter of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst.

### Contemporary Domestic Terrorism

The last twenty years of the twentieth century saw an explosion in the number of domestic terrorist groups, as well as the interests that motivate them. The U.S. Department of Justice classifies domestic terrorist groups into six categories: (1) violent Puerto Rican independence groups, (2) anti-Castro Cubans, (3) left wing, (4) right wing, (5) Jewish extremist, and (6) special interest. Among the last category’s members are antiabortion extremists, responsible for physical and psychological intimidation of abortion providers and patients, including the bombing of clinics and the murders of abortion providers. Groups like Operation Rescue, the Army of God, and the American Coalition for Life Activists have been implicated in, or accused of endorsing, a number of these crimes.

Ecoterrorism, done in the name of environmental preservation, has also come under recent



scrutiny. Animal rights organizations that use harassment and intimidation fall under this category (e.g., the Animal Liberation Front, which targets institutions that conduct unethical research on animals, as well as those that profit from this mistreatment). In addition, more general environmental activists like Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front have been dubbed domestic terrorists (the latter by the FBI in 2001).

In the 1990s, domestic terrorism achieved a prominence that it never had before. On 26 February 1993, the World Trade Center was rocked by a bomb in its underground garage. The explosion, caused by a homemade fertilizer bomb, killed six people and injured more than a thousand. On 4 March 1994, the jury found Mohammad Salameh, Ahmad M. Ajaj, Mahmud Abouhalima, and Nidel Ayyad guilty on thirty-eight counts related to the bombing. This event was an act of domestic terrorism only according to the definition that emphasizes the place of the event (on U.S. soil). The Arab identities and foreign citizenship of the convicted perpetrators would make this an act of international terrorism under other definitions. Similarly, the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the downing of the airplane over Pennsylvania, can be seen in this light. The ongoing investigation into 9/11 is primarily focused on an international terrorist network, especially Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden.

Conspiracy theories have abounded with these WTC attacks. One proposed motivation for the attacks is the alleged conspiratorial tendencies of the Arab mentality. Daniel Pipes's work on Arab paranoia stresses how conspiracy theories are a part of daily life in the Middle East. The antisemitic and anti-Western nature of these theories, according to some analysts, leads to extremist behavior. A number of other conspiracy theories point to other sources. In the 1993 attack, the fact that an FBI informant had provided much of the damning evidence against the accused has led to the belief that the FBI agent was a provocateur; that is, someone who incited and provided the materials for the bombing. In the 2001 attack,

numerous theories abounded that the terror was a result of (1) an inside job in the U.S. government designed to provoke a global war and domestic martial law; or (2) a Mossad (the Israeli secret service) conspiracy to incite anti-Arab sentiment around the world and evoke support for Israel's policies. Some theories combined the two narratives, arguing that the purpose of the terrorist acts was to usher in a New World Order and perhaps the final Armageddon.

### **Oklahoma City and the Militias**

A number of domestic terrorist acts occurred in the 1990s, including the 1996 Atlanta Olympic bombing and the continued bombings of the Unabomber (which led to the arrest of Ted Kaczinski). Along with these came the increasing threat of chemical and biological terrorism, which erupted in Japan with the 1996 Sarin gas attacks by the Aum Shinrikyo cult, and spilled over into the twenty-first century with the post-9/11 anthrax mailings. But the event that dramatically propelled domestic terrorism and conspiracy theories into the public arena was the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. In addition to the scale of the destruction (169 dead, including 19 children), what was significant about this event was the fact that it was done by U.S. citizens against other U.S. citizens. Timothy J. McVeigh, a white Desert Storm veteran, was arrested and subsequently executed for the crime. During his trial, the prosecution stressed that a major motivation for the bombing was McVeigh's conspiracy beliefs. Most significantly, McVeigh believed in a government conspiracy and cover-up in the 1993 destruction of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. The David Koresh-led religious organization had lost eighty-seven members in a fiery end to a months-long siege, when federal law-enforcement agents stormed the residence with tanks and CS gas. The date of the assault, 19 April 1993, was two years to the day before the Oklahoma City bombing.

Timothy McVeigh, an avid consumer of Waco conspiracy theories, became the exemplar for the dangerous results these beliefs could produce. His alleged brief experience with the militia movement

propelled these armed groups into national prominence. While militias were never legally linked to the Oklahoma City bombing, much media scrutiny was placed on them, and the Patriot network in general. This loose collection of disgruntled citizens included tax resisters, constitutionalists, white supremacists, Christian Identity members, right-to-bear-arms activists, and general antigovernment protestors. Conspiracy theories were often associated with the Patriot movement, especially theories that proposed that a New World Order was imminent. The image of the conspiracy-obsessed militia member anchored the link between conspiracy beliefs and violent domestic terrorism. This association was spread by official government spokespeople, private watchdog organizations (such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Center on Hate and Extremism), think-tank experts, scholars, and even Hollywood films (like the 1999 film *Arlington Road*).

At the same time, there were plenty of conspiracy theories about the Oklahoma City bombing itself. Steven Jones, McVeigh's lawyer, published a book-length account that claimed McVeigh was a foot soldier in a larger network of domestic and international terrorists. David Hoffman, in his book *The Oklahoma City Bombing and the Politics of Terror* (1998), provides the most thorough example of these theories. Hoffman meticulously arranges the loose ends developed by other conspiracy theorists (including the two-blast theory, that there was more than one explosion recorded); the lack of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) agents in the building during the bombing; the ATF informant Carol Howe's testimony; the eyewitness accounts of McVeigh accomplices; and numerous other details) into a broad account of why the bombing occurred. Along with Adam Parfrey, Hoffman makes the argument that terrorism, to be effective, requires a claim of responsibility. No one claimed responsibility for the bombing, and many militia groups condemned the act.

Like many Patriot members, Hoffman charges that the Murrah Building bombing was planned and executed by government insiders, in coordination with foreign agents, in order to turn popular

support away from antigovernment groups and towards government institutions. According to this theory McVeigh was a patsy, similar to Lee Harvey Oswald in the Kennedy assassination. The bombing was pseudoterrorism, a pretext for the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act and the widespread curtailing of civil liberties.

This theory about the Oklahoma City bombing draws on longer standing theories about terrorism in general—namely the “strategy of tension.” The “strategy of tension,” it is argued, is a counterinsurgency tactic that involves staging violence in order to blame it on one's enemy. The 1933 Reichstag fire, allegedly started by Nazi forces, was blamed on Communist groups to turn popular German support to the Nazi regime. Operation Gladio, which took place primarily in Italy in the 1970s, involved government infiltration and provocation of leftist groups to commit acts of terror. Some conspiracy theories argue that many of the pretexts for the twentieth century's wars (the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the USS *Maine*, the Gulf of Tonkin incident, and Pearl Harbor) were deliberately engineered to garner popular support for going to war.

Jack Z. Bratich

**See also:** Boston Tea Party; COINTELPRO; Freemasonry; Haymarket Bombing; *Lusitania*, Sinking of; Militias; Mormonism; Nativism; New World Order; Oklahoma City Bombing; One-World Government; Pearl Harbor; Pentagon Papers; Tonkin Gulf Incident; Unabomber; USS *Maine*, Sinking of; Waco; Weathermen; Whiskey Rebellion.

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### Dominion Theology

While evangelical Christians agree on expecting the Second Coming of Christ, they differ as to what they should do in the meantime. While some argue that in a fallen world, Christians must confine themselves to the saving of souls, others contend that it is their duty to seek to reform society's institutions. In the late 1970s, the emergence of the Christian Right marked a considerable step forward for the latter argument. But what this involved was far from clear. In part, it entailed a defense of the evangelical subculture against what was seen as a secular humanist conspiracy. But it also involved attempting to reverse recent legislative changes, particularly as regards abortion, and some in the Christian Right harbored more ambitious aspirations still. The United States, they argued, had originated as a Christian nation and in the future its institutions

should be based on the Bible. In arguing this, the more intransigent elements in the Christian Right were drawn to a range of theories about the relationship between God and government that are collectively known as Dominion theology.

The central biblical text for Dominionists is Genesis 1: 26–28, where God declares that man shall have dominion over all the earth. This is seen as directing believers to create both a Christian government and a Christian culture and has been particularly associated with a school of thought known as Reconstructionism. Founded by a Presbyterian thinker, Rousas John Rushdoony, Reconstructionism argues for a free-market economy, the ending of government-provided education and welfare, and, most controversially, the restoration of Old Testament sanctions that will include the death penalty for murder, adultery, homosexuality, and incorrigible juvenile delinquency. In 1965 Rushdoony founded Chalcedon Inc., subsequently the Chalcedon Foundation (named after a fifth-century church gathering), but it was not until the 1980s that Reconstructionism began to attract attention from within the broader Christian community. By this time, Rushdoony had broken with his son-in-law, Gary North, who would become a particularly prominent publicist for Reconstructionism through his Institute for Christian Economics and his authoring of a number of books. A third figure, Gary DeMar, and his group, American Vision, were another crucial element in the movement, while a broader organization, the Coalition for Revival, was set up to bring together Reconstructionists with other adherents of Dominion theology. Some members, unwilling to adopt the full Reconstructionist argument, resigned from the organization, and another dispute, which broke out at Pat Robertson's Regent University Law School, led to the removal of its dean. Tensions among Dominionists have emerged around a number of questions. Where Reconstructionism was particularly associated with Presbyterian churches, charismatic Christians (distinguished by their belief in "speaking in tongues" and divine healing) represented a different tradition. There were differences, too, over how the so-called creation mandate found in Genesis related to the return of Christ. Most

evangelicals believed in what was called premillennialism, that Christ's return would precede the bringing about of Godly government and then a final battle with Satan. Reconstructionists, however, were postmillennialists, believing that they would come to power before the Second Coming.

Within this milieu, conspiracy thinking found a ready audience. Rushdoony himself was a supporter of the John Birch Society, while North wrote the epilogue to a conspiracist text by the John Birch Society author, Larry Abraham. Subsequently publishing a version under his own name, North declared that the enemies of the United States were "a conspiracy of super-rich and super-powerful insiders." But behind them, he declared, was Satan himself.

*Martin Durham*

**See also:** Apocalypticism; John Birch Society.

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### Donnelly, Ignatius

Ignatius Donnelly (1831–1901), known as “the Prince of Cranks” and “the Apostle of Discontent,” was a politician, farmer, newspaperman, orator, reformer, and popular author of an apocalyptic dystopian novel, who became a leader of the Populist Party in the 1890s. As both a political organizer and movement intellectual, Donnelly contributed greatly to the political culture of the Populist Party and to the conspiratorial imagination of late-nineteenth-century agrarian radicalism. In his speeches and writings for the party, Donnelly gave voice to the deeply held belief that the spread of plutocracy and monopoly capitalism left the United States “on the verge of moral, political and material ruin.”

Born in Philadelphia, Donnelly moved to the utopian community of Nininger in rural Minnesota in 1856. After the community broke up, Donnelly remained in Minnesota where he fought for the “have nots” against the “haves” as lieutenant governor in the state legislature, in Congress, and as the president of the Minnesota Farmers Alliance. Donnelly was also a prolific author, writing books on the existence of Atlantis, the scientific basis for Armageddon myths, and *The Great Cryptogram*, in which he argued that Francis Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's plays.

Donnelly's most important literary work is the novel *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century*. Published in 1890, *Caesar's Column* extrapolates what he saw as the worst tendencies of the 1880s—unfettered capitalism, bribery and corruption, the degradation of labor, and the monopolization of culture by the rich—and constructs a narrative around the cataclysmic self-destruction of this imagined destiny. Set in 1988, *Caesar's Column* begins with the protagonist's arrival in New York City by airship where he finds a magnificent city of glass-covered streets and pristine high-rise buildings. However, this utopia above ground is paralleled by the hell found underground, where the teeming millions of the working class are brutalized into a near-bestial state. This absolutely divided society is ruled by an inner council of oligarchs and dictators who maintain order with a fleet of airships known as “Demons” armed with poison bombs. While the rich have grown decadent and autocratic, the working class has also lost its ideals and organized itself into the nihilistic Brotherhood of Destruction. Conspiracy thus faces conspiracy and when the rebellion begins it sets off an uncontrollable riot of looting and massacre. So many people are killed in this massive uprising that bodies clog the streets. Imagining himself a conqueror, Caesar Lomellini, the military leader of the Brotherhood, orders the bodies piled up in Union Square and encased in concrete, forming a gigantic column to stand as a monument to the uprising. At the novel's end, Caesar himself is murdered, and as the city burns the protagonists escape the conflagration in an airship to begin a new society in Africa based upon Populist values.



After publishing *Caesar's Column*, Donnelly rose through the Minnesota Farmer's Alliance to become one of the leading intellectuals of the Populist movement. Donnelly authored the preamble to the Populist Party platform of 1892, a philosophical statement that powerfully expresses the moral and political outrage behind the rapid growth of the Populist movement among both farmers and industrial workers. Delivering the preamble in person at the party convention in St. Louis, Donnelly dramatically asserted: "From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires. . . . A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forebodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism" (Hofstadter).

Donnelly's suggestion of "a vast conspiracy" of financial manipulators was interpreted by historian Richard Hofstadter as evidence of the reactionary nature of the Populist revolt, and that this "folklore" revealed Populism to be a hayseed movement that was led by "pseudo-intellectuals" who were possessed by the "paranoid style of American politics." However, Donnelly's statement can also be read not as evidence of demagoguery, but as a cultural expression of a distinct structure of feeling that united U.S. farmers and workers in the 1890s. Increasingly subjected to the manipulation of railroads and banks, and reduced from their proud status as autonomous working men to "wage slaves," Populist Party leaders and followers alike articulated this monopolistic intrusion as a *deliberate depravation* of their much-prized independence. Without democratic change, Donnelly demands, the conspiracy of the present could become the *Caesar's Column* of our future.

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### The Dorr War

A popular armed uprising in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1841, the Dorr War sought to extend the restricted suffrage of the state constitution. Although some conspiracy-minded historians have argued that Tammany Hall, the New York Democratic Club, was responsible for the Dorr War or manipulated unrest over suffrage in Rhode Island to gain partisan advantage, it appears that Tammany did not enter the picture until late in the dispute and gained very little from it.

Reformers had protested for years about the right to vote being limited to property owners. By 1840 a majority of adult males no longer owned real estate in Rhode Island, but many did possess a significant amount of personal property. Suffrage requirements were contained in the royal charter granted by King Charles II in 1663, which became Rhode Island's constitution in 1776. The charter also apportioned representation on the distribution of population as it was in 1663, so that as people moved from rural areas to the cities, urban dwellers became vastly underrepresented.

In 1811 the Rhode Island Senate with a Republican majority passed a bill to extend the suffrage, but the Federalists in the House defeated it. Popular agitation began with a mass meeting in Providence in 1820, and the legislature responded by putting the suffrage question to a vote of the people. But with only property owners voting, it lost 1,600 to 1,900. In 1825, when a convention to rewrite the state constitution considered extending the suffrage, only three delegates voted for it. Then, qualified landowners voted against ratifying the proposal, which contained a reapportionment. Four years later, 2,000 persons appealed to the legislature to extend the suffrage, but the House reported that landholders were "the only sound part of the community." They argued that if the landless did not like it, they should acquire real property or move elsewhere. In 1832 more petitions met the same fate.

Growing dissatisfaction manifested itself in the formation of the Constitutional Party at a meeting of representatives from ten communities on 22 February 1834 in Providence. The next month twenty-nine-year-old attorney Thomas Wilson Dorr, Harvard class of 1823, addressed another meeting of delegates from twelve towns. When only 700 persons voted for its candidates in 1837, the party disbanded.

Then, in the autumn of 1840, Dr. J. A. Brown organized an anti-Whig group called the Rhode Island Suffrage Association, which spread to every town in the state. It published a paper called the *New Age*, held mass meetings characterized by lively speeches, wore badges, waved banners, and paraded with a band. When the legislature rebuffed the people's petitions, the association called for a People's Day on 17 April 1840. Three thousand attended the demonstration in Providence and adjourned to Newport the next day, where delegates appointed a committee to call a People's Constitutional Convention, and paraded through town, several carrying guns.

Events moved rapidly. On 28 August 1841, 7,512 people voted for delegates to the People's Convention, which drafted a constitution on 4 October. They revised it on 16 November and called for its ratification. From 27–29 December, 13,944 people voted for, 52 against. The People's candidate for governor was the same dedicated and obstinate Thomas Dorr, who had addressed the Constitutional Party meeting in 1834. He was the son of an aristocratic Woonsocket manufacturer, a respected member of the community, a onetime Federalist, an anti-Jackson Whig, a pro-Van Buren Democrat, president of the Providence School Committee, treasurer of the Rhode Island Historical Society, and representative in the state legislature. On 18 April 1842, 6,359 people voted for him to lead a new People's government.

But the charter authorities were not idle. They opposed what they considered a usurpation of authority and provided severe penalties for those who ran for office or voted in the People's election. To prevent his being arrested, Dorr called for an armed escort on inauguration day, 3 May. According

to the *Providence Daily Journal*, 3,000 people marched in the inaugural parade, approximately 850 under arms. The next day the charter government declared Rhode Island in a state of insurrection.

On 17 May Dorr and seventy armed volunteers forced a six-man, sword-armed guard to surrender the Armory of the United Train of Artillery and captured two six-pound cannons. By 1:00 A.M. the next day Dorr's troops dwindled to 250 men. They approached the Providence Arsenal in a fog under a flag of truce, and Dorr demanded the Arsenal surrender. From his well-fortified position with an overwhelming force Colonel Blodgett refused, but held his fire. Dorr lit the fuses on his cannon. There was a flash of powder in the pan, but no report and Dorr and his troops slipped away in the early morning fog. The next day he escaped to Connecticut. He tried to establish his government again and met the same opposition.

The only fatality in Dorr's War occurred on 27 June. In Chepachet, a group of brick-throwing Dorr sympathizers from Massachusetts assailed the Kentish Guard at the Pawtucket Bridge. When the crowd failed to disperse, the Guard volleyed over their heads. The crowd continued to throw bricks and the Guard fired into the crowd, killing one man.

On 21 June 1842, the state legislature called a constitutional convention with delegates apportioned on the basis of the 1840 census. The convention drafted articles extending the suffrage and redistricting the legislature, and the people ratified the new document, ending the longtime struggle.

Both sides appealed to the national government for assistance, but all three branches demurred. President John Tyler refused to send troops, the Senate tabled a resolution requiring the president to inform Congress of his actions, and Chief Justice Roger Taney, speaking for the Supreme Court in an 8–1 decision involving a dispute over which government was the proper authority, wrote:

“No one, we believe, has ever doubted the proposition, that, according to the institutions of this country, the sovereignty in every State resides in the people of the State, and that they may alter and change their form of government at their own pleasure. But whether they have changed it or not

by abolishing an old government, and establishing a new one in its place, is a question to be settled by the political power. And when that power has decided, the courts are bound to take notice of its decision, and to follow it" (*Luther v. Borden*).

When Dorr returned to Providence in October 1843, after being celebrated by Tammany Hall in New York, the government arrested him at the City Hotel, tried him before the state Supreme Court, and convicted and sentenced him to life in prison. The legislature released him on 27 June 1845, restored his civil rights in May 1851, and pardoned him in January 1854. He died a year later at age forty-nine.

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## Drugs

Apart from the possibility that the excessive use of certain drugs can make the user paranoid, illicit drugs have been at the center of a number of conspiracy theories over the past century. One cluster of conspiracy theories surrounds the use of opiates, and another focuses on marijuana.

### Opiates

Opiates—opium, morphine, and heroin—have figured largely in drug conspiracies. One of the earliest conspiracy theories surrounding opiates in the United States concerned Chinese immigrants on the West Coast. When Chinese immigrants began

arriving in the United States around 1870, their habit of smoking opium drew condemnation. Chinese laborers, derogatorily called "coolies," were essential to the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, but when economic depression beset the country in the late nineteenth century, white fears of labor competition, combined with Chinese opium smoking, led to repression of the Chinese population. Nativism, xenophobia, and the conviction that opium smoking posed a threat to U.S. society helped lead to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese immigration to the United States. Other repression came in the form of local and state laws that targeted Chinese Americans, as well as harassment by native-born whites, particularly on the West Coast. In 1875 a San Francisco City ordinance banned opium smoking. Stories of Chinese immigrants who lured white females into prostitution, along with media depictions of the Chinese as depraved and unclean, bolstered the enactment of anti-opium laws in eleven states between 1877 and 1900. On the federal level, in 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Opium Exclusion Act, which forbade the importation of smoking opium. Although no fully formed conspiracy theory emerged among anti-opium advocates, by the turn of the century the association between Chinese immigrants, opium, and societal decay illustrated the widespread belief that opium smoking (or the consumption of any psychoactive substance for non-medical purposes) threatened to erode the Anglo-Saxon race's ability to propagate itself. Put another way, during the Social Darwinist-infused days of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, drug addiction among white Americans was thought to result in racial suicide.

More delineated conspiracy theories concerning opiates materialized during and after World War II. Propagating numerous drug conspiracies was Harry J. Anslinger, who served as commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) from 1930 to 1962. Anslinger had an imposing physical appearance: somber-faced, bald, thick-chested, and square-jawed, he resembled a cross between Benito Mussolini and the infamous British satanist Aleister

Crowley (Sloman, xi). As head of the FBN, Anslinger dominated U.S. drug policy for thirty years, during which time he maintained the link between foreigners and drugs, brought a high level of bureaucratic order to federal drug policy, embarked upon a campaign to demonize and restrict marijuana, melded antinarcotics policy with U.S. foreign policy and security issues, and sought repressive measures to deal with addicts and dealers. During World War II Anslinger charged the Japanese with conspiring to spread narcotics addiction throughout the West, remarking that a drug-sodden nation could offer little resistance to an invading Japanese military. The Japanese were flooding China with narcotics during the war but no evidence corroborated their supposed plan to foment addiction in the United States. Similarly, in the early cold war years, Anslinger unrelentingly maintained that heroin addiction was part of Communist China's plan for subversion in the United States. Lacking any proof of such a conspiracy, Anslinger nonetheless fostered stories and images of syringe-wielding Chinese soldiers poised to take over the free world and outlined the details of the Chinese Communist Party's heroin conspiracy in his 1953 book *The Traffic in Narcotics*. Anslinger's conspiracy theories demonstrated the link between federal drug policy and national security issues, which is to say that the FBN's claims were in line with America's anticommunist mission in Asia. The commissioner never recanted his accusations and his claims persisted into the 1970s.

In a reversal of Anslinger's claims, two other drug conspiracies emerged during the cold war, which charged the U.S. government, not foreign nations, with spreading narcotics addiction and using drugs for undemocratic purposes. One conspiracy theory accused the CIA, from the 1950s through the 1980s, of willingly allying itself with narcotics (opium, morphine, and heroin) traffickers in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as part of the agency's anticommunist crusade in Asia. By supplying these unsavory elements with funds, equipment, and intelligence, the CIA provided a zone of protection around drug lords and blocked investigations of their clients' drug running. Ultimately, the CIA con-

tributed to the global narcotics trade by sanctioning their allies' involvement.

Researchers, such as Alfred W. McCoy, have unearthed evidence corroborating the link between the CIA and narcotics traffickers in Asia but deny the existence of a full-blown conspiracy in which the CIA intended to foster trafficking and addiction internationally, including Europe and the United States. Rather, the CIA's short-term goal of using narcotics traffickers as self-sustaining paramilitary forces during the cold war blinded the agency from foreseeing the long-term growth in the region's drug trade after the U.S. government no longer needed its clients' services. In essence, the CIA, narrowly focused on anticommunism, deemed its clients' expanded drug trafficking abilities as only "fallout" from overriding cold war concerns. For instance, when narcotics produced by CIA allies supplied U.S. addicts—as in the case of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam using heroin trafficked by South Vietnamese, Laotian, and Thai officials—the CIA, bound by law to provide intelligence on drug trafficking, illegally prevented investigations of Southeast Asian officials. Damning facts such as these have lent the air of conspiracy to the CIA's relationship to the international drug trade.

Another drug conspiracy leveled at the U.S. government involved the Nixon administration's drug policy and the White House's reorganization of federal drug enforcement agencies. In the early 1970s President Nixon launched his "war on drugs" in response to a burgeoning heroin epidemic in the United States. Like Harry J. Anslinger, Nixon cast blame on foreign nations for America's addiction problem. Nixon favored the use of federal drug control agencies as the answer to the country's supposedly growing rates of drug abuse. Part of Nixon's solution entailed the creation of the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence (ONNI), Office for Drug Abuse and Law Enforcement (ODALE), and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which replaced the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), the FBN's successor agency. The executive branch oversaw these agencies and critics accused the president of using them for purposes not related to drug control. Specifically, skeptics



argued that Nixon manufactured a drug scare that distracted the U.S. public and Congress and allowed the administration to create White House-controlled federal agencies that were used for surveillance and harassment of political enemies, not apprehending drug dealers.

Critics charged ODALE and ONNI as being little more than a White House private police force. ODALE, housed in the Justice Department, was authorized to conduct no-knock search warrants and warrantless raids, as well as to use court-ordered wiretaps. Such an agency had the capacity to act above the law and did on occasions. Indeed, key figures in the Watergate scandal—G. Gordon Liddy, Egil Krogh, E. Howard Hunt, and Lucein Conein—were all involved in federal drug control agencies. Liddy developed the creation of ODALE. Conein, a CIA agent, apparently developed a special assassination force—ostensibly aimed at major drug traffickers—within the DEA after that organization’s creation in mid-1973. Krogh served as deputy assistant for the president for law enforcement and helped set up the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention (SAODAP), which established federal methadone clinics. Interestingly, the federal methadone clinics—aimed at helping heroin addicts—drew criticism from African Americans as a ploy to keep inner-city populations addicted to hard drugs. In the end, the Plumbers, drawn from the Nixon administration’s drug control apparatus, and the resulting Watergate scandal derailed Nixon’s quest for unchecked executive power.

### **Marijuana**

Like the opiates, conspiracy theories formed around marijuana, a drug outlawed in 1937 by the Marijuana Tax Act. Similar to the Chinese immigrants’ negative association with opium smoking, marijuana was linked to another stereotyped immigrant group, Mexicans. During the first few decades of the 1900s local and state restrictions on marijuana, particularly in the West and Southwest, were established as the drug was purported to cause smokers to commit crimes. Tales of stoned Mexicans who craved violence and were immune to pain were common. Throughout the first half of the 1930s Anslinger

resisted calls for federal legislation banning marijuana, believing that the states could best control the matter. But by 1936 Anslinger reversed course and embarked on a campaign in which he first stated that he had underestimated the marijuana threat and then proceeded to depict the weed as worse than heroin, and the harbinger of death and discord. Drug policy scholars have attributed Anslinger’s turnaround to his shrewd concern for bureaucratic survival—he used the marijuana issue to justify his and the FBN’s existence.

According to this line of thinking, Anslinger did not create a marijuana scare; he joined one already in progress and bolstered it to best of his ability with lurid testimony at congressional hearings and in newspaper and magazine articles. Anslinger’s article “Marijuana: Assassin of Youth,” which appeared in the July 1937 edition of *American Magazine*, was a prime example of FBN antimarijuana propaganda. The article, as did most of Anslinger’s marijuana horror stories and other sensationalized accounts like the Hollywood film *Reefer Madness*, involved American youths and linked the drug with serious crimes (such as murder, rape, and mutilation), insanity, promiscuity, and general immorality. For Anslinger, the consequences of inhaling the killer weed ranged from patricide and fratricide—as the commissioner often recounted in the case of a Florida youth—to the possibility that a user would turn into a “philosopher, a joyous reveler in a musical heaven,” a statement that linked marijuana and jazz music (Anslinger 1937, 150). The outcome of all the scare tactics and misinformation was the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, which initially curtailed hemp production, but ultimately served as the basis for criminalizing marijuana users.

Countering Anslinger’s view of marijuana as a generator of crime and death is the conspiracy theory best articulated by Jack Herer in *Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy: The Emperor Wears No Clothes*. According to Herer, bureaucratic survival was not at the heart of Anslinger’s antimarijuana campaign. Rather, Anslinger’s role in demonizing marijuana stemmed from his participation in a concerted effort by powerful economic interests to stamp out competition from the hemp industry.

Specifically, Anslinger, the E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company (DuPont), business magnate Andrew Mellon, and the media giant William Randolph Hearst worked hand in hand to prevent a growing hemp industry from offering cellulose-based products, such as paper (and potentially textiles and plastics), from competing with DuPont's products. By the 1930s DuPont had developed patents for producing paper from wood pulp and also had plans to make plastics from petroleum products. Andrew W. Mellon, secretary of the treasury and owner of the Mellon Bank of Pittsburgh, which was one of only two banks DuPont dealt with, appointed his future son-in-law to head up the newly created FBN in December 1930. Anslinger's appointment to the FBN, housed in the Treasury Department, tied him to Mellon's and DuPont's financial interests, which included stunting a hemp industry that had grown over the 1920s and 1930s. The Hearst newspaper syndicate, the nation's largest, was also tied economically to the wood-paper industry. Moreover, Hearst, known for his disdain of jazz music, Mexicans, and African Americans, readily published antimarijuana tracts that put his newspapers in line with the federal government. Ultimately, all of these actors constituted a conspiracy orchestrated to make hemp illegal. According to this theory, the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, far from outlawing a supposedly murderous drug, was in fact legislation designed to further DuPont's financial fortune.

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**See also:** CIA; Cocaine; LSD.

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# E

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## Encryption

Encryption, which derives from the Greek word “kriptos,” refers to the concealment of information through the conversion of plain text into ciphered or encoded text. So pervasive is this ancient expression of secrecy that encryption might be read as the physical manifestation of conspiracy in language. From the court conspiracies of the Middle Ages to the world of cold war espionage, countless conspiracies and conspiracy theories have been based on the encoding or decoding of encrypted messages. The earliest example of encryption can be traced back to 1,900 B.C. when unconventional hieroglyphics were found on the tomb of Khumhotop II in the place of more standard inscriptions. While their intent was not to make the message secret, but rather to obscure its meaning and thus attract the attention of passersby, it nevertheless stands as one of the first known examples of codemaking. The *Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana catalogs encryption (or, “secret writing” and “secret talking”) as the forty-fourth and forty-fifth of the sixty-four arts, along with others such as meditation, cooking, and bookbinding. Other examples include cuneiform tablets in ancient Mesopotamia and the *atbash* cipher of the Old Testament. Yet it was not until the mid-ninth century that cryptography developed into an actual science. Arab scholars produced influential treatises and studies of the subject, and invented the equally important discipline of cryptanalysis (the decipherment of encrypted messages) primarily through methods of frequency

analysis. This legacy can still be identified in the word “cipher,” which originates from the Arabic *sifr*, or “zero.”

One of the earliest and simplest methods of encryption is the substitution cipher. This system is credited to Julius Caesar and employs an alphabet in which plaintext letters are replaced by the third letter that follows in the alphabet; thus A becomes D, B become E, and so on. The closely related transposition method involves the rearrangement of plaintext letters in a word or a sentence, creating a kind of anagram. More often, the transposition method relies on a preestablished key possessed by both the sender and receiver of the message, such as a parallel list of plaintext and ciphertext alphabets. Closely allied to encryption, and often used in conjunction with it, is the practice of steganography (from the Greek word for “covered writing”). Steganography, which according to Herodotus is at least as old as 440 B.C., refers to the secret transmission of a message. In classical times this might mean using invisible inks, such as milk or urine, or even going as far as tattooing a message on the head of a slave and allowing his or her hair to grow back. In modern times, messages have been photographed and reduced to the size of microdots, electronically embedded in image files, and placed in plain view on the Internet.

Since its beginnings, encryption has emerged as one of the fundamental necessities of statecraft. Its use in political affairs became well established in the Western world in the seventeenth century when



black chambers were established by nations across Europe. The black chambers, such as France's Cabinet Noir and Vienna's Geheime Kabinets-Kanzlei, operated as secret rooms where messages between diplomats and other government personnel were intercepted and cryptanalyzed, before proceeding through the postal service to their addressees. In France, Cardinal Richelieu recognized the value of decrypting the messages of foreign powers, and with the help of Antoine Rossignol (and later his son, Bonaventure), began developing new methods of cryptanalysis, even inventing the Great Cipher (*"le chiffre indéchiffrable"*) of Louis XIV.

Encryption has proved no less important in the twentieth century, having had far-reaching effects in both the Machiavellian intrigues of political life and in wartime. One of the most famous episodes in the history of encryption and cryptanalysis occurred during World War II, in which codebreakers at Bletchley Park, notably Alan Turing, cracked the German Enigma code by developing on the work of Polish mathematician Marian Rejewski. The ability of the Allied forces to decipher all German communications enabled them to protect shipping lanes, monitor troop movements, and better coordinate attacks, ending the war far sooner than if they had been unable to crack the code. The other famous codebreaking machine to emerge from the work at Bletchley was Colossus, which was used to break the German Lorenz cipher, and later became the forebear of the modern computer.

In recent times, there has been no shortage of government attempts to control the spread of strong encryption, particularly after the invention of Public Key Encryption by Whitfield Diffie. Of particular note is Phil Zimmerman's public key encryption program PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) which was posted to a Usenet bulletin board as freeware in June 1991 and has since spread across the globe. Zimmerman wrote and released PGP in 1991 in order to forestall Senate Bill 266, an anticrime bill that would have forced the manufacturers of communications devices using encryption to install back doors through which the government could easily read all correspondence. The distinction of PGP is

that it allows individuals with conventional home computers to send RSA-encrypted messages via e-mail that are effectively impossible for intelligence organizations to decode. By September 1993, Zimmerman was being investigated by the San José Office of U.S. customs for the illegal "export" of his program, a case that was finally dropped. Since the U.S. Department of State classified encryption technologies as "munitions," to be regulated under the Arms Export Control Tax, Zimmerman was considered an illegal arms exporter.

The eventual furor created by the release of PGP and the investigation of Zimmerman brought the issue into public awareness like never before. On one side, there existed an unlikely union of civil libertarians, privacy advocates, and big business (concerned about corporate security and the protection of Internet transactions). On the other side, the government and security agencies argued that they would be unable to read the communications of drug cartels and terrorists, thereby hampering their investigation and prosecution of criminals. Various compromises have been proposed by the U.S. government, such as key escrow, in which all private encryption keys are held by a neutral third party and relinquished to law enforcement bodies in criminal investigations, yet it has not had wide support and the issue of government controls on encryption remains largely undecided.

Although strong encryption has in recent years entered the public domain, the National Security Agency (NSA) is still largely responsible for its development and control. The NSA has stood at the forefront of cryptanalytical science for the last half century and has played a role in almost every encryption-related issue since its inception. Established in 1952 by the presidential directive of Harry S. Truman, the NSA began its life as the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), eventually expanding to become larger than the CIA. For many years, its name did not appear on any governmental documentation and its budget remains a matter of great secrecy. Though the NSA is in one sense a modern-day black chamber, it is also the largest information gathering and cryptanalytical body history has ever seen, administering the

ECHELON program, employing more mathematicians than any organization in the world, and cryptanalyzing both domestic and international communications for use by U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies. There is also some evidence that it has been involved in industrial espionage by passing on information to U.S. companies in order to win lucrative international contracts. Unsurprisingly, modern conspiracy theories, novels, and films such as *Sneakers* (1992), *Mercury Rising* (1998), and *Enemy of the State* (1998) have cited it, rather than the CIA, as the newly definitive enemy of the people.

Tony Elias

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Hackers; National Security Agency; Venona Project; Zimmerman Telegram.

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## Eugenics

Eugenics refers to methods of improving the hereditary qualities of a race or breed. Some critics of eugenics have argued that in the hands of a powerful government it would be used to make genetic alterations to control potential criminal and antisocial behavior.

Eugenics literally means “well-born” and describes efforts to improve society by breeding better people—by encouraging the reproduction of people with “good” genes and discouraging those with “bad” genes. At least fourteen countries, including the United States, enacted some form of eugenics practice in the early twentieth century.

The practice of eugenics in the first half of the twentieth century in the United States led to the compulsory sterilization of 60,000 “feeble-minded” people in thirty-three states, and indeed, compulsory sterilizations continued to be legal in California

until the 1970s. The U.S. Supreme Court case *Buck v. Bell* (1927), allowed (in its words) the sterilization of the feeble-minded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed, dependent, orphaned, tramps, homeless, and paupers as a means of bettering society.

The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor in New York was the headquarters of eugenics research in the United States from 1910 to 1940. Here, scientists promoted their racist ideals under the guise of science, convincing the U.S. Supreme Court and more than twenty states that their ideas were valid.

Other organizations involved in the eugenics movement included the American Breeders Association, the Race Betterment Foundation, and the American Eugenics Society. Such organizations promoted the myths of genetic causes of a wide range of psychological and behavioral disorders. Eventually, the Public Health Service and the Surgeon General aligned with the eugenics movement.

As eugenicists produced their science, universities including Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Brown offered courses in eugenics. By 1928, approximately 20,000 students were enrolled in almost 400 courses at universities in the United States. At the same time, laws were enacted restricting immigration into the United States, requiring sterilization of the “feeble-minded,” and forbidding interracial marriages. Very wealthy people not only stood behind the validity of eugenics but also encouraged it. These people included David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, Mrs. E. H. Harriman, who gave \$15,000 to the Eugenics Record Office, and corporate giants John D. Rockefeller and John Harvey Kellogg. The Pioneer Fund, a nonprofit grant foundation in New York, still gives grants to researchers studying potential applications of eugenics.

The science of the eugenics movement was motivated by social forces. The idea of eugenics was first used to promote the legitimacy of the ruling class in England in the late 1800s, based on the notion of Social Darwinism. Sir Francis Galton posited that the ruling class passed on its leadership qualities to its offspring; thus leadership stayed in the family. Its most extreme version was

promoted by Adolph Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, and eugenics became a part of Nazi ideology.

The eugenics movement in the United States developed at a time of social and economic difficulty. The influx of large numbers of immigrants into U.S. cities at the beginning of the twentieth century led to rapid urban and industrial growth, and increased competition for scarce jobs. The resulting social problems led to fear of the poor and the foreign and resulted in attempts to control these groups. Social ills were blamed on individuals with “bad genes” rather than on the structure of U.S. capitalistic society.

The study of criminality began with the so-called Chicago School of Criminology, which emerged largely as a result of environmental and social conditions, including extensive foreign immigration, that materialized at the turn of the twentieth century in Chicago. From 1860 to 1910, the city’s population doubled every ten years, and by the turn of the twentieth century the city’s population was over 2 million inhabitants, largely as a result of immigration from Europe. With new immigrants in an overcrowded environment, official rates of crime and disease escalated. Thus, it is not surprising that efforts to reduce crime and control the population occurred mostly in these areas.

Eugenicists studied family trees in order to trace traits that they thought were passed from one generation to the next. Mental tests designed to identify immigrants with bad gene pools at one point designated more than 75 percent of all Russian and Polish immigrants as “feeble-minded”; few noted the degree of absurdity in such claims.

Well-known research produced by Richard Dugdale and Henry Goddard seemed to justify the practice of eugenics. Richard Dugdale was asked in 1874 by the Prison Association in New York to inspect county jails; as a result, he became intrigued by the high incidence of kinship among inmates. He used his own funds to conduct an extended investigation of one large kin group living in and around Ulster County, New York, whom he dubbed the “Jukes.” Dugdale eventually uncovered a family of some 709 descendants of a Dutch immigrant named Max.

In 1875, Dugdale reported his findings to the Prison Association and eventually wrote “*The Jukes*”: *A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity*. Dugdale located six members of the “Jukes” family in a county jail and traced the genealogy of the family back over 200 years. In so doing, he discovered that a large number of the family members were poor, ill, and involved in prostitution and had illegitimate children; these activities supposedly cost the state of New York millions of dollars per year.

Criminologists now assert that Dugdale’s study had a major impact on attitudes about the causes of crime at the time, even though it was based on unreliable information and was plagued by value judgments and unsupported conclusions. Indeed, many interpret the Jukes study as an effort to convince society that poverty and crime are the inevitable results of bad stock. In fact, Dugdale was a public health reformer who wrote in support of treatment for physiological disorders to cure social ills, rather than promoting “solutions” such as sterilization or worse. Nevertheless, many used Dugdale’s findings to support a eugenics movement aimed at improving society through restrictions on immigration and forced sterilization.

The Kallikak family is a fictitious name given to another family studied by U.S. psychologist Henry Goddard. Goddard collected data for a longitudinal study that would contrast the descendants of one “upstanding man” and his upstanding Quaker wife with the descendants of the same man and an illicit “tavern wench.” Kallikak is a pseudonym that comes from two Greek words, good (*kallos*) and bad (*kakos*). Goddard assigned this name to the family to help illustrate the effects of “moronic breeding” (“moron” was a term used to describe people with a mental age between eight and twelve years).

Previous to his study of the Kallikaks, Goddard and his assistants had worked with the staff at Ellis Island to identify “morons” attempting to immigrate to the United States. Their work at Ellis Island had supposedly given them sufficient expertise to classify mental capacity by sight.

Goddard located the descendants of the “upstanding man” and the “tavern wench” (*kakos*) living in

poverty and compared them to the “legitimate” descendants of the married couple (kallos). As Goddard expected, the results of the study confirmed that the kakos line were much more likely to be troubled or in trouble than the kallos line. Goddard published the results of his study in *The Kallikak Family* (1912), but in fact he had doctored photos of the kakos line to give the individuals a more depraved and sinister appearance, for example, by painting dark circles under the eyes of small children.

The science of eugenics was flawed in many ways. For example, the methods used to study ethnic and racial variation in various behavioral traits were poorly defined and difficult to measure. Surveys filled out by professionals working inside institutions and advocates of the eugenics ideals contained falsified data and dishonest findings. Other data were collected from school principals of children and friends and acquaintances of adults. Often, the only evidence presented by eugenicists was anecdotal, drawing conclusions about entire ethnic and racial groups based on stories about a particular family or individual. Key concepts of study were poorly and subjectively defined according to middle-class white standards that immediately biased findings against some racial and ethnic groups. The main proposition of eugenicists, that genes caused a wide range of behavioral problems in individuals, was illogical and simplistic. Other larger level factors in society were ignored as important for understanding human behavior.

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### Executive Intelligence Review

*Executive Intelligence Review* is a weekly news-magazine published by the Lyndon LaRouche organization. LaRouche, the magazine’s contributing editor, published articles and “exposés” that contributed to the development of his conspiracy theories involving Jewish politicians, international bankers, the British royal family, and drug dealing. The editors of the *Executive Intelligence Review* also published books and shorter monographs on a variety of topics by expanding articles originally published in the magazine.

The magazine emerged out of Lyndon LaRouche’s 1971 plan to develop a worldwide intelligence operation. He proposed that the operation be organized like a major national news weekly. The New Solidarity International Press Service (NSIPS) was incorporated by three LaRouche followers in 1974. As a news service, LaRouche’s intelligence operatives used journalistic cover complete with press passes to gain access to government officials. *Executive Intelligence Review* was created as money flowed into the operations of the NSIPS. During the Ford and Carter administrations, *Executive Intelligence Review* operatives gained White House press accreditation and participated in a number of presidential press conferences. The news service also opened bureaus in capitals around the world. By 1979, *Executive Intelligence Review* was producing about \$4 billion in revenue—not surprisingly, since the annual subscription rate was nearly \$400.

Many of the articles that appear in *Executive Intelligence Review* were expanded into books. One



of the more famous books was *Dope, Inc.: the Book that Drove Henry Kissinger Crazy* (1992). In this book, the editors exposed what they saw as the real aims of the United States government's "war on drugs." According to the book, "the kingpins of the U.S. branch of the drug cartel, led by Henry Kissinger and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith launched a years-long effort to silence the authors [of an earlier edition], starting with LaRouche, who was railroaded to federal prison in late 1988." President George H. W. Bush kept LaRouche in prison, according to the book, because LaRouche was about to reveal the complicity of the federal government in the drug trade.

In *The Ugly Truth about the ADL*, the editors of *Executive Intelligence Review* exposed the Anti-Defamation League as "one of the most dangerous organizations in the world." The book portrays the ADL as a spy organization supplying intelligence data to foreign governments. It cites the 1994 San Francisco spy scandal as an example of the role played by the ADL in spying on the United States. At the end of 1993 it was revealed that an ADL operative in San Francisco, Roy Bullock, collected and traded information in a covert spy network involving the San Francisco police, some twenty other California police departments, and police departments outside of California. Over thirty years Bullock compiled a huge computerized data bank including files on close to 1,000 groups and 10,000 individuals. Bullock provided information to the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and sold information on antiapartheid activists to both South African agents and the ADL. *The Ugly Truth* also linked the ADL to organized crime by connecting contributions from reputed gangster Meyer Lansky to the Anti-Defamation League.

Despite the connection to Lyndon LaRouche, the *Executive Intelligence Review* received some

attention from the mainstream press. In 1988, Nelson Benton, a reporter for the magazine, asked President Ronald Reagan about the fitness of Democratic Party nominee Michael Dukakis to be chief executive of the United States. A rumor had been circulating for some time that Dukakis twice underwent psychiatric treatment in the 1970s. President Reagan answered the question, thus allowing the rumor to gain additional credence. Jeffrey Steinberg, a senior reporter for *Executive Intelligence Review*, appeared on British television in 1998 to present the theory that Prince Philip ordered British intelligence to assassinate Princess Diana. The latter incident indicated how much the British royal family was a target of the LaRouche network. *Executive Intelligence Review* regularly reported that Queen Elizabeth ran an international cocaine smuggling cartel and that Italian banker Roberto Calvi was murdered by the Duke of Kent. The *Executive Intelligence Review* also claimed that the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was a first strike in a British attempt to take over the United States with the eventual goal of world domination.

*John David Rausch, Jr.*

**See also:** Antisemitism; British Royal Family; Drugs; Kissinger, Henry; LaRouche, Lyndon; Oklahoma City Bombing.

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*Executive Intelligence Review* website: <http://www.larouchepub.com>.

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## **Farrakhan, Louis**

Louis Farrakhan is the leader of the Nation of Islam, an organization he helped reconstitute in 1977. He has been praised by his supporters as an influential and eloquent leader who has used his position of authority to foster a stronger sense of self among African Americans, such as in his organization of the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. Farrakhan's detractors, however, have decried him as a racist who traffics in divisive and antagonistic rhetoric. His espousal of many specific conspiracy theories as well as his tendency to speak generally of "the enemy" and "them" has led critics to label him a purveyor of paranoia.

Born Louis Eugene Walcott in New York City, Farrakhan was raised in Boston by his mother. He never knew his father (who died when Farrakhan was three years old), but his mother was a strong disciplinarian and devout Episcopalian who had a strong influence on his life. As a young man, he went into show business, becoming a well-known singer, musician, and dancer under the stage name of "Calypso Gene." Persuaded by Malcolm X to attend a speech given by Elijah Muhammad, Farrakhan became a member of the Nation of Islam in 1955. He changed his name first to Louis X, then to Louis Haleem Abdul Farrakhan in 1965.

Farrakhan rose to prominence in the Nation of Islam, replacing Malcolm X as leader of the Temple in New York City after his assassination in 1965. After the death of the longtime leader of the Nation of Islam, Elijah Muhammad, in 1975, the leader-

ship of the Black Muslims passed to Muhammad's son, Warith Deen Muhammad. The younger Muhammad soon abandoned many of the tenets of his father and changed the name of the group several times. Farrakhan led a movement to reestablish the traditions of Elijah Muhammad, and in 1977, he became the leader of a reconstituted Nation of Islam.

Farrakhan's powerful and often divisive rhetoric has won him both staunch support and strong animosity in and out of the Black Muslim movement. After Malcolm X broke with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam in 1964, Farrakhan wrote in the *Nation*, the newspaper of the Nation of Islam, that such people were "worthy of death." The fact that these words were published shortly before the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965 fueled speculation that Farrakhan was involved in a conspiracy to kill his rival.

The nature of the relationship between Farrakhan and Malcolm X has continued to be a source of controversy. In 1995, Qubilah Shabazz, one of the daughters of Malcolm X, was arrested on suspicion of plotting Farrakhan's assassination in retaliation for her father's murder. The case was suspended, however, and Qubilah was sent to a psychiatric care center in Texas. Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, reconciled with Farrakhan and Farrakhan stated that both he and Shabazz were victims of a "larger conspiracy."

Farrakhan often uses language and imagery that suggest he himself is a target of persecution and

conspiracy. He has often hinted that drugs, crack cocaine in particular, were brought into black communities by the federal government as a way of destroying them, and that this was in part a response to his own growing influence during the 1980s.

Farrakhan has been denounced as an antisemite, largely because of statements in which he has suggested Jews played a dominant role in the slave trade. He has also suggested that Jews created AIDS and intentionally infected black children with it. A number of Farrakhan's assistants have also caused controversy by making antisemitic remarks. He has also been accused of more general racism toward white people for his adherence to many of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad that describe white people as "blue-eyed devils" who have conspired to rob blacks of their rightful place in society. A firm proponent of race separatism, Farrakhan has preached the evils of blacks marrying nonblacks (and whites in particular).

Farrakhan also invokes well-worn images of conspiracy in his rhetoric, including references to Masonic orders, multinational bankers, and numerology.

Supporters counter that he is simply carrying on the call for self-reliance that has been at the heart of the Black Muslim movement since its inception. This self-reliance, they argue, necessitates a separation from white culture, but it should not be equated with racism.

Farrakhan has also been condemned for his role on the international stage, particularly his trips to Libya, Syria, and Iraq. For several years, he was banned from entering Great Britain. Yet Farrakhan has often turned his condemnation by others into a political asset, suggesting that he is criticized because he represents a real threat to the political and economic systems that still enslave African Americans. He has often suggested that he is the subject of numerous assassination plots by those who fear his message of black empowerment.

In recent years, however, Farrakhan has taken some steps to broaden his appeal. In 1995, Farrakhan led the organization of the Million Man March, a gathering of African American men in

Washington, D.C., for a "day of atonement." While Farrakhan's involvement caused controversy, even some of his critics conceded that the march had the potential to be a catalyst for positive change. Farrakhan also moved the Nation of Islam closer in its belief systems to traditional Islam, which helped reconcile him with Warith Mohammad. Although they still maintained leadership of two separate groups, Farrakhan and Mohammad announced their unity at the second International Islamic Conference in Chicago in February 2000.

*Ted Remington*

**See also:** AIDS; African Americans, Cocaine; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam.

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## Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is largely synonymous with two things: its longtime director, J. Edgar Hoover, and the anticommunist feeling Hoover shared with the majority of his countrymen during the early cold war. It would certainly be a mistake to assert that the FBI was only concerned with questions of espionage and a self-professed goal of preventing Communist subversion; primary among FBI concerns were such activities as bank robberies, kidnapping, and mail fraud (Schrecker, 207). Nevertheless, after World War II, the agency's primary focus centered around its efforts to contain the spread and influence of communism. Such ac-

tivity largely defined the organization, and certainly accounts for much of its notoriety in conspiracy circles. Historians have argued that the FBI was “both cause and effect, as well as most obvious beneficiary” of U.S. anticommunism (Watters and Gillers, xiv).

This, however, was not the intention of the FBI’s designers. The brainchild of Attorney General Charles Bonaparte, the agency was born out of Progressive Era impulses toward centralization and efficiency. Responding to the inadequacy of local authority to address interstate crime, the FBI was originally charged with combating postal and antitrust violations, as well as other types of financially related fraud; only later did the agency’s mandate expand to include organized crime targets such as the Mafia, Prohibition, and the Ku Klux Klan. Three things happened that were to greatly expand the power of the FBI, and the first was the ascent of J. Edgar Hoover to its directorship in 1924. Hoover radically increased both the scope and professionalism of the FBI—for example, he inherited an organization with nine field offices; six years later, there were thirty. He was head of the FBI for the next forty-eight years, and the organization’s subsequent history is in large part the biography of Hoover himself.

Second, the United States passed several pieces of legislation (including the Eighteenth Amendment, beginning Prohibition) that created interstate crimes for the FBI to enforce. In particular the Mann Act, which aimed to combat interstate prostitution trade, and the Dyer Act, which aimed to curtail car theft, provided arenas and authority for the FBI to act. Third, during World War I, concerns over espionage justified the broadening of FBI activity to unearthing spy networks. After it, the threat posed by political radicalism set the stage for the most prominent FBI work of the century: combating communism.

Americans have long viewed radicalism as a potential threat to the stability and security of their country; anticommunism was not born in 1945, merely intensified. Accordingly, the FBI redoubled its efforts in this area, to combat the threat—real and perceived—posed by the Soviet Union. The

cold war had military and political aspects; it also had domestic ones, and the FBI was at the forefront of these. It led the way among government agencies concerned about the influences that Communists inside the United States and the U.S. government could have. Fear of such insurgency was widespread among Americans, providing fertile ground for Joseph McCarthy. The era dubbed “McCarthyism” was characterized by a widespread hysteria throughout U.S. society, wherein many suspected Communists were hounded from jobs, public life, and homes for the most tenuous of (purported) radical sympathies. Behind McCarthy’s ability to make accusations lay the FBI; he and like-minded politicians (many on HUAC, the House of Representatives’ Un-American Activities Committee) would hardly have been able to establish any credibility without information supplied by the FBI, and McCarthy freely admitted that he got the bulk of his information from the organization (Bayley, 46). The FBI may have been the silent partner in McCarthyism, but it was in fact the dominant one.

After Hoover died, revelations about the nature and extent of the information gathered shocked the nation. In an essay entitled “Why I Got Out of It,” a former FBI agent details the myriad ways that the agents would infiltrate potentially subversive political groups to obtain information on the members (as part of COINTELPRO, the program of domestic surveillance and infiltration begun in the 1950s). He also discusses the selection of targets—a process done with almost reckless disregard for the likely level of the threat. Suspicion was often confined to “liberal” groups, and black ones were particularly suspect: “It seemed that every politically dissident black man was a candidate for investigation” (Watters and Gillers, 378). Under the guise of investigating potentially subversive groups for dangerous activity, the FBI acted as a political organization, investigating liberal groups with far more abandon than conservative ones.

These “FBI files,” born out of concern for alleged conspiracy, have become the center of suspected conspiracies themselves—particularly among those on the Left who have felt most threatened by the agency. Web searches can draw a raft of



links detailing alleged FBI involvement in conspiracies connected to the Kent State shootings, UFOs, the Kennedy assassination, the Mafia, and the Martin Luther King assassination among many others. There is no common thread connecting these alleged conspiracies, but the mid-1970s revelations of the FBI's wiretapping activity has made the agency a target of conspiracy thinking itself. These revelations coincided with a declining faith in the U.S. government after Watergate and the Vietnam War. Perhaps as a result, the FBI is now perceived as a wellspring of conspiracies as much as a discoverer of them.

David Hecht

**See also:** Anticommunism; COINTELPRO; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; McCarthy, Joseph.

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## Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an independent disaster management agency that reports to the president of the United States. Although it has been frequently accused of being involved in conspiratorial activities by those on the far right of U.S. politics, FEMA's official role is "to reduce loss of life and property and protect

[America's] critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery" (FEMA 2002). This means that FEMA plans for and deals with problems caused by such natural phenomena as hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes, as well as man-made disasters such as chemical spills, nuclear accidents, and fires. It also has responsibility for emergencies created by war, terrorism, and other acts of civil disturbance. The agency has 2,500 full-time employees, supplemented by over 5,000 standby reservists. FEMA's headquarters are located in Washington, D.C., but it maintains regional and area offices around the country.

Many members of the American Patriot movement in particular, however, do not accept the official version of what FEMA does. For them the agency is a key part of a global conspiracy to impose a tyrannical and oppressive New World Order on the United States. Believers in this conspiracy theory contend that less than 10 percent of FEMA's staff are actually assigned to preparing for and dealing with natural disasters such as storms and earthquakes; the rest, it is argued, are involved in formulating plans to overthrow the Constitution and turn the United States into a military dictatorship. In 1992 the Liberty Lobby's newspaper, the *Spotlight*, reported that blueprints for this dictatorship could be found in a top-secret safe in FEMA headquarters.

According to such members of the Patriot movement, FEMA is best understood as a "secret" or "shadow government" that is waiting to assume control of the United States once a presidential declaration of martial law has been made in response to either a sufficiently serious genuine national emergency or one that can be convincingly "manufactured." Examples of such an emergency are said to include the threat of imminent nuclear war, massive terrorist attacks, an outbreak of rioting occurring in several U.S. cities simultaneously, a series of natural disasters affecting a large section of the U.S. population, or a major environmental disaster. Martial law having been declared, FEMA's extensive emergency powers will then come into operation. Patriot groups argue that FEMA, acting under these powers, will be

able to ignore all existing laws, move entire populations at will, arrest and detain citizens without a warrant and hold them without trial, seize property and food supplies, and even suspend the Constitution itself. For the Militia of Montana, in such circumstances the “American people and all their belongings become chattel of FEMA, and the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces will be in absolute control of our country” (Militia of Montana).

Led by Gerald “Jack” McLamb, a retired police officer from Phoenix, Arizona, the Patriot organization Police Against the New World Order (PANWO) has further contended that the Los Angeles riots of 1992 were carefully planned by FEMA as a test to see how Americans would react to the imposition of martial law. According to PANWO the test worked out much better than New World Order “social planners” had expected. This was because very few citizens complained about the presence of army personnel on their city streets in the mistaken belief that they were there simply to restore order. FEMA personnel are also said to fly many of the unmarked “black helicopters” operating around the United States in preparation for a United Nations takeover of the country; to be engaged in the construction of concentration camps for the imprisonment of U.S. dissidents; to be implicated in the abductions undertaken by visiting UFOs; and to be operating a secretive state-of-the-art monitoring installation in a hamburger processing plant in Salt Lake City where over 800 telephone numbers are monitored, with particular attention being given to companies engaged in the sale of guns and ammunition.

In 1998 the idea that FEMA allowed the White House to suspend constitutional government following a declaration of martial law was given widespread public exposure when it was expressed by one of the leading characters in *The X-Files* movie, Dr. Kurtzweil (Martin Landau). The movie also made the case that FEMA was one of the principal agencies involved in covering up the alien genesis and human extermination project, a theme that had been a mainstay of the “mythology” aspect of the long-running television show of the same name. FEMA responded by suggesting that viewing its activities as part of a global conspiracy to hide the

presence of aliens from the U.S. population was to seriously confuse the “true mission” of the agency (FEMA 1998).

FEMA was created under executive order by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. At this time it took over the activities of various other agencies such as the Federal Insurance Administration, the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, and the National Weather Service Community Preparedness Program. Civil defense responsibilities were also transferred to the new agency from the Defense Department’s Defense Civil Preparedness Agency. Some of the major disasters and emergencies FEMA has been involved in since its creation include the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania in 1979, the Loma Prieta earthquake in California in 1989, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. The “true mission” of FEMA was brought into renewed focus by the September 11 al-Qaida terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. Under its director Joe M. Allbaugh, and in conjunction with the newly created Office of Homeland Security, FEMA was given new responsibilities for dealing with issues of national preparedness and homeland security in the wake of the attacks. This included training and equipping what FEMA calls “the nation’s first responders” in how to deal with weapons of mass destruction (FEMA 2002).

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**See also:** Liberty Lobby; New World Order; *The Spotlight*; UFOs; *The X-Files*.

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### Federal Reserve System

It was a conspiracy theorists' dream come true: a group of wealthy bankers, supported by academics and politicians, skulking off to a secluded island to concoct a complete transformation of the U.S. banking system. The meeting in November 1910 on Jekyll Island, Georgia, which established the blueprint for the Federal Reserve System, played to long-held Populist fears of "Eastern Money Interests," Jews, and large banks. When the plan was presented to Congress, it effectively increased the authority of the federal government—at least, indirectly—over the nation's banking system.

Ever since concerns about "foreign interests" in the First and Second Banks of the United States, some Americans had viewed banks suspiciously. Writers such as William Gouge and politicians such as Thomas Hart "Old Bullion" Benton advocated a metallic standard of gold and silver coin only. These "hard money" proponents supported Andrew Jackson's "war" on the Bank of the United States and distrusted all forms of paper money. Although "hard money" advocates were in the minority in most states, they appealed to farmers and laborers who distrusted moneyed elites. After the Civil War, ironically, this same distrust evidenced itself in a *demand* for paper money ("Greenbackism") and/or for coinage of silver, a position best associated with William Jennings Bryan.

By the late 1800s, however, although most Americans were satisfied with the nature of the banking system, they realized that important weaknesses existed. The banking system was not sufficiently "elastic," meaning that it could not expand or contract the money supply when economic conditions changed. Another concern for those familiar with the financial sector was that in several panics—1873, 1893, and 1907—a single banker, J. P. Morgan, had stepped in with a consortium of bankers to rescue the system. After the 1907 panic, even Morgan admitted that any future bank runs might be beyond his ability to contain.

A series of commissions and studies by the American Bankers Association and the federal government produced a number of recommendations, most notably the need for a central bank and nationwide interstate branch banking. (Many states did not permit intrastate branch banking, and interstate branch banking was viewed as illegal, although no express challenges to interstate banking had occurred.) Virtually all of these studies concluded that any reforms in the banking system would require a powerful national bank capable of acting as a "lender of last resort" and tasked with providing liquidity to the banking system as a whole to allow for greater "elasticity."

An unstated, but widely held, goal of many of the reformers was also to limit or reduce the power of the New York banks, such as National City Bank, J. P. Morgan, and Kuhn, Loeb, and Company. Despite the fact that Morgan himself and most of the officers of National City were Protestants, a widely held suspicion existed in the rural United States that the New York banks were dominated by Jews. (The presence of Paul Warburg of Kuhn, Loeb among the Jekyll Island group of "conspirators" reinforced the fear of "powerful New York Jews.") Whether many Americans indeed feared a Jewish element in the "money power" or not, a popular conception was that banks in New York wielded inordinate power. Thus, the reformers' plans also involved different strategies for minimizing the influence of the New York banks.

By 1913, the United States had what is termed a "dual banking" system consisting of state-chartered

banks (which could not issue money), and national banks, chartered by the federal government, which could issue banknotes. The *comptroller of the currency* had authority over all national banks, while state authorities (bank examiners and such) supervised the state banks. There was no central bank or “lender of last resort,” or any national source of credit expansion.

Following J. P. Morgan’s formation of a consortium of banks to bail out the banking system during the panic of 1907, concerns arose over the “consolidation” of banking power, especially in New York. Congressman Arsene Pujo’s House Banking and Currency Committee, which convened in 1911, investigated Morgan and First National’s George F. Baker, and concluded that New York banks controlled far more financial assets than they actually owned through various investments, interlocking directorates, and trust companies. New York, Pujo claimed, controlled 43 percent of the money in the United States.

When the Jekyll Island meeting took place, all of these concerns played upon the reforms to which the participants agreed. The central individuals who drafted the basis of the Federal Reserve Bank system were Senator Nelson Aldrich (head of the National Monetary Commission); Henry P. Davison of J. P. Morgan; Charles D. Norton of First National Bank; Paul Warburg of Kuhn, Loeb; and Colonel Edward House (one of President Woodrow Wilson’s closest advisors). Not only was this a small group, but conspiracy-minded people could point to the fact that Warburg was Jewish, or that House had connections to London banks and that he had written a futuristic novel *Philip Dru, Administrator*, a story in which Marxist socialism triumphed. Worse, the meeting took place in secret. Aldrich, especially, was concerned that if a plan was not drafted in secret, “special interest” lobbyists would nitpick it to death.

Aldrich’s presence convinced some that John D. Rockefeller was manipulating the meeting. Morgan, according to one conspiracy view, was a “Rockefeller stooge”—an astonishing claim about one of the richest men in the world. Morgan controlled the Fed bill through Aldrich, his “floor broker in the

Senate” (Allen, 45). Rockefeller then used the Fed, according to this view, to “bankroll” the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, manipulate stock prices through inflation, and push the agenda of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Trilateral Commission in later years.

There is no question among historians that the Jekyll Island meeting resulted in the essence of the Federal Reserve Act, introduced by Congressman Carter Glass of Virginia, chairman of the House Committee on Banking. Far from being drafted in secrecy, the Federal Reserve Act was debated extensively and was subjected to much compromise before being passed overwhelmingly by the House (298 to 60) and the Senate (43 to 25). Under the act, twelve Federal Reserve District Banks were established in different regions across the United States. Each of these banks was a corporation owned by the member banks in its district, and while all national banks had to be members, state banks were not required to join the Federal Reserve System. Member banks had to place 6 percent of their capital and surplus in the district bank. One of the significant factors of the act was the location of the district banks: New York, of course, had one, as did Philadelphia and Boston. But Minneapolis, Dallas, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Cleveland, and Richmond all had district banks, and the state of Missouri—the heart of the Midwest—had two (St. Louis and Kansas City). Clearly, Congress had gone out of its way to dilute the “money power” of New York.

Any district bank could act to stop runs by providing emergency cash from its vaults, and in theory, if one entire district was in trouble, other districts would come to its aid. The “elasticity” problem was addressed through the Fed’s manipulation of discount rates to lend money to member banks to either expand, or contract, credit.

In reality, though, New York retained its power through its overall influence, its dominant leadership, and its connections to corporate America. Congress intended that a Federal Reserve Board of Governors should be instituted, made up of five members appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, as well as the comptroller and the secretary of the Treasury. The Banking Act of





Federal Reserve Bank entrance. (ChromoSohm/Corbis)

1935 changed this by moving key decisions to the Federal Open Market Committee, composed of seven members of the Board of Governors and five of the twelve district bank presidents, including the New York president.

The Federal Reserve Act was established on the assumption that the nation's money supply would remain tied to gold, and thus its open-market activities were always balanced with an eye toward the gold stockpiles. When the stock market crashed in 1929, many contended that the Federal Reserve had encouraged the stock market "boom" by providing "easy credit." Subsequent research has shown that if anything the Fed failed to expand the money supply in proportion to the rapid growth in the industrial sector, and that a slow but destructive deflation had occurred. After 1930, the Federal Reserve engaged in a deliberate massive credit contraction that helped plunge the nation into the Great Depression, still under the assumption that the Great Bull Market had resulted from "loose money." The contraction also ensued, however, because as other nations

left the gold standard, and as the gold backing of U.S. banks eroded, depositors withdrew funds at an alarming rate. President Franklin Roosevelt took the United States off the gold standard, stabilizing the banks. But his prohibition of individual gold ownership in 1934 was viewed as part of the conspiracy to place all financial power in the hands of the Federal Reserve System.

The entire gold standard controversy pits a number of conspiracy theories against one another. For example, if the Bank of England sought control over the U.S. economy, it might have attempted to weaken the economy by leaving the gold standard. With the United States left as the only nation in the world whose currency was still tied to gold, U.S. gold reserves would have flooded out, and U.S. banks would have collapsed—as nearly happened. On the other hand, the solution, and the path taken by Franklin Roosevelt, was to secure the banking system's gold asset base by prohibiting individual gold ownership, except for jewelers and dentists. Yet this is viewed by other conspiracy theorists as evidence

of Roosevelt's plan to centralize the economy and make citizens dependent on worthless paper money.

In fact, only a perfectly coordinated international conspiracy, assisted by the deliberate actions of totalitarian states that hated each other—Germany and the Soviet Union—could have possibly manipulated such events. Not only would the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve System have needed to operate in unison, but so would the Bank of France, the Reichsbank, and virtually every other central bank in the world, all coordinating vastly different command-and-control structures, governance systems, and national goals. Over these conspiracies, one can stretch yet another layer, namely that of “international Jewry,” which was manipulating economic developments to its own ends, some in concert with, and some antithetical to scenarios involving the British or a Roosevelt dictatorship.

Since World War II, some have been convinced that the Federal Reserve's open-market activities were designed to ensure that those presidents favored by the Fed maintained their office, and those who displeased the Fed lost theirs. Despite the Fed's supposed independent status, many argue that it has conveniently lowered rates to support the economy of leaders to whom it was favorably disposed. Yet one of the most despised presidents of modern times, Bill Clinton (whom conspiracists have accused of being a “Trilateralist and Bilderberger”), witnessed multiple interest-rate hikes by the Fed during his two-term presidency. Thus, either he had no control over the Fed, or the Fed was working in direct opposition to the ends of the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Bilderberger group.

In the post–World War II era, the Bretton Woods agreement pegged foreign currencies to the dollar, and although the dollar was legally required to be convertible into gold, it was nevertheless pegged to gold in price. That system collapsed in 1968 after consistent federal budget deficits made it impossible for the dollar to hold its value. After that, the world's currencies entered a more competitive era in which they “floated,” or competed, against each other.

A more consistent criticism of the Federal Reserve is that it has virtually eliminated gold and silver

coinage, supposedly in violation of the Constitution. With all paper money in the control of the federal government, the economy would be at the mercy of either the White House or the Fed, and individuals would become slaves to “fiat money.” For more than two decades after the Great Depression, the prohibition against holding gold remained in place, but in the early 1970s, the government once again allowed individuals to buy and sell gold coins. Although the value of Canadian Maple Leafs and other popular gold coins fluctuated wildly with the price hikes in oil emanating from OPEC, in the 1980s the Fed's anti-inflation policies nearly eliminated any premium on gold. For the next twenty years, gold hovered steadily at historically low prices, causing consternation among those who pointed to gold as a key indicator of government-generated inflation.

If anything, the Fed has consistently lost control of the banking system and seen its influence over the economy weakened. The appearance of electronic funds transfers and high-speed satellite transmissions made information on financial markets available anywhere in the world, instantaneously. No government could hide weaknesses in its monetary or fiscal policy for more than a few hours. Meanwhile, the speed of banking transactions brought the United States—and the world—increasingly closer to competitive money, if not in actual paper form, at least in electronic form and in credit/debit card substitutes.

*Larry Schweikart*

**See also:** Gold Standard.

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## Film and Conspiracy Theory

Films that center on or significantly include a conspiracy have been around as long as most other genres of fiction films. To take one notorious early

example, *The Birth of a Nation* (dir. D. W. Griffith 1915) portrays the original Ku Klux Klan (KKK), positively, as a conspiracy by Southern whites to overturn gains made by African Americans during the post-Civil War Reconstruction. Generally, though, traditional “secret societies” such as the KKK have appeared in films only sporadically. (Two recent examples are the organization based on Yale University’s Skull and Bones society in *The Skulls* [dir. Rob Cohen 2000], and the legendary Illuminati in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* [dir. Simon West 2001].) As in many conspiracy theories, conspiracies in films tend to be amorphous. And as with all genres of popular film, conspiracy movies follow cycles that vary with changing trends in the wider culture (Altman). There have been three major cycles: from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s during the cold war, from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s in the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate era, and from the early 1990s to the present.

### **The Cold War and the “International Communist Conspiracy”**

The first important cycle of conspiracy films begins in the late 1940s with the start of the cold war and concern over the so-called international Communist conspiracy. Some of these films follow the efforts of federal agents to combat Communist spy rings and fifth columns, such as *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (dir. Gordon Douglas 1951); the similarly premised TV series *I Led Three Lives* (1953–1956), scripts for which were vetted in advance by the FBI; *Walk East on Beacon* (dir. Alfred Werker 1952); and the perfectly ludicrous *Big Jim McClain* (dir. Edward Ludwig 1952), featuring western stars John Wayne and James Arness as agents of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) foiling a Soviet plot to take control of Hawaiian ports by infiltrating waterfront labor unions. Another group of Communist conspiracy films concerns the protagonists’ discovery that people close to them are secretly Communists: a woman’s husband in *Conspirator* (dir. Arthur Hornblow 1949) and *I Married a Communist* (a.k.a. *Woman on Pier 13*) (dir. Robert Stevenson 1950); a war veteran’s girlfriend in *The Red Menace* (dir. R. G. Springsteen 1949); a couple’s

son in *My Son John* (dir. Leo McCarey 1952); and a man’s coworkers in *The Fearmakers* (dir. Jacques Tourneur 1958). These and dozens more along the same lines, none of them successful at the box office, were probably released to allay suspicions about the patriotism of people in the film industry (Leab, 26) at a time when it was widely alleged that Hollywood had been infiltrated by clandestine subversives, and many film workers, especially writers, were blacklisted by the studios and some (the “Hollywood 10”) were even jailed by the government. Unsurprisingly, no real effort to understand the Communists and their aims is made in these “red” conspiracy films, except to suggest that they are motivated by greed, hunger for power, and so on. A pastiche with a clever twist is *The House on Carroll Street* (dir. Peter Yates 1988), written by Walter Bernstein, who had himself been put on the blacklist, about a leftist writer persecuted for refusing to cooperate with the HUAC who teams up with an FBI agent to uncover a government conspiracy to smuggle Nazi war criminals into the United States to aid in the cold war. Blacklisted screenwriters feature in *The Front* (dir. Martin Ritt 1976), also scripted by Bernstein, and in *The Majestic* (dir. Frank Darabont 2001).

The classic Communist conspiracy film *The Manchurian Candidate* (dir. John Frankenheimer 1962) was released at a time when relations with the Communist bloc were already beginning to move toward détente and the fear of communist subversion within the United States had greatly diminished. In consequence, films began openly critiquing cold war paranoia, as in *Seven Days in May* (dir. John Frankenheimer 1964), in which opposition to U.S.-Soviet nuclear disarmament inspires a plot to overthrow the government and install a military regime. (The generals’ coup concept was more recently, and prophetically, recycled in *The Siege* [dir. Edward Zwick 1998], in which a terrorist campaign by Arab fundamentalists in New York provides the military an excuse to impose martial law.) By the late 1960s, international conspiracy paranoia had become spoof material in *The President’s Analyst* (dir. Theodore J. Flicker 1967) and in James Bond movies. Subsequent “straight” cold war conspiracy suspense films usually seem like throwbacks to a distant past,

although a few are quite well made, such as *Telefon* (dir. Don Siegel 1977), with its Soviet agents pre-programmed to blow up military installations, and *The Package* (dir. Andrew Davis 1989), in which rogue U.S. and Soviet spies conspire to undermine progress toward peace.

### Alien Invasions and Body Snatchers

Three excellent alien invasion films from the early cold war period, *Invaders from Mars* (dir. William Cameron Menzies 1953), *It Came from Outer Space* (dir. Jack Arnold 1953)—in which, however, it turns out that the intruders are not invading but only want to repair their spaceship—and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Don Siegel 1956), along with less memorable knockoffs like *The Brain Eaters* (dir. Bruno VeSota 1958) and *Invisible Invaders* (dir. Edward L. Cahn 1959), are often regarded as commentary on the Communist witch-hunting hysteria of the time. They were freer to criticize or even ridicule this anticommunism owing to their fantastic plot lines, involving ordinary people whose identities are “taken over” by extraterrestrials in a conspiracy to wrest control of the earth from humans. Siegel’s film in particular lends itself to complementary interpretations as both a metaphoric, perhaps even satiric exaggeration of the internal Communist menace and as a critique of the rigid conformity to traditional “American values” that was seen as a sign of loyalty (Bartholomew, 374). Also worth mentioning in this context is the archly titled *Red Planet Mars* (dir. Harry Horner 1952), which, before descending into vacuous spiritualism, flirts with the intriguing idea of the Soviets faking an alien contact in order to destabilize the West.

The body-snatching concept—whether the aliens appropriate real people’s bodies or disguise themselves to resemble humans—reappears not only in two remakes of Siegel’s film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Philip Kaufman 1978) and *Body Snatchers* (dir. Abel Ferrara 1993), and in more or less direct imitations such as two TV series, *The Invaders* (1967–1968) and *Dark Skies* (1996–1997), the miniseries *V* (dir. Kenneth Johnson 1983), and *The Puppet Masters* (dir. Stuart Orme 1994), and the made-for-TV *Target Earth* (dir. Philip Markle

1998), but also in several other films, in each case with a different angle in keeping with the changing zeitgeist. *The Stepford Wives* (dir. Bryan Forbes 1975) echoes—or perhaps the word should be confirms—feminist critiques of the patriarchal nuclear family in a “male fantasy” about men in a small town turning their wives into docile automatons, “living dolls” (Borzello, Kuhn, Pack, and Wedd, 14). The 1990s resurgence of environmental activism is reflected in *The Arrival* (dir. David Twohy 1996) when aliens from a hot planet who have assumed human identities plot to replace us by hastening the global warming that we instigated. Young “slackers” are targeted for takeover by aliens who have body-snatched their teachers in *The Faculty* (dir. Robert Rodriguez 1998), and in *Disturbing Behavior* (dir. David Nutter 1998) a similar contingent from Generation X is mind-controlled through brain implants administered by a mad scientist in collusion with the teenagers’ own parents. Late-twentieth-century anxiety about illegal immigrants is humorously played upon in *Men in Black* (dir. Barry Sonnenfeld 1997) (Dean, 155), in which an ultrasecret agency polices extraterrestrial “aliens” who have been living on earth for decades in the guise of humans, domesticated animals, and even celebrities such as Newt Gingrich, Dennis Rodman, and Sylvester Stallone. (Elvis too, but he has since returned to his home planet.)

### The Post-Vietnam, Post-Watergate Era

Given the cinematic obsolescence of the international Communist conspiracy, the next significant cycle of conspiracy films, which begins in the early 1970s, can be attributed to a variety of causes, domestic and international, cultural and commercial. First, the assassinations, ghetto rebellions, and other upheavals of the 1960s had left a legacy of disappointed hopes, cynicism, and pessimism, which was further augmented by the lightless tunnel that was the war in Vietnam. Then, as the new decade wore on, there were additional blows to national self-confidence: Watergate and other political scandals, the energy crisis and resulting recession, the ignominious fall of Saigon, and the Iran hostage crisis. The early to mid-1970s also saw a downturn in



movie attendance, leading the studios, uncharacteristically, to take chances. One result was the “Hollywood renaissance” sparked by the emergence of “movie brats” (young, sophisticated directors like Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola) who were given unprecedented freedom to pursue their visions, and another was an opportunity for African Americans to make films for the major studios in the so-called blaxploitation boom. Hollywood’s unaccustomed risk-taking, combined with the mood of the times, also helped make it possible to bring forth a slew of darkly antiestablishment films involving evil conspiracies, often perpetrated by forces within the government. Fredric Jameson perceptively characterizes these films as “an unconscious, collective effort at trying to figure out where we are . . . in a late twentieth century whose abominations are heightened by their concealment and their bureaucratic impersonality” (Jameson, 3).

### **Governmental, Corporate, and Police Conspiracies**

A few of the films are directly inspired by the political assassinations of the 1960s. *Executive Action* (dir. David Miller 1973) anticipates Oliver Stone’s *JFK* (1991) in dramatizing a conspiracy theory of the Kennedy assassination, while *Winter Kills* (dir. William Richert 1979, reedited 1983) is about the cover-up of a conspiracy in the assassination of a fictional president, and more recently the made-for-TV *First Target* (dir. Armand Mastroianni 2000) also concerns a presidential assassination conspiracy. *The Parallax View* (dir. Alan J. Pakula 1974), which follows a reporter’s investigation of a shadowy corporation that carries out assassinations, is more representative of the decade’s pessimistic new trend as Jameson describes it. A similar aura of sinister hidden power pervades the conspiratorial Nixon White House in Pakula’s *All the President’s Men* (1976). The president’s paranoid personality is explored in *Secret Honor* (a.k.a. *Lords of Treason*) (dir. Robert Altman 1984) and *Nixon* (dir. Oliver Stone 1995); the intelligence community in *Three Days of the Condor* (dir. Sydney Pollack 1975), *The Killer Elite* (dir. Sam Peckinpah 1975), and *The Osterman Weekend* (dir. Sam Peckinpah 1983); and

the nuclear power industry in *The China Syndrome* (dir. James Bridges 1979) and *Silkwood* (dir. Mike Nichols 1983), in which a brave woman dies while trying to expose practices that could lead to environmental disaster. (Although both stories are based on fact, it is in keeping with their respective timeframes that in *Erin Brockovich* [dir. Steven Soderbergh 2000] another female whistle-blower is successful in exposing a corporate conspiracy to cover up an environmental disaster. By contrast, in the barely coherent *Chain Reaction* [dir. Andrew Davis 1996], the conspiracy, which is connected to the CIA, rather than causing or covering up an environmental disaster, seeks to prevent the development of an environmental panacea: a cheap, non-polluting energy source.)

In more recent reworkings of this dark motif, the tobacco industry is in collusion with a major television network to hide the truth about nicotine addiction in *The Insider* (dir. Michael Mann 1999); the United Nations is the locus of a murky plot (in both senses) to sabotage a global free-trade agreement in *The Art of War* (dir. Christian Duguay 2000); a Microsoft-like software company secretly but ruthlessly pursues worldwide domination of electronic communications in *AntiTrust* (dir. Peter Howitt 2001); and in the conspiracy film parody *Zoolander* (dir. Ben Stiller 2001) the clothing industry maintains a healthy profit margin by washing the unimposing brains of male fashion models until they become supporters of child labor and *Manchurian Candidate*-like assassins of would-be reformers. (*The Insider* also inspired an ingenious antismoking public service short designed to resemble a trailer for a fictitious conspiracy film.) There should also be mentioned in this context three films from African American filmmakers that concern deep-rooted racist conspiracies in law enforcement. In *Deep Cover* (dir. Bill Duke 1992) an undercover black policeman discovers that his Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) handlers are permitting corrupt Latin American governments to saturate his own community with hard drugs, while in both *The Glass Shield* (dir. Charles Burnett 1995) and the made-for-cable *Gang in Blue* (dir. Mario van Peebles and Melvin van Peebles 1996), other

young black officers uncover white vigilante organizations within the police force. In view of the widespread currency of similar conspiracy theories, regarding, for instance, the origin of AIDS/HIV, in African American culture (Turner), which some call “black paranoia,” it is strange, perhaps suspiciously so, that there have not been many more such films.

### Surveillance and Control

In keeping with Watergate-era revelations of secret tape recordings and government surveillance regimes, high technology in such areas as media manipulation, advanced weaponry, and above all surveillance quickly became a prominent fixture in conspiracy films. A sound surveillance specialist unwittingly becomes an accomplice to a murderous conspiracy in *The Conversation* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola 1974), and another soundman accidentally discovers a politically motivated conspiracy in *Blow Out* (dir. Brian De Palma 1981), while a high-tech helicopter with a secret agenda of surveillance and crowd control is at the center of *Blue Thunder* (dir. John Badham 1983). NASA conspires to deceive the public with a faked Mars mission in *Capricorn One* (dir. Peter Hyams 1978), and in *Alien* (dir. Ridley Scott 1979) a faceless organization called “The Company” with vast, apparently quasi-governmental powers surreptitiously arranges for the crew of a deep-space mining ship to sacrifice themselves in retrieving a lethal life form for development as a weapon. Similarly, and in anticipation of *The X-Files*, politicians plot to keep secret a captured UFO in *Hangar 18* (dir. James L. Conway 1980). Two additional science fiction films of the 1980s anticipate another conspiracy trend of the 1990s, of surveillance and media manipulation becoming almost literally ubiquitous: in *Videodrome* (dir. David Cronenberg 1983), television signals exert strange powers over viewers, while aliens disguised as humans keep the population under constant surveillance and control through nonstop subliminal advertising in *They Live* (dir. John Carpenter 1988). A more recent variation on Cronenberg’s idea about mind-destroying video signals occurs in *Batman Forever* (dir. Joel Schumacher 1995), in which The Riddler distributes a set-top box in order to assimilate

viewers’ brainwaves. Carpenter’s idea about hidden commercials is echoed in the teenpic *Josie and the Pussycats* (dir. Harry Elfont and Deborah Kaplan 2001), as the music industry inserts subliminal messages in pop tunes in order to further, in the words of the film’s title character, a “conspiracy to brainwash the youth of America.”

### The Contemporary Period

Several significant trends of the 1990s show little sign of abating in the new century. First, the number of films (and TV programs) with a conspiracy angle has grown enormously. Second, the nature of film conspiracies has moved beyond the normal channels of politics, whether traditionally left or right, cold war international or Watergate domestic. Now film conspiracies are not only vast in size and/or in power and could be unfolding anywhere at any time, but the participants, rather than individuals implementing perfidious but intelligible left- or right-wing schemes, seem to have no goals except expanding the conspiracy. Moreover, the conspirators seem to be discrete individuals in appearance only but in fact are part of a seamless whole, in some films even to the extent of having a collective mind, like the Borg in *Star Trek: First Contact* (dir. Jonathan Frakes 1996). Finally, rather than merely projecting an illusion of innocuous normality in order to mask its subversive reality, the new-style conspiracy so pervades every facet of existence, from the universal to the singular, as to cast doubt on the reality/illusion distinction itself.

Observers are divided on how to explain these developments. Jonathan Romney, interestingly, sees the trend as a consequence of new cinema technology such as CGI (computer graphics imaging), which has disrupted the relationship between what we are actually seeing (computer simulations) and what we think we are seeing (physical objects that have been photographed), instilling a paranoia that is more epistemological or even existential than political. “The new paranoia movies,” he writes, “have less to do with political anxieties, more to do with the feeling that there is little verifiable reality in the screen image itself and, by extension, in the world we know through visual media” (Romney,

39). Other commentators adopt a more analytical approach. Mark Fenster follows Fredric Jameson in attributing it to an unthought-out but justified discontent with the status quo among the general population, while Peter Knight argues that globalization has made conspiracy theory less a political position than a “default mode” of experiencing culture in the New World Order, and Timothy Melley points to what he calls “agency panic,” which he describes as “a feeling that individuals cannot effect meaningful social action, and, in extreme cases, may not be able to control their behavior” (Melley, 11). Unquestionably, whatever the specific cause of the increased preoccupation with conspiracy, it is fed by the realization that more and more aspects of daily life, and not only in the popular culture, are being subsumed into regimes of manipulation, surveillance, and control, for no obvious reason, unless merely as an end in itself (Garfinkel, Rushkoff).

### Obscurity and Inscrutability

A rogue intelligence group that not even its enemies can identify exerts mind control to program assassins and even uses the space shuttle to cause earthquakes in *Conspiracy Theory* (dir. Richard Donner 1997). The film’s protagonist, a taxi driver who is also a conspiracy theorist, conceives of the entire world as dominated by two “opposing factions” that “at some levels [are] at war but at other levels [are] the same.” He learns that the extent to which he is under constant surveillance exceeds his wildest paranoid nightmares, which is a common experience in these films. In *The End of Violence* (dir. Wim Wenders 1997) the government (or some unspecified part of it) seeks to suppress street crime by secretly installing satellite-coordinated hidden cameras in all public places, and in *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott 1998) a similar but even more omnipresent surveillance regime has been instituted by the National Security Agency (NSA), apparently to no purpose other than for the sake of having it. (The story is premised on covering up the murder of a congressman who opposes a Telecommunications Security and Privacy Act that would give the NSA greater power to violate the latter in the name of the former. Such is their electronic reach that they wipe out all traces of the hero’s

identity, as had happened to the heroine in an earlier film, *The Net* [dir. Irwin Winkler 1995]). There is a similar obscurity or even inscrutability about the plotters’ true goals in a spate of White House cover-up films that all appeared in 1997, inspired perhaps by the cumulative effect of years of pre–Monica Lewinsky Clinton rumors: *Shadow Conspiracy* (dir. George P. Cosmatos), *Absolute Power* (dir. Clint Eastwood), *Murder at 1600* (dir. Dwight Little), and the best of the lot, the brilliant satire *Wag the Dog* (dir. Barry Levinson), in which a war is manufactured in order to divert attention from sex allegations concerning the president and an underage girl.

### Antiestablishment Conspiracies: Beyond “Left” and “Right”

In several films the source of the conspiracy is found not in the establishment or some part of it, but comes from the opposition to the establishment. The nature of the conspiracy is nevertheless the same: it is usually vast, has sweeping but (at best) only vaguely defined goals, and can operate anywhere at any time, with everyone potentially a secret adherent of it. In political terms, these antiestablishment conspiracies resist ascription to traditional categories like right- and left-wing. The all male and almost all white members of the aptly named Project Mayhem conspiracy in *Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher 1999) seek to blow up corporate buildings, but not so much to subvert capitalism as to restore their masculinity, which they believe they have forfeited in the empty consumerism of modern life. Threatening a police commissioner with (appropriately enough) castration for trying to shut down the “fight clubs” from which he recruits volunteers, their charismatic leader boasts that “we know everything about you . . . We control every part of your life.”

Going one better than *The Parallax View*’s Joseph Frady, who was blamed for the political assassination he died trying to prevent, Michael Faraday in *Arlington Road* (dir. Mark Pellington 1999) unwittingly delivers the explosives that blow up the FBI building, for which he also takes the blame posthumously, rather than the antigovernment conspirators, who appear to be ordinary middle-class suburbanites with no interest in politics of any kind.

Similarly opposed to the status quo is the eponymous conspiracy in *Twelve Monkeys* (dir. Terry Gilliam 1995), which plans to return the planet to the animals, a goal that is accomplished by releasing a plague virus that affects only humans.

### **Epidemics, Medical Experiments, and the Unexplainable**

The epidemic motif has featured in other conspiracy films, notably *The Andromeda Strain* (dir. Robert Wise 1971) and *Outbreak* (dir. Wolfgang Petersen 1995), in both of which scientists are co-opted by the military into developing as weapons new disease organisms, from outer space in the former film and from Africa in the latter. (The cold war era film *The Satan Bug* [dir. John Sturges 1965] also has a secret government lab experimenting with deadly microorganisms, one of which is stolen for use in an extortion plot.) Sometimes the government experiments on people directly, but without their knowledge, to alter them in desired ways. This happens during the Vietnam War to the protagonists of both *Jacob's Ladder* (dir. Adrian Lyne 1990) and the Roger Corman-produced *The Capitol Conspiracy* (a.k.a. *The Prophet*) (dir. Fred Olen Ray 1999). In the former the purpose is to enhance soldiers' will to fight and in the latter to endow orphaned children with extrasensory powers. Paranormal children are also created by the government in the miniseries *Sole Survivor* (dir. Mikael Salomon 2000), while a conspiracy of mutant teenagers to take over the world is opposed by pro-human mutants in *X-Men* (dir. Bryan Singer 2000), and a conspiracy to use mass-produced human clones to do the same features in *The 6th Day* (dir. Roger Spottiswoode 2000).

In four eerie films from the mid-1990s, so little is revealed about what seems like a conspiracy that it is left uncertain whether there even is one. In *Safe* (dir. Todd Haynes 1995) and *The Trigger Effect* (dir. David Koepp 1996), something in the environment causes mysterious allergic reactions in the former film and a general breakdown of the entire social fabric in the latter. The prisoners in *Cube* (dir. Vincenzo Natali 1997) are unacquainted with each other and have no idea who imprisoned them or why, while the mathematician protagonist of *Pi*:

*Faith in Chaos* (dir. Darren Aronofsky 1997) finds himself pursued by stockbrokers and Orthodox Jews because he may possess a secret that no one can begin to explain rationally. These are so-called independent films and their quirkiness might be dismissed as typical of "indies," but in the late 1990s conspiracy films more in the mainstream displayed comparable characteristics.

### **Conspiracies of Infinite Regress**

As billionaire Nicholas Van Orton learns in *The Game* (dir. David Fincher 1997), the employees of Consumer Recreation Services (CRS) could be anyone and everyone he might encounter, and therefore what he takes to be the real world populated by real people could be just that, but then again it might also be an elaborate fiction engineered as a birthday present from his brother for making his life more exhilarating; or as a scheme for stealing his money in which his brother may or may not be complicit; or as a benign plot to help him overcome the childhood trauma of his father's suicide; or as a malign plot to induce him into following in his father's footsteps (i.e., off a roof); or as something the film cagily refuses to reveal, inasmuch as the ending leaves open the possibility that the "game" is still being played, or even that there has never been a time when it wasn't. In other words, the real world/game world distinction is in an infinite regress that doesn't need to be sustained by resorting to more obvious devices like "virtual reality" (VR)—although the VR concept can be intelligently exploited, as in *The Thirteenth Floor* (dir. Josef Rusnak 1999), in which the solution to a murder in "our" world must be sought in a VR world inhabited by virtual "people" whose motivations, despite their preprogramming, are ultimately as indeterminable as those of the CRS employees in *The Game*.

### **The Truman Show, Dark City, and The Matrix**

Three important conspiracy films from the last years of the last century add a further twist. Not only is the conspiracy vast, beyond politics and existential in its implications, but all of us are made to feel a part of it, actually or potentially.



Truman Burbank in *The Truman Show* (dir. Peter Weir 1998) lives in an artificial world, but for him, and for him alone, there is no other world, because everyone except him is complicit in a conspiracy to sustain his belief that his world is the only one. This is because the town in which he has been raised since birth and subtly prevented ever escaping from is really a giant television studio equipped with countless hidden cameras and microphones, and all the people he has ever known whether intimately or casually are, unknown to him, actors in the employ of a director with the sacrilegious name of Christof. At the same time, everyone in the world Truman has never met is a voyeur of his life as Christof arranges it to unfold in his round-the-clock TV show, the popularity of which implies acceptance of the ever-increasing surveillance and control in their own daily lives on the part of the television audience and, by extension, of the film's audience. As Christof says of Truman, he "prefers his cell."

In *Dark City* (dir. Alex Proyas 1998) another artificial world has been created in space and populated with kidnapped humans by a dying race of aliens, the Strangers, who possess "the ability to alter physical reality by will alone," as explained in the opening voice-over narration from Daniel Paul Schreber, a psychiatrist ironically named after a turn-of-the-last-century paranoid whose delusions were studied by Sigmund Freud. Every night, while the Strangers are altering physical reality, Schreber rearranges the entire population's memories so that the aliens can experiment on them. One human, Murdoch, discovers that he has the same powers. But after defeating the Strangers he simply takes their place, instituting a regime that, although presumably more benign, is no less total in its control over the malleable populace.

So total and all enveloping is the conspiracy in *The Matrix* (dir. Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski 1999) that it has a name that evokes the womb. In the far future renegade computers have imprisoned most of the human race in pods in order to harvest their bodies' electrical energy, while keeping them pacified with the cybernetically induced illusion that they are in 1999 New York. As Agent Smith puts it (he is part of a special program that hunts down

members of the human resistance who have escaped their pods and reentered the VR environment of the Matrix to carry out sabotage), in their own minds they are merely "billions of people just living out their lives, oblivious." But unfortunately for them (or so it would seem), the contentment they experience in their "prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch," as the rebel leader Morpheus describes the Matrix, is so great that "they will fight to protect it." This means that, in order to prevail, Morpheus's people, who of course also constitute a conspiracy, would need to destroy all those oblivious billions.

### Freedom versus Security?

In these films, ordinary people's acceptance of and complicity in a conspiracy against their own autonomy, their privacy, their individuality and even their existence leave a depressing aftertaste despite saccharine romantic endings. Perhaps the message is one of resignation: the emerging regime of surveillance and control is inexorably eroding what remains of our freedom, and many of us, if not all, are resigned to accept this, and, perhaps in hope of greater security as a trade-off, even to embrace it.

Ken Harris

**See also:** AIDS; African Americans; Anticommunism; Area 51; Central Intelligence Agency; Clinton, Bill and Hillary; Cold War; Drugs; Hollywood Ten; House Un-American Activities Committee; Illuminati; Ku Klux Klan; *The Manchurian Candidate*; National Security Agency; New World Order; Nixon, Richard; Pakula, Alan J.; Patriarchy; Skull and Bones Society; Stone, Oliver; Subliminal Advertising; UFOs; United Nations; Watergate; *The X-Files*.

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## Fluoridation

Fluoridation, the addition of fluoride to drinking water to prevent tooth decay, has been associated with numerous conspiracy theories beginning in the 1950s when it was first promoted nationally as a

public health measure. Throughout the fifty years that fluoridation has been controversial in the United States, the antifuoridation movement has been receptive to conspiracy theories because the basic premise of the movement has been that there is sufficient scientific evidence to prove that fluoridation is either dangerous or ineffective, and that the promoters of fluoridation know this. Blaming the promotion of fluoridation on a conspiracy has been one way antifuoridationists have tried to explain efforts to promote fluoridation despite their evidence. As part of their theories, opponents of fluoridation also often rejected the official version of how fluoridation was discovered. According to promoters of fluoridation, a dentist in Colorado discovered that excess fluoride in drinking water discolored teeth. When the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) attempted to confirm his observations, they discovered that low levels of fluoride did not cause discoloration but in fact inhibited tooth decay. Even when antifuoridationists accepted this version of history, to support their theories they cited the role that alleged conspirators, such as the federal government, played in the discovery. Although antifuoridationists shared similar views about the dangers of fluoride and questioned its origins, they disagreed on who was responsible for the promotion of fluoridation, and their motivation for promoting it.

In the 1950s, during the McCarthy era, some antifuoridationists believed that fluoridation was part of a Communist plot to destroy the United States. All of these antifuoridationists rejected the official history of fluoridation's discovery, but disagreed over how fluoridation was actually discovered. Some believed the Nazis in 1930s Germany had discovered that fluoridation made those drinking it docile and easily controlled. The Nazis had allegedly used it in concentration camps and to stifle opposition in their campaigns against Poland and Czechoslovakia. Other antifuoridationists claimed fluoridation caused sterility, and was used by the Nazis in Eastern Europe as part of their plan to eliminate local populations and replace them with German settlers. According to this theory, Soviet scientists learned about the uses of fluoridation either

through meetings with the German General Staff during the brief period of time between the signing of the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of 1939 and the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 or when the Soviet army overran Eastern Europe in the final days of World War II. Some antifluoridationists did not speculate on the origins of fluoridation, but focused on how the Soviet Union had used fluoridation in its prisoner-of-war camps and gulags during World War II to keep their prisoners docile. As proof that the Soviet Union had used fluoridation during World War II, these antifluoridationists cited the memoirs of a soldier who claimed that during the war he witnessed numerous lend-lease shipments of fluorides to the Soviet Union for the purpose of controlling prisoners.

Antifluoridationists who believed the promotion of fluoridation was a Communist plot considered three possible motives. Some believed that fluoridation would weaken Americans' mental abilities and their will to resist communism, preparing the way for a political takeover of the United States. Others believed that fluoridation was the first step toward a military invasion of the United States. Communist saboteurs would slip into water-treatment plants in key cities and military bases across the country and use the fluoridation equipment to dump a lethal dose of fluoride into the drinking water, paving the way for a Soviet invasion. Another version of this theory held that fluoridation would cause cancers and other diseases, particularly in children, so that in ten or twenty years, when the Soviet Union attacked, the United States would not have enough healthy men to raise an army for national defense. Some antifluoridationists suggested that the ultimate goal of fluoridation was not simply the destruction of the United States, but the poisoning of all human beings in preparation for their replacement by a new kind of human being specially bred by the Soviets.

Antifluoridationists who believed fluoridation was a Communist conspiracy were never a very large segment of the antifluoridation movement, although they were extremely vocal. They reflected the general atmosphere of the 1950s, when many Americans worried that the federal government and soci-

ety had been infiltrated by Communist agents and were concerned about the possibility of military conflict with the Soviet Union. As those concerns lessened in the late 1950s and early 1960s, antifluoridationists believing in these conspiracies diminished in importance in the movement, although profluoridationists continued to stress their views as a way of discrediting all antifluoridationists. Antifluoridationists who believed in a Communist conspiracy came to be seen as humorous and absurd, not only among profluoridationists, but also in the broader society. The best example of this image can be seen in the black comedy *Dr Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1964), a movie in which a madcap U.S. general initiates a nuclear war because he believes that the Soviet Union is poisoning the United States through fluoridation.

After the Communist conspiracy faded away, two other conspiracy theories gained prominence within the movement: one claiming the promotion of fluoridation was a conspiracy by business interests; the other identifying the federal government as the force behind the conspiracy. Each of these groups was identified as the source of the money to fund scientific research favorable to fluoridation and finance campaigns encouraging communities to adopt fluoridation. Sometimes these two groups, business interests and the federal government, were considered to be working together in the conspiracy.

For some antifluoridationists who blamed the promotion of fluoridation on business interests, the primary conspirator behind the promotion of fluoridation was the aluminum industry, particularly the biggest corporation in the industry, the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). ALCOA was promoting fluoridation as a way to dispose profitably of the fluoride compounds that were a waste product of the aluminum manufacturing process. As proof of this conspiracy, antifluoridationists noted that an ALCOA chemist had assisted the Colorado dentist in some of his water tests leading to the discovery of fluoride. They also believed it was not a coincidence that Oscar Ewing, head of the government agency responsible for initiating the promotion of fluorida-

tion in the 1950s, had previously been a high-level lawyer for ALCOA.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when environmental issues became a concern in the United States, some antifuoridationists argued that ALCOA was using fluoridation not only as a disposal method, but also as a way of undermining environmentalists' efforts to stop industrial pollution. These antifuoridationists reasoned that if ALCOA could win widespread acceptance of the idea that fluoride in drinking water was safe, it could argue that there was nothing wrong with the company releasing those compounds from its factories into the environment. Other antifuoridationists expanded the conspiracy to include all businesses that generated fluoride compounds as part of the manufacturing process, from glass- and brickmakers, to weapons manufacturers. As proof of these theories, antifuoridationists stressed the minor role the Mellon Institute, a business-financed research institute, played in early tests on fluoridation.

For others, the force behind the promotion of fluoridation was the sugar industry, which wanted to find an easy way to prevent tooth decay so that it could encourage consumption of sugar. Sometimes, the entire processed food industry was considered part of this conspiracy. Antifuoridationists argued that the safe and effective method of preventing tooth decay was the elimination of processed foods, especially refined sugar and flour, from the diet. These industries, by backing the use of fluoridation, were seeking to prevent tooth decay through a dangerous and ineffective method that would allow Americans to continue to consume their products. These antifuoridationists rarely offered any proof to support their allegations, although they sometimes mentioned the Mellon Institute's role in fluoridation research as evidence of these views.

The federal government was also considered involved in a plot to force fluoridation on the U.S. public. Within the federal government, the USPHS was the agency primarily responsible for promoting fluoridation; antifuoridationists claimed this agency was only backing fluoridation as a way to extend federal authority. These antifuoridationists argued that once the federal government won pub-

lic acceptance of treating tooth decay through chemicals in the water supply, the next step would be birth control or psychiatric medication administered to the entire population through the public drinking water, or forcing exercise and diet regimes on the entire population to control obesity. Another explanation for the USPHS's continued promotion of fluoridation was that the USPHS was involved in a cover-up; the USPHS promoted fluoridation because it could not admit that its scientists, when they determined that fluoridation was safe, had committed a mistake that may have endangered the health of millions of Americans.

*Gretchen Ann Reilly*

**See also:** Red Scare.

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#### Ford, Henry

In addition to being the foremost U.S. industrialist of the early twentieth century, Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor company, was also one of America's more vocal antisemitic conspiracy theorists. During the years following World War I, when he was no doubt one of the most powerful and influential men in the world, Ford oversaw the publication of numerous antisemitic articles in the widely read journal that was seen as the public forum for his personal philosophy, the *Dearborn Independent*.

The 91 articles total 992 pages in the collected edition Ford published beginning in 1920, *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*.





Henry Ford, 1863–1947. (Library of Congress)

With titles such as “How the Jews in the U.S. Conceal Their Strength” and “The Scope of Jewish Dictatorship in the U.S.,” the articles claim Jewish involvement in every aspect of U.S. life, from banking to baseball. The standard attacks on Hollywood and Wall Street as centers of Jewish power are included, but less obvious targets come under scrutiny as well, and it seems difficult to understand how jazz, for instance, was interpreted as a tool of

the Jewish conspiracy (“Jewish Jazz Becomes Our National Music”). *The International Jew* also introduced Americans to *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and in many editions of that infamous antisemitic forgery, Henry Ford’s own approving comments occupy a central place in the preface. Norman Cohn, perhaps the leading foremost expert on *Protocols* argues that “all in all *The International Jew* probably did more than any other work to make the *Protocols* world-famous” (159).

Between the *Dearborn Independent’s* circulation of around 500,000 and *The International Jew’s* massive print runs, Ford’s views had a great impact on the United States of the 1920s. In a society that had been disrupted by World War I and was beginning to be split by labor movements, Ford’s claims that the war had been fought on orders from Jewish bankers and that unions were merely a “front” for the Jewish conspiracy had significant political implications. Ford, ever the populist, could never believe that the *true* working man believed in the unions and opposed certain aspects of Ford’s industrial ideology, so he was sure that “working men are the tools of some manipulator who seeks his own ends through them” (Lee, 62). That is, the force of the Jewish conspiracy, this time in the guise of Bolshevism, lay behind the various movements toward unionization and labor reform. Faced with what he saw as an intensification of Jewish subterfuge, Ford increased his opposition to supposed conspiracy. He began forcing all of his car dealers to distribute the *Dearborn Independent* (although some quit their relations with Ford over the issue). Then, in an attempt to dig up hard evidence of the international Jewish cabal, Ford employed an army of private detectives whom he ordered to investigate prominent Jews. The detectives even investigated non-Jews whose beliefs lay to the left of Ford’s rightist populism (including three presidents—Hoover, Taft, and Wilson), suspecting them of being nothing more than Jewish fronts. These tactics did not meet with universal approval, to say the least, but since Ford and his followers saw the press as yet another front for the Jewish cabal, the more the mainstream press ridiculed Ford’s ideas, the more evidence Ford saw of conspiracy.

Meanwhile, Ford's ideas were finding a receptive audience overseas. Translated as *The Eternal Jew*, the *Dearborn Independent* articles took Germany by storm. Ford's biography became an instant best-seller, and Nazis questioned at Nuremberg were later to emphasize Ford's influence on their own developing antisemitism. Hitler had a life-sized picture of Ford next to his desk, and would refer to the U.S. automobile magnate as his "inspiration." Ford is the only American mentioned in *Mein Kampf*, and some argue that Hitler went so far as to paraphrase many passages from the *Dearborn Independent* in his work. Many suggest that Ford may even have directly funded Hitler, as Hitler himself is said to have said this in private (though he denied it publicly). Some also charge that Ford financed the publication and distribution of *The International Jew* in Europe. Whether these charges are true or not, many consider Hitler's "intellectual" indebtedness to Ford proof enough of Ford's indirect implication in the Nazi conspiracy to carry out the "final solution."

Ford was later to apologize publicly for the articles published in the *Dearborn Independent* and *The International Jew* in a retraction published in every major U.S. newspaper. While Ford claimed to have no knowledge of what the *Dearborn Independent* contained, most saw through this statement. New York papers doubted his professions of innocence, and Hitler's circle was convinced that the retraction had been written under duress, with Ford finally submitting to the power of the international Jews.

Even after Ford's retraction there seemed to be indirect evidence that he was covertly propagating the idea of the international Jewish conspiracy. Union leaders made formal complaints that foremen at Ford's plants were distributing antisemitic propaganda to workers, attempting to cut down union membership by linking it to the Jewish-Communist plot. There were strong suspicions that certain high-ranking employees of Ford's European divisions were Nazis. Then, on Ford's birthday in July 1933, Hitler sent his best wishes along with "The Grand Cross of the German Eagle"; this highest of honors had been bestowed on only four other men, one of

whom was Benito Mussolini. In spite of public pressure to refuse the honor, Ford accepted. Ultimately, Ford opposed Hitler and Mussolini during the war, but even in this final turn there was an element of his old conspiracy theory, for Ford came to believe that even Hitler and Mussolini were mere puppets whose strings were pulled by a secret, insidious force.

Marlon Kuzmick

**See also:** Antisemitism; Gold Standard; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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#### Foster, Vince

In total, there have been three law enforcement investigations and two U.S. congressional inquiries into the 1993 death of Deputy White House Counsel, and close friend of the Clintons, Vincent W. Foster, Jr. All of the reports and inquiries have reached the same conclusion: Vince Foster committed suicide in Fort Marcy Park. Upon initial review, the reports and inquiries appear to be straightforward, with few problems to be discussed. However, some inconsistencies have led many conspiracy theorists to suggest Foster was murdered, presumably to prevent him from revealing secrets about one or both of the Clintons.

#### The Official Account

According to the official version of events, after six months in Washington, the stress and pressure had caused Foster to become depressed. On Tuesday afternoon, 20 July 1993, at approximately 1:00 P.M. Foster left his White House office and drove to Fort Marcy Park, located in the Virginia suburbs approximately 6.5 miles from downtown Washington. Foster's car was later seen at the Fort Marcy

Park parking lot at approximately 4:30 P.M. Thus, sometime between 1:20 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. Foster arrived at the park, walked to an isolated location, sat down on a steep berm, placed his 38.-caliber revolver into his mouth, and killed himself.

At 5:45 P.M. a man, only identified in the Fiske Report as Confidential Witness (CW), in a white utility van informed two park service works that he had discovered a dead body in Fort Marcy Park. The park service workers called both the Fairfax County, Virginia, emergency number as well as the U.S. Park Police.

At approximately 6:10 P.M. Fairfax Fire and Rescue units and one Park Police officer arrived at Fort Marcy Park. There were only two cars in the small parking lot, one of which had Arkansas license plates. Because of the lack of specifics from the 911 call, the seven emergency workers split up to conduct their search. Within minutes the rescue workers found the body resting on the berm, face up, with the head near the crest of the berm. Fort Marcy Park, which was originally used as an “earthwork fortification” (Starr, 11) during the Civil War, contains two Civil War cannons (Ruddy).

U.S. Park Police Officer Fornshill radioed police headquarters at 6:15 P.M. stating that a body was found and that it appeared to be a suicide. Investigators arrived at the park and took Polaroid photos as well as one roll of 35mm film of the body and death scene. The Polaroid photos were mainly close-ups of the body. A Park Police investigator eventually searched the car with Arkansas license plates and found White House identification revealing the body to be Vincent Foster, Jr. Sometime between 7:30 and 8:30 P.M. the White House was notified of Foster’s death. The medical examiner arrived at Fort Marcy Park at 7:40 P.M. and by 8:17 P.M. an ambulance had transported Foster’s body to the morgue. By 8:45 P.M. Park Police investigators had cleared the death scene and eventually arrived at Foster’s home at 10:00 P.M.

On 21 July, the deputy medical examiner of Northern Virginia conducted an autopsy on Foster, who was then buried in Hope, Arkansas, on 23 July. Six days after Foster’s body was found, Associate White House Counsel Stephen Neuwirth, while

packing Foster’s personal items from his office, found a torn-up note in the bottom of Foster’s briefcase. White House personnel believe that the note is in Foster’s handwriting. The note, though not signed, identifies the travel office scandal (in which the Clintons were accused of firing staff in the White House Travel Office in order to install political allies) and the editorials naming Foster in the *Wall Street Journal* as being the major source of his depression (Fiske).

On 10 August, the chief of the Park Police held a news conference where he stated that based on the death scene, the autopsy findings, and the investigation, it was clear that Vince Foster committed suicide in Fort Marcy Park on 20 July 1993.

### **Contradictions and Problems**

One of the major contradictions in this account is the location and condition of Foster’s body and clothing. The police report places Foster’s body near the front of cannon #2, which is in the northwest corner of the park. The berm surrounding this cannon is low vegetation and mostly bare dirt. Of the two cannons, cannon #2 is the farthest from the parking lot, approximately 800 feet. The police report also indicates that Park Police Officer Fornshill was the first to locate the body (Ruddy). The crime lab examination of Foster’s clothing showed it was clean of all soil and dirt, as were his shoes.

Lead paramedic George Gonzalez from Fairfax County’s Fire and Rescue has stated he was the first to discover Foster’s body, not Officer Fornshill. Gonzales also states that the body was in heavy/tall vegetation and was near, but not in front of, cannon #1. Gonzales also has stated that the body was laid out perfectly straight, not contorted or bent in any way. Conspiracy theorists have also pointed out the dirt-free conditions of Foster’s clothing and shoes. If Foster had walked across a dirt pathway and then lain down on a dirt-covered berm it would be impossible for his clothes and shoes to be dirt free. However, if Foster’s body was by cannon #1, in the heavy vegetation, this could have prevented any direct contact with dust and dirt.

The photos raise other issues with the investigation. One account indicates that over forty Polaroid

photos were taken; yet only thirteen are listed in the official report. Also, the one roll of 35mm film did not produce any usable photos (Ruddy). The Polaroid of Foster's right hand holding the revolver shows some vegetation, which is much more consistent with cannon #1 than cannon #2, as the police report states.

Nine months after Foster's death the FBI conducted a metal detector search around cannon #2. They found dozens of bullets but were not able to find the bullet from Foster's gun. The FBI also found blonde human hairs as well as carpet fibers on Foster's clothes. The FBI never gave an explanation as to the origin of either the hairs or fibers, which has led to speculation that Foster was murdered elsewhere and then transported to Fort Marcy Park.

The assertion that Foster still had the gun in his hand has also raised doubts about the suicide. The gun was reported to be hanging off Foster's right thumb, as seen in the police photo. Thus, Foster must have gripped the gun with both hands, in a sort of cupping action, placed his right thumb on the trigger, placed the barrel in his mouth, and pulled the trigger. Then, after the fatal shot, Foster's arms would have fallen to his side, with the gun hanging on his thumb. The questions raised by this account assert that the cupping action would have placed Foster's fingers over the cylinder of the revolver, making the rotating action impossible, and leaving fingerprints; the FBI did not find any fingerprints on the gun. In addition, this was a very awkward way to hold a gun, even during a suicide (Kellett). CW, who found the body, has stated repeatedly that he did not see a gun in Foster's hand.

Another major contention is the note found in Foster's briefcase six days after his death. The briefcase had been searched by White House staff in the presence of both Park Police and the FBI two days after Foster's death. During this initial search the torn-up note was not found. After finding the note, White House staff not only reassembled the twenty-seven pieces using clear tape, but also did not immediately notify the police or the FBI. The note also did not have a date or a signature, nor were any fingerprints found on it. The FBI finally authenticated

the note as Foster's handwriting, but by using only one comparison sample (Ruddy).

The action of the White House staff along with some questionable police work has led many conspiracy theorists to believe Foster was murdered. However, if Foster did not commit suicide then this was one of the largest multiagency conspiracies and cover-ups in the history of the United States. The U.S. Park Police, the FBI, two independent counsels, White House staff, and the Fairfax County Medical examiner would all have had to agree to assist with the cover-up and this list does not include the conspirators in the actual murder.

*Kenneth L. Mullen*

**See also:** Clinton, Bill and Hillary; Clinton Body Count; Scaife, Richard Mellon.

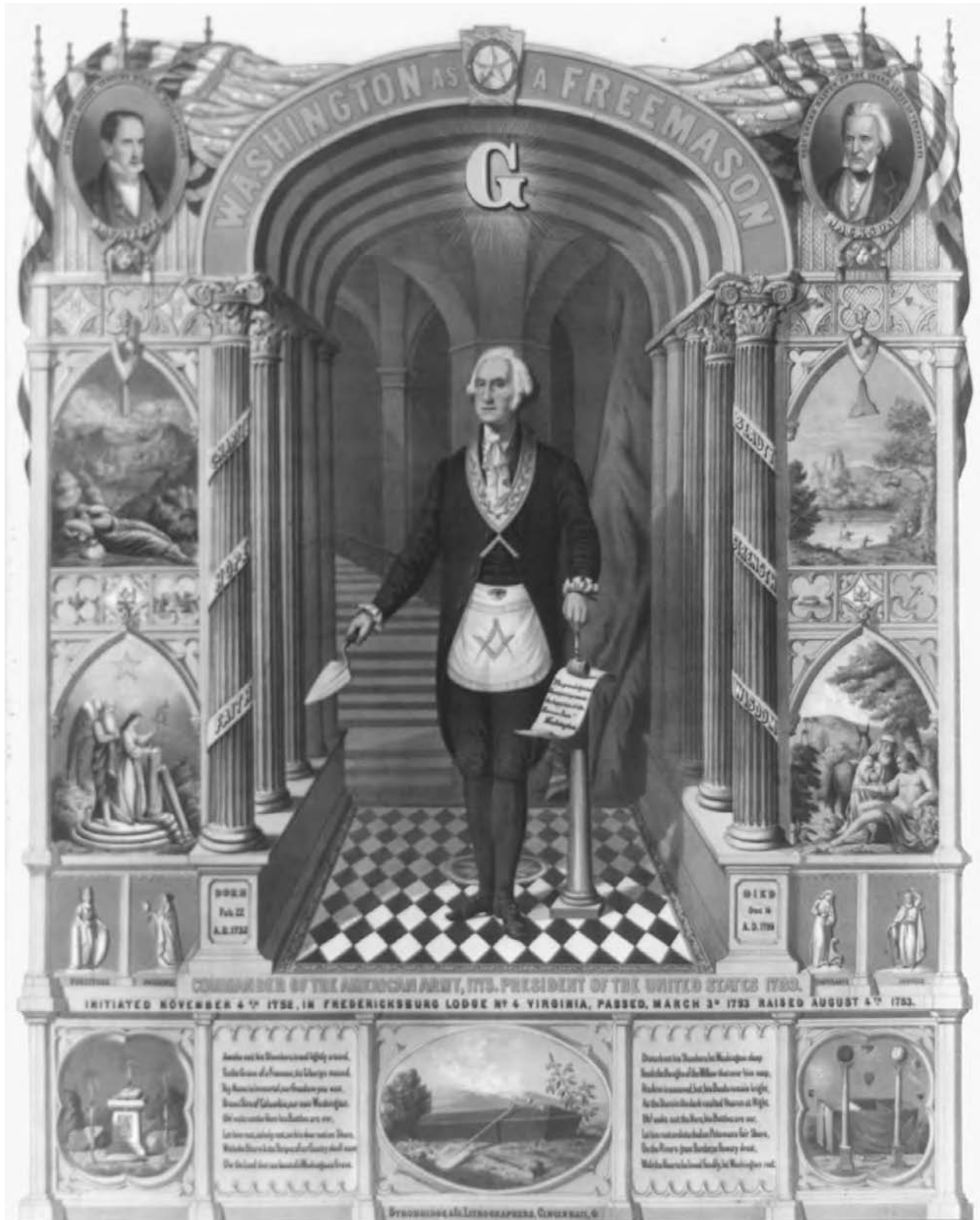
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## Freemasonry

Claims about the Freemasons' far-reaching influence and subversive aims have played a part in some of America's most enduring conspiracy theories. The Order of Free and Accepted Masons, an all-male fraternal organization, has had chapters on the North American continent since the 1730s, and has featured prominently in U.S. conspiracy thinking since the late eighteenth century. Conspiracy theory about the Freemasons points to the semisecretive nature of the organization and the acknowledged political involvement of many of its members to support the allegation that the Freemasons are an extremely powerful and wealthy cabal of antireligious subversives who





George Washington as a Freemason. (Library of Congress)

have infiltrated business and government structures worldwide.

### Historical Origins

The history of Freemasonry can be difficult to trace, in part because many of the sources available are markedly biased. Masonic historians claim that only Freemasons, who have been initiated into the secrets of the order, can accurately write its history and charge that non-Masonic scholars are frequently swayed by anti-Masonic sentiment. Conversely, those who center conspiracy theories on Masonry argue that Freemasons have participated in massive cover-ups of their own activities, which make the task of the “truth-seeking” historian arduous, if not perilous.

Both Masonic historians and many anti-Masonic conspiracy theorists assert that the roots of the order date back to antiquity, though most third-party historians dispute this claim. The craftsmen’s guild on which the present-day fraternal society was based can, indeed, be traced back to the medieval era. Some of the fraternal society’s characteristic features, such as its ritual initiation and secret signs of membership, can also be accounted for by the nature of masonry as a profession; members sought to protect their status by developing elaborate forms and rituals to ascertain eligibility and proclaim membership, and since masons tended to be itinerant laborers, they created signs, such as the much-touted “secret handshake,” in order to assure recognition of guild membership. The mythology embraced by Masonic tradition, however, reaches back more than 5,000 years to encompass the architect of Solomon’s Temple, Hiram, who is said to have been murdered because he would not reveal the secrets of Masonry. Some historians also link the Freemasons to the Knights Templar, a crusading monastic order outlawed by the papacy in the fourteenth century. While pro-Masonic historians tend to elaborate a long history of anti-Masonic persecution, conspiracy thinkers see in the same narrative a history of secret conspiratorial plots that occasionally come to light, but that have never been fully exposed or interrupted.

Notwithstanding these rival accounts of Freemasonry’s past, most historians outside the debate understand the fraternal order of Freemasons to have emerged in Britain in the early eighteenth century. These historians distinguish “nonoperative” or “speculative” Freemasonry as a fraternal order whose function is primarily social, from the much older craftsmen’s guild that served professional functions and which they term “operative” Masonry. “Nonoperative” Masons were attracted to the guild by its combination of rationalist/scientific inquiry and deep respect for tradition and fellowship. Eventually, as the guild system died out and as “speculative” membership grew, the organization came under the leadership of the nonoperatives and was transformed into the modern order. Membership of the Freemasons grew rapidly in the eighteenth century; the organization spread across Europe and into the North American colonies, with the first American lodges forming soon after 1730.

### Conspiratorial Accusations in the Eighteenth Century

The first century of Freemasonry saw explosive growth in the popularity of the order on both the European and North American continents, fueled by widespread interest in the Enlightenment ideas upon which the order based its central tenets and, especially on the American continent, by the perceived social advantages of membership. As membership grew, so did public suspicion of the order. As early as the 1720s, charges of immorality and lewdness were levied against the Freemasons. Since the proceedings of Masonic gatherings were secret, nonmembers could not find out what the organization actually did during their meetings and dinners. Critics claimed that Masons habitually overindulged in alcohol, and many also insisted that the all-male meetings were little more than mass orgies, at which sodomy and ritual flagellation were practiced. These complaints did not, in themselves, amount to charges of conspiracy, although later conspiracy theories adapted and reiterated them.

The earliest articulation of Freemasonry as a conspiracy came from the Roman Catholic Church,

which claimed that the order intended to undermine the Church and its teachings. The Church's organized opposition to Freemasonry began in 1738, in the form of a papal bull issued by Clement XII, which condemned Freemasonry and excommunicated all Masons. Numerous other bulls issued in the following decades denounced the secretive practices of the order and declared it an enemy of Christianity. Masonic chapters were also intermittently accused of political conspiracy in Europe. During the 1730s and 1740s, Masonic meetings were interrupted and even banned, and members of lodges were interrogated by police in Holland, France, and elsewhere, as state forces came to suspect the organization of subversive political aims and antiroyalist beliefs. The Enlightenment ideals of religious pluralism and individual liberty embraced by the organization increased church and state suspicion of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century; it was argued that the conspiratorial actions of the group were simply the logical extension of its radical philosophies.

Conspiracy thinking about Freemasonry on the American continent drew upon all of these charges, though early American Freemasons tended to be the target of mockery more than of sustained investigation. In the first half of the eighteenth century, American Masonic lodges, generally less concerned with Enlightenment thought than many European lodges, functioned primarily as social clubs. Following the pattern set by British lodges, they often rejected membership applications from individuals who did not make an "independent" living, excluding a sizeable portion of the colonial middle classes. After 1750, many of those rejected began to set up their own Masonic lodges, known as "Ancient" Freemasons. Members of these lodges were strongly inclined to the colonial cause, while members of the older lodges (dubbed "Moderns" by the "Ancients") often tended to loyalism, though neither group took an official stance. Nevertheless, the Masonic affiliation of many key players during the American Revolution led the order to identify itself, in the post-Revolutionary period, with the core values of the new Republic. At the 1793 dedication of the U.S. Capitol, for instance, President George

Washington wore Masonic garb and performed a modified Masonic ritual during the ceremony, assisted by other Masonic brethren; a silver plate laid over the cornerstone located the dedication in the 13th year of American independence and the 5,793rd year of Masonic history. Conspiracy thinkers also point to the incorporation of Masonic symbolism in the design of the Great Seal of the United States as proof that Freemasonic influence on government was pervasive in this period; however, Freemasons deny that the all-seeing eye atop the pyramid is a specifically Masonic symbol, although it resembles some design elements used by Masons.

Even as the public profile of U.S. Freemasonry improved in the 1790s, the first major wave of conspiracy thinking about Masonry was cresting in Europe. John Robison's exposé, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against All Religions and Governments of Europe*, published in 1798, laid the blame for the French Revolution on the Freemasons, who, he claimed, had been thoroughly infiltrated and corrupted by a supposedly atheistic secret society known as the Illuminati, which was founded by Adam Weishaupt, a Jesuit priest, in 1776. Weishaupt became a Freemason in 1777 and believed that Freemasonry could help him to spread Illuminati beliefs, which were based on Enlightenment thought. Those who raised the alarm over the Illuminati charged that the extent to which they had infiltrated and transformed Masonry was unknown. Robison's work raised an alarm in the United States. Congregationalist minister and Federalist supporter Jedidiah Morse was among those who publicly denounced the conspiracy, which he represented as a grave threat to the young republic. Others, such as Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University, joined in the growing alarm. Morse insisted he did not mean to condemn all Freemasons; rather, he insisted, it was only "Illuminized Masonry" that he meant to warn against. Morse, a Federalist, claimed that the conspirators planned to make inroads onto the American continent through the Jeffersonian party. Other Federalists took up the charges, and even Masonic brother George Washington admitted to concern over the dangerous presence of "Illuminized Masonry" in the United States. Anti-Feder-

alists denied links to secret societies and responded with conspiracy charges of their own, such as Abraham Bishop, who, in *Proofs of a Conspiracy against Christianity, and the Government of the United States* (1802), charged Robison with royalist sympathies and accused his supporters of seeking to undermine U.S. democracy.

“Illuminized” Masonry remains a central theme in present-day conspiracy theory about the Freemasons, but the Federalist-era controversy did not tarnish the image of Freemasonry among most members of the post-Revolutionary middle and elite classes. On the contrary, the upper levels of U.S. society, and those who aspired to join them, were increasingly drawn to Freemasonry. The strong identification of the order with key American values enhanced Freemasonry’s popularity in the post-Revolutionary United States; even more importantly, the order served increasingly useful networking functions in a nation that was actively rebuilding its own political and social infrastructure. Masonic membership was associated with status and power; accordingly, those seeking status and power also sought to become Masons.

### Anti-Masonic Movement

The identification of the Masonic order with the nation’s most powerful and influential citizens drew increasing suspicion in the first part of the nineteenth century, culminating in the first national anti-Masonic movement in the late 1820s and early 1830s. In contrast to the alarm raised in the wake of Robison’s book, which, for the most part, confined itself to members of the clergy and government officials, the anti-Masonic movement of this period was a genuinely populist movement. The movement was touched off by the abduction and suspected murder of William Morgan, who was in the process of publishing an exposé of Freemasonry, in 1826. When his abductors received light sentences, many charged that a cover-up was in process.

The reformist movement that developed in the wake of the Morgan affair claimed that Freemasons were anti-Christian and antidemocratic, that they deliberately sought power and conspired to elevate the social position of Masons, and that, if un-

checked, their growth would have disastrous consequences for the young nation. They supported this claim by pointing out that secret societies were on the rise; for instance, a Massachusetts congregationalist, the Reverend Peter Sanborn, argued in 1829 that a secret alliance existed between Freemasons and Phi Beta Kappa. Noting that up to a third of college-educated men were yearly inducted into the secret honor society, Sanborn argued that a subversive plot supported by educated youth and well-placed older Masons would destroy the nation. In response, in 1831 Phi Beta Kappa abandoned its secret practices. The anti-Masonic movement also argued that Freemasonry undermined marriage by forcing husbands to keep secrets from wives, who were not allowed to take part in Masonic proceedings. Women, alienated by the all-male order, joined the anti-Masonic movement in significant numbers.

Suspicion of Masonic practices led to the formation of an Anti-Masonic Party, the first major independent U.S. third party, in 1827. The party held its first national convention in 1830 and in 1832 ran a candidate for president against the Masonic incumbent, Andrew Jackson. After 1833, the party withdrew as an active force in national politics, focusing on state and local-level campaigns. The movement continued to decline in the late 1830s and the party had disbanded by 1843.

During the years of the anti-Masonic campaign and its aftermath, national membership in the Freemasons declined significantly, and the period saw the formation of a number of rival fraternal organizations such as the Odd Fellows. However, by the 1850s, Masonic membership was again on the rise. During this decade and especially after the Civil War, the Freemasons reformed their reputation and regained much of their former prestige. Changes in the organization’s self-presentation implicitly addressed some of the charges of conspiracy thinkers; the new Masonry professed Christianity, refuting claims that they sought to undermine organized religion, and countered claims of self-interest and greed by actively promoting charity. Masons also responded to the long-standing objections to the all-male nature of the society by



forming a female order, the Order of the Eastern Star, in 1869.

In 1867, the National Christian Association revived conspiracy charges against the Masons; their campaign led to the presidential candidacy of General John Wolcott Phelps on an anti-Masonic platform in 1880. Phelps performed very poorly in the polls, receiving only a few hundred votes. After this campaign, anti-Masonic groups avoided electoral politics. Conspiracy charges against the Freemasons, however, continue until the present day.

Conspiracy theory about the Freemasons generally does not directly engage the legacy of the Prince Hall Freemasons, an African American Masonic organization founded in Boston in 1775. The African American lodge received its charter from the British Grand Lodge during the American Revolution; after the Revolution, other U.S. lodges refused to recognize the group, ostensibly on the grounds that it was not “regular” because it had been chartered by a foreign power. Racist and segregationist sentiment among many members of the Freemasons, particularly in southern lodges, prevented their recognition of the Prince Hall order; this nonrecognition lasted in many cases until the 1990s. Prince Hall Masonry is rarely charged with the kind of far-reaching influence and subversive aims of Freemasonry in general; many conspiracy theories do not even mention its existence.

### **The Present**

Christian conspiracy theorists in particular continue to contend that the group’s agenda is both anti-Christian and antidemocratic. Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century conspiracy theorists see Freemasons as the key to the New World Order conspiracy. Others allege that the group is satanic, that it worships a goat-headed Luciferian god known as Baphomet, and that it is actively involved in plots to cover up UFO discoveries. Freemasonry has been tapped as part of the conspiracy to assassinate John F. Kennedy, and also plays a key role in conspiracy thinking about the Oklahoma City bombing and, more recently, the bombings of the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11.

In addition to forming the center of many conspiracy theories, Freemasonry, as one of the oldest U.S. conspiracy theories, also acts as an index of thinking about conspiracy. Anti-Masonic sentiment in general and the anti-Masonic political movement in particular have been cited by mid-twentieth-century political theorists as a key example of the “paranoid style” in U.S. politics. These scholars argue that such large-scale suspicion of the Freemasons, a harmless fraternal organization, reflected U.S. xenophobia and anxiety. More recently, some populist historians of the period have suggested that, in fact, many Masons did possess a great deal of influence and often used it nepotistically, if not conspiratorially. Since the post-Revolutionary era saw a concentration of power and wealth among the U.S. upper classes, they observe, antebellum anxiety about Masonry reflected not paranoid suspicion but a well-founded and legitimate concern over the unequal distribution of wealth and power in the republic.

*Dana Luciano*

**See also:** Anti-Federalists; Illuminati; Morgan, William; Robison, John.

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## Freemen

Based upon the ideas of past radicals, like the Posse Comitatus and Christian Identity movements, the Freemen movement of Montana coalesced around a basic conspiracy-minded distrust of the government, the corporate banking industry, and the meaning of citizenship. Jordan, Montana, rests on the western Great Plains far from urban intellectual centers, but the thoughts of that community's Freemen stood close to the hearts of many Americans. By the mid-1990s, the ideology of the Freemen reflected powerful fears prevalent in U.S. thought.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Ralph Clark family felt the sting of bankers' investments and the government's policies. Caught between rising interest rates and falling property values, the Clarks sought shelter from government foreclosure on their home, which had been mortgaged to finance a land purchase. The seed of discontent planted by the local Posse Comitatus bore fruit as local farmers, like Clark, banded together to "study" their common concerns. The government, they thought, was in cahoots with Jewish bankers and meant to destroy the United States, beginning with bankrupting the farmers and ranchers.

In February 1994, the Freemen took action, flooding the area's county courthouses with documents asserting personal sovereignty and charging elected officials with failing to carry out their duties. When the office holders failed to respond, the Freemen held a "common law" court, found them guilty, and filed liens on their property for as much as \$1 million. In March, the county attorney issued arrest warrants against the Freemen for impersonating public servants and charged some with criminal syndicalism. After issuing the order, Nickolas Murnion, the county attorney, said that one of the

Freemen approached him, saying that they were going to leave him swinging from a bridge. The Freemen's plans, however, encompassed more than intimidation of local, state, and federal employees.

LeRoy Schweitzer provided the financial instrument for the group's initial exploits. Embittered by run-ins with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Schweitzer came upon a solution for revealing the government and banking fraud. By using a line of "credit" from the liens filed against local and national officials, the Freemen could supposedly access money without interference from financial institutions. By utilizing this system, the Freemen believed they could prove the falsehood of the banking system while paying off their debts.

In Montana, the Freemen exercised their own law and order to score a series of successes. Schweitzer's credit scheme converted liens into "LeRoy checks." Several businesses, state agencies, and even the IRS accepted the payments. The Freemen have maintained that they paid off their debts fairly. Schweitzer believed it was "honorable to repay a debt in double, which he did for himself and anyone else who needed relief." Of course if the state or federal agency sent the Freemen a return check for the overpaid amount, they kept it as their own money. The Freemen eventually issued 3,432 checks totaling \$15.5 billion. With this evidence, the Freemen thought it was possible to expose the government and return the nation to a sound financial basis.

Mobilized by an influx of cash, the Freemen purchased a variety of devices to send and receive information. Schweitzer filled his home with the latest computers, modems, laser printers, and facsimile machines that allowed the group to tap into international sources. The men also attempted to purchase materials for armed confrontation, such as radio equipment, rifles, and high-power ammunition.

In June 1995, four Freemen instructors held three-day training sessions for \$300 per pupil. Schweitzer offered to waive the \$300 fee for the attendees, largely out-of-state Patriot organizations, if they would pledge their manpower, skills, and armaments to help found their own sovereign territory.

The FBI informer within the cabin witnessed LeRoy Schweitzer's presentation on economics, which captured the attention of the students during the three-day seminar. This hands-on instruction included how to file liens against private individuals or government officials and how to write "LeRoy" checks. The presentation also included segments on forming independent republics with small armies of approximately 200 men.

In September 1995, the Freeman leaders moved their home base from a cabin outside Roundup, Montana, to a new location, dubbed Justus Township, outside of Jordan, Montana, on the Ralph Clark ranch. For almost seven months, the FBI watched, waited, and collected more evidence on the Freeman as hundreds of people entered the compound to hear their message.

In the end, a standoff resulted from the local community's unwillingness to put up with the Freeman. In early March 1996, the Freeman issued a statement that they would arrest and punish all trespassers, including ranchers who leased land from the state of Montana. The threatened ranchers, tired of the FBI's "Weaver Fever" inactivity—a reference to the agency's hesitation after the botched Ruby Ridge assault—approached Sheriff Charles Phipps about forming a legal posse to protect local citizens and arrest the Freeman. On 25 March 1996 the community's resolve forced the FBI to move quickly and arrest Schweitzer and another leader, Dan Petersen. Although the standoff continued eighty-one days after the arrest of key leaders, the Freeman movement had died from a lack of support in the eastern Montana communities. Support from fellow militia groups fell short of expectations as only ten Patriots mustered for a rally in nearby Lewistown. The FBI's evidence eventually helped convict fifteen Freeman and convinced six to plead guilty.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the goals of the Freeman nevertheless still resonated in rural America, echoing concerns about getting back to the faith of Christianity, limiting the role of government, and revising the financial system of the United States. The nonviolent negotiations carried out by law enforcement in 1996 contrasted with the Ruby

Ridge and Waco incidents earlier in the decade and forced organizations like the Freeman to rethink their methods of battling cultural, political, and economic decline.

*Steve Shay*

**See also:** Christian Identity; Militias; Posse Comitatus.

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## Fugitive Slave Act

The Fugitive Slave Act was enacted in 1850 as a part of a larger compromise orchestrated by Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky in an attempt to patch the growing rift between the North and South over the expansion of slavery into the Western territories. The law, which was basically a revision of the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law, was seen as a federal conspiracy by both northerners and southerners and made the prospect of liberty for blacks, north and south, slave and free, seem even further out of reach.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was passed in a similar climate of sectional differences following the American Revolution and the emergence of the United States as a nation. In 1793, slavery had been abolished or was being abolished in eight of the northern states while it remained legal in seven southern states. The United States Congress passed the law in 1793 in order to allow slave catchers to return fugitive slaves in the free states back to their owners in the South. The law merely required oral testimony by the slave catcher that the person he had found was indeed a slave. The person thus captured had no guarantee to the right of trial and any person found guilty of harboring the accused fugitive would have to pay a fine of \$500.

The law limited the rights of blacks in the North whether a fugitive or born free, because it made it possible for slave catchers to abduct any black person from the North and simply claim that he or she was a runaway slave. Even if an abducted black could prove that he or she had been born free or had been set free, their limited rights to a trial





Runaway slaves try to escape their irate master and other pursuers. (Library of Congress)

meant that such evidence may not be permitted in court. Recognizing the disparity between the constitutional rights given to U.S. citizens and the restrictions placed on blacks in the North due to the 1793 laws, many northerners fought to pass state laws that would provide its black citizens with some effective means of getting around the federal law.

Between the passage of the first Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 and the second of 1850, several northern states enacted a series of personal liberty laws that would allow captured blacks accused of being fugitives the right to trial by jury and would require written documentation of their ownership to be presented by their captors. Many such laws also provided for the prosecution of kidnappers who abducted free blacks in the North and forbade the use of state facilities in assisting with such endeavors. Such concessions given to blacks in the North angered southern slave owners, who claimed that the northern states were conspiring against them and denying them of their property and prompted the

South to clamor for more rigorous federal enforcement of the 1793 law.

The quest for an end to sectional disagreements in both the Whig and Democratic Parties culminated in Clay's Compromise of 1850. This compromise consisted of five separate bills:

1. The admission of California as a free state.
2. Moving the Texas border east, out of New Mexico territory.
3. The organization of the Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah territories with a provision that popular sovereignty would decide if they would later be admitted as slave or free states.
4. The Fugitive Slave Act.
5. The abolition of the slave trade in Washington, D.C.

As the biggest concession to slave owners in the South, the new Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 suc-



ceeded in rolling back some of the rights attained by blacks in the North by overriding the laws of individual states in mandating the return of runaway slaves.

Clay's bill for the Fugitive Slave Act was divided into four sections. The first allowed the claimant (either the owner or the slave catcher) to take the accused fugitive to any court, commissioner, clerk, marshal, postmaster, or customs official to stake his claim within the state where the alleged fugitive was apprehended. All of the officials of the first section, with the exception of the federal marshal, were granted the authority by the second section to issue a warrant for the arrest of the accused. The third section doubled the fine set down in 1793 from \$500 to \$1,000 to anyone found guilty of harboring the accused fugitive or to any federal marshal who failed to enforce the law. The last section of the bill gave federal marshals the right to act in place of the owner or the owner's agent in capturing suspected fugitives. Once the bill was passed into law, the act further mandated that commissioners presiding over the cases of accused fugitive slaves would receive a \$5 paperwork fee if the accused was set free and a \$10 fee if the accused was found guilty and returned to slavery.

Political opponents of the law in the North argued that the difference in the amount paid to the commissioner based on the ruling would entice officials to find in favor of the slave catcher in order to earn more money in such cases. Southerners, on the other hand, argued that the law did not do enough to ensure that their property was being returned and

further argued that northerners were conspiring against them by not attempting to enforce the law. Sectional rivalries between northern and southern whites continued as usual, while blacks in both the North and the South found their prospects for freedom in the United States severely limited.

Though it is unclear whether or not the law actually stopped slaves from attempting to escape to freedom, it is clear that those blacks who had already found their freedom in the North had reason to fear the new law. Within the first year and a half of the law's enactment, only five out of eighty-nine accused fugitives were set free. Many northern blacks, fearing seizure, fled further north to Canada. Between the time the bill was passed into law in late September of 1850 and the end of the year, an estimated 3,000 blacks had fled to Canada.

Questions of who the law actually benefited and who it conspired against became irrelevant with the eruption of the Civil War in 1860 and the subsequent enactment of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

*Michele Ren*

**See also:** Abolitionism; Lincoln, Abraham, Assassination of; Mexican-American War.

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## **Genet, Citizen Edmond Charles**

Edmond Charles Genet (known as “Citizen Genet”) was French ambassador to the United States in the 1790s, and was accused of engaging in clandestine schemes detrimental to American interests.

He was born in Versailles in 1763, the son of a royal bureaucrat. While he was still an adolescent, his intelligence and family connections secured him a clerkship in the foreign affairs ministry. In 1787, he was appointed secretary of the Russian embassy in St. Petersburg, but Genet’s zealous support of the French Revolution led Catherine the Great to order his removal in 1792. Back home in France, Genet was hailed by the ruling Girondin faction as a hero of the republic and welcomed into the highest circles of government. His newfound fame led to his appointment as minister to the United States, charged with the important task of improving the relations between the two countries that had deteriorated since the American Revolution.

When Genet departed for the United States in early 1793, he was only thirty years old, an impulsive, rash young man whose native talents were never honed by hard work. This was unfortunate, for the difficulty of his assignment was enough to tax even the most artful diplomat. First, Genet was to negotiate with a generally pro-British Washington administration a new treaty granting more commercial favors to France. Second, he was to ask Americans to support attacks upon Spanish and English possessions in North America, schemes that would very likely involve the young nation in

international hostilities. And last, Genet, in effect, had to convince the Americans to pay for his mission and its intrigues, for the French government had not appropriated any funds for the purpose; rather, they hoped that the money would come from an advance payment of the \$5.6 million debt the United States owed France.

In April 1793, Genet arrived in Charleston where he was given a hero’s welcome by a host of state dignitaries. Wanting to see the country, Genet embarked for Philadelphia by land and, after a month-long, triumphant journey north, arrived in the nation’s capital and was honored, in his own words, with “perpetual fêtes.” The popular adulation, combined with initial amicable meetings with federal officials, apparently led Genet to believe that the success of his mission was assured.

He was, of course, wrong. While Genet was on his way to Philadelphia, the Washington administration had issued the Proclamation of Neutrality, forbidding “all acts and proceedings whatsoever” that would involve Americans in the European conflict. Undaunted and apparently oblivious to the niceties of international protocol, Genet set in motion a chain of events that would shortly force the Washington administration to demand his recall. First, without the approval or, indeed, the knowledge of the U.S. government, Genet issued letters of marque for privateers—manned primarily by U.S. crews—to prey on British shipping. The prizes, when brought back to U.S. ports, were to be condemned and sold in courts set up by local French

consuls. Immediately, the Washington administration protested that licensing the seizure of foreign ships was a violation of U.S. neutrality and the sale of prizes on U.S. soil was a violation of U.S. sovereignty. To no avail, Genet argued that France asked no more than what it granted the infant U.S. during the American Revolution and that his actions were fully justified by the 1778 Franco-American treaty. A second and potentially more volatile category of Genet's schemes was his vision of "liberating" Louisiana, Florida, and Canada from their Spanish and English masters. While in South Carolina, Genet delegated the scheme to seize Spanish Florida to the French consul in Charleston, Michel Ange Mangourit, who assembled 300 men under the command of a Revolutionary War veteran, Elijah Clarke. Out west, as the French were well aware, the settlers were furious with the national government due to their inability to secure the navigation of the Spanish-controlled Mississippi River or protect the citizens from Indian attacks. Having been instructed to take advantage of this situation and foment an attack upon New Orleans, Genet was elated when, upon arriving in Philadelphia, a letter awaited him from the Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark. Clark, now a deeply embittered and indebted alcoholic living in Louisville, Kentucky, offered to raise a 1,500-man army to march on New Orleans. Genet promptly sent French botanist André Michaux, armed with a letter of recommendation from Thomas Jefferson, to begin talks with the Kentuckians.

Both expeditions, however, were dismal failures, primarily due to the inability of Genet to secure funding and the Washington administration's determined opposition to his plans. The lack of money was due to the Washington administration's refusal to advance payment on the \$5.6 million debt. Upon receiving the news in mid-June, Genet, left without any means of financing his ambitious intrigues and rightly fearing the imminent collapse of his entire mission, attacked the administration in a number of impolitic letters. Underestimating the power of the executive branch and overestimating the force of public opinion, Genet believed he could appeal to the American people over Washington's head. The

effort backfired, however; the American public was dismayed as word leaked of his discourtesies toward the Washington administration. In August, Thomas Jefferson wrote to the American minister in Paris, formally requesting Genet's recall.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, Washington's Neutrality Proclamation cooled the ardor of Governor William Moultrie, who immediately forbade any further recruitment for an attack on Florida. Shortly after, before Elijah Clarke and his men could seriously complicate U.S. relations with Spain, they were ordered to disband. In Kentucky, George Rogers Clark's previous boast that 1,500 men would flock to his banner proved to be exaggerated. No more than a few dozen volunteers ever appeared, nor did the money promised him by the French. Any remaining enthusiasm for attacking New Orleans dissipated when several high officials, including Jefferson and the governor of the Northwest Territories, Arthur St. Clair, made it abundantly clear that anyone who supported an attack upon Spanish territory would be subject to prosecution.

Back in France, meanwhile, the newly ascendant Jacobins denounced Genet as an enemy of the republic. Concerned about continuing the supply of U.S. foodstuffs, the French government quickly granted America's request for a recall, and Genet's replacement, Jean Fauchet, revoked all commissions issued by Genet and canceled the expeditions against Spanish territories.

Faced with the very real possibility of execution should he return to France, Genet chose to remain in the United States. In 1794 he married the daughter of New York Governor George Clinton. After spending eight years on a farm in Long Island, Edmond and Cornelia Genet moved to an estate outside Albany, where they raised six children. Genet spent the rest of his days as a landed gentleman, tinkering with inventions and only occasionally involving himself in politics. He died on Bastille Day, 1834.

*Matthew Schoenbachler*

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### German Americans and World War I

Fears of German American subversion surfaced many times in the United States in the twentieth century. The publication of the Zimmerman telegram and the sinking of the *Lusitania*, two still controversial events that contributed to the United States entering World War I, were not the only causes for U.S. alarm in the face of growing Ger-



"Halt the Hun!" Third Liberty Loan Poster by Henry Patrick Raleigh, 1918. (Corbis)

man aggression. Beginning well before the nation's entry into the war and lasting beyond the war's end, many Americans shared a conspiracy-minded fear of espionage and sabotage by what Henry Landau once called "the Enemy Within," a contingent of German Americans suspected of being more loyal to the Fatherland than to their new homeland.

Posters and pamphlets produced by the Committee on Public Information during the years of U.S. involvement in World War I depict German military aggression as an external threat, geographically distant but never completely removed from the North American continent. In one such poster the German soldier is a brutal giant holding a rifle and bayonet and stomping around a war-torn Europe; Europe and the rampaging Hun are separated from the Statue of Liberty, and the nation it represents, by only a thin strip of water. A second poster presents the U.S. infantry marching off to join the battle as the modern equivalent to medieval knights riding off to fight in a holy war against the infidel. World War I was thus regularly presented in the United States as a necessary and just war against an external threat. However, there was also an emerging sense of a threat from within, a fear of espionage and sabotage that grew out of the large number of unassimilated, politically organized German Americans living in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century. Many of these German Americans continued to use their native tongue in daily life and to define themselves and their communities against mainstream U.S. culture.

### German American Culture

In the nineteenth century, a pluralistic German-language culture had existed in the United States; as late as 1910, an estimated 9 million people in the United States still spoke German as their native tongue. They formed the broad basis for readership of a large variety of German-language newspapers and publications and supplied membership for German-language clubs and parishes as well as the National German-American Alliance (1901–1918), an organization that actively opposed U.S. entry into World War I. These many speakers of German were also the force behind attempts at offering German



as a language of instruction, or at least as a foreign language elective, in public schools. Although by 1910 the German language was already being displaced by English among the younger generation, World War I drew a sharp cutoff line for German language instruction in the entire country. In 1919, German language instruction was forbidden in several states, including Indiana and Nebraska. In *Nebraska v. Meyer*, the Supreme Court decision in 1923, this ban was overturned.

The action of the first half of Willa Cather's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of 1922, *One of Ours*, is set near the city of Frankfort, Nebraska, and dramatizes the new distrust toward German Americans growing out of the tensions that peaked with the nation's entry into war. In book three of Cather's novel, a charge of disloyalty is brought against two established German immigrant farmers. The evidence presented by the neighbors against the two men is "confused and almost humorous," yet the judge decides the case against them and assigns a fine. In later sections of the novel, Cather continues to show her sympathy for German Americans in her depiction of two older women persecuted by their more thoroughly assimilated neighbors.

### Suspected Acts of Sabotage

Even before the United States officially entered the war, there were suspicious fires and explosions at a number of U.S. plants and supply terminals. In January 1915, then again in November of the same year, fire consumed the Roebling plant in Trenton, New Jersey, where armaments and antisubmarine netting for the Allied powers were manufactured. A set of explosions, likewise attributed by many to German saboteurs, occurred in early January 1917 in munitions plants in Kingsland, New Jersey. The most spectacular of such explosions was the "Black Tom" incident of 30 July 1916. More than 2 million pounds of munitions stored on Black Tom Island in New York Harbor exploded; the explosion and the resulting fire caused enormous damage and killed three men and a child. These munitions were awaiting shipment to the Allies for use against Germany. The incident has thus been viewed by many as an act of sabotage by German agents. With Congress's

declaration of war against Germany on 6 April 1917 came stringent controls to prevent further acts of sabotage. These included the issuing of two "Alien Enemy Presidential Proclamations" and the establishing of internment camps for people of German birth residing in the United States who had not completed the naturalization process.

Suspicious of an imperial German conspiracy have largely faded from public consciousness along with the more general cultural memory of World War I, but related conspiracy theories—particularly those involving the *Lusitania* and the Zimmerman telegram—are still in circulation. The Black Tom explosion is perhaps the exception, as it has been the subject of several recent, highly speculative studies and has gained new relevance with the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, which sent the United States scrambling anew to uncover networks of saboteurs and those who fund them. Within two weeks of the World Trade Center's destruction, a guest columnist at *ABQjournal* reminded his readers that September 11 may not have been the first time the city was bombed by agents of a foreign power: "N.Y. Was Attacked by Terrorists in 1916."

James B. Kelley

**See also:** *Lusitania*, Sinking of; Zimmerman Telegram.

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### Ghost Dance Religion

Wovoka (Jack Wilson), a Paiute mystic from Nevada, revived the teachings of Tävibo, a member



Ghost Dance—Cheyenne and Arapahoe. (Library of Congress)

of the Paiute tribe, following a series of powerful visions beginning in 1886. A short time later, Wovoka began instructing proselytes in the Wanagi Wacipi (Ghost Dance, or the Dance of the Souls Departed), a sacred ceremony designed to hasten earthly renewal for all American Indians, living and dead. Wovoka's teachings spread rapidly among a dispirited and hungry people assigned to desolate western reservations. Government officials, frightened settlers, and Christian missionaries responded to the Ghost Dance's popularity with alarm. To complicate matters, newspapers flooded the public with exaggerated tales of an Indian Messiah and impending rebellion. The unconfirmed conspiracy allegations later culminated in the murder of Sitting Bull, a respected Hunkpapa chief, and the massacre of 150 American Indian men, women, and children

at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in December 1890.

When the Lakota tribe learned about the Wanagi Wacipi in 1889 they dispatched a delegation to meet Wovoka and to join in the dancing. After the delegation returned to South Dakota the following April, tribal leaders convened a council. To quell any disturbance that the proposed gathering might cause, the government's Indian agent in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, arrested three of Wovoka's disciples and detained them until the prisoners offered assurances that no councils would be held. Other Indian agents in the Dakotas withheld rations until the dancing stopped.

The popularity of the ritual led many non-Indian observers to conclude that widespread dancing was a precursor to armed rebellion. Residents of both

Dakotas panicked when they learned of the Ghost Dance's allure. Charles Hyde, a resident of Pierre, South Dakota, informed the secretary of the interior that he had obtained information about a planned Indian outbreak. Although an investigation later revealed that there was no cause for apprehension, tensions remained high. On 26 September 1890 residents of Mead County wrote to Thomas J. Morgan, the commissioner of Indian affairs, warning that Indians were planning an uprising. Perain P. Palmer, Cheyenne River's new agent, confirmed that dancers with Winchester rifles were preparing for the arrival of a messiah.

Political leaders took notice when Kicking Bear carried a militant version of the Ghost Dance to Standing Rock in the Dakotas. James McLaughlin, Standing Rock's agent, expressed grave concern when Sitting Bull, a Hunkpapa chief and symbol of American Indian resistance, expressed an interest in the ceremony. Although McLaughlin successfully evicted Kicking Bear from Standing Rock, the dance's popularity continued unabated throughout the Dakotas.

### The Newspaper War

During the fall of 1890 reporters flooded the Dakotas. Rex Alan Smith, author of the acclaimed *Moon of Popping Trees* (1981), comments that the resulting "newspaper war" inflamed an already unstable situation. Reporters from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *Omaha Daily Bee*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *New York Times* emphasized the hostile nature of the Ghost Dance religion, when, in reality, Wovoka emphasized peace and brotherhood. "War correspondents" who rushed to the scene also paid a Pine Ridge "news factory" to supply them with melodramatic conspiracy stories and titillating rumors. As a result, reporters on the scene flooded the uninformed American public with outright lies. Local newspapers, especially the *Pierre Free Press* and the *Rapid City Journal*, also contributed to the settlers' unwarranted fears. In an attempt to stop the hysteria, Charles Moody, editor of the *Sturgis Weekly Record*, and Elaine Goodale Eastman, a noted educator living in the Dakotas, condemned the "wild and wooly newspaper liars." Terrified North and

South Dakotans, however, ignored the pleas for calm.

By September 1890 the Ghost Dance had also reached the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa communities of the Southern Plains. Newspapers in Guthrie, El Reno, and Oklahoma City also circulated rumors of frenzied dancers, scalping parties, and impending warfare. Not surprisingly, terrified inhabitants responded to the news by requesting military protection. During this period, however, Thomas J. Morgan was completing a tour of the western reservations. His visits to the Southern Plains convinced the commissioner of Indian affairs that the reports from Oklahoma were grossly exaggerated. A subsequent investigation, which found no evidence of danger, advocated a policy of noninterference until the dancing had stopped.

### The Ghost Dance War

Daniel F. Royer, the new agent at Pine Ridge, buckled under the pressure of the escalating crisis. Fearful for his own safety, a frightened Royer informed his superiors that 3,000 crazed Indians were dancing in the snow. Royer and other agents reported that they were at the mercy of "wild and crazy" Indians. Fearing the worst, bureaucrats informed the Dakota agents that President Benjamin Harrison had authorized the use of military force to suppress the Ghost Dance on 14 November 1890.

Dr. Valentine McGillycuddy, a former agent at Pine Ridge, rushed to the scene. In his opinion, the presence of armed soldiers only exacerbated the threat of violence. Many dancers, alarmed at the troops' presence, fled to the security of the Stronghold, a natural Badlands fortress located 50 miles northwest of the agency. McGillycuddy, an eyewitness to the unfolding tragedy, correctly predicted that there would be trouble unless the soldiers immediately withdrew from the region.

On 11 December 1890 Sitting Bull requested permission to travel to Pine Ridge. Rather than allow the Lakota chief to bolster the Ghost Dance's popularity, General Nelson A. Miles approved James McLaughlin's request to arrest Sitting Bull, the dance's "high priest and leading apostle." Four days later a bungled arrest attempt resulted in Sitting

Bull's murder. Angry Hunkpapas, fearing for their own safety, bolted Standing Rock and fled to Indian camps along the Cheyenne River in South Dakota. Although Hump, a Miniconjou adherent of the Ghost Dance, had surrendered peacefully on 21 December 1890 at Fort Bennett, Big Foot's band decided to flee to Pine Ridge.

Major Samuel M. Whitside's Seventh Cavalry finally caught the desperate band of 370 Indians at Porcupine Butte and escorted them to Wounded Knee Creek on 28 December 1890. The next day Colonel James Forsyth gave orders to disarm the Indian camp. During the subsequent search a scuffle ensued, causing a rifle to fire. The soldiers, fearing that they were being attacked, responded with deadly force. When the smoke cleared some 150 Lakota men, women, and children lay dead.

Following the tragedy at Wounded Knee Wovoka withdrew from the spotlight and encouraged the Ghost Dance adherents to travel the "white man's road." He died in Yerington, Nevada, on 4 October 1932. Sadly, the jingoism of the "war correspondents" assigned to cover the Ghost Dance in the Dakotas contributed to the bloody episodes of December 1890. The Wounded Knee tragedy was the culmination of thirty years of armed conflict between the U.S. military and American Indians. Although never completely removed from the public's consciousness, the Ghost Dance religion and the Wounded Knee massacre received renewed interest during the modern civil rights movement and the takeover of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, by members of the American Indian Movement in 1973.

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**See also:** American Indian Movement; Native Americans.

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#### Gold Standard

Control of the money supply has been a key component of every regime in history, and when looking for a conspiracy, most theorists "follow the money"—in this case, the government's relationship to gold. Roman emperors were notorious for shaving gold coins so that they would look normal but actually contain slightly less gold, thereby allowing the rulers to inflate even a gold-based currency. Generally, however, by the Middle Ages most monarchs were constrained by the ease of weighing and measuring gold, and therefore found it difficult to meddle with the state's money supply. Instead, they borrowed against both gold reserves and taxes. Throughout this period, silver was desired for coinage, but its value was almost always measured against gold. Since silver was mined at an approximate stable ratio to gold (somewhere in the range of 13–17 ounces of silver taken out of the ground for every ounce of gold), the relative value of silver to gold remained fairly constant over the centuries.

Perhaps surprisingly, the large discoveries of gold and silver in the New World—mostly in Spanish-held territory—did not significantly alter the European economy. Prices did begin a gradual creep upward in about 1200, and increased sharply at times, correlating roughly with the "commercial revolution," then again with the birth of capitalism in the late 1700s. Of course, other events unrelated to gold or silver production also caused prices to skyrocket, as with the grain shortages in France in the 1780s. The important point, though, is that gold remained the polestar by which virtually all other values in the European world were fixed, and thus it obtained a certain mythic character.

Gold proved the world's most useful and reliable money in the premodern world because it possessed several important characteristics of money: (1) it was easily divisible, (2) it was (somewhat) portable, (3) it had inherent jewelry value, (4) it was



scarce, and (5) it was durable. Gold's scarcity, however, became increasingly unattractive as a characteristic of money in the developing European economy and in the United States, where capitalism demanded constant exchange, financing, and, above all, a steadily growing circulating medium. By 1800, mining and minting of gold coin in no way could keep pace with the demands of the capitalist system. Nor could silver adequately fill in: what capitalism demanded was an order-of-magnitude increase in the money supply, not the minor incremental surge provided by minting silver.

The Bank of England, the world's first "central bank," was the first to break from the "mercantilist" notion that only gold and silver constituted wealth. The Bank operated on a gold reserve upon which it issued banknotes that were redeemable in gold. What note holders and depositors did not know (and were not told) was that if all those holding notes suddenly and simultaneously appeared at the bank to redeem their paper money in gold (and later, silver coin), there would not be nearly enough metal in all of England to redeem every note at 100 percent ("par") value. A banking term, "fractional reserve banking," was used to describe the concept, which relied on a statistical probability (or, at the time in the 1700s, a likelihood based on common sense) that only a fraction of the note holders would ever appear at any given time to redeem their paper money in gold or silver "specie" (coin).

To a conspiracy theorist, this had all the indications of a plot. It appeared that the Bank of England, with the support (or at the direction) of the king, was deliberately cheating the public by issuing notes that it could not redeem in an emergency. In fact, "fractional reserve banking" involved a trade-off in which the public agreed to accept paper money for its convenience in exchange for a small amount of risk. What went unstated was the degree of risk, or under what conditions the money would not be redeemable.

Scottish "free" banks approached the matter differently. They did not attempt to mandate any specific reserve ratio, but rather allowed competition to sort out the good from the bad banks. However,

if a bank failed, its president and directors were subject to double liability for the loss. Lawrence White has argued convincingly that the Scottish system proved extremely stable and resilient, especially in contrast to the Bank of England. Competitive money, rather than gold convertibility of a national currency, White maintained, was the key to a stable monetary system.

In the United States, state legislatures attempted to bridge the gap between the two systems. States adopted a system of chartered banks whose charters authorized them to issue paper notes, backed by specie. The banks had to maintain convertibility at all times. This did not prove difficult in normal economic circumstances, but during panics, almost every bank in the state—or even the nation—could "suspend" specie payments and simply refuse to convert paper money for gold or silver. According to the bank charters, the legislature was to terminate the bank's authority to do business, but in fact, since suspension was nearly universal, and termination would effectively shut down all banks, legislatures rarely invoked these clauses. Instead, banks resumed business—and payment of specie—as soon as economic conditions warranted.

Still, a healthy competition among banknotes let people know which institution's notes were reliable, and which were not. A "Dun and Bradstreet" catalogue of banknotes, called *Dillistin's Bank Note Reporter*, was published and widely circulated among bankers and merchants. It accurately and in a timely fashion alerted storekeepers to money that had lost its value on the open market. Still, to operate as a bank, until the 1830s and the appearance of "free banking" laws, an institution required a charter from the state legislature in order to issue notes. It was note issue that differentiated chartered banks from "private" banks—deposit and lending operations. But the burden of chartering numerous new banks in the booming 1840s proved great enough that many states adopted "free banking" laws, further severing the relationship between the paper money and gold. Under the "free banking" laws, all a bank had to do to issue notes was to place an appropriate amount of designated bonds on deposit

with the secretary of state. After minor problems with the wording of the laws were ironed out in Michigan and other states, free banking proved effective and reliable. Indeed, in the U.S. antebellum period, competitive note issue, backed by a gold reserve, more than adequately served the economy's needs. When competition was enhanced by a branch banking system (which many states allowed), the system became even stronger and more reliable.

Wedge into this mix were the First and Second Banks of the United States (BUS, 1791–1811, and 1816–1836, respectively). These were national banks that were four-fifths privately owned, and could issue notes that had a universal quality in that the Banks were the only institutions permitted to have interstate branches. Because of their ubiquity and national character, they were viewed by critics as inordinately powerful and “controlled” by foreign interests. However, they were still both tied to the gold standard.

Of equal concern to the conspiracy-minded was a suspicious change of the Constitution's Article I, Section 8, which states, “The Congress shall have Power . . . To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin. . . .” According to the “gold bugs,” or early “hard money” advocates, this section stipulated that the phrase “coin Money” meant *only* metallic money could constitute the circulating medium of the United States. The Jacksonian Democrats, especially, interpreted the phrase this way and demanded an end to all note-issue by private banks. Led by Thomas Hart “Old Bullion” Benton, the “hard money” wing of the Democratic Party wanted to stop all banks from printing paper money, threatening to cease chartering any banks at all if they could not ensure it in other ways.

The United States, like England, had never “gone off” the gold standard, in that all international transactions were delineated in gold and currencies of all types were still redeemable in gold. Moreover, from time to time, such as Andrew Jackson's “Specie Circular,” payments on government land were required to be made in gold. When the value of silver or gold

changed, the U.S. Congress or Parliament passed a law reestablishing the value of silver to gold, not vice versa.

The Civil War brought new pressures on the gold standard. Abraham Lincoln's Union government needed additional revenue to finance the war, and temporarily suspended all gold redemption, then authorized the printing of \$450 million in “greenbacks.” These notes differed from previous money in that they were not immediately redeemable in gold, but rather had a promise to pay in gold at a future date. In addition to the greenbacks, the Union chartered a wave of national banks, which had the authority to print money, and, in order to remove competition from the national banks, the government passed a 10 percent tax on all non-national banknotes, effectively eliminating all competition with government money. Thus, in a period of three years, the link to gold was temporarily severed and competition in note issue ended.

Following the Civil War, the United States felt the effects of an international deflation. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the national banking system, this deflation hit the South and the West harder than other sections of the country, and there was an acute shortage of money in the West, especially. At the same time, new silver discoveries (the Comstock Lode, for example) had boosted the amount of silver coming out of the ground relative to gold. Instead of a ratio of 16 ounces of silver to one ounce of gold, by the 1870s the ratio reached 17:1. Politicians and agrarian activists saw an opportunity to use the power of government to rearrange the rules in their favor. They lobbied for the “free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16:1,” hoping to force the taxpayers to pay the additional costs for turning the cheaper silver into coins. Two half-measures were adopted under silverite pressure: the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Both bills attempted to force the government to purchase large quantities of silver at artificially inflated prices, but each failed to achieve its objective. Neither could purchase nearly enough silver to affect the market, and neither artificially fixed prices at a significantly higher level.

The Sherman Act proved disastrous. It required the government to purchase silver at the price of 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>:1, thus opening a window for speculators without increasing the quantity of silver in circulation. Domestic and foreign speculators pounced on the price differential to pour silver into U.S. vaults, while gold flowed out. The government came close to bankruptcy before banker J. P. Morgan bailed out the United States Treasury with a massive loan. This only further inflamed the anger of those convinced that industrialists and bankers such as Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller controlled the money supply. Somehow, the critics argued, Morgan, Rockefeller, and the “money trust” manipulated the economy by its “control” of the gold standard.

This view, of course, flipped the old Jacksonian and English “goldsmith” views on their heads: they had argued that only through a gold standard could the “common man” be protected against the machinations of “big business” and the “money interests.” Within a fifty-year period, however, conspiracy theorists—many of them the same voices who had called for a gold-only standard—now lobbied for a bimetallic standard. Businessmen and bankers favored a gold standard, not because they controlled it, but because it was predictable and stable.

The “free silver” movement reached its apex with the nomination of William Jennings Bryan as the Democratic candidate for president in 1896. Echoing the conspiracy-theorists’ fears of a “money trust,” Bryan delivered his famous “Cross of Gold” nomination acceptance speech in which he warned that shadowy forces were attempting to “crucify mankind” on a “cross of gold.” The Republican, William McKinley, ran on a gold-only standard (as well as a “full dinner pail”), and won handily, ending all discussion of bimetallism.

In 1913, the Federal Reserve System was created as the new “central” bank of the United States, and it further centralized monetary authority in the hands of the federal government. As one historian of U.S. central banking, Richard Timberlake, has pointed out, there was never any question that the Federal Reserve would operate under the existing

gold standard. However, the deflationary shocks of the 1920s caused most countries, culminating with England, to go off the gold standard for international exchanges. That left the United States as the only major nation still on the gold standard, meaning that people could purchase paper dollars with paper pounds sterling or francs, then convert dollars to gold. U.S. gold flowed out of the Federal Reserve’s vaults to Europe, weakening the banking system, until Franklin Roosevelt took the United States off gold during the New Deal.

Conspiracy theorists then came full circle again: Roosevelt was attempting to control the money supply of the United States by eliminating the gold reserve requirement—precisely what the previous generation of conspiracy theorists had advocated. By that time, conspiracy theories had split into two streams when it came to gold and money. One stream argued that the Rockefellers, through the Bank of England (and with the support of the Rothschilds), manipulated the international price of gold. The other stream claimed that, in line with the objective of a “one-world government,” the Federal Reserve served as a tool for the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the United Nations to weaken the U.S. economy and provide convenient inflation for politicians favored by these groups. Critics such as J. Orlin Grabbe and Sherman Skolnick have argued that the Federal Reserve has, at political direction, inflated and deflated the monetary base at critical times.

As the Internet has made electronic money transfers easier, the significance of gold-backing of any monetary system has faded. Gold prices, except for a pair of spikes related to oil price increases in the 1970s, have hovered at post-World War II lows. Despite claims by Grabbe and Skolnick, no Federal Reserve inflationary “mischief” has resulted in any substantial gold price increases. Quite the contrary, during the time that individuals or foreign interests were supposedly masterminding a massive inflation, gold prices continued to languish at low levels. Indeed, to simultaneously manipulate *both* Federal Reserve policies for inflation *and* gold prices is self-contradictory. If gold is the “ultimate guarantor” of

monetary value, then economic logic suggests that gold prices would have risen in the case of inflation. More likely, the Internet has opened up a new era of genuinely competitive money, although not privately issued money. Instead, national currencies—the yen, the ruble, the dollar, the peso, and the euro—all compete against each other with productivity and national wealth providing the real guarantor of monetary values.

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**See also:** Federal Reserve System.

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## The Green Corn Rebellion

During the season of the Shawnee Green Corn celebration in the summer of 1917, a group of discontented, mostly illiterate, tenant farmers in southeast central Oklahoma planned to march to Washington, take over the government, stop U.S. participation in the war in Europe, and end conscription. Although signs of the conspiracy were discovered in various parts of Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas, overt acts of violence were confined to approximately 6,000 square miles, and the majority in half that area in the

four contiguous Oklahoma counties of Seminole, Pottawatomie, Hughes, and Pontotoc.

Agitators from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Working Class Union (WCU), the Socialist Party, the Jones Family (the poor people's secret name for their organization), and Catholic baiters convinced the farmers that at least 2 million others were mobilized, more would join the cause as they marched east, and the whole nation would rise up in arms. They called meetings in the woods, as many as three per week, and promised the farmers two carloads of rifles. They argued that they shouldn't be fighting farmers and workers in Germany, when the real enemies were the capitalists at home.

But it did not take much convincing. Many of the farmers were suffering from poor soil, from uncontrollable costs of production, transportation, and storage, from bad weather and insect infestation, and from an uncertain market. They also saw those with whom they dealt, the banker and the small-town merchant, as highly prosperous.

H. H. Rube Munson, a paid IWW organizer, came to the area to stir up resistance to the draft. Another IWW professional, J. E. Wiggins, revived the dormant, indigenous Working Class Union and built upon the strength of the Socialist Party in the area. He combined socialism and anarchism to foment draft resistance and inflated the group's feeling of strength by numbering membership cards in the millions, and holding meetings in secret.

But only isolated incidents occurred. Rebels dynamited the Dewar waterworks on 7 June, resulting in the arrests of nine WCU members, cut the livestock fences owned by some banks, pulled down communication lines in Francis and a few other places, partially burned four bridges, attempted to blow up the storage tanks of the Magnolia Petroleum Company in McAlester, threatened to destroy the McAlester Grain and Elevator Plant, and stole property of some of the wealthy.

The IWW set 2 July for the grand mobilization, but when the day arrived it was postponed to 3 August. On 2 August a party of five black WCU members ambushed Sheriff Frank Grall and his deputy, J. W.



Cross, in Little River country, south of Seminole. After wounding Deputy Cross, the farmers fled. That same night a band of rebels marched from farm to farm soliciting recruits and camped on a sandbar in the South Canadian River. The next morning part of the group tried to destroy the railroad bridge over the river. About a hundred others, under command of Captain Bill of the Red Sash, moved to a bluff on Old Man Spear's farm, where the owner ran up a red flag in his backyard and denounced "Big Slick," President Woodrow Wilson, for getting the country into war. When a twenty-five-man posse approached the bluff the rebels ran into the woods.

The next day nearly 1,000 posse men from seven counties began the final campaign. Three rebels were killed, 400 arrested, and 120 indicted for seditious conspiracy and conspiring to obstruct the Selective Service Act. Three were sentenced to ten years in prison, two to six years, and a number from one to four years; 154 pleaded guilty to draft resistance. During the trials authorities set exorbitant bails and systematically excluded socialists from juries.

The eastern press portrayed the farmers as perpetual renegades who merely used the draft as a pretext to resist the government. It did not understand the economic plight of the farmers, their real concern that conscription would lead to their death in Europe, and their traditional honesty and law-abiding nature.

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## Gulf War Syndrome

Gulf War Syndrome (GWS; also known as Persian Gulf Syndrome) is the general term used to describe a cluster of symptoms, disorders, and diseases,

whose common factor is that the victims were veterans of the war in the Persian Gulf in 1990–1991. The veterans and their families (principally from the United States, but also from other coalition forces) have accused the governments involved of subjecting unwitting service personnel to untested chemical weapons or antinerve-gas drugs, and/or covering up what they know about the issue.

Many Gulf War veterans have reported experiencing a variety of physical symptoms and illnesses in the years since the Gulf War. Symptoms reported include nausea, cramps, rashes, short-term memory loss, fatigue, difficulty in breathing, headaches, joint and muscle pain, and birth defects. Ailments have been reported by American, Canadian, Australian, and British veterans alike; in some cases spouses of veterans have reported similar symptoms. The mysterious syndrome has sparked debate between veterans' groups, Senate investigators, and the military over questions of accountability, treatment, and compensation. Hypothesized causes include parasites, biological and chemical warfare agents, prophylactic vaccines and medications given against biological and chemical warfare agents, fumes from oil well fires, and stress. In 1994 an advisory panel organized by the National Institutes of Health reported that the syndrome represented many illnesses and many causes; they deemed biological and chemical warfare agents unlikely as causes. Causes for the illnesses in many subsets of patients have been identified—for example, some thirty veterans had leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease spread by sand flies—but in many instances the cause has not been identified. Veterans groups have blamed a variety of causes for these disparate GWS symptoms, including battlefield exposure to toxicants such as chemical weapons, smoke from oil fires and pesticides, and exposure to such chemicals and vaccines as the nerve agent sarin, the drug pyridostigmine bromide, depleted uranium, and anthrax and botulism vaccines.

There is still much debate about whether "Gulf War Syndrome" exists. In 1999 researchers said that brain scans of some sick veterans revealed signs of damage caused by exposure to toxic chemicals,

while some medical historians have pointed out that syndromes of undiagnosable diseases have occurred after other wars, including the U.S. Civil War and World Wars I and II.

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**See also:** Agent Orange; Health Scares.

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## Hackers

In February 2000, Websites such as Yahoo!, Amazon, eBay, and CNN were shut down by “Denial of Service” messages that crippled a corner of the Internet for a three-day period. As it had frequently done, the media focused upon the much-hyped computer hacker and professed to shed light on this dangerous underground. The popular fear is that the hacker is potentially anybody, including the neighbor’s teenage son or daughter, who, safely ensconced behind drawn shades or in basement apartments, could be busily hacking global computer systems. Such news coverage, however, is nothing new given that reports of hackers violating government, corporate, and personal databases have become common currency on the Internet and helped perpetuate a conspiracy-minded paranoia regarding the ubiquity of hackers and the vulnerability of Internet users across the globe. Yet the term “hacker” is problematic because, since its earliest incarnation in the 1950s, it has mutated in the popular media to include such divergent groups as traditional hackers, phone phreakers (people who hack into the phone system), crackers (the label for the less acceptable forms of hacking), and cypherpunks (those with a more general, but no less radical, interest in cryptography). In the seminal *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution* (1994), Steven Levy notes that, as of 1984, there were three distinguishable generations of hackers. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the first generation consisted of Peter Samson, Bob Saunders, John McCarthy, Bill Gosper,

Richard Greenblatt, Stewart Nelson, members of the Tech Railroad Model Club, and a host of other figures that found themselves wandering through the early computing labs of MIT. As Levy describes it, these hackers were drawn to the early computers housed in MIT’s Research Laboratory of Electronics and, driven by an overwhelming curiosity, they experimented with both hardware and software for the express purpose of pushing the computer beyond its original programming. They wanted to create something new, whether through the physical manipulation of the system or writing programming language such as FORTRAN, which helped create a freely distributable precursor of today’s video games: *Spacewar*. As a result, a hacker ethic stressing the free flow of ideas emerged: “Just as information should be clearly and elegantly transported within a computer, and just as software should be freely disseminated, hackers believed people should be allowed access to files or tools which might promote the hacker quest to find out and improve the way the world works” (Levy, 102). Contemporary accounts of hackers continue to stress the ethics of hacking, whether Paul Taylor in *Hackers: Crime in the Digital Sublime* (1999), remarking that the true hacker demonstrates simplicity (simple but impressive skills), mastery (sophisticated technical knowledge), and illicitness (the act of hacking is against the rules) (15); or Pekka Himanen’s summary in *The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age* (2001), that the hacker spirit consists of intrinsic interest, enthusiasm, and joy (3–4).



In addition to their common interests, these early hackers were also united in that they were viewed by the general population as mages of some weird, and equally wicked, magic. As the 1950s changed into the 1960s, resistance to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, condemnation of military/educational partnerships, and the value of free love placed these early hackers in a precarious position. Public image of these hacking magi fluctuated between the “mad scientist” type and the geeky “pasty-skinned, glassy-eyed automatons” that were the precursor to an Orwellian Big Brotherism just over the horizon (Levy, 130). With the advent of the 1970s, hackers eventually exited the hallowed halls of MIT and took to the streets to form computer-based clubs that fostered the hacker ethic by allowing diverse members to share hacking tips. This second wave of hackers used home-based transistor kits to explore the possibilities of creating new computer systems and social networks “where truth, openness, and democracy existed in a form purer than one could find anywhere else” (Levy, 192). Notable among this second wave were such groups as Community Memory, set up by Lee Felsenstein and Efram Lipkin, and the popular Homebrew, founded by Gordon French and Fred Moore. In a shift of the conspiratorial target, this second wave of hackers returned the conspiratorial gaze outward to express their own mistrust of those with economic advantage, notably multinational corporations (e.g., IBM) that threatened to privatize and restrict computer systems, software, and information.

Tellingly, on 3 February 1976, the Homebrew Community Club newsletter was set abuzz when a hacker, in a written letter entitled “An Open Letter to Hobbyists,” expressed dismay, frustration, and anger that his BASIC computer software program had been hacked and freely distributed. The author of the letter? Microsoft founder Bill Gates. Unfortunately, Gates’s letter was the writing on the wall; money had come to hackerdom as twenty-three separate computer companies, including Apple and Microsoft, were eventually founded out of Homebrew’s members. Yet, as hackers began to compete with one another in a market that valued shares over sharing, they became their own conspiratorial

targets. This third generation ran afoul of the first and second generations and, consequently, internal accusations of corporate espionage, theft, and an overall betrayal of the hacker spirit ensued.

This internal strife among hackers-cum-corporate-officers intensified during the 1980s when the home computing market began to grow at exponential rates. Furthermore, fueled by the popularity of hackers in such venues as movies (*War Games*), novels (*Neuromancer*), and television (*Max Headroom*), hacking exploded in the public consciousness because the personal computer potentially allowed *anyone* to hack computer systems. Thus, while *War Games* was screened nationwide, FBI agents arrested the six teenage members of the “414 Gang,” a computer club that hacked the Los Alamos National Laboratory, a site involved in the development of nuclear weapons. Or, in 1987, Shadow Hawk (Herbert Zinn), admitting to hacking AT&T computers, became the first to be prosecuted under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986. Finally, to help solidify the growing concern over hackers, Cornell graduate student Robert Morris unleashed the first computer worm that “unknowingly” infected computer systems worldwide and shut down the emergent Internet network. As Andrew Ross, in *Strange Weather: Culture, Science, and Technology in the Age of Limits* (1991), puts it, the effects of Morris’s Internet virus “helped to generate a moral panic that has all but transformed everyday ‘computer culture’” (75) while a “[v]irus-conscious fear and loathing have clearly fed into the paranoid climate of privatization that increasingly defines social identities in the new post-Fordist era” (80). By the end of the 1980s, the conspiracy dialogue shifted toward a media-hyped condemnation of hacking—the distinctions among hacking, cracking, and phone phreaking completely ignored—and the potentially crippling abilities of such computerized cabals as the Legion of Doom or, in West Germany, the Chaos Computer Club. Tellingly, U.S. Attorney Otto Obermaier called hacking the “crime of the future . . . [and] this kind of conduct will not be tolerated” (Slatalla and Quittner).

The judicial pursuit of hackers has only intensified since the 1980s and has now become an

increasingly publicized enterprise. For example, in 1990, four members of the Legion of Doom were arrested for stealing information that could potentially disrupt BellSouth's 911 emergency system. Later that year, the Secret Service, operating in the interest of national security, launched Operation Sundevil, a cooperative, multijurisdictional search and seizure operation targeting computer bulletin boards housed in fourteen cities. Bruce Sterling, in the online version of *The Hacker Crackdown*, writes that "Sundevil appears to have been a complete success. Boards went down all over the United States, and were shipped en masse to the computer investigation lab of the Secret Service, in Washington D.C., along with the 23,000 floppy disks and unknown quantities of printed material." Yet, Sterling argues that Sundevil had little to do with hacking itself but with media relations, since it would send a "message" to the digital underground that they could not hide behind the relative anonymity of their computer terminals for long.

Essentially, the hacker war escalated into the public domain as businesses used the hacker threat to market security software. At the same time, law enforcement agencies publicly brought the more flamboyant hackers to trial and shifted the cultural understanding of hackers from the early days of computer exploration into the realm of computer theft and fraud. Examples of these cybercriminals include members of Masters of Deception (Phiber Optik, Acid Phreak, Scorpion), who broke into such corporations as AT&T and the Bank of America, and Kevin Poulsen, who manipulated phone lines in both Los Angeles and Hawaii to ensure that he won Porsches and cash from radio giveaway contests.

Conspiracy theorists, however, point to the case of Kevin Mitnick as the most public example of government/corporate manipulation of the hacking image. In trouble with the law since his hacking teenage years, Mitnick, over a two-year period, became the FBI's most wanted hacker of the 1990s after allegedly hacking into computers, stealing corporate secrets, scrambling phone networks, and breaking into the national defense warning system. Foiled by security specialist Tsutomu Shimomura, Mitnick was arrested in 1995 after eluding authori-

ties for several years. Mitnick spent over four years in jail *prior* to his trial, prompting biographer Jonathan Littman to remark that "the government made it clear that they might indict him in different jurisdictions [and] that he might have to face multiple trials. He did not get the evidence against him for a very long time. The only trial Kevin Mitnick got was in the *New York Times* and in the media." Most observers argue that Mitnick, while certainly responsible for some of his deeds (he signed a plea agreement in 1995), could not have carried out all his attributed hacks and was unjustly prosecuted in favor of the positive media spin that increasingly depicted hackers in criminal/terrorist terms. Given the climate of the 1990s, Littman remarks that "there was more at stake at that time. And I think Mitnick, for the media and for some in the government, made a great scapegoat and was a great sort of boogeyman."

Even Levy, in the 1994 edition of *Hackers*, states that the noble stature of the early hackers has been deleted by this fourth branch of media-hyped hacker, a figure "rooted in the vernacular . . . [and] synonymous with the 'digital trespasser.' . . . In the past few years, with the emergence of computer viruses, the hacker has been literally transformed into a virulent force" (432). Unfortunately, the term has fared no better in recent years, evidenced in the "Denial of Service" attacks of 2000 or, a few years earlier, the 1998 penetration of the Pentagon's unclassified computer networks and, in 1999, the vandalization of the U.S. Senate, White House, and U.S. Army websites. Critics contend that such hacks continue to feed into the conspiratorial paranoia that accompanies average computer users regarding the malevolent computer hacker lurking over the digital horizon, which only helps sway public opinion toward increased policing of the Internet and the ongoing development (and purchase) of security software.

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### Hamilton, Alexander

In the early 1790s Alexander Hamilton, then secretary of the treasury, was accused of conspiring to turn the American Republic into a monarchy. The origin of that theory can be dated, fairly specifically, to April 1791 and a dinner engagement between Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson (then secretary of state), and John Adams (then vice-president). In the course of a conversation on political subjects Adams remarked that the British Constitution "would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man" if only it were purged of its corruption and if the House of Commons had equality of representation. Hamilton responded with sentiments derived from one of his favorite political writers, David Hume: "purge it of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an *impracticable* government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed." Jefferson was horrified by Hamilton's declaration and from that moment purportedly believed that Hamilton was "not only a monarchist" but that he preferred "a monarchy bot-tomed on corruption" and, furthermore, Jefferson believed that Hamilton was actively conspiring to erect such a system in the United States (Sawvel, 36–37).

Jefferson and Madison (who had come to think like him) began to see evidence of Hamilton's conspiring ways in many of his writings and actions, past and present. Hamilton's fiscal policy in partic-



Alexander Hamilton. (Library of Congress)

ular, a policy that aimed to concentrate wealth at the national level by assuming debt through a national bank, was characterized as an elaborate ploy designed to deprive the U.S. people of their liberty. As the Republican Party began to coalesce around Jefferson and Madison, Hamilton was portrayed in the popular press as the head of a "Royal Faction" intent on ending Republican government.

Rumors spread in newspapers that Hamilton was plotting to have the Duke of Kent, a son of George II, crowned as king of the United States. The *National Gazette*, a paper published in Philadelphia by Philip Freneau (with the backing of Madison and Jefferson), fanned the flames of suspicion, by painting Hamilton as an advocate for monarchy and aristocracy. In May 1791, Jefferson assembled his evidence of Hamilton's conspiracy and presented it to President George Washington, charging that Hamilton's scheme was to "prepare the way for a change from the present republican form of government to that of a monarchy" (Ford, vol. 1, 200). Washington did not believe a word of this and pressed for an end to the accusations. Learning from Washington of the charges against him, Hamilton defended himself in a long letter in which he argued that the real conspirators were his accusers. Hamilton later spoke of the "unkind whispers" (Syrett, vol. 12, 347) leveled against him and maintained that the "real threat to republicanism came not from Madison and Jefferson's imagined group of monarchists and aristocrats, but rather from the disorder and anarchy that would result from the destruction or lessening of the influence of the national government." Hamilton summarized the issue in a fairly accurate way when he wrote: "One side appears to believe that there is a serious plot to overturn the state Governments and substitute monarchy to the present republican system. The other side firmly believes that there is a serious plot to overturn the General Government & elevate the separate power of the states upon its ruins. Both sides may be equally wrong & their mutual jealousies may be materially causes of the appearances which mutually disturb them, and sharpen them against each other" (Syrett, vol. 12, 253). Washington rightly considered the "wounding suspicions, and irritating charges" (Boyd, vol. 24, 317) of conspiracy and counterconspiracy to be harmful to the harmony of the early American Republic, but he was unable to bring the parties together.

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**See also:** Anti-Federalists; Disunion, Fears of; Hartford Convention; Jefferson, Thomas.

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## Harding, Warren G.

Warren Gamaliel Harding, twenty-ninth president of the United States, died in a San Francisco hotel room on the evening of 2 August 1923. The sudden end to his brief, unhappy administration, and the refusal of First Lady Florence Harding to permit an autopsy, fueled subsequent rumors of foul play and cast a retrospective shadow over the president's final days. It has been suggested that Harding committed suicide, or might even have been murdered, in order to avoid imminent revelations of scandal that could have resulted in his impeachment and removal from office.

Within months of his death, some of the president's key associates, including Attorney General Harry Daugherty, Interior Secretary Albert Fall, and the Veterans Bureau chief, Charles Forbes, were mired in the Teapot Dome oil lease investigations. Teapot Dome was America's worst experience of political scandal before Watergate and has since become a catchall term to describe the illegal sale of government oil lands in Wyoming for profit, along with other, loosely linked cases of fraud, embezzlement, and bribery by Harding's cronies—the men who constituted "The Ohio Gang" who followed the new president to Washington in 1921.





Casket of Warren G. Harding being carried from the doorway of the White House to be placed on a caisson and taken to the Capitol. (Library of Congress)

Harding himself is not thought to have been personally involved and probably knew little or nothing of the corruption within his government until mid-1923. The dawning realization, however, was known to have deeply troubled him. Embarking on a tour of the western United States to promote U.S. membership of the World Court, Harding exhausted himself by insisting on a punishing schedule of public appearances. After his collapse in Seattle, the rest of the tour was canceled on Florence Harding's orders and the president was rushed through to the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. At first, his condi-

tion seemed to improve but, on the evening of 2 August, as his wife read to him a favorable news article from the *Saturday Evening Post*, the president suffered a relapse and died.

Conspiracy theorists have had plenty of material to work with in the case of Warren Harding. Conflicting accounts of the exact time of the president's death, its exact cause, and the number and identity of persons in the presidential suite at the time, aroused suspicion among reporters, as did Florence Harding's refusal to allow an autopsy. The former first lady later destroyed many of her husband's personal papers,

while the rest were closed to historians for forty years. This generated fresh rumors that she, or her husband, had something to hide. In the absence of detailed, academic analyses of the president and his administration, the way was left open for less reliable commentators to fashion Harding's image and place in history. In 1930, Gaston Means, a private investigator and convicted perjurer, published *The Strange Death of President Harding*, alleging that Florence Harding had confessed to administering an overdose to her husband, with his tacit complicity, during his illness in San Francisco. Her aim, she told Means, was to spare him the humiliation of impeachment. Harding apparently understood what she was doing as the fatal dose was administered and accepted it as his sole means of escape from onrushing disaster. Means also confirmed the claim of Nan Britton's 1926 memoir, *The President's Daughter*; that she had been Harding's mistress and had borne his child. Jealousy of Harding's philandering, Means wrote, had driven Mrs. Harding to employ private detectives to keep track of his extracurricular activities.

Popular fiction later took up these promising themes of adultery, scandal, and petty espionage. In the 1926 play *Revelry*, Samuel Hopkins Adams's pastiche of the Harding years, the failed "president" Willis Markham commits suicide to avoid humiliation. In Gore Vidal's *Hollywood* (1989), much is made of Florence Harding's 1920 visit to noted Washington astrologer Madame Marcia, who had famously predicted in 1920 Harding's election and premature death. Vidal, however, has Marcia prophesying the president's murder.

The rumor mill ground on for four decades. While Harding's philandering nature has been confirmed by most scholars of the period, there exists no clear evidence to substantiate the wilder rumors of presidential murder. The most likely explanation for Harding's death is that of sheer nervous exhaustion, exacerbating an already dangerous heart condition. Two recent Harding analysts, Robert Ferrell (1996) and Carl Sferrazza Anthony (1998), support the theory of death from natural causes. Anthony adds an extra dimension by speculating that the homeopathic remedies practiced on the president by Dr. Charles Sawyer may have been a significant contrib-

utory factor to Harding's sudden death at a time when he had appeared to be on the road to recovery. Ferrell and Anthony point to a postmortem disagreement between Sawyer and other medical experts as to the cause of Harding's death. Anthony suggests that the real cause of death—a fatal heart attack brought on by strong purgatives that were administered relentlessly by Sawyer and weakened the president's condition—was covered up in order to protect Sawyer's reputation. Anthony claims that although the death was innocent and accidental, it was nevertheless a case of negligent homicide.

By 1923, Harding biographer Francis Russell records, the president was overweight and suffering from high blood pressure. He could no longer complete his customary rounds of golf and had to be propped up in bed at night due to breathing difficulties. The intense physical exertions of the western tour, therefore, combined with overwhelming fear over the rumors of scandal now reaching his ears, were probably more than sufficient to bring about his collapse and death without murderous assistance from his wife. The recent "accidental death" scenario propounded by Anthony is perhaps more plausible.

Despite this, the rumors of conspiracy have never entirely been silenced. Interpretations of the Harding years have been dominated more by hostile journalists, gossip, and popular fiction than by serious historical analysis and this has given the entire period an "unbalanced" character, in which the focus has been almost entirely upon the president's love life, his wife's addiction to clairvoyants, and his associates' thievery. In such a lurid environment, murder conspiracy theories thrive. The facts are insufficient to sustain such theories but, in the case of President Harding, the justifying principle appears to be *not* that presidential murder took place, but that, given the surreal nature of the Harding era, it would not have been surprising.

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### Hartford Convention

Between 15 December 1814 and 5 January 1815, twenty-six Federalist delegates from the New England states met in Hartford, Connecticut, to consider their future as members of the United States. New England Federalists increasingly feared a southern/Republican conspiracy to weaken the northern region and subjugate it to the Republican agenda. Concerted, forceful action by the New England states seemed imperative. To concerned New England observers, “Mr. Madison’s War” of 1812–1815 and the hardships it imposed on the region demonstrated the extent of anti-New England conspiracy. By 1814, the scattered calls for a convention of New England states to resist subjugation reached a fever pitch Federalist leaders could no longer ignore. New England fears of conspiracy thus prompted action that in turn engendered Republican fears of Federalist conspiracy to break apart the union.

### Sectionalism and Partisanship

Fears of conspiracy grew out of vigorous sectional jealousies and partisan politics. Even before the 1787 Constitutional Convention, political leaders and observers had noted the differences of climate, geography, economy, religion, and custom that differentiated New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South, and the West from each other. The interests of one region often conflicted with those of the others, and ratification of the 1787 Constitution in no

way dispelled perceptions of regional incompatibility. Throughout the decades of the early Republic, any attempt to enhance the interests of one region usually brought accusations from other regions of conspiracy to strengthen one part of the country at the others’ expense.

Adding to the sectional tension, partisan politics quickly emerged during George Washington’s presidency and intensified under his successors. In the new system of government, political opposition had not yet gained legitimacy and was seen as conspiratorial by definition. The Federalist Party, based in New York and New England, supported Alexander Hamilton’s program of economic and commercial development and his pro-British, elitist attitudes. Republicans, led by Virginians Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, preferred French friendship, and advocated agricultural individualism and the democratization of politics. Federalists, the party in power under Washington and Adams, feared that Republicans would gain ascendancy in the state and federal elections of 1800. In an attempt to suppress “treasonous” Republicans, Federalists passed the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. In turn Republicans, who perceived Federalists as the true conspirators, responded with the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions that labeled the acts unconstitutional. Jefferson’s election in 1800 and other Republican victories reversed the parties’ political fortunes, putting Federalists on the defensive. Shrinking to a political minority, New England Federalists perceived even more dangerous conspiratorial designs by the opposition.

Foreign affairs only exacerbated the sectional and partisan disputes. As warfare between France and Great Britain resumed in the first decade of the nineteenth century, both sides preyed upon U.S. shipping to prevent New World resources from reaching each other. Jefferson and his successor, Madison, attempted to coerce the combatants into respecting U.S. neutrality by denying them the advantages of U.S. trade until they ceased harassment of U.S. ships. Their trade embargoes, however, greatly curtailed economic activity in New England, which had always relied on its commercial relationships, especially with Britain. It seemed to







longer resist constituent pressure and, led by Massachusetts, scheduled a convention for that winter. The moderate Federalist Party leadership intended the convention as a forceful means of petitioning the federal government and an attempt to contain more radical Federalist sentiment. But when Federalists demanded constitutional reform to protect their beleaguered region, Republicans and their Virginian party leadership perceived an attempt to break up the union. Just as New Englanders feared a conspiracy to subjugate them to southern interests, southerners saw the Hartford Convention as a vehicle for New England secession. As early as 1809 inconclusive evidence linked New England Federalists to a British plot to separate and perhaps retake the region. Since Jefferson's election in 1800, the hard-core Federalist Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts had periodically advocated a separate New England confederacy. And, while Federalist leadership proclaimed their unionist sentiment and moderate intentions, the popular mood in New England tended toward radicalism, and scattered but insistent calls for a separate peace with Britain or outright secession fed southern fears of disunionist conspiracy.

In actuality, the convention held to a moderate course. The twenty-six delegates came from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, two individual New Hampshire counties, and one county of Vermont. Their final report highlighted the need for the region's defense, criticized the developments that had reduced its influence in the federal government, and suggested correctives for the situation. The convention proposed seven constitutional amendments that included abolition of the three-fifths clause, raising the voting majority necessary to admit new states to two-thirds, limits on the federal government's war and embargo powers, and an injunction against successive presidents from the same state.

Despite the moderate aims of the convention, Federalists could not shake their reputation as secessionists, and amidst the nationalism that swelled after Andrew Jackson's decisive victory at New Orleans, Federalist influence outside the state of Massachusetts evaporated. The Federalist proposals

ultimately came to nothing, and contrary to its detractors' assertions, the Hartford Convention did not further disunionist conspiracy but rather diffused and contained secessionist sentiment. However, it also demonstrated the depth of suspicion of both New Englanders and southern Republicans that the other was conspiring against them.

*Cheryl Collins*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Anti-Federalists; Disunion, Fears of.

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## Hawaii, Attempted U.S. Takeover of

The U.S. political and economic agenda to dominate Hawaii accelerated in 1867–1868. Due to the high tariffs levied by the United States on imported Hawaiian sugar, both countries sought closer economic ties. Two options were being considered to improve relations. On an official level, negotiations for a Reciprocity Treaty were under way between Charles Coffin Harris, the envoy representing King Kamehameha V's government, and General Edward Moody McCook, the former U.S. consul to Hawaii. Yet, a simultaneous push for annexation was also gaining support among disgruntled U.S. residents. One catalyst that contributed to the worsening relations was the navy's decision to dispatch the USS *Lackawanna* to Hawaii, where ship and crew were under orders to remain permanently. Screening this deployment of troops as a response to a threat of French aggression, the United States insisted that the ship was there only to protect U.S. interests and its citizens. Arriving on 9 February 1867, the *Lackawanna* anchored in Honolulu Harbor, and its presence posed a serious challenge to the independence of the Hawaiian kingdom. If the U.S. had been sen-

sitive to the fragile relations between the two countries, the navy would have no doubt limited the duration of the orders, or at least sent another captain. William Reynolds, the captain of the *Lackawanna*, was persona non grata in Hawaii. He had been stationed in the islands between 1852 and 1861 and had earned the reputation of being an annexationist. His return to Honolulu at the helm of a fully manned vessel of war with instructions to remain there indefinitely was cause for concern, especially since many resident Americans as well as the administration of President Andrew Johnson favored annexation over reciprocity. U.S. expansionist plans in the Pacific region became evident in the summer of 1867 when Reynolds sailed the *Lackawanna* west and on 28 August claimed Midway Island.

In early 1868, George W. Lendeveg disclosed that a conspiracy to take over Hawaii was in the works. As captain's clerk, Lendeveg was privy to classified documents as well as the private writings and personal correspondence of Reynolds. Motivated by the need to find a financial solution to his own personal problems, Lendeveg broke his oath of allegiance to the U.S. Navy when he drafted a letter to the king in which he promised to furnish information that would prove Reynolds was plotting against the monarch. Lendeveg pledged loyalty to Kamehameha and offered his services as a spy to uncover the machinations of the conspirators; however, he made it clear that he expected to be rewarded for his role in saving the kingdom. Alarmed at the extent of the conspiratorial network, Lendeveg counseled the king that even his most intimate advisors were not to be trusted and insisted on delivering the evidence in person. Since the future of the nation might be at stake, a ministerial-level interview with Attorney General Stephen H. Phillips was arranged. Unsatisfied that his tale of subterfuge had been adequately addressed at this meeting with the king's intermediaries, Lendeveg wrote another letter warning that the crisis was at hand. Arguing that urgency was paramount if the kingdom was to be saved, Lendeveg revealed the names of those who had been beguiled by Reynolds and were now recommending revolution and annexation by the United States.

After evaluating the evidence Lendeveg had stolen from Captain Reynolds, Charles de Varigny, the minister of foreign affairs, informed Washington of Lendeveg's treasonous activities and forwarded copies of the two seditious letters to Secretary of State William Seward.

Even though the Reciprocity Treaty was ratified by the Hawaiian Legislature, it was rejected by the U.S. Senate. The setback halted all progress on a closer economic union at this time. What about the threat of annexation? Hawaii had failed to gain the much-coveted elimination of tariffs on its sugar exports, but its diplomatic maneuvering preserved the nation's independence. Official disclosure of Lendeveg's treachery made the conspiracy to annex the islands public knowledge, and this prevented Reynolds and the U.S. government from moving unilaterally. On 6 May 1868, the *Lackawanna* departed Honolulu and sailed for San Francisco. Once there, George Lendeveg was court-martialed and sentenced to fines and ten years' hard labor. The sentence was subsequently reduced by Rear Admiral H. K. Thatcher and later commuted by the attorney general. Theft of private correspondences and official documents, which may have exposed a U.S.-backed plot to incite revolution in a sovereign state, and the handing over of those documents to a foreign government are treasonous activities, yet Lendeveg's punishment for these actions was expunged. By exonerating Lendeveg, the United States cleansed itself of all involvement in a conspiracy that, now, officially never existed.

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### Haymarket Bombing

On 3 May 1886 a striker protesting outside the McCormick Harvester Company in Chicago was killed by the police. On 4 May in the city's Haymarket Square, a small crowd of socialist and anarchist demonstrators who had gathered to protest the killing was dispersing when a bomb was thrown at the police, killing one officer and wounding several others. In the hysteria that followed, newspapers in Chicago and across the United States blamed anarchist groups for the bombing, wealthy businessmen in Chicago donated money to hire "sympathetic witnesses," and eight men—August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg, Albert Parsons, and Oscar Neebe—were charged with conspiracy to commit murder and riot. During the trial the state produced evidence for the existence of a "Monday Night Conspiracy," alleging the defendants had met together at Griefs Hall in Chicago, as part of a larger gathering of local anarchist groups, to discuss the Haymarket meeting and lay plans for the bombing.

That a group made up of mainly foreign-born anarchists should find itself arraigned on conspiracy charges in Chicago in 1886 remains one of the more compelling metaphors for the age. The closing decades of the nineteenth century were among the most turbulent in modern U.S. history, and no city felt the transformations of the time more keenly than Chicago. To some Americans the future of the republic itself seemed in question, as economic depression and a widening conflict between capital and labor laid bare the social divisions and political tensions of the post-Civil War era. In the years leading up to the Haymarket "conspiracy" industrial conflict intensified, with almost 700,000 workers on strike in 1886, the year of the Haymarket bombing. By the end of the decade nearly 10,000 lockouts and strikes had

taken place. The 1880s had also seen the rise of a new nativist response to shifting patterns in immigration to the United States, as groups of white "native-born" Americans in cities across the country preached the dangers of nonassimilation, and the cancerous presence of "alien" political ideologies. The aftermath of the Haymarket bombing was not a good time to be a known anarchist in Chicago. Neither was it a good time to be a foreign-born U.S. worker.

### Negligible Evidence for Conspiracy Charges

Problems during jury selection for the trial of the Haymarket "bombers" indicated from an early stage that the "conspirators" might themselves be the victims of a conspiracy to convict innocent men. Confronted with potential jurors who said they would be unable to act impartially, having already formed an opinion on the case from what they had read or heard, Judge Joseph E. Gary repeatedly struck down objections from the defense about the unsuitability of jurors. Gary interviewed many of those available for selection at such length that some are said to have simply given in and rediscovered their "impartiality" under duress. The case for the prosecution rested to a large degree on the testimony of an expert witness who claimed that the bomb thrown at Haymarket bore a resemblance to other bombs made by the defendant Louis Lingg. But prosecutors were unable to prove that Lingg had either thrown the Haymarket bomb or conspired to do so. A key witness for the prosecution, Harry Gilmer, offered damning testimony in support of the conspiracy charges, and identified a Rudolph Schnaubelt as the man who had thrown the bomb. But Schnaubelt had already been arrested and released without charge, Gilmer's evidence in court conflicted with the description of the bomber he had given to the *Chicago Times*, and the defense alleged that he had been paid by the police to testify. The defense also established that August Spies could not, contrary to Harry Gilmer's evidence, have lit the fuse for the bomb. Indeed, the evidence against all but two of the "conspirators" was negligible. A number of the accused were shown to have been elsewhere at the time of the





A bomb explodes as police battle rioters in Haymarket Square in Chicago on 4 May 1886. The explosion killed several people. (Library of Congress)

bombing, while others were unaware that the Haymarket meeting had even been planned.

Despite the gravity of the charges, and the huge volume of evidence presented during the trial, the jury took only three hours to convict all eight defendants, seven of whom, including Spies, Parsons, and Lingg, were sentenced to death. A number of appeals against the sentences were lodged in 1886 and 1887, including one made to the State Supreme Court of Illinois that contested both the legal and factual basis of the “conspiracy” convictions. The appeals failed. Lingg committed suicide before the sentence could be carried out, but Parsons, Spies,

Fischer, and Engel were hanged on 11 November 1887. Neebe, Fielden, and Schwab were jailed for life, but were pardoned by the governor of Illinois, John Altgeld, in 1893.

*David Holloway*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; American Protective Association; Anarchists; Eugenics; Know-Nothings; Molly Maguires; Nativism; Red Scare.

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### Health Scores

Disease, medical practice, and public health have long been subjects of conspiratorial allegations. Historians of earlier centuries typically link such suspicions to the vulnerability of a social order threatened by instability or war, and to the mysteriousness of illness prior to the age of “scientific medicine.” At the turn of the twenty-first century, key discoveries and treatments have transformed medicine, and the public is bombarded with a constant stream of health-related information carried by the media. But despite these advances in knowledge and access to information, health-related conspiracy theories proliferated in the second half of the twentieth century. It may be that, in a culture saturated with medical information, the body’s uncertainties and vulnerabilities are pervasive and prominent. Medical conspiracy theories also reflect rising suspicion toward and resentment of the medical establishment, which, since the mid-nineteenth century, is increasingly prestigious, powerful, and rich.

### Historical Precedents

Contagion was recognized long before microbes were identified. Notable conspiracy theories of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries blamed disease on infection by foreign enemies or domestic aliens. During the Salem witchcraft scare that culminated in the trials of 1692–1693, routine forms of disease and death were said to be the work of witches, but far more fearsome than familiar diseases were the special “afflictions” caused by demonic possession—screaming fits, visions, pains—which were considered highly contagious. Historians stress that the witch-hunt was preceded by a series of disrupting calamities, including drought, floods, smallpox, and Indian wars, and that it took place during a hiatus in governmental and legal authority.

The Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic of 1793 occurred during the vulnerable early republican period, which was characterized by fear of a French invasion. Faced with the epidemic, Philadelphia doctors speculated that the recent flood of Caribbean immigrants into the city had brought a French contagion with them, possibly as part of a deliberate French plot.

A foreign enemy also figured in a prominent conspiracy theory about the Great Flu pandemic that coincided with World War I. Spurred by media stories revealing a German conspiracy to spread contagion through Bayer aspirin tablets, public health authorities formally investigated the imported medicine.

### The Growth of the Medical-Industrial-Governmental Complex

A decisive step in the formation of the modern medical establishment was the founding of the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1847, which capped decades of struggle to transform a diverse, unregulated array of practices and practitioners into an exclusive, credentialed profession. Resistance to professionalization, which was widespread in the nineteenth century, was collectively known as the Popular Health Movement (PHM). Like its post-1970 descendant, the Alternative Health Movement, the PHM comprised a diverse array of supporters who shared distrust or outright paranoia toward legitimate medical authority. Today, the split between the profession and the public is more pronounced than ever: the AMA is reputedly the strongest and richest lobby in Washington, while the Alternative Health Movement has grown into an institution in its own right.

The growth of “scientific medicine” in the early twentieth century decisively divided the layperson from the expert. Scientific medicine based medical practice on laboratory research and credentialed expertise acquired through long, costly years of training at a shrinking number of medical schools that were selectively endowed by the Rockefeller and Carnegie Trusts. In the mid-twentieth century, the growth of related chemical, pharmaceutical, technological, and service industries brought an ever-

increasing involvement of private interests and funding into academic, research, and clinical medicine.

Beginning with the Pure Food Act of 1906, the U.S. government has formally intertwined itself with healthcare and health policy. Since 1970, Washington has spun out a vast web of health-related agencies and centers, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the agencies that operate within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which include the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health. Through these organizations, the government has become involved in all aspects of health-related delivery, licensing, regulation, funding, policy, research, education, and publicity.

The healthcare sector absorbs a vast amount of the national economy, having accounted for 14 percent of the gross domestic product in 2001. Although more money goes into healthcare, the systems that deliver it are breaking down. Doctors blame unregulated, price-fixing insurance companies; insurance companies blame price-fixing by consolidating hospitals and the steep rises in drug and technology costs. The healthcare consumer, meanwhile, faces enormous cost spikes and decreasing access to quality care.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, government, business, and universities share funding, research projects, clinical facilities, and oversight personnel; industry and giant philanthropic trusts support education and research; and public relations firms work with industry-supported scientific experts to feed information to the media. Although medicine has always been political in the broad sense—a source and use of power—by the end of the twentieth century medicine was a major facet of the power structure. Faced with this conglomerate of intersecting interests, many healthcare consumers voice the perception that individual and collective bodily well-being calls for a power struggle against fraud, exploitation, manipulation, and coercion.

### **Big Medicine and Overarching Conspiracy Theories**

Some conspiracy theories posit seamless collusion among the intersecting interests involved in medi-

cine. The Rockefeller conspiracy theory, which was promulgated in the mid-twentieth century (Bealle), alleges that in the 1930s Rockefeller petroleum and financial interests merged with the infamous Nazi-tainted German chemical company I. G. Farben to form an international drug trust, which went on to control many banks and industries and to direct education, policy, and research through gifts to agencies and universities. This theory, because of its emphasis on Rothschild funding and media monopoly, is usually considered antisemitic. A later elaboration asserts that Rockefeller interests financed the “green revolution” to develop super-profitable “superwheat” hybrids that require large amounts of fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides (commodities controlled by Rockefeller), enabling Rockefeller drug and medical interests to profit from resulting increases in environmental and diet-related illness (Ruesch).

The “hidden cure” genre of overarching conspiracy theories alleges that the public is denied effective cures and treatments that the medical-pharmaceutical complex does not consider sufficiently profitable. A prominent example is the belief that, although the cure for cancer has been discovered, doctors, researchers, drug companies, the media, and the FDA have conspired to suppress the cure in order to continue generating profits from cancer patients.

There is no plausible evidence for the Rockefeller and hidden cure theories, which imagine an improbable degree of collusion across a vast array of institutions and professions. But it is not surprising that such theories are popular, given the very real and profitable collusion of government, industry, and research institutions at the expense of consumers. For example, in a pharmaceuticals market controlled by the FDA, the U.S. pharmaceutical industry enjoys monopoly-like power; and in 2001, U.S. prescription drug costs—already much higher than in other countries—spiked 16 percent in a single year.

### **Fact-Based Theories**

Many conspiracy theories grow by citing a legitimate disclosure, linking it to a troubling public health situation, and explaining it all as a large conspiracy—

sometimes very plausibly. Patient safety studies released in the 1990s cited data indicating that 1 in 500 hospital patients is gravely injured or killed by mistake. Since a professional code of secrecy is traditional in medicine, the safety researchers conducted their own direct studies, finding that the vast majority of iatrogenic (doctor-caused) disabilities and deaths are never reported, even within secret internal hospital reviews. They concluded that the true percentage of hospital patients killed by a “medical mistake” is 1 in 50 (Institute of Medicine).

Disclosures of damage caused by prescription drugs often give rise to theories about prior knowledge and cover-ups, or even about deliberate plots to induce illness in order to profit by its treatment. There are parallels in the area of surgery: for example, responses to well-publicized questions about heart bypass surgery’s efficacy and dangers have included allegations of unnecessary surgery as well as an overarching theory that the production and treatment of heart disease is a large industry in which agribusiness and fast-food chains profitably induce the obesity and heart blockage from which medical and drug interests, cardiac surgeons, hospitals, and device makers profit.

Some conspiracy theories respond to striking trends in new diagnoses; examples include behavioral disorders such as attention deficit disorder, mood disorders such as depression and anxiety states, and so-called hormone deficiencies. Profit is generally the ascribed motive for the conspiracy to diagnose and medicate, but some theorists posit more sinister aims, describing plots to debilitate the population with mind-numbing drugs such as Prozac and Ritalin; to pacify women through “addicting” hormone replacement; to reduce the population by impairing fertility; and, in a period of economic instability, to keep the lower classes in their place by making them fat with fast food.

### **Fraud and Addiction**

Tobacco is a compelling context and paradigm for the perception of disease-related conspiracies involving profit, public relations, government collusion, and scientific fraud. Broadly publicized exposés have shown not only that industry and

government leaders knew tobacco was both addictive and deadly, but that tobacco companies, guided by their public relations consultants, influenced research and even directly paid scientists to sign their names to favorable reports in prestigious medical journals (Rampton and Stauber).

A number of conspiracy theories accuse industry and marketing interests, in collusion with government, of addicting the population to, in addition to tobacco: street drugs, alcohol, hormones, Ritalin, Prozac, fatty food, starchy food, television, the Internet, violent films, sugar, shopping, pornography, and gambling. Some theories describe significant collusion, for example, that the meat, dairy, and grain industries work hand in hand with chains like McDonald’s, whose “supersize” meals help increase rates of diabetes so that Eli Lilly can reap greater profits from insulin. The “food disparagement” laws passed by many states in the 1990s, which attempt to suppress speculative criticism of food safety, have helped fuel the perception that agribusiness intimidates the media and buys off politicians.

### **Transgressive Science**

New laboratory techniques and inventions have given rise to a number of conspiracy-tinged scenarios, including the charge that the human genome project is being used to develop pathogens that target racially specific populations. There is fearful speculation about novel pathogens created in the laboratory, including animal pathogens that cross over to humans and superpathogens produced through gene-splicing. Outbreaks of Hanta virus, Legionnaire’s disease, and some of the rarer hepatitis strains have been followed by speculations that dangerous new agents bred in the laboratory have been accidentally or deliberately released.

These fears grow from an anxiety about the breaching of boundaries between species, between nature and science, and between genetically distinct individuals. Some large-scale disease conspiracy theories often harmonize this boundary anxiety with an anxiety over geographic and demographic boundaries. In an age of globalization, boundaries no longer separate populations and nations, nor do they sequester diseases. Popular press books published in

the 1990s describe impending epidemics facilitated by laboratory experimentation, jet-setting doctors, negligently unchecked urban overcrowding, mass migration, and international travel (Garrett).

### **Immunization**

One of the richest popular veins of conspiratorial theorizing focuses, not surprisingly, on vaccination programs. Although parents are free to refuse to immunize their children, state, federal, and school authorities exert considerable pressure. Immunization programs developed by the government in league with vaccine manufacturers (who profit greatly), and aiming to include every child, represent in an immediate form the combined powers of government, education, and commerce expressed through medical intervention. The fact that serious adverse outcomes and even death occur from a small percentage of vaccinations is widely publicized and fuels complaints about medicalized coercion and speculations about more far-reaching damage.

Elaborate theories about intent and damage related to vaccination are widely discussed, especially on the Internet. New vaccines are constantly being tested, and covert experimentation is sometimes alleged: for example, there is a theory that a health maintenance organization (HMO) in California secretly tested a new measles vaccine on 700 minority children (the use of minorities as guinea pigs resonates with the infamous Tuskegee medical experiment of the 1930s).

Officially reported “adverse events” tend to be immediately apparent, but questioners of immunization programs speculate about long-term harm, including developmental problems, chronic fatigue syndrome, autoimmune and neurological problems, and behavioral and learning disorders. Since vaccines are modified pathogens, some antiimmunization protesters use a rhetoric of purity, complaining that the “pure” bodies of children are invaded, polluted, and disordered by this literalized form of governmental intrusion.

The public revelation that at least one common, mandated vaccine serum contained a mercury-based preservative called thimerosal was followed by charges of outright poisoning and cover-ups. Acting

on the theory that autism is caused by unsafe vaccines in general, and thimerosal in particular, organizations of parents of autistic children were successful in getting the thimerosal-containing vaccine pulled and the issue brought before a congressional hearing, where a representative called for criminal penalties for any government agency that had covered up the thimerosal danger.

Immunization packs together several paranoia-inducing aspects of medicine: coercion by power, population-wide inclusion, the invasion of the body and the family system, and novel tinkering that forever change the body’s functioning. Immunization sometimes serves as the warp into which other conspiracy theories are woven. For example, a theory about biochip implants for tracking and controlling the populace converges with smallpox vaccination phobia in a theory that smallpox vaccinations will be used to implant tiny ID microchips useful for detecting foes during periods of social unrest. Another theory uses immunization to link chemtrails and West Nile virus. Chemtrails, or contrails, are the visible condensation streaks left by aircraft exhaust; conspiracy theorists suspect they are toxic and represent secret mind-control or weapons testing programs. Citing outbreaks of West Nile virus and Legionnaire’s disease, and noting that authorities responded to West Nile by spraying New York with questionable pesticides, one theorist posits that the outbreaks resulted from pathogens and toxins released as chemtrails in a covert experiment in mass immunization.

### **Environmental Dangers**

Conspiracy theories constantly emerge in response to ever-recurring alarms about environmental contamination. The dangers discussed include exposure to nuclear, microwave, and electromagnetic radiation; poisoning by toxins, pathogens, and pollutants in the environment; and contaminants in food and water. A number of well-publicized incidents since 1970 have fueled suspicions of widespread industrial fraud and negligence. These include several nuclear plant near-disasters in the 1970s and the Kerr-McGee plutonium plant mystery, which involved the 1974 death in a one-car crash of whistle-blower Karen Silkwood



(the subject of a 1984 movie). Discoveries of disease clusters in sites contaminated by industry gave rise, in the 1990s, to the mass media book and film dramas *A Civil Action* and *Erin Brockovich*, in which poisoned families with sick or dying children are pitted against corporate bullies propped up by governmental and legal authority. Many cancer fears revolve around suspicions of covered-up exposure and suppressed knowledge of toxicity.

Some environmental alarmists have set out to emulate Rachel Carson, whose 1962 exposé of pesticide dangers turned public awareness toward environmental pollution. One self-proclaimed follow-up is the 1996 book *Our Stolen Future*, whose authors look beyond cancer to the reproductive and developmental damages threatening future generations caused, they write, by hormonally active pollutants, particularly organochlorines. A red flag, according to the endocrine disrupter thesis, is the alleged drop in human sperm levels—a broadly publicized finding that led to much speculation about the future of humanity, but which follow-up studies have repeatedly shown to be unsubstantiated. Governmental responses to the endocrine disrupter scare illustrate the ineffectual oversight that helps nurture conspiracy-tinged suspicions. Although Congress, spurred by scientific testimony about emasculated wildlife, has undertaken a vast Environmental Protection Agency program to test 80,000 chemicals for estrogenic activity, the United States is one of the few developed nations in which chlorine pollution by the paper and chemical industries continues unchecked.

The 1990s saw the publication of plausible, detailed reports and books exposing chemical industry malfeasance pulled off with the collusion of the government and media. *Behind Closed Doors* and *Toxic Deception* trace machinations to prevent the regulation of dangerous pollutants including dioxin (a potent organochlorine and a known carcinogen). PBS aired “Trade Secrets,” exposing how chemical companies concealed the toxic by-products of vinyl chloride, particularly dioxin pollution.

### Food Scares

The corporate push for genetically modified food arouses great suspicion. Critics charge that GM

food (“Frankenfood”) is profitable to industry not only because it can be patented, but because crop uniformity will eventually drive up pesticide demand. The charge that big food interests take advantage of poverty to open new markets for GM food is restated by conspiracy theorists, who describe a deliberate macroeconomic creation of food shortages in impoverished nations in order to open the door to GM food. The food industry’s opposition to GM food labeling and precautionary measures fuels such suspicions.

Margit Stange

**See also:** AIDS; Fluoridation; Gulf War Syndrome.

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### Hearst, William Randolph

The unprecedented power of William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951) opened the media magnate to charges of conspiratorial behavior throughout his entire career. With his hands firmly wrapped around the levers of public opinion, Hearst happily applied pressure to his enemies (such as Theodore Roosevelt and Orson Welles) and an almost suffocating embrace to his own enthusiasms (the eight-hour workday, the annexation of Mexico, or Marion Davies's acting career, for example). Many aspects of Hearst's professional career have been viewed through a conspiracy-tinged lens, although perhaps the most often invoked is his alleged "engineering" of the Spanish-American War. There were other public moments when charges of Hearst-generated conspiracies were alleged. Among the most interesting are those associated with the McKinley assassination, the death of Hollywood producer Thomas Ince, and the campaign to expunge Welles's classic film *Citizen Kane*.

In the history of modern media, perhaps no individual was more skillful in marshaling the tools of communication to promote his own agenda than William Randolph Hearst. His early twentieth-

century media empire—which he built through the inherited wealth of his father's mining enterprises—was influential in a way not easily appreciated today. At the peak of his power he owned twenty-eight newspapers, with most of them in the largest U.S. cities, as well as eighteen widely circulated magazines, influential film studios, several radio stations, and for a time a political constituency of national consequence.

Hearst was more than a media figure. He was oversized in his influence, and his ego. His grasp of the media matrix in its infancy was as thorough as his commitment to push his agenda on the U.S. public, and his use of the tools of technology to advance his own causes—from the global (Spanish-American War) to the ephemeral (the film career of chorus-girl-turned-actress Marion Davies)—earned him the requisite fear, awe, and contempt of his media brethren. Financially wounded by the Great Depression and undermined by the backlash against his pro-German sympathies in the 1930s, his massive empire and influence declined throughout the last decade of his life. Although he died 14 August 1951, the Hearst Corporation remains a formidable publishing conglomerate, employing nearly 20,000 people and producing dozens of magazines and newspapers, as well as maintaining an active presence in business publishing, cable television, radio, even real estate.

#### The McKinley Assassination

Establishing a pattern that would become familiar to readers of his newspapers for half a century, Hearst mercilessly attacked the sitting president during his reelection campaign in 1900. Hearst's papers assailed President William McKinley in their news stories and front-page editorials, and savagely delineated him and his Republican cronies in cartoons. Hearst attacked McKinley for his support of wealthy industrialists, his pro-trust business policies, and his anti-working-class hubris. When a crazed assassin named Leon Czolgosz murdered McKinley at the Buffalo World's Fair in September 1901, some Republican politicians and many Republican newspapers accused Hearst of inflaming the murderous hatred of Czolgosz through editorials such as the



William Randolph Hearst, 1863–1951. (Library of Congress)

one published in Hearst's papers the previous April: "If bad institutions and bad men can be got rid of only by killing, then killing must be done." Competing newspapers and a handful of powerful politicians were quick to denounce this Hearst-generated pattern of stirring up the masses through his papers' consistent, coordinated attacks on McKinley. According to biographer David Nasaw, no less a figure than Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt fingered Hearst as bearing some responsibility for the assassin's act: "Every scoundrel like Hearst and his satellites who for whatever purposes appeals to and inflames evil human passion has made himself accessory before the fact to every crime of this nature."

### **Death on the Water**

Another death—and a more enduring suspicion about Hearst's direct involvement—enmeshed the publisher in November 1924. Movie producer Thomas Ince, who was celebrating his forty-third

birthday at a star-studded private party aboard Hearst's yacht, the *Oneida*, died shortly after being taken off the boat early the following morning. Although Hearst claimed that Ince had suffered a heart attack on board, there was rampant speculation in the gossip columns and throughout Hollywood that Hearst had murdered Ince. Murmured motives included everything from an untenable clash of egos to, more salaciously, a theory that Hearst shot Ince while he was firing at Charlie Chaplin, who was allegedly having an affair with Hearst's mistress Marion Davies. The "Hearst-shot-Ince-while-gunning-for-Chaplin" theory was the premise of a 2001 film, *The Cat's Meow*, directed by Peter Bogdanovich and adapted from Steven Peros's play about the incident.

No evidence has ever been produced linking Hearst to the crime, although his yacht full of media-connected guests (a regular group of revelers who usually partied at Davies's Los Angeles mansion, according to Chaplin) remained uncharacteristically silent about the incident. The conspiracy theorists claim Hearst swore them all to silence and that none of the witnesses would have risked incurring the wrath of the media giant by revealing the truth.

### **Razing Kane**

Hearst's attempt to squelch distribution of Orson Welles's 1941 masterpiece, *Citizen Kane*, led to what several biographers have called a "clash of titans." Hearst—informed by columnist Hedda Hopper after she screened the movie that the portrayal of Kane/Hearst was a "vicious and irresponsible attack"—pulled out all the stops to keep the movie from being shown (Carringer). In one of the earliest examples of the power of vertical media integration, Hearst allegedly threatened Kane's producers, RKO, with an advertising blackout of all future RKO movies in Hearst magazines, newspapers, and newsreels. Hearst supposedly promised unflattering, magazine-length profiles of RKO executives in his publications and reportedly even threatened to initiate FBI investigation of members of the RKO board of directors and of executives associated with the film. Hearst's newspapers

labeled Welles a Communist sympathizer and attacked his association with a group of radio writers and directors called “The Free Company,” whom Hearst labeled as anti-American leftists.

The film did eventually open, though in limited release around the country. Despite its widespread celebration by reviewers (*Time* magazine called it “Hollywood’s greatest creation”), the film—battered by Hearst’s preemptive publicity strikes—was a commercial failure. Only after RKO sold its film library to television in 1956 did the movie find its audience. In 1962, the film magazine *Sight and Sound* voted it the greatest film ever made.

Hearst didn’t kill *Citizen Kane*, but he wounded it, and it wouldn’t be until well after “the Chief” (as his employees called him) was dead that his quasi-biographical counterpart Charles Foster Kane became, for a new generation of media consumers, the enduring icon of a once-mighty publishing empire.

*James Broderick*

**See also:** Yellow Journalism.

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## Hiss, Alger

In the anticommunist trials at the beginning of the cold war, Alger Hiss was accused of having infiltrated the government in the 1930s, and debate continues to this day about whether he was indeed part of a larger Communist conspiracy or whether there was a conspiracy to frame him.

On 3 August 1948, Whittaker Chambers, a senior editor at *Time* magazine, testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) about his firsthand knowledge of Communist cells that he said had infiltrated the federal government in Washington, D.C. Chambers described the cells as Marxist study groups that were not involved in

espionage and he testified that he ceased to have contact with them after he left the Communist Party in 1937.

Chambers had already told his story to a number of government officials, going back to 1939, but only now in a year when the Republican Party had its first real chance to capture the White House since 1933 was it getting a public airing. Republicans on the committee were eager to use their hearings to paint the Democrats, specifically the current administration of President Harry S. Truman and the former administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as “soft” on communism and heavily influenced by Moscow.

One of those Chambers named as a Communist was Alger Hiss, a former State Department official, who was then the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Before he left the government in 1946, Hiss had served on President Roosevelt’s staff at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. Later that year, he served as secretary-general of the San Francisco Conference, where the United Nations was organized. He had joined the Carnegie Endowment to help further U.S. work at the UN, which had come under harsh attack by powerful right-wing groups across the country.

Two days after Chambers’s testimony, Hiss appeared before the HUAC. He denied any association with Communists and said that he had never met Chambers. He was such an impressive witness that several committee members wanted to drop the matter, but one member, first-term Congressman Richard M. Nixon, had been fed a number of secret reports charging that Hiss had been a Communist (all of which could be traced to a single source—Chambers), and he convinced the committee to continue the investigation.

On 7 August, Chambers met in secret session with the committee and testified to a great deal of information about Hiss’s private life. Much of this information was wrong—Chambers clearly was exaggerating his relationship with Hiss—yet it was also apparent from his testimony that he *had* known Hiss back in the 1930s, though not as Whittaker Chambers. During his 7 August testimony, Chambers revealed that Hiss only knew him as “Carl.”





Alger and Priscilla Hiss leave a New York federal court arm in arm. (Library of Congress)

Once Hiss realized who Chambers was, he testified on 16 August that he knew Chambers as a freelance writer named “George Crosley” who had come to him to get some information for a story. He said he had gotten to know Crosley for a while, but when Crosley failed to pay back several small loans, Hiss cut off their relationship. In subsequent hearings, Chambers denied ever using the name Crosley, but months later, after Hiss located a publisher who also knew Chambers as Crosley, Chambers conceded that he probably had used the pseudonym.

Furious at what he saw as malicious slander, Hiss sued Chambers for libel. Chambers responded by

escalating the charges. During pretrial depositions in Baltimore, Maryland, that November, Chambers offered into evidence four slips of paper in Hiss’s handwriting as well and a sheaf of typewritten pages (later called the Baltimore Documents) that he said were copies of State Department documents that had been typed by the Hisses at their home and then handed to Chambers for transmission to the Soviet Union. Two weeks later, Chambers dropped a public bombshell when he led HUAC investigators to his Maryland farm, and from a hollowed-out pumpkin pulled five rolls of 35mm film, which he said contained photographs

of documents implicating Hiss and others in an espionage conspiracy.

These new charges were at odds with Chambers's previous testimony, not only before the HUAC, but also before a grand jury, that he was not involved with espionage. Because the documents were dated into April 1938, they presented another problem: Chambers had insisted in nearly all his statements as far back as 1939 that he had left the party in 1938.

The public uproar over these so-called Pumpkin Papers increased pressure to indict Hiss, but that, too, presented roadblocks. Hiss could not be indicted on espionage charges because the statute of limitations protected him from being charged with a crime that had allegedly taken place more than ten years before. The solution was to ask Hiss before the grand jury whether he committed espionage. He denied it, and on 15 December 1948 he was charged with perjury.

But Chambers still presented a problem. He had admitted perjuring himself before the grand jury when he denied any firsthand knowledge of espionage. If he were to be indicted as well, a jury at Hiss's trial might not believe the testimony of an admitted liar. At the urging of Richard Nixon, who testified before the grand jury on 14 December, the jury decided against indicting Chambers. As for his previous testimony that he had left the party in 1937, Chambers simply amended his testimony, saying he was merely preparing to leave in 1937 and didn't make his break after April 1938.

Hiss's trial opened in May 1949 and ended in July with a hung jury, voting 8–4 for conviction. Hiss was retried that November and this time was convicted. He went to jail in March 1951 and served forty-four months in a maximum security penitentiary before his release in November 1954.

At his sentencing on 25 January 1951, Hiss told the judge, "I am confident that in the future the full facts of how Whittaker Chambers was able to carry out forgery by typewriter will be disclosed." The campaign to prove that he had been framed began at that moment and Hiss directed his attorneys to search for any evidence that would prove his innocence. After his appeals had been exhausted, he hired a new lawyer who filed a motion for a new trial

in 1952. In the motion, Hiss for the first time presented evidence that his conviction was obtained from fraudulent evidence. The questions it raised included the following:

- Was the Woodstock typewriter #230099 that was presented in evidence at the trial by the defense (claiming the Hisses gave it away long before the documents were allegedly typed) a clever fake planted on the defense by the FBI?
- Was forgery by typewriter possible and specifically, were the copies of State Department documents placed in evidence by the prosecution forged by Whittaker Chambers or a confederate?
- Did Whittaker Chambers leave the Communist Party long before the April 1938 dates of the last document and therefore could not have received those documents from Hiss?

The defense offered a great deal of evidence to support its brief. It stated that according to Woodstock company records, a typewriter with serial number #230099 would have been manufactured too late to have been the machine given to Hiss's wife by her father when his company went out of business in 1932. Another expert examined the type bars on the machine and found that they had been altered. The assumption was they had been altered so that typing from the machine would match the typing on the Baltimore documents.

Experts also looked at the documents themselves and concluded that contrary to Chambers's testimony that Hiss's wife Priscilla had typed them, they had been typed by several people. Another expert made a careful examination of the paper and the envelope that Chambers said they had been stored in for ten years and concluded that their condition precluded Chambers's story from being true.

Chambers had testified that he ceased getting documents from Hiss after he left the Communist Party. He also said he had gotten work as a translator after he left the party. The brief used letters from the publishing company to show that Chambers had been assigned the translation in 1937.

In its response, the government ridiculed Hiss's brief, saying forgery by typewriter was an impossibility. It also contradicted the defense's typing experts, saying the information was irrelevant anyway to the charges against Hiss. As for the date when Chambers left the party, it said he was only preparing for a break when he got the translation work. The judge agreed with the prosecution, and Hiss's motion was turned down.

Many years later, it was revealed that not only was forgery by typewriter possible, but that it had already been employed by the government. In 1940, the FBI had worked with Canadian agents to forge a typewritten letter to convince the president of Brazil that an Italian airline had connections with Nazi Germany. The ruse worked, and the president cut off the airline's landing rights in Brazil. Hiss appealed the motion's denial, but his efforts were unsuccessful, and the case appeared to be dead until the mid-1970s when Hiss, working with new attorneys, successfully sued the government under the Freedom of Information Act and received some 45,000 investigative documents on the case from the FBI.

The documents confirmed some of the suspicions aired in Hiss's 1952 motion and, worse, indicated that the government knew about or helped hide information that would have benefited Hiss at trial.

Among other things, the documents showed that:

- The FBI knew that a typewriter with the serial number #230099 was manufactured too late to have been the Hiss machine.
- Previous statements by Chambers that had been inconsistent with his testimony at both trials were concealed from the defense by the government. Among the statements was one revealing his homosexuality, which could have provided a motive for his charges.
- The FBI had gotten statements from other witnesses indicating that key portions of Chambers's testimony were false.
- An investigator working for the defense turned out to be a mole for the FBI, who

turned over a great deal of what he found for the defense to the prosecution.

Armed with this evidence, Hiss's new attorneys went to court in 1978 filing a motion of *coram nobis* to overturn the verdict based on what they said was prosecutorial misconduct. Again, the government opposed the motion for, saying the information, even if true, would not have been enough to overturn the original verdict. The judge sided with the government and subsequent appeals again were unsuccessful. Legally, the Hiss case was dead.

But not quite. In 1992, Hiss wrote a letter to one of Russia's preeminent historians, General Dimitry Volkogonov, requesting that he examine the files of the KGB for any evidence of Hiss's guilt. Volkogonov did examine the files and announced that while Hiss clearly had contacts with the Soviets during the course of his official duties, they contained no evidence that Hiss had ever been a Soviet spy. His statement was greeted harshly by U.S. conservatives. In response, Volkogonov admitted that he hadn't looked through all the files, but he still said that if Hiss had been a spy, he would have seen some indication of it in the files he had examined, and he had seen none.

Then, in 1995, the National Security Agency (NSA) released several hundred telegrams between Moscow and its U.S. agents that it had decrypted during the cold war. Two of the telegrams discuss an agent code-named "Ales." According to the NSA, Ales was Hiss. Others disagreed, pointing out that the NSA was merely guessing and that there was no such proof that Ales was Hiss. This view received some support with the 1996 publication of a book in Russia called *Operation Snow*, by a former KGB official named Vitaly Pavlov. In the book, Pavlov, who joined the KGB in 1939, insisted that Hiss was never a Soviet spy.

By then, the information was too late for Hiss, who died four days after his ninety-second birthday on 15 November 1996, still proclaiming his innocence. As for Chambers, he died long before, under mysterious circumstances on 1 June 1961. Like Hiss, he went to his grave insisting that his testi-

mony was truthful. With more than a dozen books written on the case representing both sides, what actually happened between the two men back in the 1930s remains a topic of deep disagreement.

*Jeff Kisseloff*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Atomic Secrets; Chambers, Whittaker; House Un-American Activities Committee; Venona Project.

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## Hoffa, Jimmy

His long disappearance has supplied endless jokes for late-night comedians and the theories about what happened to him have spawned a half-dozen nonfiction books; three fictionalized accounts, including a comic treatment; a Hollywood movie written by David Mamet and starring Danny DeVito and Jack Nicholson; and a few prime-time television specials.

Where is Jimmy Hoffa? How could such a well-known figure—revered by his loyal union members and reviled by former Attorney General Robert Kennedy and other U.S. government officials—just disappear? Is the ex-Teamster leader buried under the end zone of Giants Stadium in the New Jersey Meadowlands as is rumored?

Some facts are indisputable: Jimmy Hoffa was last seen in the parking lot of the Machus Red Fox restaurant in Bloomfield Hills, a Detroit suburb, at about 2:30 P.M. on 30 July 1975. He was supposed to meet two Mafia leaders, Anthony Giacalone of Detroit and Anthony Provenzano of Union City,

New Jersey. Neither of these men ever showed up. Jimmy Hoffa was declared legally dead on 30 July 1982.

So what happened? The speculation began immediately. *Newsweek* mentioned the following possible murder motivations: Hoffa was challenging the leadership of then Teamster head Frank Fitzsimmons. During the previous months, severe conflicts within the union resulted in frequent violence. Fitzsimmons, however, pledged his full cooperation in the investigation and Local 299 offered a \$25,000 reward for information about Hoffa's whereabouts. Rumors also persisted about a mob connection: Anthony ("Tony Pro") Provenzano was considered a possible suspect because Hoffa was allegedly threatening to expose Mafia links to the Teamsters. In July 1982, a federal witness testified at a U.S. Senate hearing that Hoffa was "ground up in pieces, shipped to Florida and dumped in a swamp" (*Newsweek*).

According to excerpts from FBI case files, published in a two-part series in the *Detroit Sunday Journal* in October 1975, "All sources believe that Hoffa's disappearance is directly connected to his attempts to regain power within the Teamsters Union, which would possibly have an effect on the LCN's [La Costra Nostra] control and manipulation of Teamster Pension Funds" (Zacharis). After his disappearance, the FBI investigated a claim made by one Teamster that Hoffa, disguised in fake glasses, checked into a hotel on 2 August 1975, under the name of "Jewell."

Other theories: Donald Frankos, a prison inmate, told *Playboy* that he was involved in a plot to kill Hoffa and that the remains were mixed with concrete used to build Giants Stadium. "He ain't here," later declared John Samerjan, vice-president of public affairs for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

When convicted murderer Ricky Powell claimed that Hoffa was floating beneath two dams in Michigan, *Boating* magazine posted a \$10,000 reward to the person who could find his remains in the Au Sable River, 175 miles from Detroit. Nobody ever claimed the award. *Los Angeles Magazine* speculated





Jimmy Hoffa. (Library of Congress)

that Hoffa's remains were located at the El Dorado Restaurant and Poker Club in Gardena, California, but Larry Flynt, the pornography publisher, later purchased the property and no evidence was ever found.

Investigative reporter Dan Moldea, who spent more than two decades writing about Hoffa, believes that Salvatore ("Sally Bugs") Briguglio, a Local 560 business agent, killed the Teamster leader.

In September 2001, DNA tests indicated that a hair taken from Mr. Hoffa's hairbrush was found in the car driven by Charles "Chuckie" O'Brien—a union member with ties to the Mafia—on the day Hoffa disappeared. Federal prosecutors had to decide no later than December 2003 whether to press charges. In the 1980s, author Steven Brill called the Hoffa disappearance the "most notorious unsolved mystery of the decade." More than a quar-

ter of a century later, the mystery still remains unsolved.

Hoffa also bears a perhaps unique distinction: he is a victim of a possible conspiracy and he may be a party in one of the major conspiracy theories of the twentieth century. In 1979, four years after Hoffa's disappearance, the House Select Commission on Assassinations (HSCA) stated that Jimmy Hoffa, along with two mob figures—Carlos Marcello and Santos Trafficante—had the "motives, means and opportunity" to kill Robert Kennedy. The former attorney general was a longtime Hoffa nemesis because of his vigorous prosecution of the Teamster leadership. A federal informant reportedly said that Hoffa would like to kill Kennedy but that his brother was a more likely target because "when you cut down the tree, the branches fall with it" (Caloff). The HSCA was never able to establish any evidence of mob complicity in either of the assassinations.

*Donald Altschiller*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of.

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## Hollywood Ten

Among the first and most visible victims of the post-World War II wave of anticommunist paranoia, the Hollywood Ten were a group of leftist filmmakers—producer Adrian Scott, directors Edward Dmytryk and Herbert Biberman, and screenwriters Alvah Bessie, Lester Cole, Ring Lardner, Jr., John

Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ormitz, and Dalton Trumbo—who were blacklisted by the film industry and ultimately sentenced to a year in federal prison for contempt of Congress after refusing to cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947.

For Hollywood conservatives, the postwar surge of social problem films, the presence of known Communists in the leadership of the Screen Writers Guild, and a series of violent strikes in 1945 and 1946 by the leftist Conference of Studio Unions, were all evidence of a vast Communist conspiracy to control the film industry and undermine U.S. democratic values. Their greatest outrage was directed at the pro-Soviet films produced during the war—*Song of Russia*, *Mission to Moscow*, *The North Star*—but they also detected Marxist propaganda in a wide variety of progressive films including *Crossfire*, *The Farmer's Daughter*, and *The Best Years of Our Lives*. In 1944, Hollywood reactionaries had formed the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA); early in 1947, the MPA issued an open invitation to the HUAC to investigate Communist influence in the film industry.

The HUAC eagerly accepted. Hollywood, with its twin threats of Jewish domination and Communist infiltration, had long been an irresistible target for conspiracy theorists, and the film industry had weathered innumerable attacks by both federal and state investigating committees since the 1930s. In the postwar period, however, the political landscape had considerably altered as the emerging cold war abroad profoundly raised the stakes in the anticommunist crusade at home. In the spring and summer of 1947, FBI agents swarmed over the film colony while HUAC chairman J. Parnell Thomas himself held a series of closed-door interviews at the Biltmore Hotel with “friendly” witnesses. In September, the HUAC issued subpoenas to forty-three members of the film community, including nineteen who would become known as the “unfriendlylies” for their vocal opposition to the HUAC.

The “unfriendlylies” were a diverse group in terms of age, ethnicity, class background, status, and experience within the film industry, and even political commitment. Although all were linked with the

Communist Party at some point in their lives, their individual commitments to the party line or to political activism diverged wildly. Nonetheless, there was common ground: all were fierce (even “premature”) antifascists, and all were committed to integrating their politics into their creative work. Rejecting the studio moguls’ contention that movies were simply entertainment, they believed that movies could and should reflect the diversity of the body politic and represent U.S. values of democracy, social justice, and tolerance. Rallying around the slogan “freedom of the screen,” the Hollywood radicals and their supporters (which initially included an impressive coalition of leading liberals and the studio heads) clearly understood that the HUAC’s investigation was intended not simply to smear individual film radicals but to discredit the very values that underlay their cultural politics. For them, the HUAC investigation was the opening salvo in a reactionary conspiracy to destroy civil liberties, indeed, a harbinger of fascism in the United States.

To a certain extent, both sides were right. Hollywood radicals did try, within the confines of a profoundly conservative studio system, to produce anti-fascist, antiracist, internationalist, progressive films. And the HUAC members, recognizing the power of film to shape public consciousness and to reflect the nation to the world, did want to ensure that Hollywood films reflected their own conservative version of Americanism.

At the hearings in Washington in late October, only eleven of the nineteen unfriendlylies were called to testify. One, Bertolt Brecht, fled for Europe as soon as the hearings had ended. The remaining ten were charged with contempt of Congress and fired from their positions at the studios. Blacklisted, they left Hollywood for New York, Europe, and even Mexico in search of work, while their lawyers unsuccessfully appealed the contempt convictions. The Hollywood Ten entered federal prison in 1950; when released the following year, the HUAC had returned to Hollywood with a vengeance, and hundreds of radicals joined the Ten on the blacklist while dozens more named names to save themselves and their careers. One of those was director Edward Dmytryk, the only member of the Ten to



Hollywood screenwriter Ring Lardner, Jr., being led away in handcuffs to serve a one-year jail sentence for refusing to answer questions before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Lester Cole and Herbert Biberman in background. (Library of Congress)

recant and return to work at the studios. The remainder of the Ten continued to work haphazardly, writing behind fronts for both film and television. In the late 1950s, the first chinks appeared in the blacklist when Dalton Trumbo, writing under the pseudonym “Robert Rich,” won the screenwriting Oscar for *The Brave One*; in 1960, the blacklist was officially broken when Otto Preminger hired Trumbo to adapt *Exodus*. Ultimately, however, the blacklist affected not only people but *ideas*. The climate of fear created by the anticommunist crusade stifled dissent and encouraged political and cultural conformity in ways that powerfully shaped the film industry and the larger culture of postwar America.

Jennifer Langdon-Teclaw

**See also:** Anticommunism; House Un-American Activities Committee.

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### Holocaust, Denial of

The Nazi Holocaust is one of the events of history that has received the greatest scrutiny. While historians disagree on different aspects of this phenomenon, it is basically agreed on that the Holocaust may be correctly defined as follows: (1) the Holocaust was the intentional murder of European Jews by the Nazi government of Germany during World War II as a matter of state policy; (2) this mass murder employed gas chambers, among other methods, as a method of killing; and (3) the death toll of European Jews by the end of World War II was roughly 6 million. Not surprisingly, with a group of historical events as laboriously studied as the Holocaust, conspiracy theories about this period abound. However, the most prominent U.S. conspiracy theory regarding the Holocaust is its denial.

Before discussing how Holocaust denial constitutes a conspiracy theory, and how the theory is dis-

tinctly American, it is important to understand what is meant by the term “Holocaust denial.” Holocaust deniers, or “revisionists,” as they call themselves, question all three major points of definition of the Nazi Holocaust. First, they contend that, while mass murders of Jews did occur (although they dispute both the intentionality of such murders as well as the supposed deservedness of these killings), there was no official Nazi policy to murder Jews. Second, and perhaps most prominently, they contend that there were no homicidal gas chambers, particularly at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where mainstream historians believe over 1 million Jews were murdered, primarily in gas chambers. And third, Holocaust deniers contend that the death toll of European Jews during World War II was well below 6 million. Deniers float numbers anywhere between 300,000 and 1.5 million, as a general rule.

While Holocaust denial began as a German and French conspiracy theory, its antecedents are both specifically American and an encapsulation of 2,000 years of European antisemitism. Addressing the latter point first, the conspiracy theory that Jews have manipulated non-Jews in many ways, shapes, and forms is nearly as old as Judaism itself. According to antisemites, Jews (not just the ruling Jewish elite of the first century, but *all* Jews) killed Jesus, poisoned wells, spread the Black Death, murdered Christian children to make Passover matzohs with their blood, and were the prime movers behind the Communist movement in Eastern Europe. If a single text encapsulates European antisemitism, it is the anonymous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, the purported minutes of a meeting of leaders of international Jewry in which the destruction of non-Jewish culture is discussed. Originating in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, the *Protocols* were, in fact, an altered plagiarism of Maurice Joly’s *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel* (*A Dialogue in Hell between Montesquieu and Machiavelli*), written in the 1860s as an attack against Louis Napoleon III (Ridgeway, 50).

Oddly, despite the present connections between some Holocaust deniers and violent extremists, it was via the anti-war movement of World War I that the seeds of Holocaust denial were planted in the



United States. This process was twofold. First, the antisemitic U.S. industrialist Henry Ford brought the *Protocols* to the United States after a visit to Europe during World War I designed to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Ford read them and became convinced that the “Jewish industrialists” were primarily responsible for the war. The introduction of this document to a nation where Ku Klux Klan membership was on the rise added anti-semitism to the current nativist, racist, anti-Catholic sentiment. Ford published the *Protocols* in his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, over a seven-year period between the two world wars, giving legitimacy to a conspiracy of a Jewish cabal that sought to propagate war as a moneymaking operation.

At the same time, antiwar historians, notably Harry Elmer Barnes, began to suggest conspiratorial motivations on the part of the major powers at war. As historian Deborah Lipstadt has noted, Barnes and his colleagues were correct in many of their assumptions, for example, Germany was not solely at fault for the war (Serbia had, after all, fired the opening salvo); much anti-German propaganda spread during and after the war was, in fact, false; and there *were* war profiteers who made fortunes on the slaughter of the war (Lipstadt, 33–34). However, this did not change the essentially imperial nature of the war itself. Nevertheless, with the doubts of Barnes and his cohorts borne out through historical method, reports of German atrocities committed during World War II (this time true) would be treated with even greater skepticism. Barnes, who lived into the late 1960s, was among the first Americans to embrace Holocaust denial.

Aside from the obvious denial of Nazi atrocities by the perpetrators themselves, the Frenchman Paul Rassinier, a leftist who had been interned at Buchenwald and Dora, first promoted Holocaust denial most vociferously. (Rassinier’s influence on the culture of Holocaust denial is still felt today, with his disciple Robert Faurisson leading the denial movement in France.) It did not take denial long to reach the United States, however. The first major Holocaust denier was Austin App, a Pennsylvania-based literary scholar. Beginning almost immediately after the war, App began a media campaign to

expose what he believed were exaggerations in the Nazi treatment of Jews. While his own German ethnicity was likely a prime attraction for him to denial, App’s own antisemitism and susceptibility to conspiracy theories informed much of his writing. For instance, App frequently used any combination of the terms “Talmudist,” “Bolshevik,” and “Zionist” in his writings as indicators that Jews were behind what he deemed a hoax that the Nazis had murdered 6 million Jews. In this way, he was able to imply that religious Jews, atheistic Communist Jews, and nationalist Jews were all conspiring together to spread belief in a mass murder against Jews. Furthermore, App blamed Jewish media control for the continued belief in this hoax (Lipstadt, 94–96), and this continues to be a theme in antisemitic and denial writings. If, as John Zimmerman and other observers have noted, the aim of Holocaust denial is to rehabilitate National Socialism, then it is fitting that App et al. would reiterate most of Hitler’s own antisemitic themes in their writings (Zimmerman, 119).

The title of App’s major work on the Holocaust, *The Six Million Swindle*, is informative because it implies on its very own the existence of a conspiracy of Jews to perpetrate a hoax against non-Jews for monetary gain. This monetary gain, specifically, would be reparations paid by West Germany for crimes committed against Jews during the war. What App and later deniers fail to address is a simple fact: reparations have been paid out since the 1950s based not on the number of deaths of Jews during World War II, but rather on the number of Jews who *survived* and whose costs of being settled elsewhere (primarily Israel) needed to be paid. Historian Michael Shermer has pointed out that, were the Holocaust truly a hoax designed by Zionists to gain cash for the fledgling state of Israel, then Zionists would have inflated the number of survivors and not the number of dead (Shermer and Grobman, 106).

Nevertheless, the Zionist angle of the conspiracy continued to be played by deniers and continues to this day. After App, U.S. Holocaust denial was carried on by Arthur Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University outside Chicago. In his 1976 book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*,

Butz reiterates the notion that the Holocaust is a consciously perpetrated falsification of history. While Butz is more subtle than App in blaming Jews for this hoax (he does not attack the Jewish religion in the manner of App, nor does he depict all Jews as Communists), he does target Zionists specifically as the hoaxsters, along with the governments of the Allies (particularly the Soviet Union), refugee and survivor organizations, and even the International Committee of the Red Cross (Lipstadt, 126).

What Butz and other deniers fail to realize is the relative weakness of the Zionist movement before, during, and even after World War II. Zionism was considered heretical by most Jewish religious movements, and those Jews that *did* settle in Palestine before the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 were largely refugees with nowhere else to go, rather than political ideologues bent on creating a Jewish state in Palestine. Indeed, much recent research from Israel on the Holocaust has shown that some major figures in the Zionist movement cared very little about the dire situation of Jews in Europe during World War II. For instance, Menachem Begin, prime minister of Israel from 1977 to 1983, was jailed by Soviet authorities for Zionist activities until the Nazi invasion in 1941. However, rather than stay in Europe to fight the Nazis, Begin left for Palestine, where he waged guerrilla war for five years in the name of Zionism. Begin was not alone in his decision to fight for Zionism rather than the survival of European Jews.

Notably, the antisemitism of most deniers leads them to denounce Begin's choice while, at the same time, choosing to continue to believe that this fractious movement called Zionism could perpetrate a worldwide hoax. Nearly all major deniers, in fact, share a dual obsession with the Holocaust and with Zionism and the State of Israel. The chief purveyor of denier propaganda in the United States is the California-based Institute for Historical Review (IHR), which sells not only Holocaust denial books and pamphlets but also critiques of Zionism and religious Judaism. Willis Carto, head of the Liberty Lobby, an anti-Israel political action group based in Washington, D.C., founded the IHR. While there has been much internecine fighting over the last

two decades at the IHR over money, Carto's views and those of the present directors (who include Mark Weber, a formerly overtly neo-Nazi propagandist) are not far from each other. In another twist, over the course of his battle with the current IHR leaders, Carto conspiratorially accused Weber of being a Zionist agent.

Weber also bangs the drum of equating Jews with the Bolshevik Revolution, a practice begun by App among U.S. deniers but going back to the revolution itself among observers in both Europe and the United States. While Weber is able to seize on certain truths about the Bolshevik Party that can tie it, at least on the surface, to Jews (such as that many prominent Bolshevik leaders, including Leon Trotsky, Lev Kamenev, and Grigori Zinoviev, were Jewish by birth), Zimmerman has pointed out that the average Russian Jew was more attracted to Jewish nationalist, Zionist, or democratic socialist parties (Zimmerman, 128) than to Communist radicals such as the Bolsheviks. Weber also repeats App's error of equating Zionism and communism. While there did exist Marxist-Zionist parties, particularly in the early days of the Israeli state, the backing of the Soviet Union for countries hostile to Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was a coup de grâce for any alliance between two ideologies that are, by nature, diametrically opposed (Zionism is a form of nationalism, while communism is international in its aims).

It can thus be seen that Holocaust denial is a conspiracy theory that seeks to place Jews behind an international movement to promote a falsehood for monetary gain. In this way, Holocaust denial is no different than many other previous forms of antisemitism, which imputed to Jews monetary greed as well as a conspiratorial air. Besides the haphazard manner in which deniers have chosen to lump all Jews together, regardless of religious or political orientation, as perpetrators of this "hoax," deniers also engage in efforts at pseudoscience to try to prove their point of view regarding the Holocaust. To date, none of their efforts has made any lasting impression on Holocaust historiography. While the rational observer will conclude that this is a testament to the truth of the history of the Holocaust, for the Holocaust deniers, it is merely one more

piece of evidence of a conspiracy to quash what they believe to be the “real truth” about the fate of Jews during World War II.

Andrew E. Mathis

**See also:** Antisemitism; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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### Hoover, J. Edgar

J. Edgar Hoover was the longtime director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, heading the domestic security organization from 1924 until his death in 1972, a span of nearly half a century that witnessed four wars (three “hot” and one cold), the Great Depression, and the civil rights movement. All of these major events played a key role in the controversial career of the man whose name is synonymous with the FBI. In fact, “Hoover” and “the FBI” are often used interchangeably, and at least one historian has written that this practice is hardly inaccurate (Schrecker, 204). By the time of Hoover’s death, it was scarcely thinkable that anyone else could be the director of the FBI.

Hoover’s FBI was renowned for the personal professionalism of the agents (on which Hoover had long insisted) and, at least in the early years, the judiciousness with which Hoover often exercised his police power. But any mention of judiciousness would ring hollow in the ears of the many victims of McCarthyism, one of the most prominent of Hoover’s campaigns. The FBI’s files were the raw data from which Joseph McCarthy and like-minded politicians fomented hysteria over the potential

influence of Communist subversives in the United States. Many innocent men and women were discredited and blacklisted by this fear; a whiff of left-wing sympathy was often enough to brand a person a Communist sympathizer.

In one of the most glaring examples of this, Hoover and the FBI played a key role in the 1954 discrediting of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who nine years earlier had directed the design of the first atomic bombs, which ultimately ended World War II on U.S. terms. Based on a letter to Hoover—which grossly exaggerated old evidence against Oppenheimer—the U.S. government eventually decided that Oppenheimer was a security risk. There was so little hard evidence against him that the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was forced to acknowledge his loyalty at the same time that it affirmed he was a security risk. Many sad stories abound from the period; the early 1950s were a scary time to be even a moderate dissenter in the United States. Historians have rightly condemned the McCarthyites for using the specter of communism to curtail freedom and individual liberties. Tempering such criticism, however, are recent revelations from archives of the former Soviet Union, showing that there *were* a large number of Soviet operatives in the United States. Hoover and McCarthy were responding to a very real situation, but doing so in a way that often victimized innocent people for their political beliefs in the name of national security.

The same biases played a role in Hoover’s decision making during the 1960s. Although there is little question that he genuinely believed the radical students’ and civil rights movements to be threats to the nation’s security, these assessments were ultimately political ones. The same suspicion of radicalism that had characterized his assessment of the Communist threat colored his analysis of the liberal 1960s as well. Hoover became convinced that the increasingly radical civil rights movement posed a grave threat to the country and must be stopped. One radical historian writes that internal FBI memos “discussed finding a black leader to replace King,” and “as a Senate report on the FBI said in 1976, the FBI tried ‘to destroy Dr. Martin Luther King’” (Zinn, 462).

Discussions of this sort are always politically charged, and suspicion can easily be cast on some of the more outlandish claims made about the FBI's conspiracies (such as its role in covering up UFOs). Such verification from the U.S. Senate, however, is among the evidence that suggests that there is fire for this smoke. The columnist Jack Anderson agreed. Despite the kind words he wrote (perhaps moved in the wake of the director's then-recent death), Anderson was in fact quite critical of Hoover. Anderson felt it "hypocritical not to point out" the FBI's recent tendency to go "beyond its jurisdiction to investigate the business dealings, sex habits and personal affairs of prominent Americans." In fact, Anderson was quite critical of Hoover, and the misuse of power and access that Anderson mentioned has come to be one of Hoover's enduring legacies.

*David Hecht*

**See also:** Anticommunism; COINTELPRO; Federal Bureau of Investigation; House Un-American Activities Committee; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; McCarthy, Joseph.

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### House Un-American Activities Committee

The House Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities was established in May 1938 when the House of Representatives voted 191 to 41 to authorize an eight-month investigation into "the extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States." The House would vote yearly extensions of the committee's mandate through 1944. When the committee chairman,

Texas Democrat Martin Dies, retired at the end of that year, its termination appeared likely. But when Congress convened in 1945, Mississippi Democrat John E. Rankin successfully pushed through a vote to make the committee, renamed the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), into a permanent standing committee. With its ever-escalating investigation of suspected Communists, this committee at times seemed to turn conspiracy fears into a national policy.

The moving force behind the adoption of the 1938 resolution was a Jewish lawmaker from New York, Samuel Dickstein, whose primary target was pro-Nazi groups and propaganda. By 1940, however, the HUAC's focus became Communist activities. Standard accounts accuse Dies of exploiting the HUAC to tar the New Deal and liberals as subversives. But at least as responsible was the Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939 and the resulting shift in the party line that made the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA) the spearhead in resisting U.S. preparedness.

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union and the accompanying reversal of the CPUSA line followed by the wartime U.S.-Soviet alliance led the HUAC to keep a low profile. Two changes were responsible for its resurgence. One was the heating up of the cold war and the second was the Republican capture of the House in the 1946 elections, with the result that New Jersey Republican J. Parnell Thomas became the new HUAC chair.

In October 1947, the Thomas Committee won newspaper headlines with an investigation of Communist infiltration into the Hollywood movie industry. The high point was the questioning of ten writers and directors about their membership in subversive organizations. On order from the Communist Party, the so-called Hollywood Ten refused to answer on First Amendment grounds and were convicted and imprisoned for contempt of Congress. In response, the movie industry adopted a "blacklist" of suspected Communist sympathizers—with many of the names on the list supplied by the HUAC and its staff. The movie industry's model was followed in other fields such as radio and television.

The high point of the HUAC's success and influence came in 1948 from its hearings into Communist



infiltration into the U.S. government. Its prize witness was Elizabeth Bentley, the former lover and accomplice of Soviet agent Jacob Golos. Persons named by Bentley as supplying secret information included the high-ranking Treasury Department official Harry Dexter White, former presidential economic adviser Lauchlin Currie, William Remington of the War Production Board, and Maurice Halperin of the Office of Strategic Services. Although hopes of profiting from the publicity led Bentley to embellish the truth at times, the substance of her account—despite accusations to the contrary then and since—was accurate

Bentley's testimony before the HUAC did not add to what she had previously told the Federal Bureau of Investigation. More of an HUAC coup grew out of the follow-up testimony of *Time* magazine editor Whittaker Chambers. Among those Chambers named as members of a secret Communist underground in Washington was Alger Hiss, a former high official in the State Department and then president of the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace. Materials turned over by Igor Gouzenko when he had defected from the Soviet embassy in Canada had unmistakably pointed to Hiss as a Soviet spy, and he had been quietly eased out of government service. But the HUAC did not have this information and Hiss put on such a slick performance when testifying that the HUAC would have dropped the matter if not for Republican congressman Richard M. Nixon of California. Nixon would be vindicated when Chambers, in reply to a libel suit by Hiss, revealed photocopies of secret government documents given him by Hiss for transmission to the Soviets. Hiss could not be prosecuted for espionage because of the statute of limitations, but he was indicted for and convicted of perjury.

In 1948, Nixon joined with fellow HUAC member Karl Mundt, Republican from South Dakota, to introduce what became the Internal Security Act of 1950, requiring "Communist-action" and "Communist-front" organizations to register.

The Democratic recapture of control of the House in 1948 meant that Thomas was out as HUAC chair, and in 1952 would be forced to resign

from Congress after conviction for payroll padding. His successors—except for Pennsylvania Democrat Francis E. Walter, chair 1955–1963—were not formidable personalities.

From the start, the HUAC had its faults. Some of its leading figures—such as Thomas and Rankin—were not simply anticommunists but racists and antisemites. The committee was prone to making sweeping generalizations on insufficient evidence. Not all its informants had the firsthand knowledge of Communist activities that Bentley or former *Daily Worker* editor Louis Bunde did and even they fell into the trap of exaggerating to enhance their self-importance, while others were simply frauds. Inevitably, mistakes occurred when individuals were wrongly named as Communists or Communist sympathizers. The continuing pressure to retain newspaper headlines—a pressure heightened by the successes along that line by Wisconsin Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy—aggravated those failings.

On the other hand, those who refused to testify on the grounds of the Fifth Amendment's guarantee against self-incrimination were safe from prosecution. Up through 1960, the Supreme Court rebuffed most legal challenges to the HUAC. Those who wished to repent of past involvement were given ample opportunity to do so. Those who took advantage of that opportunity—such as movie director Elia Kazan—would be vilified by the same people who were simultaneously accusing the HUAC of running roughshod over innocent individuals. As for the complaints about guilt by association, a person's associates have always been used as a guide to their evaluation. Most importantly, Communist infiltration of government and key opinion-influencing institutions was no paranoid delusion but a dangerous reality.

The lead in attacking the HUAC came from Communists and fellow travelers who had pressing reasons for not wanting a close look at their activities. The attack was joined by many liberals. Some were motivated by a sincere concern about what they saw as a threat to civil liberties; others because they saw the HUAC as a weapon in the hands of supporters of a rival right-wing political agenda.



H. A. Smith swears in Rep. J. Parnell Thomas for the House Un-American Activities Committee; also shown are Reps. Richard B. Vail, John McDowell, Richard M. Nixon, and John J. Delaney. (Library of Congress)

The HUAC retained strong congressional support through the 1950s but the tide began to shift in the 1960s. A violent confrontation between police and protesters in May 1960 when the HUAC held hearings in San Francisco signaled a renewed and more aggressive campaign against the HUAC by supporters of the emerging New Left joined with the remnants of the Old Left and such longtime anti-HUAC organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union. At the same time, the HUAC faced an increasingly hostile Supreme Court majority led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, while the easing of cold war tensions undercut popular support. To appease its critics, in the mid-1960s the HUAC turned the focus of its attention on the Ku Klux Klan. In 1969 Democratic Congressman Richard I. Ichord of Missouri took the lead in reorganizing the HUAC into the House Internal Security Committee with a more narrowly defined mandate.

But these changes failed to satisfy the HUAC's foes. The final blow was the Watergate scandal when HUAC opponents took advantage of Nixon's disgrace to push through the committee's termination in January 1975.

*John Braeman*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Chambers, Whittaker; Hiss, Alger; Hollywood Ten; Hoover, J. Edgar; McCarthy, Joseph.

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### Hughes, Howard

Howard Hughes (1905–1976) was a dashing and handsome young billionaire, airline owner, and Hollywood producer who gradually became a legendary recluse. His prolonged hermit like existence and fabulous wealth eventually inspired widespread and often conspiracy-minded interest in his bizarre day-to-day life, as well as in his involvement with a variety of schemes, scandals, and hoaxes. Hughes's father was the inventor of a three-headed drill bit that revolutionized the oil business. The subsequent wealth of the Hughes Tool Company, however, did not protect Hughes's parents from fatal health problems, giving the wealthy orphan a lifelong fear of germs and contamination. As a twenty-year-old, Hughes moved to Hollywood and became a movie producer, wooing screen starlets and fostering such swashbuckling titles as *Hell's Angels*, *Son of Sinbad*, and *The Outlaw*. At the same time, Hughes shifted the family's toolmaking fortune into aviation, even designing his own aircraft and setting records for air speed and transcontinental travel.

As Hughes's empire grew, it encompassed Trans World Airlines and RKO Pictures, and soon gained a lucrative role as the U.S. military's chief electronics supplier. But Hughes's business practices were aggressive and occasionally involved intimidation and bribery. In the 1940s he found himself fighting allegations of mismanagement and illegal business practices. Although his high profile and shadowy deals soon made him a target of surveillance by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, Hughes was able to forge a strong relationship with the CIA, leading Hughes

Aircraft into the espionage business during the cold war.

By the late 1950s, however, Hughes's emotional state began to deteriorate, leading him into personal isolation. His financial empire began to weaken, and he took refuge in a series of secret hideaways in California, Nevada, the Caribbean, South America, and Europe. For the latter part of his life, Hughes was seen by virtually no one but his assistants. When summoned by the press, or by the courts, he was famously not available, and persistent rumors developed that he was dead and aides were running the empire in his name.

In truth, Hughes was alive, but had adopted—apparently voluntarily—a sedentary life in which he watched movies, abused drugs, and slept in darkened rooms beyond the reach of his own security staff. His obsession with germs gradually became overwhelming. He began to insist that aides use white gloves when typing memos for his attention. When touching objects (or, rarely, his aides), he insisted on using layers of tissue paper to avoid direct contact.

Despite his paralyzing fears, however, by some accounts Hughes continued to run his empire, and at times his presence was quite active in sensational public affairs. In the late 1960s, for instance, Hughes was cloistered in Las Vegas and discovered that the U.S. government was planning to test a hydrogen bomb some 100 miles away. He became obsessed with stopping the test, even attempting to bribe President Lyndon Johnson to stop it. Some years later, Hughes's relationship with President Richard Nixon became a magnet for allegations of conspiracy, including rumors (of doubtful veracity) that the infamous eighteen-second gap in the Watergate tapes was made in order to erase a conversation about Hughes's illegal financial dealings with the president. In 1972, another scandal emerged when what seemed to be Hughes's memoirs appeared in bookstores, quickly producing \$1 million in sales. However, Hughes had not written or authorized the book, and decided to disclaim it, a task made more difficult because he remained unwilling to appear in public. Finally, a conference call with reporters allowed Hughes to denounce the bogus autobiogra-



The American millionaire businessman, film director, and aviator, Howard Hughes, in his flying goggles, 1936. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis)



phy, simultaneously demonstrating to the world that the mysterious billionaire was still alive.

Hughes died in 1976 while en route to a Houston hospital from his Acapulco hideaway. Because he died without an official will, the struggle over his fortune was fought out in courts for years. One of the prime beneficiaries of his money was the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, once a tax shelter but now a world-class center of scientific research and funding. In a final ironic twist, one of the fruits of the Institute's research—a procedure for kidney dialysis—might have prevented Hughes's calamitous airborne death. It would have given the hermit billionaire yet another opportunity to intrigue the world.

James J. Kimble

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Cold War; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar; Johnson, Lyndon B.; Nixon, Richard; Watergate.

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### Hutchinson, Anne

With Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson is the most famous American religious separatist of the seventeenth century. She, with Williams, is also one of the first Americans to be publicly subjected to a methodical manipulation and eventual banishment by the defenders of New England orthodoxy, a process that, for some commentators, verged on a conspiracy. Had it not been for Hutchinson's chief opponent, John Winthrop, the influential governor of Massachusetts Bay, there is a chance that the controversy would have never boiled over and that Hutchinson

and her followers would have permanently altered the basic nature of the Puritan church. But Hutchinson left New Englanders not with an assurance of providence, but rather a long-lasting unease over the unfortunate turn of events that led to her trial and banishment.

Impatient with the lukewarm spirit of her church in Lincolnshire, Hutchinson and her family followed her preacher, John Cotton, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1634. Initially, the situation in Boston suited Hutchinson well; she was pleased that, unlike her Lincolnshire church, the Congregationalist churches in Boston were neither state sanctioned nor composed "automatically" of members of the community, but rather of those believers who attested to the spirit. After a time, Hutchinson was admitted to the church, and she began meeting with women periodically to discuss the sermons of Cotton and John Wilson, a second minister of the Boston church.

A close reader of scriptures and a thoroughgoing mystic, Hutchinson began to amplify Cotton's sermons and to criticize Wilson's. Where Cotton's sermons emphasized free grace as the only condition of salvation and the idea that the Holy Spirit dwells in all Christians, Wilson's emphasized good works as a necessary condition for sanctity. Good works, Hutchinson taught, are the fruits of, not the condition for, salvation. She began to state that others in the Massachusetts congregation, like many members of the Church of England, were not saved because they were too reliant on a sanctity derived from works.

Hutchinson's meetings grew in attendance and frequency, and they began to attract an influential, well-to-do following throughout Boston that included Henry Vane, then the governor of the colony. In June 1636, Hutchinson's brother-in-law John Wheelwright, a minister who shared Hutchinson's views on "free grace" and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, arrived from England as the controversy was developing. Hutchinson's followers, who by this time comprised the majority, proposed that the church be reformed and that Wheelwright be appointed as the second teacher. John Winthrop, the once and future governor of Massachusetts Bay and

firm adherent to an exclusionist theology, strongly opposed the appointment and was successful in blocking it. He believed that Wheelwright and the Hutchinsonians were straying so far from orthodoxy that they threatened to tear apart the nonseparatist fabric of the Puritan community. When a deputation of clergy visited Hutchinson in December 1636, they were disturbed to hear Hutchinson express doubts whether the ministers of Massachusetts were saved (excepting, of course, Cotton and Wheelwright). Hutchinson was intelligent and persuasive, but her perceived air of superiority must have seemed to the church fathers especially inappropriate coming from a woman. Winthrop in particular had no patience for women who (as he wrote in his journal) “meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger.”

In Winthrop’s view—and there is no reason to believe he was mistaken—if Hutchinson’s critique of the Church of England was allowed to go unchallenged, nothing would keep her from critiquing and undoing the Massachusetts churches. Her views were held by the leaders of the colony to be Antinomian (“against the law”). Winthrop and others charged that the Antinomians looked for guidance too much from the untrained, unregulated self and not enough from the church and its ministers. As election time for a new governor drew near at the beginning of 1637, political maneuvering by Winthrop and other colony leaders relocated the elections to Newtown (now Cambridge) and thus took away the Antinomian majority vote. Winthrop was elected governor, while Vane was voted out of public office. After the shift in power was completed, a synod of all the ministers in the Bay was called that proclaimed the errors of the dissidents, including those of Hutchinson and the Antinomians. The General Court banished Wheelwright, who moved north to New Hampshire territory. Next, the General Court turned to Hutchinson herself. Her offense was political as well as religious, and she was indicted for “traducing the ministers and their ministry.”

Hutchinson was given two trials: one for disturbing the peace by the state and the other for heresy

by the church. Winthrop cross-examined Hutchinson, and she began to lose her public support as the trials wore on. Hutchinson did little to keep that support in place by making the controversial claim that God spoke to her “by immediate revelation.” Such a statement was a recognized heresy in the Puritan church, and, arguably, any orthodox Protestant community, for self-preservation, would have reacted to Hutchinson in the same way the Massachusetts Bay Colony did. Hutchinson was excommunicated from the church—ironically, by the sanction of Cotton, who, after being forced to choose between the Antinomians and the status quo, joined the rest of the court in condemning her—and she was driven from Boston in March 1638. Hutchinson’s followers were made to admit their errors by being forbidden to bear arms—a strong sentence in the day.

After Hutchinson’s banishment, an account of the proceedings was sent to England to show that Massachusetts had no toleration for Antinomianism. Hutchinson withdrew to Rhode Island. When she miscarried later that year, Winthrop and others throughout New England took it as a conclusive sign of providential justice. Later the Hutchinsons relocated to New York. Her death there at the hands of the Indians in 1643 confirmed again for many in Boston that her judgment had been just. Although some modern historians defend Winthrop’s handling of the Antinomian controversy as a necessary act of self-preservation, others critique it as deplorable, and see it as one of the more sordid instances of the Puritan era’s sexism and intolerance, even if Hutchinson displayed a degree of intolerance herself.

Bryan L. Moore

**See also:** Puritans.

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## Identification Cards

Many people have seen the idea of identification (ID) cards as a conspiracy against the liberty of individuals; those on the Right have usually drawn on biblical prophecies to warn against ID cards, while those on the Left have feared the introduction of increasing government surveillance and control of workers.

Opponents of mandatory or quasi-mandatory identification cards on the religious Right have pointed to the Bible's warning against the "sin of David," whom Satan incited to conduct a census and whom God punished for thus "numbering" the people (1 Chronicles 21). Caesar's all-empire registration that took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem (Luke 2) has similarly colored the view of many Americans that any government information collection for tax purposes is part of a wider conspiracy. Likewise, the introduction of a government-assigned number in order to take up a job was viewed as fulfillment of the biblical prophecy of the "mark of the beast" in Revelation 13: "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The widening use of ID numbers is said to be mandated by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Community, as part of the New World Order predicted in Daniel 7:23 and Revelation 13:4-8. The Social Security Administration's "Enumeration at Birth" program, in which newborns are assigned Social Security Numbers (SSNs), is part of a "global plan for enumeration," mandated by the UN. New identification technology is seen as partic-

ularly worrisome, with fears, for example, that bar codes contain the number 666, the mark of the beast. On the Left, the assignment of SSNs to workers in the 1930s produced concerns, for example by the United Mineworkers, of a potential employers' "blacklist" of troublemaking laborers. However, much of the opposition to the SSN was fueled by opposition to President Roosevelt's New Deal itself, and made use of conspiratorial accusations largely as a rhetorical flourish. Just before the 1936 election, Republican presidential candidate Alf Landon asked rhetorically if millions of Americans would now be fingerprinted and photographed and "opened for federal snooping." The Hearst newspapers asked, "Do you want a tag and a number in the name of false security?" and spread the rumor that all workers would be required to wear dog tags displaying the SSN.

Although the fears and conspiracy theories that met the introduction of the SSN can now seem far-fetched, it is nevertheless the case that the numbers have become all-purpose identifiers, despite assurances at the time, and fears about the erosion of liberty and privacy are not unfounded. However, the United States does not have a national ID card as other countries do. The most-commonly checked government IDs are the driver's licenses issued by the fifty states, but less than 20 percent of the population has a U.S. passport. More than 7,000 different jurisdictions issue all manner of birth certificates, which are the "breeder documents" upon which other IDs are based.



Proponents of universal ID cards start from the observation that the United States already has a de facto national ID card, in the form of driver's licenses, and a national ID number, in the form of the SSN. In the wake of the terrorist attack on September 11, for example, advocates for a national ID card argued that the existing system had to be made more robust by combining the existing cards into one.

In a similar vein, opponents of national ID cards suggest that the current scattered system is but the slippery slope to the introduction of a national ID. These skeptics assert that, because totalitarian systems rely on ID cards (Nazi Germany's IBM-supplied ID system, the Soviet internal passport, and apartheid South Africa's pass system being key examples), ID cards themselves represent the thin edge of the wedge of a Big Brother state apparatus, which could be introduced by stealth and in a piecemeal fashion, via small technological improvements and policy changes. Mainstream civil liberties and privacy advocates such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, and the Privacy Foundation do not see any conspiracy in this, although slippery-slope arguments can sometimes play the same role as conspiracy theory in viewing together what would otherwise be unrelated, disparate events. Sometimes privacy advocates will employ the hint of conspiracy to simplify the presentation of what is really an argument about incremental, technological determinism.

A rather different group of ID opponents does see a literal conspiracy. In U.S. history there is a long-standing populist, right-wing fear of the encroachment of "big government" into the life of the average American, and ID cards are often seen as part of a larger conspiracy of the federal government (and the so-called New World Order) to control the private life of citizens. Members of the Patriot movement, in groups such as the Militia of Montana and the Posse Comitatus, have attempted to rescind or revoke their own driver's licenses or SSNs, in a process called "asseveration." For example, Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols had at one point attempted to back out of a \$20,000 debt by attempting to repudiate his U.S. citizenship; he destroyed his

driver's license, passport, and voter registration card. Similar ID-revocation techniques have been used in attempts to avoid child-support payments, back taxes, gun registration, seatbelt laws, speed limits, and similar infringements on "sovereign" citizens.

These groups describe ID cards as part of a conspiracy to hook citizens into rejecting their "sovereign" status. Even the ZIP code is feared as a form of "adhesion contract" to nullify sovereignty. The idea of ID cards as an antisovereign conspiracy is generally employed as part of a strategy for avoiding taxes or other financial burdens, although this kind of tax avoidance has been universally unsuccessful. There is, however, a thriving business in running seminars on the subject, at which attendees might pay several hundred dollars to acquire the appropriate paperwork, plus the ability to themselves hold similar seminars, forming a kind of multilevel-marketing campaign for the anti-ID card conspiracy theory.

In the United States "liberty" is often a code word for guns, and even fairly mainstream opponents of gun registration sometimes see ID cards as part of a much larger pattern, in which "fascist" government agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) is targeting gun owners and the "politically incorrect." The Brady Bill requires that ID such as a driver's license be shown and checked against a federal database as part of a handgun sale, which has led the gun lobby to equate registration and ID cards with gun control.

New forms of technology provoke similar responses from opponents of identification cards. "Smart" cards, which can carry several megabytes of data, are frequently described as the next step in bringing about one-world government tracking of all persons; the use of such smart cards on military bases has been described as a pilot project to move the entire civilian population to a trackable, cashless society. Biometrics such as facial recognition, and location tracking via GPS (Global Positioning Satellite), are seen as part of the same plan. The next step is implantable ID, such as the Digital Angel and Verichip products from Applied Digital Solutions. The religious Right note that these products in part fulfill the design specification of Revelation 13:16 that speaks of "a mark in their right hand, or in their

foreheads.” Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber, spoke of the army implanting a computer chip in his buttocks during the Gulf War, but more mainstream commentators now note that such technology is becoming more likely. For the conspiracy-minded, high-tech ID systems are seen as systems not just for identification, but for mind control.

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**See also:** Income Tax and the Internal Revenue Service; Militias; Mind Control; New World Order; Posse Comitatus; Universal Price Codes.

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## Illuminati

The Order of the Illuminati was a short-lived secret society in eighteenth-century Germany that became the linchpin of countless conspiracy theories and works of historical and religious speculation, ranging from reactionary attacks on the French Revolution to the countercultural writings of the 1960s and 1970s and through to the religious Right in the present. In terms of sheer longevity and versatility, few conspiracy theory “villains” can match the record of the Illuminati.

### Origins

The legend began in the southwest German state of Bavaria, a militantly Catholic realm where the Re-

formation and the Enlightenment had been stoutly resisted by both the ruling family and the Jesuit clergy who controlled the cultural institutions. The Order of the Illuminati was born in the febrile brain of Dr. Adam Weishaupt, a professor of Canon Law at Bavaria’s most prestigious educational institution, the University of Ingolstadt. A leader of the liberal faction within the university that supported the introduction of non-Catholic books and scientific subjects into the university curriculum, Weishaupt felt that Jesuit rivals were sabotaging his career, and determined that only a secret organization could ever succeed in spreading the secular, rationalistic ideas of the Enlightenment in such a hostile environment.

Secret societies and fraternal orders were something of a rage among the elites of Europe and America during the eighteenth century. Living in a world where traditional beliefs seemed increasingly inadequate and traditional society was decaying, many sought out deeper knowledge and new forms of sociability to go with them. The exotic rituals and quasi-pagan “mysteries” available to initiates in Freemasonry and similar institutions were immensely appealing, and at their best taught a more modern and open-minded value system than the official culture of the day. Membership was also an excellent way for ambitious men to make social and professional connections.

Weishaupt’s new secret society was launched 1 May 1776, with five members. Loosely based on Masonic lodges, Illuminati chapters were intended to become “schools of wisdom” (Stauffer, 150), in which new ideas could be freely taught, away from the prying eyes of priests and public officials. Weishaupt originally planned three “grades” of Illuminati, Novice, Minerval, and Illuminated Minerval, promising higher grades to come. The order was structured in a hierarchical, cultlike fashion in which the higher-ranking members were supposed to control the actions and thinking of their subordinates. Each novice—young, rich, impressionable men were the preferred recruits—was to be instructed by a single Minerval who was to keep the identities of the other members secret. Advancement required the novitiate to prepare detailed reports on his life and character, including the

books he owned and the names of his enemies, and to recruit new candidates. Then finally, after two years of study, the novice was elevated to Minerval status and got to attend Illuminati gatherings. Minervals were to form a kind of secret Enlightenment university hidden within the existing institutions of the society, where the order would work to see that its members were highly placed.

This was a bold plan to spread an intellectual revolution through Catholic Europe, frightening in the degree to which it sought to control its agents, but it amounted to relatively little in practice. Intent on personal, dictatorial command of the order, Weishaupt quarreled frequently with other leading members, and the total number of Illuminati rose to no more than perhaps sixty in its first four years of existence.

The order's fortunes took a temporary turn for the better when Baron Adolf Franz Friederich Knigge, a well-connected diplomat and leading Mason from the north of Germany, joined in 1780. The accession of Knigge greatly increased the geographic reach and social prestige of Illuminism, and created an alliance with Freemasonry that proved the key to the order's brief period of expansion. Knigge added a number of new grades, with cheeky, imposing titles like Priest, Prince, and Magus, and expanded the group's recruitment to include not just impressionable young students but also experienced men who already occupied positions of influence, especially Knigge's Masonic colleagues. Several of the new Illuminati grades corresponded to Masonic degrees and provided easy points of access for Masons into the higher ranks of the new order. Under Knigge's guidance, the Order of the Illuminati enjoyed its only period of real prestige or influence. Membership climbed into the thousands, and reached outside Bavaria into a number of other German-speaking states. A number of German princes and nobles became Illuminati, as did such lions of German culture as Goethe and Herder.

### Suppression

Then, beginning in 1784, just at the peak of the order's popularity, the hammer came down. Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria issued a series of

edicts banning all voluntary associations and societies that had been created without government permission, in time naming the Illuminati specifically as one of the outlawed groups. An investigation was begun and Illuminati who held any kind of official position in the army, clergy, government, or educational system were forced to confess and recant their membership, promptly and sincerely, or lose their jobs. As in many cases where a government tries to suppress a conspiratorial organization, heavily embroidered confessions and lurid, semi-fictional tell-alls began appearing as the scandal mounted. Weishaupt and Knigge escaped, but a number of other leading Illuminati were arrested, including one Xavier Zwack, a disgraced member whose trove of letters and documents included plans for creating a secret organization for women, essays defending atheism and suicide, claims that the Illuminati had the power of life or death over their members, and information on secret ink, counterfeiting, poison, and even abortion.

### Conspiratorial Interpretations of History

A highly imaginative stew of prospective sin and projected skullduggery, Zwack's papers became the basis for the Illuminati legend that mushroomed almost simultaneously with the Bavarian order's final suppression in 1787. Its fame was first spread by a host of German-language works published attacking and defending the order, including several intemperate productions from founder Adam Weishaupt himself. Taking the seized documents and the controversial literature out of its original context, the embattled defenders of church and king came to see the Illuminati as both representatives of, and the prime movers behind, all the insidious forces of innovation, free thought, and revolution that seemed to threaten their world. European reactionaries simply refused to believe that such a diabolical organization could be killed, seeing its hand in the other major and minor political upheavals of the eighteenth century.

The most notable and shocking of these developments, of course, was the French Revolution that began in 1789. Once the French Jacobins had pushed the country to regicide and mass murder in

the early 1790s, apologists for the old regime cast about for explanations and many settled, improbably enough, on the Bavarian Illuminati as the culprits.

The basics of the grand Illuminati conspiracy theory were first mapped out by University of Edinburgh scientist John Robison, a Mason who gradually became convinced that the secrecy provided by Masonic lodges and similar institutions “had been used in every country for venting and propagating sentiments in religion and politics, that could not have been circulated in public without exposing the author to great danger” (Robison). This protection encouraged free thinkers and libertines to “become more bold, and to teach doctrines subversive of all our notions of morality . . . of all satisfaction and contentment with our present life, so long as we live in a state of civil subordination.” This insight might have had some merit as a description of Europe’s intellectual ferment during the eighteenth century, but Robison literalized it into the charge that “AN ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN FORMED for the express purpose of ROOTING OUT ALL THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS, AND OVERTURNING ALL THE EXISTING GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE” (Stauffer, 203).

In his book *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, Robison outlined his theories in massive though often mistaken detail, tracing the origins of the conspiracy back to French Freemasons whose ideas had spread to Germany and allegedly spawned the Illuminati. Along with many of his contemporaries, Robison believed that the Illuminati had not really been suppressed in 1787, but had merely gone underground and assumed new and more dangerous guises. Robison labored for sixty pages to establish a link between the Bavarians and the French revolutionaries, relying on a few fleeting contacts between some mid-level Illuminati leaders and two well-connected French Masons who became prominent French politicians during the 1790s, Mirabeau and Talleyrand. Supposedly the French immediately adopted Weishaupt’s plan “in all its branches,” creating “illuminated” lodges all over France, including, Robison claimed, the infamous Jacobin club that produced the Revolution’s most radical and bloodthirsty faction (Stauffer, 213).

Almost simultaneously with Robison, a French writer was working out an even more elaborate version of the same theory. In *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du Jacobinisme* (*Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*), the Jesuit priest Augustin Barruel described a “triple conspiracy” of “*sophistes*” specializing in “Impiety,” “Rebellion,” and “Anarchy.” According to Barruel, it all began with a conspiracy of philosophers, led by Enlightenment figures such as Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, whose anti-Christian writings sapped the intellectual and political prestige of the Catholic Church. At the same time, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau expounded the doctrines of liberty and equality, and Freemasons took up their cause, inculcating impressionable young men with the blasphemous notions that “all men are equals and brothers; all men are free.” The Illuminati then emerged to bring the philosophers and Masons together behind a program of cultural and political revolution, seeking to destroy not only the Christian churches and Christian monarchs of Europe, but “every religion natural or revealed . . . every government . . . all civil society . . . all property whatsoever.” This “complete academy of Conspirators” brought their plans to fruition by creating the Jacobin clubs and fomenting the French Revolution (Stauffer, 217–218).

### Arrival in the United States

These Illuminati-based explanations of the French Revolution and the other radical movements of the time spread quickly to the United States, where war with the French Republic seemed to be looming and the Federalists in power were being severely criticized in the press. Many of these press critics were political refugees from suppressed radical movements in England, Scotland, and Ireland and strong sympathizers with the ideals of the French Revolution, adding fuel to a sense of alien subversion.

The authors of the Illuminati conspiracy theory had warned the United States that it was in danger. Robison claimed that the Bavarian Illuminati had planted cells there before their official suppression, and Barruel cried that the *Illumines* were coming fresh from their successes in France: “As the plague flies on the wings of the wind, so do their tri-



umphant legions infect America. . . . The immensity of the ocean is but a feeble barrier against the universal conspiracy of the Sect” (Stauffer, 226–227).

Robison and Barruel found eager readers among the Federalists, especially in New England, where the legatees of the old Puritan clergy wielded great political influence and deplored what they perceived as a declining level of religious belief since colonial times. Believing that Thomas Jefferson’s Democratic Republicans were in cahoots with the French in any case, Federalists were all too prepared to believe that their political enemies might be part of a much broader and deeper conspiracy against not just George Washington and John Adams, but religion and morality in general.

In the spring and summer of 1798, a full-fledged Illuminati scare broke out, turning the conspiracy theory into a leading topic of political debate and contributing to the paranoid atmosphere that produced the Alien and Sedition Acts. Robison and Barruel were endorsed in widely published and discussed sermons by some of New England’s most famous divines. Leading off was Rev. Jedidiah Morse, pastor of First Church, Charlestown, Massachusetts, and also America’s leading authority on geography. Morse launched the controversy before a large audience in Boston on 9 May, declared a day of “solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer” by President John Adams. Morse published two other Illuminati sermons later that year, along with innumerable newspaper articles defending and trying to substantiate his charges. Pressed for specifics, he named Thomas Jefferson, the figurehead and presidential candidate of a rapidly coalescing opposition party, as the likely chief of the American Illuminati.

Although by no means universally accepted, even by those of his own political persuasion, the Illuminati theory was given further sanction that summer by Rev. David Tappan, a Harvard professor of divinity, and especially by Rev. Timothy Dwight, who as president of Yale College was virtually the spiritual leader of New England’s Congregational-Federalist establishment. Having preached and written often against the rise of “infidelity,” Dwight fell hard for the Illuminati theory, lending his considerable prestige to one of the most histrionic of the attacks,

addressed to the people of New Haven during their 1798 Fourth of July celebration. Speaking on the “The Duty of Americans in the Present Crisis,” Dwight called upon his fellow citizens to stand against these enemies, who embodied “the cruelty and rapacity of the Beast,” lest their sons become “the dragoons of Marat” and their “daughters the concubines of the Illuminati” (Stauffer, 250–251).

Morse and Dwight were in deadly earnest, but some Federalist politicians and publicists tried to exploit the Illuminati fears for political gain. One of Jefferson’s nastiest critics, newspaper editor William Cobbett, helped oversee the publication of Robison’s book in America, and Dwight’s politician brother Theodore gave speeches and wrote articles purporting to show that Jefferson was “the very child of *modern illumination*, the foe of man, and the enemy of his country” (Stauffer, 283).

Despite the large amounts of ink and breath that Federalists expended on it, the Illuminati scare largely fizzled out as a political phenomenon. The opposition press ridiculed the charges and even many Federalists were openly skeptical. What was worse, Jeffersonian Republican journals such as the Boston *Independent Chronicle* and the Philadelphia *Aurora*, and clever Republican orators such as New Haven’s Abraham Bishop, worked fairly successfully to turn the charges around. If there was any real conspiracy to suborn the nation’s religious, cultural, and political institutions, it was the one being mounted by the “political priests” of New England, who hoped to suppress the religious and political freedoms that Americans enjoyed, and protect the privileges of New England’s tax-supported Congregational churches, by smearing their political opponents and leading a witch-hunt for Illuminati and other subversives.

Ranging back through the region’s history to Puritan witch trials and blue laws, Democratic Republican critics depicted Federalist New England as a benighted place where a “union of church and state” labored to keep the people misinformed and docile. Timothy Dwight was labeled the “Pope” of New England, a cutting epithet in a country where the Catholic Church was widely and deeply disdained. Many of the articles and pamphlets were written

from the viewpoint of New England clergymen or politicians who had been ostracized and sometimes forced from their positions for their liberal political opinions. The general tenor and strategy of the attacks are captured in the title of John C. Ogden's pamphlet, *A View of the New England Illuminati: Who are Indefatigably Engaged in Destroying the Religion and Government of the United States; under a Feigned Regard for Their Safety*. Along with hundreds of newspaper articles by Ogden and others, Abraham Bishop's widely reprinted speech and pamphlet on "the extent and power of political delusion," emanating from Dwight's own stomping grounds, proved highly popular and effective.

Although hysterical attacks on the Republicans continued, the specific charge that they were part of an Illuminati conspiracy dropped out of Federalist use once Jefferson assumed the presidency in 1801. Jefferson's own allies kept up the countercharge for several more years as they tried unsuccessfully to gain power within the New England states. Occasionally they came close to building a conspiracy theory of their own, revolving around the alleged "union of church and state." In 1802, Bishop published a kind of parody of Robison's book, also titled *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, that documented the means by which New England's Federalist elite clung to power and repressed dissent.

### Aftermath

Although never mainstream again after 1800, the Robison-Barruel theory of the Illuminati as secret prime movers in world events has figured in the beliefs of many, if not most, major conservative conspiracy theorists since that time. Antisemites, Christian Identity, Nesta Webster, the John Birch Society, and the far Right, whose warnings about the New World Order pervade the Internet—all find Robison's material too good to pass up and assign a major role to the Illuminati as progenitors or allies of whatever group each particular writer fears. Religious reactionaries have been especially attracted to the Illuminati legend, which makes the forces of secularism seem so efficient, powerful, and dangerous. By the same token, but from the other end of the political spectrum, many Americans influenced

by the 1960s counterculture have embraced belief in the Illuminati, sometimes tongue-in-cheek or only imaginatively, out of an attraction for the idea of a secret network of enlightened individuals who might be able to spread hidden knowledge and bring about sweeping cultural, social, and political change.

Jeffrey L. Pasley

**See also:** Antisemitism; Barruel, Abbé; Freemasonry; *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*; John Birch Society; Morse, Jedidiah; New World Order; Robison, John.

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### **The Illuminatus! Trilogy**

*The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, "a fairy tale for paranoids," is a cult classic coauthored by Robert Shea (1933–1994) and Robert Anton Wilson (1938–), former editors of *Playboy* magazine. Intrigue—and lots of sex, drugs, and rock and roll—characterize this psychedelic epic that defies paraphrase. Thirteen years after its 1975 publication, the 800-page trilogy was the best-selling trade science-fiction paperback in the United States. The novel won the 1986 Prometheus Hall of Fame Award and was adapted into a ten-hour rock opera at London's National Theatre.

### Structure of the Novel

The form and the content of this novel focus on an ancient struggle between anarchy and authority. The Illuminati, a secret society formed on 1 May 1776 by Adam Weishaupt, turns out to be a much older organization, 30,000 years old, originating in Atlantis. While the Illuminati embodies authoritarian forces linked to a one-world government, readers learn in one of many twists in the novel that this is a false identification; the true Illuminati—known only as A(A—employs a totally different, laissez-faire (and Taoist) agenda.

The authors employ a conscious strategy of jumbling time and switching points of view with such frequency as to disorient the reader. While these nonlinear techniques are part of a satire on modernism in the novel, they have much deeper significance, enacting anarchy on the level of narrative. These techniques create a certain vicariousness, with the reader's disorientation mirroring the initiation rites, mind-altering drugs, secret rituals, and webs of deception that make up much of the story line. *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* is heavily influenced by the *Principia Discordia* (1965), a religious treatise on the worship of chaos, by Greg Hill and Kerry Thornley (the latter a companion of Lee Harvey Oswald during his time in the marines). H. P. Lovecraft appears in the novel as a writer murdered by the Illuminati for revealing the existence of extra-terrestrial "soul eaters" known as the Iloigor.

### The Plot

The plot revolves around the decision of the Illuminati to "immanentize the Eschaton"—to annihilate the world in order to release enough consciousness energy to give Illuminati members transcendental illumination or immortality and to placate the Iloigors. The Illuminati stage three attempts at mass destruction: a nuclear world war over the island of Fernando Poo, the release of a plague known as Anthrax Leprosy Pi, and the resurrection of Hitler's lost legion placed under a biomystical protective field under Lake Totenkopf in Ingolstadt, Bavaria.

The story begins with a New York City bombing in the office of a small, left-wing magazine *Confrontation* and the disappearance of its coeditor

Joseph Malik, who had been researching the Illuminati. Saul Goodman, investigating the case, is captured by the Illuminati but rescued by Malik, who turns out to be working with John Dillinger and characters Simon Moon, Padre Pederastia, and Miss Mao for the Justified Ancients of Mummu (JAMs), a discordian group fighting the Illuminati. Joining the JAMs in opposition to the Illuminati, Goodman—as part of his enlightenment—learns to perceive fnoords, words people are brainwashed not to see, which are inserted in texts to manipulate negative responses.

Meanwhile, George Dorn, a journalist for *Confrontation*, who is investigating a right-wing assassination ring, is imprisoned in Mad Dog, Texas, where he meets Harry Coin, one of several candidates for the assassination of John F. Kennedy (the real assassin, it turns out, is Harold Canvera, an obscure individual with apolitical motives). Dorn is rescued by members of the Legion of Dynamic Discord (LDD), another anarchic organization fighting the Illuminati. Hagbard Celine, a charismatic billionaire, heads the LDD; Celine, however, turns out to be one of five leaders of the Illuminati, as well as a member of A(A(. Joining the LDD, Dorn visits the ruins of Atlantis, travels the underground Sea of Valusia, meets Howard the talking dolphin, and makes love to two women (Mavis and Stella Maris) who turn out to be versions of the same woman—Marilyn Monroe, who has reached transcendental illumination and can incarnate Eris, the goddess of discord.

The novel moves toward a very literal climax since Eris incarnates herself through the energy released in an explosive mass of orgasms during Woodstock Europa, a rock concert held 1 May 1976. In an apocalyptic parody, the goddess of discord, with assistance from porpoises and many of the major characters in the story, thwarts the Illuminati's resurrection of Hitler's lost legion. Meanwhile, in the Lehman Caves outside Las Vegas, Saul Goodman contains the threat from Anthrax Leprosy Pi, when he finds Carmel, a pimp who is the most important man in the world since he's the only carrier of the disease. Near the close of the novel, readers encounter the Leviathan, an enormous single-celled sea creature

(the true pyramid with the eye) who communicates telepathically with FUCKUP, Celine's computer.

Thus, starting out as a detective story, the novel becomes science fiction, and finally a love story between a super computer and a sea monster.

### Conspiracies in the Novel

The novel refers to many of the major conspiracy theories circulating in post-Watergate America, and it depicts many militant left-wing organizations of the 1960s. The novel also invents conspiracy theories of its own, such as the Washington-Weishaupt theory, in which Adam Weishaupt replaces George Washington on the eve of the formation of the United States.

Summing up their novel, the authors state, "This book, being part of the only serious conspiracy it describes—that is, part of Operation Mindfuck—has programmed the reader in ways that he or she will not understand for a period of months (or perhaps years)." In other words, the reading is not just a description of conspiracy—it is a conspiracy. Operation Mindfuck in the novel is anarchic, a discordian strategy. So how, without contradiction, can these authors program readers to be anarchists? The answer lies in the form of programming, whose goal, like that of a computer virus, is to disrupt a system. Politically speaking, disruption is revolution when the objective is to overthrow a form of government or way of life. In this way the effect of reading the novel compares with a political act involving the subversion of cherished norms in the West—logical consistency, the sequence of time, the social order, and, of course, objective "reality."

Marcus LiBrizzi

**See also:** Illuminati.

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### Income Tax and the Internal Revenue Service

Americans have always hated taxes, and although the British less so, there has nevertheless in both countries been a strong resistance to government taxation, combined with demands that any duties be carefully monitored and controlled. Taxation, of course, lay at the root of the American Revolution, and some "neo-Confederates" still maintain that the tariff, not slavery, was the cause of the Civil War. No tax, however, has been more controversial or provided more fodder for conspiracy theories than the United States Federal Income Tax.

Employed briefly during the Civil War, then eliminated, the income tax made a resurgence in the late 1800s under Populist and other "reform" groups who feared wide disparities in wealth. Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1879) argued for a "single tax," and although that was more of a "land tax," George's proposal raised the argument that everyone should pay some taxes. In 1894, Congress passed a 2 percent tax on all incomes over \$4,000, injecting "class envy" into the taxation process. The United States Supreme Court ruled all income tax unconstitutional the following year, but that hardly dimmed the Progressive fervor for "reform" of the wealth structure. At the same time, discontent with tariffs—the country's major source of revenue, replacing land sales in the late 1800s—rose to such a degree that Congress revisited the notion of income taxes. Tariffs had always been problematic, as they pitted one section of the country against another, but the income tax offered, in theory, a way to make all "equally" bear their share of the nation's financial necessities.

From the outset, the income tax was "sold" to the public and legislators on the grounds that it would "equalize" the tax burdens borne by the various classes. Indeed, the merits of the tax *never* involved funding the nation's activities, but advocates *always* placed it in the context of egalitarianism and redistribution of wealth. Supporters discovered two cen-





People filling out tax forms in Internal Revenue office. (Library of Congress)

tral tactics that made the tax even more popular: keep it small (at first) and simple (at first).

However, enacting any income tax required a constitutional amendment, and the Sixteenth Amendment was ratified in 1913 to enable Congress to tax incomes. Early proposals were aimed mainly at “the rich,” with anyone earning less than \$3,000 exempt, and those earning \$20,000 to \$50,000 paying only 2 percent. The “superrich” (i.e., those with incomes over \$500,000) paid only 7 percent, and most Americans, with incomes between \$3,000 and \$20,000, paid between 0.5 and 1 percent. Moreover, the entire tax form consisted of a single page. The combination of placing the burden on the “rich” and keeping the form simple dramatically reduced (but did not eliminate) opposition to the tax.

Following passage of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1913 as a means to escape the constitutional prohibition on income taxes (which the United States Supreme Court had upheld in 1894), the United States enacted the first

permanent, nationwide income tax. At that time, Congress established the Bureau of Internal Revenue then, in 1953 following a federal reorganization, it became the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Many continued to resist, though, claiming the tax was unconstitutional. The most famous “tax protestor” is perhaps Irwin Schiff, whose book, *How Anyone Can Stop Paying Income Taxes* (1982), became a bestseller. Schiff claimed that no one was required by law to sign tax forms, thus no one ever had to pay taxes. In 1983, the federal government changed the language of the code to address Schiff’s claims, although none were ever upheld in court. Schiff also claimed that people could “refuse” to be audited by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

The federal income tax grew quite onerous in World War I, with rates surging to 25 percent on the lowest tier of payers and 77 percent on the “superrich.” Not surprisingly, tax revenues fell, and when he became secretary of the treasury, Andrew

Mellon decided to find out why, investigating the relationship between rates and revenue. Even though it would not be named the “Laffer Curve” for another fifty years, Mellon discovered the essence of the axiom that at some point lowering taxes actually produces more revenue. He convinced President Warren Harding and Congress to slash tax rates, setting off a boom known as the Roaring Twenties that only ended with the stock market crash in 1929.

Conspiracy theories associated with the income tax include the position that the Sixteenth Amendment was never actually ratified; that taxation is a “front” for support of an international monetary fund in the form of billions of dollars of loans to world banks; and that wages and salaries are the chief source of income for most people, but that it is “not income.”

The IRS, despite several congressional reforms, is still viewed as a font of abuse, partly due to the structure of laws under which it operates. Among some of the abuses documented in Michael Minns’s book, *How to Survive the IRS: My Battles against Goliath* (2001), were:

1. The IRS destroyed legitimate businesses by circulating word during its “investigation” that the company was involved in criminal activity.
2. Proceedings against people who have no money, or ability to pay, as mere “test cases” to send “messages” to “bigger fish.”
3. Tax preparers sent to jail for forms they had not prepared or even seen.
4. Arbitrary and political uses of the audit function to silence critics of an administration, or to intimidate proponents of IRS reform. Worse, the IRS “never had to say it was sorry,” in that it was virtually immune from civil suits for wrongful prosecution, nonpayment, or seizure of property.

In addition to these abuses, the IRS conducts its legal proceedings in “tax court,” which lacks most of the protections of civil or criminal trials, making it easier for the IRS to gain a conviction.

Abuses such as these led to the reforms of 1998, which had been based on congressional hearings in which dozens of citizens told horror stories about bankruptcy brought on by wrongful IRS actions, or wrongful incarceration for “nonpayment” of taxes. The hearings had to provide anonymity to several witnesses from the IRS out of fear that they would be intimidated or punished at work. Nevertheless, the truth came out, and Congress responded, if not enthusiastically.

The resulting reforms, known as the “taxpayers’ Bill of Rights” or the IRS Restructuring Act, (1) curbed the IRS’s ability to invoke liens, levies, and seizures of property or income during litigation or investigation, (2) limited the IRS’s ability to attach wages or seize property of a spouse, and (3) allowed civil damages against the IRS for negligence in collections or unlawful collections. In addition, the reform provided stronger powers to the citizens’ ombudsman office, strengthened the legal position of individuals locked in battles with the IRS, and in a general sense opened some window of liability to the IRS for abuses against individuals and businesses.

Another area of controversy surrounding the collection of income taxes arose during Prohibition, when “revenooers” sought to close down “speakeasies” on the grounds that they were avoiding taxes. Soon, IRS agents became involved in other Treasury Department activities, such as gun control and tobacco oversight, through the connection to taxation. As is well known, Chicago gangster Al Capone, who was doubtless guilty of multiple murders and general mayhem, was finally arrested and jailed on income tax evasion.

Another element related to IRS conspiracy theories involves the attacks by the agency on tax-exempt churches. During the Clinton administration at least eight churches were targeted for proceedings because they allegedly broke federal tax law. However, most of the churches punished were critical of Clinton, while no audits were conducted of so-called “black” churches that routinely invited Clinton to services for what were, essentially, campaign talks. But perhaps the largest and most publicized IRS/church battle involved the Church of Scientology, which won tax-exempt status in 1993 after twenty-

five years of “war” between the Church and the IRS. As part of the agreement, the Church had to pay \$12.5 million to the IRS.

This marked a victory of sorts against government, but only by an organization whose power is likewise feared by many conspiracy theorists. The Church of Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard, had employed an aggressive campaign of suing the IRS and individual agents for millions, repeating a formula the Church had used against critics who claimed it was a “cult.” Perhaps of interest also was the timing of the end of the suit against the IRS, not long after Bill Clinton took office, thanks in large part to the support of Hollywood elites such as John Travolta, many of whom are Scientologists.

More recent troubling aspects about the IRS and the income tax for the conspiracy-minded include claims that a massive abuse of the IRS by the Clinton administration occurred in which the IRS audited more than two dozen conservative organizations during Clinton’s second term. Not only were organizations audited, but numerous individuals who became prominent critics of Clinton, including Paula Jones, Billy Dale, Texe Marrs, David Horowitz, George Putnam, and Linda Tripp, as well as women who had gone public with their affairs with Bill Clinton, such as Elizabeth Ward Gracen. In May 1997, Landmark Legal Foundation began legal proceedings to obtain documents from the IRS to determine if the audits had been politically motivated. After much legal wrangling, two years later Landmark found evidence that the IRS had indeed audited the Western Journalism Center (a group critical of Clinton) after the Clinton White House forwarded a “complaint” about WJC. The WJC audit was only one of many brought against magazines and journalists (including *The American Spectator* and WorldNetDaily.Com editor Joseph Farah).

One could take conspiracies involving the income tax and the IRS in virtually any direction, from its role as a conduit for funding “one-world government” to its “illegal” status. The wonder about income tax theories is not that there are so many, but that there aren’t even more.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Militias.

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## Industrial Workers of the World

In the history of U.S. labor, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) has no equal in its revolutionary spirit, its vibrant proletarian and egalitarian culture, and its commitment to fighting the class struggle. Between its founding by working-class militants in 1905 and its mass persecution after World War I, the IWW engaged in hundreds of spectacular strikes from the timberlands of the Pacific Northwest to the textile mills of New England. For over a decade, the IWW was the most feared labor union in the country, making it the target of an extraordinary level of repression from Pinkertons, vigilantes, police, and militias, or what the Wobblies simply called the “Iron Heel.” “There can be no peace,” states the IWW’s founding document, “so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life” (Kornbluh). Attacked by employers, demonized by political leaders, and depicted in the capitalist press as bomb-throwing and un-American aliens, the IWW may have been the most conspired against and conspiratorially minded U.S. social movement of the early twentieth century.

There are many reasons why the U.S. ruling classes saw the IWW as such a threat. Broadly syndi-



As a leader of organized labor and a presidential candidate for the Socialist Party in five elections, Eugene V. Debs passionately fought for radical social change in the United States. (Library of Congress)

calist and socialist in ideology, the IWW was dedicated to building “One Big Union” of all working people who would use the revolutionary “General Strike” to overthrow capitalism and abolish the wage system. The IWW built its membership out of workers that most unions believed were unorganizable, including itinerant workers, tramps and hoboes, lumberjacks, miners, harvest workers, and factory women. Unique among U.S. unions at the time, the IWW proudly organized men, women, and even

children of every race, nation, and language without prejudice. The IWW imagined itself as the “fighting organization of the working class,” and resolutely refused to build permanent union structures that could become coopted or bureaucratic and thereby lose its revolutionary spirit. Instead, the Wobblies offered their organizational talents during strikes and taught workers how to organize, make demands, and win concessions for themselves. The Wobblies wrote songs and poems of agitation, including the labor classic “Solidarity Forever.” Their many newspapers were filled with political cartoons and published in dozens of languages. IWW printing houses were famous for producing inflammatory pamphlets on sabotage and revolutionary strategy, as well as thousands of stickers and buttons known as “silent agitators” emblazoned with slogans like “Joint the IWW and Fire Your Boss,” “Labor Is Entitled to All it Creates,” “An Injury to One Is an Injury to All,” and “Bum Work for Bum Pay.” The Wobblies also produced some of the most charismatic and committed leaders in the history of the U.S. Left, including the giant, one-eyed William “Big Bill” Haywood, the “Rebel Girl” Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlo Tresca, Eugene V. Debs, and Ralph Chaplin. In short, the IWW inculcated the fiercest radicalism in sectors of the industrial working class that were once the most exploited and degraded in the country, thereby posing a direct threat to the profits of some of the country’s richest and most corrupt corporations.

Choosing to make its stand exclusively on the economic front, the IWW generally saw elections as futile and political institutions as coconspirators with capitalism. Wobbly leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn argued that the state was simply “the slugging committee of the ruling class” and not a real democracy (Dubofsky). “No Socialist can be a law abiding citizen,” proclaimed “Big Bill” Haywood, commenting on the capitalist nature of the United States; “when we come together and are of a common mind, and the purpose of our minds is to overthrow the capitalist system, we become conspirators then against the United States government” (Preston). Though Haywood was being critical of the biases of state power with this statement, most political and industrial elites did see the IWW as a subversive “conspiracy”



that was out to undermine property, decency, and law and order.

Where the government, business, and press used violence to eradicate the Wobbly “conspiracy,” the IWW defended itself with accusations of a “frame-up,” sparking an ongoing rhetorical, legal, and political class struggle over the meaning of “conspiracy.” Committed to nonviolent direct-action protest, Wobbly civil-disobedience often generated violence in return. During major strikes and confrontations, Wobbly leaders were repeatedly arrested and charged with the crime of “conspiracy.” The first major trial began in 1906 when Big Bill Haywood and two others leaders of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) were tried in Idaho for conspiracy in the murder of the former governor. Under the direction of infamous Pinkerton James McParlain, Big Bill and his comrades were kidnapped in Colorado and illegally extradited to Idaho to stand trial for their lives. A massive publicity campaign eventually “broke the conspiracy” and Haywood was acquitted. During the IWW’s “free-speech campaigns” in Spokane, Fresno, San Diego, and elsewhere, Wobbly activists were met with mass arrests, police brutality, and vigilante violence to prevent their constitutional right to hold open-air meetings. During the Lawrence, Massachusetts, “Bread and Roses” strike of 1912, textile mill owners were put on trial for planting a bomb that they intended to blame on the IWW. In 1915, Wobbly songwriter Joe Hill was executed in Utah in what many believe was a conspiracy to frame a poetic voice of proletarian revolution. More so than any other union in the United States, Wobbly history is full of such examples.

When the United States began to “prepare” for its entry into World War I, the repression of the IWW intensified. Teddy Roosevelt attacked the IWW as disloyal and pro-German, claiming that “every district where the IWW starts rioting should be placed under martial law and cleaned up by military methods” (Dubofsky). Congressmen and business leaders denounced the IWW as “Imperial William’s Warriors” or the “I Won’t Work” and passed new antisedition laws to quash dissent during wartime. Although the IWW membership was

split over support for the war, its newspapers and magazines were banned from the mail and hundreds of Wobblies were persecuted for leading strikes, making speeches, or carrying membership cards. Frank Little, a militant Wobbly leader and opponent of U.S. involvement in World War I, was lynched during a strike in Butte, Montana, by a gang of masked vigilantes who were most likely hired by the copper-mine owners.

Beginning in 1917, the Justice Department unleashed its newly constituted federal police powers against the national leadership of the IWW, leading to the arrests of over 2,000 Wobblies on charges of conspiring to obstruct the war effort. Most were convicted of violating wartime antisedition laws (well after the war was over), and sentenced to long prison terms. Many years later, one of the indicted Wobbly leaders from Chicago had this to say about the trial: “After we had heard the case for the prosecution we became certain that a real charge of conspiracy had been proven—but not against us. We were sure that the real conspirators were the ones who were trying the alleged conspirators. The government itself had planned the conspiracy, and we were its victims” (Brazier).

During the postwar red scare, one incident in particular marked the violent end of the IWW. On Armistice Day 1919, in the lumber town of Centralia, Washington, several community leaders and members of the American Legion carried out a bloody attack on the local IWW hall. Determined to defend themselves against the mob’s assault, the Wobblies engaged the Legionnaires in a fierce gun battle that left several men on both sides dead. One Wobbly, Wesley Everest, who was captured in his World War I soldier’s uniform, was later dragged from his prison cell under cover of night and lynched by a mob. This event is widely known in Wobbly literature as the “Centralia Conspiracy.”

*Michael Cohen*

**See also:** *The Iron Heel*.

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## Internet

The Internet and conspiracy theories are a match made in heaven. With its ability to link seemingly unrelated information, the Internet has become the new home for amateur and professional conspiracy theorists, who spread their messages by the millions through all channels and networks. Having itself emerged from underneath a shroud of secrecy, the Internet has not only revolutionized the ways in which we communicate, it has also transformed the nature of conspiracy culture.

### Historical Origins of the Internet

The Internet itself began amidst a quasi-conspiracy. Its origin lay in the paranoia and fear that was widespread in the late 1950s in the United States because the Soviet Union had gained a lead in the space race, having launched several of its Sputnik satellites. To overcome this technological lag, the U.S. government began investing large sums of money in military technology—the beginnings of the military industrial complex.

One immediate result was the founding of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a branch of the U.S. Defense Department, in 1958. This agency had the task of creating and sustaining U.S. technological supremacy in the field of military applications throughout the world. Part of this task was developing a communication network that could withstand severe attacks and resulting outages by means of the dynamic rerout-

ing of messages. Somewhat by chance, a research team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) simultaneously began working with the idea of connecting two computers over a vast geographical space, thus creating a network.

By the mid-1960s these initial tests had come to fruition and when DARPA hired MIT researcher Lawrence Roberts in 1966, the Internet—or “ARPAnet” as it was then called—was born. Initially, this project remained a secret feasibility study under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State. But its rapid growth among universities and research institutions with defense contracts made keeping it undercover unfeasible. In 1972 it was made public at an international computer conference.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s ARPAnet remained largely in the public domain, but access to these super computer networks was restricted to institutions of higher education and research. In the mid-1980s, however, this changed. The National Science Foundation (NSF) created the NSFnet to link five supercomputer centers, and this, coupled with the implementation of a new set of communication protocols called TCP/IP (Transmission Control Program/Internet Protocol), soon supplanted the ARPAnet as the backbone of the Internet. In 1995, however, the NSF decommissioned the NSFnet and responsibility for the Internet was assumed by the private sector. Fueled by the increasing popularity of personal computers and the World Wide Web, which was introduced in 1991, the Internet saw explosive growth beginning in 1993, thereafter becoming a significant factor in the stock market and commerce during the second half of the decade. But why has the Internet become a haven for conspiracy theorists and their kin and how has this medium changed conspiracy culture in the process?

### Connections between Conspiracy Theory and the Internet

With the advent of the Internet as a commercially successful medium in the mid-1990s, conspiracy theories immediately found a new home. For those who could afford it, the Internet offered the possibility of exchanging information of any kind at speeds and in quantities hitherto unimaginable.

New modes of correspondence that greatly facilitate communication across temporal and spatial barriers have emerged in cyberspace: e-mail, mailing lists, newsgroups, Internet relay chat, electronic conferencing, and multi-user dimensions (MUDs). Often relegated to the political and social fringes and often ridiculed or debunked by the mainstream conservative press, conspiracy theorists now discovered that the Net was a perfect vehicle to transport and spread their thoughts.

Besides the speed and the quantity of information being exchanged, the novelty is that the information is to a great extent uncensored. The Internet does not discriminate between truth and fiction, and completely ludicrous information is placed alongside scientific contributions. The possibility for an Internet user to remain anonymous is similarly important in this respect, since it allows for completely depersonalized information exchange, where no moral justification or fear of being reproached for what is written is needed. The Internet thus has become a new virtual reality where the lines between factual truths and utter lies have become completely blurred. It is precisely this space where conspiracy theorists found fertile ground for their beliefs and interpretations.

One of the outstanding features of conspiracy theories is their ability to connect seemingly disparate events, groups, or individuals into a grand scheme or plot. In a similar fashion the Internet enables associations through so-called links, which are hypertext connections between two pieces of information or data. One website may have as many as several hundred links to other websites. The name itself—web—is no coincidence. A second significant correlation between the Internet and conspiracy theories is the ability of online search engines to combine any number of words and to display the results accordingly. Thus the conspiracy theorists' inclination to combine disparate events, people, and places can infinitely and instantly be satisfied. Jonathan Vankin and John Whalen, authors of *70 Greatest Conspiracy Theories of All Time* and creators of the *conspire.com* website, note: "If ever there was a mass medium that mirrored the psychotropic device of the conspiracy the-

ory, the World Wide Web is it. With its vertiginous array of endless connections—hyperlinks for the hyperattuned—the Web fits the paranoid mindset as snugly as a virus locks into a human receptor cell" (qtd. in Pence). Likewise it has been suggested that the Internet was not just made for conspiracy theory: "it is a conspiracy theory" (Stewart qtd. in Marcus, 18). A final reason why the Internet is a haven for conspiracy-minded people is that it gives individuals the option to remain anonymous, hidden, or unknown. This, of course, is paramount for the conspiracy theorist prototype since his activities in disclosing secret evils must themselves always remain clandestine in order to succeed. The possibility to produce conspiratorial interpretations while one's identity—including name, age, gender, religion, political affiliation, occupation, marital status, etc.—remains concealed thus is an essential reason why the Internet has become a catalyst for the creation of conspiracy theories. This anonymity promotes in the user a readiness to experiment and a willingness to go beyond the barriers of common sense and logical cognition. It is these reasons that lead us to understand why the conspiracy culture has undergone and continues to undergo a significant paradigmatic shift.

The Internet has made conspiracy theories and the people who hatch them ubiquitous, socially acceptable, and in some cases even legendary. The World Wide Web has become a venue where people can express and share their fears about politics, the government, space invaders, secret organizations and the like, while coming to terms with their daily lives. In a world where the Federal Bureau of Investigation monitors e-mails and phone calls with a software called "DSC1000" (formerly "Carnivore"), the National Security Agency spies on foreign countries' economic activity using a secret program called "Echelon," and NASA—in a post-September 11 paranoia of its own—just offered a well-known airline company the use of a machine that can read the minds of passengers before they board a plane, these individual fears are certainly more than warranted. The Internet has become an arena for a new form of political discourse, one that is unmediated, liberalizing, almost anarchic. An abundance of cyber-

communities has sprung up that discusses, shares, and interprets information on a constant basis. Conspiracy newsgroups are some of the most highly visited forums on the Net.

This new form of communication also connects many people that previously had no possibility of corresponding even though they shared a broad interest in a certain topic. It is this almost ritual sharing of information in the online forums by a regular group of participants that constitutes an online community. These individuals are not necessarily detached from the real world, as some skeptics fear. Rather, they might be seen as trying to come to terms with real-world events in a venue that connects like-minded persons who are well aware that their community is based in a textual world. Because participants come and go as they please and major topics of interest change frequently, the community can be described as amorphous and possibly ephemeral since these newsgroup communities undergo a process of continuous membership evolution. For some social theorists, then, these forms of communication and community promise to open new opportunities of social and political interaction and in turn possibly create a new form of participatory democracy hitherto unknown.

Conspiracy theories, in most cases, are interpretations of real events. They can thus be understood as versions—multiple and multiplying accounts—of reality. Cyberspace, too, has been described as a version of reality: virtual reality. It is precisely this notion of another reality behind or beyond reality that constitutes the fundamental temptation of cyberspace and conspiracy theories. This is why there is no doubting that the Internet has propelled the spread of conspiracy theories to an extent we can scarcely grasp, and many have lamented this tendency. It is the weblike structure of the Internet itself that makes it beneficial for interpretations of every shape, size, and ideological orientation. The theories are free to roam, grow, mutate, spread, and also disappear in this virtual realm.

Some commentators, however, have expressed the hope that where conspiracy theory meets the Internet there will arise a new and more benign understanding of these interpretative methods. If

such theories are understood as the outcries of those who feel left out politically, socially, or otherwise on the one hand and, on the other, as the upholding of a liberal individualism some people fear they are losing, then the Internet could be seen to serve as an instrument of democracy and as a voice of representation for those who previously had none.

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**See also:** Hackers.

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#### Iran-Contra

Iran-Contra linked together two issues on opposite sides of the world that dominated President Ronald Reagan's foreign policy. In the Middle East, he was deeply concerned about U.S. hostages, including the CIA's Beirut station chief, William Buckley, being held in Lebanon by Hezbollah, a fundamentalist group with links to Iran. His aim in Central America, meanwhile, was to prevent the spread of communism, particularly by supporting the Contra rebels fighting the leftist government in Nicaragua. The CIA and members of the National Security Council (NSC) staff secretly pursued these ends by effectively trading arms for hostages with Iran despite "Operation Staunch," the administration's arms embargo against the radical Islamic regime. Simultaneously, they also organized private and foreign financing for the Contras as well as public relations campaigns within the United States. Reagan certainly approved much of this, but it remains unclear whether he authorized a diversion of funds from the Iranian arms sales to the Contras.



At the time of the affair, some observers (e.g., Draper) argued that it almost amounted to a coup with a small “junta” led by Reagan and including Admiral John Poindexter, the national security adviser, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, an NSC staffer, and William Casey, the head of the CIA, secretly running a foreign policy against the express wishes of Congress. However, a less apocalyptic view was subsequently established, which blamed the affair on the net result of the imperial expansion of the presidency, Reagan’s poor management, and his weak knowledge of foreign affairs (Draper; Cannon). His senior cabinet members, particularly the secretary of state, George Shultz, and the secretary of defense, Casper Weinberger, were also accused of not properly controlling policy implementation within the administration. However, after congressional hearings ended in 1988 the affair quickly faded from the public consciousness. It was not a major issue in the 1988 presidential election, despite Vice-President George Bush’s involvement, and aside from a few storms linked to the special prosecutor’s investigation it rarely hit the news after Reagan’s term ended.

### **Historical Background**

After the pro-U.S. Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979, staff at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran were held hostage for over a year by the new regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. According to some commentators and historians, the crisis greatly helped Ronald Reagan beat Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election, and it also made him determined to secure the release of the U.S. hostages held in Beirut as the issue threatened his reelection. Others in his administration, including William Casey, Robert McFarlane, the national security adviser at the time, and Admiral Poindexter (then McFarlane’s deputy), also hoped to return Iran to its traditional role as a counterweight to Soviet influence in the Middle East. Despite Iranian involvement in terrorist acts against the “Great Satan,” culminating in the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine base in Lebanon that resulted in 241 deaths, they believed that there were moderates within Khomeini’s regime who would be willing to help U.S. cold war

*realpolitik*. The two issues combined in Iran-Contra as weapons sales were meant to promote moderates who would then secure the release of the Beirut hostages.

Reagan’s Central American policies were similarly affected by the cold war as Communists had taken power in both Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979. Reagan reacted in 1981 by authorizing CIA involvement against the Sandanistas in Nicaragua, and the opposition Contras were soon built up to 5,000 men from nearly nothing. In 1982, though, Congress reacted to Reagan’s strident policies by passing the Boland Amendment, prohibiting the funding of attempts to overthrow the Sandanistas. The CIA continued to fund the Contras, however, saying it was fighting the arms flow into neighboring El Salvador, and in 1984 Reagan went further by authorizing the mining of Nicaraguan harbors. Congress angrily reacted to this clear violation of international law by passing the second Boland Amendment in June 1984, banning all direct CIA intervention.

### **The Contra Scandal**

Following the first Boland Amendment, Oliver North began to guide secret, privately funded public relations campaigns supporting the Contras and opposing congressional opponents. Meanwhile, Casey secured financial support from the apartheid government in South Africa for the Contras before deciding to target rich private citizens. North again took part and Reagan, who supported the plan, also met with big donors, including singer Pat Boone, Texas oilman Nelson Bunker Hunt, and brewer Joseph Coors. The campaign raised \$10 to \$20 million but more money came from foreign states. Saudi Arabia gave \$32 million after an approach from McFarlane, while Taiwan, Brunei, and South Korea also gave support.

Aside from fund-raising, the Joint Congressional Committee looking into Iran-Contra showed that the NSC and the CIA had also continued to provide direct support for the Contras. A key figure was John Hull, an Indiana-born rancher based in Costa Rica, who later skipped bail to avoid charges of drug and arms trafficking. He was also indicted on

charges related to the bombing of a press conference, attended by U.S. journalists, which caused eight deaths. The CIA's involvement was revealed in October 1986 when one of its planes was shot down, but North and Poindexter argued before the Congressional Committee that it didn't break the Boland Amendments. They differentiated between funds appropriated by Congress and unappropriated funds and said that the executive branch only needed to account to Congress for the former. This distinction represented a threat to constitutional government, however, as it cut Congress out of any role in foreign policy (Draper 1991).

### **The Iranian Scandal**

Another source of funding for the Contras was a diversion of profits from illegal arms sales to the Iranian government. McFarlane, following an approach by the director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, David Kimche, had started these sales in July 1985. Kimche said that via Manucher Ghorbanifar, an exiled Iranian merchant, he had contacted Iranian moderates who wanted to establish better relations with the United States. To show their seriousness, they would secure the release of Buckley in return for the United States authorizing a small arms sale to Iran for use in its war against Iraq. McFarlane discussed the idea with Reagan and the chief of staff, Don Regan, on 18 July while the president was in the hospital following surgery. It clearly breached the U.S. arms embargo, but Reagan approved the plan as it offered the possibility of contacting moderates and releasing the hostages.

On 6 August, McFarlane presented a deal worked out by Ghorbanifar to Reagan, Bush, George Shultz, and Casper Weinberger. Shultz and Weinberger opposed the plan, which involved 100 TOW missiles being exchanged for a number of releases, but Reagan was noncommittal. McFarlane later claimed that the president subsequently approved it and Reagan confirmed this to the Tower Board, which he established to investigate the affair. However, the president later told the board that he hadn't approved it, before finally saying that he couldn't remember. The board and Congress both eventually concluded that Reagan had approved the plan.

On 20 August, Israel shipped 96 missiles to Iran, which the United States replaced, but no hostages were released. Yet when the Iranians asked for 400 more missiles Reagan quickly agreed, so Israel shipped 408 more missiles to Iran on 14 September with the United States again replacing them. The following day a U.S. hostage, the Reverend Benjamin Weir, was released in Beirut. However, as this didn't meet the terms of the original deal, the Iranians' next order was met with some skepticism. For instance, Michael Ledeen, a pro-Israeli historian who had acted as a conduit with Israel, argued that the plan should be abandoned, but McFarlane carried on and dropped Ledeen in favor of Oliver North. More Israeli missiles were soon on the way to Portugal en route to Iran, but despite lying to the State Department, North couldn't get Portuguese approval so the flight was turned back. Instead, a CIA front airline made a delivery, but the Iranians were subsequently refunded \$8 million of their \$11 million payment as the missiles they received couldn't hit high-flying reconnaissance planes. Another \$1 million was diverted by North into "The Enterprise," a web of secret bank accounts run by ex-U.S. Air Force major general Richard Secord, which funneled funds to the Contras.

On 5 December, Reagan signed a "finding" retrospectively authorizing all that the CIA had done and ordering Casey not to brief Congress about the operation. Poindexter, the new national security adviser (McFarlane had resigned on 2 December), kept it in his office safe and destroyed it once the scandal became public, as it explicitly described the affair as an arms trade for hostages. This would have greatly embarrassed Reagan, as he always maintained that he wasn't dealing with the kidnappers but only with people who could influence them. This distinction was difficult to maintain, however, as the hostage-takers were clearly greatly influenced by Iran, their main sponsor, even if they were not actually under its direction.

Reagan signed two more "findings" in January 1986 authorizing direct CIA arms sales to Iran, which William Casey and North quickly acted upon. Reagan overrode Casey's and Weinberger's reservations and approved the transfer of 3,504 TOWs to

Iran in January 1986. Weinberger had put up some bureaucratic obstacles but Reagan's support ensured the plan's implementation, although only 1,500 missiles were sent before the scandal was revealed. Secord acted as the CIA liaison with the Defense Department and he creamed off millions of dollars for the Contras (as well as a commission for himself) as North was vastly overcharging the Iranians. The new deliveries again failed to lead to hostage releases, revealing the futility of the plan. As the missiles were sent before releases, the kidnappers had no incentive for releasing hostages. Indeed, the plan really provided an incentive for kidnapping more Americans as the U.S. government was always willing to pay the "ransom." But, as North argued during the affair, if the United States had broken off the deal, it could have incited even more hostage-taking (or worse) from the terrorists. By the end of the affair, three Americans had been released, but another three hostages had replaced them.

The plan eventually became public when a Lebanese magazine revealed in November 1986 that McFarlane and North had visited Iran in May 1986 to discuss the arms deals. They had flown to Iran using fake passports with another NSC staffer and CIA personnel on a plane carrying Hawk missile spares. The mission was meant to speed up hostage releases, with more Hawks waiting to be flown out offered as an incentive. However, the Iranians treated the Americans badly, keeping them waiting and only sending low-level negotiators. The two sides also failed to agree on whether the arms should be delivered before or after the hostage releases. However, a compromise was eventually reached, which meant that the United States kept up a steady supply of sales until the scheme was revealed.

### **The Investigations**

Once the scandal became public, Reagan appointed an investigatory commission consisting of former secretary of state Edmund Muskie, Ford's national security adviser Brett Scowcroft, and former Republican senator John Tower, who was the chairman. The Tower Board investigated the whole affair and revealed many of the shortcomings of Reagan's lackluster control of foreign policy. It also revealed

Reagan's inability to recall much about the affair, even when presented with clear evidence of his involvement in it.

The Tower Board carried out its investigation in private, so it was overshadowed by the public congressional hearings even though it revealed considerably more. It was a Tower Board aide who found hundreds of vital documents still recorded on computers, which North thought had all been destroyed. These records provided the key to unraveling the scandal as North and his secretary, Fawn Hall, had had a "shredding party" to get rid of as many paper documents as possible. Yet, much of the plan was carried out without written records anyway. Poindexter had imposed an iron curtain of secrecy on the plan, discouraging North from putting anything on paper and compartmentalizing the plan so only a very few people knew everything. He told the Congressional Committee that he had lied to Congress and implemented the plan without approaching Reagan as he knew what the president wanted to do. The president thus had "plausible deniability" against any inquiries; "the buck stops here," Poindexter concluded.

The congressional hearings, held from 5 May to 3 August 1987, garnered much public attention, especially the appearance of Oliver North. He created a striking image dressed in his medal-covered marine uniform, which he had never worn while working in the NSC. Throughout his appearance, North argued that he had acted as a patriot, defending the United States from communism. He won a great deal of public support, despite admitting to a series of illegal acts culminating in a plan to use the Iranian money to finance a new body similar to the CIA but outside of all constitutional restraints. He said Poindexter and Casey shared his aim, but Casey never faced the Congressional Committee as he had a cerebral hemorrhage on the morning he was due to testify. He died in a hospital a few months later, leaving many questions about the CIA's role in the affair unanswered.

### **After the Hearings**

Once the hearings were completed, the scandal all but died. It was not a major issue during the 1988 presidential election, for instance, which Bush won

despite suspicions about his involvement. The special prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, continued to investigate and successfully prosecuted North and Poindexter on a number of charges. However, both had their convictions overturned by the court of appeals because of the immunity they had been given for their congressional testimony. Others, including McFarlane, Secord, Alan Fiers of the CIA, and Elliot Abrams, a former assistant secretary of state, pleaded guilty to a number of minor criminal offences, generally involving lying to Congress, but no one went to jail. Casper Weinberger was also indicted on five felony counts in June 1992, but the president pardoned him and five others six months later.

The pardons all but ended Walsh's investigations, and Bush was thus accused of having acted to spare himself embarrassing court appearances and even prosecution. The public, though, was not really interested as the scandal seemed to be a historical nonevent. A number of factors contributed to this view, but it was primarily because the scandal suffered from comparisons to Watergate. For instance, the Joint Congressional Committee hearings were considered to be less dramatic than the Watergate ones as there were no revelations to match those of John Dean. The consequences were also less dramatic, as Reagan did not have to resign as Nixon had. It was never conclusively proven that he had approved the diversion, and the lack of a "smoking gun" meant he escaped impeachment. After leaving the White House, Reagan also quickly became a historical figure, as he withdrew from politics and made few public appearances. In 1994, he also announced that he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, which further shielded him against public investigation. (In the same year, North unsuccessfully fought a Senate race in Virginia for the Republicans.) Bush also received little attention once he left office, as his single term was not seen as being historically noteworthy and the public's appetite for scandal was soon being satisfied by his successor, Bill Clinton.

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## Irish Republican Army

At any one time there are believed to be over 3,000 terrorist groups active in the world. Despite recent concerns, extremely few of these groups are active in the United States, but one group that has had a presence stretching back through recent decades is the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Some 40 million Americans claim Irish ancestry and when terrorism emerged out of the political and civil unrest in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, there were concerns that militant republican groups like the IRA would find among this diaspora a ready source of funding, weapons, recruits, and political support. Since then there have been frequently voiced concerns—particularly from paranoid U.K. governments—that the United States is the major source of financing and weapons for the IRA's campaigns of violence. The media have played on such fears and a steady stream of films and novels have portrayed (usually with a sympathetic eye) Irish terrorists working, fighting, and dying for the cause on the streets of U.S. cities. But how realistic is this picture?

Certainly, there is a small degree of support among Irish Americans for the IRA, and accompanying this support have been money and weapons. However, the extent of this assistance has generally been hugely overestimated. In the Irish War of Independence fought from 1919 to 1921 more than \$10 million was raised in the United States for the



IRA (an impressive sum equivalent to nearly \$100 million today) (Coogan). This bounty, however, contrasts starkly with the far more frugal support provided in the recent conflict. The Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAI) raised some \$600,000 in the United States in the first years of the 1970s, but by the end of the decade they were struggling to raise even \$100,000 (Bishop and Mallie). Fifty years on, it was clear that support for Irish extremism had declined dramatically in the United States. It was a trend that would continue. By 1998 a detailed study into the finances of the IRA revealed that while the organization had an annual budget in the region of \$10 million per annum, the vast majority of this sum was being raised within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Horgan and Taylor). As little as \$50,000 was coming from the United States (less than 1 percent of the IRA's annual income).

In terms of weapons as well, the role of the United States has generally been overstated, but at least in the 1970s there was more genuine cause for concern on this issue. When the recent round of troubles kick-started in 1969 the IRA was desperately short of weapons. With its large Irish community and lax gun laws, the United States was the first port of call in the search to acquire arms. In 1970 five Irish Americans in Philadelphia organized a shipment of over 400 Armalite rifles (a weapon used for deer hunting in the United States), which were all successfully smuggled into Ireland. But such large shipments were rare. Most weapons from the United States were smuggled in very small batches, hidden in suitcases or concealed in freight goods. Like the Armalites, most of these weapons were hunting guns or other small-caliber items, bought legally in stores and shows throughout the United States and smuggled slowly overseas. There was precious little weaponry of serious military caliber. In an attempt to address this, IRA representatives involved themselves with organized crime elements in efforts to acquire more potent weaponry, such as M60 machine-guns and later Stinger surface-to-air missile systems (Bell). However, these isolated efforts tended to backfire for the IRA and, even before the end of the 1970s, the United States had largely become a peripheral source of weaponry (although a very limited amount

of munitions smuggling has continued even into the cease-fire era).

While prepared to raise funds and purchase weapons in the United States, it has always been very clear that the IRA has not been prepared to commit acts of violence in the country. In theory, they have many potential targets (e.g., the British Embassy in New York). However, the IRA has always understood that there would be a serious public and political backlash if it engaged in violence in the United States and it has strict orders in place to absolutely prohibit that from happening. With the declaration of cease-fires in the mid-1990s, support for extremist republicans has dwindled even further in the United States. The largest of the dissident groups, the Real IRA, is now believed to bring in no more than \$10,000 to \$15,000 per annum from the United States, and sometimes even less than this. The U.S. operations of the dissidents have also been seriously hurt by effective undercover and surveillance operations by the FBI in particular. Indeed, throughout both the 1980s and 1990s police and federal agents have proven very effective in identifying and prosecuting those involved in procuring weapons and funds for the IRA. Such losses have hastened the decline of illicit support for the movement, especially as a more moderate Irish republicanism has emerged to the fore with the advent of the ongoing peace process. At the start of the twenty-first century, it is fair to say that the level of support Irish terrorists now enjoy in the United States is extremely meager indeed.

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#### ***The Iron Heel***

*The Iron Heel* is the title of Jack London's 1908 novel about a socialist revolution in the United States.

While London is best known today as a writer of adventure stories about dogs, in his own time *The Iron Heel* established London's identity as a literary hero of the international proletariat and the most famous U.S. socialist around the world. The future of totalitarian dictatorship and mass working-class revolt imagined in London's novel caused such a stir among his generation of radicals that the term "Iron Heel" came into common usage as a name for strike-breaking, police brutality, government conspiracies, and other violent forms of labor discipline and political repression. But like most dystopian novels set in the "not-too-distant future," through the years *The Iron Heel* has proven to be equally prophetic and problematic.

Working class by background and a committed socialist since boyhood, Jack London was inspired to write *The Iron Heel* by the plebeian terrorism and czarist brutality of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the violent series of strikes that spread class conflict across the mining and mill towns of Colorado. In Colorado, a cabal of mine and mill owners—working in consort with the local government—used Pinkertons, the state militia, vigilante mobs, bombing conspiracies, and agents provocateurs, as well as the courts, police, and capitalist press, to crush the militant Western Federation of Miners and end their drive for the eight-hour day. London extrapolated the real events from Cripple Creek, Telluride, and Russia to produce a speculative novel in which a ruthless capitalist "Oligarchy" gives birth to the repressive "Iron Heel," a violent counterrevolutionary army of militia, spies, and mobs who crush all political resistance to a capitalist dictatorship.

The novel presents itself as the recently discovered "Everhard Manuscript." From its imaginary vantage point in a socialist utopia some 700 years in the future, the book's fictional editor explains that the Everhard Manuscript has been lost for centuries and represents the best firsthand account of the origins of the Iron Heel and the start of the great class war that would last nearly 300 years. The narrative was written by Avis Everhard, the bourgeois daughter of a Berkeley university professor and the lover of the novel's true hero, Ernest Everhard. Ernest is

a proletarian philosopher and political agitator who emerges from his electoral role in the Socialist Party to become the underground leader of the "First Great Uprising."

The first half of the novel is blatantly didactic, dominated by detailed discussions of socialist politics and economics. Originally skeptical of this aggressive working-class hero, the strong-willed Avis becomes converted to socialism through her own investigation of a "tacit conspiracy" by capitalist society against an injured worker who has been tossed on the scrap heap. Upon recognizing the moral superiority of socialism, Avis becomes the lover, student, and political partner of Ernest as their world gradually collapses into civil war. During a direct confrontation between Ernest and the Oligarchy (the last moment of civil "debate" before the coming war), a man of wealth and few words stands up to the intellectually and physically superior proletarian to explain bluntly: "Our reply [to the worker's revolution] shall be couched in terms of lead. We are in power. Nobody will deny it. By virtue of that power we shall remain in power. . . . We will grind you revolutionists down under our heel, and we shall walk upon your faces. The world is ours, we are its lords, and ours it shall remain." These words mark the birth of the Iron Heel.

The battle between socialism and the Iron Heel is formally joined, and the novel, which began as a slow political romance, rapidly accelerates into a chaotic adventure story. The first signs of counterrevolution appear in the form of "patriotic" mobs known as the "Black Hundreds" who rise up and destroy union halls and radical newspapers. With time, the Oligarchy grows ever bolder: engineering an economic crisis to eliminate the middle class, plotting world wars with Germany to build up the army, and provoking a "Peasants' Revolt" of starving farmers, which the Iron Heel destroys with characteristic gore. Yet, through this maelstrom of violence, Ernest prepares to run for Congress on the socialist ticket in the 1912 election. However, he alone is pragmatic enough to know that, given what the Oligarch said to him, voting alone is not going to overthrow the Iron Heel. So he begins to shift his organizational work away from the democratic

sphere of reform and into the underground world of revolutionary conspiracy. Taking up a new identity as revolutionary leader, Ernest begins the necessary work of rooting out infiltrators, establishing a network of guerrilla “Fighting Organizations,” and planning to infiltrate the Iron Heel itself. “It was bitter bloody work,” writes Avis, “but we were fighting for life and for the Revolution, and we had to fight the enemy with his own weapons. . . . It was warfare dark and devious, replete with intrigue and conspiracy, plot and counterplot.”

When a desperate electorate sweeps Ernest and the socialists into office, the Iron Heel plots to undermine democratic rule altogether. During a fiery speech in the congressional chamber, an agent of the Iron Heel throws a bomb at Ernest’s feet, which injures the hero, but more importantly it legitimates the arrest of all socialists as terrorists. After this blow, the Iron Heel formally abolishes democracy and asserts its dictatorial rule through “labor castes, the Mercenaries, and the great hordes of secret agents and police of various sorts.” When the First Great Uprising fails with the cataclysmic destruction of the “Chicago Commune” (in a terrifying scene reminiscent of the end of Ignatius Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column*), many former socialists form terrorist groups both noble and insane, taking up a desperate and undisciplined war of revenge on the Oligarchy. The manuscript cuts off in breathless anticipation of the Second Great Uprising, thoroughly planned by our heroes and set to begin when Ernest and Avis are captured and “disappeared” by the Iron Heel.

As both a novel and idea, *The Iron Heel* played an important role in the culture of U.S. radicalism in the first half of the twentieth century. The novel was very popular with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and other revolutionary socialist circles. To these groups, *The Iron Heel* was used as an entertaining educational tool as well as a theoretical critique of “right-wing” or party socialists who believed that electoral politics could defeat capitalism. The “Iron Heel”—much like Orwell’s “Big Brother”

for the post–World War II generation—served as a potent metaphor for the conspiracies and control mechanisms of the ruling class. For example, in 1914 the radical journalist John Kenneth Turner evoked London’s novel to explain the meaning of the Ludlow Massacre: “If the picture of blood and terror so graphically painted in Jack London’s novel, ‘The Iron Heel,’ does not become a reality in the near future it will not be the fault either of the persons in control of the industries of this country or of those in possession of the reins of government. . . . The evidence is unmistakable of a nation-wide conspiracy to break up organizations of labor, to discipline the workers, to suppress agitators, to outlaw strikes, to nullify the tendencies that have been working toward the establishment of a better society, and to steer the ship of capitalism in the safe harbor of an industrial feudalism” (Turner).

*The Iron Heel* seemed to predict exactly the coming of World War I and the violent hysteria that marked the red scare of 1919–1920. For the generation that followed London, *The Iron Heel* contains a precise prophecy of the rise of fascism in Europe. Of course, neither fascism nor a revolutionary underground of any size appeared in the United States, leading to the novel’s unceremonious obscurity in the second half of the twentieth century. However, as the hope for social revolution passed from the industrialized First World to the decolonizing Third World, *The Iron Heel* found a new audience in Latin America and wherever international military conspiracies, secret police, and the rich collaborated to rule with an Iron Heel.

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**See also:** Donnelly, Ignatius; Industrial Workers of the World.

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## **Jackson, Andrew**

As a general, official, candidate, and especially as seventh president of the United States, Andrew Jackson (1767–1845) was and is one of the most polarizing figures on the American scene. Because of the Jacksonians’ occasionally lurid rhetoric and Manichean approach to certain policy issues, historians have long been in the habit of including Jackson and his followers in the ranks of “paranoid” or conspiracy theory–prone political movements. This interpretation comes most powerfully from the post–World War II “consensus” historians, led by Richard Hofstadter, with their downplaying of class, economic, and ideological conflict as forces in U.S. history. The Jacksonians constantly described American society in these terms, and practiced a politics of angry confrontation, so the consensus historians set them down as demagogues using class rhetoric to mask a capitalist agenda, or as conspiracy theorists who, as David Brion Davis puts it, saw “the growing inequality of wealth as the product of an aristocratic conspiracy against the rights of the laboring classes” (Davis, 69).

This view is inadequate. Coming to prominence in a time of sweeping change—what more recent scholars have labeled the “Market Revolution”—the Jacksonians were expressing serious concerns when they attacked their Monster Banks and hydras of corruption. This revolution saw millions of Americans become wage laborers for the first time, subject to the will of employers and forced to meet

their daily needs by buying goods and services in the marketplace. Inequalities of wealth deepened as many traditional trades were decimated by industrialization. The legal and institutional order was remade in ways that maximized the power and protected the earnings of capitalist entrepreneurs over and against the rest of society. Finally, two major economic depressions punctuated the Jacksonian era, the panics of 1819 and 1837, and in those crashes millions of Americans found themselves suddenly susceptible to the fortunes and policies of unfamiliar institutions like banks and corporations, run by and for the benefit of a new class of economic power brokers. In sum, while we may find the Jacksonians’ analysis of the Market Revolution extreme and their policy responses to it crude and simplistic, the problems they perceived were no paranoid delusions.

Jackson himself was probably a bit paranoid. Much of his political career was spent crusading against various enemies and evildoers, some open, some hidden, but most not especially evil by any objective analysis. Jackson tended to turn any issue into a quest for personal vindication, and while this tendency was an important flaw in Jackson’s character as a leader, it should not lead us to conclude that he was always *merely* paranoid. In many cases, they really were out to get him. The following is just a sampling of the occasions when Jackson detected conspirators at work against him, and vice versa.



### **The Election of 1824 and the “Corrupt Bargain”**

Though Andrew Jackson’s candidacy began as a merely local, tactical maneuver, the hero of New Orleans emerged rapidly as a popular favorite, disrupting the presidential plans of House Speaker Henry Clay and Monroe administration cabinet members John Quincy Adams, William Crawford, and John C. Calhoun. Jackson’s sudden rise was one of the seminal events in U.S. political history, potentially placing the power of presidential selection into the hands of popular majorities for the first time.

Unfortunately, the U.S. political system was unprepared for this development. The established means of nominating presidential candidates, the congressional caucus, fell apart when only one quarter of the members attended. Crawford was nominated but the supporters of Jackson, Adams, and Clay ignored the caucus decision, setting up a four-way presidential race that was guaranteed to be difficult to resolve. Jackson finished first in the popular and Electoral College voting, but fell short of the required majority in the College. This meant the final decision would have to be made in the House of Representatives.

The Jacksonians expected the House to simply ratify the people’s choice, but that was not a constitutional requirement. Though some feared riots if Jackson was not elected, the House voting on 9 February 1825 had the look of a deal between the Adams and Clay forces. The states that had given their Electoral College votes to Clay went to Adams, along with several Jackson states, making Adams president. Rumors of a conspiracy to thwart the people’s will circulated heavily, and one week later they seemed to come true, when Adams announced Clay as his choice for secretary of state. Adams and Clay both denied that there had been any arrangement, but the circumstantial evidence for a perhaps unstated understanding between them is strong.

The Jacksonians exploded in anger, denouncing the election as a “corrupt bargain” against the people and Adams as a morally and democratically illegitimate president. Jackson’s own reaction was typi-

cally violent: “So you see, the Judas of the West has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver. [H]is end will be the same” (Dangerfield, 228). His supporters used the battle cry of “bargain and sale” to undermine the Adams administration’s every move, finding sinister motives behind even the most high-minded initiatives and the least significant decisions. Adams and Clay were dubbed “the coalition,” a pejorative term in those days, used to denote an alliance based purely on self-interest and lust for power.

Missouri senator and ardent Jacksonian Thomas Hart Benton led a congressional investigation of corruption in the administration. The committee issued a report comparing Adams and Clay to the kings and prime ministers of England before the American Revolution. The coalition was supposedly out to seize absolute power by using the government’s revenue to buy up supporters, specifically by appointing partisans to office and subsidizing friendly newspapers. Later a Committee on Retrenchment was formed during the campaign year of 1828 to look further into Adams’s alleged excesses. Of course, this so-called spoils system of partisan appointments expanded dramatically once the Jacksonians were in power, despite their cries for “reform” while Adams was president.

Ironically, all these attacks were directed at what was probably one of the least partisan administrations in U.S. history. Most of the charges were exaggerated or fictitious, but all were made plausible by the circumstances of Adams’s election. Whether corrupt, a bargain, or not, the Adams-Clay coalition was based on assumptions about the role of democracy in the constitutional system that suddenly became outmoded in the 1820s. The founders may have placed the election of the president in the hands of the Electoral College and Congress, but in practice it had become the province of the people themselves.

### **Slaying the Monster Bank**

Probably the best-known examples of Jacksonian “paranoia” can be found in the so-called Bank War, in which Jackson destroyed the Second Bank of the United States first by vetoing a bill renewing its

charter and then by removing the government's deposits from the bank. Couched in some of the most radical rhetoric ever to come out of the White House, Jackson's crusade against the bank struck the institution's defenders and most later commentators as extreme and hyperbolic if not downright pathological.

Like the attacks on the "coalition," Jacksonian fears about the institution they sometimes called the Monster were rooted in serious concerns. Giant national institutions of any kind were virtually nonexistent in this period. The Bank of the United States (BUS) was perhaps the first national business corporation, and the only other real national institution of any kind, the federal government, had no presence in most communities besides the local post office. The BUS was not the Federal Reserve or a government treasury. Instead, it was a privately owned, profit-making commercial bank, with branches across the country, that happened to enjoy the very great privilege of holding the government's money on deposit.

From the inception of its first incarnation back under Hamilton and Washington, the BUS had been highly controversial, as much for its potential for political abuse as for its economic power. Especially under the direction of Nicholas Biddle, who assumed the presidency of the Second BUS in 1823, the national bank set the example followed by most major U.S. corporations since, working to maximize its influence by forging close ties with politicians. Loans to lawmakers and political journalists were made freely, and several of the most prominent congressional leaders, including Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, were hired by the bank in their private capacity as lawyers. The influential New York *Courier and Enquirer* switched from opposition to support of the BUS after a loan came through. This sort of influence-buying is what the Jacksonians were thinking of when they denounced the BUS as a "hydra of corruption" (Watson, 154).

Banks themselves were unfamiliar, suspicious institutions to most Americans of the early nineteenth century. Bank-loaned paper money was felt to be, in essence, fake money (in contrast to gold and silver) that encouraged reckless, groundless

speculative investments. Jackson told Biddle he had been "afraid" of banks ever since reading about the South Sea Bubble, a disastrous British investment mania of the early eighteenth century. Jackson had also personally experienced a bank-driven financial boom and bust. The BUS was widely blamed for a banking and land speculation bubble that had burst and plunged the country into a depression beginning in 1819. Newly reestablished at the end of the War of 1812, the national bank had first failed to restrain a rapid overexpansion of credit by new state and local banks and then suddenly cracked down a few years later to save itself. An epidemic of bankruptcy, unemployment, and homelessness ensued, followed swiftly by tens of thousands of debt collection lawsuits that sent many debtors to jail. Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson were only two among many major figures who barely escaped total ruin in the panic of 1819, and many other similar and lesser Americans were not so lucky.

Jackson's home region and electoral base, the West, was especially hard hit. The new western cities like St. Louis and Cincinnati had been the center of the land boom, and in aggressively collecting debts after the crash, the BUS stripped hundreds of western farmers and businessmen of their property. By some reports, most of Cincinnati ended up owned by the BUS. Westerners responded with political outrage that would fuel Jacksonianism later on. New senator and future Jacksonian Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri reported that his trip to Washington was "one long ride amidst the crashings and explosions of banks" (Chambers, 101). In Washington, Benton helped launch the antibank crusade that Jackson would finish a decade later, giving voice to many westerners' sense of sudden enslavement to an evil foreign entity. "All the flourishing cities of the west are mortgaged to this money power," Benton thundered. "They are in the jaws of the monster! A lump of butter in the mouth of a dog! One gulp, one swallow, and all is gone!" (Watson, 39).

The ideas of Jacksonians like "Old Bullion" Benton, so named for his advocacy of a "hard money" currency of gold and silver coins only, can be seen as typical conspiracy theories to the extent that they blame large, disturbing changes on one villainous

institution. As with many other conspiracy theories, this act of scapegoating allowed Jacksonians to avoid both acknowledging the global, systemic forces at work and admitting that any fundamental or irreversible damage had been done to U.S. society. A villain or monster could be defeated more readily than the Market Revolution or industrial capitalism.

The depth of Andrew Jackson's own antipathy to the BUS was not widely known during his first two presidential campaigns and for most of his first term as president. It came out only when his long-time political enemy Henry Clay, now a senator, decided to press for early recharter of the BUS. (The existing charter did not expire until 1836.) Clay expected a veto and hoped to use the issue against Jackson in the 1832 presidential race. Though Thomas Hart Benton led a stiff resistance and the Jacksonians had a majority in Congress, enough of them defected to allow the recharter bill to pass on 3 July 1832. The whole thing smelled of corruption to Jackson, who was sick and suffering intense pain at the time from an old bullet wound in his arm. He took the recharter drive as a personal challenge that had to be beaten back: "The Bank . . . is trying to kill me, but *I will kill it*" (Watson, 143).

The message that Jackson and his aides concocted to explain the veto remains a shocking presidential document, crackling with anger and critical of dominant elements of U.S. society in a way that would be impossible to imagine today. Hardest for his opponents to take was Jackson's harsh class rhetoric, condemning the wealthy for conspiring against democracy and the welfare of the nation: "The rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes," the veto message argued.

The document set the terms for the "Bank War" that followed, boiling down a host of fears about the social and political impact of the rise of corporate capitalism into this one battle against a monstrously large and dangerous bank. While also attacking the bank as unconstitutional and overly beholden to foreign investors, Jackson focused his greatest ire on the way government involvement with business inevitably led to the subversion of democratic institutions and values:

Many of our rich men have not been content with equal protection and equal benefits, but have besought us to make them richer by act of Congress. By attempting to gratify their desires we have in the results of our legislation arrayed section against section, interest against interest, and man against man, in a fearful commotion which threatens to shake the foundations of our Union. (Jackson, 1832 )

Bank president Nicholas Biddle and his allies thought this was crazy talk, that the veto message would ruin Jackson: "It has all the fury of chained panther biting the bars of his cage. It is really a manifesto of anarchy" (Watson, 150). So convinced was Biddle that the message would contribute to Jackson's downfall that he had thousands of copies printed up and mailed at bank expense.

Obviously, this was far from the case. Jackson was resoundingly reelected in 1832, an election that his opponents tried to turn into a referendum on the Bank War, with the aid of the BUS itself. As his second term opened, Jackson was determined to finish what he had started. Fearful that Biddle's political loans and lobbying might secure another, perhaps veto-proof recharter bill sometime in the Monster's remaining four years of life, Jackson and his advisors planned a preemptive strike. They would withdraw the government's money from the BUS and deposit it in a number of different state banks, thereby crippling Biddle's institution both financially and politically.

The recipient institutions were denounced as "pet banks" by administration critics, and they were indeed more Democrat-friendly in their politics than the BUS. One long-standing interpretation of the Bank War posits a "Wall Street Conspiracy" led by Jackson's henchman, vice-president, and successor, Martin Van Buren of New York. The BUS was based in Philadelphia, then the nation's financial center, and historian Bray Hammond argued in the 1950s that Van Buren and New York bankers had schemed to destroy Philadelphia's preeminence by getting the government's money shifted to New York and elsewhere. Later historians have debunked the idea of a Wall Street conspiracy, point-

ing out that the financial community as a whole strongly opposed the removal of the deposits.

The removal of the deposits was a precipitous step, of questionable legality and wisdom, that could really only be justified in terms of the lurid conspiratorial rhetoric about monsters and hydras that the Jacksonians had been using. The secretary of the treasury, not the president, controlled the location of the deposits, and Jackson had to fire two different treasury secretaries in 1833 before finding one that would comply, Roger B. Taney, a coauthor of the veto message. Even worse was the fact that many of the evils that the Jacksonians had blamed on the BUS would be made worse by spreading the money around to other commercial banks even further from the government's control. If banking itself was a problem, then it became far worse during the Bank War era, with the states chartering some 347 new banks between 1830 and 1837.

Where the removal of deposits did succeed admirably was in provoking a response from Nicholas Biddle that proved the Jacksonians' point about the threat that the BUS posed. "This worthy president thinks that because he has scalped Indians and imprisoned judges he is to have his way with the Bank," Biddle wrote. "He is mistaken" (Watson, 157). As Jackson's congressional opponents sought unsuccessfully to reverse the policy or punish the president, Biddle engineered an artificial recession, calling in the Bank's loans more quickly than necessary, contracting credit and increasing unemployment sharply across the nation as businesses suddenly found themselves unable to finance their operations. Biddle hoped the induced panic would galvanize the business community in support of the bank, but the opposite turned out to be true. He had more or less conceded defeat in the fall of 1834, and allowed prosperity to return.

### **The "Riot Year" and the Attempted Assassination of Andrew Jackson**

Though not well-known as such today, the period of the Bank War was as restless, troubled, and paranoid as any in U.S. history. Indeed, the "Great Riot Year" of 1834 rivals 1919 or 1968 for the sheer depth and

breadth of unrest. As the removal of the deposits and Biddle's recession unfolded, a wave of political violence broke out the likes of which the country had not seen since the Revolution. Every imaginable political and social division generated riots that pitted Jacksonian Democrats against their opponents, workers against employers, whites against blacks, "natives" against immigrants, Protestants against Catholics, and various local communities against such perceived fringe dwellers as abolitionists, Mormons, and even riverboat gamblers.

Unsurprisingly, some of this violent ill-will was directed at Andrew Jackson, whose rabble-rousing Bank War rhetoric was blamed by some for the wave of unrest. In February 1834, Jackson received a note that said, "Damn your old soul, remove them deposits back again, and re-charter the Bank, or you will certainly be shot in less than two weeks, and that by myself!!!" (Cole, 221).

This was the first of many threats that Jackson received. Rumors spread that a rebel army of 5,000, possibly financed by the Bank of the United States, was being organized in Baltimore to overthrow the president, and when Jackson was warned, he promised to hang them all high if such a army dared to come after him.

Finally, just after the close of the "riot year" (which led into a year that was actually more violent by some measures), there was a real attempt on Jackson's life. On 30 January 1835 an unemployed house painter named Richard Lawrence approached within 8 feet of Jackson as he was leaving the Capitol after a congressman's funeral. As Jackson was receiving applause of the crowd gathered outside, leaning on Treasury Secretary Levi Woodbury, Lawrence drew a pistol and fired with a loud bang; then he drew a second pistol and fired again. Jackson hesitated to see if he was shot. Miraculously, he wasn't: it was a damp, muggy day and the pistol cap had failed to set fire to the powder, in both guns! Though he needed help to walk at this point in his life, Old Hickory (as he was popularly known) lived up to his tough-guy reputation on this occasion, letting go of Woodbury and going after Lawrence with his cane.



By all accounts, Richard Lawrence was the original lone gunman. Depressed, angry, and occasionally delusional, Lawrence had previously tried to kill his own sister and threatened other acquaintances. In explaining his motives for trying to assassinate Jackson, the painter sometimes followed Jackson's political opponents in blaming the president for the hard economic times, but at other times Lawrence claimed that the president had murdered his father or was blocking his bid to take his rightful place as King of England. A jury eventually wasted little time acquitting Lawrence by reason of insanity.

Nevertheless, conspiracy theories circulated about the attempt on Jackson, usually tailored to the political interests of those who spread them. Some rumor or other linked "almost every eminent politician" in Washington with the would-be assassin (Rohrs, 150). Led by the administration spokesperson, the *Washington Globe*, the Jacksonian press questioned Lawrence's insanity and blamed the fiery speeches of Jackson opponents, especially one given by South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun two days before the attack, for inspiring the attack. (Entertainment options in early Washington being limited, the shooter really did hear Calhoun's speech.) One of the doctors who had examined Lawrence was cited as agreeing that political controversy could have driven him to murder.

Jackson himself believed that Lawrence had been hired by Mississippi senator George Poindexter, a personally violent man who was also one of the administration's most violent critics. Jackson told some visitors on the day of the attack that Poindexter had turned to Lawrence because he was too cowardly to kill Jackson himself. Witnesses were found who testified to seeing Lawrence at Poindexter's house. The evidence against "Old Pains" was serious enough to warrant congressional investigation, but the testimony of the two men who had been willing to give affidavits against Poindexter, Mordecai Foy and David Stewart, fell apart under scrutiny. Stewart could not correctly describe Lawrence and Foy turned out not to know where Poindexter's house was. Other evidence surfaced indicating that government contractor Charles Coltman might have offered work to Stewart, a blacksmith, for testimony

incriminating Poindexter. The Poindexter conspiracy theory itself began to look like, as the anti-Jackson *United States Telegraph* put it, "one of the foulest conspiracies ever set on foot" (Rohrs, 159).

This last accusation should serve as a reminder that Andrew Jackson and his supporters had no monopoly on conspiratorial thinking. Regarding the attempted assassination, the opposition press (along with George Poindexter) argued that the whole thing was a setup. They accused the Jacksonians of arranging Richard Lawrence's attack themselves to keep Jackson high in the public's favor despite the widespread unrest and the continuing fallout from the Bank War. The fact that both of Lawrence's pistols failed to fire properly was regarded as too unlikely to be accidental, and the Jacksonians had made political hay out of threats to Jackson in the past. Lawrence himself blamed the humid weather, but the investigation showed that the pistols had been loaded correctly and both performed flawlessly when tested. Of course, modern forensic methods were still a distant dream in 1835, so it is probably best not to place too much stock in the tests. No link between Lawrence and the Jacksonians could ever be found, and once Lawrence and Poindexter were cleared, the whole matter descended to the level of mere partisan innuendo.

However, it was an index of the no-holds-barred nature of Jacksonian era politics that charges of conspiracy-linked assassination were made so openly in such mainstream venues. The modern equivalent would have been the *New York Times* and Lyndon Johnson—not do-it-yourself conspiracy theorists—accusing Richard Nixon or Barry Goldwater of hiring Lee Harvey Oswald immediately after the Kennedy assassination.

### **The American Whigs versus "King Andrew the First"**

No review of the Jacksonian era would be complete without some mention of the more general conspiracy fears expressed by Andrew Jackson's opponents. Beginning with the 1828 campaign, Jackson had been the subject of some of the most remarkably over-the-top vilification ever visited on a presidential candidate. Aiming to frighten pious Christians across

the settled regions of the North, anti-Jackson newspapers depicted him as a martinet, bigamist, murderer, and all-around madman whose rule might literally bring hell on earth. Items like the famous “coffin handbill” detailed Jackson’s career as a duelist and as a cruel “military chieftain” who had executed prisoners and his own men on numerous occasions.

The anti-Jacksonians were a disparate group that finally coalesced during his second term into a new national political organization, the Whig Party. The new party’s name was rooted in the opposition’s rather conspiratorial or at least histrionic take on Jackson’s conduct during the Bank War. “Whig” was the name used by both the parliamentary opponents of absolute monarchy in England as well as the American opponents of British tyranny during the Revolution. The nineteenth-century American Whigs adopted the name because it encapsulated their basic message that Jackson sought to become, or already was, a dictator or king. A famous Whig cartoon labeled the president “King Andrew the First,” and pictured a crowned Old Hickory with robes and scepter, trampling on the Constitution.

Although the President Who Would Be King was undoubtedly a partisan campaign theme, the leading Whigs seemed to mean it in deadly earnest. Jackson had a long record, going back to his military career, of shrugging off legal restraints and treating himself as the supreme authority. A number of future Whigs had been bitterly critical of General Jackson’s unauthorized conquest of Spanish Florida back in 1818. Henry Clay had given a celebrated speech depicting Jackson as a potential military dictator in the mold of Julius Caesar, Oliver Cromwell, and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Jackson’s opponents warned voters about his dictatorial tendencies during his first two presidential campaigns, and they found ample evidence in Old Hickory’s presidency to support their fears. Southern anti-Jacksonians like Calhoun and Poindexter were alarmed by Jackson’s uncompromising stance and threats of force during the Nullification Crisis of 1831–1833. For most northern and western Whigs, the most troubling aspect of Jackson’s presidency was his use of the veto power against the Bank of the United States and a number of so-called

“internal improvement” bills, mostly road and canal bills. All of these measures were highly prized by Henry Clay and other supporters of Clay’s so-called American System of aggressive, government-sponsored economic development, but the veto itself was a major concern.

The veto power had always been controversial because it was an attribute of absolute monarchy that the English Whigs had stripped from their kings in the Glorious Revolution of 1689. Early U.S. state governors often did not possess a veto. The presidential veto had been used only a handful of times before the Jackson administration, and even then (according to the Whigs) only on constitutional grounds, never because a President simply disapproved of a policy and wanted to impose his will on the rest of the government. Later in U.S. history, it became expected that the president would set the policy agenda for Congress, but in the early days of the Republic this was regarded by many as executive “usurpation,” a corrupt violation of the constitutional separation of powers. Thus Washington, D.C.’s oldest and most established newspaper, the *National Intelligencer*, could write, in apparent seriousness, that Jackson’s bank veto had rendered the Constitution a “dead letter” and the “will of a DICTATOR . . . the Supreme Law!” (Watson, 152).

In fairness to the Whigs, their charges concerned the tendency of Jackson’s actions and the character of his leadership, and usually did not posit a literal monarchical conspiracy. Yet if Jackson sought to kill a symbolic monster in crusading against the Bank of the United States, the Whigs had their own monster in Jackson himself.

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**See also:** Bank of the United States; Bank War; Biddle, Nicholas; Wall Street.

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### Japanese Americans

The Japanese American population became the target of a paranoid campaign in the United States after the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Thousands of West-Coast Japanese Americans were incarcerated in concentration camps in 1942. While white America believed these Japanese Americans were potential

saboteurs and a “fifth column” within the United States, the belief in a Japanese “conspiracy” was not a new phenomenon—it built on a lengthy history of suspicion and racism toward Japanese Americans since their arrival in the United States in the late nineteenth century.

Japanese began arriving in the United States, principally on the West Coast, from the 1880s and were quickly confronted by racist opposition. Labor and trade unions in particular led the way, seeking to prevent Japanese settling and working in the United States. Such attitudes emerged from a history of anti-Chinese sentiment; the Japanese were also disadvantaged due to laws that prevented them from becoming citizens (only “white” immigrants could become citizens, dating back to a 1770 law). Only the second generation (known as Nisei), those born in the United States, could be citizens. In the early twentieth century the newspapers of William Randolph Hearst, along with a number of anti-Japanese organizations, joined in the anti-Japanese crusade, trumpeting the “Yellow Peril.” They predicted that the Japanese would “crowd out the white race” on the West Coast (Daniels, 116). The Japanese victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War made Japan seem a threatening Pacific power. Further, various Japanese American community organizations were viewed as sinister, and were even sometimes perceived as part of an eventual plot to take over the United States.

Such paranoia had real results in pressuring politicians to take stronger measures against the Japanese. An alien land law enacted in California in 1913 was a response to agitation that Japanese were taking over farmland and crowding out white farmers. It was in practice largely ineffective, and thus led to increased, rather than diminished, tensions and fears of Japanese conspiracies. The Immigration Act of 1924 hit the Japanese particularly strongly, reducing the number of immigrants to a negligible number.

Thus, when Pearl Harbor was attacked, revealing the vulnerability of the United States and pitching it into a fierce Pacific war, there was already an atmosphere of mistrust and paranoia toward Japanese Americans that was ready to be heightened to





An American soldier guarding a crowd of Japanese American internees at an internment camp at Manzanar, California, during World War II. (Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis)

hysteria. There was also a history of racist government policies that, when added to the “exigencies of war” by which so much has often been justified, made the violation of fundamental civil liberties acceptable. In the days following Pearl Harbor,

“enemy aliens” became the target of federal and state government security measures. The 8 December 1941 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* recorded the first roundup of “suspicious characters” and noted that the San Francisco police were



mobilized to meet the threat of “sabotage.” Despite protestations of loyalty from the Japanese American community, belief that they were all potential saboteurs, spies, and fifth columnists ready to aid a Japanese attack on mainland America was pervasive. By February 1942, many areas were barred to enemy aliens, which, the *San Francisco Chronicle* argued, would guard against “sabotage and other fifth column activities”; on 3 February the paper also quoted California Attorney General Earl Warren, who declared “every alien Japanese should be considered in the light of a potential fifth columnist.”

Newspapers fomented this anti-Japanese hysteria, and along with a military keen to exercise strong internal security measures and politicians acutely aware of the need to respond to the demands of their constituents, it was perhaps inevitable that some action would be taken. Military leaders spoke of the threat of the “fifth column”; they were also keen to apportion at least part of the blame for the disaster of Pearl Harbor on a Hawaiian–Japanese American fifth column. At the same time, people like Walter Lippmann, one of America’s most respected journalists and social commentators, talked of the imminent danger of attack from both without and within the West Coast. Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, sanctioned mass searches of Japanese homes, and a system by which Japanese Americans were forced to register and were prevented from traveling. Slowly rights were stripped from Japanese Americans. On 13 February, a Pacific Coast congressional delegation sent President Franklin D. Roosevelt a unanimous recommendation urging “immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage,” and six days later Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 by which over 120,000 people, a majority of whom were U.S. citizens, were put into concentration camps. There were legal appeals arguing the unconstitutionality of these actions but little was done. Over the remaining years of World War II, some groups were released and resettled in the East and Midwest; others were pressured to renounce their citizenship and some of these, along with some noncitizens, were repatriated to Japan.

The war years saw the culmination of a deep-seated racist mistrust of Japanese Americans; the years following the war saw movements to end legal discrimination against Asian Americans, including the Japanese. But recognition of what was done in World War II was slow. Ultimately, in February 1976, Gerald Ford signed Proclamation 4417, formally recognizing the events of the war years as a “national mistake.” In the 1980s, a Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians reported on the events and opened the way for redress, financial and otherwise, for the survivors. The treatment of Japanese Americans from their arrival in the United States until the end of World War II reveals how racial paranoia and fear toward an ethnic group can be exaggerated into a belief in conspiracies to undermine democracy and threaten safety, and given the right circumstances can become a basis for unjust actions and a threat to the very democracy in whose name these actions are invoked.

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#### Jefferson, Thomas

Thomas Jefferson was born 13 April 1743, in what is now Albemarle County, Virginia. Jefferson was a member of the Continental Congress, author of the Declaration of Independence, governor of Virginia,

minister to France, secretary of state, and vice-president, and became the third president of the United States in 1800. One of America's most influential but, in his day, controversial leaders, Jefferson was at the center of several important conspiratorial episodes.

### The Botanical Expedition

Thomas Jefferson and James Madison set out on a month-long botanizing excursion to New York during April–May of 1791. The intent of the travelers was to observe the flora and fauna of the region and its scenic beauty, and to visit historic sites of revolutionary fame. It is likely that these men welcomed the opportunity to make political inquiries in the towns where they visited. Such activities did not go unnoticed. In fact, it was the view of some New York Federalists that the secret purpose of their tour was to cement an alliance between the New York Republicans and their Old Dominion counterparts to the south. Jefferson and Madison unified, and established a popular base for, the Republican Party through key political visits on their journey. Certainly, the Federalists viewed this trip as a threat, and conspiracy theories were abundant. (It may seem strange that the building of a political alliance might be considered a conspiracy, but the very notion of a political party was considered conspiratorial in the era of the Founders.) New York Governor Clinton “seems not to have noticed the touring Virginians, nor did they call on him” (Peterson, 440). If any alliances were struck between Jefferson and Clinton, Burr, or anyone else on this trip, they were very secret indeed.

### Jefferson as an Agent of France and Revolution

By far the most intense and significant conspiracy theory regarding Jefferson was the widespread Federalist belief that he and his followers were fellow travelers or outright agents of the French Jacobins and their revolutionary agenda of radical republicanism, social egalitarianism, and religious “infidelity.” This belief first emerged while Jefferson was secretary of state in the early 1790s. As the French declared their nation a republic and exe-

cuted King Louis XVI, America was riven with controversy over the French Revolution and the resulting series of wars between France and the monarchies of Europe. Based on a few letters of his that leaked to the press and the statements of his many allies, Jefferson acquired a reputation as the French Revolution's leading supporter in America. Subsequently the charge that he was not just a friend but a tool of France became a primary theme of Jefferson's opponents, and would remain so for most of the rest of his political career.

Jefferson-as-conspirator was the subject of one of America's earliest political cartoons, “The Providential Detection.” This anonymous drawing depicts an American eagle about to claw the eyes of Jefferson as he tries to burn the Constitution on an “Altar to Gallic Despotism,” encapsulating the conservative argument that further democratization in America would inevitably lead to dictatorship as it had in France. The eagle represents the belligerent, repressive Federalist policies of the John Adams administration, which included the Alien and Sedition Acts, legislation that aimed to crush the Jacobin conspiracy once and for all. Significantly, the fire on Jefferson's altar is fueled by copies of the two leading Democratic Republican newspapers, the Philadelphia *Aurora* and the Boston *Independent Chronicle*, as well as the anti-Christian writings of Thomas Paine (*The Age of Reason*) and William Godwin. This reflected the Federalist belief that publications dissenting from established political and religious doctrines were not contributions to public debate, but part of a larger conspiracy against not only the U.S. government, but also the orderly, hierarchical, Christian society that Federalists believed they were defending. Some Federalists even believed that Jefferson and his followers were secretly the American wing of the infamous Bavarian Illuminati.

In politics, the Federalists relied especially on the threats that Jefferson, who held liberal but far from atheistic ideas on religion, allegedly posed to Christianity in America. (During the “Reign of Terror” period in France, Robespierre's Jacobin regime had converted the churches into Temples of Reason.) The Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States*, a nationally read Federalist newspaper, ran notices

throughout the election season of September 1800, putting the Federalist message bluntly (Cunningham, 154):

THE GRAND QUESTION STATED

At the present solemn and momentous epoch, the only question to be asked by every American, laying his hand on his heart is “shall I continue in allegiance to

GOD—AND A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT;

or impiously declare for

JEFFERSON—AND NO GOD!!

The religious campaign against Jefferson was most intense in once-Puritan New England, which was both the Bible Belt of early America and the Federalists’ electoral stronghold. New England Federalist politicians and clergy bombarded the people of the region with apocalyptic warnings about the consequences of a Jefferson victory in the presidential election of 1800. Former Massachusetts congressman Fisher Ames painted this eventuality as “the abasement of all that is venerable . . . the transmutation of all that is established” (Horn et al., 122–123).

Nor did this sort of talk stop once Jefferson was in office. Having lost the nation as a whole but holding New England in 1800, Federalists circled the wagons in the face of intense Democratic Republican efforts to win over the voters of their states. Their warnings about Jefferson grew almost comically hysterical, especially given the relatively modest policy changes that Jefferson’s administration was implementing at the time. Attempting to rally his home state of Connecticut “to resist a foe, just entering the gates of your fortress,” Theodore Dwight outlined “the consummation of Democratic blessedness” that awaited the Land of Steady Habits if it too succumbed to the revolutionary legions who had already overrun most of Europe and in the recent election “secured . . . dominion over a large portion of these United States.” Unless Connecticut made a stand, her people faced the literally hellish prospect of “a country governed by blockheads, and knaves; the ties of marriage . . . destroyed; our wives, and our daughters . . . thrown into the stews; our children . . . forgotten . . . a world full of ignorance,

impurity, and guilt; without justice, without science, without affection . . . without worship, without a prayer, without a God!” (Horn et al., 123).

This sort of scaremongering rang increasingly hollow as it became obvious that the women and children of New England were in no danger from President Jefferson, and most of that region joined in reelecting him handily in 1804.

### Aaron Burr and the Electoral College Deadlock

Jefferson and his supporters had a conspiracy problem of their own in 1800. They were so sure of Jefferson’s imminent victory after key legislative races were won—many states still appointed presidential electors—that they made arrangements to ensure Aaron Burr would receive sufficient votes from southern states to become vice-president. Jefferson was surprised to learn that the vote in the South fell more heavily to Burr than was expected. The election resulted in a tie between Jefferson and Burr, each with seventy-three electoral votes, which was to be resolved in the House of Representatives. Bitterly opposed to Jefferson and his Republican ideology, the Federalists conspired to deny him the presidency. The Federalists allied themselves in favor of the challenger, Aaron Burr, in spite of his reported disavowal of candidacy. In spite of their best efforts, on Tuesday, 17 February, the thirty-sixth ballot in the House of Representatives resulted in Jefferson’s election. “Even in defeat they acted a miserable part, most Federalists withholding their votes from Jefferson to the bitter end” (Peterson 1970, 651). As president, Burr would have been beholden to the Federalists who supported him, ensuring their continued influence in the federal government. Relations between Jefferson and Burr deteriorated, and several years later Jefferson pronounced him guilty of treason and called for his arrest.

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**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Anti-Federalists; Hamilton, Alexander.

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## Jesuits

The Jesuits have always made up a prominent part of anti-Catholic beliefs and conspiracy theories. It is the largest religious order of men in the Catholic Church today, with approximately 21,000 Jesuits worldwide and 4,500 in the United States. The Jesuits currently operate twenty-eight colleges and universities in the United States, including Georgetown in Washington, D.C. In addition to education and parish ministry, the order also provides opportunities for lay volunteers to assist the poor through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Despite these many contributions to the common good, the Jesuits are central to many anti-Catholic conspiracy theories. Why the Jesuits figure so prominently in this paranoia can be better understood by looking at the history and special character of this religious order.

The founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1495–1556), was born in the Basque region of Spain. As a young man, he dreamed of a military life by which he would win glory for himself and acclaim from the ladies. This worldly dream was cut short when Ignatius was crippled by a cannonball during the siege of Pamplona. While recuperating, Ignatius experienced a profound conversion and decided to take the same discipline he experienced as a soldier and apply it to a new religious order,

which he hoped would be a new army for the Church. This was the Society of Jesus, which was founded in 1540.

Through combining discipline and learning, the Jesuits became a powerful new force in Roman Catholicism. Of great significance for the Americas was the interest the Jesuits took in foreign missions. The first Jesuits to arrive in the future United States were Fathers Andrew White (1579–1656) and John Altham (1589–1640) and Brother Thomas Gervase (1590–1637). Together, they established a mission in southern Maryland in 1634.

One of the characteristics of the Jesuit order was that, in addition to the three traditional monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, there was added the fourth vow of special obedience to the pope. The order was founded in the midst of the Protestant Reformation, when it appeared that the religious world of Europe was in tatters. Ignatius responded to this situation by stressing obedience to church authority in these chaotic times. Certainly, to people living centuries later, the manner in which Ignatius expressed his sixteenth-century understanding of obedience could be quite unsettling. The faithful should be always ready to uphold and defend the precepts of the Church, and never criticize these in any manner; his view of obedience was strict and sounded very much like blind faith. In the constitution he wrote for the order, Ignatius stressed that a Jesuit should be completely obedient to the pope and the leaders of the order.

This stress on obedience, as well as their great success in the Counter-Reformation, led the Jesuits to be especially feared by Protestants. In 1585 Queen Elizabeth I of England issued the Act against Jesuits and Seminary priests, which banished all Jesuits from England and its territories.

The perceived threat of the Jesuits led to similar such legislation in the American colonies. In 1647 the colony of Massachusetts Bay passed the Anti-Priest Law. After reviewing the violence and unrest on the European continent and claiming that these were caused by “those of the Jesuiticall order,” this law stated that no Jesuit was to come within the territory of the colony and that any currently residing in Massachusetts Bay were to be banished. Should



any who were banished return to the colony, they were to be put to death.

Forty-three years later Massachusetts passed an even stricter law, the Act against Jesuits and Popish Priests, on 17 June 1700. This decreed that “every Jesuit, seminary priest, missionary, or other spiritual or ecclesiastical person” was to depart the colony within three months. Any captured after that date would be imprisoned for life and subject to execution if they tried to escape. Anyone hiding or aiding in any way a member of the “Romish clergy” would be fined 200 pounds and pilloried for three days.

At the time of independence the American Catholic community numbered only about 25,000, but this was to change dramatically because of immigration. Beginning with the Irish in the early nineteenth century, and followed by the Germans, Italians, and Poles, the Catholic population reached 1.6 million in 1850 and 12 million in 1900. This created a tense situation in the United States, because although the country was predominately Protestant, its largest denomination was the Catholic Church, which alarmed many Protestants, to whom this increase looked more like an invasion than immigration. And leading this threat to the country, they were sure, were the Jesuits.

A great number of anti-Catholic writings emerged in the nineteenth century. In 1882 Edwin A. Sherman published *The Engineer Corps of Hell*, which included the infamous *Secret Instructions of the Society of Jesus*. This was supposed to be a kind of classified procedure manual for the top echelon of the Jesuit Order. Among its contents were chapters on how to gain influence over princes, magnates, and the wealthy. Three chapters were devoted to the methods by which rich widows were to be convinced to enter religious life and give their money to the order.

A very popular anti-Catholic work from the nineteenth century that remains in print was *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*. Written in 1885 by Charles Chiniquy, who claimed to be a former priest, the book warned of the threat of the Jesuits to U.S. liberty: “The American people must be very blind indeed, if they do not see that if they do nothing to prevent it, the day is very near when the Jesuits will

rule their country, from the magnificent White House at Washington, to the humblest civil and military department of this vast Republic” (Chiniquy, 374).

In the early twentieth century there appeared E. G. White’s *The Great Controversy* (1911). White warned his fellow Americans that the Jesuits were “the most cruel, unscrupulous, and powerful of all the champions of popery. . . . There was no crime too great for them to commit, no deception too base for them to practice, no disguise too difficult for them to assume.” To those who countered that the Jesuits appeared holy, White responded that although the members of the order wore a garb of sanctity, this was only a disguise. Beneath this blameless exterior, he claimed, was a deadly intent against all that the American people stood for. A fundamental principle for the Jesuits, White said, was that the end justifies the means: “By this code, lying, theft, perjury, assassination, were not only pardonable but commendable, when they served the interests of the church. Under various disguises the Jesuits worked their way into offices of state, climbing up to be the servants of kings, and shaping the policy of nations” (White, 233–235).

In 1960 a Catholic was finally elected president of the United States. Despite all the dire predictions, the massacre of Protestants and suspension of liberties did not take place, nor were Jesuits appointed wholesale to key government posts. A good deal of anti-Catholic bigotry subsided after the election of Kennedy, but it did not all go away. Hate groups with an anti-Catholic bias and belief in a worldwide Jesuit conspiracy still remain.

During the 1980s there appeared various print materials attacking the papacy and the Jesuits. Chick Publications issued a cartoon book in 1983 entitled *The Poor Pope?* that claimed that the Vatican “almost destroyed the United States when her Jesuits engineered the Civil War and murdered Abraham Lincoln. Her Jesuits even set up World Wars I and II, which has been carefully covered up” (Chick, 20).

In 1984 the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation published and widely distributed a pamphlet entitled *The Pope’s Secrets*. Typical of anti-Catholic con-

spiracy theories, the pamphlet blames the Vatican and its Jesuit agents for all of the world's woes. The scope and power claimed for this conspiracy is truly impressive: "Because of her age-old desire to control the world government and church, the serpent-like Vatican has infested the world and the U.S. government with so many of her zealous, highly-trained and dedicated Jesuit devotees, that she now controls the United Nations (which she created); the White House; Congress; every state, federal, civic, and social government agency including the U.S. Department of Labor, the IRS, the FBI, Supreme Court, judicial systems, the arms forces; state, federal and other police; also the international banking and federal reserve systems (called the Illuminati and Agentur), labor unions, the Mafia and most of the heavy-weight news media" (Alamo, 1).

This worldwide conspiracy includes communism under "Jesuit-trained" Fidel Castro, the corruption of youth with drugs by "Jesuit Vatican-trained" Timothy Leary, and control of the Israeli parliament, where some "Israelites have converted to this sect (Roman Catholicism). The Vatican wanted them to become rabbis so that they could place them in the Israeli Knesset as spies. Some of these Roman Jesuit rabbis are there today" (ibid., 1). Finally, the pamphlet makes much of Jesuit assassins dutifully removing enemies of the pope, including Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. The assassination of Kennedy is an interesting twist on the old fear of a Catholic president. The claim is that Kennedy was assassinated because he wouldn't turn the country over to the Vatican.

Today the Internet has become a major outlet disseminating Jesuit conspiracy theories. One example is a web page sponsored by the Pacific Institute, a group founded in San Diego in 1977 "for the express purpose of Biblical research." Entitled "America will soon lose its Constitution," it warns of the great threat of the Jesuit conspiracy in the United States: "Today the pope's Jesuits are not only entrenched at the highest levels of all branches and departments of the U.S. Government, but they are also entrenched at the highest levels of virtually all the major corporations and industries in the United States. . . . Our God-given Constitution is the reason the United

States has become the greatest country in the world, but it is being thoroughly undermined today by the Jesuits in the government as they work to destroy the United States" (www.pacinst.com/america.htm). The group blames excessive environmental regulations and gun control laws on Jesuit politicians in Congress, and they even blame Jesuits for the tragedy of September 11.

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**See also:** Anti-Catholicism; Nativism.

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### Jewish Defense League

Although it was initially organized to protect Jews in crime-ridden neighborhoods in New York City, the Jewish Defense League (JDL) became best known for its occasionally violent protest activities directed against Russian anti-Jewish policies and Arab terrorism. This militant organization soon became involved in an unlikely, even bizarre, political alliance and was also subjected to both U.S. and local government surveillance. The 1990 assassination of the founder, Meir Kahane, later raised serious questions about an Arab conspiracy, fueled by much new evidence discovered in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Paradoxically, some members of the Jewish Defense League—who professed profound concern for the physical safety and welfare of their coreligionists—were implicated in the 26 January 1972 murder of a Jewish secretary, Iris Kones. This tragic killing took place during the firebombing of the New

York office of Sol Hurok, who promoted cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union. Later, however, some charges were dropped against the JDL members because of illegal police procedures and other problems for the prosecution. Almost all mainstream Jewish organizations considered the JDL a violent, extremist group and regularly denounced its leader.

Founded in the spring of 1968 by the charismatic rabbi Meir Kahane and a group of politically conservative New York City Jews, the JDL and its activities were regularly featured in the New York media and, occasionally, the national press. Indeed, one member boasted that the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, George H. W. Bush, complained to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir that JDL activities were endangering détente with the Soviet Union (Dolgin, 39).

Although the JDL was a right-wing organization, both its methods and often violent rhetoric seemed to mirror radical leftist groups of the 1960s. Leon Wieseltier, the *New Republic* literary editor and a JDL member for a brief time, once boasted to his parents that Eldridge Cleaver was making him a better Jew (Wieseltier, 25).

Although many journalists and academics have written numerous articles describing and analyzing the political activities and philosophy of the JDL, relatively little attention has been paid to an unusual political alliance that developed during the early years of the organization. After Meir Kahane was freed on bail in Brooklyn Federal Court on 3 May 1971 from an indictment of conspiracy to transport weapons across state lines, Joseph A. Colombo, Sr., a major Mafia figure, appeared in a joint news conference with the JDL leader and announced an alliance with him. Colombo declared that the rabbi was “fighting for his people in Russia and we’re fighting for our [Italian] people here . . . if they [the JDL] need our support, we will give it” (Kaplan, 1).

A year earlier, Colombo and some of his mob associates had formed the New York-based Italian American Civil Rights League—grist for comedians and editorial cartoonists—whose mission was to fight anti-Italian prejudice, especially the depiction of all Italians as gangsters. Barry Slotnick, counsel to the newly established organization, was also the

attorney for Kahane, and reportedly helped introduce these two controversial figures to each other.

A *New York Times* editorial (15 May 1971) expressed puzzlement about this bizarre organizational alliance: the Italian American Civil Rights League seemed an unlikely group to place as one of its top priorities concern over the mistreatment of Soviet Jews; similarly, JDL members would not likely highlight as a major issue in its political agenda the removal of the names “Mafia” and “Cosa Nostra” from the television program *The FBI*. Nevertheless, some analysts suggested that Kahane and Colombo forged this alliance to mobilize jointly their respective supporters against their alleged systematic harassment by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The real reason for the alliance might never be known. On 29 June 1971, Joseph Colombo, Sr., was shot three times in the head and neck at an Italian American Unity Day Rally held at Columbus Circle and attended by an estimated 100,000 supporters. Colombo was in a coma for seven years and died on 22 May 1978. His assailant—who was immediately shot and killed by Colombo’s bodyguards—was Jerome A. Johnson, an African American who allegedly had mob ties in Harlem.

Almost two decades later, Rabbi Meir Kahane also suffered a violent death. On 5 November 1990, an Egyptian janitor named El Sayyid Nosair assassinated the JDL leader before a group of JDL supporters at the Marriott Hotel in midtown Manhattan. Subsequent investigations found intriguing connections between Nosair and many terrorists involved in either the first or second attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) and also other worldwide terrorist activities perpetrated by Al-Qaeda. Immediately captured after the Kahane shooting, Nosair was later found to be a follower of the exiled Egyptian cleric Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, then based in Jersey City, New Jersey. He was reportedly the spiritual leader who inspired the first World Trade Center bombing on 26 February 1993. Furthermore, police discovered that Mohammed Salameh and Mahmoud Abouhalima—who were key players in the WTC bombing—were staying in Nosair’s house also in Jersey City, located near Abdel-Rahman’s mosque. Nosair’s cousin, Ibrahim el-Gabrowni obtained a

\$20,000 contribution from Osama bin Laden for Nosair's legal defense. Wadi El-Hage, the key Al-Qaeda operative involved in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, visited Nosair in his U.S. prison, several years before he went to East Africa. El Sayyid Nosair, who was acquitted of the Kahane murder in a state trial in 1991, was convicted in 1995 on a federal charge of murder in aid of racketeering, and was sentenced to life in prison.

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**See also:** September 11.

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### John Birch Society

The John Birch Society was founded by Robert Welch on 8 December 1958, following a lecture given by Welch to eleven wealthy businessmen in Indianapolis, Indiana. Welch, a onetime candy manufacturer from Cambridge, Massachusetts, used his comments to outline his disillusionment with the moderate leadership of the Republican Party and to express his belief that a "Communist conspiracy" threatened to overturn capitalism and hijack the U.S. government. Taking its name from a U.S. captain who had been killed by Chinese Communists in the final days of World War II—the "first casualty" of the burgeoning cold war—the society went on to become one of the largest and best-known political action organizations of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although its membership rolls were kept secret (the society's commitment to conspiracy was supplemented with a healthy dose of paranoia), his-

torians have estimated that by 1962 the Birchers boasted over 60,000 members and \$1.5 million in annual income (Dallek).

The worldview of Welch and his followers was anything but complex. Simply put, all of their beliefs revolved around the understanding that "Communism, in its unmistakable present reality, is wholly a conspiracy, a gigantic conspiracy to enslave mankind; an increasingly successful conspiracy controlled by determined, cunning, and utterly ruthless gangsters, willing to use any means to achieve its end" (Welch, 21). To Welch and his followers, the United States was fighting a losing battle against this global conspiracy. If the United States was indeed the strongest nation on the planet, yet its leaders could not contain the spread of communism, then these same leaders must be consciously or unwittingly colluding with the Communists. Respected U.S. political and judicial leaders, such as President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren, were therefore cast as willing pawns in the Communist takeover of the United States. The programs that Eisenhower, whom Welch described as a "tool of the Communists," and other politicians supported—programs such as the continued growth of the welfare state, a commitment to civil rights legislation, membership in the United Nations, and increases in foreign aid—were thus seen as eroding U.S. sovereignty and power, allowing the Communists to infiltrate all levels of U.S. government. Such institutions as labor unions, churches, and schools were powerless to stop these developments, as they too had been penetrated by known Communists. The Birchers stood as the nation's last line of defense against the pawns of global communism.

Faced with such a formidable foe, the Birchers did not call for violent counterrevolution or any other sort of undemocratic action. Rather, the society stressed education and grassroots political organizing as the ways to combat the Communist conspiracy. Welch urged Birchers to create new anticommunist radio programs and to establish "reading rooms" stocked with such right-wing publications as the society's own *American Opinion*, the *Dan Smoot Report*, and the *National Review*. In the political arena, the Birchers worked to capture



the leadership posts in such important Republican organizations as the Young Republicans and the California Republican Assembly. Once established in these positions of authority, Birchers provided conservative candidates such as 1964 presidential hopeful Barry Goldwater with trained personnel of political organizers. The society also exerted tremendous influence at the local level, running like-minded candidates for school boards, city councils, and numerous other offices across the nation.

In the aftermath of Goldwater's defeat, Welch's conspiracy theories grew more and more bizarre. Developing a broad historical perspective, Welch now saw the roots of the Communist conspiracy in the eighteenth century, more specifically in the Illuminati, a secret society founded by Adam Weishaupt in Bavaria in 1776. The elite members of the Illuminati, whom Welch referred to rather vaguely as the "Insiders," had been conspiring to overthrow "all existing human institutions" and become "the all-powerful rulers of a 'new order' of civilization" for close to 200 years. The first overt action of these plotters was the French Revolution, and the first open declaration of their purposes was Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. It is in this historical trajectory that Welch placed communism, which he now believed was "only a tool of the total conspiracy." After witnessing the successful takeover of Russia in 1917, the Insiders saw how powerful communism could be, and how they could use it in their quest for global dominance. World War II thus became an Insider-provoked conflict (Welch claimed that the Communists had "goaded the unsuspecting Hitler into attacking Poland") whose sole purpose was to devastate Europe and therefore prepare the continent for the spread of communism. Having conquered much of Europe, the Insiders now wished to infect the United States with communism (Epstein and Foster, 118–119).

Such historically inaccurate theories began to alienate many rank-and-file members, as well as important conservative leaders and politicians who had once actively supported the society. As conservative leaders sought to distance themselves from the "extremist" image of Goldwater and his most adamant followers, the society saw its influence

greatly diminish. The *National Review*, a previous ally of the society, rebuked the Birchers in 1965, and such prominent conservative politicians as Ronald Reagan began to question the organization's opinions and tactics. The American Conservative Union (ACU), one of the most influential post-Goldwater conservative organizations, adopted an unstated policy barring society members from sitting on the ACU board. The ACU also issued a statement denying any connection between themselves and the society. Yet despite such developments, the influence of John Birch Society members on U.S. politics should not be overlooked. Their activity within the society often led them into other arenas of political activity within their communities and eventually into Republican Party politics. The organizing skills that they brought to the Goldwater campaign of 1964 helped allow conservative stalwarts to battle with success more moderate Republicans over the shape of the party itself. Without the grassroots efforts of society members, the "conservative capture" of U.S. politics—culminating in the election of Reagan in 1980—may have never even gotten off the ground.

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**See also:** Anticommunism; Civil Rights Movement; Cold War; Illuminati; United Nations.

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#### Johnson, Lyndon Baines

Lyndon Baines Johnson was president from 1963 to 1969. From humble origins, Johnson became first a congressman, then senator, Senate majority leader, vice-president, and ultimately president. His presi-

dency featured great progress in civil rights and social programs, but was a strategic disaster. Military intervention in Vietnam expended vast amounts of blood and funds, and shattered the popular consensus that previously supported U.S. foreign policy. Meanwhile, dramatic growth in Soviet military power, and in German and Japanese economic strength, challenged U.S. hegemony. The tumultuous events that spanned LBJ's presidency inspired many conspiracy theories, which often featured LBJ controlling events from behind the scenes.

Numerous biographers have described LBJ's unpleasant personality: he was grossly crude, profane, vain, greedy, secretive, and ruthless; he flattered superiors and viciously bullied subordinates, and strove to dominate others and win at any cost. His relentless womanizing made President Clinton's transgressions seem minor. Johnson used his political power to amass a vast personal fortune, using, for example, his influence over the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to assure the success of the radio and TV stations he owned in his wife's name. Lobbyists and government contractors purchased advertising time on these stations to secure LBJ's favor.

Johnson employed corrupt and illegal political tactics. In Texas, he bought votes directly and through local officials, labor unions, and ethnic political machines. His opponent out-stole him in 1941, but Johnson created enough illegal ballots to win the 1948 senate race by eighty-seven votes, earning him the nickname "Landslide Lyndon." In 1964 and 1968, Johnson instructed the FBI to spy on both the Democratic National Convention and the Republican presidential campaigns.

LBJ's abuses of presidential power greatly exceeded Nixon's. Johnson used the executive branch—including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Internal Revenue Service, Secret Service, and Army Intelligence—to spy on and harass political opponents, administration officials, civil rights activists, antiwar protesters, celebrities, and ordinary citizens.

Conspiracy theorists often cite the above character flaws and criminal acts to support further spec-



Lyndon Baines Johnson. (Library of Congress)

ulation. After all, would not such a profoundly immoral man be capable of anything? The chief accusations are that Johnson masterminded the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Allegedly, only Johnson had the motive and means to commit these crimes and to cover up government involvement afterward. LBJ is also accused of escalating the war in Vietnam on false pretenses, and giving Israel a "green light" to attack its neighbors.

Johnson's alleged motives to kill JFK included simple desire for power and fear that Kennedy would drop him from the ticket in 1964. Some believe the assassination resulted from a bitter factional dispute between Kennedy's northeastern "doves" and Johnson's southern "hawks." These theorists note that after the assassination, Johnson immediately reversed Kennedy's policies toward the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Southeast Asia, and began aggressively planning for intervention in Vietnam. The assassination occurred on LBJ's "home

turf” (Texas), where Johnson’s supposed underworld connections could easily murder Kennedy and the patsy, Oswald. Finally, only Johnson, as the new president, could ensure that the Kennedy autopsy and the Warren Commission reached the “correct” conclusion—that is, that Oswald was a lone nut—and stymie any competing investigations.

Johnson’s alleged motives to kill Robert Kennedy included personal hatred and fear that he would reopen the investigation into his brother’s death (which would lead back to LBJ) once elected. More importantly, Robert Kennedy threatened Johnson’s position on Vietnam. Before announcing his candidacy, Kennedy offered Johnson a choice: if LBJ publicly announced that Vietnam was a mistake, and appointed Kennedy to a commission to determine a new strategy, then RFK would not run for president. Otherwise, he would run on an antiwar platform, and presumably would withdraw the U.S. from Vietnam if elected. The means of assassination were allegedly a “second gunman” infiltrated into Kennedy’s bodyguard, with a chemically programmed robot (Sirhan Sirhan) as patsy. Los Angeles Police Department officers with CIA and Army Intelligence ties purportedly ensured that the investigation was a whitewash and Sirhan was convicted.

Johnson’s motive to kill Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged from King’s threat to mobilize a massive antiwar protest in Washington and shut down the federal government. The FBI and Army Intelligence had watched King for years, and Army Intelligence had a massive presence in Memphis in April 1968. Conspiracy theorists contend that Johnson ordered the military to “use every resource” to prevent King’s “invasion” of Washington. An army sniper team allegedly killed King, and the FBI coordinated the cover-up. Once again, the crime was pinned on a loner with no apparent motive, deflating talk of a larger conspiracy.

The conspiracy view of U.S. intervention in Vietnam contends that as soon as Johnson took power, he reversed Kennedy’s policy of gradual disengagement. In 1964, Johnson began to escalate the conflict, and provoked North Vietnam with covert operations in order to secure a pretext for overt intervention. On 30–31 July, South Vietnamese com-

mandos raided the North Vietnamese coast, and on 2 August, North Vietnam retaliated with a torpedo boat attack on U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Johnson administration claimed that North Vietnam attacked again on 4 August, and that these were “unprovoked” attacks on innocent ships in international waters. Hanoi accepted responsibility for the first attack, but charged that the Johnson administration deliberately faked the second attack in order to justify escalation (an accusation many conspiracy theorists accept). Whatever the case, Congress gave Johnson a “blank check” to intervene in Vietnam—the “Gulf of Tonkin Resolution”—and LBJ cashed this check when he sent U.S. combat troops to Vietnam after the 1964 election.

Conspiracy theorists believe that U.S. support permitted Israel’s crushing victory in the 1967 Six Day War. They contend that Johnson met Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in May 1967, and gave Israel a “green light” to attack Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel thereby gained a defensive buffer, and obtained access to U.S. arms. In return, Johnson secured the Jewish vote, and gained crucial assistance with his Vietnam problems, because closing the Suez Canal dramatically reduced the flow of Soviet weapons and supplies to North Vietnam. Some believe that the United States provided intelligence to Israel before the war, and that U.S. and British aircraft participated in the attack.

During the Six Day War, Israel attacked the USS *Liberty*, a U.S. intelligence ship in the Mediterranean. Johnson accepted Israel’s apology and explanation that the attack was a mistake. Conspiracy theorists, however, believe Israel deliberately attacked the *Liberty* to prevent the ship from gathering intelligence on Israeli plans to attack Syria, and that Johnson knew this but hushed it up to protect Israel. Some even contend that Johnson purposely denied air cover for the *Liberty*, because he did not want U.S. aircraft and Israeli forces embroiled in combat.

*James D. Perry*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of; King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; Tonkin Gulf Incident.

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## Jonestown

Jonestown is the name of the settlement in Guyana founded in the 1970s by the Reverend Jim Jones and populated by members of his religious commune, the People's Temple. The name "Jonestown" has come to refer to the 1978 event where over 900 people died, including Jones himself. While official accounts maintain that the deaths were caused by a Jones-led mass suicide, conspiracy accounts argue that most of the dead were murdered. In conspiracy-theory circles, Jonestown is an example of a mind-control cult experiment (with links to the CIA) that went awry.

The official explanation of Jonestown is well known, having dominated news accounts, mass-market paperbacks, documentaries, and made-for-television movies. It states that on 18 November 1978 Jim Jones, the charismatic and fanatical guru who founded the People's Temple and established

the religious commune Jonestown, persuaded his followers to drink cyanide-laced Kool-Aid. Over 900 members did so, and Jones himself died via a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Around the same moment, U.S. Congress member Leo Ryan (on an official investigation mission) and three reporters were gunned down on the Port Kaituma airstrip as they tried to leave Jonestown. The assassins did not die in the "White Night" of mass suicide, but fled and went into hiding. One of the gunners, Larry Layton, was later tried and convicted of the murders. The entire event of Jonestown was attributed to the psychotic leadership of Jones, and engendered general suspicion of idealistic, alternative, and experimental religious groups.

### Mass Suicide or Mass Murder?

Conspiracy accounts challenge this official explanation on two major counts: that most of the members died by murder rather than suicide, and that Jim Jones, far from being a lone nut leader, was enmeshed in the shadowy network of intelligence and mind control. Evidence for the former begins with the initial news accounts, which listed the suicide toll at 400, and claimed that 700 had fled into the jungle. A week later the accounts were revised to say that 913 people had consumed the poisoned concoction. Not only did this leave almost 200 people unaccounted for, it indicated a shift in the number of suicides. U.S. military and embassy officials on the scene first explained the inconsistency by claiming that the Guyanese people could not count, that they had missed a pile of bodies (even after days of searching and counting), and that the discrepancy was due to bodies being stacked on one another. However, the first photographs from the scene (150 of them, both aerial and close-up) showed no stacking. In addition, skeptics find it difficult to believe that 408 bodies (82 of them children) could conceal over 500 others. Instead of this revised story and number counting, skeptics like John Judge believe the initial reports that stated that the majority of Jonestown members fled into the jungle.

But what happened to them then? C. Leslie Mootoo, the top Guyanese pathologist, was the first



to examine the bodies. He noted that the vast majority of the dead did not exhibit symptoms of cyanide poisoning (which include muscular contortions, especially in the face). At the Guyanese grand jury hearing, Mootoo testified that 80–90 percent of the victims had fresh needle marks in their shoulder blades, that a number of others had been shot or strangled, and that at least 700 had been murdered. The grand jury, after hearing Mootoo's testimony and considering other evidence, concluded that only two people had committed suicide. In addition, some photos showed gunshot wounds, while others displayed drag marks leading to the bodies, indicating that the bodies were moved after death.

Initially, the U.S. Army spokesperson declared that no autopsies were needed, as the cause of death was not an issue. While the United States dispatched large military aircraft for the retrieval of bodies to the United States, they performed the task slowly. The bodies were left to decompose in the heat for almost a week, making autopsies impossible. Relatives and the National Association of Medical Examiners complained that the remains were ineptly handled, often illegally embalmed or cremated, and nearly impossible to identify. These badly botched procedures signaled a cover-up for skeptics (since forensic reconstruction of the White Night could not be done), further indicating a mass slaughter.

But who performed the killing? A number of theories emerge here. One version is that Jones's elite armed guards (about twenty men) hunted the fleeing members. These guards were an all-white group who had special privileges during the Jonestown stay (90 percent of the dead were women and 80 percent were black). Some of these armed guards were responsible for gunning down Congressman Leo Ryan and the reporters on the airstrip. Witnesses and survivors describe the killers as glassy-eyed "zombies" and their killing as mechanical and methodical. Most of these armed guards escaped and are still unaccounted for. Other theories implicate U.S. Green Berets who were in Guyana at the time, as well as British Black Watch troops also training in the region. Guyanese troops and police (some of whom were on the scene of the Ryan

killings but did very little to defend them) have also been implicated.

Jim Jones's fate has also come under suspicion. While the official story maintains that he committed suicide, conspiracy theories point to the fact that the gun allegedly used was found some 200 feet away from the body. Photos of Jones's body do not show his identifying tattoos. The FBI examined Jones's fingerprints twice (highly unusual for what is supposed to be an exact science), while his dental records were never checked.

Putting all of these pieces together, the conspiracy theory argues that what happened on 18 November 1978 was a mass murder, put into action because of Congress member Ryan's investigative findings that uncovered the true nature of the People's Temple.

### **Messianic Cult, Government Mind-Control Experiment, or Both?**

Beyond the events of that day, however, conspiracy theorists also place Jonestown in a larger context, implicating the very nature of the religious commune into the shadowy world of intelligence. In a tape recording made during the White Night, Jim Jones is heard yelling, "Get Dwyer out of here!" He was referring to Richard Dwyer, who was working as deputy chief of mission for the U.S. Embassy in Guyana. Dwyer was listed in the publication *Who's Who in the CIA*, and was allegedly an agent since 1959. He was found at the airstrip where Ryan and the others were killed, stripping the dead of their belongings. Other embassy members, some of them close to Jones, were also involved in intelligence work. Jones's childhood friend Dan Mitrione joined the CIA-financed International Police Academy. Mitrione was a police advisor in Brazil during Jones's ministering there in the early 1960s, where neighbors found Jones's wealthy lifestyle to be suspicious (he claimed he was getting paid by the U.S. government). Jones's early work in founding the People's Temple in 1965 in Ukiah, California, his moving of the church to San Francisco (where supporters Mayor Miscone and Harvey Milk were later mysteriously killed), and his eventual relocation to

Guyana were all implicated in mysterious deaths, large financial dealings, and illegal activities. Most of Jones's wealth (estimated at between \$26 million and \$2 billion) disappeared after the mass death.

According to survivors and ex-members, Jonestown was anything but the socialist utopia or religious commune its self-promotional literature claimed. These survivors described the organization as a cult, complete with routine harassment, forced labor, and torture (including repeated "White Night" drills). After the collective death, investigators discovered a massive cache of drugs, with large quantities of thiazine, sodium pentathol, and numerous other tranquilizers and psychotropic drugs used in the CIA's MK-ULTRA behavioral modification experiments.

A number of survivors ended up with mysterious fates even after they avoided the gruesome "White Night." Former Jones aide Michael Prokes held a press conference where he accused the U.S. authorities of hiding an audiotape of the massacre. After meeting the press, Prokes went to the bathroom and allegedly killed himself. Jeannie and Al Mills, who planned on writing an exposé of Jones, were found murdered in their home. Yet another former member was involved in the 1984 mass murder of Los Angeles school children.

In 1980 the U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found no evidence of CIA activity in Jonestown. A year before, based on many of the discrepancies, sinister links, and evidence around Jonestown, former Ryan aide Joseph Holsinger came to the conclusion that sums up the Jonestown conspiracy theory. He argued that Jonestown was a mass mind-control experiment with CIA involvement, in which MK-ULTRA techniques (officially halted in 1973) were transferred from institutions to religious groups. Holsinger also argued that Ryan's congressional investigation found incriminat-

ing evidence of this experiment, and that Ryan and the 900 members of the People's Temple were murdered to prevent exposure.

Jack Z. Bratich

**See also:** African Americans; Central Intelligence Agency; Mind Control; MK-ULTRA; Waco.

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## **KAL 007**

On 1 September 1983, a Soviet fighter shot down Korean Air Lines flight 007 (KAL 007) near Sakhalin Island, killing 269 people. The Reagan administration insisted that the Soviets deliberately destroyed an innocent civilian airliner while the Soviets asserted that the 747 was on a spy mission. Since then, the debate over whether there was some form of conspiracy or cover-up has blossomed, with some attempting to explain how KAL 007 could have accidentally wandered astray, while others argue that U.S. intelligence agencies used KAL 007 to probe Soviet air defenses.

KAL 007 initially flew from New York to Anchorage without incident. The pilot and copilot were elite former military aviators with a combined 10,000+ hours flying 747s, and the pilot had been nominated to fly South Korea's presidential aircraft. However, an hour after departing Anchorage, the flight was already twelve miles north of its first checkpoint on the route to Seoul. KAL 007 gave false position reports at the first four checkpoints, reporting that it was on course when it was actually many miles off course. The 747 flew over the Kamchatka Peninsula—site of many strategic installations—for 38 minutes, but somehow eluded fighter interception and entered the Sea of Okhotsk. Just before Sakhalin Island, 007 turned northwest—directly toward the Soviet mainland. Over Sakhalin, Soviet fighters tried to force the plane to land, but 007 took evasive action, altering course and altitude, and finally entering the Sea of Japan heading

southwest. A fighter fired two air-to-air missiles, and at least one struck 007, which descended 32,000 feet in 12 minutes and disappeared from Japanese radar screens.

The shootdown had remarkable political effects. Before the shootdown, the Reagan administration planned to deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles to Europe, but congressional Democrats and European allies strongly opposed this decision. Congress also opposed the administration's favorite military programs. Cold war tensions were easing before the incident, due to surprising new Soviet initiatives on arms control, grain purchases, and human rights. On 26 August, Yuri Andropov made an unprecedented offer to eliminate Soviet SS-20 missiles if the United States renounced its missile deployments. After the shootdown, the incipient U.S.-Soviet rapprochement was aborted, Reagan's defense programs sailed through Congress, and U.S. missiles were deployed on schedule and with minimal opposition. Many observers noted that the shootdown benefited the hawks in Washington and Moscow.

Seymour Hersh claims that due to a series of highly improbable errors, 007 got lost and the crew failed to notice. The U.S. military saw Soviet defenses react to 007, but did not understand why the Soviets were alerted, and the Soviets simply "screwed up" when they shot down the plane. In short, no conspiracy.

Gollin and Allardyce rebut in detail the only two plausible explanations for 007 accidentally getting lost—that the inertial navigation system or the auto-



pilot was incorrectly programmed. They show that 007's behavior was inconsistent with accident, but unlike other authors, do not attribute this to a conspiracy involving U.S. intelligence.

### **KAL 007 and U.S. Intelligence**

KAL conspiracy theorists note that during the cold war, U.S. intelligence focused intently on the Soviet Far East. Intelligence sought to find vulnerabilities in Soviet defenses and constantly watched for Soviet submarine and bomber activity that might presage a nuclear attack. Listening posts in Alaska and Japan, reconnaissance aircraft like the RC-135, and "ferret" satellites intercepted Soviet radar, communications, and electronic transmissions. U.S. aircraft regularly intruded on Soviet airspace in order to activate, locate, and analyze enemy defenses. Many aircraft were shot down on such missions, and therefore U.S. intelligence closely monitored Soviet fighters, many of which were launched when KAL 007 intruded. U.S. intelligence should have been especially alert that night, because the Soviets allegedly planned to launch a new ballistic missile toward the Kamchatka testing ground. An RC-135 aircraft and the radar ship *USS Observation Island* patrolled near Kamchatka to track the missile and monitor missile telemetry and other communications.

David Pearson contends that U.S. radars would have tracked 007, and U.S. intelligence would have noticed Soviet radars tracking 007. Military procedure required notifying air traffic control in such cases—yet this did not occur. Pearson cannot believe those who claim that U.S. intelligence did not gather data on 007, or misunderstood the data, or analyzed the data too late.

R. W. Johnson and others argue that 007 deliberately intruded on Soviet airspace, and that the U.S. military did not notify air traffic control about 007 because they wanted to observe the Soviet response. Johnson links the intrusion to U.S. discovery, in June 1983, of a large new Soviet radar in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. This radar might violate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and signify Soviet intent to build an ABM system, but the only way to discover this was to "light up" the whole air defense system with an intruder. Johnson theorizes that U.S.

aircraft used electronic warfare to blind Soviet radars and enable 007 to penetrate the defenses. Electronic warfare confused the Soviets about whether 007 was military or civilian, and the Soviets alerted their entire system. Meanwhile, U.S. reconnaissance assets—including a "ferret" satellite and the Space Shuttle—were perfectly positioned to harvest much intelligence from the alert. Johnson considers that U.S. planners never expected the Soviets to shoot down the plane. The shootdown forced the Reagan administration to conceal their responsibility while blasting the Soviets in the court of public opinion.

Michel Brun rearranges the evidence to reach a bizarre conclusion. He argues that 007 stumbled across a U.S.-Soviet air battle over Sakhalin, in which over ten U.S. military aircraft were downed. KAL 007 escaped this dogfight, only to be shot down near Honshu by "friendly fire" from Japanese or Americans who mistook 007 for a Soviet bomber.

A subgenre of KAL conspiracy theory is the argument that 007 landed on Sakhalin or ditched safely at sea and the Soviets imprisoned or executed the survivors. These theories claim that 007 was not blown apart in midair, but descended slowly for twelve minutes, which indicates the plane was air-worthy and under control. The vast quantities of debris, bodies, and luggage recovered from other 747 midair explosions were not found near Sakhalin, and nothing from the cargo compartment ever surfaced. Thus, 007 must have landed or ditched intact. Some ultraconservatives contend that the Soviets lured 007 off course in order to kill a single passenger, the staunchly anticommunist John Birch Society chairman, Larry McDonald, and that he—and other survivors—languish in Russian prisons even today.

KAL conspiracy theories generally reflect their authors' political predispositions. Right-wing theories echo the U.S. government position in 1983: the flight was innocently astray, U.S. intelligence was uninvolved, and the Soviets wantonly murdered civilians. Left-wing theories echo the Soviet position in 1983: the flight was an intelligence probe, and the U.S. government behaved just as dishonestly as the Soviet government. Each side accuses the other of imbecilic credulity. "Rightists" contend that the

belief that the Reagan administration would risk innocent lives on an intelligence mission is a product of Soviet disinformation and that furthermore, so many people would have known about any such mission that something would have leaked. “Leftists” insist that “accident theories” demand accepting too many highly improbable events at once and they consider proponents of such theories to be tools of the Reagan administration’s cover-up.

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**See also:** Pan Am Flight 103; TWA Flight 800.

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### Kennedy, John F., Assassination of

The Kennedy assassination has become known as the “mother of all conspiracy theories.” With the possible exception of Pearl Harbor, no other event in U.S. history has excited so much controversy, with literally hundreds of books—and Oliver Stone’s popular movie *JFK*—devoted to every detail of the assassination and its aftermath. The assassination created bitter disputes between conspiracy theorists (hereafter “critics”) and Warren Commission supporters (hereafter “loyalists”). Critics and loyalists accused each other of naivete, cynicism, and selective interpretation of the evidence. The rising popularity of the conspiracy view generally reflected the increasing skepticism in U.S. society. Just after the assassination, “conspiracy buffs” were regarded as harmless fruitcakes, but by the early 1990s—after Vietnam, Watergate, revelations of CIA assassination plots, and Iran-Contra—opinion polls revealed that most Americans rejected the Warren Commission version of events. Critics disagreed on the exact nature of the “real conspiracy,” since many organizations and individuals had plau-

sible motives to kill Kennedy. Most theories focused on Lyndon B. Johnson, the CIA, the Mafia, and the anti-Castro Cubans, but all agreed that a “lone nut” (i.e., Lee Harvey Oswald) did not kill JFK.

#### The Establishment View

John F. Kennedy barely won Texas in 1960, and needed to raise money and build popular support there before the 1964 election. He flew to Texas in 1963 with Vice-President Johnson, and landed in Dallas on 22 November. Dallas seethed with right-wing hate, but JFK and Jackie Kennedy nevertheless chose to ride in an open limousine with Governor John Connally and his wife Nellie. LBJ, Lady Bird Johnson, and Senator Ralph Yarborough followed in another open limousine. The rest of the motorcade conveyed security, press, staff members, and local dignitaries. At 12:29 P.M., the motorcade entered Dealey Plaza, and turned right onto Houston Street, heading toward the Texas School Book Depository (TSBD). The presidential limousine slowed down to negotiate the tight (120-degree) left turn onto Elm Street in front of the TSBD. The vehicle then headed away from the TSBD, and began driving toward the “Triple Underpass” (where Elm, Main, and Commerce Streets passed under a railroad bridge). A “Grassy Knoll” lay ahead and to the right of the vehicle, and behind the fence on the Grassy Knoll was a parking lot and railroad yard. Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots from the sixth floor of the TSBD with a bolt-action Italian rifle: one struck Kennedy in the back, which exited through his throat and then struck Connally, one struck Kennedy in the back of the head, killing him, and another shot missed. The limousine drove to Parkland Hospital, where doctors pronounced Kennedy dead. The body was taken aboard Air Force One to Bethesda Naval Hospital for autopsy.

Shortly after the assassination, Oswald was arrested after shooting a police officer, J. D. Tippit, who tried to question him. Oswald was charged with the murder of Kennedy and Tippit. Two days later, a local nightclub owner, Jack Ruby, fatally shot Oswald in the basement of Police Headquarters. On 29 November, President Johnson summoned Chief Justice Earl Warren to preside over a distinguished

panel charged with investigating the assassination. Johnson ordered the Warren Commission (hereafter WC) to complete its work before the 1964 national political conventions, and the WC issued an 888-page report in September 1964. The report incorporated the accounts of hundreds of witnesses and such material evidence as a movie taken by a spectator, Abraham Zapruder. The WC concluded that Oswald alone killed Kennedy, that his motives were frustration and personal failure, that he had no connection to the U.S. or foreign governments, and that he had no connection to Ruby.

### Reaction to the Warren Commission

WC conclusions were widely accepted, at least temporarily, but soon critics would challenge WC evidence, methods, conclusions, and even the integrity of its members. Even loyalists conceded that its work had certain shortcomings. The WC worked very quickly, and relied uncritically on the FBI and CIA to conduct the actual investigation. They did not have access to autopsy photos or x-rays, and did not consult forensic experts. They assumed from the outset that Oswald acted alone, subordinated all evidence to this preconceived theory, and ignored or disparaged evidence or witnesses that contradicted this theory.

Some critics considered the WC nothing less than a whitewash designed to obscure the truth, protect LBJ politically, and neutralize any potential competing investigations. The FBI allegedly manipulated the WC in order to suppress evidence that Oswald was an FBI informant or was under FBI surveillance, and that the FBI was aware of the assassination plot but failed to warn the president. They also thought the FBI concealed Ruby's extensive Mafia connections, and that the CIA and the FBI withheld evidence that linked Oswald to Soviet and Cuban intelligence. Some critics believed that the original purpose of the assassination was to frame Cuba as a pretext for U.S. invasion, and thus the conspirators had built a plausible trail (sometimes using "Oswald doubles") linking Oswald to communism. When LBJ decided for unknown reasons not to invade Cuba after the assassination, all this evidence needed to be hidden from the WC.

### What Happened in Dealey Plaza?

Many critics focused on errors, omissions, and inconsistencies in the WC account of the events in Dealey Plaza. Critics considered that certain people in or near the plaza behaved suspiciously, and that physical evidence and eyewitness testimony called into question the WC theory of the assassination.

A successful assassination necessarily involves a failure of protection, but some regarded Secret Service performance in Dallas as either culpably negligent or downright suspicious. Secret Service men failed to act on information in their possession concerning sniper threats to the president in Dallas, permitted the president to take a dangerous route, failed to close all windows and manholes along the route, and failed to ride on the limousine. They also reduced the number of police motorcycle and automobile escorts in the motorcade, and stayed up late drinking the night before the assassination. Agents reacted sluggishly throughout the attack, and the limousine driver even *slowed down* and looked behind him until the fatal shot struck Kennedy. One author argued that after Oswald's first shot, a Secret Service agent in the following car accidentally shot Kennedy in the back of the head with an AR-15. Some witnesses claimed that men with Secret Service identification warned them away from the Grassy Knoll area before and after the assassination, but the Secret Service insisted that no agents were in this location. Did these "bogus agents" enable the Grassy Knoll shooter(s) to enter and leave the area undisturbed, or were the "agents" really Dallas plainclothes detectives?

Critics chastised the WC for failing to investigate the possibly sinister behavior of certain individuals in and around Dealey Plaza. For example, a man in the plaza opened and closed his umbrella as the shots began, and some speculated he was signaling to the assassins or firing a paralyzing dart into Kennedy's neck. Another man seemed to make hand signals and speak (to hidden gunmen?) into a walkie-talkie as Kennedy approached. Just before the assassination, a man collapsed in front of the TSBD, perhaps to distract police and public attention as the assassins moved into position. Just after the assassination, Dallas police arrested "three tramps" in a railway car

behind the plaza, and somehow lost their arrest records after releasing them. Critics obsessively scrutinized photographs of the tramps, and argued that the tramps were really Mafia hitmen or the same CIA team later responsible for the Watergate burglary. Subsequent investigations found innocent explanations for the Umbrella Man, the “distracting seizure,” and the three tramps, but critics disparaged this evidence.

### **The Zapruder Film**

The Zapruder film created vexing problems for the WC and is probably the strongest objective evidence for conspiracy. The film frames provided a clock that established the exact sequence of events in the plaza, and the reactions of the victims and the forensic evidence are difficult to reconcile with the WC interpretation. The FBI claimed that the minimum firing time for the murder weapon was 2.3 seconds, or 42 film frames, yet the WC found that both Kennedy and Connally were hit within a 30-frame time span. Thus, either the same bullet hit both men, or there were two gunmen. The WC chose the former explanation, the so-called “single-bullet theory.” The single bullet purportedly struck Kennedy in the back of the neck, exited through his throat, then entered Connally’s back near his right armpit, exited below his nipple, shattered his wrist, and wounded his thigh. Critics insisted that Connally did not react for ten frames after Kennedy was visibly hit, so they couldn’t have been hit with the same bullet. The WC rather unconvincingly concluded that Connally suffered from a “delayed reaction” to his extensive wounds. Critics questioned WC assumptions on seating alignment and trajectory, and contended that Kennedy and Connally were seated such that the same bullet could not have passed through both men.

Critics and loyalists alike meticulously analyzed the frames of the Zapruder film that showed Kennedy’s head and body at the fatal moment, and argued fiercely over the results. The film showed Kennedy jerking violently back and to the left in reaction to the fatal shot, and most viewers believed this obviously indicated a gunman on the Grassy Knoll (to the right front of the limousine). Loyalists

claimed that “neuromuscular spasms” or a jet of brain tissue flying from the front of Kennedy’s head caused his body to fly backwards after he was shot from behind. Most viewers found this counterintuitive if not totally implausible.

The Zapruder film was vastly important, and thus unsurprisingly was itself the subject of conspiracy theories. Suspicions were heightened because the film was not available to the public for many years, and supposedly the CIA had access to the film within days of the assassination.

Critics cited anomalies within the film, and apparent disagreements between the film, eyewitnesses, other photographs, and reenactments, as evidence of tampering. Some critics seemed to interpret the film most selectively, accepting the parts of the film that supported their views and rejecting those that did not. Yet, if the CIA could perform a complex editing task on short notice, why did they not make the film completely support the lone gunman theory?

### **Eyewitness Testimony**

Many people in Dealey Plaza witnessed things apparently inconsistent with the WC version of events. Some witnesses claimed to have seen strange men with rifles on the Grassy Knoll and Triple Underpass before the assassination. Many witnesses, including police officers, thought the shots came from the Grassy Knoll, and surged forward to investigate. Some witnesses believed they saw a puff of smoke on the Grassy Knoll and a man fleeing the scene. Some critics asserted that this man could be seen behind the wall on the Grassy Knoll in photographs taken during the assassination. Two motorcycle officers behind the limousine were splattered with blood and gore, consistent with a shot from the right front exiting to the left rear. A bullet fragment slightly wounded James Tague near the Triple Underpass, but the WC could not “conclusively” match this bullet to any of the three Oswald supposedly fired. The WC speculated that the fragment came from the first or second shot, but critics doubted that a mere fragment could travel so far and strike with such force.

Some testimony from TSBD employees raised questions about the WC version of events. One



employee noted that on the morning of the assassination, Oswald did not know why people were gathering outside, and seemed unaware the motorcade was coming. A secretary saw him in the first floor break room at 12:15, although the WC insisted he went to the sixth floor at 11:55 and stayed there. A photograph taken when the shots erupted appeared to show Oswald standing in the TSBD doorway. Less than ninety seconds after the final shot, a policeman with a drawn pistol encountered Oswald calmly drinking a Coke on the first floor. Oswald managed the encounter with remarkable aplomb for a man who had supposedly just shot the president, and the policeman departed. Did Oswald race down six flights of stairs only to pause for refreshment? Or was he not on the sixth floor at 12:30? Several witnesses claimed they saw *two or three* armed men on the sixth floor at 12:15.

Even moderate readers considered that WC treatment of witnesses was incomplete and selective. In their rush to judgment, the WC ignored many important witnesses, and disparaged—or tried to intimidate—witnesses who suggested that Oswald did not fire three shots from the sixth floor of the TSBD. Critics maintained that the WC deliberately avoided and suppressed testimony that contradicted their preconceived theory. Loyalists simply noted that eyewitness testimony was notoriously unreliable and that human memory was fallible and easily influenced after the fact.

#### **Kennedy's Wounds: Parkland Testimony**

Doctors at Parkland Hospital had great experience with gunshot wounds, and saw the president and Connally immediately after they were shot. Their testimony on his wounds should thus carry great weight. On arrival, Kennedy was unconscious, with fixed dilated pupils, a gray pallor, and slow, uncoordinated breathing. He was clearly dying, but the doctors did what they could. They cut away his clothes, and made a small incision to enlarge the throat wound and insert an endotracheal tube. They administered fluids and oxygen and began a chest massage, but to no avail. Kennedy was officially pronounced dead, and placed in a casket. An unseemly altercation developed between Texas officials,

whom Texas law required to conduct Kennedy's autopsy, and armed federal agents, whom Johnson had ordered to take the body to Washington. Federal guns superseded Texas laws, and the casket was taken to Air Force One, where Johnson was sworn in as president.

Several developments at Parkland fueled conspiracy theories. In particular, the wounds described at Parkland did not match the autopsy reports and photographs later made in Bethesda. At a press conference just after Kennedy's death, Doctor Perry stated that the throat wound was an entrance wound, and he and other Parkland doctors repeated this claim in subsequent interviews and testimony. Doctors' statements written the afternoon of the assassination reported gunshot wounds to Kennedy's temple and a large, gaping wound in the back of the head from which cerebellar tissue extruded. Parkland doctors did not observe a wound in Kennedy's back, nor did they find a small entry wound high on the back of the head. Hospital staff found a bullet on an unattended stretcher, and the WC asserted that this bullet passed through Kennedy, lodged in Connally's thigh, and later fell out onto the stretcher. Critics doubted that this stretcher was really Connally's, and suspected the bullet was planted or that another bullet was later substituted. Critics noted that the bullet was nearly intact (or "pristine") despite having passed through two men, smashing numerous bones in the process. Only a high-velocity bullet could pass through two bodies in accordance with the "single bullet theory," but only a low-velocity bullet could remain pristine—a clear contradiction. Critics further contended that the weight of fragments recovered from Connally's body and remaining inside him exceeded the weight lost by the pristine bullet.

#### **Kennedy's Wounds: Bethesda Testimony**

Kennedy's autopsy was undeniably mishandled. The doctors at Bethesda were clinical, not forensic, pathologists, and had little experience with gunshot wounds. They conducted the autopsy amidst an intimidating crowd of senior officers, FBI, and Secret Service agents. Robert and Jackie Kennedy were in the hospital, and kept pressuring the doc-

tors to finish the autopsy. An autopsy that might have taken three days was concluded in three hours, and the doctors neglected many essential procedures. They failed to consult the Parkland doctors beforehand to discuss the case. They did not examine the clothing to establish whether or not the clothing holes were consistent with the wounds. They did not track the bullet path from Kennedy's back through the body to determine the exit point. Indeed, they were entirely unaware of the throat wound until the next day, when it was too late to reexamine the body. They failed to shave the head for a clear view of its wounds, or to section the brain to establish the path of the fatal bullet. They did not examine all of the internal organs. Doctor Humes burned his draft autopsy notes and draft autopsy report, and wrote his final report from memory, without access to photographs or x-rays. Given this slapdash performance, conspiracy speculation was almost inevitable.

The first source of controversy was the location of the back wound. If Oswald fired downward from the sixth floor, then the back entry wound had to be higher than the throat exit wound. Numerous credible witnesses testified that the back wound was much lower—some 5–6 inches below the neckline—than the throat wound. Such a back wound was consistent with the bullet holes in Kennedy's jacket and shirt, and with the autopsy "face sheet" (a drawing made at the autopsy and verified by Kennedy's personal physician). However, any shot that entered there and exited through the throat had to be traveling upward, not downward. Critics doubted the WC explanation that Kennedy's suit and shirt were bunched up, and thus the bullet entered much higher than the clothes seemed to indicate. Humes did not dissect the bullet's track—he only probed the wound, and found it a few inches deep. He did not use autopsy photographs to establish the wound's exact location when writing his final report. Despite the evidence to the contrary, the WC concluded that Kennedy's wound was at the "back of his neck."

The head wound created further controversy, because the testimony of Parkland and Bethesda doctors disagreed on important points. A Parkland

doctor (Carrico) described a 5–7cm hole in the "right occipitoparietal" area, but at Bethesda, Humes said the hole was much larger (13cm) and located higher ("involving chiefly the parietal bone but extending somewhat into the temporal and occipital regions"). Parkland doctors testified that cerebellar tissue was visible, whereas the Bethesda doctors observed cerebral tissue (the cerebellum is located lower than the cerebrum and looks quite different). Bethesda doctors said the scalp was "absent" over the wound, but Parkland doctors said the scalp was present. Bethesda doctors found a small occipital wound that the Parkland doctors did not observe, and the autopsy concluded that the bullet entered through this wound and exited through the large parietal wound.

Critic David Lifton accounted for these discrepancies with an elaborate theory that unknown individuals stole Kennedy's body from the coffin in Dallas, and secretly altered the corpse. The pre-autopsy surgery "reversed the trajectories" (i.e., made evidence of a front shot seem like evidence of a rear shot). Lifton considered that the Bethesda doctors were honest, but were deceived. Such a complex effort clearly required considerable planning and the cooperation of Secret Service and Navy personnel. Loyalists simply asserted that Kennedy's casket was never unattended on Air Force One, as Lifton claimed.

Lifton and other critics regarded the autopsy photographs and x-rays with great suspicion. The WC deemed the photographs and x-rays too "morbid" to include in the report—indeed, the WC did not even examine them—but allowed a medical artist who had not seen the body to create drawings of the wounds. Critics noted that these drawings were inconsistent with photographic and eyewitness testimony, and wondered what the WC was hiding. When autopsy photographs were finally released, critics claimed that they did not match the observations of Parkland doctors. For example, they argued that in the frontal photo, the throat wound was a large gash rather than the neat incision created at Parkland. They claimed that in photos of Kennedy's back, a ruler was placed over the "real" (low) entry wound, and that in photos of the back of

the head, no massive occipital wound was evident. They also contended that the skull x-rays showed extensive damage that was not visible in the photographs. Loyalists countered that various experts considered the photographs and x-rays authentic and consistent with two shots from the rear, and thus the Parkland doctors must have been mistaken in their observations.

Further suspicion centered on the disposition of autopsy materials. During the autopsy, doctors made slides of blood smears and took tissue specimens from the wounds. They also preserved the brain in formalin. They placed these materials in a footlocker and transferred them to the National Archives, where they subsequently disappeared. Critics found speculation that Robert Kennedy disposed of them to prevent their public display unconvincing. If RFK wanted to prevent an unseemly spectacle, why not destroy the far more sensational photographs and x-rays?

### **Who Was Oswald?**

The WC went to great lengths to prove that Oswald had the motive, means, and opportunity to kill JFK, and that he did so alone. The WC Report was widely regarded as the “prosecutor’s brief against Oswald” should the case have come to trial. Critics took the defending lawyer’s role. They delved into every detail of Oswald’s life, and pointed out errors, omissions, and questionable assumptions in the prosecution’s case.

Oswald’s background was unusual: as an enlisted Marine radio operator, he was stationed at the Japanese base from which U-2 aircraft flew secret missions over Russia and China. He developed an interest in communism, and taught himself Russian. After leaving the Marines, he declared himself a Communist and defected to the Soviet Union. He lived in Minsk for a time, and married a Russian woman, Marina. He left Minsk in 1962, and lived in Dallas and New Orleans. In New Orleans, he started a pro-Castro organization, and then traveled to the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City in an unsuccessful effort to enter Cuba. Despite all this, the WC insisted that Oswald had no relationship with the FBI or CIA. He got a job at the TSBD, and

when he heard the president would pass the TSBD, he smuggled his rifle into the building and constructed a “sniper’s nest” of book boxes. After shooting JFK, he walked toward his home, but Officer Tippit stopped him for questioning en route. He shot Tippit, ducked into a movie theater, and was there arrested. Police and federal agents interrogated him and tested him for gunpowder residue. Police were transferring Oswald to the County Jail when nightclub owner Jack Ruby shot him fatally.

### **Mole or Marxist?**

Critics were highly skeptical that Oswald had no connection to U.S. intelligence. Oswald was a marine with security clearance working in a sensitive installation, yet he acted like an ardent Communist. He learned Russian, subscribed to pro-Soviet literature, associated with Japanese Communists, and frequented expensive nightclubs. Somehow, all this failed to alarm U.S. military counterintelligence. Critics speculated that this lack of interest was deliberate: Oswald was a “spy in training” who was building a “leftist” cover story because U.S. intelligence planned to infiltrate him into Russia in the guise of a defector. Some believed his Russian skills dramatically improved because he attended the elite Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. Critics considered that Oswald gained a hardship discharge and was issued a passport with suspicious ease. Further, they questioned how Oswald could have paid for a \$1,500 trip to Russia when his bank account contained only \$203.

Oswald’s defection to Russia should have sounded many alarms. In the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, he announced his intention to renounce his citizenship and reveal military secrets to the Soviets. Strangely, the CIA did not open a file on Oswald for over a year, but only placed him on a list of people whose mail was secretly opened. The FBI opened a counterintelligence file, but took no action other than to watch for signs of his return to the United States under another name. U.S. intelligence apparently did not assess whether Oswald’s defection could compromise the U-2 program, even though his knowledge might have been useful to the Soviets.

Oswald returned to the United States in early 1962, though not all the details of his trip are known, and the State Department facilitated his journey. They returned his passport quickly, made no difficulties about his citizenship, exempted his wife from immigration restrictions, and loaned him money. Oswald should have interested U.S. intelligence: did he give military secrets to the Soviets that enabled them to shoot down a U-2 in May 1960? What, if anything, did the KGB ask him after he defected? Were he and his wife Soviet spies? What did he observe in Russia? The FBI interviewed him three weeks after his return, and found Oswald truculent and evasive. He refused to take a polygraph test, said he might return to the Soviet Union, and immediately subscribed to leftist periodicals. Astonishingly, the FBI nonetheless declared Oswald “unworthy” of further interest, and closed his file. Similarly, the CIA supposedly chose not to interview him, and did not even obtain transcripts of all the FBI interviews.

Critics argued that Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent—one of many “fake defectors” sent to Russia at that time. Although the precise purpose of the “fake defection” remained speculative, these authors considered that this explained Oswald’s strange behavior and the U.S. government’s favorable treatment of him. Loyalists denied that Oswald received special treatment, and asserted that when the intelligence agencies ignored Oswald, they were bungling, not protecting their asset. The question of whether Oswald was a Marxist or a mole in Russia was chiefly important in that he displayed a similar pattern of ambiguous behavior after he returned to the United States.

### **Strange Friendship**

In Dallas in late 1962, Oswald befriended George de Mohrenschildt, a wealthy émigré Russian aristocrat and oil geologist. He was thirty years older than Oswald, far more sophisticated, and a staunch anti-communist. Why did this man waste his time with a callow, penniless, Marxist loser? Whatever the reason, he found Oswald a job and clearly exerted a major influence over him. De Mohrenschildt had CIA contacts, and was a close friend of the CIA’s

Domestic Contacts Division chief in Dallas. Critics speculated that de Mohrenschildt controlled Oswald, debriefed him on his experiences in Russia, and reported the results to this (or some other) CIA contact. Was de Mohrenschildt’s friendship with Oswald sinister? Or was it a casual lark for a bored aristocrat? De Mohrenschildt later testified that Oswald told him he had shot at a Dallas right-winger. De Mohrenschildt and his wife were the only people, other than Marina, who actually saw the assassination rifle in Oswald’s possession. Critics find this testimony—which confirmed Oswald’s murderous proclivities to the WC—suspiciously convenient, in view of de Mohrenschildt’s CIA connections.

### **Oswald in New Orleans**

In April 1963, Oswald moved to New Orleans, where a large Cuban exile population feverishly plotted against Castro. Oswald opened a chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC), a pro-Castro organization. He handed out FPCC leaflets, subscribed to leftist periodicals, and wrote letters to U.S. Communist leaders exaggerating his exploits. At the same time, he tried to join a CIA-funded anti-Castro group, and offered to train Cuban exiles or fight alongside them. The leader of this group confronted him in the street while he was distributing pro-Castro leaflets, and both were arrested. Oswald made a point of contacting the FBI and emphasizing his FPCC activities. His trial brought him enough publicity to get radio and TV interviews, until a broadcaster exposed him as a dishonorably discharged defector and probable Soviet tool. The New Orleans FPCC was completely disgraced.

What was Oswald up to in New Orleans? Critics argued that he was burnishing his pro-Castro credentials, perhaps prior to infiltrating Cuba under CIA control. He was also part of a larger CIA plan to penetrate and discredit the FPCC in the United States and Mexico. These authors noted that Oswald gave his address as 544 Camp Street on FPCC leaflets. From this address, two rabid anticommunists organized anti-Castro activities: Guy Banister (a private detective and violent, alcoholic racist) and David Ferrie (a pilot and adventurer). The address was also the headquarters of a CIA-supported anti-



Castro group. Critics contended that Oswald knew Banister and Ferrie, and freely mingled with anti-Castro Cubans. Oswald, in his FPCC guise, identified pro-Castro individuals in New Orleans so that Banister could prevent them from infiltrating anti-Castro groups, and Oswald only scuffled with the anti-Castro Cuban leader as a staged provocation.

Critics reacted incredulously to the contention that the FBI “lost track” of Oswald for two months in New Orleans. Oswald mailed his New Orleans address to places where the FBI intercepted all incoming mail: the FPCC, the American Communist Party, and the Soviet Embassy. Similarly, these authors disparaged CIA claims that they had “no information” about Oswald’s New Orleans activities. How could a former defector to Russia walk into a hub of CIA operations against Castro, announce he was a pro-Castro activist, attempt to infiltrate anti-Castro groups, and not generate intense CIA interest? Either the CIA and FBI were monumentally incompetent, or Oswald was an intelligence asset. Loyalists believed that these agencies indeed bungled, and explained Oswald’s behavior in New Orleans as merely that of a “weirdo” acting out his confused fantasies.

### **Oswald Impostors**

After leaving New Orleans, Oswald took a bus to Mexico City, ostensibly to obtain permission to travel to the Soviet Union via Cuba. U.S. intelligence normally photographed everyone entering the Soviet and Cuban consulates in Mexico City, and taped all telephone conversations. Oswald repeatedly phoned and visited the consulates, yet unaccountably the CIA could provide no photos or tapes of Oswald. The CIA claimed that the cameras were broken or off when Oswald visited, and that the tapes of Oswald’s calls were “routinely destroyed” after they were transcribed. Thus, there was no incontrovertible proof of what Oswald did and said in Mexico.

Critics suspected that an Oswald impostor visited Mexico at the same time as the real Oswald. The CIA gave the WC a picture of a taller, older man named “Lee Oswald” entering the Soviet consulate, but later claimed they erred when they identified

him as the real Oswald. In any case, “Oswald” made a strong impression on Soviet and Cuban consulate personnel, and flew into a rage when told travel paperwork would take four months. “Oswald” met with a KGB officer from Department 13 (assassination specialists), and slept with a woman who had previously sexually entrapped men for the Cuban government. He might even have offered to kill Kennedy for the Cubans. Critics maintained that someone wished to create the impression that Oswald was under Cuban control, that he received advice from a KGB assassin, and that he planned to escape via Mexico to Cuba after the assassination. With his long record as a Marxist hothead, Oswald was an excellent patsy if the objective was to declare war on Cuba after the assassination. Critics argued that the original plan changed after the assassination. Consequently, the CIA withheld evidence linking Oswald to Cuban and Soviet intelligence, and the WC refused to follow any leads in this direction.

Critics maintained that Oswald doubles appeared in the United States as well as Mexico City. For example, witnesses testified that on different occasions, “Oswald” test-drove a car in Dallas, sold a rifle, bought rifle ammunition, test fired a rifle, and visited the Selective Service Office in Austin. Each time, the man identified himself as Oswald, made some reference to Oswald’s experiences, and acted obnoxiously—yet each time, the real Oswald was known to be elsewhere. Three men visited anti-Castro activist Silvia Odio in Dallas while Oswald was on the way to Mexico. One of the men was introduced as “Leon Oswald.” Afterwards, one of the other men called Odio and described “Leon” as a “loco” ex-marine and expert marksman who thought Kennedy should be shot. The WC dismissed this story using testimony later determined to be fraudulent. Critics considered that the existence of Oswald doubles disproved the lone gunman thesis—someone was setting up Oswald as a patsy. Loyalists dismissed the stories of doubles—the witnesses were lying or mistaken.

### **Framing Oswald**

Critics considered that much of the evidence linking Oswald to the assassination was manufactured

in order to frame him. For example, they claimed that photos of Oswald holding a rifle in his backyard were faked. They questioned the authenticity of Oswald's order for the assassination rifle and of his palm-print on the rifle. They noted that there was no evidence that Oswald bought ammunition or practiced shooting regularly. They doubted that Oswald fired the rifle at a Dallas right-winger, or that he could have stored the rifle and transported it to the TSBD in the manner the WC described. They noted that the police gave Oswald a paraffin test for gunpowder residue. The test was positive for the hands but negative for the cheek, which indicated that he fired a pistol but not a rifle.

Police broadcast a description of the suspect only 15 minutes after the assassination. The WC assumed this was based on the eyewitness testimony of Howard Brennan. Critics wondered how Brennan could have seen Oswald 100 feet away on the sixth floor and described him accurately to police, when he was unable to identify Oswald "for sure" in a police lineup later that night. A great many other eyewitness descriptions were available, so why were the police fixated quickly and specifically on Oswald?

### **Who Shot Tippit?**

Some critics doubted that Oswald shot Officer Tippit. They did not believe Oswald could have gotten from his house to the shooting scene in time to kill Tippit, and doubted the witnesses who saw Oswald at the scene. They questioned that the bullets at the scene came from Oswald's revolver, or that Oswald owned the revolver the police said killed Tippit. Other critics accepted that Oswald killed Tippit. However, they asserted that the "real conspirators" sent Tippit to kill Oswald—to silence the patsy—but Oswald beat him to the draw. They alleged that Tippit was the tool of organized crime or right-wing politics.

### **Oswald's Motives**

Critics viewed the WC assessment of Oswald's motives as particularly vague and weak. Supposedly, he killed Kennedy from hostility to his environment, inability to establish meaningful relationships

with others, discontent with the world, and the desire to be a "great man" of history. Critics noted that Oswald expressed admiration for Kennedy, and had no particular reason to kill him. Oswald was not insane, and steadfastly maintained his innocence even when mortally wounded. Indeed, he explicitly said he was a patsy, and critics believed him.

### **Who Was Ruby?**

Loyalists believed that there was not just one homicidal lone nut in Dallas that November weekend, but two. Jack Ruby was a low-class hustler, perpetually in debt, with a propensity for unpredictable violence. He ran a series of nightclubs and failed businesses in Dallas, and cultivated both police and criminal contacts. The assassination greatly upset Ruby, and he began hanging out at the police station, where he was well known. He masqueraded as a reporter, and attended Oswald's press conference. Ruby did not know Oswald was being transferred to the County Jail, and would have missed Oswald entirely if Oswald had not delayed his departure to change his clothes. On the spur of the moment, Ruby pulled out his gun and shot Oswald in the abdomen. Oswald was taken to Parkland, where he died. Ruby explained that he wanted to spare Jackie Kennedy the agony of a trial, and seemed to think he would be regarded as a hero. His lawyer convinced him to plead temporary insanity, but the jury convicted him of murder and sentenced him to death. Ruby testified before the WC, which concluded that Ruby had no connection to the drug trade, anti-Castro groups, or organized crime. The WC further concluded that the Dallas police did not help Ruby kill Oswald. Ruby was retried, and died of cancer in prison in 1967.

Critics noted that Ruby had a lifelong association with mobsters and closely associated with them in Dallas. He was involved in sordid activities (nightclubs, prostitution, gambling, and drugs) that mobsters typically control. He lied about the number of trips he made to Cuba in 1959, and did not go there for pleasure but as a mob courier. Ruby's long-distance calls from Dallas dramatically increased in the months before the assassination, and many of these calls were to people with mob connections.

Ruby was heavily in debt to the mob. Did he “pay off his IOU” by killing Oswald? Since Ruby was a familiar figure in the police station, he was the perfect instrument to silence Oswald. Ruby did not act on the spur of the moment—he clearly stalked Oswald at the police station. Although there was no guarantee he would intercept Oswald, he lurked and waited for the opportunity. Ruby warned the WC that the assassination was a conspiracy, but fear for his life and the prospect of a new trial inhibited him from speaking frankly. Some critics believed his cancer was no accident—he was eliminated before a new trial gave him the opportunity to tell the real truth.

Loyalists asserted that the Chicago mob was unlikely to trust someone as stupid and talkative as Ruby with important business. He knew mobsters, but was an insignificant hanger-on, and his calls to mob figures before the assassination related to his dispute with the stripper’s union. He lurked in the police station from a pathetic desire to be associated with important events, and his conspiracy claims to the WC reflected mental derangement.

### **The Garrison Affair**

In New Orleans on the afternoon of the assassination, Guy Banister pistol-whipped an associate, who then confided to his friends his suspicions that Banister’s partner, David Ferrie, had driven to Dallas to serve as the getaway pilot for Kennedy’s assassins. District Attorney Jim Garrison interrogated Ferrie, and handed him over to the FBI, who questioned and released him. In 1966, Garrison found criticisms of the WC compelling enough to begin his own investigation into Oswald’s activities in New Orleans in 1963. He concluded that Oswald was an agent provocateur for U.S. intelligence—but who controlled him? Banister was dead, but a New Orleans lawyer told Garrison that on the day of the assassination, “Clay Bertrand” asked him to represent Oswald. “Bertrand” turned out to be a pseudonym, and Garrison decided, on thin evidence, that “Bertrand” was prominent local businessman Clay Shaw. Garrison suspected that Shaw ran a CIA front company involved in anti-Castro activities and the assassination, and that Shaw knew both Ferrie and Oswald. Garrison pressured Ferrie to talk, but Fer-

rie died of a brain aneurysm without talking. Under pressure himself to produce results, Garrison arrested Shaw and charged him with conspiracy to kill JFK. Garrison produced dubious witnesses who claimed they saw Oswald, Ferrie, and Shaw together, and used the trial to attack the “lone gunman” thesis (though this was not strictly relevant to Shaw’s case). The jury quickly acquitted Shaw, but the case became a global media circus and was the basis for Oliver Stone’s movie *JFK*.

The critics fed Garrison, and Garrison fed the critics. Prominent critics advised Garrison, and some had access to the evidence he generated. He obtained a copy of the Zapruder film, and allowed critics to make and circulate “bootleg” copies. Afterwards, critics contended that Garrison was on the right track—the Oswald/intelligence link—but his methods were unsound. They also observed that his key witnesses died (suspiciously, of course).

Loyalists thought that Garrison was a publicity-seeking megalomaniac. Interestingly, some loyalists advanced their own conspiracy theory: Garrison was protecting the Mafia and diverting attention from them with his wild theories about CIA, Nazi, and anti-Castro plots. They contended that Garrison treated the New Orleans Mafia laxly when he was prosecutor, and never mentioned the Mafia as a participant in the assassination conspiracy. Indeed, he called mob sponsorship of the assassination “a myth.”

### **Congress Investigates**

In the mid-1970s, after Vietnam and Watergate, public willingness to believe in government duplicity was high. The issue of CIA involvement in the Kennedy assassination gained enough momentum that Congress established the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Congress appointed G. Robert Blakey to head the HSCA. This choice strongly influenced the direction of the investigation, because Blakey was a lawyer who specialized in organized crime. The HSCA critically analyzed the WC report, and found many of its conclusions valid. Most importantly, the HSCA concluded that Oswald fired three shots from the TSBD, and two struck Kennedy, killing him.

Based on acoustical evidence from Dallas police radios, the HSCA argued that there was a second gunman in Dealey Plaza, and thus necessarily there was a conspiracy. The HSCA could not identify this gunman, but excluded the involvement of the Soviet government, the Cuban government, the Secret Service, the FBI, and the CIA in the conspiracy. The HSCA also excluded the involvement of the Mafia and the anti-Castro groups *as groups*, although “individual members may have been involved.” Perhaps inevitably, critics were annoyed and suspicious that the HSCA confirmed the Single Bullet Theory and debunked many of their pet theories. Loyalists, however, were dissatisfied with the conspiracy finding.

Some critics asserted that Blakey took charge of the HSCA in order to redirect the investigation away from uncomfortable evidence of U.S. government and anti-Castro Cuban involvement in the assassination. They considered Blakey too cozy with “potential suspects” (the FBI and CIA). Blakey was unwilling to force these organizations to disgorge what they knew about Oswald, and channeled staff time and effort into the Mafia investigation at the expense of every other avenue. Critics condemned his “soft” handling of scientific and medical experts, and his failure to ask “hard questions” about the missing evidence and the authenticity of the autopsy x-rays and photographs. In short, as one of the HSCA investigators lamented, the investigation was not even adequate, let alone the “full and complete” effort that Congress mandated. Critics even took issue with the acoustic evidence, which they believed indicated more than four shots.

Congressional investigations generated a few conspiracy incidents of their own. In 1975 and 1976, two prominent mobsters—Johnny Roselli and Sam Giancana—were murdered after they testified before Congress about CIA-Mafia assassination plots. An HSCA investigator planned to interview de Mohrenschildt concerning his relationship with the CIA and Oswald. Alas, the day before the interview, de Mohrenschildt committed suicide. Critics believed that these three important witnesses were silenced before they could reveal what they knew about the CIA-Mafia plot to kill Kennedy.

Loyalists took comfort that the HSCA debunked many conspiracy theories and confirmed the basic outline of the WC report. They considered the acoustic evidence flawed, since they disbelieved in a “fourth shot.” Naturally, they regretted that the “blunder” of introducing this evidence only opened the door to new conspiracy speculation and to a flood of people fraudulently confessing that they were the Grassy Knoll shooter.

### **Who Benefited?**

Many critics approached the assassination like a detective solving any other crime: first identify someone with the motive, means, and opportunity to commit the murder. Some critics considered motive much more important than means or opportunity, especially as time passed and few truly new facts about Dealey Plaza seemed likely to emerge. Some believed that the government had so effectively hidden the truth and deceived the public that to ask “How?” was futile. All that remained was to ask “Why?” or, put differently, “Who benefited?” The list of plausible suspects was long, and included LBJ, the Mafia, the CIA, the FBI, the military-industrial complex, the Soviets, the Cubans, and the anti-Castro Cuban exiles.

### **Lean and Hungry Lyndon**

Craig Zirbel argues that LBJ was the central conspirator who orchestrated Kennedy’s assassination. Johnson most directly benefited from the killing and had the most power to cover his tracks. Zirbel believes that the deeply immoral vice-president hated the Kennedys, and was capable of murder. LBJ was obsessed with becoming president, and feared that Kennedy would drop him from the ticket in 1964. He expected that his presidency would bring great political and economic benefits to himself and his friends in the oil industry and military-industrial complex. The assassination occurred on Johnson’s “home turf” (Texas) where he had many connections to the police and organized crime. Johnson was intimately involved in planning the trip, and tried to put his political enemy, Senator Yarborough, in the presidential limousine instead of his ally, Governor Connally. After the assassination,



Johnson, as the new president, used his power—and particularly his friendship with J. Edgar Hoover—to ensure that the Kennedy autopsy and the WC reached the “correct” conclusion (i.e., that Oswald was the only assassin) and that evidence to the contrary was destroyed. Zirbel presents a strong circumstantial case for motive, but has no information whatsoever on how Johnson planned and implemented the plot.

### **Goodfellas**

David Scheim and Robert Blakey, among others, contend that the Mafia had the motive and the capability to kill Kennedy. Kennedy’s brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, waged a relentless campaign against mob bosses Santos Trafficante and Carlos Marcello, and against Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa. Declassified wiretaps revealed these men venting furious complaints against the Kennedys and predicting they would be killed. These mobsters thought Kennedy double-crossed them. They helped Kennedy win the 1960 election, provided him with a mistress, and cooperated with the CIA, yet RFK persecuted them. Scheim insists that both Oswald and Ruby were connected to Marcello, but were sufficiently distant to make excellent tools (i.e., Marcello need not implicate himself or his lieutenants). Marcello somehow induced Oswald to shoot Kennedy, but had backup hitmen in the Plaza. Oswald’s primary role was as patsy, and he was not expected to survive to reach custody. When he did, Marcello ordered Ruby to eliminate him. Scheim presents a great deal of evidence that Ruby was a longtime low-level mob functionary but, like Oswald, completely deniable and expendable.

The conclusions of the HSCA essentially supported this theory, although Blakey’s book stated the theory more directly than the HSCA Report. However, despite thousands of hours of wiretaps of top mobsters, no conclusive proof exists of mob involvement in the assassination. More problematically, how could the Mafia engineer a cover-up? How could they be sure that the federal government would not discover the plot and crush them after the assassination?

### **Rogue Elephant**

Mark Lane asserts that the CIA killed Kennedy because JFK planned to destroy the organization. Kennedy betrayed the CIA at the Bay of Pigs, and his efforts to bring the Agency under control afterwards threatened the organization’s existence. The CIA benefited from the assassination, because the organization survived and prospered. Supporters of this theory observe that the CIA obviously had the capability to kill Kennedy, and the Agency was involved in many other assassination plots at this time. Such a plot did not require the participation of the entire Agency, but only a small, compartmentalized subgroup. These authors cite the abundant evidence of a CIA relationship with Oswald discussed elsewhere in this essay, and some argue that the CIA used mind-control techniques to program Oswald to kill. Others argue that Oswald was not a robot, but a patsy (the real assassins were the CIA’s pet Cubans). Ideally, from the CIA viewpoint, the United States would blame Castro for the assassination and invade Cuba. Supporters of this theory have long sought to prove that known CIA agents were in or near Dealey Plaza, but so far none have succeeded. For many years, speculation focused on the identity of the “three tramps.” When the Dallas City Council released the arrest records of the tramps, they were revealed as genuine tramps.

### **The Director**

Mark North asserts that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover hated JFK and RFK personally and politically. Hoover detested their immorality and liberalism, but more importantly, he resented their plans to force him to retire. Hoover allegedly attempted to blackmail the Kennedys into waiving his retirement, but failed. North argues that Hoover then learned through surveillance and informants that the Mafia planned to kill Kennedy. Hoover realized that if the Mafia succeeded, his close friend Lyndon Johnson would waive his retirement.

North contends that Hoover did what he could to ensure that the plot succeeded. He withheld information about threats to the president from the Secret Service, and allowed the Mafia plans to proceed undisturbed. North believes the FBI moni-

tored Oswald, but let the Mafia manipulate Oswald into his role as patsy. After the assassination, Hoover ensured that the FBI championed the “lone gunman” thesis, and suppressed, as much as possible, evidence of Oswald’s relationship with the Mafia. North considers that Hoover suppressed evidence of Mafia involvement in the assassination, because this avenue of inquiry might reveal that he knew but did nothing. His triumph complete, Hoover remained FBI director until his death in 1972. North’s theory, of course, relies heavily on other theories, particularly with respect to Mafia assassination plots.

### **The Military-Industrial Complex**

The military-industrial complex (“MIC”) derived great benefit from the cold war. The military had plenty of shiny weapons, defense contractors reaped huge profits, and politicians had many happily employed constituents. Kennedy’s efforts to secure U.S.-Soviet détente in the autumn of 1963 threatened the MIC, and some authors consider that the MIC played a role in the assassination. Peter Dale Scott, for example, relates the assassination to Vietnam: Kennedy began to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam, but after the assassination, LBJ dramatically escalated U.S. involvement. Indeed, the Kennedy assassination preserved the “entire cold war status quo” for another twenty-five years. Scott believes that when Oswald acted strangely in New Orleans, Dallas, and Mexico City, he was acting under orders from military intelligence. Scott claims that three Army Intelligence agents were in Dealey Plaza during the assassination. He speculates that police officers and Secret Service agents who were reserve Army Intelligence officers facilitated the killing of Kennedy and Oswald. Regrettably, Scott’s work contains much conjecture but little specific, verifiable detail.

### **From Russia with Love**

Michael Eddowes asserts that Khrushchev ordered Kennedy’s assassination to avenge his humiliation in the Cuban Missile Crisis and intimidate future presidents. According to Eddowes, Oswald defected to the Soviet Union but did not return—a

KGB assassin took his place. De Mohrenschildt controlled “Oswald” for the KGB, not for the CIA. Jack Ruby was also a KGB agent, and intended to help “Oswald” escape to Mexico. However, “Oswald” was caught en route to Ruby’s house, and Ruby had to silence him instead. Among the many fallacies in this theory, why would a KGB assassin behave as Oswald did in New Orleans, and draw attention to himself as a Communist troublemaker? How did the double fool the real Oswald’s relatives? Why would Khrushchev want to kill Kennedy, when this would bring a cold warrior like Johnson to power? Eddowes’s absurd theory received a decisive rebuttal in 1981, when Oswald was exhumed and examiners found that he was the same man who defected to Russia.

The Soviets probably had no role in the assassination, but still feared they might be blamed. In January 1964, a KGB officer, Yuri Nosenko, defected to the United States with the electrifying claim that he handled Oswald’s case when Oswald was in Russia. Nosenko insisted that the KGB found Oswald of no intelligence interest, and did not recruit him or his wife. The CIA suspected that Nosenko was lying, and had defected on KGB orders. Nosenko cooled his heels in solitary confinement for three years until the CIA decided he was a genuine defector.

### **The Cubans**

If Khrushchev had little reason to kill Kennedy, Castro had less. True, Kennedy had ordered the CIA to “get Castro,” but in late 1963 Kennedy was moving toward reconciliation with Cuba. If Castro were caught, the Americans would destroy him, and he would hardly choose such an unreliable (and overtly pro-Castro) creature as Oswald for this delicate task. Nonetheless, in September 1963, Castro threatened to assassinate U.S. leaders if they continued to try to assassinate Cuban leaders. From 1967 to 1976, gangster Johnny Roselli spread rumors that Kennedy’s assassination was indeed Castro’s retaliation. Most authors consider this just another CIA-inspired effort to frame Havana.

The anti-Castro Cubans were powerfully motivated to kill Kennedy. They believed JFK betrayed them at the Bay of Pigs, and he was shutting down

their covert operations while he sought détente with Castro in late 1963. Many Cuban exiles were trained in guerrilla warfare and assassination, and thus had the raw capability to kill Kennedy. The WC considered and rejected the theory that the anti-Castro Cubans could somehow have used Oswald to kill Kennedy, hoping to divert the blame onto Castro. The HSCA investigated the “most violent and frustrated” exile groups, but concluded that Oswald had no contact with these groups. HSCA investigator Gaeton Fonzi was not so sure—he argued that the committee did not fully explore this possibility.

### **A Conspiracy So Immense**

In *Our Dumb Century*, the satirical magazine *The Onion* has a parody news article about the assassination: “Kennedy Slain by CIA, Mafia, Castro, LBJ, Teamsters, Freemasons: President Shot 129 Times from 43 Different Angles.” This parody mocks the numerous critics who believe a broad alliance of motivated individuals and organizations conspired to kill Kennedy. For example, Peter Dale Scott accuses a “coalition of forces inside and outside government” that included the Mafia, CIA, military intelligence, the Texas rich, drug networks, the “Vietnam Lobby,” and perhaps Johnson and Hoover. Similarly, Jim Marrs brings nearly every conceivable suspect into his big conspiracy tent, including the FBI, CIA, anti-Castro Cubans, the military, LBJ, Texas oilmen, international bankers, and the mob. Jim Garrison is somewhat less inclusive—in his book, he names only the CIA, FBI, Secret Service, Dallas police, and the military. These critics have perhaps demonstrated that Dark Forces (the “shadow government” or the “business-banking-politics-military-crime power structure”) lurk in America’s basement, but they have not provided specific, incontrovertible evidence to link the Dark Forces to the Kennedy assassination.

How could such vast conspiracies remain secret for nearly forty years? Scott responds that the Kennedy assassination was not the isolated act of a few bad men, but a reflection of structural imperatives in U.S. “Deep Politics.” The assassination resulted from “ongoing, unacknowledged processes” that link normal political activity to the criminal underworld. Scott cites alleged longtime U.S. gov-

ernment support for drug trafficking as another example of such processes. In his view, a “conspiratorial network” existed in 1963, and still exists today, that could easily have killed Kennedy and maintained secrecy afterwards.

Carl Oglesby presents a unique synthesis in *The Yankee and Cowboy War*. He contends that JFK and LBJ represented the two competing factions in U.S. politics: “Yankees” and “Cowboys.” The Yankees were the classic “eastern establishment”—New York financiers, lawyers, and plutocrats—while the Cowboys were the scions of “new wealth” such as the oil, aviation, and defense industries based in the South and West. Every administration from 1933 onward, Democratic or Republican, was a coalition of Yankees and Cowboys, but in the early 1960s, factional cooperation began to erode. The basic issue was policy toward the Soviet Union—the Yankees favored détente, while the Cowboys favored containment. Containment implied high military spending, maintenance of forward positions in Eurasia, and intervention in Cuba and Vietnam. Détente implied lower military spending, withdrawal from Eurasia, and no intervention in Vietnam. Oglesby asserts that the assassination resolved the debate in the Cowboys’ favor, and thus the cold war continued and the United States fought in Vietnam. The Yankees struck back in 1973, when they trapped Nixon (a Cowboy) in the Watergate scandal, forcing him to resign and allowing the Yankees to pursue cooperation with the Soviet Union.

### **Case Closed, or Perpetually Open?**

The Warren Commission offered a single, relatively coherent explanation of the Kennedy assassination. This explanation immediately captured the “high ground”—it became the dominant paradigm that critics had to refute decisively before presenting their own paradigm. After 1964, critics identified apparent anomalies in the dominant paradigm, but never displaced the WC from the “high ground” because they could not resolve the apparent anomalies more effectively than the WC. They offered a plethora of competing hypotheses, but no single, coherent paradigm. Now four decades since the shooting, there seems little agreement about many

of the most basic facts, and the debate remains as fierce and emotive as ever. With little hope that any consensus will ever emerge (not least because beliefs often seem to be held as a matter of faith), what is certain is that Kennedy assassination lore has become part of everyday American culture.

*James D. Perry*

**See also:** Castro, Fidel; Central Intelligence Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of; Mafia; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Ruby, Jack; Warren Commission.

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## Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of

On 4 June 1968, presidential candidate and New York senator Robert Francis Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles, California. Just five years earlier, President John F. Kennedy, the senator's brother, had been assassinated in Dallas, Texas, and the investigation that followed had failed to adequately convince the U.S. public of the official "lone gunman" theory. In President Kennedy's case, conspiracy advocates pointed to a government cover-up. Consequently, acknowledging that the American people would closely scrutinize the Robert F. Kennedy murder investigation, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) became determined to conduct an extremely thorough investigation, which would not leave any loose ends. Ironically, however, the official investigation of the LAPD also pinned the crime on a lone gunman. Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was arrested and found guilty of the murder, but much mystery and controversy has surrounded the case ever since. Unable to find satisfactory answers for several crucial questions in the investigation, some writers have concluded that Robert Kennedy's murder must have been a conspiracy.





Clutching his rosary beads, Senator Robert F. Kennedy lies wounded on the floor of the Ambassador Hotel, after being shot by an assailant, following his victory speech in the California primary election. Kennedy's wife, Ethel, is at lower left. (Bettmann/Corbis)

### **The Events of 4 June 1968**

In 1968 presidential candidates were not yet protected by the Secret Service. Also, Robert Kennedy's campaign team feared that a police presence around Kennedy could be politically damaging, since police were viewed by some as oppressors of minority rights. Consequently, Kennedy's team hired Ace Security to protect the senator. Having won the California primary, Kennedy had made much ground in gaining the Democratic presidential nomination. After his victory speech in the crowded Embassy Ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, he was in the process of being escorted to a press

conference through two swinging doors of the crowded hotel pantry by Thane Eugene Cesar, an Ace Security guard. As Kennedy made his way through the pantry, he shook hands with restaurant workers. A few seconds later, the pantry erupted in chaos as shots rang out and people pushed and pulled in an effort to get to safety. Five injured people and Kennedy lay on the floor bleeding from their wounds. Kennedy, spread-eagle on his back, bled profusely from the back of his head and clasped a rosary in his hand, which had been handed to him by a busboy named Juan Romero. Kennedy died the next day as a result of the wounds he received.

More than seventy witnesses claimed to have seen Sirhan fire in Kennedy's direction. In fact, Sirhan was still clutching a smoking .22-caliber revolver in his hand when members of the crowd subdued him. Just twelve hours before the murder, Sirhan had been seen practicing rapid fire with a revolver at a nearby rifle range. A police search of Sirhan's home uncovered a notebook in which he had written, "My determination to eliminate R.F.K. is becoming more of an unshakable obsession. . . . R.F.K. must die." And, further down the notebook page, Sirhan went as far as to pinpoint a deadline for the murder. He wrote, "Robert Kennedy must be assassinated before 5 June 1968" (Knight, vol. I, 206). In the face of this damaging evidence, however, there was still one extremely important piece missing in the investigation puzzle. What was Sirhan's motive? During the police interrogation, Sirhan did not deny his actions. Instead, he claimed that he could not recall his actions or the reason for them. Consequently, in an effort to assign a motive, investigators placed Sirhan under hypnosis. Even though the psychological prodding revealed that Sirhan was very susceptible to hypnosis, it failed to shed any new light on a possible motive. As a result, investigators constructed a political motive for the crime. As it turned out, 5 June 1968 was the twentieth anniversary of the Israeli-Arab War, and Palestinian-born Sirhan, according to investigators, committed the murder because of Kennedy's public support of Israel.

### The Trial

In the trial that followed, most of the physical evidence was not questioned. Instead, the main objective in the proceedings was to ascertain if Sirhan was mentally impaired during the crime. It was at his trial, in fact, that Sirhan, for the first time, accepted the police assessment of his motive. Sirhan explained that he did not remember anything about that night, because he was intoxicated. However, he admitted that Kennedy's promise to sell military aircraft to Israel, if he was elected president, greatly angered him. Some writers, however, have contended that Sirhan had written his plan to kill Kennedy in his notebook days before the candidate had publicly announced his plan to support Israel.

In the end, the court found Sirhan guilty of first-degree murder and five counts of assault with a deadly weapon. Sirhan was sentenced to die by gas chamber, but, after the California Supreme Court ruled the death penalty unconstitutional in 1972, the sentence was changed to life in prison.

### Inconsistencies in the Evidence

From the outset, this seemingly airtight case left some journalists with more questions than answers. For example, how many bullets were fired? As early as a few days after the shooting up to recent years, this question has remained the most mysterious and controversial issue in the Robert Kennedy murder investigation. According to the LAPD, Sirhan's gun held eight bullets, and, therefore, only eight bullets were fired. This official police stand, however, took quite a bit of explaining in order to account for Kennedy being shot four times, four bystanders being shot once, one bystander being shot twice, two holes in the ceiling tiles, and two holes in the center post of the swinging doors that led to the pantry—a total of fourteen holes but only eight official bullets. The official bullet accountability report issued by the LAPD stated that bullet #1 entered behind Kennedy's right ear and remained lodged in his head. Bullet #2 damaged the senator's clothing as it passed through his right shoulder pad and struck Paul Schrade, a campaign worker, in the forehead. Bullet #3 entered Kennedy's back a few inches below the top of his right shoulder and remained lodged there. Bullet #4 entered his back one inch below bullet #3, but this one exited the senator's body through the right front chest. Bullet #5 hit Ira Goldstein in the right buttock and remained lodged there. Bullet #6 only damaged Goldstein's clothing as it passed through a pants leg, struck the cement floor, and ricocheted into Irwin Stroll's left leg. Bullet #7 struck and remained lodged in William Weisel's left abdomen. Bullet #8 bounced off the ceiling and stuck Elizabeth Evans in the head. The holes in the ceiling, explained police, were caused by a bullet entering through a tile, bouncing off of an unknown object, and exiting another tile as it reentered the room. The police also explained that the two holes in the center post were not bullet holes.

Mysteriously, some police photos, which were not submitted into evidence at Sirhan's trial, document two bullet holes in the center post of the two swinging doors that led into the pantry.

During the investigation, the LAPD removed the damaged ceiling tiles and later destroyed them. The center post of the swinging doors also met the same fate. Years later, the LAPD claimed that the center post was removed in order to make an x-ray examination to determine whether the holes had been made by bullets. After the tests proved inconclusive, however, the LAPD ordered both the center post and the x-rays destroyed. In 1986, the LAPD released a censored version of the assassination investigation records. Finding more questions than answers in the censored disclosure, conspiracy theorists once again began to thrive. In 1988, twenty years after the assassination, LAPD Police Chief Daryl Gates released the entire existing Robert Kennedy assassination files to the public, which left no doubt as to the incompleteness of the records. For example, the files contained no record of or reference to the tests on or x-rays of the two holes found on the center post. Many conspiracy theorists have claimed that the police explanation of the bullet count versus the number of bullets would require several acrobatic bullets, which defied the laws of physics. These writers point out that the positions and distances between Sirhan and the wounded do not line up with the angles in which the bullets entered the victims. What is more, all records of the testimony of seven forensic experts about the crime scene have disappeared from the records, the gun used by Sirhan was ordered destroyed by incineration by the police, and over 2,000 photos of the crime scene were burned. Why? Chief Gates explained that much evidence was destroyed after Sirhan's conviction, because it was no longer required and the police department had a great need for space in the evidence room.

The next logical question asked whether there was a second gunman. Many witnesses inside and outside of the pantry reported that they heard two shots, and after a short pause, a flurry of shots, which have been compared by witnesses to the sound of many balloons popping or many fireworks exploding

in rapid succession. Furthermore, eyewitnesses reported that Sirhan was more than 5 feet away from Kennedy when he fired at him. However, the autopsy report stated that powder burns surrounded the entry wound of the fatal bullet, which had struck Kennedy at point blank range in the back of the head. Also, the fatal bullet, according to the report, was fired from behind. Yet, all witnesses placed Sirhan in front of Kennedy during the shooting. To add to the confusion, ballistics tests conducted by the LAPD crime lab concluded that the bullets extracted from Kennedy's body were too distorted to provide a positive match with any .22-caliber gun. In 1989, the supermarket tabloid the *Globe* published an article in which it accused a Pakistani reporter of being the actual assassin of Robert Kennedy. The reporter sued the magazine for libel and won. Besides this exonerated reporter, Thane Eugene Cesar, the Ace Security guard who escorted Kennedy through the pantry by the arm, has also fallen under suspicion. Holding Kennedy by the arm, it seems that he would have had the opportunity to shoot him in the back of the head and at point-blank range. Cesar had been vocal in his dislike of the Kennedys. He owned a .22-caliber gun, and he could have taken advantage of the confusion in the room to do the deed. However, the police investigation concluded that Cesar could not have committed the crime because he was only carrying his .38-caliber service revolver that night.

On the night of the assassination, a Kennedy campaign worker, Sandra Serrano, was a witness to "the lady in the polka dot dress," yet another unsolved mystery in the Robert Kennedy murder. According to Serrano, she stepped out of the hotel onto a fire escape in order to get some fresh air. During this time, Serrano said, she saw three people, a woman and two men—one of which matched Sirhan's description—ascend the fire escape. Shortly after, Serrano claimed that the same party, minus Sirhan, quickly exited the hotel through the fire escape shouting that they had shot Kennedy. A local television station interviewed Serrano less than an hour after the shooting, and she described the couple. According to Serrano, the woman wore a white dress with polka dots. She was of light skin, wore

black shoes, and had brunette hair. Her male companion, according to Serrano, was a twenty-three-year-old Mexican-American man.

During police interrogation, however, Serrano seemed less sure of what she had previously claimed to have seen and heard. An audiotape of a polygraph test conducted by investigators in 1968, which had been sealed up by police until 1988, suggested that police had forced Serrano into denying her previous statements about the night of the shooting. When questioned by the media about the forceful fashion in which the Serrano interview was conducted, the LAPD replied that Sergeant Hernandez was merely following normal police routine. Furthermore, shortly after the story about the woman in the polka dot dress broke, the LAPD claimed to have solved the mystery. Investigators identified the polka dot dress woman as Valerie Schulte, a campaign worker, who had nothing to do with the crime. Unfortunately, Schulte did not match the description by any of the witnesses. Both her yellow dress and her blond hair were the wrong color, and she was in crutches that night. In addition, in 1988 Serrano told a radio interviewer that she had been forced to tell police that she had been mistaken about the statements made by the couple on the fire escape.

Nevertheless, several witnesses inside the hotel, who claimed to have seen Sirhan with a woman wearing a polka dot dress that night, substantiated Serrano's story. Some witnesses even claimed to have seen Sirhan whisper in the ear of the lady in the polka dot dress a few moments before he shot at Kennedy. Outside of the hotel, Police Sergeant Paul Sharaga also substantiated Serrano's story. Sergeant Sharaga was patrolling the area and got a radio call about a shooting at the Ambassador Hotel. Arriving on the scene, he parked his car and ran toward the hotel. As he approached the building, he overheard a couple saying that they had shot Kennedy. Sergeant Sharaga followed the couple but lost them in the darkness. He immediately radioed a description of a young man and a young woman wearing a polka dot dress. Years later, retired Sharaga claimed that the LAPD had taken it upon itself to retract his statements. However, in later

interviews Sharaga continued to affirm his sighting of the couple and his claim that he had overheard them say that they had shot Kennedy.

### **Conspiracy Theories**

Was Sirhan the assassin after all? Some psychohistorical studies claim that Sirhan was an extremely proud and extremely unhappy individual who as a youth had suffered through the Israeli-Arab War (1948–1949). After immigrating to the United States, he had failed in an attempt to become a successful jockey. Having been thrown off a horse, he had injured his head, back, and right eye. What is more, his head trauma had resulted in a mental imbalance. After reading about Kennedy's support of Israel, according to some psychoanalysts, Sirhan focused on Kennedy as an outlet for his anger and frustration. With so much evidence missing, lost, or destroyed, however, the question of who shot Robert Kennedy may never be answered to the satisfaction of many critics. At a parole hearing in 1997, Sirhan said that he had not killed Kennedy, and he claimed that he had been framed. Lawrence Teeter, Sirhan's attorney, claimed that his client had been hypnotized and, consequently, used as a puppet to commit the crime. Since Sirhan was in an imposed altered state of consciousness, said Teeter, he should not be held accountable for his actions. Besides not being aware of what he was doing, Sirhan, Teeter continued, was incorrectly positioned to have fired the fatal shot. In 1998, the thirtieth anniversary of Kennedy's assassination, Sirhan once again announced that he was innocent, and, once again, he was denied parole.

If the murder of Robert Kennedy was a conspiracy, then who was involved and why? Given Sirhan's susceptibility to hypnosis and Kennedy's anti-Vietnam War stance, some writers have speculated that renegade CIA agents may have hypnotized Sirhan to kill Kennedy. Others have pointed to Kennedy's call to racial equality and suggested that the Ku Klux Klan or other white supremacy groups may have had a part in Kennedy's death. The African American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., had been assassinated two months earlier, and the senator's show of allegiance to King's cause had angered many anti-civil rights groups. Also,



Kennedy's previous duels with organized crime provided yet another possible enemy with a motive. Some writers have speculated that the woman in the polka dot dress and her partner may have been somehow linked to the mob. Certainly, the handling of the investigation by the LAPD left many feeling that the agency was either part of a conspiracy or utterly incompetent.

*Rolando Avila*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Mind Control; MK-ULTRA.

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**King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of**

Like the official reports into the other assassinations of the 1960s, the government's account of the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on 4 April 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, is problematic because it is filled with holes. The most significant difference between other assassination conspiracy theories and those related to the death of the great civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner is that a U.S. jury in a civil court in December 1999 actually concluded that a conspiracy resulted in the death of Dr. King.

This jury, consisting of six white and six African American Memphis residents, resolved that Dr.

King was murdered by a conspiracy involving a produce dealer with strong connections to the Mafia, a racist restaurant owner, and various agencies of government at the city, state, and federal levels.

James Earl Ray was never convicted in a court of law for killing Dr. King. Instead, Ray admitted guilt through a plea bargain. Ray claims he pleaded guilty in the face of threats of execution from a private attorney who took Ray's case pro bono. Ray recanted his admission three days later, but never got a trial. A mock trial in the 1990s found Ray not guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The 1999 civil lawsuit was filed by the King family against Lloyd Jowers, who once owned Jim's Grill, a restaurant only one block from the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was shot on the balcony in front of his second-floor motel room. Jim's Grill stood on the bottom floor of Bessie Brewer's rooming house, where the shot that struck Dr. King on the right side of his face was reportedly fired from a second-floor bathroom window. King's family sought \$100 in actual damages from Lloyd Jowers for the wrongful death of Dr. King; more importantly, they hoped to discover the truth about the conspiracy that differed so greatly from the official story of the U.S. government.

**The Official Story**

According to the official account by the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), Dr. King was killed by one shot fired from in front of him; the shot emanated from the bathroom window at the rear of a rooming house at 422 South Main Street in Memphis. The shooter was James Earl Ray, who had purchased the rifle using an alias and transported it from Birmingham, Alabama, to Memphis in order to kill Martin Luther King, Jr.

The HSCA discovered evidence that Ray did in fact buy a .243-caliber rifle and telescopic sight in Birmingham on 29 March using the alias Harvey Lowmeyer (someone who had spent time with Ray's brother in prison). Ray returned it 30 March for the more powerful .30-06 Remington Game-master that was used to kill King and that was found near the crime scene. Ray claimed he bought the rifle on the orders of "Raoul," a man who Ray said

he was involved with in a gun-running operation. The HSCA concluded there was no Raoul.

Upon arriving to Memphis, Ray checked into the New Rebel Motel using the alias of “Eric S. Galt.” On the day of the assassination, Ray checked into Bessie Brewer’s rooming house across from the Lorraine Motel using the alias “John Willard.” Each is an alias of a real person living in Toronto, Canada; Ray had not ever met either of them. Moments after the assassination, Ray supposedly dropped the bundle containing the murder weapon near 424 South Main Street in front of a nearby business.

The HSCA concluded that it was highly probable that James Earl Ray stalked Dr. King for a period immediately preceding the assassination. After the shot, Ray fled Memphis and traveled immediately to Atlanta and ultimately to Toronto, Canada. There, Ray hid using various aliases. Ray was caught on 8 June 1968 by Scotland Yard in London at Heathrow Airport.

The HSCA concluded that James Earl Ray’s alibi for the time of the assassination, his story of being set up by the mysterious figure “Raoul,” and other allegedly exculpatory evidence, were not worthy of belief. The HSCA also noted that Ray “knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily pleaded guilty to the first degree murder” of Dr. King and thus he must be guilty.

Consistent with conspiracy theories, the HSCA wrote that “on the basis of the circumstantial evidence available to it, there is a likelihood that James Earl Ray assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a result of a conspiracy.” They summarized this belief by noting several findings that were consistent with a conspiracy. For example, an analysis of Ray’s conduct before the assassination provided compelling indications of conspiracy, including the fact that he had significant associations with others, such as his own racist brothers, and that he had help robbing a bank in 1967. Additionally, his activities in California, when he was a fugitive from justice after escaping from the Missouri State Penitentiary, and his strangely abrupt trip to New Orleans, were viewed as suspicious. Finally, the HSCA found it could not concur with any of the accepted explanations for Ray as a lone assassin because his supposed

motive of virulent racism could not be verified; thus money must have been his motivation.

The HSCA found that there was substantial evidence to establish the existence of a St. Louis–based conspiracy to finance the assassination of Dr. King. Plans to kill King were widely discussed in St. Louis among numerous individuals named by the HSCA; yet, no link between Ray, his brothers, and the key players of the St. Louis conspiracy was ever acknowledged or explained. Despite this, the HSCA believed it was likely that word of the standing offer on Dr. King’s life reached Ray prior to the assassination and that Ray killed King for money. This conclusion was reached solely on evidence that Ray had been to St. Louis in 1967 and may have heard about the offer from one of his brothers who lived there.

The HSCA wrote that it was “unfortunate that this information was not developed in 1968, when it could have been pursued by law enforcement agencies equipped with tools not available to the committee and at a time when the principals were still alive and witness’ memories were more precise.” Of course, given that the FBI led the investigation, and that its leaders hated King and viewed him as the most dangerous man in the United States, it is not surprising that this lead was not investigated. Furthermore, that the FBI hated King so greatly and yet was still allowed to head the investigation into his death lends credibility to the conspiracy theory that they were somehow involved in his death.

After conducting a cursory review of possible involvement by right-wing extremist organizations, and by people in Memphis, New Orleans, Atlanta, Birmingham, Louisville, St. Louis, Miami, Texas, and New York, the HSCA concluded that no private organizations or individuals were involved in the assassination of King. They also concluded that “no federal, state or local, government agency was involved in the assassination of Dr. King,” including the FBI, Memphis Police Department (MPD), and the Missouri State Penitentiary from which Ray had escaped.

### **Problems with the Official Story**

Conspiracy theories related to the murder of Dr. King arose out of inconsistencies in the official

story. Here, the conclusions of the HSCA investigation speak volumes. On the one hand, the HSCA concludes that the investigation was fundamentally flawed and that government agencies all but set King up to be murdered; on the other hand, it then concludes that there was no direct involvement by government agencies in King's death.

The HSCA summary report concluded that: "The Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation performed with varying degrees of competency and legality in the fulfillment of their duties; The Department of Justice failed to supervise adequately the Domestic Intelligence Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; in addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in the Domestic Intelligence Division's COINTELPRO [counter intelligence] campaign against Dr. King, grossly abused and exceeded its legal authority and failed to consider the possibility that actions threatening bodily harm to Dr. King might be encouraged by the program; The Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation performed a thorough investigation into the responsibility of James Earl Ray for the assassination of Dr. King, and conducted a thorough fugitive investigation, but failed to investigate adequately the possibility of conspiracy in the assassination; [furthermore] the Federal Bureau of Investigation manifested a lack of concern for Constitutional rights in the manner in which it conducted parts of the investigation" (U.S. House, 3).

Even if the poor FBI investigation was the only problem with the official story, there might be strong justification for believing in a conspiracy. Yet, there are many other problems with the official story, as well as clear indicators of a conspiracy.

The first is the lone assassin, James Earl Ray. Ray dropped out of high school and worked in the dye room of a shoe factory for less than a year before he was laid off. Six weeks later he enrolled in the army and was stationed in West Germany where he was charged with drunkenness and breaking arrest. Ray was then discharged for ineptness and lack of adaptability for service in 1948. Ray's criminal record prior to the assassination reportedly includes no acts of violence (other than robberies), no shootings, no hate crimes against blacks; Ray was a petty

crook. His record included small-time thefts, burglaries, and robberies. Despite a relatively minor criminal history, Ray was described as a professional criminal by the HSCA. Ray made two escape attempts from Missouri State Penitentiary and broke out one year prior to the assassination by hiding in a bread truck. Over the following eleven-month period, Ray traveled extensively in North America, residing in such cities as Chicago, Montreal, Birmingham, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, despite having no known source of income. The HSCA suggested that Ray had robbed a bank in his hometown in Illinois in July 1967, possibly with the help of at least one brother, and that this money could have been used to fund his travel. The HSCA found no direct evidence of his involvement, but discussed page after page of evidence of past robberies committed by unknown assailants who the HSCA thought were Ray and his brothers.

The next suspicious set of problems relates to the shot itself. The exact position of King at the time of the shooting is not known, so the HSCA concluded that the shot could have come from the bathroom window or from the ground in front of the Lorraine Motel. Engineering tests on the bullet trajectory thus can be viewed as "inconclusive." Witnesses claimed King was leaning over the railing on the balcony when he was shot, and they described King as being thrown backwards off his feet. This would mean King was shot from below rather than from above. The HSCA concluded the bullet could have come either from above or below from the bushes.

A shot from the bathroom would have been very difficult due to the type of gun; the partially obstructed view of the balcony by trees and shrubs; the position of the tub in the bathroom; and the bathroom wall, which left only two feet to maneuver the gun and make the shot. Ray had only earned the rank of marksman in the army, the lowest rank one can earn upon graduating from boot camp.

In the 1990s new investigations were launched by the King family and others; ballistics tests undertaken at this time were unable to match bullets from the gun to the bullet taken from King. Not all testimony from the HSCA concluded the bullet was fired from the gun alleged to have been used to kill

King. Judge Joe Brown claimed in a speech that more than half of ballistics tests show it was not the gun that killed King.

Accounts of Ray's supposed activities before and after the fatal shot was fired are suspicious. Before the shot was fired, Ray allegedly spent at least fifteen minutes in the bathroom on the second floor of the rooming house. Yet, a dresser moved away from the window did not contain Ray's prints, nor did the chair pushed up to the window. Ray's prints were also not found in the bathroom from where he supposedly fired the shot.

Accounts of the activities in the bathroom preceding the shot are inconsistent. One witness claimed to have tried to use the bathroom twice, but found it to be occupied. He then went to the room of Charles Stephens, the common-law husband of Grace Stephens, the owner of the rooming house. Grace Stephens described a man fleeing the bathroom who did not resemble Ray. Investigators did not believe her and, after refusing to change her story, she was confined to a mental hospital.

Charles Stephens supposedly went to the bathroom also, and told the witness that Ray was inside. James McGraw, a taxi-driver, however, said Stephens was in his bed, too drunk to get up and at 6 P.M. the bathroom door was wide open. If true, this suggests that the shot was not fired from the bathroom.

Most troubling about the actual shot is that friends and acquaintances of King claimed he was on the balcony in front of his room, smoking a cigarette and waving to supporters for ten to fifteen minutes prior to being shot at 6:01 P.M. If King was out in the open for this period of time, why was he not shot earlier? Some suggest that someone must have expected King to be on the balcony at precisely 6 P.M. and only prepared to shoot him at that time. If this is true, then a conspiracy would have to be involved in King's death, for someone would have had to know about King's intention to leave his room at 6 P.M. to go to dinner with his colleagues. Given the fact that the FBI had wiretapped King's phones, and that the Memphis Police Department had an undercover operative in the King entourage, that governmental agencies knew of King's movements is beyond question.

The official account of what happened after the shot is also troublesome. Ray reportedly dropped a bundle of materials in front of Canipe's Amusement Company, a building next door to the rooming house, while fleeing. He supposedly dropped this bundle because he saw an empty police car 200 feet away and became scared. Although photographs confirm the presence of this police car, some scholars conclude the drop of the bundle makes no sense, because the drop location is slightly out of the way from his parked car.

The contents of the bundle are problematic, as well. Inside numerous items were found, including the .30-06 Remington Gamemaster slide-action rifle, serial No. 461476, model 760, with a Redfield variable telescopic sight, serial No. A17350, and Weaver sight mount. Also inside the bundle were cans of Schlitz beer, the 18 April edition of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, a plastic bottle of aftershave lotion, a pair of binoculars, and a portable radio with the identification number scratched off. When the FBI was able to decipher the number, it was revealed to be Ray's Missouri State Penitentiary inmate number. Initially, Ray's prints were found on the rifle, the binoculars, a Schlitz beer can, and the front page of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. Later, Ray's prints were identified on the telescopic sight of the rifle and on the bottle of aftershave lotion. However, no prints were found on the unspent bullets found in the bundle, and the bullets were of different types and made of different metals than the one that killed King.

Judge Arthur Hayes, Ray's original attorney, says a witness to the drop (Guy Canipe) claimed it occurred ten minutes *prior* to the fatal shot. If true, this serves as evidence of a conspiracy. Canipe never saw the man who dropped the bundle, but only heard a thud and witnessed a man walking away quickly. Other witnesses saw this man get into a white Mustang and drive away. Their description was consistent with Ray but none could directly identify Ray. Ray owned a white Mustang but claims he was getting gas at the time of the shooting, only to return to the area and drive away after seeing all the commotion.

It is clear that a white Mustang screeched away from the scene at about 6:03 P.M., only two minutes



after the shooting. Some speculate that it would not have been possible for the assassin in only two minutes to retrieve his materials into a bundle, run down the hallway of the second floor of the rooming house, go down the stairs to drop the bundle after seeing a police car, get into his car, and finally drive away. Some witnesses allegedly reported seeing two white Mustangs on the same street, although this is unlikely.

One report verifies that another man by the name of Ted Andrews, who wore clothes similar to Ray, was also seen at Jim's Grill by the owner, Lloyd Jowers. Andrews rented a room at another rooming house and instructed the owner to wake him at 5:30 P.M. so he could make some phone calls. Andrews reportedly left to make the calls and then returned after the assassination. An investigation into Andrews shows that he was a former officer in the navy and that his FBI file is mostly blacked out. His connection, if any, to the assassination, has never been established.

Bobbie Balfour, who worked at Jim's Grill in 1968, testified in the 1999 civil trial that she was not permitted to deliver breakfast to the second floor of the rooming house on the day of the assassination, where she sometimes delivered it to Grace Stephens. She also testified that upon returning to the restaurant the morning after the assassination, her boss, Lloyd Jowers, told her the police had found a gun on the ground in the back of the restaurant, where a large group of trees and shrubbery stood at the time of the shooting.

Numerous witnesses report seeing and hearing a man in these bushes below the Lorraine Motel balcony across the courtyard. These witnesses were essentially ignored, including Solomon Jones, King's chauffeur, and at least one other tenant of the rooming house. Other witnesses who have always said they heard what sounded like a firecracker going off below the room in the courtyard were not believed.

Olivia Catling, a nearby resident, testified at the 1999 civil trial that she heard the shot and ran to the scene with her children. She said she saw a man run and jump into a green car and drive away, that the police saw him, and did not follow him. She also heard a fireman say to the police: "That shot came

from those clump of bushes." Officers approached the bushes with guns drawn but found no one there. Some claim footprints were found in this area and that molds were taken, but the results were never publicized.

The bushes behind Jim's Grill were cut down by the City of Memphis the day following the assassination. Earl Caldwell, a *New York Times* reporter, said he saw a man crouched in these bushes and saw a puff of smoke after the shot; he told officers of this and it was verified by Solomon Jones in a sworn deposition to the FBI and MPD. A sanitation official testified that he received a call from MPD Inspector Sam Evans at 7 A.M. on 5 April telling him to cut the bushes down. Whether this was an attempt to destroy evidence may never be known; at the very least, it is suspicious.

Perhaps the most unbelievable element about the official story that Ray was a lone assassin is that Ray used the aliases of people he allegedly did not know while he was on the run from the law. Ray used the names of real people, each living within two miles of each other in Toronto. The aliases Ray used included "Eric Starvo Galt" and "Eric S. Galt," "John Willard," "Paul E. Bridgeman," and "Ramon George Sneyd." All of these men are similar in physical characteristics to Ray; Galt even had a scar on his face and right hand, just like Ray. Each of these men reportedly had visited the United States and had some kind of interaction with the police while there. This leads to the possibility that Ray got these aliases from some law enforcement agency. One scholar suggests the possibility that Ray could have obtained these aliases from the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit (LEIU), a private association of police intelligence squads within more than 200 police department and penal authority members.

Eric St. Vincent Galt reportedly was involved in Canadian military intelligence on a CIA and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) weapons project known as the proximity fuse. Eric S. Galt was originally one of Ray's aliases. According to the HSCA, Ray had established himself as Eric S. Galt and used that name almost exclusively for nine months preceding the assassination.

When he rented an apartment or a room, bought a car, secured a driver's license, took dance lessons, rented a safe deposit box, visited a doctor, attended bartending school, and subscribed to a locksmith course, Ray did so as "Eric Starvo Galt." On the other hand, in transactions directly linked to the assassination, Ray deviated from this established identity and used the aliases of "Harvey Lowmeyer" (only to purchase the rifle) and "John Willard" (only to rent the room at Bessie Brewer's rooming house). He used the aliases "Paul E. Bridgeman" and "Ramon George Sneyd" to rent rooms in Toronto. Ray reportedly changed rooms and the name he used to rent the rooms on the very day that the FBI finally announced who he really was. Originally, the FBI issued an All Points Bulletin (APB) for Eric S. Galt.

Ray's use of the Galt alias is problematic for at least two reasons. First, *not* using the Galt alias during the assassination suggests Ray did not want officials to know of the real Galt. Second, there is no Eric Starvo Galt, but there is an Eric St. Vincent Galt. Government employment files contain the signature of Eric St. Vincent Galt, who often signed his name "Eric St. V. Galt." Given that Galt used large circles instead of dots to punctuate, his signature looked like "Eric Starvo Galt." This means Ray must have obtained the "Eric Starvo Galt" alias by examining Galt's files. The fact that the CIA had access to these files points to their involvement in providing Ray with this alias.

It is unlikely that Ray made up the alias "Eric Starvo Galt." All of Ray's previous aliases were people he knew or had at least heard of. Considering that Ray and Galt looked so much alike, that Ray had plastic surgery on his nose four months prior to the assassination to make it less distinguishable, that Ray had never been to Toronto, that Ray had never met Galt, and that the name "Starvo" likely was misread by Ray somewhere, it is at least possible that Ray was provided with this alias. If so, this means a conspiracy was involved in King's death.

Galt's official record is contained in a detailed file by the RCMP, which often shares intelligence with the CIA. One examination into Eric St. V. Galt found that his father was a private detective in South Africa who came to Canada before Galt was

born. While on the run, Ray supposedly wrote to the South African consul using the Galt alias in order to request permission to go to Rhodesia. How Ray could have known about Galt's father without seeing his family background on paper is unclear.

Perhaps Ray's story of Raoul is real after all. For example, Jules Ricco Kimble (a.k.a. Rollie) lived in Montreal, where he sold guns, listened to police broadcasts, and made calls to places in the United States including New Orleans. Ray once said he met Raoul at a New Orleans bar. One researcher claimed Rollie was also once arrested in Louisiana. An FBI agent, in an interview with a researcher, claimed to have found papers in Ray's car with the name of Raoul on them, but that he withheld them from his superiors.

As Ray fled from authorities, some claim he was visited by an anonymous person, described as a "tall, fat man." At one residence, this man reportedly delivered an envelope for "Paul Bridgeman." At another residence, an envelope was delivered for "Raymond Sneyd." Conspiracy theorists allege that these were payments intended for Ray and were made by someone (e.g., Raoul) who thus knew of the aliases he was using. Some researchers have alleged that Ray ordered a ticket to London on 6 April, only four days after the assassination. The ticket supposedly arrived on 26 April but Ray did not pick it up until 2 May, one of the days that Ray was visited by the "fat man." In an interview, the "fat man" told the researcher that he'd be killed if he talked. The "fat man" spoke of an envelope he delivered to Ray that contained a letter with connections to Portugal and big money.

Ray also reportedly received phone calls at each residence in Toronto and in London. All of this suggests, at the very least, that Ray did not act alone, and that he possibly had help fleeing from the law.

### **Clear Evidence of Government Involvement?**

Although the 1999 civil jury found that various agencies of government at the city, state, and federal levels were involved in King's death, they failed to name specific agencies. Here, circumstantial evidence is suggestive of the agencies that the jury may have been referring to.

For example, immediately after King was shot, the first person to his side and the first person to point to the rooming house where the shot was supposedly fired was Marrell McCollough, the minister of transportation for the Invaders, an organization working with King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). McCollough was actually an undercover officer with the Memphis Police Department; later he would join the Secret Service.

McCollough reported directly to MPD Intelligence Officer Eli Arkin, who had links to the FBI. James Harrison, an FBI informant within the SCLC, left for Atlanta the day before the assassination, the same place Ray would go immediately after the shooting. Harrison later testified of army personnel in the MPD the week that King was killed. This was verified by Arkin during the 1999 civil trial.

The FBI's hatred for King was legendary in the 1960s. For example, in November 1964, the FBI sent a memo to King telling him to kill himself, accompanied by tape recordings from their phone taps of King's phones that reportedly contained conversations with women other than his wife. The document, released through a freedom of information request, showed that the FBI saw King as a fraud and suggested that they saw King as the most dangerous man in America.

King became a target because of his "Poor People's Campaign" and his harsh criticisms of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. First, King threatened to launch a massive, nationwide sit-in involving the nation's poor, demanding, among other things, a guaranteed minimum family income. Second, King called the United States the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world" for its war in Vietnam. Thus, King directly attacked U.S. economic and political systems; given his widespread following, the government had legitimate reason to fear the end of the status quo. This alone lends credibility to conspiracy theories that claim the U.S. government wanted King dead.

In addition to this, many commentators have noted that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was a racist and personally hated King. When one considers that the FBI conducted the official investigation into King's death, it is easy to understand the con-

cerns of the HSCA related to the investigation. King was literally at the center of the civil rights movement in the United States and was its most eloquent spokesperson; logically his death would disrupt the movement, if not end it.

The CIA also had files on King, including a report from FBI director Hoover to President Johnson that described King as "an instrument in the hands of subversive forces seeking to undermine our nation." King was considering running for U.S. president at the time, and the CIA saw King as a threat to national security. While the CIA has attempted to kill foreign leaders through its alleged assassin training programs such as QJWINN, WIROGUE, and MK-ULTRA, and though it admits to carrying out international assassinations in the past, the CIA has never admitted to trying to kill a U.S. citizen. Given that King was viewed as an enemy of the state, however, perhaps the CIA did not consider him a "real American."

The involvement of the MPD in the death of King makes sense given the connections between its officers and the FBI. For example, the MPD chief was Frank Holloman, a former FBI member who spent seven years working under Hoover. If the FBI or the CIA wanted King dead, they would likely work through agencies of local government such as a southern police department, where racist attitudes would already be more prevalent.

A memo written by the FBI published in a local newspaper in Memphis called King a hypocrite for staying in the white-owned Holiday Inn rather than a black-owned motel. Thus, King switched his room to the Lorraine Motel, where he was shot. King's room was switched from the first to the second floor by a "light-skinned SCLC associate," according to the motel owner. In fact, no SCLC associate ever admitted to this.

The government often used mainstream media outlets such as major magazines and newspapers to discredit King. On the day King was killed, his specific whereabouts were broadcast over the radio. All of this suggests that King could have been set up by an elaborate conspiracy to be murdered on 4 April.

For example, the normally heavy FBI surveillance of King stopped on 3 April. Army sharp shoot-

ers who were in place to deal with any rioters associated with King's visit to Memphis were pulled back on the day of the shooting. Carthel Weeden, captain of the nearby fire station, claimed that he was approached by military intelligence officers on the day of the killing. He led them to a rooftop overlooking the balcony and rooming house. They had briefcases containing cameras, to take pictures of the surrounding area. Although some claim these were the real killers, it has widely been acknowledged that these men did in fact take pictures, probably of the entire assassination, although such pictures have never been viewed.

In addition, the MPD units that normally tracked King were moved back several blocks prior to the assassination. One unit was only one block away at the fire station, on a rest break at the time of the killing. After King was shot, no APB was issued for the killer, no seal of the city was issued to stop the killer's escape, and no signal Q (for radio quiet) or signal Y (for coordinating red lights) was issued. A private ambulance was not allowed to transport King after the shooting; five minutes elapsed until the city ambulance arrived to transport King to the hospital.

A black Memphis police officer, Edward Reddit, was removed and sent home on the day of King's killing because of a death threat from a "reliable secret service informant." Furthermore, two black firemen were sent to a different station at the request of the MPD. The FBI contacted the MPD and told them that the death threat was actually made against an officer in Knoxville, not in Memphis; this call reportedly was received at 4:15 P.M. but Reddit was still driven home by Eli Arkin at 5:00 P.M. It is not clear what motivated these actions, but they add to the speculation that the assassination plot was well planned and involved numerous individuals within the city of Memphis.

MPD surveillance files of King were ordered to be released by a court in 1976 but they were destroyed by fire the day before they were to be picked up by the Memphis American Civil Liberties Union. One scholar claims that the complete MPD files on King were never shared with the HSCA; the ones that were shared were supposedly doctored.

One thing is certain: the records of the HSCA are sealed until 2028, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police data on King are inaccessible, likely at the request of the CIA. HSCA evidence is not subject to freedom of information requests because it is part of the congressional record. This is to protect the names of innocent persons not involved in King assassination.

Richard Sprague, the first leader of the HSCA, originally promised to make all records available to the HSCA. He claims he was forced to resign. The second Committee chair, from 1976 to 1978, was Walter Fauntroy. He claims his phone and television were bugged. Fauntroy reported reading files later in the 1990s that documented a meeting between the FBI chief, CIA operatives, and military officers in Southeast Asia concerning training assassins. Fauntroy claimed he tried to write a book about this but was then investigated by the Justice Department for a misdated check. He took this as a warning.

When Ray escaped from prison in 1977, Fauntroy heard reports about an FBI SWAT team being organized to kill him; Fauntroy alerted local officials who eventually caught Ray before the FBI could get to him.

The 1999 civil jury did not name government agencies, but it did name Frank Liberto, a produce dealer, as the man who paid the money to have King killed. Liberto allegedly delivered \$100,000 to Lloyd Jowers at Jim's Grill for payment to kill King. Raoul supposedly also brought the rifle in a box to Jowers the day before the killing. John McPherson, another store owner, testified that he picked up produce at 5:15 P.M. from Liberto's store and heard him say "shoot the SOB on the balcony." Café owner Lavade Addison, a friend of Liberto's in the 1970s, has claimed Liberto admitted that he funded King's killing.

The links between Liberto and the government in this case are not clear. However, a thorough investigation into Liberto shows he had deep connections to the Mafia, the CIA, and other powerful interests, all of whom have demonstrated in the past that it is acceptable to murder someone viewed as a threat to the nation. And so, as with many conspiracy theories, the leading theory of the death of Martin



Luther King, Jr., alleges that King was murdered by someone with ties to the CIA, FBI, local police department, and Mafia.

Matthew B. Robinson

**See also:** Civil Rights Movement; COINTELPRO; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar.

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**Kissinger, Henry**

After coming to prominence as a Harvard scholar, Henry Kissinger served as President Richard Nixon's national security adviser (1969–1973) and as the secretary of state (1973–1977) under both Nixon and Gerald Ford. Kissinger held both posts simultaneously, but even before then he had directly run foreign policy from the White House, repeatedly bypassing the State Department. This direct approach occasionally led to policy masterstrokes such as Nixon's visit to China, but it also created an air of secrecy as policy was made without congressional and public scrutiny. This was most controversial in the Vietnam War, but Kissinger has also been accused of breaking international law elsewhere and of involvement in secret buggings and wiretaps.

At Harvard, Kissinger made his reputation with a study of the realpolitik of the Austrian chancellor, Klemens von Metternich, who emphasized power and self-interest over more moral concerns. Kissinger's liberal critics (especially Hitchens) accuse him of secretly pursuing similarly amoral policies, including tacit endorsement of the 1971 Bangladesh coup that led to 3 million deaths and of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975, which caused 200,000 deaths. Vietnam, however, is the main issue of contention, with Kissinger being accused, for instance, of sabotaging the 1968 Paris peace talks to ensure Nixon's victory at the polls. The U.S. and North Vietnam had agreed to a bombing halt, but, following Kissinger's tip-off, Nixon's camp and right-wing supporters pressed the South Vietnamese government into renouncing the plan. The move all but ensured Nixon's victory, but Kissinger still continued sending overtures to the Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphreys, criticizing Nixon and angling for the national security adviser job in case of an upset.

Once in office, Nixon and Kissinger quickly reacted to a North Vietnamese offensive by bombing enemy bases in neutral Cambodia. The plan was justifiable in military terms, but to avoid rousing public opinion and to test diplomatic reactions, it was not revealed to, or approved by, Congress. (However, when the House Judiciary Committee



President Richard Nixon in deep discussion with adviser Henry Kissinger. Kissinger was the principal architect of U.S. foreign policy during the administrations of Republican presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He served as national security adviser during the first Nixon administration and secretary of state from 1972 until the end of the Ford administration, the first foreign-born person to hold that position. (National Archives)

voted to impeach Nixon in 1973, it refused to endorse an article citing the secret bombing.) News of the secret bombing quickly leaked to the press, with a full description appearing in the *New York Times* on 9 May 1969. Nixon and Kissinger, who were both secretive and suspicious of others, reacted in what was to become a typical manner by angrily demanding to know who leaked the report. J. Edgar Hoover was summoned and Kissinger agreed to a list of suspects, eventually totaling thirteen government officials and four journalists, including close friends and staff, whose phones were then bugged. Kissinger has subsequently tried to play down his role in these “Kissinger taps,” while arguing that they were justified because of national

security. However, they were run outside of the normal FBI channels, with no official records kept and summaries sent straight to Kissinger until May 1970, when Nixon decided that the White House should receive them instead. The taps ran until February 1971 and they were the first of the political wiretaps that came to characterize Nixon’s presidency. They were also cited as evidence in the House Judicial Committee’s decision to recommend Nixon’s impeachment.

Kissinger’s temper and his ability to provoke Nixon were most noticeably shown over the Pentagon Papers. When this huge study of the Vietnam War was leaked to the press, Kissinger was enraged, as it threatened to undermine his secret negotia-

tions with China. His mood was darkened even further when the leak was revealed to be Daniel Ellsberg, a former student and aide of his. Kissinger denounced Ellsberg to Nixon as a drug-fueled eccentric who enjoyed taking potshots at Vietnamese civilians, and so enraged the president that he supported action that led to an illegal break-in of Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. When the judge at Ellsberg's trial in 1972 learned of the break-in and of recordings of Ellsberg on the "Kissinger taps," he dismissed all of the charges against the defendant.

Kissinger's and Nixon's heightened paranoia following the Cambodia bombing leaks meant that they soon cut all but a few others out of foreign policy discussions. National Security Council staff members were reduced to guessing what was happening by watching the limousines coming to the White House. Kissinger even told his staff to keep an eye on his chief of staff, General Alexander Haig, who was said to listen secretly to Kissinger's phone calls. In December 1971, another of Kissinger's aides, navy yeoman Charles Radford, was also discovered to be secretly photocopying documents and passing them on to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas Moorer. This had a dramatic effect within the White House, with Kissinger demanding action and threatening to quit. However, the incident was so embarrassing that nothing happened except for more wiretaps and yet more secrecy. Eventually, it was estimated that only seven people including Nixon really knew what was happening in Vietnam. None of them were in the cabinet.

Since leaving office, Kissinger has become one of the most respected elder statesmen in the United States. Partly through good self-publicity, such as his voluminous memoirs, he has won much respect for some of his actions during the Nixon presidency, including his role in the recognition of China. Typically, this involved a fair amount of duplicity as few in the administration knew about Kissinger's visit to Peking until Nixon dramatically revealed it to the nation. Kissinger also won the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the 1972 Vietnam peace talks, even though they led to little more than a brief cessation in the war. His prolonged efforts to secure détente with the Soviet Union were more successful, as was

his role during Watergate. The scandal only indirectly involved him, and he was portrayed as holding the presidency together, running foreign policy, and edging Nixon toward resignation.

*Neil Denslow*

**See also:** Cambodia, Secret Bombing of; Hoover, J. Edgar; Liddy, G. Gordon; Nixon, Richard; Pentagon Papers; Watergate.

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### **Know-Nothings**

The American Party, or Know-Nothing Party, developed in the context of the increasing sectional tensions that led to the Civil War. An exclusive, native Protestant, anti-immigrant, and anti-Catholic organization, it stemmed from the nativist movement and from the anxiety caused by the massive influx of immigrants, reaching its peak in the 1850s.

### **The Papal Plot**

Foreign immigration led many conservatives to believe that the nation's social and even political ills could be solved by the elimination of foreign influence. The country had experienced an unprecedented flow of immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century, reaching dazzling numbers. From 1841 to 1860, more than 4 million immigrants arrived, with two notable peaks: 369,980 in 1850 and 379,000 in 1851, the majority of whom were Irish (1.2 million) and German (more than a million). In cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, and St. Louis, immigrants outnumbered native-born citizens. Many feared the impact on the very fabric of the United States of such large groups, impoverished, ignorant, disease ridden, and alien in their religion and languages. From a political point of view, many

traditional parties were distressed by the growing political influence of those groups in big cities, especially Catholics, since many of these immigrants tended to be manipulated by urban democratic political machines.

Consequently, there developed a strong belief in a papal plot to subvert U.S. values and even destroy U.S. institutions and cultural homogeneity. In addition, Catholics were deemed unfit to live in a republic and unpatriotic because they owed allegiance to the pope. The Irish were especially blamed as tools used by the pope to control U.S. religious and political life. Moreover, the great number of Catholics moving to the Midwest caused the Know-Nothings and other nativists to think that the power of the pope might be transferred there.

By the end of the 1840s, several nativist secret societies were formed to protect and save the country, supposedly threatened by an alien menace. In 1849, Charles Allen, a New Yorker, formed a secret fraternal society made up of native-born Protestant working men, artisans, and small businessmen, who feared economic competition from cheaper immigrant labor. It was called the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, and evolved into a secret political movement (with a formal pledge of secrecy) known as the American Party, formed in 1854 by delegates from thirteen states. If questioned, members were required to say, "I know nothing," hence the popular appellation. They pledged never to vote for any foreign-born or Catholic candidate.

Know-Nothings made wide use of newspapers and periodicals for their propaganda, together with a network of activists from Boston to the Mississippi Valley. Some predicted that the pope and his army would land on U.S. shores to set up a new Vatican in Cincinnati, Ohio. One famous Know-Nothing was Samuel Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, who wrote a series of articles denouncing a "foreign conspiracy." Another was Lyman Beecher, a seventh-generation Puritan preacher. Intent on stopping the West from becoming Catholic country, he wrote that he came to Cincinnati "to battle the Pope for the garden spot of the world." Mob attacks on Catholic churches in New England soon became frequent.

### Popularity without Long-lasting Results

In practice, the Know-Nothings' political aims were not so much to suppress immigration, nor even restrict it—although some sponsored resolutions to bar paupers and criminals—but to control the influence of foreigners and "purify" U.S. politics. Their legislative program called for the exclusion of foreigners and Catholics from public office, for more stringent naturalization laws (extension of the residency period before naturalization from five to twenty-one years), for literacy tests as a prerequisite for voting, and for restrictions on liquor sales.

The Know-Nothings capitalized on the Compromise of 1850 and the furor over "Bleeding Kansas," which led to a fundamental political realignment in the mid-1850s, winning national prominence chiefly because the two major parties—Whigs and Democrats—were at that time breaking apart over the slavery issue. By 1855 they had captured control of the legislatures in parts of New England and were the dominant opposition party to the Democrats in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

In the presidential election of 1856, the party, by then mainly composed of southerners as a result of the internal debates over slavery, supported former Whig president Millard Fillmore with a simplistic platform—reputedly the shortest in U.S. history: "America must rule America." When the vote was counted, Fillmore gathered nearly one million popular votes (21 percent of the popular vote) and eight electoral votes. In Congress, the party had five senators and forty-three representatives.

Afterwards, Know-Nothingism declined for internal reasons: lack of efficient organization, the sudden decline in immigration, the failure to push any legislation against immigration and Catholics, disagreement over secrecy, and the mounting violence of its supporters (rioting and bloodshed took place during the elections). The slavery issue broke down the party, as was the case for the Whigs and the Democrats. In 1855, at the party's first convention in Philadelphia, when southern delegates pushed a resolution to support the Kansas-Nebraska Act, northern delegates left the room. While northern workers felt more threatened by the southern Slave Power



than by the pope and Catholic immigrants, at the same time, fewer southerners were willing to support a party that ignored the question of the expansion of slavery. By 1860, many members and sympathizers joined the ranks of the growing Republican Party with a political platform based on free soil. In fact, both parties overlapped ideologically; their supporters both believed in conspiracy, one being the pope's, the other the slaveholders'. However, historians have debated whether the inevitability of the Know-Nothings' decline in favor of Republicanism was because the papal plot was less plausible than the slaveholders' conspiracy.

The anti-immigration stance of the party was condemned by many Americans, like Abraham Lincoln, who frowned on their discriminatory and exclusionist philosophy as betraying such sacred U.S. values as equality and hospitality to immigrants; or William H. Seward, who attacked their failure to see that U.S. economic development required immigrants. In 1855, Abraham Lincoln wrote in a private letter: "I am not a Know-Nothing. . . . As a nation we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, *except negroes.*' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, *except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics.*'"

The Know-Nothings left an indelible mark on U.S. politics. The movement eroded loyalty to the national political parties, was instrumental in the breakdown of the Whig Party, and made the political system more fragile before the divisive issue of slavery.

*Aïssatou Sy-Wonyu*

**See also:** Anti-Catholicism; Nativism; Slave Power.

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#### **Koch Brothers**

Charles G. Koch, CEO of Koch Industries Inc. (KII), and younger brother William I. Koch, president of the Oxbow Corporation, pursued each other through thirty years of mutual conspiracy accusations that ultimately centered on the oil industry's ability to influence government actions through campaign contributions.

Control of Kansas-based KII, the second-largest privately held company in the United States, was divided in 1967 among the four sons of ardent libertarian Fred Chase Koch: Frederick (b. 1932), Charles (b. 1935), and twins David and William (b. 1940). In 1983, KII bought the shares of William, Frederick, and their allies following a 1980 attempt to oust Charles as CEO. Dissatisfied with the deal, William eventually brought more than two dozen legal actions for fraud, conspiracy, and racketeering; most failed. Internal KII beliefs that William's conspiracy charges were themselves part of an anti-KII conspiracy gained support in July 1999, when the *New York Times* reported that William hired private investigators to pose as journalists to get inside information from KII.

William Koch's only successful lawsuit was a Qui Tam action—an individual suit on behalf of the federal government—charging that Koch Industries had conspired to steal oil from Osage lands. This suit followed a 1988 Senate investigation that was dropped at the behest of Republican senators Bob Dole and Nancy Kassenbaum of Kansas, Don Nickles of Oklahoma, and Democratic senator David Boren of Oklahoma. Using Federal Election Commission (FEC) data, an article in the *Nation* asserted that all four were beneficiaries of Koch political contributions; the article also alleged that a 1989 FBI

case summary said there was probable cause to prosecute KII (Perry). A 1999 jury trial found KII guilty.

Questions of political influence arose again in a 1998 Senate investigation that suggested that Charles and David had evaded campaign spending limits in 1996 by funneling \$1.3 million through the Economic Education Trust (EET) to conservative consulting group Triad Management Services. No subpoena was issued for EET's financial records, and the *New York Times* alleged that Senator Nickles blocked further investigation. In legitimate campaign financing, KII became the second largest political contributor in the energy industry in 1997–1998, with 90 percent of its donations going to Republican causes. Self-styled “Renaissance Man” William was the forty-sixth largest source of Democratic soft money in the same time period, putting him in a league with Bell Atlantic and Federal Express.

Party rivalries came to a head shortly before the 2000 elections. In August 2000, KII was indicted on ninety-seven felony counts for violating emission standards for cancer-causing benzene at its Corpus Christi, Texas, oil refinery. While the Al Gore campaign told the *Washington Post* that KII's environmental performance showed how the oil industry was buying influence with then-governor George W. Bush, the *Daily Oklahoman* argued that the indictment had been timed to discredit the Bush campaign. In April 2001, the charges were reduced to a single count, and KII agreed to pay \$20 million in penalties.

Although a terse joint memo, dated 25 May 2001, announced the end of all litigation between KII and the Oxbow Corporation, the 1983 buyout cast a long shadow. In January 2001, former Playmate Anna Nicole Smith sued KII for conspiring with her stepson E. Pierce Marshall to deny her \$474 million in KII stock owned by her late husband, J. Howard Marshall II. The elder Marshall had disinherited son J. Howard Marshall III for backing William in 1980. In earlier legal battles over the estate, a probate judge was removed from the case for having previously taken trips that were partly funded by a Koch foundation as part of a judge education program.

*Wende Vyborney Feller*

**See also:** Libertarianism; Oil Industry.

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## Ku Klux Klan

While the scale of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) activity has fluctuated through history and its nature has varied across geography, Klansmen have always framed their enemies in conspiratorial terms. Accordingly, the character, methods, and motivation of the Klan's enemies have varied in the conspiracy theories that Klansmen have promulgated during different historical periods and in different places. Nevertheless, logical patterns in the historical development of their conspiratorial theories are evident. Beginning with the first Klan groups of the 1860s, KKK conspiracy theories have repeatedly opposed economic, social, and political changes that threatened,

undermined, or overturned the power of white supremacy in U.S. society.

**Diabolical Republicans:  
Reconstruction-Era Klan Ideology**

During 1866–1871, a faction of “Radical Republicans” adopted the political strategy of granting citizenship, legal protection, militia membership, and voting rights to the recently freed slaves, in order to create an electorate that would support their nationalistic and liberal-capitalist project. To southern Democrats, black enfranchisement meant that intelligent, virtuous, and patriotic government was succumbing to ignorance, stupidity, thievery, and vice. To counter the Republicans, agents of the Democratic Party revived the tradition of the pre-war “regulators” and slave patrols. Secretive ritual fraternities, quickly subsumed under the label Ku Klux Klan, endeavored to destroy the Republican Party infrastructure and reestablish control over credit, the transportation of cotton, and black labor. More generally, they aimed to restore racial subordination in all aspects of political, economic, and social life.

The Ku Klux Klans, as well as the Democratic Party mouthpieces that supported their terrorist operations, raised alarms that “diabolical” Union Leagues were conspiring to reduce the South to “Negro domination” (Trelease, xxx). Enfranchisement of blacks undertaken by a “New England conclave . . . lorded over by Beelzebub of the fallen” had brought the state “under the domain of Negro supremacy” (Nelson, 89). Founded upon “malice and cowardly hatred . . . for the white inhabitants of the South” and a “desire to maintain power at the cost of principal and honor,” the Republicans were inflicting an “outrage on liberty and free government.” They were implementing “despotic” measures to “supercede State authority with the government of the bayonet” (Trelease, 390).

Breaches of deferential behavior and decorum threatened to disrupt the entire fabric of white supremacy. The arrival of Yankee troops in the South had aroused “insolence, impertinence, impudence and ingratitude” among the former slaves (Litwack, 144). Black parades were deemed “outra-

geous spectacles.” Petty theft and consumption of alcohol prepared the way for insurrection. Exceptional and isolated cases of violence against former masters were sensationalized: black assassins had killed overseers and armed groups of slaves had terrorized the white populace, seizing plantations to parcel out among themselves. Insubordination and disregard of curfews were characterized as “insurrection” and refusal to work was defined as “mutiny” (Litwack, 148). Blacks were being incited to rape and rapine at Republican meetings. Klansmen proclaimed that Republican Party Union Leagues were responsible for stimulating a bloody and terrible wave of assault, arson, and murder. The South was being reduced to anarchy because vindictive Republican judges dealt lightly with Union League criminals. Open talk of acquiring land and voting became incitement to race war.

The Democratic press also printed lurid tales that Republicans who lived on terms of equality with blacks were engaging in “cohabitation . . . accompanied by the most unbridled and groveling licentiousness” (Nelson, 135). Tales of Republican depravity were linked to images of threatening black men and, through metaphors of theft, violence, and putrefaction, to the financial decline of southern towns. Complex changes in transportation, credit, and shipping technology were transformed into a simple, racist explanation for southern poverty. Yankee speculators, like a horde of locusts, had descended to prey upon the South through the political manipulation of gullible freemen. The “invasion” of Republican-sponsored interstate railroads were likened to political “machines” and “rings” (Nelson, 4; 113; 135). The new railroad lines that passed from Virginia to Georgia were seen as engines of corruption whereby Yankee speculators who had bought black votes imported women and liquor to influence legislators (Nelson, 86–87; 98).

The greatest ambition of enfranchised blacks, Klansmen claimed, was to coerce white women into sexual favors and intermarriage. The ensuing “amalgamation” of the races, it was claimed, would create a race of mulattos. The South would “be ruled out of the family of white nations” (Litwack, 265; Trelease, xxxvii). Conflating sexual fear and partisan

politics, Klansmen posed as chivalrous avengers: vindictive Republicans were represented as unleashing lust-crazed savages upon war widows and defenseless virgins. Since white womanhood symbolized the heart of culture and refinement, their ravishment by animalistic black men represented in the minds of the Klan the destruction of the South as a whole: an assault on either connoted an implicit carnal attack on the other.

Although localized and lacking synchronization, Ku Klux Klan violence, including uncounted whippings, beatings and rapes, murders, and massacres, played a major role in disarming black militia and preventing black voting in at least eight states. Republican parties were destroyed at the local level and in many cities, while Georgia and Louisiana were entirely “redeemed.” The Republican Congress, in turn, passed a series of Federal Enforcement Acts enabling military intervention, suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and enough indictments and convictions to break the back of the Klans in 1872. By this point, however, the Klans had served their purpose.

After 1863 the federal government lost the will to maintain Reconstruction. Interracial state governments steadily collapsed in the face of intimidation at the polls by white paramilitaries, open intimidation by mobs, and pogroms against black communities. Although paramilitary groups—such as the “whitecappers” who drove off independent black farmers in Mississippi during 1892–1893 and again a decade later—were occasionally revived, lynching and the implementation of legal segregation served to maintain a rigid caste system in the South.

### **The Second Ku Klux Klan: A Catholic Conspiracy**

Claiming to have received a mystical vision that had instructed him to unite native-born white Protestant men in battle against aliens, radicals, political corruption, prostitution, and religious infidelity, William Simmons revived the KKK in 1915. His Klansmen harassed presumed slackers, enemy aliens, and immoral women. By the mid-1920s, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had become a national, predominantly urban, mainstream social

movement of 4 million members who represented a generally balanced cross section of white Protestant denominations and social classes. While racist ideology and vigilante violence continued to characterize Klaverns in the South and Southwest, as the order moved into regions and communities with no history of vigilantism or in which the black population was small, different concerns shaped Klavern activity.

In the context of the time, these Klansmen were not more reactionary, racist, ethnocentric, religiously bigoted, or socially alienated than the general white Protestant population. United by a commitment to civic activism and social order, however, Klansmen were more likely to express and act upon their concerns: curtailment of vice; open and honest government; modern roads, sewage systems, and schools; enforcement of conservative Protestant morality, especially Prohibition; and Protestant control of the public schools.

What differentiated the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from other reactions to disruptive change was the conspiratorial outlook and bellicosity that continued to permeate their worldview. While Klansmen had employed conspiracy theory and countersubversive rhetoric during Reconstruction, the primary enemy whom many deemed responsible for subverting their world had changed, probably because of the new geographical contexts in which the Klan was now operating. Akin to the carpetbaggers of Reconstruction lore, Catholics and, to a lesser extent, Jews now played the role of concrete, alien conspirators in the Second Ku Klux Klan’s ideology.

Enough Americans agreed with Klan leader Hiram Evans that “We must teach alien peoples the fundamental principals of human liberty before we can permit further masses of ignorant, superstitious religious devotees to come within our borders” that Congress would pass a highly restrictive immigration bill in 1924 (Feldman, 53). They may also have agreed that Catholics owned houses of prostitution and committed a disproportionate number of crimes. Non-Klansmen probably gave less credence, however, to Evans’s warnings that “the Dago on the Tiber,” Jesuit assassins, and the Knights of Columbus were stockpiling arms in Catholic churches, in



preparation for a merciless massacre of U.S. Protestants and a papist takeover of the federal government (Blee, 92).

Klansmen distributed phony literature that endorsed candidates seeking to “Catholicize” the United States (Rhomberg). Using spurious statistics, they argued that increasing Catholic power threatened the separation of church and state. Catholic priests were adjudged to be “foreign emissaries operating in the United States” (Wade, 179). Catholic control of the press, organized labor, and the public schools, combined with the control of “polyglot peoples” by Catholic political machines, was enabling the “hierarchical church [to spread] its tentacles, like an octopus, into the very vitals of the body politic” (Bennett, 214–215). Klansmen declared that they were fighting “to maintain a free republican form of government against the subtle political encroachments of the self arrogated, infallible, universal autocracy known as the Roman Catholic hierarchy” (MacLean, 95). Catholics, they maintained, were imbued with the “monarchical ideal of the individual as subject instead of citizen.”

The Knights of Columbus was charged with training and equipping an army bent on conquest for Rome. Papist agents, Klansmen warned, had poisoned President Warren G. Harding and put hidden religious symbols on the dollar bill, in preparation for the pope’s arrival in the United States. Klan recruiters displayed photographs of the Episcopal church on Mount Alban, in Washington, D.C., to claim that a new Vatican was under construction. Indiana Klansmen asserted that every time a male child was born, the congregation buried a rifle beneath a Catholic church and that church steeples were built high so that Catholics could “rain down fire on cities after the Pope declared war on Protestants” (Wade, 226). The sewer system under Notre Dame University was said to contain an arsenal of heavy artillery and explosives. The KKK circulated a phony Knights of Columbus Oath, a pledge to “hang, burn, boil, flay, and bury alive” all non-Catholics (Chalmers, 111). Such propagandizing was effective in rousing public vigilance. KKK anti-Catholicism also focused on the theme of lechery. In North Manchester, Indiana, nearly 1,500 people

turned out to ambush the pope, said to be arriving by train. Catholic stores were boycotted and Catholics were dismissed from schools and hospital boards in other parts of the state.

While the Klan decried Jewish violation of the Sabbath and accused Jews of trying to take the Bible out of the public schools, the Klan’s antisemitism dwelled on economic and social themes more than religious ones. Depending on local economy and tangible property, Klansmen charged the “International Jew” with “cosmopolitanism” (MacLean, 138). Portraying exploitation, destructive competition, and economic concentration as unnatural anomalies caused by the perfidy of a small minority, Klansmen upheld “good,” small-scale capitalism. Enlisting the infamous czarist police forgery *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Klansmen, like other anti-semites of the 1920s, described bolshevism as Jewish controlled and Jewish financed. The regime, in promoting female equality, divorce, and “free love,” had in their view nationalized women. “Hebrew libertines” were deemed the secret force behind the white slave trade and a popular culture that was bringing moral ruin upon the nation’s youth (Blee, 87).

Although the specific enemies were different from those of their Reconstruction-era ancestors, 1920s Klansmen also attacked alien outsiders in woman’s name. They employed a similar rhetoric concerning gender and sexuality to illustrate political concerns. Recitations of sexual subversion by Communists, Catholics, and Jews centered on charges that each would recast the family and morality, destroying civilization.

The Klan’s appeal to middle-class fears about female sexuality was a highly effective recruiting technique, yet it ultimately proved precarious. The irony of the Second Ku Klux Klan is that its leadership fell victim to same type of scandal that had motivated rank-and-file Klansmen to join the order. In 1925, Indiana Klan leader D. C. Stephenson, in an alcoholic frenzy, raped, bit, and brutalized a twenty-eight-year-old neighbor whom he had been courting. During his trial another woman sued Stephenson for desertion and child support. Throughout the nation, Klansmen resigned in disgust. Scandal also rocked

other realms. In LaGrande, Oregon, a Klansman was convicted of performing an illegal abortion on a clerical assistant with whom he had been engaging in sexual relations. In Denver, members of the American Legion raided the offices of the Klan vice squad and uncovered a complex network of tip-offs, graft, and protection. More generally, the Klan's ultimate failure to enforce Prohibition led to disillusionment throughout the nation.

In the South, however, Klan activity never disappeared. Here, racist rhetoric remained apocalyptic, since it was believed that the slightest concession would embolden blacks to undermine the whole apparatus of white supremacy. Klansmen continued to warn of "indigestible races," "mongrel populations," "defiled blood," and "racial pollution" as threats to the body politic (MacLean, 141). Here too, where Klansmen saw themselves as an army in training for a war between the races, there was pervasive extralegal coercion and violence. Lynching, flogging with rawhide straps, and other forms of vigilante violence were employed to terrorize African Americans, labor organizers, and people who broke moral codes.

### **From Anticommunism to Antisemitism: The Klan after World War II**

As economic destitution, unionization, and New Deal programs combined to undermine white supremacy in the South during the 1930s, Klansmen fused racism with anticommunism and antifederal government rhetoric. As Franklin D. Roosevelt redefined U.S. liberalism in terms of active government and a welfare state, Klansmen charged that he was subverting U.S. principles and destroying the foundations of states' rights. The political alliance forged between the New Deal and the labor movement provided Communists with an opportunity to establish a legitimate role, providing ammunition for the administration's enemies. Anticipating the anti-communism of the early cold war, Klan Wizard Evans was one of the first to charge that the Congress of Industrial Organizations "is infested with communists" (Wade, 262). In Alabama and Georgia, urban police, rural sheriffs, and Klansmen worked together to terrorize Communist Party organizers. Northern anti-union corporations also employed

vigilantes to flog union men. World War II, however, provided a new context for activism in the South as African Americans, liberals, and labor organizers linked white supremacy to Nazi racial policies.

Nevertheless, Klansmen posed as guardians against Communist subversion, in a context where the term "communism" was used by many southerners to describe almost anyone who did not exhibit strict orthodoxy on the racial issue. Southern segregationists continued to maintain that civil rights activists intended intermarriage and destruction of the white race through "mongrelization." Klansmen, however, concluded that the real force behind these changes was the international Communist conspiracy. Klansmen labeled Martin Luther King, Jr., a "rabble rousing nigger Communist," and asserted that Rosa Parks was a Communist agent (Rich, 68–69). They believed that the ultimate aim of these Communists was the destruction of tradition in order to pave the way for their takeover of the United States. Their plan involved the gradual weakening of the moral fiber of the nation until it disintegrated from within.

Antisemitism played an ambiguous role in KKK anticommunist rhetoric: Jews formed a sort of continuum between the racial threat of blacks and the ideological threat of Communists. As Alabama Klansman E. L. Edwards put it, "The good niggers don't want this integration any more than we do. It is the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] that is trying to jam it down our throats and it is backed by Jew money." It was, he said, "Russia's intention to Mongrelize the world, to mix the white race with the black so as to bring it under Communist control." Jewish Communists were credited with providing the brains and the driving force behind integration, yet most Klansmen still adhered to a religious view of Jewish difference. Robert Shelton, leader of the largest Klan organization of the 1960s, blamed international Jewish financiers for World War I and the Great Depression, but he also went so far as to say that if Jews converted to Christianity, they would be welcomed into the Klan. Other Klansmen declared that Jewish biology expressed itself through the "Jewish" ideology of communism.

Some postwar Klan leaders, however, would come to view Jews as an enemy of the white race because of who they were and not only for what they did. Elaborating upon the themes of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a number of postwar Klan organizations would expand and develop antisemitism in such a way that it eventually emerged as an all-encompassing conspiracy theory in Klan ideology.

The White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi, the most violent Klan organization of the 1960s, saw the Jews as the major destructive force in the United States. White Knights leader Samuel Bowers delivered religious sermons lambasting Jews as the “anti-Christ” and “Demons of the Synagogue of Satan” (Rich, 74). For him, the preservation of a constitutional republic was a means to an end: the preservation of Christian civilization.

It was this sort of dualistic antisemitism that would help create a revolutionary impulse during the late 1960s. Some of the most militant White Knights, as well as members of the United Florida Ku Klux Klan, also joined the National States Rights Party (NSRP), a small but active group of vehement antisemites who excoriated the “Federal Bureau of Integration” as a tool of the Jews. Influenced by the Christian Identity preaching of Wesley Swift, NSRP ideology was “forward looking” in the context of ideological development on the racist right.

In the 1970s, many Klansmen would be converted to the ideas of historical revisionism and Christian Identity. Historical revisionism held that the Holocaust was a figment of the Jewish imagination, a lie that had been concocted to gain the necessary sympathy for the creation of the State of Israel. Christian Identity theology provided Klansmen with an eschatology that viewed Aryans as the true Israelites, as God’s chosen people. According to the “seedline” interpretation of Genesis, blacks and other “mud people” were the result of a separate creation, given to whites by God as “beasts of the fields” (Rich, 291–296). Jews, however, were quite literally evil personified, having sprung from sexual intercourse between Eve and Satan in the Garden of Eden. Convinced of the inherent evil of Jews, and believing that Jews had taken over the

United States, some Klansmen concluded they must wage a holy war to reclaim their nation from the “Zionist Occupation Government” (Rich, 363–369).

In the 1960s, although some tiny groups of Klansmen in northeastern states affiliated with George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party, the great majority of Klansmen, many of whom would have fought in World War II, rejected Nazism as a totalitarian, anticapitalist, un-Christian form of tyranny. Before the mid-1960s, moreover, the largest Ku Klux Klan organization in the United States, Robert Shelton’s UKA (United Klans of America) respected, identified with, and even revered the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Klansmen presumed that the FBI was a meritorious ally in a common battle against un-American subversion. In 1965–1966, however, the House Un-American Activities Committee declared the Ku Klux Klan to be un-American and exposed its terrorist activities. In response, Robert Shelton asserted that “left-wing elements” were “using the Klan as bait to destroy the Committee itself because of its Southern membership” (Shelton).

Alluding to aggressive interviews by FBI agents pursuing Klan murders in Alabama, Shelton also declared that “the FBI and Justice Department have harassed members of this Klan and other right-wing organizations, causing them to lose their jobs” (Shelton). Yet he also reached out, offering that “it’s not necessary for them to infiltrate. If they fill out an application, they can do so and we’ll welcome them into the Klan and have fraternal unionism” (Shelton). The United Klans, unlike the NSRP and the White Knights, thus remained supportive of the system in that they presented illegitimate infiltration of the government rather than the national security state itself as the cause of their woes.

Between 1966 and 1971, however, the FBI accelerated its COINTELPRO–White Hate Groups program against the Klans. Using prosecution under federal law, media exposure, selective enforcement of misdemeanor law, tax audits, poison pen letters, informants, “snitch-jackets,” and other disruptive covert

action techniques, the FBI discredited a number of top Klan leaders and replaced them with informants, created and aggravated internecine factionalism, and scared off most rank-and-file members, thereby neutralizing Klan activity throughout the South. By 1972, the UKA newspaper would declare:

“[The United States government] has been transformed [in]to a corrupt, unnatural and degenerate monstrosity. . . . we need to put a bullet into its brain and hammer a stake through its heart. If that means blood and chaos and battling the alien enemy from house to house in burning cities throughout the land, then by God it is better that we get on with it now than later” (United Klans of America).

A prelude to the so-called Nazification of the KKK in the late 1970s, such statements marked a significant transition in KKK conspiracy theory. By the mid-1970s, conservative notions of nationalism and masculinity had been challenged by the defeat in Vietnam, economic decline, rising crime rates, and feminism. According to the KKK, Jewish teachers had repressed expression of Christian faith in public life and Jewish women had promoted feminism and lesbianism in a conspiracy to limit the white birthrate. The welfare state, meanwhile, was said to pay minorities to give birth to illegitimate offspring, who would grow up to a life of crime, even as the Jewish media promoted immorality among all Americans. This view held that the Zionist Occupation Government—a Jewish cabal that controlled the intelligence community, finances and banking, the media, and foreign policy—had brought war in Vietnam, moral decay at home, and, through their promotion of feminism, homosexuality, abortion, the welfare state, and racial miscegenation, would bring about the genocide of the white race.

In addition to adopting new countersubversive discourses, Klan groups paramilitarized during the 1970s. For many racists, the paramilitary vigilante, a new warrior hero, promised to resurrect a lost culture. In the 1960s, paramilitary training by Klansmen had been very limited and highly secretive. In the 1980s, however, militant activists on the racist right would reject hierarchical chains of command in favor of a secretive cell structure. Putting words

into action, they enacted an insurrection against the Zionist Occupation Government. As the leader of The Order, a mixed group of neo-Nazis and Klansmen, put it in 1983:

“A secret war has been developing for the last year between the regime in Washington and an ever growing number of white people who are determined to regain what our forefathers discovered, explored, settled, built and died for. . . . The FBI has been able to keep this war secret only because up until now we have been doing nothing more than growing and preparing. The government, however, seems determined to force the issue. So we have no choice left but to stand up and fight back. Hail Victory!” (Mathews).

Klan ideology became revolutionary. The majority of white Americans had become “race-traitors” (Beam).

After the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan saw themselves as redeeming the South and southern womanhood from black-Republican conspirators. In the 1920s, they fought off papist conspiracies to subvert the Republic and alien conspiracies to undermine Protestant morality. Retreating back to the South in the following decades, they fought against the international Communist conspiracy. After the mid-1950s, however, white supremacy changed from being an integral part of southern life into an extremist ideology. As society changed around it, Klansmen lost touch with the mainstream. Condemned today for their conspiratorial racism as well as their violence, Klansmen have become un-American extremists.

*John Drabble*

**See also:** Anti-Catholicism; Antisemitism; COINTELPRO; House Un-American Activities Committee; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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## LaRouche, Lyndon

Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche, Jr., has had a long and controversial career on the fringes of U.S. politics—running several times for president in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s—and as the founder and leader of a cultlike political organization that subscribes to a host of conspiracy theories that defy categorization as left or right wing.

Born in New Hampshire to French Canadian immigrant parents in 1922, LaRouche was raised as a Quaker, the liberal faith to which both his mother (a former evangelical Protestant) and his father (born a Roman Catholic) had converted. LaRouche's father never got along with the pacifist Quakers and had a falling out with the church's political wing—the American Friends Service Committee—over some embezzled funds. Both the father's combativeness and his alleged financial misdeeds would be repeated in the son's later political career.

While LaRouche the younger attended, but did not graduate from, Northeastern University, he was largely an autodidact, delving deeply into the works of the great philosophers. He was, he later claimed, particularly taken with the moral reasoning of Immanuel Kant. True to his Quaker roots, LaRouche was assigned to a Civilian Public Service camp for conscientious objectors during World War II. Following the conflict, he drifted toward the Trotskyist left, joining the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1948.

While a dedicated organizer for the party for more than fifteen years, LaRouche eventually had a

falling-out with his fellow Trotskyists in 1966, going on to organize a chapter of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), a Maoist-leaning group. The PLP chapter, which included many former members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a radical, anti-Vietnam War movement, became involved in the radical takeover of Columbia University in 1968. In the wake of the sit-in, LaRouche organized the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), ostensibly to create a political alliance between student activists and labor organizers, out of the collapsing SDS.

During the early 1970s, LaRouche and the NCLC fought bitter sectarian fights with the SWP and the Communist Party of the U.S.A. (CPUSA) that occasionally became violent. The goal was control of the far left movement in New York and, in this struggle, LaRouche began to develop the two tactics that would mark his future political career. The first was smear tactics, the careful planting of outlandish rumors and stories about political enemies. LaRouche would later go on to attack the personal reputations of widely disparate public figures from former secretary of state Henry Kissinger to liberal *Playboy* publisher Hugh Hefner. The second was mind control. Beginning in 1973, LaRouche established mandatory “ego-stripping” sessions for all NCLC chapters, where psychological humiliation was employed to bind members to the organization.

Along with the psychological manipulation came indoctrination in the LaRouche worldview, which combined various conspiracy theories with a cult-

like belief in the leadership and genius of LaRouche himself. LaRouche's conspiracy theory was global in scope. In it, humanity was essentially divided into three camps: the "oligarchs," the "sub-humans," and the "humanists." The oligarchs were those who secretly manipulated world events; the sub-humans were the vast majority of humanity who had no idea what was going on; and the humanists—the followers of LaRouche—were those nobly fighting to expose the oligarchs.

As LaRouche drifted from left to right and back again, the composition of the oligarchs was wide ranging and included, among other institutions, the United Nations, the National Council of Churches, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the British royal family, the latter largely responsible, argued LaRouche, for the world drug trade. In addition, LaRouche pointed an accusing finger at more traditional targets of U.S. conspiratorial thinking—the Trilateralists, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Zionist movement. If the objects of LaRouche's conspiratorial thinking ranged widely, their aim was simple: genocide. As LaRouche had it, the aim of the oligarchs is to reduce world population to under one billion so they can thereby more easily continue their domain over the planet. Even as LaRouche was formulating his conspiratorial worldview, his organization—the NCLC had spun off the U.S. Labor Party (USLP) in 1971—was delving into electoral politics. In 1976, its peak year, the USLP ran 140 candidates in 21 states—including LaRouche for president—but only received a paltry 154,000 votes. Disbanding the party in 1978, LaRouche and his followers—now numbering several hundred—began conducting a "stealth" campaign within the Democratic Party. In 1986, LaRouche followers took the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor and secretary of state in Illinois. Denounced by the head of their ticket—Democratic gubernatorial candidate Adlai Stevenson III—both candidates lost, however.

The large sums of money LaRouche spent on politicking—including expensive nationally run commercials for his presidential candidacies in the 1980s—came from several sources. One was intelligence gathering. LaRouche's publication, *Executive Intelligence Review*, with its mix of officially leaked

news and insider scuttlebutt, was widely subscribed to in Reagan-era Washington. A second source of money came from LaRouche's followers themselves. As with many, more religiously oriented cults, LaRouche acolytes—many of whom were college graduates and young professionals—were required to turn over their worldly assets and live lives of penury for the good of the organization.

Last, the LaRouche organization operated a right-wing boiler room fund-raising operation that would often play on the fears of elderly Americans who were told that only LaRouche and his organization stood between the United States and a triumphant oligarchy. It was this last tactic that ultimately brought about the downfall of LaRouche and his organization. In order to support their leader's political career and increasingly lavish lifestyle, operatives began to engage in credit card fraud, running up huge bills on the cards of elderly citizens who had donated money.

In 1986, federal agents raided LaRouche's estate and headquarters in Virginia. Despite being on trial for mail fraud and other crimes in 1988, LaRouche also managed to run for president once again, as he would do from prison in 1992. Ailing, LaRouche was released from the Federal Medical Center in 1993. While his organization remains a shadow of its former self, LaRouche has continued his political career, running for the presidency in 1996 and 2000.

*Jim Ciment*

**See also:** *Executive Intelligence Review*.

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## Leisler's Rebellion

In November 1688, Protestant monarchs William and Mary of Orange led a small army across the

English Channel at the behest of Parliament to depose James II, the Stuart king whose newborn son promised continued Catholic rule. Amid the confusion and turmoil once news of the revolution had reached the colonies, militia captain Jacob Leisler plotted and led a successful revolt against the colonial government of New York. On 31 May 1689, Leisler and his largely Dutch and German force captured Fort James on Manhattan Island, gaining control over New York harbor and supplanting Stuart appointee Governor Francis Nicholson. While condemned by some as treachery, Leisler's Rebellion proved more complex than a mere plot to overthrow the colonial government—his coup lay at the intersection of a number of significant tensions in European and American politics, society, culture, and religion.

In the late seventeenth century, New York found itself entangled in chaos and transformation. In 1664, the former New Amsterdam fell to English forces in the second Anglo-Dutch War (1664–1667). King Charles II placed the province under the control of his brother James, duke of York and heir to the throne. As proprietor with complete authority over the province (Charles reserved only the right to hear appeals), James quickly replaced Dutch officials with his English appointees and instituted a strict disciplinary code known as “The Duke's Laws,” designed to inject Dutch practice with English political custom. Despite these and other sweeping efforts to solidify English dominance, New York remained extremely diverse, inhabited by Dutch, English, German, Scottish, and Huguenot settlers spanning a large and geographically disparate area. Religious differences also split the colony as Anglicans, Dutch Calvinists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and various other Protestant denominations vied for social influence. James II assumed the throne in 1685, replacing his brother's inconsistent policies with his model of absolute monarchy. In order to control the recalcitrant northern colonies, he combined them all into the Dominion of New England, a single royal colony.

When the news of James II's deposition in the Glorious Revolution and of New England's subse-

quent overthrow of Sir Edmund Andros, the despotic British governor, reached New York, merchant and militia captain Jacob Leisler took it upon himself to restore Protestant rule in the colony. Capturing Fort James and New York Harbor, Leisler proclaimed himself governor and quickly began organizing representatives from Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut to unite with New York in an offensive against French Canada, another Catholic threat. Lack of cooperation between the colonies involved soon doomed the nascent assault and Leisler was left to deal with increasing pressure at home. While heavily supported among the Dutch laborers and artisans who resented the power of the colony's Anglo-Dutch ruling class, Leisler soon found that he could not control the city's powerful merchants. He jailed numbers of powerful New Yorkers for resisting his authority, ultimately strengthening his opponents' resolve to have him removed.

When King William's newly appointed royal governor, Colonel Henry Sloughter, sent a force of English soldiers to secure the city in early 1691, Leisler refused to allow them into key forts, suspecting the loyalty of their commander, Major Robert Inglesby. The king's forces took the city, and at the advice of prominent community leaders, Jacob Leisler was charged with treason for his attack on the royal garrison at Fort James. After a brief trial, Leisler was executed in May 1691.

Despite the death of its prominent leader, Leisler's Rebellion lived on in New York politics for decades to come, even after Parliament posthumously exonerated Leisler in 1695. Jacob Leisler's conspiracy to restore Protestant rule to New York fueled an ongoing political struggle between elite and Leislerian factions that continued as New York's various ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups clashed over the future of the colony and its relationship to the throne. Like most popular uprisings, Leisler's Rebellion was no mere coup, but an ideologically motivated effort to restructure power in the developing British North American colonies.

*James Carrott*

**See also:** Shays' Rebellion.



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### Lennon, John, Shooting of

On 8 December 1980 at 10:50 P.M. John Lennon, forty-year-old former member and creative intellect of the Liverpool pop group the Beatles, was murdered. Lennon was returning to his apartment in New York's Dakota building, One West 72nd Street, where Mark David Chapman, aged twenty-five, had been waiting to kill him. A plethora of complex conspiracy theories surround the death of Lennon. Recent books such as Jon Wiener's *Gimme Some Truth: The John Lennon FBI File* and others due for publication may shed further light on the events surrounding the death, although, as with the other major assassinations of contemporary conspiracy lore, this is probably overly optimistic.

The major conspiracy theory is that Chapman was a CIA-trained assassin. According to this theory, the musician and cultural hero was seen to be a threat to U.S. security due to his supposed radical views. Labeled an "undesirable alien" by the Nixon administration due to a drug conviction in England in 1968, Lennon had since been living with the threat of deportation, but with the birth of his son Sean he received his green card. Lennon was one of the most photographed and sought-after celebrities of the twentieth century up to this point and, it has been conjectured, he had the power to gather 2 million people in support of his own political campaigns. Such popularity, some surmised, posed a significant threat and necessitated his death. Since Sean's birth in 1976 on 9 October, Lennon had been

living as a virtual recluse in the Dakota building, possibly in fear for his life. In 1980 he took steps to resume a public life again, releasing his *Double Fantasy* album, a critical and commercial success.

Mark Chapman, living in Honolulu, had read of Lennon's return to music. On 23 October Chapman resigned from his security job, signing out for the last time as John Lennon. Four days later he purchased a five-shot, short-barrel .38-caliber Charter Arms Special from a man named Ono, and then on 30 October boarded a plane bound for New York. From New York, finding it difficult to purchase bullets, Chapman flew to Atlanta, Georgia, to visit Dana Reeves, a friend and sheriff's deputy, collected bullets, and was back in New York by 10 November. However, he had a change of mind at this point and decided to go back to Honolulu. Chapman then apparently began to hear voices in his head telling him to kill John Lennon and by 6 December he was back in New York.

On Monday, 8 December, Chapman wrote the word "Lennon" after "John" at the beginning of the Gospel of John in the hotel Bible, then left his room at the New York Sheraton. This and similar acts have led psychiatrists to theorize that the shooting was a form of suicide, with Chapman having completely identified himself with Lennon. Chapman had been a born-again Christian, and thus it may be argued that this was part of a Christian mission to rid the world of evil, based on the fundamentalist Christian belief that the world is fallen from God's grace and some are chosen to redeem it. Chapman then purchased the J. D. Salinger novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, arrived at the Dakota building, spoke with doorman Patrick O'Loughlin among others, read his book, and finally got an autograph from Lennon as he left the Dakota building. Lennon returned home and, following Yoko Ono into the Dakota, was shot four times in the body and once in the arm.

Chapman maintains he did not remember aiming the gun, just pulling the trigger, calmly. Lennon tried to escape, but the final two bullets stopped him. José Perdomo, a doorman at the time, was in the vicinity. Chapman removed his coat, to indicate to police he was not hiding a gun, and once the police arrived he stated that he had acted alone. Chapman, despite or

perhaps because of his mental illness, does appear to have behaved oddly, tranquilly reading his book after the murder and peacefully giving himself up. There are many anomalies in the events, with the premeditated and thorough nature of the assassination raising suspicions over how he carried out and financed his airplane trips around the United States with a gun, as well as his stays in New York. Upon initial questioning he claimed to have had no strong feelings about John Lennon either way.

In his book *Who Killed John Lennon?*<sup>9</sup> attorney Fenton Bresler presents extensive research from over a ten-year period and argues that Chapman was programmed by the CIA or FBI. The text reveals how the FBI had experimented in using mentally ill people as assassins and had been engaged in the surveillance of Lennon. Lennon himself had called the police a number of times due to threatening phone calls concerning the abduction of his son Sean and harming of his wife Yoko Ono. Bresler argues that Lennon's killer was one of a long line of trained assassins, and some of Chapman's history appears to concur with this theory. Chapman had spent the summer of 1975 in Beirut, Lebanon, as a youth trainer for the YMCA, and was certainly proficient at using a weapon, but this perhaps came from his training as a security guard in Hawaii. Bresler explains how the YMCA was one of a number of international organizations the CIA utilized to plant agents worldwide.

According to Lennon's personal diaries, analyzed with as much fiction as fact by Robert Rosen in his book *Nowhere Man: The Final Days of John Lennon*, Lennon foresaw his martyr's death and was himself a great believer in conspiracy theories. He was a compulsive *National Enquirer* reader, believed in phenomena such as UFOs, and was utterly paranoid. Retrospectively, one might add that his paranoia was not entirely misplaced. Rosen was friends with Fred Seaman, a Lennon employee who stole the John Lennon diaries and used them as the basis for his book, *The Last Days of John Lennon: A Personal Memoir*. Yoko Ono condemned this work as pure fabrication.

Another more populist racist and sexist conspiracy theory points to Lennon's wife, much maligned by the British press for supposedly instigating the break-

up of the Beatles. Once Lennon died Yoko Ono had a number-one hit record and benefited from the added interest in Lennon's work and life. The U.S. tabloid *Daily News* accused her of being a CIA employee, which links to the far-fetched theory that Lennon himself was a CIA agent whose services were now no longer required or who was about to renege. According to other theories Chapman was a New World Order stooge and John Lennon himself was part of the New World Order under Yoko's influence. However, these were usually concocted by aggrieved employees looking for financial benefit after Lennon or Ono had terminated their employment after a break of trust, such as Seaman's theft of Lennon's diaries.

Albert Goldman in his biography of Lennon maintains John Lennon was a violent, unstable personality who beat former band member Stu Sutcliffe so badly that he died of a blood clot in the brain. Some have seen such attacks as part of a conspiracy to denigrate Lennon and his legacy. Goldman insists that Lennon had a homosexual relationship with manager Brian Epstein and had a personal hand in his inexplicable "suicide." As with the conspiracy theory that Lennon was a CIA or New World Order agent, this theory suggests he brought his death upon himself.

In an interview with *Playboy* magazine in September 1980 (one of a number of interviews Lennon gave in this period and the first in five years), Lennon himself referred to global conspiracies. Further links to prove a wider conspiracy have been made to another assassination, the attempt on President Ronald Reagan's life. Three months after Lennon was murdered Reagan was shot and nearly killed by John Hinckley, in New York City. Hinckley's father was a close personal friend of George Bush, Sr., and his sons, convicted criminal Neil, Jeb, and George. For several weeks prior to the assassination attempt, Hinckley imitated the movements of Mark David Chapman. Both were carrying a paperback copy of the J. D. Salinger novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. (Interestingly, given his current recluse status, according to this conspiracy theory J. D. Salinger had ties to the U.S. intelligence community, in particular the CIA, and his book was intended to be a mind-control program-

ming tool.) Conspiracy theorists maintain that Hinkley could not have known Reagan's exact whereabouts unless he had received inside information, from presumably the head of the CIA at the time and future president, George Bush, Sr.

As his trial commenced on 22 June 1981, Chapman changed his plea to guilty (on the personal advice, he claimed, of God), thus reducing his sentence from at least twenty-five years to twenty. With the bargaining now conducted away from the media frenzy there was an immediate cry of a cover-up and conspiracy. His initial defense psychiatrists had claimed he was schizophrenic, that "the little people," the voices inside his head, had ordered him to do it. Dr. Naomi Goldstein, the only doctor not to have a vested interest in the case and the first to assess Chapman, recommended he be charged with second-degree murder. In her report she wrote he was not insane, but had "grandiose visions of himself" (Jones, 96).

Chapman, defending himself against accusations of being a publicity seeker, claimed to have become one with *The Catcher in the Rye*. Holden Caulfield, the central character, is on a mission to uncover phoniness in the world. "I understood that it had been necessary for a man to die. A phony man had to die. But what a beautiful foundation was laid by his death. I became that book" (Jones, 268). To allay his guilt, it may be concluded, Chapman had to construct a conspiracy theory around the novel and Lennon, one that many since have believed. The continuing high-profile and money-making status of the Beatles and Lennon legacy (witness the new Lennon clothes rage for children) means interest in Lennon and his shooting has not waned. After two decades these conspiracy theories continually work to simultaneously obfuscate and perhaps reveal the truth concerning the death of one of the most influential songwriters of all time.

Jason Lee

**See also:** Bush, George; Central Intelligence Agency; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; *The Manchurian Candidate*; Mind Control; Monroe, Marilyn.

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### Lewis, Meriwether

The great explorer furnishes perhaps the earliest example of what became a great American tradition: the beloved celebrity whose ignominious, untimely death spawned conspiracy theories intended to restore some of the hero's dignity. Lewis's apparent suicide at a remote inn off the Natchez Trace in October 1809, when he was only thirty-five years old, ignited a slowly simmering cauldron of alternative explanations. By the conspiracy-happy 1990s, these included assassination by agents of General James Wilkinson, with a cover-up orchestrated by Thomas Jefferson himself.

### Background

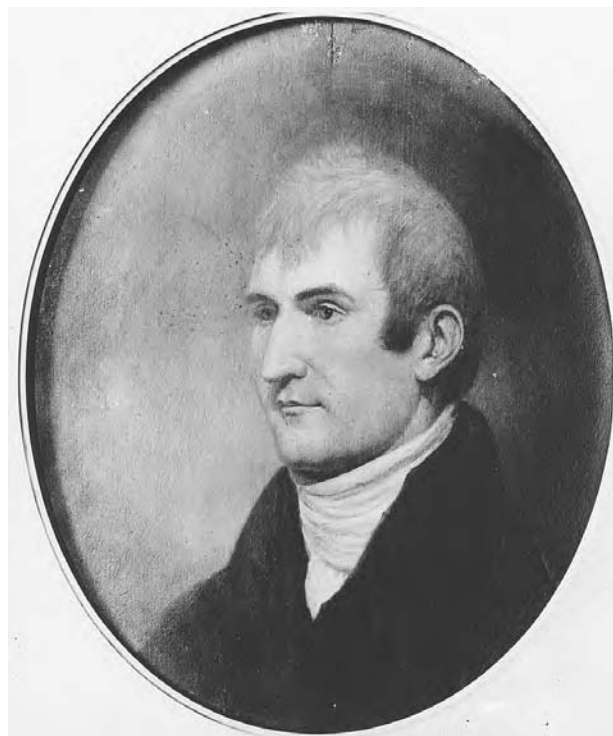
A soldier by occupation, the Virginia-born Lewis was Jefferson's private secretary for a time before achieving international fame by successfully leading an expedition to the Pacific and back between 1803 and 1806. Firming up the U.S. claim to the just-completed Louisiana Purchase and laying the groundwork for later expansion into the Pacific Northwest while also bringing back a wealth of scientific information, Lewis and his colleague William Clark became the new nation's first real celebrities, probably surpassing many of the founders themselves. President Jefferson rewarded his protégé with an appointment as governor of the Louisiana Territory he had just explored, a post that Jefferson regarded as the second-highest in the land.

Despite his experience as Jefferson's presidential "staff," Lewis was no politician, and found his post-expedition life deeply disappointing. Delaying his move to the territorial capital for almost a year, Lewis searched for a wife and planned to publish the journals of the expedition, but never managed to get either project off the ground. Once ensconced at St. Louis, Lewis performed terribly as territorial governor, clashing with more experienced politicians like Territorial Secretary Frederick Bates, who called his superior "a big baby," and getting the affairs of his office muddled enough to have some expenditures rejected by the War Department. In September 1809, Lewis set out on a trip to Washington to clear his name and see his publishers.

### Southern Death Trip

The trip did not go very well. Although conspiracy theorists point out that little was said of it while Lewis was alive, Jefferson, William Clark, and others admitted after his death that the new governor had developed serious psychological problems, including intense, habitual hypochondria, for which Lewis often medicated himself; a terrible drinking problem; and what we would call today depression. Alcoholism was a common affliction in the frontier military and seems to have worsened in Lewis's case under the stress of his political and personal failures. Only two hundred miles into the journey, downriver from St. Louis at New Madrid, Lewis had to be taken ashore from his boat and treated for some real, imagined, or self-induced illness. He made out his last will and testament and only reem-barked on the voyage when earthquakes broke out in the area, leading his fearful valet to have his master put back on the boat.

At his next port of call, Fort Pickering near present-day Memphis, Lewis arrived in a state of "mental derangement," inebriated and suicidal. The fort commander, Major Gilbert Russell, had Lewis removed from his boat and detained him for two weeks, restricting his alcohol intake to "claret and a little white wine" and posting guards to prevent the explorer from doing violence to himself. Lewis recovered his senses and promised never to touch intoxicants again. He borrowed money and horses



Meriwether Lewis. (Library of Congress)

from Russell, and set out for Washington overland, via the Natchez Trace, on 29 September 1809.

Apparently Lewis fell off the wagon rather quickly during his last journey. His traveling companion after Fort Pickering, Indian agent James Neelly, found him "deranged" again as they crossed the Chickasaw Nation, where they had to stop and let Lewis rest for two days. Shortly after, Neelly brought the suspicion of generations of conspiracy theorists on himself by going after some lost horses and sending Lewis on alone, planning to meet 50 miles farther up the Trace, at the home of a white family that accommodated travelers in a place called Grinder's Stand in present-day Lewis County, Tennessee.

Lewis appeared at the Grinder (also spelled Griner) house on the evening of 10 October 1809, and though the accounts of what happened there differ in some particulars, all agree that the governor was in a highly agitated state of mind. Priscilla Griner, the lady of the house and the only witness to give testimony, remembered Lewis pacing back and



forth in the room where he was lodged talking loudly to himself “like a lawyer.” In the wee hours of 11 October, Griner heard two pistol shots but was too frightened to investigate. Through the cracks in the log building, however, she saw that Lewis had blasted away part of his own skull, shot himself in the side, and also tried to cut his own throat with a razor, but none of it was enough to bring immediate death. Cowering with her children, Griner heard the explorer asking for water but ignored his pleas out of fright and saw him crawl off moaning. There are several variations of Lewis’s last words, but one appropriate remark recurs: “How hard it is to die.”

### Conspiracy Theories

Few questions were raised about Lewis’s death at the time, but beginning in the 1840s, stories began to circulate that he was murdered, especially in Tennessee. Even then, according to historian Dawson A. Phelps, the story did not receive much public comment for another half century, by which time the murder interpretation had become an established tradition among the locals and the Lewis family. From the 1890s on, it began to receive occasional endorsements from Lewis and Clark scholars.

Even this tradition was not necessarily a conspiracy theory. Those distraught by the pathfinder’s pathetic end may have taken comfort in the idea of murder-not-suicide, but the few concrete ideas they circulated about who might have killed him or why were vague and rather mundane in nature. The leading explanation was Lewis had been killed by robbers, perhaps his own servant Pernier. The evidence for a conspiracy or even murder is thin to nonexistent, resting largely on legend, rumors generations removed from the source, and the willing disbelief of later admirers that the great man could have been capable of such degrading and desperate behavior. Some have fingered lone eyewitness Priscilla Griner as an accomplice who lied to cover up for her supposedly absent husband Robert and unknown others. The legends tell of Robert being tried for murder but acquitted for lack of evidence.

It is certainly true that Mrs. Griner’s credibility as a witness is less than total, but that actually undermines the conspiracy theory further. Priscilla

embroidered her original story for an interviewer twenty-nine years after Lewis’s death, adding material that made the events look more suspicious. Her later account included the claim that two men came to the house looking for lodging and quarreled with Lewis, along with other conspiratorial details: three shots instead of two, meaning that Lewis’s two pistols (the kind that had to be loaded after each shot) could not have done the job; and an apparent exchange of clothing between Lewis and his servant sometime in the night.

The most thoroughgoing Lewis conspiracy theory was propounded by muckraking popular historian (and Pulitzer Prize winner) David Leon Chandler in his 1994 book, *The Jefferson Conspiracies*. Departing from the usual practice, Chandler endorsed Mrs. Griner’s revised 1838 account in full, and surmised that Lewis was murdered while trying to escape in his servant’s clothes, possibly by or with the help of his erstwhile companion Neely. As the title of the book made obvious, Chandler was eager to be the Woodward and Bernstein of the early American republic and trace the murder all the way back to the White House, or at least Monticello. Recounting the history of the Aaron Burr conspiracy and the treasonous activities of General Wilkinson (a Spanish spy and Burr crony as well as the ranking official in the frontier army), Chandler theorized that Lewis carried some sort of evidence against Wilkinson and was hunted down by the general’s henchmen, who then fabricated the tales of drunkenness and suicide that became the official interpretation.

Chandler was able to give Jefferson himself only a small role in the titular conspiracies. His major accusation was that the just-retired president helped forestall further investigation by accepting the suicide explanation too quickly and lending credence to the idea that Lewis was an alcoholic. Jefferson’s alleged motive was to avoid exposing Wilkinson, whose integrity Jefferson had publicly certified by maintaining him in an important military post and by using him as the star government witness in Aaron Burr’s recent treason trial.

Although Jefferson’s confidence in Wilkinson was politically calculated and extremely misplaced,

Chandler's theories hold very little water. Resting the crux of his argument on the half-hearted nature of the investigation, he echoed the modern assassination conspiracy literature, but begged the question of what sort of investigation could possibly have been conducted at so remote a location at such an early date. If one accepts the far-fetched premise of hired political assassins stalking the American woods in 1809, to kill a national hero, then Lewis's best friend and fellow explorer, William Clark, also has to be included in the conspiracy. No man knew Lewis, got along with him better, or respected him more, but Clark accepted the official account just as readily as Jefferson.

The "Jefferson conspiracy" against Meriwether Lewis is best considered as anachronistic speculation that tells us more about late-twentieth-century popular culture than it does about Lewis or Jefferson.

*Jeffrey L. Pasley*

**See also:** Jefferson, Thomas.

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## Libertarianism

Libertarianism is a political theory that holds that the government is almost a conspiratorial force, trying to enslave the people through its coercive power. Libertarians believe in individual freedom and individual choice. They reject the use of force or fraud to compel others, except in response to

force or fraud. Libertarians want to take the government out of private decisions by reducing the size of the government to the most essential function of providing for a peaceful environment in which all persons can prosper. As a utopian ideal, libertarianism is based on the notion that society exists at its most free when people work together voluntarily without government intervention.

The basic principles of modern libertarianism are attributed to the writings of Ayn Rand, especially her novel *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). In this work, Rand describes a U.S. society weakened by many years of welfare. Contemporary U.S. society has made individualism and the work ethic into an evil. Instead of working for a living, the characters in the novel believe that the government owes them their livelihoods. In the novel Rand instead offers the maxim of libertarianism: individualism or selfishness is good. The economist Murray Rothbard has built upon Rand to develop a more theoretical outline. He argues that government is inherently aggressive and exploitative. Instead of government, society should rely on the free market as the most efficient method of distributing resources.

Libertarianism became the basis for a political party that emerged in the United States in the early 1970s. The Libertarian Party ran philosophy professor John Hospers as its presidential candidate in 1972. While the party reached the ballot in only two states, Hospers did receive one electoral vote. Roger MacBride, the Virginia elector who cast his vote for Hospers in 1972, was the party's nominee in 1976, receiving over 200,000 votes in the November election. The party, and the libertarian movement in the United States, grew dramatically in the late 1970s, due primarily to the financial contributions of the Koch brothers, Charles and David, owners of Koch Industries. With their assistance, libertarians were able to establish a number of publications and an active think tank, the Cato Institute. In the election of 1980, David Koch was the Libertarian Party's vice-presidential nominee, primarily to take advantage of a loophole in federal campaign finance law allowing a candidate to spend unlimited campaign funds. Because of the financial assistance provided by the Kochs, the party's nominees appeared on the

ballot in all fifty states. The result of their influence in the movement was a battle over strategy, however. The party was split between a group of opportunists represented by the Kochs and the “missionaries,” following Murray Rothbard. Rothbard referred to the Koch brothers’ influence as the “Kochtopus.” The Libertarian Party ticket received 900,000 votes in 1980, a disappointment considering the millions of dollars spent by David Koch. In 1983, the Koch supporters, also known as the “Cato group,” left the party after their candidate was not nominated by the party convention. Without the Kochs’ financial support, the party did not receive as much attention for the rest of the century.

Libertarianism, and the Libertarian Party, have had a difficult time finding acceptance in the United States, in part because the philosophy does not fit neatly on the liberal-conservative continuum with which most Americans are familiar. Libertarians emphasize free markets, making them similar to many conservatives. It is the libertarians’ belief that people should be free to choose their social activities, including, for example, the use of drugs, that puts the philosophy at odds with more cultural conservatives. In short, libertarians believe that national defense and law enforcement are the only areas in which governments should be involved. They oppose the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) because it establishes an entangling alliance that might work to bring the United States into unnecessary conflict. The United Nations is also opposed because it undermines national sovereignty by placing power in the hands of international bureaucrats. Libertarians oppose restrictions on trade and immigration, believing that the free market more efficiently regulates these areas.

Libertarianism has enjoyed some limited success. Many of its basic principles were voiced by the administration of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Government services were privatized in the United States and in Europe, where a number of national airlines and railroads were sold by the government. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were hundreds of thousands of libertarians around the world. Many participate as pro-freedom activists in traditional parties while

others create their own political parties. All believe that government is the problem, not the solution.

*John David Rausch, Jr.*

**See also:** Koch Brothers.

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## Liberty Lobby

Established in 1957 by Willis Carto, Liberty Lobby was initially described as a pressure group for patriotism. It published a detailed record of how members of Congress voted on key issues, testified before congressional committees, and, in the 1960s, supported the presidential candidacy first of the conservative Republican Barry Goldwater, then the segregationist former governor of Alabama, George Wallace. In 1971, however, the country’s leading conservative magazine, *National Review*, published an article accusing Carto of creating the Lobby as a front behind which he concealed his real views. As early as the mid-1950s, it observed, he had been involved in a scheme to repatriate black Americans to Africa, while in 1960 he had visited the U.S. neo-Nazi, Francis Parker Yockey, who was being held in the San Francisco County Jail for passport offenses. Following Yockey’s suicide, Carto had published and written the introduction to a new edition of a book Yockey had written in the late 1940s, *Imperium*, in which he had praised “the German revolution of 1933.”

Carto’s organization nonetheless continued to attract support and in 1975 was in a position to launch a weekly tabloid, the *National Spotlight*, later the *Spotlight*. The popularity of publications such as the *National Enquirer*; it declared in its first edition, was because of the American people’s thirst for infor-

mation suppressed by the establishment media, and in the years that followed the paper's antipathy to what it described as a Zionist plot mingled with and was sometimes masked by its propensity to publish a veritable smorgasbord of sensational allegations.

Amidst claims of plans for UN occupation and "internationalist" weather manipulation, a central theme was the machinations of such bodies as the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group. In the mid-1970s the Lobby published a collection of documents that sought to demonstrate that the Bilderbergers' annual gathering of leading figures in politics, business, and the media served as a front for the Rockefellers' and Rothschilds' drive for a one-world government. This pamphlet, it declared, presented irrefutable proof of the truth of conspiracy theory.

While the *Spotlight* and a weekly radio program, *Radio Free America*, were central to the Lobby's activities, it also sold recommended publications through its Liberty Library, ranging from the early-twentieth-century British far-rightist Nesta Webster's conspiratorial interpretation of the French Revolution to a pamphlet on the Oklahoma bombing, *Timothy McVeigh: Mastermind or Patsy?* Amidst the different publications promoted by the Lobby, one of the most important was Carto's own study, *Profiles in Populism*, in which he defined the organization's beliefs. Where conservatives, he argued, defended free trade and involved the nation in foreign entanglements, populists recognized the need to protect the national economy and to pursue a noninterventionist foreign policy.

As *National Review* had complained, Carto's organization blended well with the conservative milieu, and it was not always easy to locate it with certainty. It had drawn attention to Carto's private correspondence, in which he had lamented the Nazis' defeat by "the International Jews." In the early 1990s, the *Spotlight* was to publish a defense of the Waffen SS, which, it declared, had fought for Europe and the defeat of communism. The most important indication of the underlying logic of Carto's argument, however, was his central role in the creation in the late 1970s of the leading Holocaust revisionist organization, the Institute for His-

torical Review. In 1993, however, a bitter argument over a bequest left by the heir to the Edison fortune led to Carto being locked out of the Institute's offices and a series of court cases that ultimately, in 2001, resulted in the closing down of both Liberty Lobby and the *Spotlight*. While both sides in the dispute continued to adhere to Holocaust revisionism, Carto declared that his erstwhile colleagues were working with the Israeli Mossad, the CIA, and the Church of Scientology in order to destroy his work.

Martin Durham

**See also:** Bilderbergers; *Spotlight*; Trilateral Commission.

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### Liddy, G. Gordon

Of all the characters to be thrown up by Watergate, G. Gordon Liddy was one of the most colorful. Unlike the bookish lawyers, such as John Dean, caught up in the scandal, Liddy portrayed himself as a man of action and steel, refusing to answer questions and remaining loyal to President Nixon. A proud conservative, Liddy never apologized for or seemed ashamed by what he had done, which included planning the botched Watergate break-in itself. He was imprisoned for his part in the affair, but after his release he used his righteous hard-man persona and



powerful articulacy to become a successful public speaker and nationally syndicated radio talk-show host.

Liddy became involved in Watergate through his role in the “Plumbers,” a small group within the White House charged with stopping damaging leaks following the release of the Pentagon Papers. Liddy was already working in the White House and he was chosen for the Plumbers because of his experience in law enforcement; he had spent five years in the FBI before becoming an assistant district attorney in upstate New York. He came to the attention of national Republican leaders in 1968 when he narrowly lost a New York congressional primary race against Hamilton Fish, Jr., a scion of a famous Republican family. After the defeat he took an active role in the Nixon campaign, for which he was rewarded with a job in the Treasury Department. However, he quickly fell out with his boss there and moved to the White House to work on “narcotics, bombings, and guns” under John Mitchell, the attorney general.

At the Plumbers, Liddy worked closely with E. Howard Hunt in organizing the September 1971 break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist. However, their men botched the job, failing to find Ellsberg’s file and ransacking the office. Undeterred, Liddy and Hunt pushed for a second break-in at the psychiatrist’s home, but John Ehrlichman, who had been appalled by the damage done in the first operation, blocked it. The Plumbers continued to push other plans for attacking Nixon’s enemy, including drugging Ellsberg with LSD and firebombing the Brookings Institution, until Liddy moved to the Campaign to Re-elect the President (CRP) in December 1971. There he worked as the general counsel while planning “dirty tricks” for the forthcoming election.

Throughout his career, Liddy unsettled many people who dealt with him because of his macho posturing, rampant conservatism, and gun advocacy. He also committed bizarre acts to show his strength and will, including holding his arm over a candle until it turned black. At the CRP he terrified his immediate superior, Jeb Magruder, which afforded him a free hand in planning GEMSTONE, a program of espionage and sabotage for the 1972 presidential election. Liddy presented his plan to Mitchell,

Magruder, and the president’s counsel, John Dean, in the attorney general’s office on 27 January 1972. It was a James Bond fantasy of wiretaps, prostitutes, and spy planes, and while Mitchell later told the Senate Watergate Committee that he “should have thrown him [Liddy] out of the window,” he merely turned the proposal down politely. Liddy believed that it was merely a question of costs so he presented a second, cheaper plan on 4 February. However, this was also rejected and as no one (especially not Magruder) was prepared to tell Liddy that the whole thing was too much, he cut back even further. Eventually a third plan, which consisted of a few wiretaps, prostitutes, and infiltrating opposition campaigns was finally approved. As a first step, Liddy’s men installed bugs in the Democrats’ offices in the Watergate building on 27 May. They failed to work properly, however, and when the team reentered the offices on 16 June to repair the bugs and photograph documents, they were arrested by the Washington police.

Liddy watched the arrests from a hotel room opposite the Watergate building and it soon became clear that he had made a number of mistakes. The most important was using James McCord, the CRP’s security consultant, as one of the burglars. McCord was quickly linked back to the campaign, which indirectly implicated the White House in the affair. The day after the burglary Liddy started shredding papers, and even money, at the CRP and called Magruder in California, who started the “damage control” along with Mitchell, which snowballed into the Watergate cover-up. The same day, Liddy was also sent to meet the new attorney general, Richard Kleindienst, and to ask him to get McCord released from jail. Kleindienst refused.

After that, Liddy played little active role in the cover-up, as the White House kept him at arm’s length even before he was implicated. He told John Dean all that had happened on the Monday after the burglary (and even offered to be shot) but from then on he laid low. The FBI linked him to the crime in June through his White House phone number, which was in pocket books carried by the burglars. Liddy was questioned by agents but he refused to answer and was accordingly fired by the CRP. On 15 September he was indicted along with the burglars

and Hunt on criminal bugging charges. He refused to testify at his trial and his obstinate manner caused the judge, John Sirica, to sentence him to twenty years. Liddy later received a further eighteen months for contempt when he refused to testify before the Watergate grand jury after being granted immunity.

Liddy eventually spent fifty-two months in prison and after his release in 1977, he started a new career in the media. He wrote novels and also his autobiography, *Will*, giving his side of Watergate, but only after the statute of limitations had run out. The book was made into a TV movie, and Liddy also began a lucrative speaking career including debates with the LSD guru, Timothy Leary. (As an assistant district attorney, Liddy had twice arrested Leary.) In 1990, he found another forum for his conservative politics and gun advocacy, a radio talk-show on WJFK in Washington, D.C., which soon achieved national syndication. He has also branched out into acting, playing “baddies” in TV shows like *Miami Vice*, *McGyver*, and *Perry Mason*.

Neil Denslow

**See also:** Nixon, Richard; Pentagon Papers; Watergate.

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## Lincoln, Abraham, Assassination of

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln on Good Friday (14 April), 1865, by actor John Wilkes Booth unleashed a flood of rumors regarding larger conspiracies afoot. Hardly had the president breathed his last early Saturday morning, when officials and public alike began accusing Confederate leaders and secret organizations in the North of masterminding the murder. A *New York Times* editorial on 26 April vowed that when the time came for reve-

lations, “[i]t will be seen that all the talk of ‘Knights of the Golden Circle,’ ‘Sons of Liberty,’ ‘American Knights,’ &c., was not without foundation.” President Andrew Johnson’s proclamation of 2 May 1865 ordering the arrest of Jefferson Davis and several others explicitly accused the Confederate leadership of complicity in Lincoln’s death. While the very tangible political and emotional stresses that gave rise to these accusations abated in the years following the murder, the effort to tie the deed to a larger, hidden plan did not. Theories implicating a surprising range of persons and causes—from the Confederacy, to Andrew Johnson, the Catholic Church, Wall Street financiers, and even Lincoln’s stalwart secretary of war, Edwin Stanton—surfaced over the next century. Some remain in vogue to this day. If the Kennedy assassination has been the greatest single source for conspiratorial expression in recent U.S. culture, Lincoln’s certainly deserves credit as the longest running. And like their contemporary cousins, conspiracy theories linked to the first presidential assassination were forged in the context of surrounding political, social, and cultural forces.

### The Basis in Events

In the days following the shooting, there were legitimate reasons for fearing a larger plot. Booth accomplice Lewis Powell’s simultaneous knife-attack on Secretary of State William Seward made the possibility of an organized assault on the Union leadership very real. It was reported that officers sent to inform Stanton of the shooting accosted a man “muffled in a cloak” on the secretary’s doorstep. Booth’s calling card left for Vice-President Andrew Johnson at the latter’s hotel raised hackles further. And the discovery of a letter in the actor’s trunk at the National Hotel, in which Booth’s correspondent advised a halt in plans until “Richmond could be heard from,” (U.S. Government, 46:3, 781) seemed to confirm the authorities’ worst suspicions. The capture of Powell at Mary Surratt’s boarding house on 17 April, and the arrest within a few days of most of Booth’s other accomplices, provided firm evidence that the attacks had sprung from an organized center. In the minds of many, including Edwin Stanton and the officers

charged with bringing the conspirators to trial, there was little doubt this center originated with the Confederacy.

The larger political and military situation preceding Lincoln's death contributed to the climate of conspiracy. On 9 April, a mere five days before the assassination, the rebel Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House. This signaled the effective end of the Civil War and the North erupted in celebration. But in reality Lee's surrender marked the beginning, not the end, of the cessation of hostilities between North and South. Confederate forces remained in the field. In Virginia, some units, including Mosby's Rangers, refused to surrender. In mid-April, there were reports that forces under his command were launching raids into Maryland from across the Potomac. In addition to active military forces, eastern Maryland and northern Virginia were full of disbanded soldiers and displaced civilians. Refugees crowded Richmond and Petersburg, seeking food and shelter from federal commissaries. Some ex-rebels formed marauding bands, adding to the uncertain security in the countryside. Others headed toward Washington and Baltimore, believing the federal government would provide free transportation to their homes in the South (U.S. Government, 46:3, 868–869). Thus, in addition to sustaining the loss of its chief of state, the area in and around Washington experienced a period of turmoil as hostilities gradually ended.

In the North the euphoria following Lee's surrender quickly turned to bewilderment and a desire for vengeance as news of Lincoln's death made its way across the country. It did not ease matters that the surrender and murder coincided with two of the most important dates, Palm Sunday and Good Friday respectively, on the Christian calendar. The religious symbolism attached to the tragedy culminated as the funeral cortege bearing Lincoln's embalmed body wound its way through northern cities on its 1,600-mile journey back to the president's hometown of Springfield, Illinois. More important, however, to understanding the basis for the initial conspiracy theories, is recognizing that at the time of his death Abraham Lincoln was a controversial figure in

the North. Many held him in high esteem, but others reviled him for the war's slaughter and for his actions in favor of black Americans. Northern political dissent was centered in the Democratic Party, and in particular among anti-war Democrats, termed "Copperheads." It ran especially strong in the larger cities outside New England and in the old Northwest, ironically, the very region Lincoln hailed from. In the aftermath of 14 April, newspapers reported individuals and communities celebrating his death by burning effigies and firing explosives.irate mobs tarred and feathered some of these celebrants and others were rescued by policemen. In Westminster, Maryland, a Democratic newspaper editor was murdered for publishing anti-Lincoln comments following the assassination.

The presence of this political dissent in the North helped feed popular rumors concerning the operations of so-called dark lantern societies, secret organizations including the previously mentioned Knights of the Golden Circle, devoted to political and military treason. Historians generally agree the real extent of the groups' activities was greatly exaggerated at the time. The exaggerated accounts were often produced by Republican newspaper editors seeking to discredit the Democrats before election time. Regardless of the reality, the evidence indicates that a good percentage of the northern public paid attention to the rumors implicating the groups in Lincoln's death. In the months that followed popular literary works, including Dion Haco's pseudonymous *John Wilkes Booth, the Assassinator of Abraham Lincoln*, and Ned Buntline's pseudonymous *John Wilkes Booth*, provided fictionalized accounts of a conspiracy involving secret northern societies.

### **Culture and Politics**

Despite the circumstantial evidence and testimony given by government witnesses, investigating authorities never established a hard link between Booth and the Confederate government, or between Booth and northern secret societies. Following the conviction of eight of his accomplices by a military tribunal in June 1865, belief in a grand conspiracy involving the rebel chieftains slowly faded from view. The execution of Mary Surratt

(along with George Atzerodt, Davey Herold, and Lewis Powell) on 7 July 1865 dampened the public's enthusiasm for extreme justice. Much of the testimony proving the involvement of Confederate leaders unraveled when it was revealed that the government's chief witness, an adventurer named Charles Dunham, had fabricated most of it. Jefferson Davis was released from prison in May 1867 without ever being indicted. The disclosure of Booth's "missing" diary by former Secret Service chief Lafayette C. Baker during testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in early 1867 further discredited the government's case. The diary had been taken from Booth's body after he was shot on the Virginia farmstead on the morning of 26 April 1865. Turned over to the War Department, it was never introduced in evidence at the conspirators' trial. Its pages confirmed the testimony of most of the accomplices: the plan had been to kidnap Lincoln and escort him safely to Confederate lines. Booth acted largely on his own initiative in deciding to assassinate the president.

However, the diary did help launch the next round of conspiracy-making. It is at this point that historian William Hanchett's thesis on the relationship between national politics and Lincoln assassination theories provides a useful perspective for understanding their subsequent development. Baker not only revealed the diary's existence, but when shown the book following its subpoena from the War Department, he claimed on the witness stand that pages had been removed since it had been turned over to Stanton in April 1865. Despite the testimony of federal officials that the pages had been torn out by Booth and used as notes, suspicions were immediately raised over what might have been written on the "missing" pages. Leading the charge was former political general and recently elected Republican congressman Benjamin Butler. In March 1867, Butler accused the government prosecutors of purposefully withholding the diary during the conspirators' trial, resulting, among other things, in the judicial murder of Mary Surratt. Drawing from Baker's allegation of missing pages, and Booth's own statement in the diary that he proposed to return to Washington



John Wilkes Booth shoots President Abraham Lincoln in the head at Ford's Theatre on 14 April 1865. The beloved president died of his wound the next day. (Library of Congress)

"and clear myself from this great crime," Butler went on to insinuate the involvement of high government officials in the conspiracy to murder Lincoln wanting to know who had tampered with the diary after the government had got hold of it. In July, he introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives establishing a five-member committee to investigate the assassination. The resolution's preamble reaffirmed that the crime had been abetted by many people holding high positions of power. Butler's target was President Andrew Johnson and his aim was shared by other Radical Republicans who, as Hanchett notes, were intent on finding evidence that could be used to impeach the president. Johnson, so the reasoning went, was the only person to gain materially from Lincoln's death. But the evidence against him was



unsubstantiated and relied almost entirely on the innuendoes of Baker and others.

The real motivations for the charges against the president lay in the bitter conflict then raging between Johnson and the Radical-controlled Congress over Reconstruction. By early 1867 the executive and legislative branches of the government were at loggerheads, with Johnson vetoing most of the congressional legislation bearing on Reconstruction policy, and Congress overriding his vetoes to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment, the extension of the Freedmen's Bureau Act, and more. In February 1867, at the same time the Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony from Baker, Congress passed the Military Reconstruction Act, which divided the South into five military districts and established more stringent conditions, including black suffrage, for readmitting the southern states. Thus, the theory implicating Johnson sprang from tangible political conflicts, and Butler's accusations may be read as a form of political theater overlaying more serious issues.

As it turned out, the theory outlived its immediate political usefulness and lived on into the next century when most of the details explaining Johnson's involvement would be worked out. At the time, however, it represented a significant stage in the development of Lincoln theories for alleging the malefactor was inside the government, and that the government was involved in a cover-up. It also displayed the unique characteristic of all early theories: they were encouraged and oftentimes fabricated from inside the government, by officials and political actors like Butler and Baker. It also inspired a number of popular literary works over the next several decades, the most famous probably being Tennessee attorney Finis L. Bates's *Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* (1907) in which he combined Johnson's involvement with the legend of Booth's escape.

In the 1880s, a fourth theory emerged, arguing that the conspiracy originated with the Catholic Church. Charles Chiniquy's *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (1886) was the first of several works alleging a Catholic plot. A French-Canadian priest who had emigrated to Illinois, Chiniquy met Lincoln when the latter defended him in a civil trial against his Catholic

superiors. The case was settled before going to a jury, but the priest believed Lincoln had earned the bitter enmity of the Catholic Church and its Jesuit henchmen in defending him. Worse, Lincoln stood for everything the Catholic Church hated, so Chiniquy argued. The clinching evidence in his presentation was statements reportedly made before witnesses by priests at a monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota, on the day of the assassination, but hours before events unfolded in Washington. A Protestant clergyman swore an affidavit stating that he had been told the priests said Lincoln and Seward were dead before the fact. How did they gain this foreknowledge? Chiniquy asserted it came through the dissemination of the plot through the church's network: "[t]hey are members of the same body, the branches of the same tree."

For Chiniquy and several others, the Catholic Church not only plotted Lincoln's murder, it also planned to destroy America's free institutions in its quest for world domination. These accusations were frequently voiced by native-born Protestants in the nineteenth century and were part of the rise in nativist sentiment in the 1890s. Historian John Higham argues this rise reflected a larger national crisis—the class cleavages then investing U.S. society. The anti-Catholic theories may be read as belonging to this larger phenomenon. But they also appear to have served more mundane political purposes. Burke McCarty's *The Suppressed Truth about the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* appeared in 1922, in the midst of the debate over Prohibition and six years before Catholic governor Al Smith's unsuccessful bid for the presidency. Reprints of an earlier anti-Catholic work appeared in 1960, in time for John F. Kennedy's successful candidacy to become the nation's first (and only) Catholic president.

### **Commemoration and Revisionism**

According to historian Merrill Peterson, the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the peak period of Abraham Lincoln's commemoration in U.S. culture. Historical studies and popular texts, including Carl Sandburg's massive two-part biography, were supplemented by works in stone. The dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922 and the completion of Lincoln's head in the Mount Rushmore group in

1937 marked the high points of this monumental commemoration. Lincoln studies also reached an important watershed with James G. Randall's 1934 essay "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?" in which he decried the lack of professional historical studies of the sixteenth president (Peterson, 256). Into this mix of popular commemoration and historical dedication appeared the most radical conspiracy theory ever associated with the assassination. Austrian-born Otto Eisenschiml's *Why Was Lincoln Murdered?* (1937) presented a mass of circumstantial evidence that implied Lincoln's own secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was the mastermind behind the murder. The Eisenschiml Thesis, as it is termed, quickly overshadowed all previous theories by virtue of its outlandish assault on Stanton's historical reputation, and the implication that the perpetrator of America's greatest tragedy was Lincoln's own trusted advisor.

Eisenschiml based his argument on a series of anomalous events that occurred just before, during, and after the assassination. These included General Grant's sudden decision not to accept the Lincoln's invitation to the theater; Stanton's alleged refusal to detail the husky Major Eckert to escort the president at his request, the assignment of a derelict patrolman as the president's bodyguard, the breakdown in the telegraph system for two hours immediately following the shooting, and more. Behind these apparently isolated instances, Eisenchiml argued, there lay a broad plot on the part of the Radical Republicans under Stanton to seize control of the government and punish the South. The Radicals had deliberately prolonged the war in order to ensure the abolition of slavery and the South's destruction. At the war's conclusion, they were dismayed at Lincoln's proposal to "let them up easy." The Radicals decided to remove Lincoln and the leading moderate of his cabinet, William Seward. With these two men out of the way, so the argument went, the way would be clear for Stanton to dominate the government and for the Radicals to exact vengeance on the South. Booth's death, and the quick trial by military tribunal of his accomplices (who were then either executed or imprisoned in the Dry Tortugas), were parts of the cover-up.

This theory and its political rationale were extreme expressions of the then-current revisionist interpretation of Civil War history. Revisionism held that the war could have been avoided, but that it was forced on the United States by the extremism of northern abolitionists. The war's principal cause had not been slavery but the constitutional issue of states' rights. Lincoln had been a moderate, both on matters of race and in his plans to restore the South. The Radicals bore responsibility for turning Reconstruction into a nightmare by insisting on black suffrage and imposing harsh conditions on the former rebel states. An earlier extreme expression of these views was Thomas Dixon, Jr.'s *The Clansman* (1905), which served as the basis for D. W. Griffith's silent film *Birth of a Nation* (1915). The revisionist interpretation gained mainstream acceptance in U.S. society during the first decades of the twentieth century and is seen as the intellectual corollary to the growing racial intolerance of white society during the same period. The politics in Eisenschiml's work does not appear to have raised much of a storm at the time. While several scholars noted the political implications in their reviews, the popular press praised the book for its "refreshing directness" and "just and impartial" treatment.

### Modern Refrains

In the post-World War II era Lincoln conspiracy theories have, for the most part, given way to other topics. Their periodic resurgence indicates, however, that Lincoln's death still holds power in U.S. culture. With one notable exception, the recent accounts borrow from previous material. Theodore Roscoe's *Web of Conspiracy* (1959) restated the Eisenschiml Thesis, adding little that was new. Whether his use of the thesis carries the same revisionist intentions is another matter. Emmett McLoughlin's *An Inquiry into the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* (1963) again raised the specter of a Catholic plot. Like his predecessor Joseph Chiniquy, McLoughlin was a former priest. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 has probably laid to rest theories of this type. The most prolonged eruption of assassination theorizing occurred in the mid-1970s with the production of a movie and companion book titled simply

*The Lincoln Conspiracy* (1977). This intentionally commercial production again resuscitated the Eisen-schimid Thesis and for good measure threw in the legend of Booth's escape, northern speculators, Confederate leaders, and Andrew Johnson. Authors David Balsiger and Charles Sellier's most original contribution to conspiracy literature was their alleged use of scientific testing, including special-light photography and chemical analysis, of physical evidence related to the assassination. Once again the famous diary took center stage when unwary officials at the Ford's Theater museum allowed the movie producers to examine the book. Even more shocking was their claim to have obtained transcripts of the diary's "missing" pages through a collector of Americana who found them among papers in the possession of Stanton's heirs. The missing pages proved, they claimed, the secretary's involvement, and listed "the names of 70 prominent people directly and indirectly involved in Booth's plan to kidnap Lincoln" (Balsiger and Sellier, 11).

Contrary to past episodes, assassination experts and professional historians quickly mobilized to attack the work's credibility. The level of professional concern can be gauged by documents viewable (as of December 2001) at the FBI Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) online reading room. Correspondence between historians and government officials, and between federal agencies, reveals the preoccupation in the post-Watergate era with protecting mainstream historical accounts against malicious fabrications. Concern reached the level of Vice-President Mondale's office and the FBI was requested by the Department of the Interior (parent organization of the National Park Service, the curator of Ford's Theater) to analyze the famous diary for evidence of tampering, invisible ink, or other "hidden" messages. After subjecting the diary to its own special-light techniques, the FBI crime lab returned a clean bill of health: no evidence of hidden messages was found. Assassination experts including William C. Davis, editor of *Civil War Times*, also subjected the work's many claims to rigid scrutiny and succeeded in debunking most of them. Despite its failure to sustain a credible case for conspiracy, *The Lincoln Conspiracy* once again proved

the allure of theories alleging governmental malfeasance and cover-up. As several commentators noted at the time, the movie's release was clearly tied to the popular distrust of government in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate.

The most recent theory returns full circle to accuse the Confederate leadership of organizing the plot. In *Come Retribution* (1988), James Tidwell and coauthors James Hall and David Gaddy assert Booth was an agent of the Confederate clandestine services. By far the best researched and historically detailed of the accounts written to date, it still lacks direct evidence linking Booth to an organized southern effort. Like their predecessors, the authors rely upon a wealth of circumstantial evidence and inferential reasoning to make their case. They theorize that the Confederate plan to capture Lincoln followed the failed Dahlgren raid in February 1864. Special orders found on the body of Colonel Ulric Dahlgren indicated that in addition to freeing Union prisoners held in Libby Prison, he intended to set fire to the city and kill Davis and his cabinet. The South reacted with outrage, while northern officials denied any knowledge of the second mission. Convinced of Lincoln's intent to wage barbaric warfare, the Confederates set in motion their own plans for retribution. Over the next twelve months rebel intelligence services and covert operatives began to organize and recruited Booth as an "action agent" in the Union capital. Booth, in turn, began to assemble his "action team." In February 1865, the Confederate cipher key was changed to the phrase "Come Retribution," indicating, according to the authors, "that the Confederate government had made a bitter decision to repay some of the misery that had been inflicted on the South."

The authors maintain that the Confederacy had plenty of will, and supplies, left to fight on in early 1865. Their master plan called for an orderly pullout from Richmond in mid-April, the staging of supplies along the route of evacuation, and the link-up of Lee's Army with Johnston's in North Carolina. Once joined, the two forces would defeat Sherman's army before turning on Grant. Furthermore, the Confederacy underwent a political redefining in early 1865 and "was willing to accept a revolution in social, eco-

conomic, and political organizations—the abolition of slavery—as the price of independence so long as the South could preside over the transition from slavery” (Tidwell et al., 375). Lincoln’s capture was part of this political remake: as a captive he would provide the South with additional leverage in negotiating peace terms. Timing was crucial. The capture had to be effected prior to the pullout, while Lee’s forces (including elements of Mosby’s command) were still operating in northern Virginia and could provide cover for the fleeing operatives and their charge. Unfortunately Booth failed to execute the plan, despite two attempts to kidnap the president in March, and the window of opportunity closed. Grant struck the Petersburg defenses sooner than expected, and his breakthrough in early April made further attempts at capture unfeasible. A second plan, to mine the White House and blow up Lincoln and his cabinet, also failed when the Confederate demolitions expert sent to work with Booth was captured by Union cavalry on 18 March. With this failure, and the fall of Richmond several weeks later, Booth assembled the remaining elements of his “action team” and carried out the final option.

This is a tale masterfully told, and while portions of the book provide a first-rate historical account of the assassination, *Come Retribution* ultimately relies upon a web of coincidence and suggestive readings of primary documents to make its case. It imputes a higher level of organizational effectiveness to the Confederate government than most historians would allow. Additionally, Tidwell’s background as an intelligence officer often leads him to reject prima facie evidence in favor of more hidden explanations. Last, as with all previous conspiracy accounts, there are the contemporary political and ideological influences to consider. The revelations of the Iran-Contra hearings in 1986 may have been a factor, and the work’s preface notes that the Lincoln operation “is a classic example of one that was too closely tied to critical government decisions, influenced by unexpected circumstances beyond those responsible for it, and had an impact quite unlike that anticipated when the operation was planned” (Tidwell et al., xi). But the reader may also discern a subtle, postmodern version of the “lost cause” inter-

pretation of history in which the viability of the southern cause is ironically reasserted as the plot to kill Lincoln unfolds.

C. Wyatt Evans

**See also:** Booth, John Wilkes.

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#### Lindbergh Baby Kidnapping

When twenty-month-old Charles Lindbergh, Jr., son of the world-famous aviator, was kidnapped on 1 March 1932, the story made headlines around the globe. More than two years later, when the authorities announced they had arrested a suspect in the



crime, German immigrant Bruno Richard Hauptmann, the outcry of relief was immense. Newspapers in the United States as well as Europe covered the “Trial of the Century,” trumpeting Hauptmann’s arrest, conviction, and execution with screaming headlines. Yet, almost from the moment of his arrest, questions have arisen regarding Hauptmann’s actual degree of involvement in the case. A small but dogged group of researchers has set forth a number of troubling charges, including lying by witnesses, police fabrication of evidence, and dereliction in Hauptmann’s legal defense. Together, these journalists, attorneys, and documentary filmmakers—and a fervid group of Hauptmann’s latter-day supporters who continue to research the case—argue that Hauptmann was the victim of a conspiracy. Law enforcement agencies, they assert, were influenced by Lindbergh’s immense celebrity, the fervent anti-German sentiment in the United States in 1934, and the growing pressure to solve such a high-profile case.

Some of the supporters of a conspiracy theory (e.g., Ahlgren and Monier) even point the finger at Lindbergh himself. They suggest that the pilot who became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic in May 1927 may have originally intended simply to play a prank on his wife by “kidnapping” the baby (he had, once before, taken the baby and hidden it in a closet while his wife frantically searched for him) but he accidentally fell off a ladder, killing the baby and requiring a “cover story” to preserve his reputation as a national hero.

Other writers who have examined the case (e.g., Behn) have posited the prospect of an inside job—pointing to a disgruntled employee or mentally unbalanced relative of the family. And there are those researchers who have not attempted to finger the guilty party, but instead focus on what they see as inexplicable lapses in police procedure and gross negligence on the part of the courts in protecting the rights of Hauptmann. All of the conspiracy theorists build their respective cases on the assumption that the New Jersey State Police, needing a suspect and perhaps working in concert with Lindbergh, coerced and bribed witnesses, altered or manufac-

tured evidence, lied in police reports, and denied Hauptmann adequate representation or access to witnesses and resources that would have proved his innocence.

### **The Facts of the Kidnapping**

The kidnapping occurred between 8 and 10 P.M. The Lindberghs would not normally have been in Hopewell (they always spent their weekdays in the Morrow estate in Englewood, New Jersey, several miles away), but little Charles was said to be suffering from a cold, and as the weather was miserable, the family delayed returning to Englewood. In the house at the time were Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Elise and Oliver Whately (the cook and the butler), and the baby’s nursemaid, Betty Gow. Charles Lindbergh arrived about 8:30 P.M., having come from New York City. (He was supposed to have been away longer that evening, giving a speech at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. He told investigators he “forgot” the appointment.)

The family dined late, and around 10 P.M., Gow went into the nursery to check on Charles, Jr. When she couldn’t find him, she told Charles and Anne that the baby was gone. Anne raced into the nursery with Gow, and then Charles went in and discovered an envelope on the windowsill, which he insisted not be opened until the police arrived. Later that night, during the investigation of the grounds, a homemade ladder with a broken rung was found. No other physical evidence or usable fingerprints were discovered at the scene.

A week after the kidnapping, a retired teacher from the Bronx named John Condon received a message from the kidnappers. Police verified that the purported kidnapper was not a fraud; Condon received some of the kidnapped child’s clothing in the mail. Negotiations led to midnight meetings in a Bronx cemetery, and eventually, \$50,000 in gold certificates were exchanged with the kidnapper. In return, Condon was given a letter that stated that the baby could be found on the “Boad Nelly”—a puzzling reference that neither the police nor Lindbergh understood. In April, some of the ransom money began circulating in the Bronx. In May, a truck driver



Police examining the window from which Charles A. Lindbergh's baby was kidnapped, Hopewell, New Jersey. (Library of Congress)

passing through Hopewell reported the discovery of a small corpse in the woods a few miles from the Lindbergh home. Though the body was badly decomposed, the Lindberghs positively identified the body as their son (it was wrapped in little Charles's clothes).

The New Jersey State Police were under intense international scrutiny. No substantive progress had been made in the case. The investigation was being superintended by the chief of the state police, Norman Schwarzkopf (father of the U.S. military's Gulf War general), who disavowed all offers of assistance from the FBI. When the baby's body was found, Schwarzkopf boldly announced in the press that the perpetrators would soon be in custody.

Almost a year and a half later, in September 1934, following one of the paths of the ransom-money

trail, police arrested Hauptmann at his home in the Bronx, charging him first with extortion and then, later, kidnapping and murder.

The prosecution's case was made up of witnesses who reportedly identified Hauptmann from the Bronx cemetery or near the Lindbergh house; handwriting samples that allegedly matched the ransom notes; the presence of John Condon's phone number, written in pencil, in Hauptmann's closet; and a missing plank from Hauptmann's attic floor, which was said to have been used in the ladder at the crime scene. He was also found to be in possession of most of the ransom money, which was stored in his garage.

Hauptmann was represented at trial by a flamboyant, alcoholic attorney named Edward Reilly, who was hired by Hearst Newspapers to put on a good show before the inevitable conviction. In the

four months before the trial, Reilly spent less than one hour talking to Hauptmann.

The “airtight” case against Hauptmann has proved, on closer examination, to be rather porous. Several researchers (especially Kennedy) have uncovered the dubious origin of much of the case against Hauptmann. For example, of the two “eyewitness” accounts of Hauptmann at the crime scene, one was given by eighty-seven-year-old Amandus Hochmuth—who was partially blind due to cataracts (but nonetheless was given a \$1,000 “reward” for coming forward as an eyewitness); the other was an illiterate and impoverished man named Millard Whited, who stated both the day after the kidnapping and seven weeks later that he had seen nothing suspicious in the neighborhood. When police informed him he would be able to share in the \$25,000 reward money if his testimony proved helpful, he changed his story and said he saw Hauptmann drive by in his car on the day of the abduction.

The writing of Condon’s phone number inside Hauptmann’s closet? In the years since the trial, three different reporters who were covering the case at the time said a fellow reporter from a New York daily newspaper put it there to create a big story for the next issue.

Investigators after the fact have disagreed with the official testimony that the floorboards in Hauptmann’s home matched the wood used for one of the rungs of the ladder—the infamous “rail sixteen.” Researchers have pointed out that police did not originally note a missing floorboard in Hauptmann’s attic, even though they investigated the house no less than nine times, looking for incriminating evidence. The missing piece of wood was officially noticed only after the police had been scouring Hauptmann’s home for a week. Further, it has been questioned why Hauptmann, a carpenter who had a garage full of wood, would have ripped up a piece of floorboard, and why he would have “planed” it smooth if it was only going to be a step on a ladder. Also, why was “rail sixteen” one-sixteenth of an inch thicker than the rest of the floorboards? (This discrepancy, according to Ahlgren and Monier, caused then-New Jersey governor Harold Hoffman to accuse prosecutors of “fabricating the evidence.”)

Handwriting experts testified that the ransom note’s misspellings matched the sample the police received from Hauptmann during interrogation. But Hauptmann claimed the police, after twenty straight hours of questioning, asked him to provide writing samples and told him how to spell certain words, such as “rihgt” for “right.”

Regarding the ransom money, Hauptmann said he was given a package from an acquaintance, Isidore Fisch, to hold for him. Hauptmann said Fisch (who, records indicate, journeyed to Germany and then died shortly after Hauptmann accepted the package) had owed him money. When he didn’t return to get the package, Hauptmann began spending some of the money, he testified.

Other questions researchers have puzzled over include:

1. How could Hauptmann, or anyone outside the immediate family, have planned a kidnapping from the Hopewell home on a night when the Lindberghs were always to be found at their Englewood home?
2. Why would someone attempt a kidnapping during a time when all the lights were on, the domestic staff—including the nursemaid—was in residence, and the family was at home having dinner?
3. Hauptmann’s footprints were never found at the scene. The ladder contained more than 400 sets of fingerprints. Not one belonged to Hauptmann.
4. Why did Lindbergh and Schwarzkopf refuse the assistance of the FBI?
5. Why did Hauptmann maintain his innocence—even after he was offered a commutation of his sentence to life in prison if he would simply confess? (This offer was available right up until the time he was executed.)

In 1981, Anna Hauptmann, widow of Richard, petitioned the New Jersey courts to reopen her husband’s case, based largely on the questions raised in the decades since his conviction. The court dismissed her appeal. She died in New Holland, Pennsylvania, in 1994. Since then, other authors (most notably Fisher) have responded to the wave of “Hauptmann-was-framed” charges with their own charges of Lindbergh revisionist hysteria and conspiracy theory fever. Several books published in the

1990s argue unequivocally for the soundness of the original case against Hauptmann and the paucity of evidence pointing to anyone else, or to any organized conspiracy. Additionally, notwithstanding the admittedly slack legal representation provided to Hauptmann, neither the New Jersey courts nor the New Jersey legislature, after reviewing the transcripts, evidence, and more than 30,000 documents now available about the case, has seen fit to reconsider the original findings or to censure—or even question—the legitimacy of police or prosecutor conduct in the matter.

*James Broderick*

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### Lindsey, Hal

The primary reason to consider Hal Lindsey in the context of conspiracy theory is that Lindsey is perhaps the single most popular writer of biblical prophecy in the United States and biblical prophecy is itself a mode of conspiratorial thought. All events are linked by an overarching logic and are leading toward some known end—the Second Coming of Christ. Lindsay is one of the very few writers to ever have three books on the *New York Times* best-seller list simultaneously. His best-known book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), has been translated into 50 different languages and has sold over 35 million copies. He has since written another twenty books, regularly conducts pro-Israeli Holy Land tours, runs an online newsletter, *Hal Lindsey Oracle*, and appears on the weekly Trinity Broadcasting Network news show, *International Intelligence Briefing*. *The Late Great Planet Earth* is a key document in the

early popularization of the mode of religious belief most common among evangelical Christianity within the United States—premillennial dispensationalism. To understand Lindsey's significance, both within biblical prophesying and within the so-called Christian Zionist Right, it is necessary to come to a basic understanding of the theology espoused by his writing.

Premillennialism is the understanding that we are approaching the millennium: the thousand-year reign of Christ that follows the Second Coming. Dispensationalism asserts that God progressively reveals himself over a series of ages or dispensations. During each dispensation, the onus placed upon humankind in terms of their responsibility to God changes. At present, according to Lindsey and most other evangelicals, we are in the age of the Grace or the Church age (the sixth of seven dispensations) during which our only responsibility to God is faith. The final dispensation, following the rapture—during which the faithful will be called to God's side—is the millennial kingdom.

The sense that the millennium is at hand depends upon biblically based interpretations of current events. More specifically, it depends upon specific interpretations of the Book of Revelation. In this interpretation, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 is the event that begins the countdown to the millennium. Israel plays a crucial role in the premillennial dispensationalist version of the Last Days—hence the strong support of Israel by Lindsey, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Jimmy Swaggart, who along with Tim LaHaye (coauthor with Jerry Jenkins of the immensely popular and profitable *Left Behind* series) are core members of the so-called Christian Zionist Right. (Incidentally, all of the aforementioned individuals have strong affiliations with groups funded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.) Without the continuing existence of the State of Israel, the events that lead up to the final dispensation cannot come to pass. The centrality of premillennial dispensationalism and its attendant Zionism to the U.S. Christian Right points to the significance of Lindsey and his writing to the contemporary political scene. The centrality of Christian Zionism to both political and



religious life in the United States has redoubled following the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Another key historical element identified by Lindsey is the movement toward the unification of Europe. Lindsey reads the European Union as the revived Roman Empire—the reemergence of which is central to the End Times scenario. One thing that has complicated Lindsey’s vision of the apocalypse is the fall of the Soviet Union, which has served as his candidate for Gog-Magog. Gog-Magog are identified in the Bible as the nations that Satan will lead upon his escape from prison at the end of the millennium. The fall of the Soviet Union has not dissuaded Lindsey from his view: in an article from August 2002 Lindsey notes, “Just when you begin to wonder where is Gog and Magog in all this . . . Russia has continued to strengthen ties with all three of the countries branded the ‘axis of evil’ by President Bush: Iran, Iraq and North Korea. Hmmm” (Lindsey 2002).

Mark Harrison

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Millenarianism.

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**Long, Huey**

A month before his death, Senator Huey Pierce Long of Louisiana informed the U.S. Senate that his enemies were planning to assassinate him. Long frequently expressed fears about physical violence, but the pronouncement soon before the shooting made his previous statements appear credible. While attending a legislative session in Baton Rouge on 8 September 1935, Long was fatally wounded in the halls of the Louisiana State Capitol building. Allegedly, Dr. Carl Austin Weiss shot Long outside the doors of the governor’s office, and Long’s bodyguards killed Weiss, shooting him approximately

thirty times. Weiss died at the scene, and Long died about thirty hours later.

As a federal senator, Long had no legal power in the state legislature, but he exercised dictator-like control over Louisiana and regularly attended state sessions. Long was elected as governor in 1928 and successfully fought impeachment charges in 1929. Halfway through his term, he won a position in the U.S. Senate, but refused to vacate the governorship to the lieutenant governor. Long took his Senate seat in 1932 after his handpicked successor, Oscar Kelly Allen, was elected. Long launched a nationwide campaign for wealth redistribution, known as the “Share Our Wealth Society,” and waged war on big business, especially Standard Oil. He engaged in unethical and illegal practices such as requiring all of his employees to sign undated resignation letters, allowing him to dismiss them at whim. Such behaviors earned Long enemies; while he was in power, there were two political parties in Louisiana: Longs and anti-Longs. Business interests and conservative politicians hated him, but his platform received mass support. At the zenith of his reign, Long controlled nearly every aspect of state and local government, but brought much-needed improvements like paved roads and schools to Louisiana. He was considered a possible threat to his estranged ally Franklin D. Roosevelt in the presidential election of 1936 when a bullet stopped his rise to power.

Long’s supporters used the shooting as a campaign issue for the state elections of 1936, claiming that political opponents were behind the shooting. Drawing attention to the senator’s prophecy of an assassination attempt, gubernatorial candidate Richard Leche and other pro-Longs called the opposition the “Party of Murder” and the “Assassination Party.” According to the theory, Weiss had attended a gathering at the DeSoto Hotel in New Orleans on 22 July 1935 where he and several other men discussed murdering the senator. One version even states that the men drew straws to determine who would actually commit the deed. Long employees recorded the meeting, and the transcripts served as the basis for Long’s own claim of an assassination attempt. There was a meeting at the hotel, but it was a well-publicized anti-Long



Huey Long rose from poverty to national prominence by ruthlessly building a powerful political organization in Louisiana and by shrewdly appealing to the populist sentiments of that state's poor. (Library of Congress)

political conference, and most sources agree that Weiss, who showed little interest in politics, was not present. Regardless, the conspiracy allegations died down after pro-Long candidates defeated their rivals in 1936, and despite campaign promises, the Longites never brought charges against any of the alleged conspirators.

Even as pro-Longs blamed Weiss, others were looking in the opposite direction, claiming that Long's bodyguards killed him. Weiss, who might have been angry about a racial slur against his family or the plans to gerrymander his father-in-law's judicial seat, hit Long on the mouth. The guards responded with gunfire, and the senator took a bullet meant for Weiss. Long did have an unexplained mouth wound, and the guards' testimony did not agree on key points, such as how many shots Weiss fired or how Long received the lip wound. Body-

guard George McQuiston refused to testify at an inquest, leading observers to think that the guards had something to hide and were conspiring to cover up the facts. In 1936 K. B. Ponder, an investigator for Long's life insurance company, concluded that the guards shot Long.

Conversely, official investigations in 1935 and 1992 found that Weiss alone was responsible for Long's death, but many questions remain. Doctors never performed an autopsy on Long, and Weiss's corpse was not examined until it was exhumed in 1991. Weiss's .32-caliber pistol and the case file were missing for fifty years, and it was fifty-six years after the incident that ballistics tests were performed on the alleged assassin's weapon. The analysis was inconclusive. A spent round found with the gun did not match bullets fired from the weapon, and the identity of Long's killer remains an open question.

*Dallas Hulsey*

**See also:** Roosevelt, Franklin D.

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## LSD

The hallucinogenic drug lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD, was discovered by the Sandoz drug and chemical corporation in 1943, and within a few short years both the U.S. military and the newly formed CIA would be investigating the possible strategic value of this extraordinarily powerful new substance. Since a single dose was merely 100 micrograms or so, 10 kilograms—about the amount that could fit into an agent's carry-on luggage, for instance—was equivalent to 100 million doses, or enough to incapacitate the entire population of either the United States or the Soviet Union. Its strategic importance as a weapon was thus all too evident, but the CIA was more interested in its potential as an interrogation aid or even as a possible "mind-control" tool. Leaving

the research into large-scale deployment to the military's chemical and biological warfare (CBW) division, the CIA began an extensive program of testing the drug on individuals.

U.S. intelligence organizations had long been interested in the possibility of mind control. The CIA's World War II predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), had experimented with marijuana as a possible mind-control agent. And Stanley Lovell, head of OSS research and development, looked into the possibility of hypnotizing German prisoners and sending them back to Germany with orders to assassinate Hitler. Though nothing much came of these efforts, the Communist trials of the late 1940s, which saw political and military officials confessing to treasonous acts they clearly did not commit, convinced the CIA that techniques for radical behavior modification existed and, worse, that the Soviets had developed them first. With the perceived threat of Soviet mind control looming on the horizon, in 1953 the CIA set up MK-ULTRA, a new project headed by Sidney Gottlieb that was devoted to studying the operational potential of biological and chemical materials (including LSD).

The CIA's testing of LSD proceeded on two fronts. On the one hand, they decided to make use of as many official medical research organizations as they could, and began funding (often covertly) research on LSD in universities, hospitals, and drug treatment centers. On the other hand, they also decided that they needed unwitting subjects whom they could drug and then observe and even interrogate. The CIA's need for unwitting subjects was so intense that agents within project MK-ULTRA agreed that they could slip each other the drug at any time. This policy of unwitting testing produced what has become one of the most publicized events in the project's history: the LSD-related suicide of Dr. Frank Olson of the Army Chemical Corps' Special Operations Division (SOD). Olson had a profoundly negative reaction to the drug, which had been given to him without his knowledge, and Gottlieb, rather than offering Olson proper psychiatric help, sent the disturbed SOD man to one of MK-ULTRA's own scientists, an immunologist and allergist who had no psychiatric experience. The MK-ULTRA scientist was

unable to salvage the situation, and Gottlieb was forced to cover up the entire incident after Olson jumped through the window of his tenth-floor hotel room. Rather than slowing down the CIA's experiments with LSD, however, the Olson case merely made them realize that they needed to start using different subjects. Gottlieb arranged to have "safe-houses" set up in New York and San Francisco where LSD was administered to unwitting prostitutes, drug addicts, and small-time criminals (i.e., those who would be least likely to report the CIA agents to the police). As the agents developed close relationships with the prostitutes, they realized that it was just as easy to pay the women to lure unsuspecting clients back to the safehouse for testing as it was to test the prostitutes themselves. Furthermore, while they were at it, the CIA operatives decided to use the prostitutes for a variety of explorations into deviant sexual practices that might have future operational value. The prostitutes who participated in what the CIA code-named "Operation Midnight Climax" were paid \$100 a night for their work.

In the mid-1970s tales of these covert domestic operations emerged as a result of both investigative reporting and government inquiries such as the Rockefeller Commission in 1975 and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 1977. The CIA agents' cavalier approach to drug-testing horrified the public, but the institutional programs they covertly funded were often just as shocking. In Lexington, Kentucky, the director of the Addiction Research Center offered addicts heroin if they "volunteered" for the LSD testing project. Some patients were kept on LSD for seventy-seven consecutive days. At McGill University in Montreal patients were subjected to extensive "depatterning"—a technique the CIA saw as a possible prelude to mind control—that involved extensive use of LSD, electroshock therapy, and sensory deprivation. Patients' LSD-induced ramblings would be recorded on tape, then, later the patients would be injected with more LSD combined with either depressants or stimulants and left alone in a room to listen to their earlier tape.

In the end, the CIA became convinced that LSD would not turn out to be the effective mind-control agent they had hoped it would be. And while they

still dreamed of administering it to foreign leaders in order to produce erratic and discrediting behavior (one of Fidel Castro's cigars was to be coated with the drug), they discontinued the research begun in the 1950s by the time the inquiries of the 1970s had begun (or so they claimed). In the meantime, LSD had become an important part of the 1960s counterculture, and no doubt this new social significance is the reason why tales of the CIA's connection to the drug were so endlessly fascinating for the public. (No one seemed to talk quite as much about the CIA's experiments with Seconal and Dexedrine, for example.)

*Marlon Kuzmick*

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Drugs; Mind Control; MK-ULTRA.

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### Lusitania, Sinking of

The Cunard passenger liner the *Lusitania* was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat on 7 May 1915 off the south coast of Ireland, en route from New York to Liverpool, resulting in the loss of 1,200 lives, 128 of them American. Allegations of a conspiracy to sink the *Lusitania* center upon the claim that the then First Lord of the British Admiralty, Winston Churchill, colluded with the First Sea Lord, Admiral Jack Fisher, and other senior leaders of the Royal Navy, to place the liner in peril, anticipating that heavy loss of U.S. lives would hasten the intervention of the United States in World War I. While it is accepted that part of the *Lusitania's* cargo comprised munitions for the Allied war effort, there have also been suggestions of a conspiracy to con-

ceal both the precise nature of these war supplies and the military capacity of the ship itself.

The emergence of a conspiracy to sink the *Lusitania* is usually traced to a conference hosted by the British Admiralty in Whitehall on 5 May, two days before the liner was sunk, where a decision was made to withdraw the *Lusitania's* naval escort without notifying the ship, in waters where U-boats were known to be active. Among others summoned to attend the meeting was Joseph M. Kenworthy, a lieutenant commander who worked for naval intelligence, and whose only prior association with Churchill had been when Kenworthy submitted a report, commissioned by Churchill, assessing the political outcomes should a passenger liner carrying American citizens be attacked and sunk by the German navy. But the suggestion that Churchill and other senior members of the admiralty conspired to sink the *Lusitania* is problematic. Records from the admiralty conference on 5 May indicate that British naval forces stationed in Ireland were instructed to protect the ship. It is also a matter of record that at least eight, and possibly more, warnings of U-boat activity off southern Ireland were communicated to the *Lusitania* on 6 and 7 May.

Notwithstanding the urgency of these warnings, and the admiralty's awareness of the U-boat threat, a more prosaic explanation for why the liner found itself unguarded in dangerous waters may lie in the complacency of the British military. In April 1915 Churchill had written that Britain "enjoyed a supremacy at sea the like of which had never been seen even in the days of Nelson." Assured, they assumed, of naval supremacy, and with their attention focused on the ongoing campaign in the Dardanelles, the men responsible for British naval policy may simply have paid insufficient attention to the dangers of U-boat activity closer to home. The notional desertion of *Lusitania* by her naval escort the *Juno* has been described, even by those who see a conspiracy, as following the standard pattern for rotation of patrol ships in the area.

#### Secret Military Cargo

Suspicious regarding the exact nature of the *Lusitania's* cargo have been aroused by discrepancies in



the two separate cargo manifests Cunard lodged with U.S. customs, one before and one after the ship's departure from New York. Yet, in order to keep cargoes secret from German informers operating on the New York docks, it was standard practice for British shipping companies during World War I to file conflicting or incomplete manifests before sailing, and nobody has yet demonstrated convincingly that Cunard actively misled either the U.S. authorities or the public as to the contents of the ship's hold. The day after the *Lusitania* was torpedoed, for example, the *New York Times* published full details of the liner's military cargo in its edition of 8 May.

The civilian status of the *Lusitania* has also been challenged, with allegations that the liner carried a hidden arsenal that could be rapidly mobilized for use as necessary. A conspiracy to conceal the *Lusitania*'s military capacity has even been linked with the unidentified relative of an unidentified future U.S. president. But none of the 109 passengers who eventually testified at the two public inquiries into the disaster recalled seeing guns mounted on the liner.

More intriguing is the debate about what caused the fateful "second explosion" on board the ship. Although the admiralty maintained for some years that U-boat U-20 had hit the ship with two torpedoes, it is now widely accepted that the submarine fired only one torpedo at the *Lusitania*, and that the second catastrophic detonation, the one that sank the liner so quickly with such huge loss of life, was caused by an unknown object or substance the ship was carrying in its cargo. The second explosion has been explained in a number of ways, ranging from the lurid (the *Lusitania* was carrying a cargo of secret

explosive powder) to the banal (the ship was sunk by a detonation of highly flammable coal dust following the impact of the torpedo). But no comprehensive explanation for the second explosion has ever been offered, and the admiralty's initial insistence on the "two torpedo" scenario has kept alive the theory of a high-level cover-up regarding the contents of the *Lusitania*'s holds.

As well as the cause of the second explosion, one further aspect of the *Lusitania* conspiracy remains unresolved. In the aftermath of the sinking, early accounts estimated that the liner had taken to the bottom of the sea several thousand dollars in cash. By 1922 these estimates had been revised, with some commentators valuing the ship's cargo at \$5–6 million, much of it in gold. During the 1950s the activities of the salvage company Rizdon Beezley around the wreck revived suspicions of Churchill's involvement in the disaster, with allegations that Churchill had commissioned the company to remove evidence of contraband from the wreck. To this day, no convincing explanation has been offered as to why the *Lusitania* would have been carrying millions of dollars of gold into a war zone.

David Holloway

**See also:** Zimmermann Telegram.

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## **Mafia**

Although the feared influence of the Mafia has provoked some exaggerated and alarmist conspiracy theories (conspiracy theorists routinely suggest, for example, that the Mafia was involved in both the election and murder of John F. Kennedy, the murder of Marilyn Monroe, and the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa), the Mafia in reality also constitutes a dangerous conspiracy. It has a basis in both myth and reality in that it is a false stereotype and a real organization intent on exploiting individual and collective vulnerabilities. There is no controlling criminal conspiracy known as “the Mafia”; instead, the Mafia should be understood as the popular name for Italian American organized crime in all its forms. Numerous terms have been used since the beginning of large-scale Italian migration to the United States in the late nineteenth century. These include “the Black Hand,” “the organization,” “the mob,” “the syndicate,” and “La Cosa Nostra.”

## **The Mafia Conspiracy**

Local, state, and federal crime-fighting agencies have long kept close tabs on Italian American organized crime. The Mafia has been implicated, occasionally with evidence, in numerous conspiracies. Known to the Federal Bureau of Investigation as La Cosa Nostra (or LCN), its members provide illicit goods and services while also using illegal means to control and distribute otherwise legal goods and services.

U.S. society and law have sent mixed messages about prostitution, alcohol, drugs, and gambling.

These activities have all been legal at some moments and under certain conditions and illegal at others. In those times and places that they have been illegal, they remained widely available due to the infrastructure of the Mafia. This infrastructure was first developed during the Prohibition era. Large-scale bootlegging, smuggling, and distribution organizations emerged in major U.S. cities to meet the demand for alcohol. The Treasury Department had little success curbing the supply or the demand, although Eliot Ness of the Prohibition Bureau of the Justice Department successfully built a case against Al Capone on tax evasion charges. With the end of Prohibition, some organizations turned to gambling. Cooperation from criminal justice authorities ensured that there would be little opposition to the forerunner of casino-style gambling in towns like Hot Springs, Arkansas, Covington, Kentucky, Fort Lee, New Jersey, and Tampa, Florida. Criminal organizations from Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis would go on to develop some of the first casinos in Las Vegas.

The cold war era that followed World War II brought the largest investigations into organized crime up to that point. Senator Estes Kefauver led a widely publicized investigation into organized crime in interstate commerce in 1951. Although the Kefauver Crime Committee did uncover real crimes, it also fantastically suggested that the Mafia was a shadow government controlling virtually every aspect of U.S. politics and commerce. Later in the decade, Senator John McClellan led an investigation

into labor racketeering. His committee's chief counsel, Robert F. Kennedy, focused most of his energies on investigating corruption in the Teamsters Union, then the nation's largest labor union. Kennedy's interrogations of the Teamsters dynamic president, Jimmy Hoffa, proved extremely popular with TV viewers.

Unlike earlier investigations, McClellan's Senate Rackets Committee led to significant antiracketeering legislation: the Landrum-Griffin Act. Among other things, Landrum-Griffin banned those who had been convicted of certain crimes from taking leadership positions in labor unions, which signaled the federal government's willingness to prosecute organized criminals. This trend would continue when Robert Kennedy became attorney general during his brother's presidency: from a low of 19 in 1960, organized crime indictments rose to 687 by 1964. Kennedy created a special unit within the Justice Department known as the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section to monitor and prosecute gangsters. In 1963, this department convinced Joseph Valachi to present testimony to the U.S. Senate about his experiences in organized crime. After being initiated in 1930 into La Cosa Nostra—"This Thing of Ours"—Valachi participated in the organization's theft, drug, and homicide crimes. In his testimony, he described his initiation ceremony, the secrecy oath of *omertá*, and the bureaucratic structure of New York's five organized crime families.

The federal government's strongest weapon against organized crime came with the Racketeering Influenced Criminal Organization (RICO) law in 1970, which allows for the seizure of the assets of those involved in criminal activity. In addition, RICO made it easier to go after the leaders of criminal organizations by extending the length of prison sentences of people participating in a pattern of organized crime over a ten-year period. These new tools led to some high-profile prosecutions, but in the 1980s low-level offenders of drug laws became the targets of aggressive policing and harsh sentences characteristic of the "War on Drugs."

The turn of the millennium brought several changes in the nature of organized crime. Revelations of widespread corruption in some of the nation's

most powerful companies inspired arguments that legitimate corporations were themselves sites of organized crime. For example, the FBI's "Uptick" undercover operation in 2000 found widespread securities fraud and brokerage houses run by members of the Bonanno and Columbo crime families.

### **The Mafia as Sensational Conspiracy Theory**

The involvement of real Italian American criminals in organized crime is often overshadowed by their fictional counterparts. It is rarely clear where conspiracy gives way to conspiracy theory. It is clear, however, that popular culture plays an important role in the development, elaboration, and reinforcement of the Mafia conspiracy theory. Al Capone the bootlegger quickly gives way to "Al Capone," the character in *The Untouchables*, or Tony Camonte in *Public Enemy*.

Many of these theories have their origins in the tabloid news or Hollywood cinema, but then quickly migrate into popular lore and public policy. During the 1950s, *New York Mirror* reporters Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer wrote a popular series of entertaining "true crime" books that both gained high sales and inspired the Kefauver investigation. Gossip columnist Walter Winchell wrote sensational "Mobfia" stories and did voiceovers for TV's *The Untouchables*, but he also provided information to J. Edgar Hoover. The theories would then migrate back into popular culture in films like 1951's *The Enforcer*, based on Kefauver's investigation.

Many politicians and public figures draw on the notoriety of organized crime conspiracies in building their careers. After Prohibition, Eliot Ness became Cleveland's safety director but lost his bid to be the city's mayor. Thomas Dewey began his rise to the New York governorship by prosecuting gangster Charles "Lucky" Luciano in 1936. More recently, Rudolph Giuliani went from a gangbusting U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York to mayor of New York City.

*The Godfather* series of films would perhaps have the greatest impact on popularizing the Mafia conspiracy in late-twentieth-century America. When the first film was released in 1972, few Mafia movies had been made since their heyday in the 1920s. The

first two films in the series captured Academy Awards in several categories, including Best Picture. The first film marked a major transformation in the image of the Mafia in that its focus on the Corleone family took literally the idea of a “crime family.” The film’s Italian American themes catered to the 1970s search for ethnic roots, while its traditional nuclear families provided a nostalgic look back during a time of rising divorce rates. Despite these fictions, the series seemed real: it exhibited the gruesome reality of violence, an eye for period detail, and a joy with Italian American food and dialogue that made it difficult for many viewers to distinguish this fictional crime family from the practice of organized crime.

Many individuals and organizations have worked hard to discredit the theory of the Mafia. Most notably, J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, denied the existence of the Mafia until the Valachi revelations of 1963. Beginning in the 1950s, the Order of the Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), an Italian American civic organization, began a campaign to eliminate the Mafia from U.S. culture. They believed it to be a defamatory stereotype with no basis in reality. In addition to protesting portrayals in the mass media, they lobbied politicians and government organizations from the FBI to the United States Postal Service, which pulled the plug on a planned *Godfather* commemorative stamp due to Sons of Italy pressure in 1998. Their efforts to get *The Sopranos* taken off cable television have so far proved unsuccessful.

Lee Bernstein

**See also:** Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoffa, Jimmy; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert, Assassination of; RICO.

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**Mailer, Norman**

At the age of twenty-five, Norman Mailer published *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), a novel based on the author’s experiences during the World War II. The rise of U.S. totalitarianism—a term intended to include all the powerful sociopolitical forces that master and inhibit individual freedom—is ominously forecast in the novel, and would become one of the author’s obsessive concerns. In his prodigious output of fiction, essays, and journalism over the last half century or so, Mailer has continued to explore the corrupting nature of U.S. power structures, finding in the nation’s government, media, armed forces, commercial behemoths, and mass-market products the causes as well as the effects of a pervasive spiritual decrepitude. As he implies in his novel *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967), totalitarianism’s depredations are evident both in individual Americans, who have generally become incapable of meeting genuine tests of courage, and in government policy, which showed a similar cowardice by launching a military campaign in Vietnam against an over-matched opponent.

Mailer’s interest in the ability of powerful men to manipulate history, including the daily lives of average citizens, is prominent in almost all his work. In *An American Dream* (1964), he suggests, rather presciently, the existence of a sinister, shadowy network of influence involving the highest levels of U.S. government, the Mafia, the CIA, the media, and big business. Mailer himself has shown a lifetime attraction to this shadowy world, confessing “it would not have been impossible for me to have spent my life in the CIA” (Mailer 1991, 1375). However, the author’s tendency is to locate the ultimate source of watershed events not in the cunning of specific potentates, but in the mysterious struggle of good and evil in the universe—an unpredictable interaction, influenced by and in turn influencing human lives, which inevitably generates uncanny “coincidences” whenever the stakes (personal, political, historical) are



high. Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (1979), a partly fictionalized account of the last few months of the life of convicted murderer Gary Gilmore, is especially concerned with inexplicable patterns in the world and the temptation to read design into supposedly random events.

This concern also permeates Mailer's massive novel *Harlot's Ghost* (1991), whose protagonist, a fictional member of the CIA named Harry Hubbard, has firsthand knowledge of three decades of cold war espionage. The CIA is represented as being involved in numerous foreign and domestic intrigues (including attempts, cosponsored by the Mafia, on Fidel Castro's life), while Hubbard and others speculate on the possibility that some element in the agency was responsible for organizing or covering up the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Among other theories Mailer's characters entertain (but do not claim to be able to prove) is the notion that Marilyn Monroe's death was a murder arranged either by John or Robert Kennedy, or by Jimmy Hoffa in an attempt to frame the Kennedy brothers. Mailer himself played an important role in popularizing Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories in the 1960s, not least with his call for a new commission to investigate the case, claiming he "would trust a commission headed by Edmund Wilson before I trusted another by Earl Warren" (Mailer 1966, 11–13). Mailer's *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery* (1995) is a psychobiography of Kennedy's alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. Armed with voluminous research into Oswald's life in the Soviet Union in the years before Kennedy's death, including interviews with members of the KGB who kept the U.S. defector under surveillance, Mailer weighs the evidence implicating the usual suspects (the Mafia, the CIA, the KGB, pro- or anti-Castro zealots), and finally concludes that Oswald probably acted alone. Jack Ruby, the Dallas nightclub owner whose murder of Oswald was captured on live television, is also judged to have acted, in all likelihood, without external assistance.

Geoff Hamilton

**See also:** Castro, Fidel; Central Intelligence Agency; Cold War; Hoffa, Jimmy; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination

of; Mafia; Monroe, Marilyn; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Ruby, Jack.

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### Malcolm X, Assassination of

Malcolm X was assassinated on 21 February 1965 at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. The subsequent murder trial convicted three men, Talmadge Hayer, Norman 3X Butler, and Thomas 15X Johnson. For most commentators (e.g., Breitman), Malcolm's death left a number of questions unanswered. Not only did the trial fail to definitively answer who murdered Malcolm, it also failed to answer who sponsored the assassination. The prosecution team quickly assumed the involvement of the Nation of Islam (NOI), and failed to track leads that did not match their assumptions. Focused solely on winning the case as they defined it, the prosecution worked with the circumstantial evidence they had without attempting to find hard facts or the real motive behind the assassination. To their discredit, the defense teams shared part of the blame; they failed to introduce evidence or raise questions that would seriously weaken the prosecution's case. Proponents of various theories have since attempted to solve some of the questions left unanswered, by positing the involvement of not only the Nation of Islam but also other groups with possible motives and means, including the Harlem Drug Lords, the New York Police Department (NYPD), the CIA, and the FBI.

#### Harlem Drug Lords Theory

As a staunch and vocal opponent of narcotics, Malcolm often warned audiences against using the



Two policemen in New York City pull a gurney bearing Malcom X after he was downed by an assassin's bullets at a rally on 21 February 1965. (Bettmann/Corbis)

“weapon of the white man.” Based largely on the personal recollections of one man (Farmer), this theory claims Malcolm’s assassination was nothing more than a battle over turf, as Harlem drug dealers did not want him driving away customers. The weakness of this theory lies in the fact that most of the evidence is anecdotal, and that Malcolm’s anti-drug beliefs did little to curb drug use in Harlem, which continued to rise steadily in the early 1960s regardless of anything Malcolm said or did.

### **NYPD Theory**

Theorists who believe the police played a direct role in the assassination often cite the issue of the “Second Man” as evidence (Norden). “The Second Man” refers to initial press reports that police arrested two suspects, Hayer and an unnamed individual. Subsequent stories failed to mention the capture of two individuals, but never corrected the error of the first reports. Proponents of the “Second Man” theory argue that the second individual was actually a

police operative, and as soon as the police realized this, all evidence of a second arrest disappeared. While the unexplained disappearance of the “Second Man” looks suspicious on the surface, others explain it away as a simple error committed by the press trying to meet a story deadline. The “Second Man,” say some, could actually be Hayer himself. One officer arrested Hayer, but this officer gave him over to two other officers for transport. The press might have questioned the first officer and then the other two officers, unaware that there was in fact only one suspect. Once they realized their error, the press corrected the information in their stories, overlooking the need to note the reason for the correction to their readers.

More compelling is the argument that the police played an important indirect role in allowing the assassination to occur. Although the police claimed to have a special detail of twenty officers guarding Malcolm the day of the assassination, only George Roberts, one of Malcolm’s bodyguards and also an undercover agent, was actually in the ballroom itself. The rest of the detail were supposedly stationed in other rooms of the building and in the hospital across the street. By keeping such a low profile, none of the officers assigned to the detail was in any position to thwart the assassination attempt. In fact, the officers credited with capturing and transferring Hayer were not a part of the special detail, but were simply passing through the area at the time. While the police may or may not have been directly responsible for Malcolm’s death, they were clearly negligent in their duties.

### **CIA Theory**

Some have argued that the CIA viewed Malcolm as a major threat to national security interests. In 1964, Malcolm’s travels in Africa sparked the interest of the government, specifically the CIA, who followed Malcolm and kept close tabs on his activities. One of Malcolm’s objectives while in Africa was to garner the support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). His attempts to lobby the OAU to pass a resolution strongly condemning the racial policy of the United States ultimately failed, but some suggest these attempts were a serious

enough threat for the CIA to eliminate him. While in Cairo, Malcolm suffered a case of food poisoning and had his stomach pumped in a local hospital. Although no proof exists that the CIA placed poison in his food, speculation surfaced after his death that the CIA might have been involved.

Internal CIA documents since released through the Freedom of Information Act indicate that the CIA had no direct role in any assassination attempts made on Malcolm X. In 1976, the CIA carried out an internal review of its files, and an in-house document dated 30 January 1976 concluded that the CIA only monitored Malcolm’s actions and never assumed any active role to stop him. Theorists question the truthfulness of such internal findings, but some question why the CIA would find it necessary to lie to itself eleven years after Malcolm’s death (Friedly).

### **FBI Theory**

Malcolm X was still in prison when the FBI started its first file on him in 1953. He initially caught their attention when he claimed affiliation with the Communist Party in a letter. Although Malcolm was never a Communist, merely mentioning his involvement was enough for the FBI to monitor him as a security threat. Over the next decade, the FBI would collect thousands of documents in Malcolm’s file. Under J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI was notoriously against the civil rights movement, which Hoover believed was a front for Communists. The FBI developed different tactics to discredit African American organizations and leaders, eventually beginning the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to combat groups it viewed as threats to national security.

Theorists point to two documents that suggest the FBI’s interest in discrediting Malcolm. The first is an internal memo dated 22 January 1969 that takes credit for the split between the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X. Exactly how much influence the FBI had in the split remains unclear, but its role was probably minor. The second document, dated 4 March 1968, outlined COINTELPRO’s objective to “prevent the rise of a ‘messiah.’” The document confirmed the FBI’s fear that Malcolm might have developed into a messiah figure for the African American community, but



using these documents to show the FBI's involvement in Malcolm's assassination is highly problematic. No credible evidence exists that the FBI ever did anything more than attempt to discredit Malcolm (Carson).

### **Nation of Islam Theory**

Although Hayer offered a surprise confession during the original trial, he did not indicate motive or identify the names of his coconspirators. His claim that Butler and Johnson played no role in the assassination was ignored. During the trial Hayer denied any affiliation with the Nation of Islam, but once in prison, he resumed his Muslim beliefs. In late 1977 and early 1978, Hayer offered two sworn affidavits, once again confirming the innocence of Butler and Johnson. With Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, Hayer claimed he no longer felt it necessary to hide the identities of his fellow assassins, whom he identified as Brother Benjamin, Leon X, Wilbur X, and William X. The motive they all shared as NOI members was to silence Malcolm, the man dubbed by the NOI as "the chief hypocrite." Malcolm threatened to spread not only the news of Muhammad's adulterous relationships, but also the knowledge of the NOI's rampant fiscal corruption.

While the best evidence suggests that the NOI had the most plausible motive and was ultimately responsible for Malcolm's death, no direct proof links the assassination to Elijah Muhammad or anyone higher up in the organization than the men who committed the crime. What is clear is that the harsh rhetoric used by various members of the NOI, such as statements made by Boston minister Louis X [Farrakhan], created a hostile environment for Malcolm, making his assassination a virtual certainty. Members of the NOI identified Malcolm as the enemy, and could easily infer that killing Malcolm was warranted and would be welcomed.

*Brett R. Fuller*

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; COINTELPRO; Farrakhan, Louis; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hoover, J. Edgar.

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### **The Manchurian Candidate**

*The Manchurian Candidate* has become an important film among both conspiracy theorists and academics studying conspiracy theory. For the former it offers a chilling portrayal of government manipulation of individuals and of the secret cabals who control the United States, while for the latter it provides a fictionalized representation of paranoia and mind control that offers an insight into a wider cultural paranoid consciousness. Released in 1962, a year before the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the film has often been seen as a prescient foretelling of the political assassinations of the 1960s, although in actuality it is more a product and summing up of 1950s cold war paranoia.

*The Manchurian Candidate* is based on a novel by Richard Condon and was directed by John Frankenheimer, and has its origins in stories that emanated from the Korean War about the brainwashing of U.S. prisoners of war by Communist forces. The film begins with the ambush of a group of U.S. soldiers under the command of Major Bennett Marco (Frank Sinatra) and his unpopular sergeant, the well-educated Raymond Shaw (Laurence Harvey). This is followed by several brainwashing sequences (during which Shaw is brainwashed into becoming a mind-controlled assassin), after which the narrative shifts to the United States and the return of Marco as a serving officer and Shaw as a decorated war hero. The film then follows the stories of the two figures as Marco attempts to understand his strange dreams and his failure to comprehend how Shaw has, in his embedded mind, become a heroic and well-loved figure, even while he consciously knows



that he and the rest of the platoon all deeply disliked him. This leads Marco into an investigation into, and ultimately a friendship of sorts with, Shaw as he realizes how the latter has been used as a mind-controlled pawn, while at the same time dramatizing Shaw's embedding within a conspiracy to kill a presidential candidate in order to guarantee the nomination and election (on a sympathy vote) of his despised red-baiting stepfather, Johnny Iselin. During the course of this it is revealed that Raymond's mother (played by Angela Lansbury) is his controller (and who is manipulating him through his unconscious incestuous desires, with the implication that she did this before his Korean brainwashing) and that the Communist plot to elect Iselin has deeper implications. The film ends with Shaw realizing he is a pawn and ultimately breaking his programming by shooting Iselin and his mother rather than his intended target.

The film's significance for conspiracy theory lies in its mapping of the pathology of brainwashing and in its portrayal of the tangled webs and conspiracies of cold war politics. In both cases, nothing is what it seems and there is a sense that there are hidden realities to be uncovered beneath the surface of appearance. This is most obvious in the form of the mind-controlled Shaw, who has a surface personality and a deeper embedded assassin identity that is triggered by the appearance of the Queen of Diamonds playing card, after which he obeys the first command he is given. This is illustrated in one memorable scene when he jumps into a lake in Central Park after the accidental appearance of the card and a random comment when he meets Marco in a bar. The problematization of surface appearances is particularly shown in the opening brainwashing sequences, where the application of mind control alters the perceptual experiences of the soldiers. The soldiers do not see the conference room where they are being brainwashed, but instead believe that they are attending a garden party where they discuss issues such as flower arranging with prim middle-class women in floral dresses. Nor do any of them see Shaw kill another soldier on the command of one of his controllers because they are so embedded in the fantasy that has been created for them.

These sequences, and Raymond's embedded personality, suggest that "reality" and identity in both mind control and conspiracy are constructed forms rather than objectively existing phenomena and that they can be altered according to the whim of the conspiracy controller. This is played out in the political narrative of the film in which reality twists and turns with the revelations, first, that it is Raymond's mother who is his U.S. controller and then that the Communist plot involves the election of Iselin. The film, therefore, maps a complex relationship between identity and reality in the suggestion that both are constructs, because if one cannot be guaranteed, then neither can the other. The film does, in the end, rescue both with the awakening of the "real" Raymond and his concomitant ability to see "reality" for what it is, but there are still doubts as to whether the self or the world can be trusted anymore.

The uncertainties that the film raises are one of the reasons why it has been so influential in conspiracy theory, which is based on both the distrust of surface appearance and the belief in a deeper reality that is as knowable as the reality that Shaw finally perceives. The film has also been influential because of the widespread conspiracy belief that there are real "Manchurian Candidates," but programmed by the CIA in its MK-ULTRA program, rather than by the Chinese or Russians. Such an idea was popularized by John Marks in his study of MK-ULTRA, *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*, and has subsequently been applied to people such as Lee Harvey Oswald (through his hypnosis by David Ferrie) and Sirhan Sirhan. The idea has also remained in currency, making its appearance in recent years in relation to figures as diverse as John McCain, who many Vietnam veterans believe to have been brainwashed by the Vietnamese Communists; Ted Kaczynski, who, it is claimed, embarked on his terror campaign as a result of the MK-ULTRA programming he underwent while he was at Harvard; and the Columbine killers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who have been seen either as brainwashed victims of a conspiracy-controlled media industry or as part of a plot to outlaw guns in the United States.

*Fran Mason*

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Film and Conspiracy Theory; Mind Control; MK-ULTRA.

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## Manson, Charles

The leader of a bizarre, conspiracy-minded cult that committed several murders, Charles Manson (often known simply as “Charlie”) became a notorious figure in the late 1960s, and the center of a great deal of conspiracy-minded speculation about his true motives. To many, Manson’s actions constituted a conspiracy to bring about the end of civilized society and the dawn of a new age of terror.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1934, Manson spent his first term in reformatory school at the age of nine. By the time he drifted to San Francisco in 1967, Manson had spent most of his adult life in jail, mostly for such offenses as car theft and credit-card fraud. He also worked some time as a pimp. He found himself in the midst of the new psychedelic drug culture in the 1960s, amidst the hippies of the Haight-Asbury district who took LSD, smoked pot, and called themselves flower children. Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s was a mecca for the nation’s disenchanted young people and they came by the thousands to participate in what they saw as a great social experiment. No one cared that Manson had been a jailbird; on the contrary, it was regarded as being greatly to his credit.

For Manson, religion was a strong force that he used to manipulate the minds of his followers. At the age of thirty-four he decided he wanted a “family,” and consequently started to attract a group of followers, many of whom were young women with troubled lives, rebelling against their parents and society. All of Manson’s followers were weak willed, naïve, and easy to lead and in addition Manson used LSD and amphetamines to alter his followers’ personalities. He assembled a destructive, doomsday cult around himself, which the media later called the Family. At one time, it numbered in excess of

100 individuals at the Spahn Ranch, some 30 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Manson was referred to both as “God” and “Satan” by his followers. As the Family’s guru, he claimed to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

By 1968 Manson was prophesying an apocalyptic racial war in the United States. He became convinced that songs on the Beatles’ psychedelic *White Album* contained coded references to the coming apocalypse, notably the tracks “Helter Skelter” (Manson’s term for the race war that would lead to Armageddon) and “Revolution 9” (which he understood to be a veiled reference to the Book of Revelation, chapter 9, which describes four angels setting out to kill a third of mankind; Manson took these four angels to be the Beatles). Manson was also associated with the Process Church of Final Judgement, one of whose key doctrines was reconciliation between Christ and Satan. According to Manson, his Family would survive the prophesied racial holocaust because they would be hiding in the desert safe from the chaos of the city. He took from Revelation the concept of a “bottomless pit,” the entrance to which he asserted was a cave underneath Death Valley that led down to a city of gold, and where Manson and his Family planned on waiting out the war. His idea was that when the war was over the Manson Family would be one of the only white families left, leaving them to rule over the remaining victorious blacks (Bugliosi and Gentry, 321). When Armageddon failed to come, Manson took matters into his own hands and began plotting a way to hasten the desired carnage. During the summer of 1969 Charles instructed some members of the Family to begin a series of mass murders.

The first, called the Tate homicides, occurred on 9 August 1969 at the home of Sharon Tate, wife of the film director Roman Polanski. Three victims were shot and/or stabbed multiple times on the grounds of the estate. These were Abigail Folger, Steven Parent, and Voytek Frykowski. Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring were murdered inside the house. Tate, eight months pregnant at the time, died from numerous stab wounds; Sebring died of blood loss. Both had also been hanged over a rafter. The next homicides, the LaBianca murders, occurred two days later in the

home of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca. They were found stabbed to death with dozens of wounds.

The officials working on the two investigations were the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office (LASO) for the LaBianca case and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for the Tate murders. Lack of communication between the two law enforcement entities put both cases in jeopardy several times during the investigations. In addition there were also several mistakes made in the preservation and collection of evidence. The police appear to have been stunned by the horrific details at the mass murder crime scenes, and they badly bungled the task of collecting evidence: for example, they were unable to find the clothing worn by the murderers (a television news crew was able to locate the clothing later).

A major break in the case happened when Family member Susan Atkins was arrested on a charge of prostitution. While in prison, she talked to her cellmate about having been involved in the Tate murders, and Manson and three of his followers (Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, and Leslie Van Houten) were charged with the Tate/LaBianca murders. The trial was spectacular: Manson spent much of the time with his back to the judge and his actions were repeated by his codefendants and other followers. He shaved his head and carved a swastika on his forehead; his Family followed suit. All four were found guilty and sentenced to execution. Manson, along with other Family members, also later received a death sentence for the Gary Hinman and Donald Shea killings, which were subsequently discovered to have been carried out by Manson's cult. The death penalties were commuted to life imprisonment in the 1970s when California law was changed.

Many commentators wondered if Manson and his Family were connected to other conspiratorial forces, and this speculation was reignited when one of his followers, Lynette "Red" "Squeaky" Fromme, attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford on 5 September 1975. Fromme was tried, convicted, and imprisoned for life in the same year. Her motive appears to have been to publicize Manson's request for a retrial, and his concern about the environment.

*Niran Abbas*

**See also:** Mind Control.

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#### McCarthy, Joseph

Arguably the most successful conspiracy theorist in U.S. history, Joseph McCarthy (1908–1957) served as senator from Wisconsin from 1946 until his death. His tenure took place during the early years of the cold war, when Americans feared the worst about their ability to fend off the threat of international communism. The senator both exacerbated and exemplified these anxieties by staking his career on the claim that various federal agencies had been infiltrated by Communists, who wished to overthrow the U.S. government. These double agents, McCarthy argued, operated conspiratorially to destroy the American way of life by posing as loyal American citizens, then working their way into important government posts. McCarthy proved notoriously unsuccessful in unmasking actual Communists, but the suspicion generated by his investigations ruined many a career. Although the senator's crusade garnered him no small amount of opposition, many feared that opposing him would bring their own loyalties into question. McCarthy's willingness to make unsubstantiated public accusations, and his reckless disregard for any standard of evidence, served to create a reign of terror that the name "McCarthyism" still invokes today.

Born and raised near Appleton, Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy never lacked for ambition and drive. At fourteen he quit school, then quickly founded a thriving small business raising chickens; later he managed a prosperous local grocery store. Growing restless, McCarthy's enthusiasm turned toward finishing his education, and at twenty years of age, he completed an entire course of high school study in



Senator Joseph McCarthy. (Library of Congress)

one year. A Catholic, McCarthy next attended Marquette, the Jesuit college in Milwaukee, then graduated from law school in 1935. After briefly working in a legal partnership, the future senator lost his first election, running for district attorney as a Democrat.

Two more years as an attorney prepared the aspiring politician for his first office—in 1939 he was elected a Wisconsin circuit judge. Though he had little name recognition or public demand for his services, McCarthy created support through tireless campaigning and, in a pattern that would continue

throughout his career, some disingenuous mudslinging against his opponents. During World War II, the new lieutenant served as an intelligence officer at Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, but kept Wisconsin politics foremost in his mind. In an effort to maximize the political value of his military service, McCarthy kept his judgeship, fabricated a record as “Tail-Gunner Joe,” and earned himself a citation by forging his commanding officer’s signature.

Upon his return home, McCarthy could see something others did not: the fading fortunes of Senator



Robert LaFollette. A member of Wisconsin's leading political family, LaFollette had initially been elected over twenty years before as a Republican. In the wake of the Depression, the senator and his brother, Wisconsin's governor Phil LaFollette, found themselves to be out of step with the Republican Party in a heavily Republican state. The siblings founded the Progressive Party of Wisconsin, and LaFollette's popularity kept him his seat despite the switch. When their political organization disbanded in 1944 after Phil's run for the presidency against Franklin D. Roosevelt, LaFollette had little choice but to return to the understandably resentful Republicans. McCarthy sensed the possibility for an upset, and ran against the incumbent in the 1946 Republican primary. During the campaign, McCarthy said little about substantive issues, preferring instead glossy photographs of himself in full military regalia and the slogan, "Congress needs a tail-gunner." But the returning hero indefatigably outcampaigned and outspent the incumbent, who took little notice of the local judge and preferred to stay in Washington. McCarthy won the Republican nomination in a tight race and had no trouble in the general election.

The new senator quickly established a name for himself among the Washington elite as an ambitious and slightly boorish publicity hound who thought often of himself, but seldom of the traditions of the Senate or the respect due to senior colleagues. As McCarthy searched for an issue by which he could define himself early in his first term, he vigorously flogged one idea then the next with little thought of political prudence or ideological consistency. Nearing the end of his first term, McCarthy had alienated much of the Senate and found himself without a major committee assignment—he needed something that would put him back in the good graces of his colleagues and the voters. In Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator McCarthy found his issue. On 9 February 1950 several witnesses claimed he told the Ohio County Women's Republican Club, "While I cannot take the time to name all of the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . names that were known to the Secretary

of State and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department."

Shortly thereafter the Senator told reporters he had a list of 207 names, then 57. In truth McCarthy had no list, and the numbers themselves usually came from mischaracterized or dated research that had been made public by others long before. Irresponsible and unsupported as the accusations were, they nonetheless thrust McCarthy into the public eye. He had the attention of the press, the Senate, and the Truman administration. The Senate convened a committee, chaired by Maryland Democrat Millard Tydings, to investigate the charges. As a member of the Tydings committee, McCarthy made far more accusations than he could support. Most observers found his performance in that forum to be irresponsible and unfair, but the junior senator from Wisconsin was successful in gaining the publicity he craved.

For the next four years, McCarthy was the nation's most well-known and vehement red-baiter. Having shrewdly maneuvered himself into the chairmanship of the unpopular Senate Committee on Government Operations, he appointed himself chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, where he had the authority and the budget to investigate "government activities at all levels." McCarthy launched investigations into Communist infiltration of numerous government agencies, such as the Voice of America—the radio network run by the State Department—and the Overseas Library Program. McCarthy also accused any number of government employees of being Communists, including such high-ranking officials as General George Marshall and Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

McCarthy's downfall came about as the result of many factors, but perhaps two loom largest overall. First, in the face of relaxing cold war tensions, fewer Americans believed the Communist threat to justify the extreme measures advocated by McCarthyism. Second, McCarthy did not ease up on his attacks on the executive branch after Dwight Eisenhower, a member of his own party, became president in 1952. Although the Republicans had seen McCarthy as a valuable asset in constructing their



Senator Joseph McCarthy chats with his attorney, Roy Cohn, during Senate subcommittee hearings on the McCarthy-Army dispute. (Library of Congress)

tough-on-communism image, none of them wanted him attacking their own administration. On Capitol Hill, patience and tolerance for McCarthy was on the wane.

The immediate cause of the senator's fall from grace, however, was the so-called Army-McCarthy hearings. Held in the Senate in 1954, they concerned the accusation that Roy Cohn, McCarthy's top aide, had abused his position by trying to win special treatment for another McCarthy aide, Private G. David Schine, who had been recently drafted. Army officials alleged that Cohn had threatened them with investigations of Communist infiltration were he not to get his way. McCarthy responded with the charge that it was the army that had acted improperly; it had threatened to give Schine poor assignments unless already ongoing

investigations were called off. The ensuing hearings were broadcast on television, and provided a testament to McCarthy's declining influence. Forty million Americans watched or heard him, many for the first time, witnessing his vituperative personal attacks and merciless accusations. By the end of the year, Joseph McCarthy had been censured by the U.S. Senate. Though he remained in that body until his death two years later, the discredited McCarthy was never again an important political player.

Americans had feared the spread and influence of communism long before the cold war. The first red scare and the Palmer Raids (1919–1920) took place almost immediately after the 1917 Russian Revolution, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities dates to 1938. Yet in the cold war era, the conspiratorial view of communism itself came to

dominate U.S. anticommunist discourse. McCarthy is perhaps the best representative of this trend. Believing the United States to be engaged in a Manichean life-or-death struggle, the senator did not see communism as an alternative political philosophy. Instead, it was the banner of an opposing and nefarious force that would stop at nothing to rid the earth of Americanism. In this view, both the standards of evidentiary rigor and those of justice were dispensable luxuries. McCarthy's approach is thus a textbook example of what historian Richard Hofstadter called, in his 1964 essay of the same name, "the paranoid style in American politics." According to Hofstadter, the paranoid style can be distinguished not only by its conspiratorial tone, but by its absolutist framework of good and evil and its penchant for the accumulation of facts buttressed by a "curious leap of imagination that is always made at some critical point in the recital of events." In this, as in so many aspects, Senator Joe McCarthy serves as a perfect symbol for his time.

Mike O'Connor

**See also:** Chambers, Whittaker; Hiss, Alger; House Un-American Activities Committee; John Birch Society; Nixon, Richard; Red Scare.

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**Mexican-American War**

Numerous conspiracy theories center on the controversial war fought between the United States and Mexico between 1846 and 1848. One theory states that the war was a product of a conspiracy by southern U.S. congressmen to gain more southern territory, and, therefore, gain more political power. Another view suggests that it was U.S. President

James K. Polk who initiated a complex conspiracy to start a "just" war against Mexico. Yet a third theory puts the blame for starting the war on a conspiracy among an aggressive Mexican press.

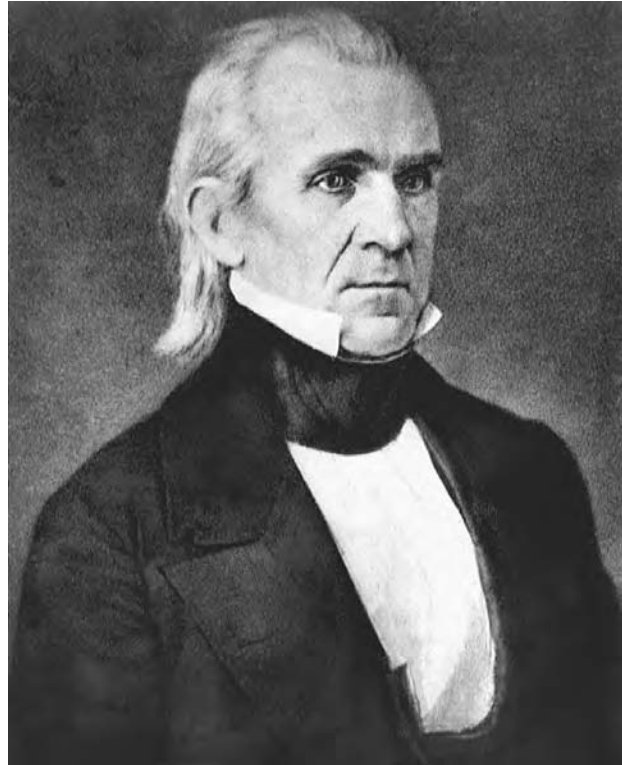
As early as the Missouri Compromise (1820), the U.S. Congress had made attempts at balancing political power between the free and slave states. This balancing act continued throughout what historians call the "era of sectional conflict," and ended only with the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War. Abraham Lincoln was one of many politicians who saw a war with Mexico as detrimental. He and many others believed that the acquisition of southern territory would offset the balance of political power. Both before and after the war, contemporary abolitionists, including prominent spokesmen in both the northern Democrat and Whig Parties, accused the so-called Slave Power, a suspected cabal of southern oligarchs bent on expanding slavery and the southern way of life throughout the Western Hemisphere, of arranging the war to accomplish their ends.

Though many at that time believed that President Polk was part of the Slave Power conspiracy, others then and since have pointed to Polk himself as the key conspirator in instigating the war. Polk was a prominent advocate of Manifest Destiny, the belief that it was the God-given destiny of the United States to spread from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Mexico's more northerly provinces—and in the minds of some, all of Mexico—were thus a legitimate target for U.S. expansion. Polk lent vocal support to this position during his campaign for the presidency, announcing his strong support for the annexation of Texas, which was currently being considered by Texas President John Tyler. According to Anson Jones (the final president of the Republic of Texas), Polk sent agents to Texas to try to persuade him to provoke hostilities with Mexico while the annexation process was taking place, bringing the United States into a territorial war in defense of one of its states and fixing the responsibility for the war on Mexico. This suspected conspiracy, which anticipated the Mexican-American War by eleven months, did not succeed only because Jones would have no part in it.

Having failed in this conspiracy, Polk attempted the purchase of New Mexico, California, and the disputed land in Texas between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. However, it soon became painfully clear to Polk that, after losing Texas to U.S. annexation, Mexico had no intention of parting with any more of its land. At this point, theory holds, Polk initiated another and even more complex conspiracy by ordering General Zachary Taylor with a large army to station himself just inside the disputed territory southwest of the Nueces River. When hostilities failed to materialize, Polk ordered Taylor to the mouth of the Rio Grande, which was the southernmost fringe of the border claimed by Texas. Once there, Taylor built a fort and blockaded the river. At the same time, a U.S. military exploring party under John C. Fremont moved into California's Salinas Valley and Polk secretly instructed the navy to invade California should any hostilities break out between the United States and Mexico.

These actions proved sufficient to provoke Mexico. A detachment of the Mexican army defending the port city of Matamoros fought an engagement with some of Taylor's troops, killing eleven and wounding another five. Now able to claim that Mexico had "shed American blood upon American soil," Polk went before Congress and asked for a declaration of war. Thus, according to this theory, a complicated conspiracy initiated by the U.S. president succeeded in starting a war. However, whether this was to accomplish his own aims or those of the Slave Power remains at issue.

Relating to this presidential conspiracy is another that points in a completely different direction. Claiming that the treaty that fixed the southern boundary of Texas at the Rio Grande had been signed under duress, Mexico repudiated both that boundary and even Texas's right to exist as an independent republic. Thus annexation of Texas by the United States was regarded as an invasion of Mexican sovereignty and Mexico immediately broke off all diplomatic relations. Although government and military leaders in Mexico did not want war with the United States, some have pointed to a conspiracy among the nationalistic Mexican press, which enflamed public opinion sufficiently to force a more



James K. Polk served as president of the United States from 1845 to 1849. During his administration, more than one million square miles of new territory were added to the nation. (Library of Congress)

aggressive policy. Polk's efforts, whether the product of a conspiracy or not, fed into the aims of this group of journalists, providing ammunition for a barrage of scathing editorials arguing that Mexico must go to war, both in retaliation for the annexation of Texas and to dissuade the U.S. from seeking to acquire more territory in the southwest. The bottom line was that Mexico's national pride was at stake. According to this view, this culminated in the skirmish along the Rio Grande, which sparked the beginning of the war.

The Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), which ceded nearly one-third of Mexico's territory to the United States. In return, the United States paid Mexico \$15 million and agreed to allow Mexicans living on the land to remain if they chose to do so.

*Rolando Avila*



**See also:** Slave Power; Zimmerman Telegram.

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**Microsoft**

Microsoft has repeatedly surfaced in conspiracy lore, especially with the growth of the Internet. Since its 1975 founding by Harvard dropout Bill Gates and his high-school friend Paul Allen, Microsoft has steadily occupied a larger and larger slice of the software market. The company's initial coup came with winning a contract for what eventually became MS-DOS, and then arranging with IBM to keep the rights to the operating system software. The introduction of Microsoft Office and Windows in the early 1990s cemented the company's dominant industry position.

Soon after September 11, an email circulated alleging that Microsoft had built a secret code into its Microsoft Word Wingdings font, predicting the attacks on the World Trade Center. When the characters Q33NY—incorrectly alleged to be the flight number of one of the planes—are converted to Wingdings in Microsoft Word, the result is a plane, two symbols supposed to resemble buildings, a skull-and-crossbones, and a Star of David:



A similar rumor had surfaced earlier about the characters NYC, which allegedly had an antisemitic meaning when converted to Wingdings: a skull-and-crossbones, Star of David, and raised thumb:

In both cases, Microsoft had to issue official statements denying the coincidence.

Microsoft has also been the subject of government-spying fears (akin to those surrounding Inslaw's alleged spy software, PROMIS) in connection with a security key built into its software. In September 1999, Andrew Fernandez, the chief scientist at a Canadian software firm called Cryptonym, announced the existence of an unaccounted-for security key in Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 5, mysteriously labeled "NSAKey." Rumors abounded on the Internet as to whether this was something Microsoft had built into Windows security in order to allow the National Security Agency (NSA) to spy on Windows users. The same rumor resurfaced in 2002, with the release of the company's Palladium security initiative.

Microsoft has also been the subject of much conspiracy parody, including articles claiming to link it to the Illuminati and numerological analyses of Gates's name. In 2002, Los Angeles filmmaker Brian Fleming released *Nothing So Strange*, a "mockumentary" that investigates a JFK-style conspiracy around the assassination of Bill Gates. The film alludes to names familiar from the Kennedy assassination, including Alex Hidell (one of Oswald's aliases) and Debra Meagher (a reference to Sylvia Meagher, an early researcher).

So what makes Microsoft a target for conspiracy theories? First, Gates's monolithic presence, legendary competitiveness, and paranoia have made him a nationally known figure on the scale of Nelson Rockefeller. As the Justice Department investigation of Microsoft indicates, it is a large, successful corporation that has not hesitated to use its success to expand its dominance. Within the technology industry, Microsoft has a reputation as a company that steals other companies' ideas and turns them into mediocre but wildly selling products. Software companies like Netscape, Norell, WordPerfect, and Lotus have all felt the financial sting of competing with the behemoth based in Redmond, Washington, and new companies know that they have only a small

window in which to succeed before Microsoft releases a competing product. On the flip side, Microsoft itself has made accusations that its Justice Department prosecution results from collaboration between Microsoft's competitors, including Netscape (now part of AOL/Time Warner), Sun Microsystems, and Oracle Corporation.

Andrew Strombeck

**See also:** Hackers; Internet; National Security Agency; September 11.

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#### Website

Nothing So Strange: <http://www.nothingsostrange.com>.

## Militias

Although being armed in the United States is by no means a novelty, during the early 1990s the collection of marginalized groups that comprised the right-wing "Patriot" community found their ranks swelling as significant numbers of newly disaffected Americans joined "citizens militias" across the United States. Strongest in the rural heartland of the West, Midwest, and South, at its zenith in 1996 the movement had militias active in all fifty states and numbered perhaps as many as 50,000 members, with several millions of supporters and sympathizers. Some militia leaders have claimed total membership figures as high as 10 million, which is frankly far fetched; federal agents have suggested that supporters could number in the millions (Abanes, 23). Perhaps more realistically, others suggest a total militia membership of between 20,000 and 60,000 (Berlet and Lyons, 289).

Ostensibly defensive in posture, mobilizing in particular against gun laws and as a defiant response

to the federal outrages at Ruby Ridge (1992) and at Waco (1993), the militia movement was remarkable and unusual not only for claiming to be socially inclusive, apparently able to recruit African Americans, Hispanics, Jews, and middle-class professionals, but also for utilizing what some have termed "fusion paranoia"—that is, conspiracy theories not just to the right of the political spectrum, but also those incorporating the arguments to the left (Kelly). However, the view that the militia movement was progressive was sharply contradicted by many analysts. One commentator saw the militias as acting as "recruiting pools" for the racist underground, pointing out that the same underground spawned Tim McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber (Ridgeway, 16–17). And as early as 1994, the various "watchdog" organizations that monitor the activities of the far right were raising the alarm that racists and antisemites were lurking in the background, disguising their true ideology behind constitutionalist arguments (Dees and Corcoran; Mulloy, 145–148).

The "constitutionalist militias" that have since become a permanent feature of the antigovernment movement are united only in terms of their opposition to the "New World Order"—an elitist conspiracy to create a global socialist tyranny. The degree to which racism and antisemitism dominate this coalition is highly questionable, and it is the nature of conspiracy theories that holds the key to understanding the role and significance of the militias.

### What the Militias Believe

Can we really describe the militias as a movement? Arguably, the exercising of gun rights represents only a common strategy among diverse groups (such as survivalists; the advocates of common law who declare themselves "sovereign citizens"; militant antiabortionists; and pro-gun activists), but this does not necessarily represent a common ideology or set of principles. Nonetheless, the term "militia movement" is widely used to refer to those who frame their activity in terms of defending the U.S. Constitution, and who argue that the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights ("A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be

infringed”) is the one that guarantees all the other constitutional rights. The only real issue around which the movement coheres is opposition to gun control, which is seen as a precursor to “tyranny” (Mulloy, 17; 48). “The individual right to bear military arms is a fundamental and undergirding principle of our Republic,” argues a prominent pro-militia journalist, and therefore, he concludes, “upon its removal the entire national government would become an illegitimate tyranny” (Suprynowicz, 315). The spirit of rebellion against gun laws is summed up in the phrase, “You can have my gun when you pry it from my cold, dead hands,” and it is the symbolic importance of the Second Amendment that guides the militia movement, tied into the ideology of nationalism: “This refusal to submit to tyranny is not simply about firearms. It is about human rights, it is about the rule of law, and it is about the continuance of this great nation” (Puckett).

How can it be that the militias, who present themselves as “Patriots” in defense of U.S. values, are also “antigovernment”? This can only be answered by understanding the politics of nationalism. The FBI’s special report of 1999, Project Megiddo, which discussed the possibility of civil disorder at the start of the new millennium, listed the following criteria as a guideline for what constitutes a militia: “(1) a domestic organization with two or more members; (2) the organization must possess and use firearms; and (3) the organization must conduct or encourage paramilitary training.” Jon Roland, of the pro-militia Constitution Society, argues that this definition is not the one implied in the U.S. Constitution, especially the Second Amendment, and that “the word militia means defense service, and is applicable to any one or more persons engaged in the defense of the community.” Roland cites George Mason, who defined the militia as “the whole people, except for a few public officials,” and he describes the FBI’s mentality in dealing with the militias as “essentially fascist” (Roland). This accusation—that federal employees and “socialist” politicians such as the Clintons are “fascists”—is a very common one in militia propaganda. By leveling this charge at their enemies, militia leaders can claim, sometimes with genuine conviction, to be “antifascist,” thereby effectively

preempting those on the left who themselves charge that genuine fascists and antisemites are influential within the militias. The website [www.US-militia.org](http://www.US-militia.org), for instance, describes those states with stringent gun laws as “despicable and fascist,” while also stating, “If you are a racist, NAZI, KKK, aryan national, psycho or any other type of genetic freak; we do not want you. We suggest you go see a psychiatrist or other mental health professional.” Nevertheless, despite this disclamation, the site contains a link to the 7th Missouri Militia—the most openly racist militia site, run by Martin Lindstedt.

In a similar vein, a pro-militia group, Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, puts forward an argument that gun control has “racist roots” (because blacks in the South have historically been denied the right to gun ownership) and that it is a precursor to “genocide.” Therefore, by opposing gun laws the militias argue that they are preventing the likelihood of genocide being carried out in the United States against any minority. Within this framework gun owners are depicted as a victimized group denied their civil rights in much the same way as nonwhites historically have been denied theirs ([www.JPFO.org](http://www.JPFO.org) is one of the most widely linked pro-gun sites from militia sites). This mirrors the strategy of the Christian Right, who have since the 1980s utilized the language of “civil rights” in defense of Christian values, and have employed conspiracy theories concerning “secular humanism”—portrayed as a rival religion to Christianity (Jorstad).

Apart from “nationalism,” expressed as the desire to “save America,” there is no guiding ideology behind a movement that generally denies being “antigovernment” at all—militias are merely opposed to “unconstitutional” government, their exponents claim. Widespread agreement exists among militia members only that there exists a plan to impose global tyranny, usually referred to as the New World Order. This is specifically a socialist plan for global domination. Within this plan a central role is played by the United Nations, which, it is claimed, will use foreign troops to disarm the U.S. populace following the enactment of stringent gun-control measures, hence the importance not only of gun ownership, but

also of training and drilling in military techniques and marksmanship.

The “precipitating factors” that spurred the movement included the passage of the 1993 Brady Bill, which regulated the sale of handguns and restricted ownership to nonfelons; the outlawing of “assault weapons” as part of the Omnibus Crime Bill (1995), passed in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing; the passage of international trade agreements such as the Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which politicians such as Patrick Buchanan said were causing U.S. jobs to be exported to the Third World; and two events that indicated, from the Christian Patriot perspective, that the federal government had declared war on its people: the botched sieges by federal agents at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, in 1992 and then again, more cataclysmically, at Waco, Texas, in 1993. These events were interpreted as proof that the New World Order was nearing completion. A Texan militia commander said of Waco, “We were sleep-walking through life. It was the massacre that woke us all up. When the history of this age is written, that’ll be the shot that rang out around the world and changed everything” (Evans-Pritchard).

Militia activists are widely characterized as sharing a conspiracist outlook. Core beliefs include: that the New World Order will require the use of concentration camps for Christian resisters; that unmarked black helicopters are being used by the military in preparation for their plans; that foreign troops working for the United Nations will be used to disarm civilians and imprison them; that international road signs are used in the United States in order to assist these foreign troops; that urban street gangs (such as the Bloods and Crips in Los Angeles) will be used as “shock troops” for the New World Order; and that implanted chips are being used to monitor U.S. citizens (a belief shared by Tim McVeigh). The following elite groups are identified as the instigators of the conspiracy: the Skull and Bones secret society, based at Yale University (of which the Bush family are said to be members); the Council on Foreign Relations; the Trilateral Commission (comprising economic, political, and media elites from Western Europe,

North America, and Japan); the Bilderbergers; the Rockefeller and Rothschild banking families; and the British royal family. Many of these conspiracy theories are the same as those of the John Birch Society, who label these elites “the Insiders.” Although these elites include Americans, the conspiracy itself is specifically un-American, as pointed out by Bo Gritz, speaking in 1992: “what we see are the tentacles of this elite club. . . . I think the head, the brain, the guts of this thing probably lies offshore from the United States” (Ridgeway, 13–14).

This is a brief summary of some of the more common theories, which not all militia members will believe. Another popular view is the suggestion that UFOs have made contact with human governments and they are colluding with corrupt elites, as advanced by William Cooper in *Behold a Pale Horse*, a book that is both popular and influential in militia circles (and which takes its title from a line in the Book of Revelation 6: 8). Some conspiracy theories are more mundane, relating to health issues such as fluoride in water supplies, or the belief that high school shootings are caused by giving the drug Ritalin to children. It is belief in conspiracies that informs all resistance from the far right, framed in opposition to the left. Unanimity is not required, merely the identification of common enemies—the enemies of the nation.

Militia and Patriot publications and websites also present an economic analysis, in which the Federal Reserve is depicted as a corrupt body, backed by private banking interests, overseeing a monetary system based upon usury and fictitious capital. There is a considerable crossover into the tax protest/resistance constituency of Patriots who believe that the payment of income tax—which was introduced illegally in 1912, it is argued—is actually voluntary and not a compulsory obligation. By refusing to cooperate with the Inland Revenue Service (IRS), Patriots believe that they are striking a blow against the New World Order. By declaring themselves “sovereign citizens” many believe that they can legally evade income tax, so long as they learn “common law” well enough to refute the erroneous arguments of IRS officials in court. Predictably, run-ins with the IRS have resulted in many would-be Patriots becoming



incarcerated or fined, as their common law arguments have failed to win out in court. Thus “tax resisters” frequently become available for recruitment to the far right, as was the case with Robert Mathews of The Order, for instance (Flynn and Gerhardt, 55).

In militia publications and websites, comparisons are commonly made with the situation when America was a British colony, ruled by King George III, which resulted in the American Revolution and the overthrow of colonial rule. This comparison legitimizes resistance against corrupt federal authority, summed up in the oft-repeated quote from Ben Franklin, “They that would give up essential liberty for a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” The vast majority of militia websites and publications, it should be emphasized, express only the utmost loyalty to the U.S. Constitution, which they feel is under threat from traitorous enemies, and they disavow both racism and violence.

It is apparent that the militias’ typical stance, being one of rebellion and distrust of mainstream politics and culture, leads many to come into conflict with law enforcement agencies, and the Militia Watchdog website provides a lengthy litany of militia members and leaders who have been arrested and charged with crimes ranging from firearms offenses, tax evasion, and civil disobedience (such as driving without a valid driver’s license), to more serious ones such as conspiracy to blow up federal buildings. In some cases, such as that of the Arizona Viper Militia, the leading protagonists in a conspiracy to make bombs turned out to be undercover federal agents (eleven out of the twelve who were arrested in 1996 eventually received prison sentences).

### **Rise and Fall of the Militias**

Calls for the formation of citizens’ militias were voiced as early as the 1980s by various right-wing groupings, including Christian Reconstructionists such as Larry Pratt, who is described by one commentator as the “Little noticed . . . chief theoretician of the militia movement” (Clarkson, 103). The modern “neomilitia” movement began in 1994 (the Militia of Montana was officially started in January of that year) and reached its zenith around 1996, when

an estimated 858 Patriot groups were in existence, of which 370 were identified as militias (SPLC). By 1998 the number of militias had declined to 171 and in 1999 the figure stabilized at just below 200, which held up through the year 2000, according to watchdogs. The Internet is the principal propaganda medium and meeting forum for the militias—the number of militia websites reached 263 in 2000, but fell to 155 by early 2001, a drop of 41 percent. Nevertheless, the diversification of tactics into “common law” and “sovereign citizen” tax protests, “paper terrorism” (illegal property liens and “freemen” court judgments against local opponents, for example), and well-publicized standoffs against law enforcement agencies suggested that the movement is likely to be far from moribund for the early years of the new millennium.

The majority of the literature on the militias emphasizes the rural base of the movement, especially the farming heartland of the West and Midwest allied with “nativist” forces in the South (Stern; McNicol Stock). Mark Fenster describes the militia movement as a “‘grassroots’ far-right movement emanating from the middle of the country” (22). There are other writers, however, who argue that it has grown beyond this base and that “militia seem to be where people are, all over the country, not just in Montana” (Castells, 95). Clearly, the movement is strongest in rural areas and much of its rhetoric lionizes the rural backbone of the United States. In many ways it is part of the ongoing rural-versus-city struggle for power and influence in politics, in which people from any geographical region can, through the power of the Internet, buy into the rural mythology and the associated “traditional values,” against the liberal permissiveness, corruption, and moral decadence of the cities. But it is not restricted only to rural areas and has appeal for those in metropolitan areas for whom the police state is felt to be an oppressive force.

In May 1999 Norm Olson of the Northern Michigan Regional Militia “recalled” militias for a meeting at Fort Wolverine, Michigan, in order to prepare a response to the expected declaration of martial law, which, it was assumed, would follow the predicted crisis brought about by widespread computer failure

at the start of the new millennium (known as the Y2K bug). Following the Oklahoma City bombing of April 1995 many militias had dispersed or gone underground, following adverse publicity; as Olson saw it, the militias had been “demonized” by federal authorities working through the media. (For militia members the media and the entertainment industries are deeply implicated in the New World Order conspiracy.) The evidence suggests, however, that militia ranks actually swelled in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing (according to “watchdog” figures, that is).

Reading alarmist reports of coming chaos at the dawn of the new millennium, which also fitted with some Christian fundamentalist prophetic timetables, militia leaders such as Olson believed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) planned to use it as an opportunity to take control in the United States, and that militias had to be prepared to resist the roundup of Patriots that this would entail. Olson also felt that since Oklahoma

the movement had lost “momentum” and “vision,” and the recall was designed to address this: “In a way that’s what’s happened to America. We’ve lost our vision. And during the last six months there has been a tremendous concern growing about Y2K, our involvement in the Balkans and rumblings of martial law.” He also alleged that detention centers were being set up, a common theme in Patriot publications such as the *Spotlight*. “Martial law will not succeed in Northern Michigan,” Olson continued. “We will fight against it if it’s imposed” (Michels).

The Y2K bug failed to cause economic collapse, civil unrest was not a problem, and martial law was never imposed. The militias declined during 2000 and with the eventual victory of George W. Bush in the presidential election of that year many militias have either disappeared or sought to take refuge on the Internet, maintaining websites and mailing lists. They retain a strong presence in cyberspace, the Michigan Militia and the Militia of Montana being the best-known examples.



Two members of the Michigan Militia, a U.S. paramilitary group. (Cynthia Howe/Corbis Sygma)

### Impact of September 11

Prior to the terrorist attacks of 11 September Mark Pitcavage believed that the militia movement “has certainly declined, but it is not in danger of disappearing, and in fact in many parts of the country it is still very strong. In some parts of the country, where militia arrests laid it low (such as West Virginia and Georgia), it is reforming.” He also mentioned the “reflowering” of the tax protest movement and the growth in popularity of the “redemption” tactic of common law adherents (a type of financial scam), “active in virtually every single state” (private email, May 2001). Militias were also able to mobilize supporters for lengthy standoffs with law enforcement agencies in both Indiana and Texas during 2000–2001, at the Indianapolis Baptist Church and the Joel Grey farm, respectively. Taking the “antigovernment movement” as a whole, of which the militias are but a part, Pitcavage concluded that it “has existed in more or less its present form since the early 1970s and nobody’s managed to stamp it out yet. I doubt it is dead right now.”

However, since 11 September the militias have been somewhat eclipsed by the wave of patriotism that has swept the United States, coupled with the strong support for President Bush and the federal government’s “war on terrorism.” Militia websites have adapted their rhetoric, arguing that terrorism stands alongside socialism, liberalism, and communism as threats to U.S. values and prosperity. The lesson for the gun lobby—the center of gravity for the militias—was that the plane hijackings could have been avoided if air passengers were allowed to carry guns on board flights: “only self defense by the ‘unorganized militia’ will be available when domestic or foreign terrorists choose their next moment of murder. And here is the public-policy implication of this fact: It would be better if the militia were more prepared to act when it is needed” (Barnett). The passengers who fought against the hijackers on Flight 93, which came down in rural Pennsylvania, it is argued, were effectively acting as a citizens’ militia. Individualized security—the right of the citizen to bear arms and form militias—is held as the ideal, contrasted with any notion of collectivized security

arrangements carried out by the state in conjunction with the disarming of civilians, which remains anathema to the Right in the United States.

It is clear, however, that militia appeals have lost a degree of salience as a result of 11 September, as there is again an external enemy taking on a similar role to that of international communism during the cold war. As Norm Olson put it, “I don’t want anyone to have the idea that we’re going to bow down to the federal government, but I think this could be a new beginning. . . . As long as there is a foreign enemy, we will work together with our federal government. George Bush’s enemy is my enemy” (Barry). Nevertheless, given the nature of conspiracist thinking, it is clear that many will be resistant to appeals to support the federal government, and will regard 11 September as a planned event, part of the conspiracy—as does the Freedom Fighter Net, linked from the Michigan Militia site: “As Franklin Delano Roosevelt is quoted as saying: ‘Nothing ever happens in international politics that isn’t planned.’ Our leaders may not have a clue what is actually going on here, but these attacks have New World Order and One World Government written all over them.”

### Hidden Agendas?

The pro-militia publication the *Patriot Report* (run by Christian Identity adherent George Eaton, out of Arkansas) argued that the militias formed in the 1990s as a defensive response to “when the socialist change agents began making offensive moves against the U.S. Constitution and American sovereignty. . . . the only thing standing in the conspirators’ way of total world conquest,” he continued, “was the few American patriots who still believe in the constitutional American Republic. . . . It was aggressive and offensive moves by the conspirators for a One World Government that caused the patriot community to recognize tyranny and then to form militias. . . . The militias are defensive, not offensive or revolutionary” (Eaton, 4).

Nevertheless, “watchdog” organizations, such as the ADL and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and some activists argue that the militias harbor hidden agendas and that racists and anti-

semities have played influential roles in the formation of the militia movement. They further argue that the “Patriots” who make up the bulk of the membership constituted “the seedbed, if not the realization, of a uniquely American kind of fascism” (Neiwert, 320). Morris Dees (of Klanwatch—part of the SPLC that Dees heads) describes John Trochmann, founder of the Militia of Montana, as “a frequent visitor to the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations,” apparently indicating guilt by association. In Dees’s book *Gathering Storm: America’s Militia Threat*, he links the militias directly with Tim McVeigh (the Oklahoma City bomber), suggesting that the movement “led to the most destructive act of domestic terrorism” in U.S. history up until that point. Dees stated in a letter to the then U.S. attorney general, Janet Reno: “Our office has confirmed the active involvement of a number of well-known white supremacists, Posse Comitatus, Christian Identity, and other extremist leaders and groups in the growing militia movement” (Mulloy, 145). These included established far-right leaders such as Louis Beam (ex-Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon), Bo Gritz (“a notorious antisemite”), and James Wickstrom (a Posse Comitatus leader).

In making the case for the involvement of far-right activists, Dees is not alone in ascribing a meeting that took place in October 1992 at Estes Park, Colorado, as a sort of planning meeting for the formation of the militias (see also Abanes, 180; McLemee, 19; Stern, 35; Ridgeway, 16). Known as the “Rocky Mountain Rendezvous,” it brought together over 150 far-right leaders, including Richard Butler of Aryan Nations, Red Beckman of the Fully Informed Jury Association, and Larry Pratt, founder of Gun Owners of America, who represented the militant wing of the pro-gun lobby. The event, which was organized by Pete Peters largely in response to the Ruby Ridge siege that had taken place earlier in the year, featured a keynote speech by Louis Beam in which he outlined the “leaderless resistance” strategy, based upon cellular, decentralized structures apparently similar to those employed by the “Committees of Correspondence” during the American Revolution. In the article of the same name that

explains “Leaderless Resistance,” originally written in 1983, Beam advocates various ways in which “those who love our race, culture, and heritage” can resist “federal tyranny,” which he regards as having replaced the threat of communism in the United States. Strategies include utilizing “camouflage,” by which Beam means “the ability to blend in the public’s eye the more committed groups of resistance with mainstream ‘kosher’ associations that are generally seen as harmless.” In other words, racists should involve themselves in groups through being disingenuous about their true ideology. With this in mind, it is clear that it would be impossible to prove that racists and antisemites are dominant within the militias, but at the same time it is a fair assumption that there are at least some present.

Nevertheless, the role of racists should not be overstated. Mark Pitcavage believes that Estes Park was not particularly relevant to the development of the militia movement and that “most militia leaders never even heard of it.” Representatives of both the SPLC and ADL are agreed that the militia movement is not mainly characterized by racism. Martin Durham argues, “Rather than see Estes Park as the origin of the modern militias it would seem more useful to see it as one of many Patriot initiatives that anticipated, but only in some cases influenced, the emergence of a new wave of paramilitary groups in 1994” (Durham, 76). He concludes that far more emphasis should be given to the role of the militant pro-gun lobby, including the National Rifle Association, but more significantly a rival group, the Gun Owners of America (headed by Larry Pratt).

For some, it is the belief in conspiracy theories that is regarded as proof enough that the militias harbor racist sentiments: “This current crop of conspiracy theories is written on a template forged long ago and reshaped by successive tales of secret worldwide conspiracies” (Ridgeway, 13). The argument is that the above theories can be traced back to antisemitic conspiracy theories, based on the model of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forged account of Jewish plans for global domination. But this is to overlook the overwhelming religiosity of the movement. Other commentators have drawn attention to



what they see as the leading role of Christian “reconstructionists” and antiabortion radicals (often with links to white-supremacist theologies). But there is far more consensus that it was Pat Robertson’s 1991 bestseller, *The New World Order*, that did most to pave the way for the militias. It both popularized and brought together secular and religious conspiracy theories in a single overarching analysis that labeled the conspirators as motivated by absolute evil (McLemee). Robertson specifically rules out blaming “monopoly capitalism” for the problems of the world—there is “some other power at work.” He identifies the “policy elites” who are attempting to dominate the world and concludes that such impulses spring “from the depth of something that is evil, neither well intentioned nor benevolent” (Robertson, 9). There is no overt racism or antisemitism in the book, however, although Robertson took considerable flak for his decision to utilize antisemitic sources—he included references to both Eustace Mullins and Nesta Webster, for example.

Rather than demonizing the militias as racist conspiracies guided by antisemitism, Mark Fenster argues that they are better understood if the important modern role of “popular eschatology” is emphasized: that is, the practice of reading and interpreting both history and contemporary events as the signs foretold in the Bible, mediated to a mass market of Christians (hence popular eschatology). The Book of Revelation is particularly significant, speaking of “fire and smoke and brimstone”; the number of the Beast (666); the four horsemen of the Apocalypse; the violent destruction of Babylon and the slaying of a third of the human population; the hour of judgment; Armageddon; and so on. Rather than preparing for a race war, Fenster feels that militia members are more likely to be preparing to fight it out with the Antichrist, assisting the forces of Christ in the final showdown at Armageddon. Popular eschatology is based upon a “mechanistic theory of power . . . [which] echoes, and at times explicitly borrows, the theories of more secular right-wing conspiracy theories,” but they are not the same thing. Although the lines between religious and secular conspiracy theories are blurred, “they each emerge from distinct, if at times over-

lapping, social and cultural contexts” (Fenster, 147). It is, therefore, the difference between conservative Protestantism on the one hand, and modernist/liberal Protestantism on the other, that holds the key to understanding popular eschatology, which is deeply traditionalist and pious. The militias represent the backlash politics of conservative Protestantism, reacting against the domination of “secular humanism” and the (immoral) liberal consensus that prevails in contemporary America.

There are concerns that militias function as “bridges,” facilitating the movement of Christian conservatives toward the far right, as they encounter the secular conspiracy theories of the Christian Right and the John Birch Society, whose tracts are widely available on militia sites, and then become susceptible to the more dangerous extremism of antisemites, whose sites are far less frequently linked (Barkun). Similarly, Ken Stern (107) uses the notion of “funnels” to describe the way that the movement takes people in over concerns over a wide range of issues, such as gun control and environmental restrictions, and then when they get to the extremist core of the funnel they emerge as antisemites, as did Tim McVeigh.

Militias also represent very real economic interests, such as gun manufacturers who use patriotism to boost sales and who promote gun ownership as the antidote to individual insecurity; anti-environmentalists who support the rights of loggers and mining interests over the efforts by Greens to restrict the use of natural resources and to protect wildernesses; and free market libertarians whose main concern is with maintaining a vibrant culture of antitax militancy and antigovernmentalism. These diverse interests express no support for racism or antisemitism, but because they employ the myths of nationalism and have a dialectical relationship with the same caricatured versions of their ideological enemies—liberalism and socialism—then they also have to contend with the racists in their midst who regard the nation as an ethnically based entity (belonging to white Europeans) rather than a values-based one (of which all immigrants can become a part). As far as militias are concerned, it is the political Left that has the hidden agenda (the eventual

creation of communism), which will result in the enslavement of all nations. The militias are ideologically “slippery,” and therefore able to recruit beyond the traditional “Christian Patriot” base of support, precisely because they have no need to be open and unambiguous about what they really believe in. They represent symbolic resistance to globalization, multiculturalism, and state power, often reflecting cultural chauvinism, but for every racist militia there is at least one libertarian one. They are a cause for concern for law enforcement agencies because, as Mark Pitcavage puts it, “they have the tools for violence coupled with an ideology in which violence is not only permissible but if used for the right ends, admirable.” By refusing to specify what the ultimate ends might be they are hoping to move beyond the fringes and into the mainstream.

Nigel James

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Income Tax and the Internal Revenue Service; Ruby Ridge; Waco.

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## Millenarianism

Millenarianism in the United States has often been associated with a conspiratorial outlook. Narrowly defined, millenarianism is the belief in the thousand-year reign of the Messiah forecast by the Hebrew prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures, or Christian Old Testament. The millennial rule of Jesus Christ, believed by Christians to be the Messiah, is also mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. More recently, the application of the term "millenarianism" has been expanded to include a variety of other groups who seek to establish, or if in the future to forecast and promote, an ideal or utopian community. These include some Eastern

and Near Eastern religious movements, such as the Aum Shinrikyo, a derivative of Japanese Buddhism, and apocalyptic sects within Islam. The term has also been applied to certain secular political movements, such as National Socialism and communism, but within the United States most millenarians have traditionally been Christians, and they often subscribe to a host of conspiracy theories.

## Christian Millenarianism in American History

As early as the colonial era, Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony interpreted the perceived spiritual apathy, or "declension," within their envisioned millennial community as the result of dark, unseen forces, a perspective exemplified by the notorious Salem Witch Trials in the seventeenth century. Colonial religious leaders such as Cotton Mather and the revivalist Jonathan Edwards saw world events as marching toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In particular, Mather, who viewed the pope as the Antichrist in league with the French armies in Canada, saw the commencement of the French and Indian War in 1754 as an event of apocalyptic proportions. During the years leading up to and including the American Revolution, many colonists saw the British, and King George III in particular, as emissaries of the devil, and they interpreted British actions as part of a great conspiracy that would fulfill the prophecies of the Book of Revelation.

Millenarian belief thrived in the early republic and throughout the nineteenth century, and it seemed to increase after the political and social turmoil of the Civil War. During the 1840s, the revivalist William Miller and his supporters eagerly awaited Christ's return to establish a millennial kingdom, only to have their hopes crushed when their expectations failed. Yet the widely publicized Millerite debacle failed to dissuade further converts to millenarianism. In fact, the intellectual pedigree of many contemporary Christian millenarians is rooted in the work of John Nelson Darby, a nineteenth-century Irish minister who developed a prophetic outline for interpreting events prior to the Second Coming of Christ. Darby's prophetic theories, which

began to be widely circulated in the United States in the 1870s, became known as “premillennial dispensationalism.” Darby’s interpretations were later further popularized by Cyrus Scofield in his *Scofield Reference Bible*. This work, which was first published in 1909, continues to be influential at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Central to Darby’s scenario was the belief in the literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, an event that would be presaged by an escalating moral decline around the world. Both Darby and Scofield also emphasized such End Time events as the release of Jerusalem from Gentile control, an event that Scofield suggested had been fulfilled with the British capture of the city in 1917, and the eventual rise of an evil representative of the devil, the Antichrist, who would terrorize the world in the days before Christ’s return.

Christian millenarians who support this interpretation that social, political, economic, and cultural conditions in the world will worsen before the Second Coming of Christ are generally classified as “premillenarian.” They maintain that Jesus will intervene in world affairs and establish the millennial reign. Conversely, millenarians who believe that Jesus Christ does not have to return for the millennium to begin, or that humanity is capable of bringing it about through social and political reform, are known as “postmillenarian.”

### **Premillenarianism and Conspiracy Theory**

Conspiracy theories are generally found among advocates of premillenarian beliefs. Some premillennialists are what certain scholars have termed “apocalyptic millenarians” and/or “revolutionary millenarians.” Apocalyptic millenarians believe that the millennium is imminent and that they will play an active role in bringing it about. Revolutionary millenarians are currently actively involved in overturning the structures of society in an attempt to bring the millennium to fruition. Many apocalyptic millenarians, and most revolutionary millenarians, promote conspiracy theories. These often include belief in a New World Order, the view that the United States government is bent on removing individual freedoms, a belief in the sinister dimensions

of modern technology such as computers or credit cards, or an interpretation that considers the planned economic and possible political unification of Europe dangerous.

These conspiracy theories are often well publicized. For instance, when former United States President George Bush proclaimed a New World Order in the post-cold war world, many conservative evangelical Christians interpreted his words as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. These included Pat Robertson, the primary host of the *700 Club*, a television program popular in conservative Christian circles. Robertson is the son of a former United States senator, and was himself a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988. In his book *The New World Order*, Robertson suggested that a conspiratorial New World Order was a concerted plan by specific groups and organizations, including the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Federal Reserve Board, to establish a one-world government. Robertson attributed many of these machinations to a supposed “invisible hand” that engineered U.S. domestic and foreign policies. Robertson left little doubt about the supposed wicked nature of these plans and warned Christians to be both aware and wary.

Robertson’s high-profile status notwithstanding, the most recognized distributor of Christian millenarianism in the last few decades has been Hal Lindsey, the author of a number of books, most notably *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), which was the best-selling nonfiction work of the 1970s. Only sales of the Bible outdistanced Lindsey’s sensational account of End Time prophecy, which was reissued in subsequent editions. Lindsey emphasized the rise of a European dictator who would dominate the world before the return of Christ. In developing his assertions, Lindsey relied heavily upon the formulations earlier devised by both Darby and Scofield.

Recently, however, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins have popularized millenarian conspiracy theories in their best-selling *Left Behind* series. LaHaye and Jenkins outline a fictional scenario for End Time events, supposedly based on prophecies in the



Book of Revelation, in which a conspiratorial world-ruling dictator, a villain capable of enormous evil, wages war on all true Christians and seeks to exterminate them from the earth. The consistent popularity of the volumes in this series—these books have regularly been on the *New York Times* best-seller list—underscores the degree to which millenarian belief and its attendant conspiratorial fascination have invaded popular culture.

### **The Future of Millenarian Belief**

It is unlikely that millenarian belief, and the conspiracy theories that arise from it, will recede. Although specific millenarian interpretations, such as the view of William Miller and his followers that Christ would return in 1843, can be disproved, the millenarian model for understanding the world cannot be so easily undermined. Millenarian beliefs are persistent and can be made to rhetorically fit almost any social and cultural context. Contemporary advocates of millenarianism, premillenarians in particular, are unlikely to be convinced that their portrayal of the conspiratorial nature of current events is inaccurate. In fact, the belief that one is instrumental in bringing the millennium to fruition, or at least that one is witnessing or about to witness the cataclysmic events that will lead to the end of the world, is seductive. Millenarians are often drawn into a fantasy realm to which their lives seem integral. Although critics may argue that such belief is delusional, advocates of millenarianism are likely to experience a psychological sense of relief, and even a sense of eager anticipation, occasioned by their view that the course of world events is predetermined and that political, social, and cultural change is imminent. They will hence remain on the lookout for “signs” of the end, signs that are often found in the dark corners of U.S. conspiracy theories.

*Michael Scott Lupu*

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Lindsey, Hal; Millerites; New World Order; One-World Government; Seventh Day Adventists; Waco.

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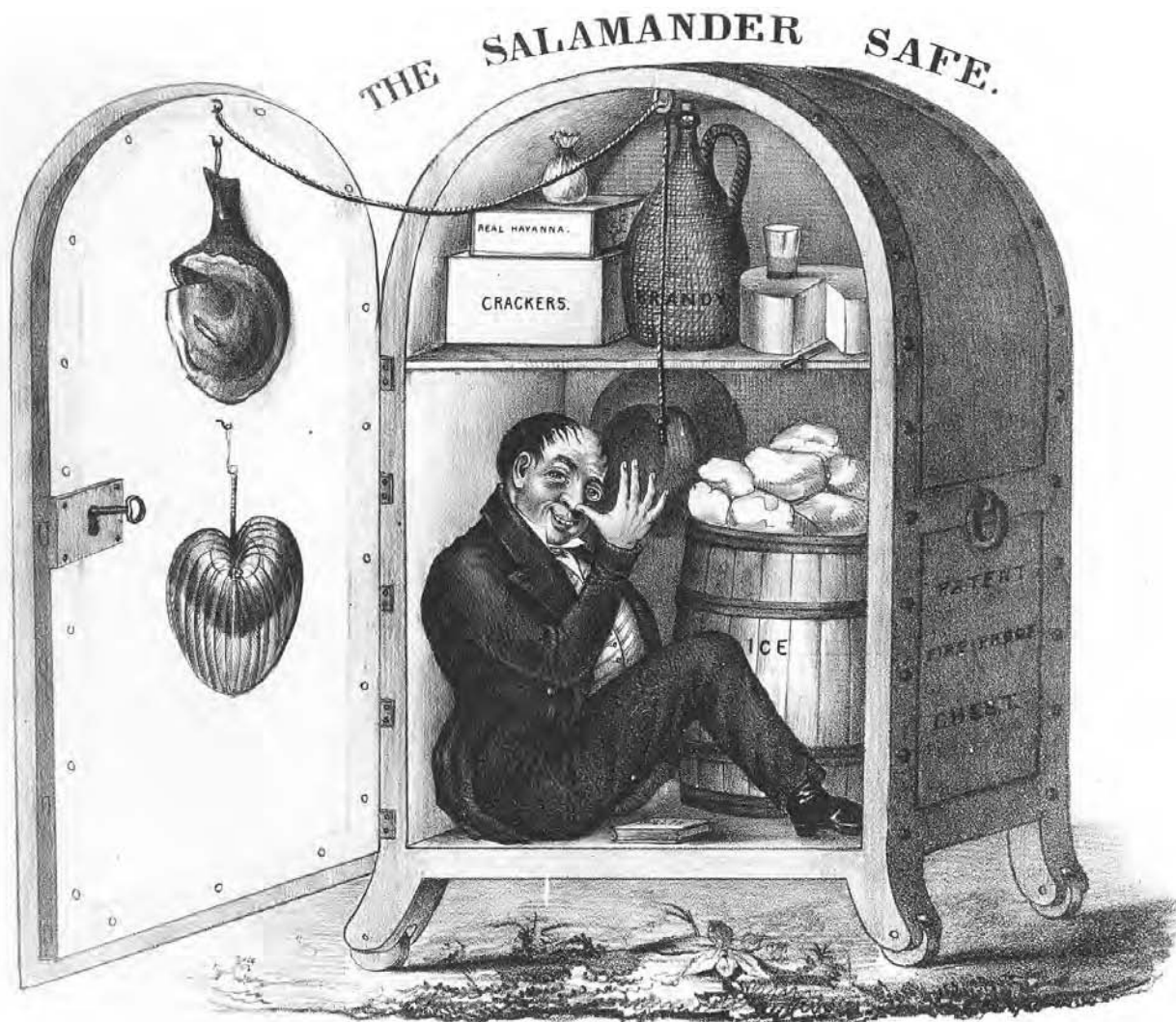
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### **Millerites**

Emerging during the Second Great Awakening, the Millerites were followers of the millenarian teachings of a self-made preacher named William Miller (1782–1849). Miller, who was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was an unlikely candidate to lead a large religious movement. Miller, a deist for a time, had experiences in the War of 1812 that led him to a more active religious life. After moving to Low Hampton, New York, and attending a Baptist church, he took a strong interest in the Second Coming of Christ. Miller studied the Bible and constructed a timeline for what he believed were the rapidly approaching “End Times.” Hesitantly, he stated that end would come sometime between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844. His writings were detailed and meticulous, focusing on the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. After many years of failing to convince ministers and preachers of the accuracy of his predictions, Miller reluctantly took to preaching himself in 1833. In 1838 he gained a highly skilled and valuable follower named Joshua V. Himes. A hardworking abolitionist, Himes helped to manage Miller’s affairs and published several Adventist newspapers such as the *Midnight Cry* and *Signs of the Times*, which proclaimed Miller’s message. The papers sought to link current events to Miller’s timeline while warning the public about the coming apocalypse. Only with the help of Himes did Millerism attract a large following.



A playful caricature of a Millerite, an adherent of the Adventist preacher William Miller, who predicted that the world would end on 23 April 1844. The man sits in a large safe labeled “Patent Fire Proof Chest,” stocked with a ham, a fan (hanging on the door of the safe), cheese, brandy, cigars, ice, a hat, and a small book marked “Miller.” As he thumbs his nose, he says, “Now let it come! I’m ready.” The “salamander safe,” probably a trade name of the period, is named after the animal mythically reputed to have the ability to endure fire (and, presumably, the holocaust) without harm. (Library of Congress)

The Millerites, although often assumed to be from the poor and lower classes, actually came from all classes, tended to be from a rural background, and had a variety of professions and religious affiliations. Miller encouraged his followers to remain with their denominations for most of his career. Unlike previous millenarians, the Millerites had no

real political agenda, and they focused entirely on the imminent Second Coming of Christ. It is unclear exactly how many Millerites there were, but some estimates place the figure at 50,000 committed followers with many thousands more cautiously interested and lukewarm followers (Barkun, 33). One of Miller and Himes’s most successful methods for

recruiting followers was their use of the traveling “Great Tent” for revival meetings. As the movement grew, other meetings began to occur on a regular basis throughout the northeastern United States, and especially in New York State’s “Burned-Over District” (so named for the repeated waves of religious revival which “burned over” the area). As 1843 approached the movement became more cohesive and suffered more critical scrutiny at the hands of the press. Horace Greeley’s *Tribune* spent an entire issue attacking Millerism. The competency and motivations of the movement’s leaders were questioned. Some of the more radical elements within the Millerites responded by declaring their opponents to be Antichrists and calling for separation from existing churches and denominations.

As the “final year” came and passed, the Millerites felt a deep sense of disappointment and uncertainty. William Miller sent out a message to his followers declaring that he had been mistaken about the date, but he still felt that the end of time was approaching rapidly. While Miller and Himes continued preaching, another Millerite minister, Samuel Snow, set a new date for the Second Coming. Snow stated that Christ would return on the Hebrew Day of Atonement—22 October 1844. Although Miller was reluctant to select another date for the return of Christ, he was pressured into acknowledging Snow’s date as a possibility. There was soon more anticipation for the new prediction than there had been for the previous one. Popular images and writings have portrayed the Millerites as dressing in white robes and climbing to hilltops and rooftops on 22 October 1844, although this has never been verified. The failure of Snow’s prediction, now known as the Great Disappointment, brought a new wave of criticism from the press and charges of dishonesty. Many urban intellectuals viewed Millerism as a form of insanity. Amariah Brigham, head of Utica State Lunatic Asylum, stated that even though most Millerites were normal, their teachings were a threat to mental health and to future generations (Numbers and Butler, 97–98). Only about 170 Millerites were institutionalized in the United States, but the numbers didn’t prevent Millerism from becoming the stereotype for religious mania and delusions.

Miller and Himes never again advocated an exact date for the Second Coming. They instructed their followers to live as if every day could be the end. The movement soon broke into groups and factions, with the most prominent being the Seventh Day Adventists.

Thomas White

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Millenarianism.

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## Mind Control

Although paranoia has usually been seen as the most important aspect of conspiracy theory in terms of subjectivity and psychology, mind-control conspiracies contribute in significant and complex ways to fears around the control of the individual at the hands of a hostile government or conspiracy group. All conspiracy theories are based on a notion of mind control anyway, simply because they are based on a belief that a conspiracy is attempting to control people’s beliefs and actions. The term “sheeple,” used derogatorily by conspiracy theorists to describe those who believe official government (dis)information, implies aspects of propaganda, brainwashing, and control of people’s thoughts. Such a term is based on a binary opposition of “us” and “them” that dominates paranoid discourses of conspiracy where there is, on the one hand, an elite group that is on the inside of power and who have true knowledge of how reality functions while, on the other, there is the “mass” who are on the outside of power and who only have access to reality through the lies and disinformation disseminated by the elite.

Mind control conspiracies have this structure at their base, but problematize the notion of “inside” and “outside.” The paranoid individual in conspir-



acy theory is relatively free from the control of the conspiracy (because s/he “recognizes” its existence and is therefore able to detach him- or herself from it), creating an objective and meaningful individuality in opposition to the brainwashed “sheeple.” Mind-control conspiracies have a more complex position with regard to the notion of identity and the construction of the conspiracy that controls its victims, because the mind-control subject has an ambiguous status as to whether s/he is inside or outside the conspiracy. On the one hand, they are “inside” because they are doing the work of the conspiracy group as a result of their conditioning, programming, or physical implant, but on the other hand, they are “outside” because they are doing so unwittingly as part of a conspiracy where they are a key element, but have no control over their actions. Hence, many important conspiracy figures, such as Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, and Timothy McVeigh are presented in conspiracy theory in radically different ways, either as knowing participants within a larger conspiracy or as mind-controlled “patsies” who were used without their own knowledge. Mind control is therefore not easily understood as a conspiracy itself, because it does not have a recognizable goal other than to ease the way for a larger conspiracy group. As such, it is more a “sign” that a conspiracy is at work in society, although in the works of Jim Keith, a seminal mind-control conspiracist, it has been imagined as the key form of social control for groups such as the Nazis and the New World Order.

### **Anxieties and Concerns of Mind Control**

The problematic nature of mind control, not least in the question of whether it actually exists as a real practice or as a meaningful psychological condition, despite the documented evidence of the CIA’s MK-ULTRA program, leads to many issues that not only focus around identity but also around the body, reality, and knowledge. Mind-control conspiracies can be understood in terms of six key anxieties or cultural concerns:

- The death of the self
- The death of reality

- The “soulless” body
- The death of the human
- Technophobia
- The end of “knowledge”

The death of the self revolves around the question of whether mind-control subjects (should such people exist) act according to their own desire or whether they are tools in someone else’s hands. The opposition can be seen in terms of a split between the conscious self-willed individual and the unconsciously driven puppet. However, because conspiracy does not control the subject from outside, but from within his or her consciousness (either through hypnosis, brainwashing and behavioral modification, drugs, or implants), such an opposition becomes problematic. The conspiracy is both inside and outside the self at the same time, with the result that mind-control victims are never sure whether their thoughts and desires are their own or someone else’s. Such a situation maps a cultural concern over the stability of the self that can be aligned with modern and postmodern concerns over consciousness and the question of how far identity is constructed within consciousness and how far it is a product of external reality systems such as the circulation of information and images in society or the operations of cultural ideology.

Related to this is the concern over the “death of reality.” If reality cannot be observed objectively as an empirical fact and then guaranteed by the sense-perceptions of the individual (because it is unclear whether it is a product of cognitive experience or created by a program, an implant, or a conditioning process generated by mind control) then it becomes an unknowable and uncertain phenomenon. Such a concern plays out twentieth-century anxieties over the nature of reality, but also revisits older philosophical debates between empiricism and metaphysics about what exists and how we come to know it (ontology and epistemology, respectively), but from a paranoid perspective. Where empiricism tends to believe in a reality that is knowable only through observation (arguably a paranoid perspective in itself), metaphysics assumes that knowledge of reality is pre-given (usually in form of the soul)





This frame grab shows a very brief subliminal message that appears at the end of a Republican National Committee television ad critical of U.S. vice-president and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore's position on prescription drugs, saying that the plan of Republican presidential George W. Bush gives people more flexibility in choosing their health care while the Gore plan "lets bureaucrats decide." Bush said the \$2.5 million ad, which aired 4,400 times, would be taken out of circulation. (AFP/Corbis)

where observation simply confirms what is already intuitively known. Mind-control conspiracies reenact such a belief in a secular form, within which the soul is replaced by a material (and often industrial) agent such as a program or an implant, that has a malign, rather than a benign, influence, not only because it displaces free will, but also because it displaces God.

When considering such a position, it is unsurprising that many contemporary mind-control conspiracy theorists, such as Texe Marrs or Ron Patton, have a fundamentalist Christian outlook. The former sees mind control in the operation of "Project L.U.C.I.D." which he claims is a far-reaching conspiracy to control all individuals through invasive technologies, while the latter concocts an occult and satanic conspiracy behind the mythical Nazi/CIA mind-control program "Project Monarch." What both articulate in their conspiracies is a fear of the soulless body, a dominant feature of many mind-control narratives,

which see the self-willed body replaced by one that simply follows a program. Many recent conspiracy theories have made connections with mind control in order to envisage a society where people are simply bodies or pieces of meat. Conspiracy theories that focus on alien experimentation on humans or the use of implants by governments represent an anxiety that the human body is just a thing or a functional unit (for example, in remote viewing conspiracies, where a person simply becomes a pair of eyes designed to observe and transmit data).

Related to such concerns are notions of the death of the human, something that is most obvious in those UFO narratives that focus on the probing of the human body and its modification for use by aliens. In such conspiracies, the human body is altered so that it no longer operates by human desires, feelings, or thoughts, but as an alien body by proxy (controlled by an alien mind), performing "in-human" activities by unknowingly conspiring against

the human species. An extension of such concerns can also be found in mind-control narratives that have their basis in governmental conspiracies, as for example in the stories Cathy O'Brien tells of her experiences as a CIA sex slave, during which George Bush, Sr., is said to have transformed into a lizard alien in front of her, an imaginative trope that is designed to show the inhumanity of mind control. The development of telemetric implants and fictionalizations of cyborg technology on film have also led to a concern with the death of the human, but this time at the hands of technology. In both alien and technological mind-control conspiracies, there is an anxiety that humans are becoming less than human and more like Descartes's "animal-machine," which is governed by its instinct (or program) rather than by rationality and thought. There is also a related concern that the mind and body have become separated because the body is simply a soulless piece of meat whose "mind" exists externally in the mind of its human, cybernetic, or alien controller. Telemetric implant and cyborg mind-control narratives represent such a process by reference to the transformation of the human into the machine and articulate a pervasive technophobia or fear of science that can be seen in many other mind-control conspiracies, whether this control occurs through hypnotism (with its connections to mesmerism), Pavlovian conditioning, electroshock therapy, the use of laboratory-created LSD, or through the introduction of literal implants, such as the "stimoceiver" (see below), into the human body.

Finally, mind-control conspiracies can be seen to articulate a very postmodern concern with the end of knowledge. The fact that mind-control victims do not know whether their thoughts are their own or those of another, transmitted to them through conditioning, programming, or the telemetric transmission of signals, highlights a concern that information is no longer knowable as an objectively verifiable truth. Knowledge has become untrustworthy, partly because the individual is unable to legitimate knowledge any more but primarily because the information received is either strategic (where the mind-control puppet only has a version of truth that will enable him or her to carry out the task, as with

Sirhan Sirhan, according to Alex Constantine) or is composed of disinformation, designed to mislead the mind-control victim into believing that reality is other than it actually is.

### **The Origins of Mind-Control Conspiracies**

Although the above ideas suggest that mind control is paradigmatic of postmodern conspiracy theory (because of the radical unknowability it creates with regard to every aspect of contemporary culture), mind control has its origins in industrial modernity. As with many conspiracy theories, the genealogy of mind control takes in both fiction and history, albeit an invented alternative history where scientific experimentation is rewritten as a secret cabalistic plan that involves human torture and social engineering on a large scale. In some respects, such a portrayal can be said to be accurate when applied, for example, to the Victorian practice of lobotomizing female inmates of mental institutions, which entailed an obvious and destructive form of mind control. However, most conspiracy discourses on mind control in the period of modernity are characterized by a paranoid anxiety over scientific inquiry, notably in the writings of Jim Keith. In several texts, Keith has traced a history of mind control that incorporates early experiments with hypnotism, eugenics, Freudian and Jungian psychiatry, behavioral psychology, and John Dewey's educational theories, that when imaginatively linked, by Keith, to governmental intelligence agencies through key figures such as Cecil Rhodes, H. G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley generates early signs of what was to become the New World Order.

Such a history is typical of mind-control conspiracies and many of the same figures or ideas constantly recur. The eighteenth-century Austrian physician Friedrich Anton Mesmer, for example, is given a key role in early mind-control narratives because "mesmerism," which was actually the application of magnetism to animal or human bodies, has become synonymous with hypnotism in popular and conspiracy consciousness as a result of the belief that the use of magnetic induction creates involuntary bodily movements that suggest control of the mind. Other important figures in the genealogy of mind control are

Sigmund Freud and the behaviorists B. F. Skinner and I. P. Pavlov. The latter is central to mind-control conspiracies because his experiments to induce dogs to salivate at the sounding of a bell (which indicated that food was on its way) have become a paradigm for anxieties over the possibility of a similar conditioning being applied to human beings.

Although the origins of mind control can be found in a reinvented history of psychological and medical science, there are also elements that are based solely on fiction. George du Maurier's novel of 1894, *Trilby*, with its representation of the figure of Svengali, introduces one of the first images of a puppet-master controlling his protégé, Trilby, by means of hypnotism and mesmeric induction. The omnipotent master controlling a slave in this way has become one of the dominant images of contemporary mind-control narratives and finds form, for example, in conspiracies surrounding Project Monarch and CIA sex slave stories. Another fictional influence of mind-control conspiracies can be found in cinematic representations where the concern over the robotic or zombielike nature of mind-control victims indicates how far mind-control conspiracies are a product of science fiction and horror film. The unthinking robot, controlled by its program, or the zombie of 1930s Hollywood cinema, who is given an order that it slavishly obeys, are dominant figurations of the mind-controlled puppet who similarly has no mind of his or her own. Specifically, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) has a significant place in forming the discourses of mind control. It has an omnipotent controller in the Svengali mould, in the figure of Rottwang, whose representation as a "mad scientist" has been applied in conspiracy theory to historical figures such as Sidney Gottlieb and Ewen Cameron of the MK-ULTRA program and to John B. Watson, who attempted to apply Pavlov's experiments to humans. The most important facet of mind control in the film, however, is Rottwang's creation of a robot that can be controlled and its subsequent use as a replacement for the rebel heroine, Maria, a substitution of the human by the machine that acts as a displaced figuration of the mind-controlled victim. A further aspect of the film that is of note for mind control is the depiction of the worker-slaves, who are

presented as no different from the robot Rottwang creates because they are already programmed to act and work in a regimented fashion.

These influences suggest that mind-control conspiracy theories have their origin in anxieties over the development of industrialization and its concomitant technologization of society in the period of modernity. The two main cultural forces that mind-control conspiracies respond to are the rationalization of industrial production and social organization, and the development of a mass culture. These are concerns that are articulated by *Metropolis*, for example, and that are extended in the contemporary societies of advanced economies (and most particularly, in the United States) in the hyper-rationalization and bureaucratization of everyday life (by governments and, increasingly, corporations) and in the extension of mass production to mass consumption. Fear of rationalization is not confined to mind-control conspiracies and, indeed, can be seen to be a staple of any conspiracy theory's fear of a hidden system controlling everyday life, but one feature that is specific to mind control is the identification of the Nazis as key players in the creation of postwar projects such as Project Monarch (as Patton claims) or the influential role their eugenic experiments and propaganda techniques have apparently had on areas as diverse as MK-ULTRA's claimed involvement in social engineering or on the development of subliminal advertising. The Nazis, as proponents of a totalitarian form of rationalized social control and as architects of a mass culture based on propaganda, become the nightmare of modernity that generates much mind-control conspiracy theory. They are also one of the reasons why eugenics is frequently mentioned in relation to mind control, although this is also part of a more general distrust of science that characterizes mind-control theories. The location of the origins of mind control in modernity can thus be seen in the fears of rationalization generated by the creation of many national and global institutions in this period, as well as by a fear of the "mass" that accompanies processes of industrial production, particularly as these are applied to society in Nazi ideology. Such concerns can be identified in mind-control conspiracies' anxieties over the mass pro-

gramming of individuals in contemporary society as part of a wider attempt to control society by a conspiracy group. Mind control thus represents not a conspiracy in itself but constitutes, for conspiracy theorists, a symptom of larger conspiratorial projects based on anxieties over social and cultural structures that developed at the beginning of the twentieth century and that have been extended into contemporary culture.

### **The Mass Media and Subliminal Advertising**

One of the first mind-control conspiracy theories of the postwar period is related to this general sense of a secret manipulation of consciousness as a sign of some unknown conspiracy at work in society. Fears over the mass media and its apparent brainwashing of the U.S. public were a pervasive anxiety in the 1950s when the development of television in conjunction with a culture of consumerism and visual advertising led to an unease over the application of mass and rationalized structures to the social scene. Such anxieties had already been raised by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their Marxist analysis of media institutions such as the Hollywood studio system and national radio in the United States of the 1940s, which, while predominantly a discussion of the operations of ideology in society, can be seen as a paranoid response to mass culture in their concerns with the way citizens' active involvement in social relations is replaced by a more passive reception of social and cultural values and beliefs. The concern over the influence of television and the mass media that developed in the 1950s, as detailed by Marling, follows such a structure, but stems from a liberal intellectual concern over the "dumbing down" of society.

A more particular example of mass-media mind control can be found in one of the founding mind-control texts, Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders*, published in 1957. Here, Packard drew attention to the practices used by the advertising industry to influence consumers in their choice of products, implying a form of mind control in the process, but he also mentioned experiments with subliminal advertising. During the 1950s an advertising executive, James Vicary, allegedly developed

subliminal advertising when he flashed the words "Eat Popcorn" and "Drink Coke" onto a cinema screen over the course of a six-week experiment. He claimed that there had been a large rise in sales of these products as a result of his campaign, claims that led to popular fears about subliminal advertising, their investigation by the Federal Communications Commission, and their banning in Britain and Australia. Subliminal advertising has had a significant impact on conspiracy theory's distrust of official media institutions as a result of such claims, despite the fact that Vicary later admitted that he had fabricated his findings. As a consequence, fears about subliminal messages on television have continued to have currency in a variety of ways, as Dan Kelly notes, in his discussion of Wilson Bryan Key's allegations that the mass media is corrupting society by inserting images of sex and death into its televisual programming. Similarly, Texe Marrs's claims about the development of a cyber-conspiracy involving the tracking of individuals through their purchases aligns itself with a fear of the practices of the mass media, in its corporate forms, and grows out of this early subliminal-advertising conspiracy theory. More specifically, the acceptance of subliminal transmissions has also led to the conspiracy belief that media institutions are an extension of governmental forces or a manifestation of larger conspiracies because of the implication of brainwashing that this alleged practice entails. Such a belief is argued by Alex Constantine, who claims that a secret governmental project called Operation Mockingbird was created in order to use television as a propaganda medium. He goes further than this, however, and also alleges that there was another program, called Operation Octopus, begun in 1948, that was a surveillance project designed to turn televisions into transmitters that would, in Big Brother fashion, send images or messages to and from people's living rooms.

### **CIA Mind Control: MK-ULTRA, and Manchurian Candidates**

At the same time that subliminal advertising was allegedly brainwashing the consumers of the United States, an actual mind-control program was in operation, run by the CIA and military intelligence



under a variety of code names (Projects Chatter, Bluebird, and Artichoke) but which in 1953 developed into an umbrella project called MK-ULTRA. Documented evidence of these mind-control experiments became more widely known following governmental investigations in the 1970s, which revealed that MK-ULTRA, under the control of Sidney Gottlieb, had engaged in 149 projects and sub-projects between 1953 and 1963 and had investigated a wide range of areas including the use of electroshock, sensory deprivation, hypnotism, radiation, and drugs such as LSD in order to effect behavioral modifications in the tested subjects. Many of these experiments were carried out on CIA and other governmental employees, but there were also LSD projects that involved tests on unwitting subjects either within the military (such as Frank Olsen, who committed suicide after a psychotic trauma, possibly as a result of having been given LSD without his knowledge), in hospitals or, in one case, a prison for people convicted of drugs offenses. Although MK-ULTRA dealt with many areas of mind control, it is the development and testing of LSD that has attracted the most attention because, in the form of Operation Midnight Climax, it was taken out of governmental institutions and applied to the general American public. In this phase, members of the public were tested in apartments in New York and San Francisco, while their responses were filmed or recorded through two-way mirrors.

MK-ULTRA has probably had the most impact on mind-control conspiracy theory because it provides substantiated evidence for government involvement in attempts to control people's behavior. What began as a response to military concerns that the Soviet Union and China had developed truth drugs and brainwashing techniques has become, in conspiracy theory, part of a large-scale attempt by the government or other groups, such as the New World Order, to exercise domination through social engineering. For conspiracy theorists, the government argument that MK-ULTRA was a response to Soviet brainwashing during the Korean War is a cover to conceal the reality of the program: the use of mind control against U.S. citizens. Alex Constantine, for example, dates the start of Project Mock-

ingbird, the government/media conspiracy to control people's minds through propaganda, to 1963 in order to signal that the end of the internal MK-ULTRA experiments was only the beginning of their real purpose, which was their external application to the people of the United States. MK-ULTRA has also spawned "Manchurian Candidate" conspiracies, which have their origin in John Marks's *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*. Marks's book is predominantly an account of the LSD experiments of MK-ULTRA, but includes many oft-quoted chapters toward the end on the work of Dr. Ewen Cameron in Montreal and on CIA hypnosis programs that apparently dealt with the question of whether it would be possible to program a human being in the first instance and then whether an individual could be programmed to be a mind-controlled assassin. This hypothesis has gained much popularity in conspiracy theory, particularly in relation to the assassinations or attempted assassinations of political figures or celebrities since the 1960s. It has variously been claimed that Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, Mark Chapman, and John Hinckley were all in some way programmed to perform deeds that they would otherwise be incapable of as conscious human beings, but which they could perform if they were hypnotized by governmental or conspiracy groups (Oswald and Sirhan) or brainwashed by a conspiracy-controlled media (Chapman and Hinckley). The latter position has become increasingly evident recently, with claims that the Columbine killers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, were indoctrinated to act as "Manchurian Candidates" by a media culture that will produce more of the same, a conspiracy theory that, like Constantine's Operation Mockingbird, sees the successful extension of CIA mind control into a program of social engineering on a national scale.

### **Project Monarch and CIA Sex Slaves**

Project Mockingbird is only one of several mind-control programs that has been imagined as a result of revelations about MK-ULTRA. One of the most significant of these other mind-control conspiracies is Project Monarch, which originates with Cathy O'Brien's book about her experiences as a CIA

mind-controlled sex slave, *Trance Formation of America*. O'Brien relates how she was programmed under Project Monarch, by use of the creation of a multiple personality disorder, hypnosis, and the use of visual and auditory stimuli (such as Disney films) as well as occult training, to generate an alternative personality that is able to perform degrading acts at the will of a controller. Such a conspiracy theory highlights the notion of the death of the human that inheres within mind-control conspiracies, in that O'Brien develops a personality that can be triggered so that it will perform "inhuman" acts that her real human self could not contemplate. Similar stories have been offered by Candy Jones, who, like O'Brien, makes much of her sensational revelations about sex with political figures and with celebrities.

Although even many conspiracy theorists (such as Keith) are skeptical of the sensational aspects of O'Brien's story, many of her "revelations" about mind control in Project Monarch have entered conspiracy culture. As a result of her book, belief in satanic and occult practices as well as allegations of child abuse often accompany contemporary stories about Project Monarch, associations that, like the earlier linking of eugenics with mind control, are designed to demonstrate how unnatural and inhuman a process it is to divorce someone from his or her real identity by creating a substitute personality that can be triggered at will. It is the Project Monarch conspiracy theory that has done much to spawn the notion of the mind-controlled puppet, and its use of programs and "trigger" devices has become widely accepted as real processes in the practice of mind control. Project Monarch conspiracy theories also list in detail the code-names and levels of mind-controlled subjects that the CIA has operating for it:

- Alpha, which is general programming
- Beta, sex-slave programming
- Gamma, programming to allow the subject to deceive and misdirect
- Theta, psychic programming designed to create assassins
- Omega, a self-destruct programming

Although these are alleged CIA designations, the types of programming they create have also been applied beyond Project Monarch in areas such as cult brainwashing, although figures such as Keith and Patton both suggest connections between Project Monarch and religious cults; in the case of the former by tracing Jim Jones's apparent links to the CIA, and in the case of the latter by a more general association of cult and occult. In these forms, Project Monarch has become an all-purpose "umbrella" conspiracy that can be applied to any group that is suspected of using mind-control techniques. What such a view also indicates is that, unlike other mind-control conspiracy theories, Project Monarch is no longer simply a functional way of getting people to do a conspiracy's bidding or even a sign of a conspiracy at work, but has become a conspiracy in itself with its own objectives, operations, and connections with other conspiracy groups, such as the Illuminati, Skull and Bones, or the New World Order.

### **Technological and UFO Mind Control**

Cathy O'Brien also relates how, because of her photographic memory, she was used by the CIA for "remote viewing" operations that involved her observing files that she would then repeat back to her controllers. Although this is not strictly speaking mind control, remote viewing has become a staple of mind-control conspiracy theory in recent years because it implies the use of ESP or other psychic powers. In conjunction with technological anxieties it enters the domain of mind control in the form of the artificial brain implant. A pervasive fear of advanced technology, whether human or alien, is indicated by these conspiracies, even though they have a history extending to the CIA conspiracies of MK-ULTRA. One of the seminal figures in implant conspiracies is José Delgado, a Spanish scientist who taught at Yale University in the 1950s and 1960s. Delgado developed a device called the "stimococeiver" that could be inserted into the brain and which, according to conspiracy theory, allowed the transmission of electrical impulses directly to it from elsewhere. This has led to a range of conspiracies around the notion of the remote-controlled

cyborg who responds to commands sent from a distant controller. Delgado's work is said, for example, to have led to a CIA program called "Sleeping Beauty" in a laboratory in New Mexico, but there have been more recent conspiracies around implants such as tracking devices, which generated claims about Timothy McVeigh having had a similar device implanted in his buttocks by the army, the Digital Angel, a device that verifies consumer identity (and a significant influence on Marrs's consumerist cyber-conspiracy), and the "Soul Catcher," a computer chip that can record and replay people's experiences.

Such biometric technology is also a staple of alien abduction narratives, which share a similar anxiety over the application of advanced, or superior, technology to the human body. As with the use of human implants, these mind-control conspiracies focus on the way in which the body is treated simply as a thing or a mindless puppet to be used by a superior power. Such anxieties are inherent within alien abduction narratives, with their stories of alien experimentation and penetration of the human body, but they also have a mind-control element in conspiracies that focus on the insertion of implants into the body when the human subject is returned to Earth. Examples can be found in television fictions, such as Scully's neck implant in *The X-Files* or the implantation of actual aliens in *Dark Skies*, but they also have currency in conspiracy theory itself. Budd Hopkins, for example, claims that many people are operating under the influence of alien implants that have three possible functions: operating as tracking devices, as monitors akin to remote viewing implants, or as receivers that turn the subject into a puppet under the command of an alien operator.

A final aspect to mind-control conspiracies are those that revolve around "Big Science" projects developed by the United States and the Soviet Union during the cold war. These range across a variety of areas, including the development of plasma weapons, or the use of microwave transmissions or electromagnetic low frequency radiation (ELF), all of which have similar effects in the creation of a buzzing in the head and which are used to

beam in emotions, messages, or commands. The weapons function by modifying the frequency of brainwaves so that they are susceptible to the receipt of outside commands, and specific conspiracy examples of such remote control weapons include the HAARP project, the saturation of the United States embassy in Moscow by microwave during the 1980s, and Alex Constantine's theory that Reagan's Star Wars project was actually a system of orbiting masers designed to beam commands into people's minds on a global scale. Unlike implant mind control, such conspiracies return mind-control theories to their roots in rationalized industrialization, so that rather than dealing with "individuals" by implanting telemetric devices one by one, people can be controlled and brainwashed on a mass scale. Although theories surrounding the use of such mass weapons of mind control are relatively recent, the concerns raised go back to the origins of mind control itself and can be found in other forms, such as fears around the fluoridation of water (which has also been claimed to be a way of inducing mind control), but also more generally in the fears that the twentieth century produced a culture in advanced societies where individuals are not treated as such, but as cattle or as "sheeple."

Fran Mason

**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; Jonestown; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of; LSD; *The Manchurian Candidate*; MK-ULTRA; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Subliminal Advertising; UFOs; *The X-Files*.

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## MJ-12

The conviction that the U.S. government is perpetrating a massive cover-up of extraterrestrial visits to the planet has become the source of vicious battles over the validity of the so-called “MJ-12” documents. In 1987, William Moore and Stanton Friedman, two prominent ufologists, along with Jamie Shandera, a television producer, claimed to have come into possession of an eight-page document classified “TOPIC SECRET/MAJIC-EYES ONLY.” The subtitle read “BRIEFING DOCUMENT: OPERATION MAJESTIC-12; PREPARED FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER,” and was dated 18 November 1952. “Majestic-12” was later shortened to “MAJIC-12,” or merely “MJ-12.”

This document supposedly contained proof of a government program initiated by President Harry Truman and directed by twelve military, scientific,

and intelligence community leaders to deal with the recovery of an alien spacecraft that wrecked near Roswell, New Mexico. Authorities supposedly discovered four dead aliens who had ejected from the craft before it crashed. Although the bodies were in a state of decomposition, enough remained to be preserved, collected, and taken to government laboratories for analysis and study. Among the twelve members of MJ-12 were Vannevar Bush and James Forrestal, who died in May 1949 and whose vacancy was left unfilled. Forrestal supposedly was directed by Truman in May 1947 to “proceed with all due speed and caution.” A cover story was concocted by MJ-12 that attributed the Roswell debris to weather research balloons.

Authorities claimed that the recovered “aliens” did not originate on Earth, but could only speculate as to where they had come from. Writing on the wreckage supposedly was indecipherable, leading to a secret Air Force project, SIGN, to determine the craft’s purpose and mission. The MJ-12 documents also refer to a 6 December 1950 crash near El Indio, Texas, which had burned up during entry into the atmosphere or upon impact.

When Dwight Eisenhower was elected president in 1952, the story continues, he came into knowledge of MJ-12 and continued the high level of secrecy. He noted the implications for national security and maintained MJ-12 under close wraps to avoid a “public panic.”

Moore, Friedman, and Shandera became aware of the document when Shandera received a roll of film in December 1984 that contained images of the MJ-12 memo to Eisenhower. But skeptics pointed out a number of problems with the documents, and challenged their authenticity. Debunker Philip Klass found numerous discrepancies that called into question the style of dating (i.e., “18 November, 1952” rather than either November 18, 1952, or 18 Nov. 1952, both of which were in common use, whereas the former was not). The type on the documents matched no typewriter in existence at the time, but did match a Smith-Corona made in 1963. Most damning, though, UFO skeptic Philip Klass found an exact duplicate of the Truman signature in the Library of Congress and contended that



the 1957 memo had forged Truman's signature. But the documents were so realistic that even Defense Department agents assessed the MJ-12 items.

Moore, the mastermind behind the documents intrigue, claimed to have played along with government investigators to gain official information about UFOs. Some accuse him of perpetrating a hoax. Stanton Friedman, who broke with Moore over other issues, nevertheless continued to be involved in the MJ-12 debate by publishing *Top Secret/MAJIC* in 1996. He concluded that the documents appeared to have been prepared by people inside government, but could not determine whether they were genuine or deliberate deceptions. Although he challenged some of Klass's points used to discredit MJ-12, Friedman only managed to "prove" noncontroversial truisms, such as the fact that those men on the list would likely have been on such a list, if one existed. More damaging to the documents' veracity, however, was a 14 July 1954 government memo found by Moore and Shandera in the National Archives from the special assistant to the president, Robert Cutler, to General Nathan Twining, which is generally regarded as a forgery and a "plant."

Despite Freedom of Information Act access, no one has produced any other documents specifically referring to either the existence of MJ-12 or alluding to any of their findings, save extremely oblique references that could apply to any program. Making matters even more complicated was the convenience of how the documents appeared—dropped onto Shandera's front porch in a plain brown bag at the very time he was working with Moore on a UFO documentary. The further good fortune of the researchers, in that all the MJ-12 documents confirmed exactly what Moore had already written, caused even UFO conspiracy theorists to look with disbelief upon the serendipitous delivery. Another convenient fact was that every man named in the MJ-12 list was dead when the documents mysteriously appeared, and thus they were unable to confirm the veracity of the list or the group's mission.

As charges and countercharges flew, almost every person involved in the debate was accused of being a CIA "plant" or government "stooge." Moore himself was viewed as spreading disinformation through

forged documents so as to discredit "the movement." On the other hand, Klass and others were lambasted as government fronts.

*Larry Schweikart*

**See also:** Roswell; UFOs.

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## MK-ULTRA

Much beloved by conspiracy theorists because it provides documented evidence to support claims that the U.S. government is involved in secret and hostile operations against its own citizens, MK-ULTRA was a covert CIA mind-control research project that lasted from 1953 to 1963. The program developed out of another CIA project, Bluebird (begun in 1950 and renamed Artichoke in 1951), which was principally concerned with psychological manipulation and had concerns similar to the navy's Project Chatter, which was begun in 1947 (lasting until 1953) and which dealt with the discovery and application of truth drugs similar to those that the Soviet Union was alleged to have developed. Both MK-ULTRA and Chatter expanded substantially during the Korean War because of the belief that Soviet forces had successfully used truth drugs and brainwashing techniques on prisoners of war. MK-ULTRA was authorized by CIA Director Allen Dulles in 1953 and was put into effect by the director of operations, Richard Helms, as an "umbrella project" that combined the interests of Bluebird, Artichoke, and Chatter. Under the control of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb the program engaged in research on a range of projects relating to drugs, toxins, hypnotism, and other forms of behavioral modification. This general focus on the transformation and control of personality has led to a widespread belief among conspiracy theorists that

its military applications were actually a cover for attempts to pacify and control civilian populations, most notably the citizens of the United States.

Under Gottlieb, MK-ULTRA combined the psychological concerns of Bluebird/Artichoke with the interest in drugs found in the navy's Project Chatter. The general aim of the project was to find ways of conditioning personnel to resist interrogation by hostile powers or to achieve the opposite through the development of control of individuals through interrogation, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, and use of drugs. There were many non-drug-related programs in the 149 subprojects that came within MK-ULTRA's portfolio, some of which involved hypnosis, investigations of magic, studies of sleep patterns, research on brain concussion, research into stimulus and response in biological systems, radiation, ESP, electroshock therapy, and projects that simply involved funding actual operations or their extension abroad under the MK-NAOMI designation, for example those taking place at the Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal. The drug programs have gained the most attention, however, in part because these were a development of overseas experiments that had already taken place regarding the use of sodium pentothal, but also because MK-ULTRA expanded the use of narcotic agents over the course of the program so that the CIA's experimentation with drugs, in particular LSD, has become the best-known area of the project in popular consciousness.

The development of LSD and its experimentation on members of the CIA, military personnel, and mental patients formed the early phase of MK-ULTRA's investigation of drugs in the 1950s. Many of those involved in investigating its effects, such as Gottlieb himself, were habitual users of the drug, and stories of LSD-spiked drinks at parties form some of the most sensational aspects of this opening phase. The main body of research, however, was performed on volunteer subjects who were tested in sensory deprivation chambers, under hypnosis, or who had aural stimuli played to them while dosed with LSD or other drugs such as mescaline. Some of the subjects, however, were tested without their consent, such as Frank Olsen, whose suicide as a result of a psychotic episode has been attributed to

the fact that he was given LSD without his knowledge. Another major part of the early phase was the testing of narcotics in government, medical, and educational institutions, with one of the first studies taking place at the National Institute of Mental Health's Addiction Research Center in Lexington, where prison inmates serving sentences for drug violations were dosed with LSD in exchange for heroin.

The most notorious feature of MK-ULTRA, and the feature that is most commonly associated with it, is the testing of LSD in CIA-rented apartments in New York and San Francisco as part of Operation Midnight Climax, which formed the final phase of the program. During this phase LSD was tested on unwitting subjects in everyday society by undercover agents (with the assent of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics) who used prostitutes to bring men back to apartments with two-way mirrors where they were given LSD and their reactions were recorded. This led to further tests and a more general distribution of LSD that has led to the general perception, as Lee and Shlain argue, that the CIA helped to create the 1960s counterculture or, alternatively, as Jim Keith asserts, that the counterculture was part of a CIA plot to channel youthful dissent into passive and nonviolent areas, with some of its key figures, such as Jerry Garcia and Timothy Leary, acting as CIA agents or stooges to achieve this plan.

The MK-ULTRA program was brought to an end in 1963 and most of the papers relating to it were destroyed in 1973 on the orders of CIA director Richard Helms. The program was subject to several hearings in the 1970s, when knowledge of CIA involvement in mind control and in the development and distribution of LSD entered the public domain. The program was the subject of investigations by the Rockefeller Commission in 1975, the Church Committee in 1976, and hearings by Senator Edward Kennedy in 1975 and 1977.

The papers and reports from these investigations form the bulk of the material used by conspiracy theorists, although they usually quote from Marks's *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate* or Bowart's *Operation Mind Control*, rather than directly from their original source. The revelations about MK-ULTRA

have led to a range of conspiracy theories, mainly involving the attempts by various agencies or conspiracy groups to pacify and control the population of the United States through mind control and the release of drugs into the environment. Keith, for example, claims that MK-ULTRA is part of a larger New World Order plot and that there have already been attempts to use LSD to pacify large numbers of people in the New York subway system. The factual basis of MK-ULTRA has been used to spin other elaborate plots, particularly when in conjunction with the mythical mind-control operation called “Project Monarch,” which, according to Ron Patton, is orchestrated by Nazis, occult groups, and the Illuminati, all of whom work in the service of the Antichrist rather than for any mere earthly power.

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**See also:** Central Intelligence Agency; LSD; *The Manchurian Candidate*; Mind Control.

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## The Molly Maguires

Twenty young Irishmen were hanged in the anthracite region of northeast Pennsylvania in the late 1870s, convicted of a series of killings stretching back to the Civil War. The convicted men were members of an alleged secret society called the “Molly Maguires,” said to have been imported from the Irish countryside, where a society of the same name was active in the 1840s. In Pennsylvania the Molly

Maguires apparently acted behind the cover of an ostensibly peaceful Irish fraternal organization called the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). The case was cracked by a Pinkerton detective, James McParlan, who spent almost two years in the coal district working undercover. More than fifty Molly Maguires went on trial between 1875 and 1878; twenty were executed and twenty more went to prison. The first ten Molly Maguires were hanged on a single day, 21 June 1877, known to the people of the anthracite region ever since as “Black Thursday.”

The Molly Maguires stood accused of killing as many as sixteen mine owners, superintendents, bosses, and workers. Their trials, conducted in the midst of enormously hostile national publicity, were a travesty of justice. The defendants were arrested by the private police force of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, whose ambitious president, Franklin B. Gowen, had financed the Pinkerton operation. They were convicted on the evidence of an undercover detective who was accused (somewhat half-heartedly) by the defense of being an agent provocateur, supplemented by the confessions of a series of informers who had turned state’s evidence to save their necks. Irish Catholics were excluded from the juries as a matter of course. Most of the prosecuting attorneys worked for railroads and mining companies. Remarkably, Franklin B. Gowen himself appeared as the star prosecutor at several trials, with his courtroom speeches rushed into print as popular pamphlets. In effect, the AOH itself was put on trial: mere membership of that organization was presented as de facto membership of the Molly Maguires, and membership of either was routinely presented by the prosecution as evidence of guilt—on charges not simply of belonging to an oath-bound society but of using that society to plan and execute diabolical crimes.

Viewed in retrospect, the case of the Molly Maguires displayed many of the classic hallmarks of a U.S. conspiracy theory. Even by nineteenth-century standards the arrests, trials, and executions were flagrant in their abuse of judicial procedure and their flaunting of corporate power. Yet only a handful of dissenting voices were to be heard, chiefly those of labor radicals. To explain why some-

thing like this could happen it is important to understand why the prosecution's depiction of the Irish defendants seemed so convincing to contemporaries. The prosecution offered no plausible explanation of motive and nor, it seems, was one expected. The explanation of Irish depravity was simply that the Irish were depraved by nature; they killed people because that's the type of people they were. This argument, while perfectly circular, was a surprisingly powerful one in the United States of the mid-nineteenth century. Irish American violence and depravity, from the labor upheavals and urban rioting of the antebellum era to the draft riots of the Civil War and the Orange and Green riots of 1870–1871, were presented as the logical transatlantic outgrowth of an alien immigrant culture. In the United States, moreover, that culture was equipped with an international conspiratorial organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, whose tentacles were said to reach across both the North American continent and the Atlantic Ocean.

The inherent savagery of the Irish was the guiding premise in what passed for the first wave of interpretation of the Molly Maguires, a stream of pamphlets, newspaper reports, and histories produced by contemporaries. Even a somewhat sympathetic observer like Dewees (*The Molly Maguires: The Origins, Growth, and Character of the Organization*, 1877) took the Irish propensity for violence more or less for granted, while the author of the other standard contemporary history, Allan Pinkerton—founder of the famous detective agency—took Irish depravity as his central theme (*The Molly Maguires and the Detectives*, 1877). This highly pejorative and highly conspiratorial perspective, which constituted the foundational myth of the Molly Maguires, remained dominant for the next two generations, resurfacing, for example, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Valley of Fear* (1904) and providing a staple of dime novel fiction until the mid-twentieth century.

By the 1930s, however, the tide had begun to turn. Anthony Bimba, a Marxist historian, was the first to offer a major revision (*The Molly Maguires*, 1932), placing the Molly Maguire affair firmly in the context of labor and capital. So concerned was Bimba to

overturn the prevailing myth of the Molly Maguires, however, that he turned it on its head, retaining its elements of circularity, tautology, and conspiracy while transferring the burden of evil from Irish workers to their employers. Evil is not a very useful category of historical analysis, at least in cases like this, for it freezes time and character rather than trying to explain causation and motivation. Why did the employers frame twenty innocent men? Because they were evil; or, put another way, because they were capitalist. At the same time, by collapsing all workers into a single category, Bimba ignored the class and ethnic diversity among them, a consideration that is now crucial to our understanding.

J. Walter Coleman, in *The Molly Maguire Riots: Industrial Conflict in the Pennsylvania Coal Region* (1936), was the first to open up this line of inquiry. Despite its apparently pejorative title, Coleman's book is among the most sympathetic and convincing accounts of the subject. The Molly Maguires, he argued, represented a specifically Irish form of labor protest, distinct from the British-inspired tradition of trade unionism in the anthracite region. If this diversity is one of the keys to understanding the Molly Maguires, another is the inherent unreliability of the evidence produced by James McParlan. He was, after all, a trained liar. Both of these points were persuasively made by Coleman but largely ignored in Wayne G. Broehl's *The Molly Maguires* (1964), which, by the standards of its time, seems curiously sympathetic to James McParlan, to his employer Allan Pinkerton, and to the employer of both, Franklin B. Gowen. A rendition of the subject more in keeping with the radical ethic of the 1960s can be found in the film *The Molly Maguires* (dir. Martin Ritt 1970) starring Sean Connery as the hero (alleged Molly ringleader John Kehoe) and Richard Harris as the anti-hero (turncoat James McParlan). It is a revealing footnote to U.S. cultural history that the director, Walter Bernstein, had been blacklisted in the McCarthy era and in part saw his film as a response to Elia Kazan, who had notoriously "named names" in the 1950s, and whose hero in *On the Waterfront* informs against his corrupt union bosses.

How, then, is one to make sense of the Molly Maguires? Clearly, what is needed is an explanation



that can break free of the two existing poles of interpretation: the Molly Maguires as depraved killers and the Molly Maguires as innocent victims of oppression, whether economic, religious, or ethnic. The Mollys themselves, being socially marginalized and largely illiterate, left us virtually no evidence, which exposes the subject to all manner of conspiracy theories, from both the Right and the Left. We do, however, have plenty of evidence about them left by other people: employers, Catholic clergymen, politicians, newspapermen, pamphleteers, census takers, government officials, and contemporary historians. Read carefully, these forms of evidence can yield at least some reliable information about who the Mollys were. Equally important, they can tell us a great deal about the aims and motivations of those who set out to destroy them. In the end, though, some fundamental historical questions demand at least a tentative answer: Who were the Molly Maguires, what did they do, and why?

The starting place in seeking an answer to these questions is the country where the Molly Maguires originated. To the historian familiar with Ireland as well as the United States, the most striking aspect of the activities in Pennsylvania is how clearly they conformed to a pattern of violent protest evident in the Irish countryside from the mid-eighteenth century onward. The Molly Maguires, who emerged toward the end of the Great Famine (1845–1851), were so named because their members (invariably young men) disguised themselves in women's clothing, used powder or burnt cork on their faces, and pledged their allegiance to a mythical woman who symbolized their struggle against injustice. The American Mollys were evidently a rare transatlantic outgrowth of this pattern of Irish rural protest. Contrary to contemporary conspiracy theories, however, it is highly unlikely that there was any direct continuity of organization or personnel between Ireland and Pennsylvania. There is no evidence at all that a conspiratorial organization was somehow imported into the United States by Irish immigrants, nor is there any evidence that individuals convicted in Pennsylvania had been involved in violent activities in Ireland.

The immigrants did arrive, however, with a cultural memory and established social traditions. Faced

with appalling conditions in the mines of Pennsylvania, they responded by deploying a specifically Irish form of collective violence against their enemies, up to and including assassination. To that extent, the American Molly Maguires clearly did exist, even if they never existed as the full-fledged diabolical organization depicted by contemporaries. They were not purely a figment of the conspiratorial imagination; indeed the conspiracy theories about them could have achieved little credibility if Irish workers had not been engaged in collective violence of some sort.

There were two distinct waves of Molly Maguire activity in Pennsylvania, one in the 1860s and the other in the 1870s. The first wave, which included six assassinations, occurred during and directly after the Civil War. Nobody was convicted of these crimes at the time, although a mysterious group called the Molly Maguires was widely believed to be responsible. Only during the trials of the 1870s were the killings of the previous decade retrospectively traced to individual members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. At the heart of the violence in the 1860s was a combination of resistance to the military draft with some form of rudimentary labor organizing by a shadowy group known variously as the "Committee," the "Buckshots," and the "Molly Maguires." During the crisis of the Civil War, all forms of labor organizing were seen as potentially seditious. The second wave of violence did not occur until 1875, in part because of the introduction of a more efficient policing and judicial system, but mainly because of the emergence of a powerful new trade union, the Workingmen's Benevolent Association (WBA), which united Irish, British, and U.S. workers across the lines of ethnicity and skill. The labor movement of the anthracite region now took two distinct but overlapping forms: a powerful and inclusive trade union movement, half of whose leaders were Irish-born; and an exclusively Irish and largely unskilled group of workers called the Molly Maguires. Favoring collective bargaining, strikes, and peaceful reform, the leaders of the WBA publicly condemned violence, singling out the Molly Maguires specifically. Yet Franklin B. Gowen repeatedly insisted that the WBA was simply a cover for the

Molly Maguires, who constituted the union's terrorist arm. Although this claim was manifestly false, it was highly effective; by collapsing the distinction between the two organizations Gowen succeeded in destroying the power of both. Not only was the union discredited by this strategy, the Molly Maguires were equipped with an institutional structure they never had. The defeat of one would now entail the defeat of the other.

To gather information against both arms of the labor movement, Gowen hired Allan Pinkerton in October 1873. Pinkerton dispatched James McParlan to the anthracite region. Several other agents would follow later. Shortly after McParlan fled the anthracite region, in spring 1875, matters reached a climax. After a heroic six-month strike against Gowen and his railroad, the WBA went down to final defeat. In the disarray that followed, the Molly Maguires stepped up their activities to a new level: six of the sixteen assassinations attributed to them took place in the summer of 1875, even as the leaders of the now-defunct trade union continued to voice their condemnation. In January 1876 the arrests began, and that summer the famous trials commenced. With labor utterly defeated, Franklin B. Gowen completed his conquest of the local economy, securing full control over production and distribution in the lower anthracite region. This was the goal the trade union and the Molly Maguires had long threatened, and it is quite clear that Gowen had been prepared to take all necessary means to eliminate that threat.

For almost a century nobody in the Pennsylvania anthracite region was willing to say much about the Molly Maguires. The story was too painful, too divisive. Not the least remarkable aspect of this ongoing story, however, has been a dramatic renewal of interest in the anthracite region itself. Every June 21 for the last six years several hundred people have arrived in the mining region to commemorate the Molly Maguires. Descendants of the convicted men and their alleged victims have sat down together to eat, drink, and talk. The dominant note of each year's gathering has been how to include all sides and perspectives. This ecumenical spirit, so clearly lacking in the 1870s, provides the best chance today

of understanding one of the more tragic tales in the history of U.S. labor.

Kevin Kenny

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### Monk, Maria

Maria Monk (1816–?1849) was the heroine and putative author of a mostly fictional but wildly popular book depicting the secret crimes that many Protestants were sure took place behind the closed doors of

Catholic convents. The book was first published in 1836 under the title *The Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal*. By some estimates, it was surpassed among antebellum best-sellers only by the Bible and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, two other favorites of the northern middle classes and the evangelical Protestant reformers whose causes relied on them. *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* remains to this day one of the most influential of all anti-Catholic texts, illustrating the powerful role that exaggerated survivor/defector narratives have played in bolstering conspiracy fears (Billington, 108).

Many facts of Maria Monk's life are sketchy and disputed, but it's generally agreed that she grew up near Montreal, the wayward daughter of a soldier's widow who supported her family by cleaning houses for the army. Raised as a Protestant, by some means or another Maria ended up under the care of Catholic nuns, escaped from their institution, and left for New York City in 1835, pregnant and in the company of Rev. William K. Hoyt, an anti-Catholic activist.

Beyond those basic facts, the accounts differ dramatically. Her mother claimed that Maria had suffered brain damage in a grisly childhood accident involving a "slate pencil," and became mentally unstable and sexually uncontrollable as a result. According to Mrs. Monk, the Catholic institution from which her daughter escaped was a "Magdalen asylum" for the redemption of prostitutes, and William Hoyt had paid Maria to blame her conditions on priests, when Hoyt himself was likely the guilty party (Billington, 101).

As described in *Awful Disclosures*, Maria's own story was far more inspirational. She told of entering the Hotel Dieu convent for her education and converting to Catholicism. After a brief stint away from the convent, including an alleged marriage, Monk decided to become a nun herself. Upon taking the veil, she was initiated, if her account is to be believed, into a nightmare world of psychological manipulation, sexual exploitation, and mass murder. Taken aside by the Mother Superior, Maria was informed that one of a nun's "great duties was to obey the priests in all things," which included servicing them sexually. When Maria virtuously objected,

the Superior explained to her that priests needed nuns for this purpose because they were "not situated like other men, being forbidden to marry." Moreover, the Catholic clergy deserved some release, because they "lived secluded, laborious, self-denying lives for our salvation." Finally, Maria was assured, priests could not sin, and whatever they wanted was both right and "pleasing in the sight of God" (Monk, 38).

The sisters at Hotel Dieu also had to assist with the horrifying measures required to hide the priests' activities. When babies were born in the convent, they were "always baptized, and immediately strangled," which was actually good for the children since they would never be tempted to sin and got to enjoy "everlasting happiness" immediately (Monk, 39). In the *Awful Disclosures*, Maria reported her discovery of a pit in the convent cellar where the little bodies were thrown in and covered with lime to promote rapid decomposition. The same fate awaited any nuns who balked at their duties, or spoke openly of the crimes committed there. Monk claimed to have witnessed a recalcitrant sister condemned to death, and then summarily executed—in the presence of the bishop—by means of smothering between two feather mattresses. Priests and nuns jumped on top and trampled her for good measure.

In its original form, the narrative ended with Maria, pregnant with the child of one "Father Phelan, Priest of the Parish Church of Montreal" (Monk, 177), escaping from the convent and arriving, apparently unaided, at a New York almshouse. Pursued by agents of the church and deathly ill, she finally unburdened herself to a hospital chaplain, who gave her a Bible and introduced her to the joys of Protestantism, depicted as a form of Christianity based exclusively on the reading of God's word and "the free exercise of . . . reason" (Monk, 179).

Monk's story (if indeed it was hers and not a tale invented by her promoters) dovetailed nicely with the accusations that Protestant extremists had been making in a then-current controversy over the alleged threat that convents posed to American girls, which was linked with a much broader anti-Catholic movement. *Awful Disclosures* documented the

charges much more sensationally than the recent *Six Months in a Convent* (1835), the rather mild narrative of “escaped” nun Rebecca Reed, who had been a sister at the Ursuline convent in Charles Town, Massachusetts, which anti-Catholic rioters had burned down in 1834. *Awful Disclosures* had the juicy details that Reed’s book lacked, and while it was not explicit by modern standards, some scholars consider it the first work of pornography published in the United States, for its frank appeal to prurient interests.

It is unlikely that Maria Monk actually wrote the book that bears her name and it is difficult to know whether she concocted the tales within it, which became more extensive and detailed in subsequent editions that boasted numerous invented illustrations and even a floor plan of the convent. In New York, she fell in with a circle of anti-Catholic activists including Rev. John Jay Slocum, Arthur Tappan, Rev. George Bourne, and Theodore Dwight, Jr. (some of whom were actively involved in other more worthy evangelical causes such as temperance and abolitionism). The narrative has been credited to several different members of the group, but it is certain that they were all heavily involved in publicizing the ex-nun’s story. The *Awful Disclosures* first saw print in an anti-Catholic newspaper; New York’s leading publisher, Harper Brothers, working through a dummy corporation named after two of their employees, finally brought it out as a book in 1836. Immediately popular, it has remained in heavy circulation ever since.

Unsurprisingly, Maria Monk’s book was controversial as well as widely read. The Protestant religious press promoted it as an absolutely truthful account of Catholic corruption and superstition, and Maria herself became a popular figure. At the same time, Catholics and other opponents of the evangelical activists responded vigorously. Posters denouncing Monk were distributed throughout New York, and a heavily documented book, *Awful Exposure of the Atrocious Plot Formed by Certain Individuals against the Clergy and Nuns of Lower Canada*, was published refuting her charges (Billington, 102). The Democratic and, like its party, generally pro-Catholic newspaper, the *New York Herald*, attacked

*Awful Disclosures* repeatedly as a “gross and atrocious fabrication” (Castagna, 675). Rev. Slocum rushed out with another book rebutting the refutations, and a public meeting was held in which Monk and her critics confronted each other.

Inevitably the controversy produced calls for a public investigation of the Hotel Dieu convent, and the results of those investigations made it much more difficult for reasonable people to give *Awful Disclosures* any further credence. Catholic officials denied requests to allow Maria herself to come back with an investigating committee, but finally did allow two American Protestant ministers to visit and inspect the convent. They reported finding nothing at all that substantiated Monk’s accusations; even the physical layout of the Hotel Dieu failed to match her description. Not long after, New York editor and author William L. Stone conducted an even more thorough investigation. Combing through the convent almost inch by inch, even sniffing jars in the basement in search of dead babies, Stone grew to doubt that Maria Monk had ever lived there at all. Though he had been active in the anti-Catholic movement and predisposed to believe Monk’s story, Stone came away impressed with the cheerfulness and tranquility of life at the Montreal convent, and wrote a report aiming to liberate his countrymen from “the bondage of prejudice” (Franchot, 161) against these particular Catholics.

The hardcore anti-Catholic press denounced the investigations (along with another Monk pregnancy) as Jesuit plots, even suggesting the possibility that the convent had been rapidly remodeled simply to cast doubt on Maria Monk’s account. Her public standing was nevertheless devastated by the investigation, and in 1837 she left New York and mostly dropped from view, her mental condition evidently deteriorating. She saw only a tiny fraction of the profits from her best-selling book, despite some lawsuits, and seemed to have drifted into petty crime, poverty, and possibly prostitution. Most accounts have her arrested for stealing from a customer at the Five Points brothel where she probably worked toward the end of her life, and then dying in jail on Riker’s Island in 1849. Her *Awful Disclosures* lived on, and on.

Jeffrey L. Pasley



**See also:** Anti-Catholicism.

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**Monroe, Marilyn**

Marilyn Monroe, born Norma Jeane Baker-Mortensen in Los Angeles on 1 June 1926, died during the night of 4 August 1962 in Brentwood, California. The Los Angeles County coroner ruled that her death was due to “acute barbiturate poisoning due to ingestion of overdose . . . a probable suicide.” Despite official reassurances that Monroe had killed herself, her death sparked a host of conspiracy theories claiming that the Mafia, Communists, the CIA, John and Robert Kennedy, her doctor, or her housekeeper had murdered her.

First spotted in an airplane factory, Monroe quickly became a famous cover girl, displaying her sex appeal in dozens of magazines, including *Playboy*. Her career as an actress took off with *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), followed by *All about Eve* (1950), *We're Not Married!* (1952), *Niagara* (1953), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953), *River of No Return* (1954), *The Seven-Year Itch* (1955), *Some Like it Hot* (1959), and *The Misfits* (1961), among others.

Despite her acting success, the official theory goes, Monroe was a troubled individual, with three failed marriages, the first to sailor James Dougherty, the second to baseball star Joe DiMaggio, and the

third to playwright Arthur Miller, and with two miscarriages while married to Miller. There were also rumors that she had an abortion shortly before killing herself, and that she suffered from schizophrenia. Her attempts to escape her “dumb blonde” image failed when she was fired for chronic lateness from her leading role in George Cukor's *Something's Got to Give*.

From 1955 on, Monroe started analytic sessions, first with Dr. Margaret Hohenberg, then with Dr. Marianne Kris, and finally with Dr. Ralph Greenson, all of whom pushed her into excessive introspection, then prescribed barbiturates to reduce her stress levels. Desperately switching from one lover to the next, including actors Yves Montand, Marlon Brando, and Frank Sinatra, and director Elia Kazan, and addicted to barbiturates that she took along with alcohol, she was still reeling from a difficult childhood spent in foster homes. On at least two previous occasions, she threatened to kill herself, first by throwing herself out of the window (1961), then by overdose (1962). On 4 August 1962, an extremely irritable Monroe bitterly complained that her publicist, Pat Newcomb, had slept through the night while Monroe had not; Monroe then spent most of the day making frantic calls to acquaintances, then took (accidentally or, more likely, willingly) twenty-five pills of Nembutal that, combined with chloral hydrate, provoked a fatal overdose.

Odd events surrounding her death immediately sparked conspiracy theories. She was found lying naked on her bed, her hand clutched on the telephone, as if she had tried to call somebody as she lay dying (she usually put her phone back on the couch, under a pillow, when she went to sleep). A list of phone calls she placed that night was mysteriously clipped from her bill. Key samples from her autopsy disappeared. The diary she kept, along with handwritten notes from Robert Kennedy, were never found, suggesting that she had been murdered because she “knew too much” and that her assassins had conscientiously removed all incriminating evidence. Monroe lay flat on her bed with her legs stretched, an odd position for someone dying from an overdose, which suggests that the death scene was staged.

Close friends who talked to or met Monroe in the days before she died described her as happy, not depressed, and for many the official suicide theory was therefore implausible. A winner of the female World Film Favorite award at the 1962 Golden Globes ceremony and a world-renowned actress with thirty films to her credit, Monroe had nothing to fear about her career—although she had been fired, Twentieth Century Fox was negotiating Monroe's return to the set of *Something's Got to Give*. The image of a beautiful movie star, lying naked on silk sheets and struck dead in the prime of life immediately caught the public imagination and helped propagate conspiracy theories.

The exact chronology of her death remains in doubt. Officially, Monroe, who had been invited to actor Peter Lawford's beach house that night, retired to her bedroom around 8 P.M. instead. Eunice Murray, her housekeeper, woke up around 3:30 A.M. early on 5 August, noticed light in Monroe's room, stepped in, found her in an odd position, and called her psychiatrist, Dr. Ralph Greenson, who asked Dr. Hyman Engelberg to come. Engelberg pronounced Monroe dead and, at 4:25 A.M., he called West Los Angeles Police Department Sergeant Jack Clemmons to notify the police of Monroe's demise. This chronology only appeared in later sworn testimonies by Greenson and Engelberg. According to Clemmons, when he arrived on the scene Murray, Greenson, and Engelberg told him that Murray had found Monroe's body around midnight. Monroe intimates such as Lawford claim they were notified of her death before 3:30 A.M. Ambulance drivers who took Monroe's body away claim she was already in a stage of rigor mortis and must have died around midnight. Should this alternative chronology be true, conspiracy theorists say, several hours elapsed between Monroe's death and the arrival of the police, leaving plenty of time for murderers to remove evidence and to leave the scene.

One theory, put forward by Donald H. Wolfe in his *The Last Days of Marilyn Monroe*, argues that U.S. president John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert both had affairs with Monroe. As a result, she knew intimate details about both brothers and about their family's connections to the Mafia and, given Monroe's history of mental illness, she might reveal

embarrassing details to the media. Since Monroe was by then a world-famous actress, a tell-all interview would trigger a scandal able to shatter Kennedy's presidency. When Monroe sang a sensuous "Happy Birthday" to the president in May 1962, Wolfe argues that Kennedy feared she was on the verge of going public about their affair and so had her killed. Robert Slatzer, in his *The Curious Death of Marilyn Monroe*, specifically blamed Robert Kennedy, who allegedly used CIA operatives to carry out the murder.

Monroe's romantic involvement with John F. Kennedy is well documented, and rumors that she started a relationship with Robert after John "dumped" her on his brother seem entirely plausible. Evidence directly implicating any of the Kennedys in Monroe's alleged murder, however, is scarce. One lone coincidence in favor of this theory is that actor Peter Lawford, who had married Kennedy's sister Patricia Kennedy-Lawford, was the last person to talk to Marilyn before she died. However unsubstantiated, the Kennedy theory remains the most popular among conspiracy enthusiasts.

Another theory, put forward by Chuck Giancana in *Double Cross: The Explosive, Inside Story of the Mobster Who Controlled America*, suggests that Chuck's older brother, mobster Sam Giancana, ordered Marilyn killed in order to punish Robert Kennedy for prosecuting Mafia leaders during his tenure as attorney general. Giancana hoped Marilyn's murder would be attributed to Kennedy, but Kennedy managed to remove incriminating evidence before Los Angeles police officials reached the crime scene.

Less believable theories abound. Frank Capell, in *The Strange Death of Marilyn Monroe*, blamed her death on a Communist conspiracy intent on sapping U.S. morale. Other theories involve Monroe's psychiatrist, Ralph Greenson, accused of giving her a lethal injection of barbiturates (either willingly, or by mistakenly pumping the drugs into her heart); her housekeeper, Eunice Murray, who might have killed Monroe on Greenson's orders; and even her publicist, Pat Newcomb, who spent the night of the death in Monroe's home.

*Philippe R. Girard*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kennedy, Robert F., Assassination of; Mafia.

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## Moon Landings

Project Apollo sent six two-man teams of astronauts to the surface of the moon between July 1969 and December 1972. Roughly 10–20 percent of Americans now believe, however, that no human has ever set foot on the moon, and that all evidence for the landings is part of an elaborate hoax staged by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Skepticism about the landings began to surface almost as soon as they took place and has remained steady for three decades since. Supporters of the hoax theory argue that careful scrutiny of still pictures, films, and radio transmissions reveals telltale signs of the deception. Critics of the hoax theory dismiss the idea of a thirty-year-long conspiracy involving hundreds or thousands of people as patently absurd. The “anomalies” in lunar photographs are, they contend, products not of a shadowy conspiracy but of the will to believe in one.

### Origins and Context

Belief that the moon missions were faked entails belief in two separate premises. The first is that it was possible, in 1969, to simulate a lunar landing and the “moonwalks” that accompanied it. The second is that the U.S. government deceived the public about one of the defining events of the century. Between 1968 and 1973, events outside the space program rendered both premises more plausible, to far more people, than they would have been a decade earlier.

Stanley Kubrick’s film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) signaled a revolution in movie special effects and, specifically, in the simulation of space travel on screen. John Sturges’s *Marooned* (1969) and Douglas Trumbull’s *Silent Running* (1971) showed that *2001* was more than a brilliant fluke. All three films stood as far beyond *Destination Moon* (1950) as that film, revolutionary in its time, had stood beyond the crude Flash Gordon serials of the 1930s. The new films’ extraordinarily realistic “look” made it easy to believe that the simulated space flight could now be passed off as real.

The five years between 1968 and 1973 also saw the rapid erosion of the U.S. public’s trust in the federal government. The optimistic pronouncements of politicians and generals about the war in Vietnam were repeatedly undercut by the testimony of journalists and returning veterans. The 1970 publication of the Pentagon Papers—the government’s own “secret history” of the war—damaged government credibility further, as did the 1970 revelation of a secret bombing campaign against Cambodia. The Watergate Scandal of 1973–1974 destroyed the Nixon administration and further damaged the federal government’s credibility. The knowledge that the president and his advisors had systematically abused the power of their offices for political gain, then systematically lied about their actions, permanently soured many Americans’ attitudes toward their elected officials.

The idea of a trip to the moon had, as late as the late 1950s, seemed to many Americans a distant dream at best. Many continued, in the early 1970s, to find the idea implausible. Disbelief in the moon landings coalesced around those doubts. A poll taken by Knight Newspapers in July 1970, a year after the first landing, revealed that 30 percent of those polled doubted the landings had been real. Doubts ran especially high where trust in the federal government was especially low. In poor, black neighborhoods of Washington, D.C., half of those polled believed that the landings had been a hoax (Van Bakel).

Cynicism about the government diminished little after the early 1970s. The healing effects of time and fading memories were repeatedly offset by fresh

scandals. Americans born since the mid-1960s thus have only vague, secondhand memories of the Apollo missions but vivid memories of government duplicity. “I’d always suspected something like that” is a common reaction among high school and college students encountering the hoax theory for the first time.

### The Community of Believers

The hoax theory, even according to its critics, is accepted by tens of millions of Americans. It has been shaped and promoted, however, by a much smaller group of core believers. The members of this core group are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publishing what they see as compelling evidence of government deception with respect to Project Apollo. They agree on what constitutes this body of evidence, on how the individual pieces of evidence should be interpreted, and on the idea that the public record of the moon landings was falsified. They disagree about the extent of, and the reasons for, that falsification.

Some hoax theorists, like William Brian, argue that U.S. astronauts *did* land on the moon in 1969–1972, but that they discovered evidence of an alien civilization that has been ruthlessly suppressed. Other theorists, like David Percy, argue that the landings broadcast on television to worldwide audiences of millions were fakes. The *real* moon landings, they believe, were carried out in total secrecy by a shadowy “black space program,” and that there is no public record of it or them. The most popular view—narrowly believed among dedicated hoax theorists and widely among rank-and-file believers—is that humans never went to the moon at all. NASA faked the landings, according to this view, because it was incapable of actually carrying them out by the end of the 1960s, as President Kennedy had challenged them to do in 1961.

The leading advocate of this “mainstream” version of the hoax theory is Bill Kaysing, who has been promoting it since the early 1970s. Ralph René’s book *NASA Mooned America* (1994), James Collier’s video *Was It Only a Paper Moon?* (1997), and Bart Sibrel’s video *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Moon* (2001) stake out positions similar

to Kaysing’s, while offering similar arguments and evidence.

Kaysing’s forthrightly titled book *We Never Landed on the Moon* (1974) was the first extended discussion of the hoax theory to appear in print. It remains in print at this writing, having been expanded and republished several times, and spawned a series of videos that present its argument visually. Kaysing’s ideas were also featured prominently in the Hollywood suspense film *Capricorn One* (1978)—the story of NASA’s attempt to fake the first manned landing on Mars. Except for the change of destination, the film’s fictional scenario is virtually identical to Kaysing’s purportedly real one. Even the spaceships are identical to those used in Project Apollo. Kaysing has actively promoted the hoax theory on radio talk-shows and, in 1997, achieved fleeting fame by suing ex-Apollo astronaut James Lovell for referring to him as “a wacko” (a judge dismissed the suit as baseless). The Fox television network’s hour-long documentary *Conspiracy Theory: Did We Go to the Moon?* (2001) gave Kaysing’s ideas a thorough, and thoroughly uncritical, airing.

### The Case for the Hoax Theory

The mainstream version of the hoax theory is built around three central ideas. The first is that NASA, incapable of actually sending anyone to the moon, never allowed the Apollo astronauts to go beyond the Earth’s orbit. The second is that official NASA photographs and films from the Apollo missions show telltale signs of their creation on an earth-bound sound stage. The third is that NASA, and its coconspirators elsewhere in the government, have kept those with knowledge of the conspiracy quiet for thirty years. The rest of the hoax theory consists of a web of suppositions and “likely stories” connecting those three ideas.

Proof of NASA’s inability to carry off a real lunar landing lies, believers argue, in the contrast between the space agency’s performance before and during the Apollo missions. NASA’s early attempts at space flight in the late 1950s and early 1960s were often spectacular failures. They achieved a measure of success with Earth-orbiting flights during the Mercury and Gemini programs, but Apollo was plagued



by problems with quality control, with meeting deadlines, and with spacecraft performance. As late as January 1967, three astronauts died on the launch pad when fire broke out in the cabin of a poorly designed Apollo spacecraft during a test. Yet, beginning with the flight of Apollo 8 around the moon in December 1968, mission followed flawless mission with only one (nonlethal) failure—Apollo 13. Hoax theorists argue that real, successful lunar missions are far less plausible than faked ones in which (according to one scenario) empty Apollo spacecraft were launched and then “parked” in Earth orbit for the required number of days before being returned to Earth under remote control.

Proof that the moon landings were staged on Earth rests, according to believers, on clearly visible “anomalies.” Why, they ask, is the “moon rock” shown in one NASA photo marked with the letter “C”? Why is the soil beneath the engine nozzle of the lunar module only slightly disturbed? An engine so powerful should have blasted out a crater deep enough to be noticeable. Why do photographs supposedly taken on the lunar surface show objects lit from more than one direction? There should be only one source of light on the moon: the sun. Why are the stars not visible in the lunar sky? With no atmosphere to obscure them, they should shine clearly. Why, in film footage that shows an astronaut planting the U.S. flag, does the flag appear to wave as if in a breeze? It should, on the airless lunar surface, hang limply from the rod that supports its top edge.

Proof of a post-Apollo conspiracy of silence lies, believers argue, in the fact that no one connected to NASA has spoken out on the subject. They see it as particularly significant that Neil Armstrong, commander of Apollo 11 and the first person to set foot on the moon, declines to give interviews and that other astronauts have specifically refused interviews with hoax theorists. Some (including Bill Kaysing) go further, suggesting that the three astronauts who died in the mid-1960s plane crashes, the three who died in the 1967 Apollo cabin fire, and the seven who died in the 1986 *Challenger* disaster were murdered by NASA to keep them quiet.

### The Case against a Hoax

The hoax theory, according to its critics, is a tissue of faulty assumptions, specious “evidence,” and bad science. The Apollo flights to the moon, though successful, were far from the flawless exercises that Kaysing and others suggest. Apollo 11, the first to land, came within seconds of crashing on the lunar surface. The explosion that crippled Apollo 13, and many of the problems that resulted, were products of flawed or inefficient design—the same kinds of problems that NASA had faced throughout the 1960s.

The purported “anomalies” on which believers rely so heavily are, in fact, readily explained without a hoax. The “C” appears only in a single copy of the photograph in question, not on the original film. The lunar module’s rocket engine fires only briefly when the ship is close to the lunar surface, and not at all for the last seconds of the descent. The shallow craters it leaves in the lunar soil reflect this. The rays of the sun illuminate objects on the lunar surface directly, but also by reflecting off the soil, the lunar module, and other light-colored objects. The stars are not visible in the dark lunar sky for the same reason they are not visible to observers standing near a bright street light: the street light (or, in lunar photography, the sun) overwhelms them. The flag moves after its pole is planted not because of breeze but because of inertia. The act of driving the pole into the ground shakes the cloth and, for a moment or two, it continues to shake.

No present or former NASA employee has “blown the whistle” on the hoax, critics argue, because there *was* no hoax. It defies belief that the hundreds or thousands of NASA employees who would have been aware of some part of the hoax would *all* have kept silence for three decades. It is, on the other hand, far from surprising that astronauts would refuse to talk to hoax theorists who accuse them of being brainwashed dupes at best and bald-faced liars at worst. Neil Armstrong’s reticence about the first lunar landing mirrors his similar reticence about his combat missions in the Korean War and his test flights of the X-15 rocket plane. Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins, who flew with him aboard Apollo 11, have both written extensively

about their experiences on the moon. Unless the existence of a hoax is assumed, critics point out, nothing about the death of six astronauts in the mid-1960s or seven aboard *Challenger* suggests foul play. Space travel is, as even hoax theorists readily admit, a dangerous business.

A. Bowdoin Van Riper

**See Also:** Area 51; Cambodia, Secret Bombing of; Pentagon Papers; UFOs; Watergate.

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## Moonies

The Unification Church (known popularly as "the Moonies," after its founder, Rev. Moon) is viewed with suspicion by the conspiracy-minded for three reasons: its links with the South Korean government and CIA, its legion front organizations, and its recruitment and indoctrination practices, the latter of which have consistently drawn charges of "brainwashing" and "mind control." Known officially as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UCW), the Unification Church was founded in Seoul, Korea, on 1 May 1954. It spread through Korea over the course of the 1950s, was transplanted to Japan in 1958, and moved to the United States in 1959. While the reach of the Unification Church would ultimately be global, these three nations remain its strongholds. The Church was relatively obscure in the

United States until the early 1970s when it made its entry onto the political scene.

Anticommunism has always been an official part of Unification theology (the key text of which is Moon's *Divine Principle*), which views communism as the legacy of Cain, who in turn is understood as the fruit of Eve's coupling with Satan. According to this view, democracy is the legacy of Abel, who symbolizes humanity's relationship with God. Thus the struggle between communism and democracy is seen as no less than the struggle between the forces of God and the legions of Satan. Moonie theology asserts that those who support the HSA-UCW or reside within its fold are on the side of God; all others serve Satan.

More cynical interpretations suggest that Moon's anticommunist politics were merely a ruse that allowed for the cultivation of powerful allies. The Unification Church's first public and official foray into anticommunist activism—which was to continue throughout the following two decades—was with the founding of the Freedom Leadership Foundation (FLF) in the summer of 1969. The FLF, synchronizing its activities with the Student Coordinating Committee for Peace with Freedom, organized a three-day fast in favor of the war in Vietnam, attracting broad media attention (Mickler). The FLF was to be the first of many affiliated groups that would later include the International Federation for Victory over Communism, the Committee for Responsible Dialogue, American Youth for a Just Peace, the One World Crusade, and the Council for Unified Research and Education. These varied groups were tied together by "interlocking boards of directors, personnel, and secret funding" (Baldwin, 167). Critics of Moon assert that these satellite groups were used to pursue Moon's political agenda(s) without endangering the tax-free status of the Unification Church. One anticult website ([www.trancenet.org](http://www.trancenet.org)) currently lists over 1,000 associated organizations or "front groups" internationally. One Moon media outlet that has drawn much attention is the District of Columbia-based *Washington Times* (whose parent company, News World Communications Inc., bought out the failing media organization UPI in 2000). In the founder's address presented on the occasion of the

paper's fifteenth anniversary, entitled "True Family and True Universe Centering on True Love," Moon claimed among other things that all of the material that Radio Free Europe uses comes from the *Washington Times*; that he brought about the election of both Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Sr; and that the newspaper played a central role in the collapse of world communism. Clearly such claims are debatable, but as support for assertions regarding the paper's influence it should be noted that former President Bush, speaking at the launch party for *Tiempos del Mundo* (a Moon newspaper distributed throughout South America), commented on the *Washington Times* as "a paper that in my view brings sanity to Washington, D.C." (Reuters). Bush was allegedly paid an honorarium of \$10,000 for his speech.

Following the public protests of the FLF in 1969, the next entrée into politics to capture widespread media attention was the Unification Church's show of support for the beleaguered post-Watergate Richard Nixon. Beginning 30 November 1973, the Unification Church ran Moon's "Answer to Watergate" as a full page ad in each of the twenty-one cities included in the itinerary of Moon's Day of Hope tour. The statement, asserting that "the crisis for America is a crisis for God" and calling for the United States to "Forgive, Love and Unite," was ultimately to appear in one paper in every state save Hawaii. The statement was coupled with the formation of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis and Committee (NPFWC), which "organized vigils, rallies, letter-writing, and leafletting in all fifty states" (Mickler, 205). On 22–24 July of the following year the NPFWC organized a 610-member, three-day fast on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C. The fast received massive publicity. Moon quickly followed up on the Church's increasing notoriety by embarking on another "Day of Hope" tour.

The Unification Church's use of questionable recruitment and indoctrination practices constitutes a second area of concern for conspiracy theorists. These activities helped to raise the profile of the Unification Church dramatically, one result of which was increased criticism. Aside from the theological

and spiritual critiques launched by Christian organizations, some of the first elements of Unification practice to come under fire were its recruitment and indoctrination practices—inevitably referred to as "brainwashing" by its opponents. It was the fear of mind control associated with the Unification Church (as well as the International Society of Krishna Consciousness) that gave rise to the practice of the abduction and "de-programming" of cult members. The Unification Church and its deprogrammer doppelgangers created the impression that U.S. youth in the early 1970s were increasingly subject to seduction and virtual enslavement by cult organizations. In terms of recruitment, the Church *has* historically employed deceptive means, with potential recruits remaining unaware of the identity of their recruiters until several steps along in the process. The process of indoctrination pursued by the Unification Church does include elements of "mind control," but no more so than other "total institutions" such as the military or Christian convents and monasteries, which are usually above suspicion. Deprivation (minimal sleep and diet), a constant focus on theology, the renunciation of material wealth, isolation from the larger society, and the use of chanting are some of the elements of indoctrination that have drawn criticism.

In addition to charges of "mind control," the Unification Church has drawn fire for its ongoing ties to South Korea and its continual denial of those links. In keeping with the Church's anticommunist theology and its origins in Korea, Moon's teachings hold that the line separating North and South Korea is of tremendous world-historical importance: it constitutes nothing less than ground zero in the eternal battle between God and Satan. The clearest evidence of ties, if not active collaboration, with the South Korean government and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) concerns Moon's connection with the Republic of South Korea under Park Chung Hee in the early 1970s. One researcher into these activities notes that during the Church's active support of the beleaguered President Nixon stateside, it was also holding massive demonstrations in Seoul at a time when such rallies had been banned by emergency decree; Moon also operated

“an anticommunist indoctrination center for Korean government employees and military” (Lee, 129) within Korea, an activity that fell directly under the control of the KCIA. Pak Bo Hi, Moon’s translator and chief aide throughout the 1970s, was retired from service in the Korean military and had served as assistant military attaché to Washington prior to establishing the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation—one of the Church’s many political front organizations. The title of military attaché generally implies some role in intelligence work. Through the KCFE, the Unification Church had access to both the South Korean embassy’s diplomatic pouch and cable channel to Seoul, which “only goes to the foreign minister, director of the KCIA, prime minister, and the president” (Lee, 130). Pak Bo Hi is also president of New World Communications, which owns the *Washington Times* and the UPI, as well as heading up the Confederation of the Associations for Unity of the Societies of the Americas (CAUSA), a primary political arm of the Church. According to a Fairness and Accuracy in Media report, “CAUSA was instrumental in providing aid to the Nicaraguan contras” (Clarkson). The controversy over links between Moon’s organization and both North and South Korea is ongoing.

Mark Harrison

**See also:** Anticommunism; Central Intelligence Agency; Mind Control.

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#### Morgan, John Pierpont

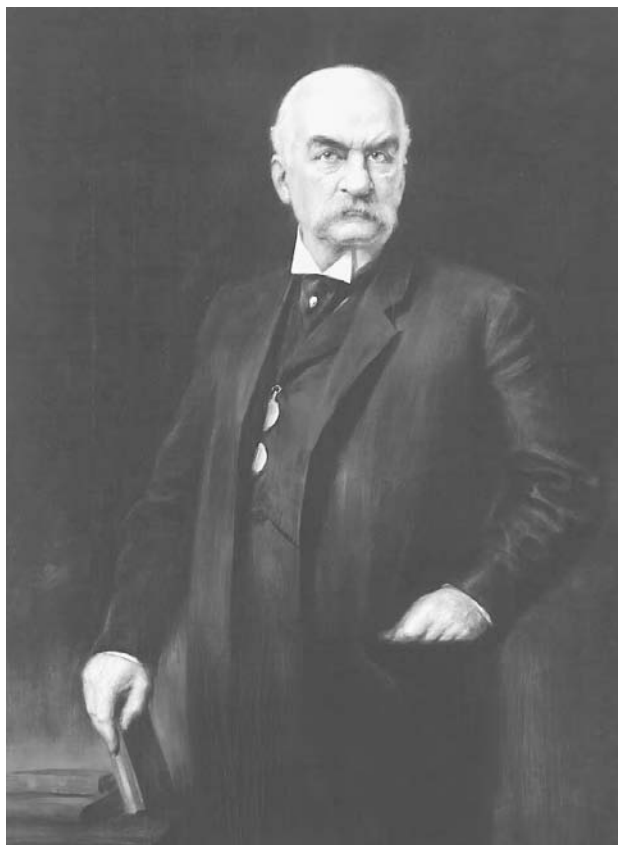
Easily the most powerful financial figure in the nineteenth-century United States was John Pierpont Morgan. His role in the creation of the Federal Reserve System, as well as his familiarity with other figures alleged to have been involved in conspiracies, including John D. Rockefeller, put Morgan at the center of financial controversies. Populists, in particular, criticized his role in rescuing the United States Treasury in February 1895 when he and President Grover Cleveland struck a deal to provide gold to the government at a profit rate of 7 percent. More recently, conspiracy theorist Sherman Skolnick has contended that J. P. Morgan and Co., the firm founded by Morgan, “with the parent holding companies of 18 money center banks” have been involved in artificially forcing up oil prices.

Both the Populists and modern conspiracy theorists and others have maintained that Morgan is a part of a vast network in league with, or controlled by (depending on the source), John D. Rockefeller. The Populists went even further, claiming that Morgan was an agent of the “House of Rothschild” who was intent on oppressing the “common man.” More modern theorists, in contrast, link Morgan to the British monarchy and its involvement in the two world wars, and Skolnick went so far as to claim that J. P. Morgan & Co. was part of a scheme with the British government to control the year 2000 presidential elections.

J. P. Morgan was born on 17 April 1837 in Hartford, Connecticut, to a mercantile family. Junius Morgan, J. P.’s father, dealt in foreign exchange and became a merchant banker, and could afford to send his son to school in Europe. The family moved to England, and after J. P. worked for his father’s banking house in London, he returned to the United States in 1857 to establish J. P. Morgan & Co. in 1860 through a connection to the expired George Peabody & Co. He served as an agent for his father’s firm, and engaged in foreign exchange and gold speculation.

Morgan’s business flourished with the expansion of the railroads, a number of which were in financial trouble by the late 1860s. Morgan formed syndicates that acquired troubled railroads, such as the





J. P. Morgan. (Library of Congress)

Albany & Susquehanna Railroad, imposing new “managerial hierarchies” on railroads that still had not adopted that managerial form. In this way, Morgan refashioned the railroads into the image of banks. He also reconstructed his firm in 1871 with a merger with a family friend, Anthony J. Drexel, as Drexel, Morgan & Company, which was reorganized again in 1895 as J. P. Morgan & Company. By that time, Morgan had formed numerous syndicates to take over troubled railroads and put them on sound managerial and financial footing. Several Jewish financial houses, such as Levi P. Morton and Seligman Brothers, as well as the European financier August Belmont, participated in these syndicates, fueling the allegations of “foreign influence” or “Jewish control.”

Morgan also got in the habit of bailing out the United States government in times of need, as in

1871 when he financed the army payroll with no guarantee of repayment after Congress adjourned without passing an appropriation bill. Drexel, Morgan & Company also refinanced the U.S. debt in 1877. Through his social contacts, especially his trips to Europe where he was on the same vessel as William H. Vanderbilt, who owned a substantial interest in the New York Central Railroad, Morgan expanded his empire. Not only did Morgan acquire critical information from magnates such as Vanderbilt and Rockefeller, but each time he sold securities for their firms, Drexel, Morgan & Company made healthy profits. As the primary historian of railroads in the United States, Albro Martin, has noted, “No banking firm in America, publicly chartered or private, had a bigger stake in the smooth operation of the American railroad system than Drexel, Morgan” (Martin, 333).

After the Populists succeeded in pressuring Congress to pass the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, which artificially overvalued silver to gold, the nation’s gold stocks plummeted and its banking system plunged into a panic. In stepped Morgan, who, with a syndicate involving Belmont and the Rothschilds, essentially prevented the bankruptcy and collapse of the U.S. government. President Grover Cleveland had to swallow his (and the nation’s) pride and accept the bailout, but the populist press crucified both him and Morgan as betraying the “working man.” Ultimately, the criticism of Morgan was irrelevant: in the 1896 election, William McKinley, running on a monometallic gold standard platform, defeated William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate who had also enjoyed the endorsement of the Populist Party for his support of “free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16:1.”

McKinley’s election substantially ended all debate about a bimetallic standard, but not all questions about the U.S. banking system. Already a number of commissions and panels, most of them formed by bankers, had made recommendations to strengthen the nation’s financial system. Their recommendations were not directed at Morgan, but rather at the necessity to have Morgan repeatedly step in to rescue the Treasury. After the panic of 1907, Morgan himself made clear that the country’s

financial needs had grown so extensive that, even with a syndicate, he could not possibly save the country a third time. Following a secret meeting on Jekyll Island, Georgia, attended by Paul Warburg, Frank Vanderlip, Nelson Aldrich, and a few others, a new banking plan was presented to Congress that in its essentials was the Federal Reserve System.

Morgan had not been present at the deliberations, nor had he participated in any meaningful way in the actual drafting of the bill, yet he was almost entirely responsible for the legislation. In late 1912 and early 1913, the House of Representatives formed a select committee under Representative Arsene P. Pujo of Louisiana to investigate the “money trust,” with Morgan under Pujo’s scrutiny. The committee sent out questionnaires to 30,000 banks and trust companies, and took testimony from prominent financiers such as George F. Baker and Morgan, and when the smoke cleared, the committee claimed to have found evidence of extreme concentration of the nation’s money in the holdings by New York banks, via consolidations, stock investments, and securities arrangements. Morgan, the committee asserted, had control of 10 percent of the nation’s wealth and controlled 43 percent of the nation’s money. (It is worth noting that the Rockefeller conspiracy theorists maintain that Morgan was a “puppet” of the Rockefeller interests.) The Pujo Committee’s report helped the drafters of the Federal Reserve bill diversify power among twelve regional banks, many of them in the West and South—well outside of New York’s influence (they thought).

Meanwhile, between the two panics (1893 and 1907), Morgan had continued his acquisition and reorganization of railroads and then, in 1900, struck a famous deal with steel titan Andrew Carnegie to purchase Carnegie Steel company for \$480 million. Morgan subsequently reorganized it as United States Steel, the world’s first billion-dollar company, and turned it over to Elbert H. Gary to run.

J. P. Morgan died in March 1913, before the Federal Reserve System became operational, but with him passed an era of “finance capitalism” that remained submerged until the arrival of Michael Milken in the 1970s. Morgan’s son, J. P. Morgan, Jr., took over the management of the company and

continued to arrange financing for numerous countries, but never became the target of vitriol that his father engendered.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Federal Reserve System; Gold Standard. Rockefeller Family.

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## Morgan, William

The abduction and suspected murder of William Morgan in western New York State in 1826 ignited a controversy that fed conspiracy thinking about the Freemasons and created a national anti-Masonic movement. Morgan, born in Virginia in 1774, was originally a stonemason, but worked at several trades. In the early 1820s, he moved from Ontario, Canada, to upstate New York, settling in Rochester and then in Batavia, and resuming masonry. Soon afterward, he sought admission to a Masonic lodge in nearby LeRoy. Morgan was initiated into the lodge, but when he supported the formation of a new lodge in Batavia, other members of the proposed lodge took his name off the petition, thus denying him membership. Morgan retaliated by entering into a contract with local printer David C. Miller to publish an exposé of the “secrets” of Freemasonry. Miller, Morgan, and other backers of the project were harassed and threatened, but went forward with the project. On 10 September 1826, some three weeks after Morgan had received a copyright for his book, *Illustrations of Masonry*,

Miller's print shop was set on fire in an apparent attempt to stop the book's publication. The same day, a member of the Canandaigua Masonic lodge obtained a warrant for Morgan's arrest on charges of petty theft. Morgan was arrested the next day and taken to Canandaigua. He was released for lack of evidence, but was immediately rearrested on debt charges and imprisoned. The following night, Morgan was abducted from the Canandaigua jail and forced into a carriage by four men; he was never seen again.

Reports of Morgan's disappearance raised questions about the extent of Masonic involvement in the incident. Popular accounts of a conspiracy, which was said to involve nearly seventy Masonic brethren, held that Morgan had initially been taken to Canada, where plans to pay him in exchange for staying out of the United States had fallen through. After a few days, according to these charges, he was bound with weights and thrown into the Niagara River just below the falls. When a decomposed male corpse was found near Lake Ontario more than a year after Morgan's disappearance, the corpse was initially identified and buried as Morgan, though many charged that the local coroner, hoping to please the anti-Masonic movement, had deliberately ignored signs that called its identity into question. The body was later exhumed and identified as one Timothy Munroe. Morgan's body was never recovered, and some held that he had not been murdered at all, but had resettled in Canada or the West Indies.

The Morgan affair also fed public alarm about the amount of influence the Freemasons had on government. Half of all officials in the county where Morgan disappeared, and as many as two-thirds of officeholders across New York State, including then-governor DeWitt Clinton, belonged to Masonic lodges. The light sentences given to the four men involved in the Canandaigua kidnapping increased the furor. Anti-Masonic conventions were held in the area, and the delegates called for a special counsel to be appointed to investigate the case. The resulting investigation went on for five years; a total of fifty-four Masons were indicted and thirty-nine were tried, but only ten were convicted of crimes,

and no definitive resolution of the case was found. Charges of a Masonic "cover-up" in the Morgan affair fueled the first national mass anti-Masonic movement, which spawned dozens of newspapers and other publications and created a political party, and which viewed Freemasonry as an enemy to the values of the "Christian democracy."

Dana Luciano

**See also:** Anti-Masonic Party; Freemasonry.

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**Mormonism**

The Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) was established on 6 April 1830, amid the religious fervor of the American Second Great Awakening. Founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844), it was from the beginning the target of suspicion and oppression. In 1820, Smith, a mystic, treasure seeker, and diviner, claimed to have received a visit from God the Father and Jesus Christ. During this visitation Smith was told that all of the churches had turned aside from God and he had been commissioned to restore the "true church." Seven years later Smith was contacted by the angel Moroni giving him instructions on where to find a set of gold plates inscribed with the *Book of Mormon* (written by and named after Moroni's father). The book was written in "reformed Egyptian" and had to be translated through the "Urim and Thummim," two seer (or peep) stones that were set in a breastplate worn over the shoulders. The translation took three years and the plates were "swept away" by Moroni after it was done. In 1830, Smith published the book and a new religion was born.

### Attacks on Mormonism

Since publication, the *Book of Mormon* has been attacked as an elaborate fraud. Critics have claimed that if Smith did not plagiarize it from the Old Testament and other sources, he made it up entirely. These charges have become harder to deflect in recent years, as evidence has emerged challenging the truthfulness of Joseph Smith on such matters as his conviction for treasure hunting and his use of folk magic. More damaging yet was the discovery of the actual scroll Smith allegedly used in his translation of the *Book of Abraham*.

From its inception, the cult faced suspicion and hostility from larger society. Anti-Mormon feeling fed on the more general nativist fear of internal subversion in the United States of the nineteenth century. Faced with a rapidly changing society, many felt the need for unity and closed ranks against the forces of anti-U.S. movements. Any group thought too different was highly suspect and Americans suspected immigrants, Catholics, and Freemasons of plotting to overthrow the republic. Ultimately, nativists feared that these “un-American” groups wanted to control all of the United States. Mormons provided one more outlet for the mass paranoia.

Despite the heartfelt contention of most Mormons that they were Christians, the sect has never been accepted by Christian churches. They see the Mormon claim as an attempt to wrap their cultlike views in the respectable blanket of Christianity. This claim was perceived as another manifestation of the attempt to cover up the giant conspiracy.

A major cause of suspicion was that the Latter-day Saints (LDS) exhibited several characteristics that were viewed as un-American. Because Mormon leaders ruled with an iron hand, they were seen as an unscrupulous, autocratic group of megalomaniacs plotting to overthrow the moral and social order. In addition, the secrecy of rituals fueled suspicion that the group was performing and plotting immoral and illegal acts.

Even the structure of the sect caused some to view it as un-American. The membership was looked upon as unwitting and docile dupes—more mindless

machines than humans. The sect demanded total allegiance and dominated virtually all aspects of its adherent’s life. These traits were viewed as a threat to the very basis of American life—democracy, religion, and justice.

Of all the frightening rituals of the LDS, it was their belief in polygamy that brought forth the most outrage and disgust from their critics. Most Americans viewed the practice as a form of slavery. Through polygamy women became mere concubines at the beck and call of their masters. Multiple wives also provided a setting for all forms of immorality and critics imagined all variety of sexual abominations taking place within the Mormon sanctuary.

### Mormon History

In 1833, the LDS faced their first real attacks and were forced to leave Jackson County, Missouri. When less subtle methods failed (opponents had destroyed the Mormon printing press and tarred and feathered the local leader), anti-Mormons went on a rampage. They burned and pillaged the Mormon settlement, forcing the residents to flee for their lives.

In December 1840 Smith gathered the faithful in Illinois. He obtained a city charter from the state government and established the new community of Nauvoo. With the concomitant right to organize a government, including a militia, he felt that the sect was insulated from persecution.

The initial years at Nauvoo were good for Smith and the Mormons. He managed to fill in the structure of his rapidly growing sect and even ran for U.S. president. Although he lost his bid for the presidency, the prophet was elected both mayor and lieutenant-general of the militia of Nauvoo. This intertwining of church and state offended many in Illinois, yet the Mormons might have weathered the storm had Smith not announced several additional heaven-sent proclamations.

At Nauvoo, Smith (with the official title of “Seer, a Translator, a Prophet, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Elder of the Church through the will of God the Father, and the Grace of Your Lord Jesus Christ”)



continued to have revelations regarding the mission and structure of the new denomination. Several of these revelations were especially vexing for many people, including some of the higher-ranking faithful. Smith first sealed some rituals and parts of the temple off to outsiders, and this “secrecy” served to further raise the suspicions of the larger community. In addition, Smith distanced his religion from traditional Christianity by proclaiming that humans, like God, were eternal and not created beings, and that the faithful could become gods themselves.

It was, however, Smith’s pronouncement on marriage that really served to outrage people both within and outside of the sect. In 1844, Smith called for his disciples to adopt the ways of the Old Testament patriarchs and take multiple wives. Smith himself apparently had already been practicing polygamy for several years and had married at least forty-nine women. The call for a return to polygamy set off a firestorm. While some of the faithful reluctantly took on additional wives, several left the sect and founded an anti-Smith newspaper in Nauvoo.

The *Nauvoo Expositor* was founded to expose the immoral practices, megalomania, and delusions of grandeur of the prophet and called for a return to the original teachings of the church, but the newspaper was only able to publish one issue. Smith ordered the paper’s printing press destroyed, the type scattered, and all recovered newspapers burned. The destruction of the opposition press resulted in the arrest of Smith and several of his confederates. While incarcerated, both Smith and his brother Hiram were murdered by a mob on 27 June 1844.

After the death of Joseph Smith his followers split into a multitude of factions, each claiming to be the true church. The bulk of the faithful chose to follow Brigham Young, one of the church’s senior apostles. In the wake of Smith’s murder, Young managed to rally the faithful and when faced with a possible government-sponsored eviction from Nauvoo, led them on a heroic trek to the Salt Lake area of Utah.

The migration west had been a goal of Joseph Smith. He felt that outside of U.S. territory the sect could practice their religion without interference. Unfortunately for Smith’s dream, only three years

after Young led the faithful to Utah in 1847, it became a U.S. territory. Initially, the religionists were left to their own devices. Within a few years, however, Young’s autocratic government, the entanglement of church and state, and the issue of polygamy raised the ire of the national government. In 1857, President James Buchanan ordered troops into the area to “restore order.” The Mormons, while appearing ready to fight, acceded to the superior force and Young negotiated a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The only casualties in the “Mormon War” were a group of 120 California-bound settlers who were brutally murdered by a Mormon militia at Mountain Meadows.

Despite their attempts at isolation, the LDS continued to have to deal with the wider world. As Utah grew and the United States solidified its control over the West, the Mormons were forced to dismantle the church-controlled political party and officially abandon the practice of polygamy in order to pave the way for statehood. Some families, disgusted with this abandonment of the founder’s teachings, left for areas in Canada and Mexico where they could continue the practice of multiple marriages.

By the time of Utah statehood in 1898, the Latter-day Saints had moved from a radical millennialist sect to a prosperous and stable denomination. As their influence spread to surrounding states the Mormons became a major part of the religious landscape of the United States. Today, the Utah-based church boasts 11 million members, with 5.5 million in the United States. It still, however, has not gained acceptance as a mainstream denomination.

*Enoch Baker*

**See also:** Nativism.

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### Morse, Jedidiah

Rev. Jedidiah Morse (1761–1826) was one of the early American Republic's best-known authors and clergymen, serving as pastor of the First Congregational Church of Charlestown, Massachusetts (now part of Boston) for thirty years. Perhaps counterbalancing his other accomplishments, Morse was also one of the forerunners in the field of U.S. conspiracy theory.

Besides his pastoral duties and frequent service as an orator on civic and political occasions, Morse was a pioneer in American geography, producing one of the first popular books on the subject, *Geography Made Easy* (1784), just a year after his graduation from Yale College. This was followed by a series of other works, most notably the two-volume *American Universal Geography* (1793), which altogether went through hundreds of editions. In an age when travel was still difficult, expensive, and infrequent, it is not too much to say that Jedidiah Morse taught most Americans of his day most of what they knew of the country beyond their own immediate horizons.

Morse also made a name for himself as a prominent purveyor of anti-Illuminati conspiracy theories. In the hysterical era of the XYZ Affair and the Alien and Sedition Acts in the 1790s, Morse lent his considerable energy and prestige to the project of turning the Bavarian Illuminati into a mainstream political issue. Joined by many other prominent New England divines, including Yale College president Timothy Dwight, Morse almost succeeded.

Like many other old-fashioned New England Calvinists, Morse was deeply alarmed at the seeming rise of “infidelity” in the 1790s, a category into which he put not just the outright rejection of Christian belief, but also its liberalization into less supernatural, more rational forms such as Unitarianism and deism. Besides mankind's innate wickedness, Morse and his colleagues blamed radical politics, especially the French Revolution and its American

sympathizers, for the decline of faith, and vice versa. The year 1794 was a turning point. Robespierre's reign of terror raged in France, while the Democratic Republican Societies and the Whiskey Rebellion disturbed the political peace at home. That same year, deist speaker and organizer Elihu Palmer toured the United States, and Thomas Paine's attack on revealed religion, *The Age of Reason*, first arrived on U.S. shores. Under the infidels' influence, Morse believed, “uncleanness, Sabbath breaking & all the flood of iniquity which springs from these” ran riot among the people. To pillars of New England's Federalist/Congregationalist “Standing Order,” under which the churches were supported by taxes and ministers used their pulpits to support the ruling political elite, it seemed that a “mental epidemic” was sweeping the country (Phillips, 68).

It only got worse as the 1790s wore on. Criticism of the government, and political activism against it, grew more intense during the battles over the Jay Treaty with England in 1796 and the presidency in the 1796 election. The pious Federalist John Adams beat the free-thinking Jefferson in that election, but with war against the French looming, Federalist hysteria came to a fever pitch.

It was in this atmosphere, in 1797, that Jedidiah Morse, Timothy Dwight, and their colleagues discovered John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, finding in its account of the Illuminati campaign to destroy all religions and governments a ready explanation for many political and cultural trends that disturbed them. Morse launched his personal campaign against the Illuminati by giving two sermons on the national fast day proclaimed by President Adams for 9 May 1798, one at his own church and one at North Church, Boston. Following New England tradition, where sermons were popular reading matter and often served as political tracts, Morse's effort was published soon afterwards.

In his *Sermon on the National Fast Day*, Morse attacked the “deep-laid plan” of the French Republic “to destroy the confidence of the [American] people” in the men and institutions that governed them, a plan being implemented not just by the French themselves, but also by their local minions, the Democratic Republicans (Stauffer, 230). What was

worse, they had criticized the clergy, too, suggesting that some secret, even deeper design was “in operation, hostile to true liberty and religion,” preparing the way “for the spread” here of “that atheistical philosophy” that was “deluging the Old World in misery and blood.” Morse recommended Robison’s book as a judicious explanation of everything that was happening, attributing it all to “the dark conspiracies of the Illuminati” (Stauffer, 232–233).

Initially the response was less sensational than Morse must have hoped, but the controversy kept him and the Illuminati in the public eye for most of the next two years. Democratic Republican newspapers questioned Robison’s veracity, printing negative reviews of the book from the British press, and demanded proof of the charges. Not much proof was to be had, but Morse gamely struck back with newspaper articles and clippings defending Robison and attacking their critics. At the same, Salem minister William Bentley, a rare Jeffersonian among the Massachusetts clergy, supplied equal amounts of material damning Morse’s position and his sources.

The controversy was renewed and expanded with a round of published Thanksgiving sermons from Morse and many other New England ministers over the winter of 1798–1799. Morse’s included an appendix that tried to document a view of American events closely following the pattern of Robison’s and the Abbé Barruel’s accounts of the French Revolution. The Democratic Republican Societies of 1793–1794 were not mere debating clubs, he tried to show, but extensions of the Illuminati. They had been founded by a French agent, “Citizen” Edmond Genet, and merely went underground and reappeared under other names after President Washington had publicly blamed them for the Whiskey Rebellion.

Morse finally seemed to get his Illuminati witch-hunt on firm ground with a third published sermon, originally given on another national fast day, 25 April 1799. This time a triumphant Morse claimed finally to have “complete and indubitable proof that such societies do exist, and have for many years existed, in the United States” (Stauffer, 292). The smoking gun was a letter detailing the membership and organization (all the way back in 1786) of a somewhat irreg-

ular Masonic organization called Wisdom Lodge in Portsmouth, Virginia, made up chiefly of immigrants from St. Domingue and France. There were suggestions of other U.S. lodges being in contact with Wisdom Lodge, and a mother club in France, but the connection to the Bavarian Illuminati was tenuous at best and the evidence of any real influence nonexistent.

Nevertheless, Morse felt the case was sealed, and the Illuminati theory gained some ground, until it was derailed by a new controversy over Morse’s own integrity. It happened that both Morse and his antagonist William Bentley were in correspondence with the German geographer Christoph Ebeling. To both men, Ebeling had written letters castigating Robison’s book, contradicting many of the alleged facts it cited, and dismissing the idea that the Bavarian Illuminati still existed in any form. Rumors of the letters began to circulate in the summer of 1799. The following autumn, Bentley saw to it that the text of his Ebeling letter appeared in several newspapers, anonymously but describing the writer and recipient in such a way that readers might assume the Massachusetts man who received the letter was Morse himself.

The Illuminati theory’s chief U.S. backer was forced on the defensive, unable to come clean without admitting that he had covered up incriminating information even though it was provided by a respected colleague. By the end of 1799, Republican newspapers were openly ridiculing Morse and his ideas, and building a sort of satirical conspiracy theory about the “New England Illuminati,” an oligarchy of “political priests” of which Morse was said to be a ringleader.

Morse soon had to drop the Illuminati theory from his repertoire, although he continued to fight for the old-time Puritan religion in other ways over the rest of his life. His skills as a controversialist and publishing entrepreneur were put to good use resisting the teaching of liberal theology at Harvard, promoting missions to the Indians and western migrants, and helping establish Andover Theological Seminary, the New England Tract Society, the American Bible Society, and the American Tract Society.

The family tradition of scientific and artistic achievement mixed with conspiracy was carried on by Jedidiah's son, Samuel F. B. Morse.

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**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Barruel, Abbé; Illuminati; Robison, John; Whiskey Rebellion; XYZ Affair.

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## MOVE

A radical African American activist organization, MOVE was influenced by many of the Left's turn to paranoia and conspiratorial thinking in the counter-cultural years of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Like those that made up the Weathermen and the Black Panther Party, MOVE members saw mainstream U.S. culture as beyond repair, and sought to form a counterconspiracy to create an alternative society in which its members could live.

MOVE—it is unclear if the name of the organization has ever acted as a specific acronym—was founded in 1972 in the Powelton Village neighborhood of Philadelphia by African American handyman Vincent Leaphart. With the assistance of white graduate-student activist Donald Glassey, Leaphart (now calling himself John Africa; all MOVE members took the last name of Africa) wrote the *Guidelines*, a manifesto detailing the beliefs of MOVE. This document, clearly influenced by the counter-cultural New Left, Black Power, and environmental movements of the late 1960s/early 1970s, attempted to establish MOVE as a viable political

organization, touching upon such themes as racism, police brutality, vegetarianism, technology, and political representation. In fact, much of MOVE's early writings and rhetoric attempted to revive and build upon these earlier movements and, in the process, cure them of their excesses. Africa stressed the importance of cleansing one's body, insisting that his followers abstain from all drugs and medicines, alcohol, meat, and ostentatious clothing. Science was "a trick" that only served to inculcate people into the "addictions" of the "System lifestyle" (Anderson and Hevenor, 9). What was needed, Africa stressed, was a back-to-nature manner of living. There would therefore be no birth control practiced within the MOVE organization, and members' diets would consist almost exclusively of raw fruits and vegetables. Trash, human waste, and even dead animals were left to "cycle" back to the earth on MOVE property, leading to run-ins with both neighbors and the Philadelphia police. At the same time, MOVE children were to be naked in the summer and only lightly clothed in the winter, while adult males and females were commanded to grow their hair into unwashed dreadlocks and dress alike in blue jeans, blue denim jackets, and heavy-soled men's boots.

MOVE saw schools, political parties and leaders, and all branches of the law as corrupt and enslaving. Moreover, the forces that controlled such institutions were viewed as actively conspiring against MOVE members and their allies. For example, as MOVE member Jeanne Africa explained, "drugs were in the black community for a long time, but they didn't have [drug rehabilitation] programs until it got into the white community. . . . The hierarchy would give you drugs to control you" (qtd. in Anderson and Hevenor, 7). To MOVE, the most concrete representatives of this hierarchy were the police, and MOVE held many demonstrations aimed at focusing attention on issues of police abuse and brutality (Philadelphia, under law-and-order Mayor Frank L. Rizzo, had a national reputation for police misconduct during much of the 1970s). In a seven-month period in 1975, MOVE members were arrested on misdemeanor charges more than 150 times, fined \$15,000, and sentenced



to several lengthy prison sentences. Seeing the court system as perhaps the most oppressive tool of the “System” conspiracy, MOVE members made it a point to interrupt these sentencing hearings, often turning MOVE trials into veritable sideshows (Wagner-Pacifici, 29).

As the 1970s drew to a close, MOVE’s rhetoric became more fiery and condemnatory, while their political activities became more confrontational—with members often seen brandishing firearms. Such trends were intensified after an 8 August 1978 confrontation with the police, which resulted in one officer dead and nine MOVE members sentenced to 30–100 years for their roles in the melee. Seeing themselves once again as victims of unwarranted oppression, MOVE made it their mission—from their new headquarters on Osage Avenue in west Philadelphia—to continuously call for the release of the “MOVE 9,” whom they saw as political prisoners in their struggle against the tyrannical Philadelphia government. This campaign, often carried out through megaphones and speakers from inside the increasingly fortified MOVE compound, reached its violent conclusion on 13 May 1985, when a showdown between the organization and the Philadelphia city government left eleven members dead (six adults and five children) and sixty-one homes destroyed. MOVE member Ramona Africa was convicted on riot and conspiracy charges in connection with the conflict, and served seven years in prison.

MOVE continued to stay in the news throughout the remaining years of the 1980s, and even into the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of the tremendous destruction on Osage Avenue, then-Mayor Wilson W. Goode appointed the Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission to examine the events leading up to, and including, the attack on MOVE. In March 1986, the commission issued a report condemning the actions of the city government, concluding that “dropping a bomb on an occupied row house was unconscionable” (Anderson and Hevenor, 389). In June 1996, a jury ordered the city of Philadelphia and two former city officials—then-Police Commissioner Gregor Sambor and then-Fire Commissioner William Richard—to pay \$1.5 million

to a survivor and relatives of two members who died in the May 1985 confrontation. To many MOVE members and supporters, such findings vindicated their belief that the city had actively conspired against them throughout the previous two decades, and was now being made to pay for such actions. During the 1990s, many supporters of convicted murderer Mumia Abu-Jamal—who had written extensively on the 1978 MOVE confrontation and resulting trials—argued that Abu-Jamal had received an unjust sentence based in part on his association with MOVE. Finally, in September 2002 a man involved in a bitter custody dispute with a member of MOVE was found shot to death in a car in New Jersey, the same day he was to pick up the boy for an unsupervised visit. While there was no evidence tying the organization to the murder, MOVE representatives quickly denied any involvement in the crime, and in fact argued that the government was setting up MOVE for the killing. A steadfast belief in a vast conspiracy against them has clearly followed MOVE into the new millennium.

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**See also:** Black Panthers; Weathermen.

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### Muhammad, Elijah

Elijah Muhammad was the most important early leader of the Nation of Islam, leading the organization for over forty years. Muhammad taught that blacks were the original human race and that whites were evil beings who had conspired to oppress blacks out of jealousy. The division between the races was a distinction between good and evil, and although whites might currently seem to hold the advantage, the day was soon coming when blacks would, with their superior intelligence and ingenuity, destroy

their white oppressors. His mixture of religious zeal, black militancy, and use of conspiracy theories to offer compelling explanations for the plight of disadvantaged blacks played a key role in the growth of the Nation of Islam as an important social movement. He was also central to the development of later influential individuals such as Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan.

Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah Poole in 1897. As he was the son of a sharecropper, Muhammad's early life was dominated by poverty. In 1923, he



Elijah Muhammad addresses followers, including Cassius Clay. *World Telegram & Sun* photo by Stanley Wolfson. (Library of Congress)

moved to Detroit and began working at an automobile factory. In 1930 Muhammad came into contact with Wallace Fard. Fard claimed to be from the "East" (although his actual personal history is obscure and filled with conflicting accounts of his early life). Preaching a mixture of Islam and black separatism, Fard found a large number of converts among the African American community in Depression-era Detroit. Muhammad attended one of Fard's meetings and became a convert to the Black Muslim movement. Muhammad soon became a trusted deputy of Fard, and it was from Fard that Muhammad received his Muslim name. When Fard suddenly disappeared from Detroit in 1934, Muhammad assumed leadership of the Black Muslim movement. He moved the headquarters of the organization to Chicago and made several spiritual and practical changes in the organization. Muhammad preached that Fard had been an incarnation of Allah, and claimed himself to be Allah's messenger. He also freely mixed ideas of traditional Islam with those of black nationalism, particularly as outlined by Marcus Garvey.

During World War II, Muhammad was sent to prison for avoiding the draft. He also openly expressed sympathies toward the Japanese, whom he felt were allies in the fight to end white power in the United States. After his release from prison in 1946, Muhammad continued to build the Nation of Islam's reach and membership. Chief among his aides in this task was Malcolm X, who became second only to Muhammad himself in his influence in the movement. After returning from his trip to Mecca in 1964, however, Malcolm X broke from the Nation of Islam, asserting, among other things, that Muhammad had fathered several illegitimate children with young staff members of the Nation of Islam. The assassination of Malcolm X in 1965 and the conviction

of three Black Muslims for the crime cast a shadow of suspicion over Muhammad, along with his new chief aide, Louis Farrakhan.

Throughout his life, Muhammad preached strict separation of the races and couched these beliefs in a cosmology that drew on imagery ranging from the Old Testament to science fiction. He taught that whites were a race who had been bred by an evil scientist 6,000 years ago. Whites were without the intellectual, physical, or moral qualities that were seen in blacks. He often spoke in apocalyptic terms about a future battle in the sky in which the "Mother Plane," a gigantic spaceship built and manned by blacks of superhuman intelligence, would effortlessly destroy the supposed power of the white man. After this battle, a new world would be created according to Allah's will in which blacks will hold dominion.

Muhammad died in February 1975. His son became the new leader of the Nation of Islam, but he discarded the name as well as some of his father's beliefs. After he formed the Muslim American Community, several members of the Black Muslim movement left to follow Farrakhan's reestablished Nation of Islam, a group devoted to reinvigorating the message of Muhammad.

*Ted Remington*

**See also:** African Americans; AIDS; Cocaine; Farrakhan, Louis; Nation of Islam.

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**Website**

Nation of Islam: <http://www.noi.org>.

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## **Nation of Islam**

Mixing elements of traditional Islamic belief with black nationalism, the Nation of Islam has played an important and often controversial role in racial politics in the United States since its founding in 1930. A number of important African American leaders have emerged from its ranks, including Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and Louis Farrakhan. A central tenet of the Nation of Islam is that most of the social and economic problems faced by blacks are the result of a long-term conspiracy among whites to disempower them. Several members of the Nation of Islam have singled out Jews as playing a particularly important role in this white conspiracy. While praised for its focus on self-sufficiency and pride among African Americans, the Nation of Islam has been criticized for its calls for racial separation as well as its often racist and antisemitic teachings.

Two groups that preceded the Nation of Islam and laid much of its religious and political groundwork were the Moorish Science Temple and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The Moorish Science Temple was founded in 1913 by Drew Ali (born Timothy Drew). Drew believed that Islam was the original religion of the Africans who were brought to the United States as slaves, and he preached that a return to Islam was a necessary step for true freedom for African Americans. The Universal Negro Improvement Association was founded by Marcus Garvey, who advocated black separatism and self-sufficiency.

The Nation of Islam itself is usually said to have begun in 1930 when Wali Farad Muhammad (born Wallace Fard) founded the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in Detroit, Michigan. Farad claimed to be an orthodox Muslim born in Mecca, but the facts of his early life are obscure and still debated. Fard preached a mixture of Islam, black separatism, and his own beliefs. At the core of his philosophy was the assertion that blacks needed to free themselves from the tyranny of white oppression by rejecting Christianity in favor of Islam (or, more specifically, Fard's version of Islam). Only then would blacks regain their rightful place as the most advanced people on earth. He also preached that black people were the original race of human beings and had lived on earth for 66 trillion years. White people were the result of an experiment done 6,000 years ago by an evil scientist named Yakub, and lacked the physical, spiritual, and intellectual abilities of blacks.

After Farad suddenly disappeared from Detroit in 1934, leadership of the group he founded was passed to his trusted associate, Elijah Muhammad. It was Muhammad who built the Nation of Islam from a small circle of believers to a national, and even international, force. Muhammad founded a temple in Chicago, and after World War II, membership climbed steadily.

Like Farad before him, Muhammad preached that white people were "blue-eyed devils" who had systematically oppressed blacks. He augmented Farad's teachings with an increased focus on practical means to improve the lot of African Americans and allow



them to be self-sufficient. Under Muhammad's leadership, the Nation of Islam owned several businesses and had significant real estate holdings.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the public image of the Nation of Islam grew through the work of charismatic members, most notably Malcolm X. In 1964, however, Malcolm X broke away from the Nation of Islam and its teachings of strict racial separation. The break was caused by his pilgrimage to Mecca, where he came into contact with Muslims of many different ethnicities, and his discovery that Muhammad had fathered several illegitimate children with women staff members of the Nation of Islam.

In 1965, Louis Farrakhan replaced Malcolm X as minister of the Nation of Islam temple in Harlem. Farrakhan also publicly denounced Malcolm X, saying he was "worthy of death." Later that same year, Malcolm X was assassinated. Three members of the Nation of Islam were convicted of the murder, and it was widely assumed that the assassination was approved of by the leadership of the Nation of Islam. Rumors about Farrakhan's possible knowledge of or involvement in the killing persisted for decades.

In 1975, Elijah Muhammad died, and leadership of the Nation of Islam passed to his son, Warith Muhammad. The younger Muhammad moved the organization away from many of his father's teachings, particularly his more strident views on race, and toward a more traditional version of Sunni Islam. He also changed the name of the organization to the World Community of Al-Islam in the West. Dissatisfied with the new direction of the movement, Farrakhan reconstituted the Nation of Islam under its original name, returning focus to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad.

Under Farrakhan's leadership, the Nation of Islam has been both reviled and praised. The publication by the Nation of Islam of *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews: Volume One*, in 1991, caused a great deal of controversy for its allegations that Jews had been at the center of the slave trade from its beginnings through the nineteenth century. Coupled with antisemitic remarks made by Farrakhan and a number of other high-

ranking Nation members, the book renewed charges that the Nation of Islam is an inherently racist organization devoted to divisiveness and conspiracy-mongering. Farrakhan's organization of the Million Man March in 1995, however, brought praise from many for its positive message to African American men.

*Ted Remington*

**See also:** AIDS; African Americans, Cocaine; Farrakhan, Louis; Muhammad, Elijah.

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## National Rifle Association

The National Rifle Association (NRA) is an organization that promotes the rights and interests of gun owners, and often views any perceived restriction of those rights and interests by the government as a conspiracy against the liberty of its members.

It was founded in 1871 by Colonel William C. Church and General George W. Wingate. Prompted by worries over the poor marksmanship of Union soldiers during the Civil War, the NRA's initial aim was simply to improve the shooting skills of its members. This emphasis on marksmanship, together with sporting and other recreational uses of firearms, especially hunting, remained the NRA's principal focus of activity until the 1960s. Although the NRA continues to offer a range of services to its approximately 3 million members, including educational, safety, and training programs, insurance packages, discounts on gun-related products, and even loans, as well as publishing a number of maga-

zines including the *American Rifleman*, *American Hunter*, and *American Guardian*, since the late 1960s it has become increasingly involved in the politics of gun ownership. It is this shift of emphasis that has led to criticisms that the NRA has become conspiratorial both in its outlook and in its attempts to resist the imposition of restrictions on gun ownership in the United States.

The origins of the NRA's greater political involvement can be traced to the successful passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968. The wave of political assassinations that took place during the 1960s—most notably those of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the African American leaders Malcolm X and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.—created a widespread debate about the place of guns in U.S. society and this, in turn, led to the 1968 legislation. The Gun Control Act was the most substantial congressional regulation of firearms since the National Firearms Act of 1934. Among other things, it prohibited the interstate shipment of firearms and ammunition to private individuals; banned the importation of surplus military firearms into the United States except those suitable for sporting purposes; and prevented the sale of guns to minors, drug addicts, the mentally ill, and convicted felons.

Many NRA members were concerned that the Gun Control Act might be the first step toward more stringent restrictions on gun ownership. Led by Harlon Carter, these members pushed for more political action on the part of the organization. As a result, in 1975 the NRA established an Institute for Legislative Action (ILA) to direct its political lobbying activities and in 1976 created a political action committee, the NRA Political Victory Fund, to provide support both for sympathetic officeholders and those seeking public office. The transformation of the NRA into a much more politically oriented interest group was confirmed at its 1977 convention in Cincinnati when, in what became known as the "Cincinnati Revolt," Carter and his supporters succeeded in gaining control of the organization from its more traditionally inclined members.

This is not to say that the nature and extent of the NRA's political activities have been uncontested

since the 1970s. On the contrary, the NRA is often subject to internecine conflict about the direction of its political activities. During the 1990s, for example, there was a long-running dispute between the "purist" approach of Neal Knox and the "pragmatist" strategy of Wayne LaPierre. The dispute climaxed at the annual meeting of the NRA's board of directors in Seattle in 1997 when Knox sought to unseat LaPierre as the NRA's executive vice-president by supporting the candidacy of Donna Dianchi. However, not only was Dianchi defeated by LaPierre, Knox himself lost his seat on the organization's board of directors as first vice-president to longtime NRA member and NRA spokesman, the actor Charlton Heston. Heston became the NRA president in 1998.

Despite such internal struggles, the broad approach of the NRA since the 1970s has been characterized as one of almost complete and unyielding opposition to any kind of gun control legislation or to any attempt to regulate gun ownership, and it is this attitude that draws criticism that the organization has a conspiratorial worldview. For instance, in the mid-1980s the NRA opposed legislation to ban armor-piercing "cop-killer" bullets—opposition that led, in part, to a break in the formerly close relationship between police organizations and the NRA—and during the 1990s it opposed the passage of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 and the "assault weapons ban" within the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994. The Brady law was the first piece of major gun control legislation since the Gun Control Act of 1968. Its main effect was to institute a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases. The Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 banned the sale or use of nineteen types of semi-automatic assault weapons and placed a ten-bullet limit on gun clips.

The NRA objects to legislation like the Brady law or the assault weapons ban for two main reasons: first, because it sees them as infringements of Americans' constitutional right to keep and bear arms as contained in the Second Amendment, and second, because it fears that such restrictions indicate moves toward the total disarmament of U.S. citizens. In an article in the June 1994 issue of the *American Rifleman* entitled "The Final War Has

Begun,” for example, Wayne LaPierre claimed he had secret evidence that “the full scale war to . . . eliminate private firearms ownership completely and forever” was “well underway” (Stern, 111). The NRA, he argued, had to employ all its resources to counter these plans. For opponents of the NRA, such attitudes reveal the conspiracism they see as underpinning the organization and they are critical of the often apocalyptic language the NRA uses in its mailings and public statements.

During the 1990s, the NRA was also heavily criticized for the fierce antigovernment tone of much of its rhetoric. The NRA was particularly hostile to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms because of its role in the sieges of Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge in Idaho in 1992 and the Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas, in 1993. A fund-raising letter sent out by Wayne LaPierre a few days before the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on 19 April 1995 compared federal government agents with Nazis, for example. Former President George Bush, Sr., resigned his life membership in the NRA in response to the letter, and there was much criticism of the apparent overlap between the rhetoric of the NRA and that of the militia movement. This criticism intensified when it was revealed that Tanya Metaksa, the head of the NRA’s ILA, had met with members of the Michigan Militia a few months prior to the Oklahoma bombing. LaPierre later apologized for the letter, but concern remained that the NRA was taking increasingly extremist positions in its efforts to defend the rights of gun owners in the United States.

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**See also:** Militias; Oklahoma City Bombing; Ruby Ridge; Waco.

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## National Security Agency

The largest and most secret intelligence tool of the United States—the National Security Agency (NSA)—was born 24 October 1952 with President Harry S. Truman’s signing of National Security Directive 6. The centerpiece of the U.S. intelligence community, NSA is a technological powerhouse equipped with surveillance tools—both human and computer—to intercept electronic transmissions around the globe. The agency is engaged in collecting raw intercepts, cracking ciphered material, and producing ciphers to protect U.S. coded communications. The NSA is home to an astonishing collection of hyperpowerful computers, advanced mathematicians, and language experts. The NSA’s very existence was the stuff of conspiracy theories for many years; moreover, many of its historic activities stand alone as conspiracies in their own right.

Size and budget set the NSA apart as the most influential among intelligence agencies. Its annual budget is disguised, though it measures in billions of dollars; most NSA appropriations are hidden in the budgets of other agencies. The NSA’s 38,000 employees occupy a compound of over sixty buildings—offices, warehouses, factories, laboratories, and living quarters—located off a forbidden highway exit ramp in Maryland. The location itself is a secret, and earthen embankments, thick trees, and mazes of barbed wire guard the NSA and its activities from intrusion, either physical or visual. Motion detectors, hydraulic antitruck devices, and tele-

photo surveillance cameras work together to alert the NSA's paramilitary response team to any potential security compromise (Bamford 2001).

The NSA was established external to the legislative process—no law created it, and no laws govern the scope of its responsibilities. No law prohibits the NSA from engaging in any activity; there are only laws to prohibit the release of any information about the agency. The NSA's mission and responsibilities are unknown to anyone external to the agency, including members of Congress. The name itself—National Security Agency—remained a secret until the late 1950s. “Until then its name, the identity of its director, and even its existence were considered more sensitive than top secret and were known only to a handful in government” (Bamford 1982). In addition to the conspiracy surrounding the NSA's existence, several of its specific operations are worthy of note.

### **The Cold War**

During the cold war, NSA intelligence-gathering efforts focused on detecting the capacity and location of Soviet weapons. Listening posts along the Soviet border failed to yield intelligence about operations deep inside the country, so the NSA responded by developing the U-2, a high-altitude surveillance jet designed to fly well above the reach of the enemy's retaliatory capabilities. This plane flew missions deep into the Soviet interior (at altitudes exceeding 70,000 feet) from 4 July 1956 until 1 May 1960, when Francis Gary Powers was shot out of the Soviet sky.

Eisenhower thought it impossible for a U-2 pilot to survive a crash; he also doubted the survivability of the plane and its equipment. When data ceased to be transmitted from Powers's U-2 flight, listening station operators assumed the plane to be destroyed and Powers to be dead. The administration issued a cover story to veil the true nature of the mission. To Eisenhower's surprise, the Soviets recovered Powers, the plane, and its intelligence payload—information intended for the NSA. When the Soviets announced the recovery, Eisenhower and his administration responded with a multitude of lies

and contradictory stories to protect U.S. intelligence operations. More likely, the cover-up was to disguise Eisenhower's hands-on role in the project.

### **The Vietnam War**

Operation Desoto placed NSA technicians aboard U.S. Navy destroyers to intercept radio transmissions and radar signals at trouble spots around the globe. In 1964 the USS *Maddox* was dispatched to monitor a North Vietnamese radar installation. To ensure success, the NSA preferred that the radar station be switched to full power at the time of the destroyer's passing by and a raid was staged against the island to create the need for the radar station's use. Assuming the destroyer to have played some role in the incident, the North Vietnamese launched two counterattacks in the following four days. “As far as the American people and Congress knew, the North Vietnamese had carried out purely unprovoked attacks in . . . international waters against an American ship on peaceful patrol” (Volkman and Baggett). An overwhelming majority in Congress immediately approved the Tonkin Gulf Resolution; thus the NSA's secret war led to direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

### **Telecommunications Surveillance**

“[T]here is no comprehensive ‘right to know’ included, either explicitly or implicitly, within the First Amendment” (Volkman and Baggett). These words of Lieutenant General William Odom, former director of the NSA, indicate the agency's attitude toward individual liberty. The most egregious of NSA activities, Operation Shamrock, was inherited at the agency's creation in 1952. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a directive permitting the use of electronic surveillance for national defense. This enabled the military to work with international communications companies to obtain access to the cable traffic of private citizens, companies, and governments. Technology quickly enabled computers to scan this information, and the NSA incorporated the watch lists of the CIA, FBI, Secret Service, and other agencies into their surveillance activities.

Operation Shamrock was taken to new extremes when Attorney General Robert Kennedy used it



against domestic targets in his crusade against organized crime. Kennedy also tracked citizens and businesses transacting with Cuba. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson monitored domestic dissidents opposed to his Vietnam policies with Project Minaret, a division of Shamrock. Under President Jimmy Carter, the NSA listened to telephone conversations on the island of Cuba using a very large surveillance balloon floating over the Florida Keys. These unconstitutional activities violated the Fourth Amendment stipulation that citizens have a right to be free of unreasonable searches and seizures.

The NSA's listening capabilities have reached new highs. NSA engineers presently "work in secret to develop computers capable of performing more than one septillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) operations every second" (Bamford 2001). Such processors are necessary to handle the immense communications traffic produced around the world today. Considering General Odom's words, one may assume the NSA uses its technological capacity to monitor conditions around the globe, including private conversations.

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**See also:** Johnson, Lyndon Baines.

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**Native Americans**

Native Americans were the featured villains in what were probably the first non-supernatural conspiracy fears experienced by European migrants to America.

**Fear and Loathing in the American Woods**

The early American frontier was in many ways a deeply fearful place, especially in the first decades of white settlement in any given region. Settlers

knew little about their new home's existing occupants, and possessed only the sketchiest notions of how many there were, where they lived, and what their intentions might be. Though as many as 7 million people lived above the Rio Grande at the time of first contact, Europeans thought of North America as, in Pilgrim leader William Bradford's words, a "hideous and desolate wilderness" (Nash, 23–24).

In traditional Judeo-Christian culture, wilderness was a place to be feared rather than cherished, a place where monsters and devils lived to test the faith of good, civilized people. Especially among the New England Puritans, it was commonly believed that the Indians were devil worshippers out to do their master's bidding, though not actual devils themselves. (However, it was considered quite likely that the Indians lived among real monsters, including dragons!) Thus the expectation of confronting ultimate evil was built into the Puritans' sense of their "errand into the wilderness" (Nash, 23–43).

Certainly not all the colonists shared the Puritans' high level of theological dread, but some fear of the Indians was fairly constant and not without justification, since over the first three centuries of European settlement, there was always some part of North America where the natives were resisting their own conquest and displacement. This resistance often took the form of a raiding style of warfare that was intended to spread terror and usually preferred striking at weakly defended targets, like an outlying cabin or an isolated outpost. Always seeking ways of fighting that minimized their own casualties, Indian war leaders were not above using devious tactics such as ambushes, sneak attacks, and feigning peaceful intentions. One of the great Indian victories during Pontiac's Rebellion (or War or Conspiracy, depending on your point of view) of 1763, the Ojibways' triumph over the British at Ft. Michilimackinac was accomplished by lulling the soldiers into complacency with a friendly game of ball. The Indian players hit the ball into the open gates of the fort, chased after it, then suddenly attacked with weapons the Ojibway women had smuggled inside the post while the whites were watching the game.

Though the European armies of the Early Modern Period were no slouches at wreaking death and

destruction on the civilian population, Indian warfare was perceived as particularly and intimately awful. In some ways Indians were better at distinguishing their targets than whites were—the French were often spared in raids on European outposts—but their military customs made few allowances for noncombatants. Indian massacre stories invariably featured a scene in which a warrior tore an infant from her mother's arms and dashed her head against a hearth or a tree; this became a cliché, but by no means one without a basis in reality. Numerous common practices of Indian warfare haunted the dreams of European settlers, soldiers, and officials, especially the scalping or other mutilation of victims' bodies and the taking of captives to be assimilated into Indian society.

(It should be noted that whites fighting Indians made few such allowances themselves, and showed far less interest than the Indians in taking captives. Nevertheless, white attacks on Indian villages were called “raids” or “battles,” while successful Indian attacks on white settlements or military posts were termed “massacres.”)

This fear of assimilation by an alien, collectively minded society, a recurrent theme in the annals of American conspiracy theory, has one of its roots in tales of captivity among the Indians. Some of the stories even admitted what historians have found to be true, that many captives, especially women and children, were successfully assimilated, and showed little desire to return to European ways. Ever more lurid Indian captivity narratives became a staple of American popular culture, and perhaps its first unique contribution to world literature.

The earlier comment about Indians haunting settlers' dreams should be taken quite literally. Recent interpretations of the 1692 Salem witchcraft crisis have emphasized the role of New England's late-seventeenth-century Indian wars (1675–1678 and 1688–1691) in generating the psychological stress and supernatural fears that exploded in Massachusetts. A large number of the accusers had some direct or immediate family experience with the Indian wars, and those who didn't had probably read Mary Rowlandson's popular, then recently published book on her experience as a captive during the earlier conflict,

King Philip's War. The witchcraft evil was thought to have first come from Indian powwows in the forest, and the devil appeared to several Massachusetts women as “a thing like an Indian,” or “a Tawny man” (McWilliams, 589, 594–95). Accuser Mary Toothaker of Billerica finally admitted under questioning that she had lashed out because she was “troubled w<sup>h</sup> feare about the Indians, & used to dream of fighting with them.” Toothaker claimed to have signed up with the devil herself because he had “promised to keep her from the Indians” (McWilliams, 595).

At least these colonial New Englanders had some direct or nearly direct experience of the Indians they feared so much. In later centuries, far more white Americans eagerly consumed Indian atrocity stories around the family table and in popular literature and newspapers than ever interacted with Indians or witnessed an Indian raid. Given the emphasis placed on the depredations of “murderous savages” in their information about the Indians, it is perhaps not surprising that nineteenth-century migrants heading to the Pacific coast on the Overland Trail brought hair-trigger emotions to all their thoughts and actions concerning Indians. Many reported their scalps itching at the very thought of Indians. Most westering travelers suffered “far more,” according to historian Glenda Riley, “from their own anxieties what *could* happen to them than from what actually *did* happen” (Riley, 427–428).

Unfortunately, the Indians themselves did suffer, at the hands of settlers who were easily panicked into acts of violence and prejudice, and eager to support harsh government policies against Indians, having learned to deal with their anxieties by fearing and hating the natives.

### **The Myth of the Superchief**

Although it would be stretching the definition of conspiracy theory to include all fears of Indian attack in this category, much of what settlers, soldiers, and government officials believed about the Indians certainly does qualify. Whites often became convinced that the Indians of different villages, tribes, and languages were leagued against them, and secretly plotting mayhem even when relations were peaceful and friendly. In some respects, a conspiracy model of



Conspiracy of Pontiac. (Library of Congress)

Indian behavior came naturally to Europeans, who struggled to understand or even perceive the complex cultural, social, and political distinctions among the various Indian groups they encountered. As with many cross-cultural conspiracy theories, it was easy to move from lumping all Indians together culturally to believing that all Indians were working together against the colonists.

This pattern emerged even before the beginning of permanent settlement. The leaders of the 1585 lost colony of Roanoke abandoned their island off the coast of present North Carolina out of a belief that Pemisapan, the *weroance* of the local Indian village, had organized a region-wide conspiracy, involving many tribes, to starve and then wipe out the colony. According to historian Michael Oberg, Pemisapan had probably done nothing more than

“grown weary of an intolerant, violent, contagious, and dependent people” (83), and, quite understandably, moved his village off Roanoke Island to a more congenial neighborhood. Even so, colony commander Ralph Lane led a force that brought back the *weroance*’s head, the culmination of a pattern of precipitous, threatening actions by Lane. “No conspiracy is needed,” writes Oberg, to explain the growing hostility of the region’s Indians to the Roanoke colony (82). The English settlement abruptly shifted locations after Pemisapan’s death, and disappeared completely a few years after that.

Pemisapan represents the original version of two ideas that became standard parts of conspiracy theories about the Indians: the Indian mastermind or monarch in control of tens of thousands of warriors, and the unfaithful Indian ally or convert. From “Pemisapan’s Conspiracy” on, serious or widespread Indian resistance was usually attributed by Europeans and later chroniclers to the machinations of some preternaturally brilliant, all-powerful “super-chief” (Bourne, 202). This analysis may have been somewhat accurate for the Powhatan Indian rebellions against Virginia in 1622 and 1644, which almost destroyed the colony and are generally thought to be the work of the war chief turned paramount chief Opechanacanough, Pocahontas’s uncle, and the reputed power behind her father Powhatan’s throne.

The reputations of most other putative Indian masterminds were built on much shakier foundations. In many cases, a widespread conflict was blamed on someone who was really only a major figure in some critical early encounter, or promoted himself as the primary conspirator in a later treaty with the white authorities.

For instance, New England propagandists depicted their apocalyptic, region-wide Indian war of 1675–1678 as the work of Philip, sachem of Pokanoket, whom they dubbed “King Philip” to re-emphasize their claim that the conflict was, as Russell Bourne puts it, “not a series of separate raids by provoked people but a brilliantly orchestrated war, conducted by a devilish military genius” (Bourne, 118). Besides personalizing the conflict as conspiracy theories so often do, this conspiratorial view of the New England Indians’ resistance was a political and ethi-

cal convenience for whites, who were authorized by their belief in this evil plot to ignore the role of their own behavior in the Indians' unrest, take extreme measures against tribes whose land rights conflicted with their ambitions, and to declare the problem solved when the designated villain was eliminated.

Philip (who changed his name from Metacom when he became sachem) was the son of Massassoit, the Indian chief who had befriended the Pilgrims and allowed their Plymouth Colony to survive. Relations had deteriorated after Massassoit's death as the local fur trade dried up and agricultural settlement expanded, bringing livestock that consumed the Indians' open-field crops and forcing them into economic dependence upon whites. Philip and his people also chafed under Plymouth's unequal laws, which had recently been used to try to hang three of Philip's followers. Plymouth leaders coveted the Pokanokets' land, and eagerly accepted rumors circulated against Philip by the sachem's Indian political rivals, to the effect the sachem planned a major war, possibly in concert with the French. When Philip was recorded at a meeting with Rhode Island officials complaining about his people's mistreatment by Plymouth, and vowing that he was "determined not to live until I have no country" (Bourne, 107), the mantle of conspiratorial mastermind was fitted and ready to be forced on him.

Philip was thought to be seeking the extermination of New England's white population. The Pokanokets did begin hostilities with a much exaggerated raid on the nearby town of Swansea, but Philip himself spent the war running while the Narragansetts, Abenakis, and other tribes around New England did most of the fighting. He nevertheless always remained New England's primary target, and by the end of the war, his village had vanished, his wife and son had been sold into slavery, and his dismembered body was on display in the town of Plymouth.

Pontiac played a similarly inflated role in accounts of the 1763 "conspiracy" that bears his name. An obscure Odawa war leader (not a chief), Pontiac touched off a frontier-wide uprising but actually led only one phase of it, the failed siege of Ft. Detroit. Both he and the British tried to advance their inter-

ests in the aftermath of the war, concluding a peace treaty that bolstered British claims to the Trans-Appalachian West and acknowledged Pontiac an Indian potentate, but probably got the former rebel assassinated as a traitor to the Indian cause. As they had long done with the alleged "conquests" of the Iroquois "Empire," the British authorities and the Anglo-American colonists exaggerated Pontiac's power and status in ways that magnified both the military threat he posed and the glory and power that accrued to those who had pacified him. The operative theory regarding Pontiac and many other superchiefs was well expressed in "Ponteach, or the Savages of America," a drama published in 1766 by French and Indian War hero Robert Rogers. Rogers's *Ponteach* is a haughty forest emperor laid tragically low by his pride. "This Country's mine, and here I reign as King," a king whose "Empire's measured only by the Sun," the character asserts in explaining his disdain for British authority (Rogers, 128, 144).

In fact, it is unlikely that general Indian uprisings could ever have been the work of a single conspiratorial mastermind, or even a knot of them. The primitive nature of the available means of communication alone—symbolic war belts of clamshell beads ("wampum") were used to coordinate the 1763 risings—precluded any sort of command and control. Conspiracies were unlikely for more fundamental cultural reasons as well. Most North American Indian tribes lacked any sort of true chief executive who could impose his will on his followers. A chief, unlike a European general, governor, or king, drew his power not from law or force, but only from the respect and love that his prowess, wisdom, and generosity had garnered among his people, who could obey him or not as they chose.

The superchief mythology, from the exaggerations of the leader's influence and the depth of his scheming to the popular dramas (and often place names) that celebrated his nobility in defeat, was applied successively to every significant Indian resistance leader after Pontiac, from John Logan of the 1774 Lord Dunmore's War (immortalized in Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* for his oratorical prowess) to Tecumseh, Black Hawk, and Osceola in the early



nineteenth century and, in a somewhat less conspiratorial vein, to such far western Indian rebels as Cochise, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse. It was applied retroactively to Philip in one of the antebellum era's most popular plays, "Metamora."

The celebrity that the superchief myth brought all of these men should not obscure how damaging it was to Indian people when they were still struggling to stay in their homelands. In their time, the names of all of these leaders were capable of plunging whole frontiers into panic, and such panics usually brought on white military campaigns that would be followed by the expropriation of Indian lands.

### **"Our Most Dangerous Enemies":**

#### **Indian Converts and Allies as Victims of Conspiracy Fears**

Far more harmful than the "superchief" myth, in terms of the brutality it inspired in whites, was the related conspiracy theory that all Indians alike were actual or potential enemies, no matter what attitude they professed to hold toward whites. Even Indians who had become Christians, pursued white occupations, and lived peaceably near white towns for decades were treated as likely traitors, spies, and saboteurs.

Since the beginning of European contact, the colonizers had been urging the natives to lay down their weapons, adopt European ways of life, and convert to the Christian religion. Most Indians resisted this pressure when they could, but for many resistance became impossible once European settlement had engulfed their homelands. Some responded to the urgings of Christian missionaries and adopted the faith, while others sought to simply live as quietly as they could, at peace with the settlers or even joining in the whites' battles with other Indians. In most of the colonies, then, there were at least small communities of peaceful and often Christian Indians living near white towns and farms. In times of general Indian conspiracy scares, these communities became deeply suspicious to whites, and often suffered as much or more than the tribes actually engaged in hostilities.

The residents of Puritan missionary John Eliot's "praying towns" discovered this during King Philip's

War. Stories circulated of "Praying Indians" joining in raids on Christian towns and spying for the rebels. According to historian Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "The English were quick to believe tales of Christian Indian perfidy," and the burning of English barns or haystacks "became pretexts for English violence against the praying towns" (Pulsipher, 475). The Christian Indians at Wamesit had to abandon their village and food supplies in late 1675 after furious English militiamen fired on them without warning on two separate occasions, in one incident wounding a number of women and children, a twelve-year-old fatally. Various Puritan commentators questioned the sincerity of Indian religious conversions and depicted the "Praying Indians" as contemptible mockeries of Christianity. Sometimes with and sometimes without official approval, New England troops sacked the villages of Indian Christians and Indian allies. Meanwhile, the authorities shut down many praying towns and interned numerous friendly natives on barren Deer Island in Boston Harbor. Some praying Indians even shared the fate of Philip's family, enslavement in the Caribbean.

Other groups of peaceful Christian Indians were visited by some of the worst atrocities in the annals of European-Indian relations in North America. The infamous Paxton Boys massacre, for instance, was part of the fallout from the conspiracy theories surrounding Pontiac. The Pennsylvania frontier had been wracked by Indian raids both during the 1763 rebellion and the French and Indian War that preceded it. There were a number of Christian Indian villages in the colony, including Conestoga, where a handful of people eked out a meager living selling bowls and baskets. Looking for payback and charging that some of the Conestoga men had fought with Pontiac, a number of men from the town of Paxton, on the Susquehanna River in east-central Pennsylvania, concluded that these supposedly friendly Indians amounted to a "Basket & Broom-making Banditney" who were "in Reality our most dangerous enemies" (Merrell, 286).

A week and a half before Christmas, 1763, fifty-four Scots-Irish men from Paxton rode to Conestoga, and shot and hacked to death six Indians they found there, allegedly in revenge for Pontiac's

Rebellion. Local authorities gathered the surviving Conestogas (who had been lucky enough to be out) and placed them in a workhouse for protection. The men from Paxton soon rode in and killed the rest.

Far from horrifying their fellow Pennsylvanians, the “Paxton Boys” found themselves at the head of a popular cause. Their numbers swelled with new recruits, the Paxton Boys rode down to Philadelphia, in arms, to take some Christian Delaware Indians being protected there and topple the government itself if necessary. A manifesto was issued in which the supposedly Quaker-dominated government of Pennsylvania was charged with being insensitive to frontier needs because it was too soft on the Indians. A poem called “The Cloven Foot Discovered” (Parkman, 716) expressed the settlers’ view that whites who gave sympathy or aid to any Indians were traitors to their fellow colonists and fellow travelers of the Indians’ secret plots against the frontier settlements:

Go, good Christians, never spare  
 To give your Indians Clothes to wear  
 Send ’em good Beef, and Pork, and Bread,  
 Guns, Powders, Flints, and Stores of Lead,  
 To Shoot Your Neighbours Through the Head; . . .  
 Encourage every friendly Savage  
 To murder, burn, destroy, and ravage.

Only some fast talking by leading Pennsylvania politician Benjamin Franklin finally defused the Paxton Boys situation, but not before more than fifty of the “protected” Christian Delawares died of diseases in the city.

Time and again in early America, peaceful Christian Indians found that the most dangerous place to be was anywhere near their supposed allies and co-religionists, the Anglo-American settlers. No matter how devout a Christian and firmly committed to peace and friendship with whites a group of Indians might be, many settlers assumed all Indians were secretly conspiring against them, and in the right circumstances might slaughter whatever Indians they happened to run across. The biggest problem that the young United States had in recruiting Indian allies during the Revolutionary War was the

fact that pro-American chiefs kept getting killed by American soldiers.

By far the most heinous example of intentional “friendly fire” on Indians during the Revolution can be found in a 1782 incident that came to be known as the Gnadenhutzen massacre, in present east-central Ohio. The “Ohio Country” was a bitter battleground between the British and Indians on the one hand, and the settlers just south of the Ohio River in Kentucky on the other. German American missionaries from a sect called the Moravians had converted large numbers of Delaware Indians who lived in this area to Christianity and kept them on the American side. The Moravians were pacifists, so once converted these Indians did not even believe in fighting.

The Christian Indians of Gnadenhutzen happened to be harvesting their corn one day in 1782 when a war party of American settlers appeared. They were pursuing some hostile Indians who had been seen in the area. The settlers charged the friendly villagers of Gnadenhutzen with being warriors, pointing to the existence of European implements, such as axes, spoons, and tea kettles, in this village of Indians who had adopted white lifestyles, as evidence they had killed and stolen from whites. On the strength of this flimsy evidence, the Gnadenhutzen Indians were sentenced to death. They spent the night praying to the European God, and in the morning the settlers dragged the Indians out of their cabins in groups of two or three and executed them with a mallet so as not to waste ammunition.

These sorts of incidents often turned white suspicions about Christian and friendly Indians into self-fulfilling prophecies. With friends like the American settlers, many Indians reasoned, who needed enemies? During wars and war scares with neighboring colonial powers like Great Britain, France, and Spain, most Indians with any access to the “foreign” power were quite willing to work with them against the settlers and/or the United States if they possibly could, though the Indians’ fondest desire was always to be left relatively independent of any European power.

Colonial and U.S. officials frequently turned this rational pattern of Indian behavior into the basis of

another sort of conspiracy theory, of the Indians as cat's-paws of foreigners out to split off pieces of their territory or curb American expansion. Andrew Jackson first made a name for himself by brutally precluding the possibility that the southeastern Indians might collaborate with the Spanish or British to block the United States from accessing the Gulf Coast and its ports. This was the basic aim of his campaigns against the Creeks, the British, and the Seminoles between 1813 and 1818, which began with a settler panic about a "massacre" at Ft. Mims in Alabama, and ended with the summary execution of two British citizens and an Indian religious leader and the forcible U.S. annexation of Spanish Florida.

But at least Jackson's enemies were genuinely hostile to the United States. Unfortunately, the mistreatment of friendly and Christian Indians continued long after the point had passed when Indians posed any real threat to the United States and even in cases where they could hardly have done more to demonstrate their loyalty. Perhaps the most egregious example of many occurred in Civil War era Minnesota. A group of Winnebago Indians, previously removed by the government from their Wisconsin homeland, were living peacefully in the manner of white farmers in the area around Blue Earth. When a Sioux uprising broke out in 1862, the Winnebago were forced out of their homes as a security threat, and sent to a new reservation in a barren section of present Nebraska. The Winnebago had no connection to the Sioux outbreak, and could not have made much of a military contribution to it in any case, since most of the fighting-age Winnebago men were serving in the Union army at the time. The Winnebago veterans would find no homes to return to after the war. At that point, many of them doubtless wished they had been conspiring against the United States.

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**See also:** Pontiac, Chief; Salem Witch Trials.

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## Nativism

At its height in the nineteenth century, nativism was the often conspiratorial hostility of white, native-born, Protestant Americans to European immigrants that, at times, was embodied in political movements and evolved into genuinely exclusionist policies. In the 1850s, a burgeoning coalition of self-proclaimed nativists swept into office and called for radical change. During the nineteenth century, the perception of immigrants shifted from welcome to demonization, usually depending on whether the United States was going through economic expansion or stagnation. From the start, immigration and the resulting competition, whether religious, class,

or racial, between ethnic groups became a key issue in the development of the United States, and one that was frequently expressed in the rhetoric of conspiracy theory.

Historically, immigration falls into three periods: colonial and eighteenth century; "Old" in the first half of the nineteenth century; and "New" starting in the 1880s. The decade from 1845 to 1854 saw the greatest proportionate influx of immigrants in U.S. history. By 1860 more than one out of every eight Americans was foreign-born, with the most numerous being Irish, German, and English immigrants. Each period generated its own kind of nativist reaction, from Know-Nothingism (the openly nativist political party of the 1840s and 1850s), to anti-immigration laws (the first being the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, culminating in the closing of the gates through the National Origins Acts of 1921 and 1924).

It is important to note, however, that openness to immigration has remained the majority opinion, for in Tom Paine's words, the United States was to be "an asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty" from all parts of the world.

In the colonial period, although ethnic mixture was the reality, with a majority white population living alongside an Indian and a black group of African origin, the white group was very heterogeneous in its composition. The majority were of English origin but many were Dutch, French Huguenots, German, and Scots-Irish, which created frictions. For instance, in the Massachusetts colony, the Puritans did all they could not to admit non-English settlers. In spite of the reality of ethnic plurality, the global perception was that of Englishness. Hence, after the Revolution, the 60 percent of English origin in the white community took political power and set the tune culturally.

Early nativism was marked by a belief in total assimilation, the giving up of one's former culture, language, and behavior to be blended into a new identity, that of an American, as celebrated by Hector Saint John de Crèvecoeur, who glorified the land of limitless opportunities to all newcomers (the "melting-pot" theory). The asylum tradition was promoted through the 1790 Naturalization Act, which



made it possible for virtually anybody to be admitted and naturalized into a citizen. However, this “generous” act contained limitations; only “free white persons” who had resided in the United States for at least two years were eligible for naturalization. Hence, from the start, the reality of social and political exclusion—of blacks and Indians—paved the way for future exclusions.

The self-image of hospitality was seriously tested at the time of the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts, which gave the president arbitrary countersubversive powers to exclude or deport any foreigner deemed to be dangerous, and to prosecute anybody publishing or writing in “a false, scandalous and malicious nature” about the president or Congress. The government was reacting against European radicals whose political activities were considered subversive. The Naturalization Act was amended to provide for a fourteen-year residency requirement for prospective citizens; in 1802, Congress reduced the waiting period to five years, a provision that remains in effect today.

### **Anti-Catholicism**

In the following decades, most immigrants entering the United States were Roman Catholics (one-third of all immigrants between 1830 and 1840 were from Catholic Ireland), and so ethnic prejudice against immigrants was also usually accompanied by conspiracy-mongering against Catholicism. Since the colonial period, Americans had come to identify themselves as a Protestant nation, and many leading Protestant clergymen had cautioned the country against a papal plot to destroy U.S. liberty and society.

In the nineteenth century this conspiratorial tradition fed into nativism in a variety of forms: exclusive nativist clubs and fraternities such as the Order of United Americans or the United Sons of America; and political parties, especially when the social and economic situation was bleak, as in the late 1830s, the early 1840s, and the mid-1850s. These groups attracted middle-class Protestants, members of the two “traditional” parties (Democratic and Whig), and working-class voters who resented what they considered to be the job competition from immigrants, the increase in crime, public drunkenness,

and pauperism, and the manipulation of immigrant voters.

More significant was the proliferation of nativist propaganda. Prompted by the news of an Austrian Catholic missionary society sending money and men to the United States, Samuel F. B. Morse, a distinguished professor of sculpture and painting at New York University, wrote *A Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States* (1834) and he went on to publish *The Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions of the United States* (1835), both of which involved denunciations of the Catholic conspiracy against the United States. Lyman Beecher, a seventh-generation clergyman and president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, published *A Plea for the West* in 1835, in which he exposed the alleged plot by the pope to build a “Vatican” in the West by sending hordes of Catholic settlers there. However, perhaps the most effective was the “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” of nativism, the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, which sold 300,000 in 1836. Monk told of her alleged experiences with Catholicism, which involved forced sexual intercourse with priests and the murdering of nuns and children. Although her mother denied the legitimacy of her work, stating that Maria never belonged to the nunnery and that a brain injury her daughter received as a child could be the cause of her stories, the book was widely accepted as truth. In 1841, the *Vindicator* was published by Rev. W. C. Brownlee, the leader of the New York Protestant Association. In the same year, there was growing concern in New York State that Catholics were gaining influence in schools because of the action of Archbishop John Hughes of New York. He was seeking to obtain state aid for Catholic schools, which was interpreted as both a subversive plot against the First Amendment, and a refusal by Catholics to attend public schools and be assimilated. In 1842, the American Protestant Association was founded by 100 Clergymen in Philadelphia to oppose Catholics.

This propaganda led to agitation, rioting, and mobbing. Although Catholics occasionally reacted to the nativist movement with violence, nativists instigated the greater part of those violent acts. In Boston, there were numerous riots in 1823, 1826,

and 1829. In May 1832, these potentially explosive conditions produced a riot at a New York Protestant Association meeting. Further, while addressing a Baltimore Baptist audience in 1834, a group of Catholics attacked a Baptist speaker. On 10 August 1834 a mob of forty to fifty people gathered outside of the Ursuline Convent School at Charlestown, near Boston, and burned it to the ground. Although eight people were arrested and tried, only one was sentenced to life imprisonment. This rather lenient sentence, together with the lack of condemnation in moderate Protestant circles, shows how widespread hostility to Catholics had become. The violence continued into the following decade when, for example, thirty people were killed and hundreds injured during nativist riots in Philadelphia in 1844.

### Political Nativism

Anti-Catholicism gradually evolved into a political crusade. In 1844, James Harper founded the American Republican Party in order to break the deadlock between the Whig and Democratic Parties in New York State, and offer another approach to politics. It allied with the Whigs, which resulted in the defeat of the Democratic Party. The American Republican Party demonstrated the political relevance of the nativist movement and paved the way for the entrance of the Know-Nothings into the national political scene as the only coherent organization to rest its political action on hostility to immigration and to Catholics.

The American Party had its origins in 1849 in New York. At first a secret society called the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, it became a formal party in 1853, and its members were dubbed the Know-Nothings (after their refusal to answer questions about their involvement) by Horace Greeley, a famous newspaper editor. By the middle of the 1850s the party ranked over a million members across the country. At the local level, in the 1854 election, the Know-Nothings won six governorships and controlled legislatures in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and California, where they passed discriminatory laws against immi-



Samuel F. B. Morse. (Library of Congress)

grants, including the first literacy tests for voting, in order to disenfranchise the Irish. The party's platform focused on voting rights, stretching the residency period before naturalization from five to twenty-one years, and requiring the exclusion of foreigners and Catholics from public office. After the defeat of their candidate in the presidential election of 1856, the Know-Nothings were split by their inability to overcome the slavery issue. They lost influence and were absorbed into the expanding Republican Party, formed in 1854. However, another important factor in their decline was that not all Americans opposed the arrival of new immigrants because they were much needed by industrialists, railroad builders, and other businessmen as unskilled labor willing to accept lower wages.

**Exclusion or Americanization?**

After the Civil War, “new immigrants” from southern and central Europe, even more numerous and alien, increased the demonological anxiety of the native-born, which led to numerous conflicts and a radical reexamination of the country’s immigration policy. From 1880 to 1930 a total of 25 million newcomers entered the United States. The more numerous were Italians, Jews, and Slavs—totaling more than 9 million—who brought in new customs, manners, languages, and religions. To this flow of immigration one should add the massive black migration to the North. All these groups were scattered throughout the country but they tended to flock together in big cities, especially in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New England.

In this era of *laissez-faire* capitalism, nativism evolved into the fear that class conflict would destroy the social fabric of the United States. Mounting labor organization, and the importation of socialist and anarchist ideologies by immigrants, rekindled the conspiracy theories. The violent strikes of the 1870s and 1880s were therefore seen as signs of forthcoming disaster. In this climate, the American Protective Association was organized as a secret society dedicated to eradicating “foreign despotism,” which included Catholics. One of its aims was to ban German-language instruction.

Nativism took on a special coloring in the West, where the fear was of Chinese immigrants, considered a threat to white workers because they accepted lower wages. The Workingmen’s Party led a movement for a new state constitution in California in 1878 and 1879 that included stringent discriminatory measures. At the national level, riots and mobbing, especially in Wyoming and New York, led to mounting pressure by California and other western states on Congress to pass the nation’s first immigration restriction, which some commentators have viewed as the institutionalization of racial paranoia. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act excluded the Chinese from naturalization and immigration. More restrictions were introduced in 1892, and Chinese immigration was banned permanently in 1902. In 1906 the first English language requirements for naturalization were enacted. The U.S. government legis-

lated gradually to close the doors by limiting Japanese immigration through the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907–1908. In the 1917 Immigration Law, Congress enacted a literacy requirement for all new immigrants and designated Asia as a “barred zone” (excepting Japan and the Philippines). The 1921 National Origins Act inaugurated the quota system, by which admissions from each European country was limited to 3 percent of each foreign-born nationality in the 1910 census. It effectively favored northern Europeans at the expense of southern and eastern Europeans and Asians. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act can be considered as a perfect application of nativist concerns for racial homogeneity since it confirmed that immigration quotas were based on the ethnic makeup of the U.S. population as a whole in 1920.

It was not until 1965 that racial criteria were removed from U.S. immigration legislation. An annual quota of 20,000 was awarded to each country, regardless of ethnicity, under a ceiling of 170,000. Up to 120,000 were allowed to immigrate from Western Hemisphere nations, not subject to quotas (until 1976).

Meanwhile, at the end of the nineteenth century in the wake of the Progressive movement, the muck-rakers, social workers, and social reformers drew the public’s attention to the poverty, disease, and crime rates of immigrant ghettos. Moreover, they sought to bridge the gap between newcomers and native-born Americans. The “new immigrants” were less skilled, less educated, more clannish, and slower to learn English. However, in order to cope with their new life, immigrants tended to organize into minority societies, trying to preserve as much of the group’s culture as possible. But growing concern for national homogeneity urged many to think that a campaign to “Americanize”—meaning assimilation—was necessary. Thus the Bureau of Americanization was created to encourage employers to make English classes compulsory for their foreign-born workers. For example, in the Ford Motor Company School, the first thing an immigrant was asked to learn to say was, “I am an American.” Most states banned schooling in other tongues; some even prohibited the study of foreign languages in the elementary

grades, in the belief that public schools were the major tool for Americanization.

### English Only?

The global trend since World War II has been to diminish discrimination, at least by statute, and to reduce prejudice against immigrants and members of ethnic minorities. Hostility certainly lost much of its conspiracy-minded intensity, with the combined effects of the civil rights movement and the struggle by Hispanics and Native Americans for equal rights. However, the end of racial quotas in 1965 led many Third World people to enter the United States, especially those coming from Central and South America, which alarmed many Americans and gave new targets to nativism, especially in the states where those immigrants tended to flock together. The question of bilingualism then became the central issue of nativists. In the 1980s the “English only” movement was launched to restrict the language of government to English and encourage immigrants to learn English. Illegal immigration was another element that encouraged nativist anxieties, as encapsulated in President Ronald Reagan’s declaration in 1984 that “we have lost control of our own borders.” Illegal immigrants were seen as a threat to native-born workers and an obstacle to unions, as they were enjoying all the advantages of living in America (schools, hospitals, welfare benefits) while escaping all the drawbacks, like taxes.

However, no legislation managed to curb the number of “undocumented” aliens on U.S. territory. In California, another upsurge of activism took place in the 1990s due to economic stagnation, rising racial tensions, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Voters approved Proposition 187, which was meant to force public agencies (schools, police, and social and health services) to find out the immigration status of supposedly undocumented aliens, and report them to the immigration authorities. The initiative was judged unconstitutional. However, a direct consequence was the enactment by Congress of legislation toughening immigration enforcement laws.

*Aïssatou Sy-Wonyu*

**See also:** Anti-Catholicism; Anti-Masonic Party; Antisemitism; Eugenics; Japanese Americans; Know-Nothings, Ku Klux Klan; Red Scare; Sacco and Vanzetti.

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### Neo-Nazis

Along with other right-wing hate groups, neo-Nazis have drawn on the rhetoric of conspiracy to frame their analysis of global and U.S. politics. Although overshadowed by the stronger tradition of the religious Right in the United States, various neo-Nazi organizations contributed to the wider cluster of antisemitic and white supremacist groups.

### Early Nazi Propogandists

During the 1920s the National Socialists asserted that the German military had been victorious on the battlefield in World War I, but that Jewish traitors in the government had stabbed Germany in the back, even as international Jewish financiers prepared to loot the German economy. According to the Nazi myth, the German *Volk* was engaged in a metaphysical struggle against materialist “Jew-Capitalists” and “Jew-Bolsheviks,” both of which



sought to destroy the *Volkish* community by fostering social inequalities and encouraging class conflict. The cosmopolitan city was characterized as a cesspool, festering with immorality and crime, where Jewish conspirators poisoned the hearts and minds of the *Volk*. The Nazis promised to free German society from economic depression and class conflict by establishing a racialist community under the leadership of a divinely inspired leader. Nazi propagandists operating in the United States emphasized these same themes, but they met with little success. Appeals to isolationist, anticommunist, and racist sentiment failed to bring about any substantive alliance with U.S. antisemitic or white supremacist organizations.

### Postwar Neo-Nazis

After World War II, most U.S. racists remained rooted in Republican and populist traditions, which rejected socialism and dictatorship. A number of very small Nazi groups did exist, however, with the American Nazi Party (ANP), founded by George Lincoln Rockwell in 1958, being the most influential. ANP conspiracy theory fused crude negrophobia with conspiratorial antisemitism: Jewish communists were believed to be spearheading the civil rights movement in the South and enticing black men to rape white women and riot in northern cities. Party publications were rife with crude jokes about African American culture and political aspirations, while providing detailed descriptions of conspiratorial machinations by Jews. Party activists drove through the U.S. South in their Hate Bus, and picketed screenings of *Exodus* and performances of *The Deputy*, which criticized papal policies during World War II. At antiwar rallies later in the decade, Rockwell's Nazis threw paint, eggs, beer cans, and garbage at antiwar demonstrators, provoking violent confrontations. Such theatrics created notoriety unwarranted by any substantive threat that the ANP posed, either to democratic institutions or the advance of civil rights.

Rockwell's greatest success occurred in summer 1966, when the ANP agitated against Martin Luther King, Jr.'s housing desegregation marches in Chicago. For twenty-two days, ANP activists inflamed race

relations, generating intense publicity. More than 1,000 local residents pelted civil rights marchers with bricks and bottles, shouting "White Power!" and waving Confederate and Nazi flags (Oates, 413). Once the protests ended and tensions subsided, however, the Nazis lost what little support they had gained during the melee. Ignoring this fact, Rockwell shifted gears in 1967, renaming his party the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP). Attempting to broaden the appeal to non-Aryan whites, he abandoned Nazi iconography and launched a new magazine entitled *White Power!* Rockwell also became more militant, declaring that "every tendency towards degeneracy and subversion . . . must be weeded out and utterly destroyed" (Rockwell).

The Chicago emergence of Black Power and New Left militancy also provided a context for Rockwell's increased militancy. Another reason, however, was that Rockwell feared for his safety and was suspicious of his own followers, believing many of them to be spies for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. The ADL did investigate the ANP, and two other Jewish groups had discussed Rockwell's commission with the naval reserve in 1961, before Rockwell was discharged. Rockwell was made understandably paranoid, however, by a highly effective FBI covert action program entitled COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. Between 1965–1971, FBI agents cut off financial support, even as informants sowed dissension. Federal, state, and local authorities also created disruption: the Internal Revenue Service conducted tax investigations, city inspectors closed Nazi offices, and local and state police made disorderly conduct arrests.

On 25 August 1967 a sniper assassinated George Lincoln Rockwell. Former *Stormtrooper* editor John Patler was convicted of the murder, but in the context of an ensuing struggle for power, a number of conspiracy theories were put forth by Rockwell's lieutenants. The victorious faction offered that Patler was an ADL agent and named California Nazi James K. Warner as his coconspirator. Warner alleged that Matt Koehl and William Pierce had engineered a coup to elevate Rockwell to martyrdom and seize control of the party. Accusations and counteraccusations even led to an internecine gun-

fight. Decrying “illegal FBI harassment,” Warner left the NSWPP, telling Nazis loyal to him to prepare for “Armageddon, the meeting of the forces of good and evil and the complete destruction and death of all the mongrel hordes and their Jewish masters” (American Nazi Party, 2).

Warner also charged that El Monte, California, party organizer Ralph Forbes had used the NSWPP as a recruiting ground for religious cults. Rockwell, having met with Christian Identity minister Wesley Swift in June 1964, had recognized the power of theological antisemitism for recruitment purposes, and several of his close associates, including Forbes, later became Identity ministers. Even Warner came to recognize Identity’s potential, and established an Identity Church in 1975. He also organized a paramilitary group and helped former Nazi David Duke create the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Matthias Koehl took over the NSWPP and in 1967 published a more militant ten-point platform calling for “revolution.” Quoting Adolph Hitler to the effect that the survival of the race had become more important than respect for law and order, NSWPP editor William Pierce and a group of younger Nazis launched a youth group, which became one of the most violent neo-Nazi groups of the early 1970s. The National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF) called for a “militant struggle” against the “pigs” to “build a popular base.” The NSLF formulated an early version of the leaderless resistance tactics that would animate the violent neo-Nazi cells of the early 1980s. In 1971 William Pierce called for a revolution by “guerrilla fighters.” He published bomb-making instructions, discussions of urban warfare techniques, and lists of targets for political assassination. Later, Pierce wrote *The Turner Diaries*, an apocalyptic novel about race war. The plot inspired a white power cell called the Order, which committed armored car robberies and murdered a Jewish talk show host in the early 1980s. Convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh also seems to have found the novel provocative. Pierce’s associate, Willis Carto, became active in the Holocaust denial movement, publishing essays that presented the Nazi genocide as a fabrication by Communist-Zionist plotters. His

*Spotlight* newspaper, which dwelled on conspiratorial plots by international bankers and federal agents, would influence the militia movement during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Despite extensive propagandizing and publicity, Nazis have failed to gain a substantial following in the United States. This, combined with disruption by law enforcement during the 1960s, encouraged some of them to embrace terror, paramilitarism, alliances with other racist groups, and a revolutionary agenda. With his revolutionary call for white power, George Lincoln Rockwell had facilitated ideological cross-pollination between National Socialism, white supremacy, and Christian Identity. Although membership in formal National Socialist groups declined after the late 1970s, militant hybrid associations such as the Aryan Nations, the White Aryan Resistance, the National Alliance, and the Mountain Church would all revere Adolph Hitler and George Lincoln Rockwell as founders of the White Power movement.

John Drabble

**See also:** Antisemitism; Aryan Nations; Ku Klux Klan; Pierce, William L.

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## New World Order

On 29 January 1991, President George Bush gave his second State of the Union address. He spoke as the Gulf War was under way and he was keen to promote the new era he claimed the conflict represented. Bush repeated a term he had already used in several speeches, claiming that abroad in the world was "a big idea, a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children's future." Bush was not the first policymaker of the 1990s to speak of a "New World Order," but like the others his words rested on a generally held perception that with the ending of the cold war something transformational had begun. Other visions that saw the sunlit uplands as lying just ahead had already been offered, most obviously two years earlier when historian Francis Fukuyama had proclaimed that "the End of History" and the arrival of endless liberal democracy had arrived. However, while talk of the New World Order was heard frequently in the United States for the rest of the 1990s, this was not in the affirmative sense Bush had intended. Instead, it gained notoriety as a code-phrase for the conspiracy theories of global control that were being disseminated in print, over short-wave radio, and, most of all, the new medium of the World Wide Web. It very soon dropped out of use by U.S. policymakers.

For the radical Right, the mere use of the phrase was enough, for these three words were already familiar to groups such as the John Birch Society.

The preeminent right-wing conspiracy-mongers of the 1950s and 1960s (and the focus of Richard Hofstadter's seminal analysis of the paranoid style in 1964), the Birchers popularized its use in their literature to describe the socialistic "One Worldism" they were convinced was being promoted by the Soviet Union via the United Nations. The vision was of a dedicated Communist conspiracy, working ceaselessly to overthrow U.S. liberties and incorporate the United States into a world state and world government. Conspiracy writers (such as the author writing under the name "Garudas") have charted the term "New World Order" through Henry Kissinger, Henry Wallace, the Versailles Peace Conference, Cecil Rhodes, and British imperialism, back to the traditional bogeymen of many U.S. conspiracy theories—the Elders of Zion, the Freemasons, and the Bavarian Illuminati. Genuine organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, the World Trade Organization, and the Bilderberger group are said to have conspired together to advance this goal. Needless to say, groups like the Birchers greeted Bush's employment of it with the happy fear so typical of the vindicated conspiracy theorist.

However, the key users of the term in the post-cold war 1990s were not the traditional radical or religious Right (although figures such as Pat Robertson did dabble), but instead were the new grassroots militias and other self-styled "patriot" groups that sprang up in the United States during the decade. The New World Order (often short-handed as "NWO") became emblematic of their conspiracy theories about America's slide toward global domination, with claims that made the Birchers look modest in comparison. The following is from "Operation Vampire Killer" by the "Police Against the New World Order":

Behind the scenes is a plan for an oligarchy of the world's richest families to place 1/2 the masses of the earth in servitude under their complete control, administered from behind the false front of the United Nations. To facilitate management capabilities, the plan calls for the elimination of the other 2.5 billion people through war, disease,

abortion, and famine by the year 2000. As we can plainly see, their plan for population control (reduction) is well under way. (Mulloy, 426–427)

Although the roots of this were often drawn from religious extremism such as the Christian Identity movement, the imagination was thoroughly post-cold war. Treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), and various United Nations environmental agreements were seized upon as evidence of this super-plot. In the patriot/militia NWO scenario one thing is made clear: the threat was not subversion. This time the globalist forces are here (as the preferred term “Zionist Occupation Government,” or ZOG, made clear), and are assisted in their plot to deprive Americans of their collective and individual sovereignty by a traitorous federal government and its many agencies. As a militia text asked in 1994: “Do you know there are more than a million among us who are trained as traitors to the American constitutional way of life [and] are slated to be our slave-masters under the New World Order?” (Mulloy, 437).

In support of all this, a profligate mishmash of detail was put forward as “evidence.” This ranged from the very specific—that Highway Department notations on the back of road signs are in fact secret codes to enable foreign troops to find their way (with the typical excess logic of conspiracy theories, they are written on the back because foreign troops will prefer to drive on the wrong side of the road)—to the sweeping, such as the claim that a government agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), responsible for floods, hurricanes, and the like, is a cover story for the preparation of concentration camps for dissident U.S. patriots. Among still wilder claims made are that electronic implants can control individuals, the military can control the weather, and that hovering above the United States is the all-seeing, all-knowing black helicopter. Summing up all this, in 1994 Linda Thompson, an Indiana attorney but also the self-styled “Adjutant General of the Unorganized Militias of America,” devised a “Re-Declara-

tion of Independence,” with this as its preamble: “The Federal Government, at this time, is transporting large Armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of Death, Desolation and Tyranny, already begun, often under the color of the law of the United Nations, and with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy of a civilized Nation.” Although such views seem absurdly inconceivable (particularly for Europeans who have learned to have little faith in the abilities of the United Nations), such rhetoric does, of course, sometimes connect to action. Militia opinion and activity can easily be read as inevitably leading to the terrible events of 19 April 1995, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City.

However, to consider all conspiracy theories about a New World Order as potentially terrorist or held solely by a right-wing fringe would be a mistake. Suspicions about the order of the post-cold war world and the United States’ role in it have become legion and have served to mobilize public opinion in the 1990s. Any analysis of conspiracy theories and the New World Order must recognize that the term has had just as much employment on the Left as the Right, and so must question its conspiratorial alignment too. For the Left, the term came about as part of a process of counter-definition, for instance by use of the modifier “New World Disorder.” The name on the Left one comes across most often is Noam Chomsky—no other author is so associated with a coherent viewpoint on the post-cold war order of the world and the place of the United States within it. Chomsky offered a succinct definition in *Deterring Democracy* in 1992: “The Gulf War has torn aside the veil covering the post-Cold War era. It has revealed a world in which the United States enjoys unchallenged military supremacy and is prepared to exploit this advantage ruthlessly. The New World Order (in which the New World gives the orders) has arrived” (<http://www.znetwork.org/chomsky/dd/dd.html>).

Writing on this subject (with titles such as *World Orders, Old and New*) and developing these ideas has been Chomsky’s work in the last ten years and by the end of the decade his use of the term was



solidly fixed for the Left—unsurprisingly, it gained an outing again in criticism of the War on Iraq. Some of the debate about the New World Order has involved cross-talk between Left and Right, leading some to regard this as evidence of a new fusion of political belief. However, the Kennedy and King assassinations, Vietnam, COINTELPRO, and Watergate, Iran-Contra, and the Tuskegee syphilis study had already offered the Left historical confirmation for overseas military adventurism, government surveillance, corporate conspiracies, clandestine intelligence agency dirty tricks, and even Hillary Clinton's "vast right-wing conspiracy" against her husband. In other words, the New World Order as the Left saw it could not help but rest on a foundation of prior suspicion.

Does this make the Left's concept of the New World Order a conspiracy theory? Not if it is taken to mean that there is only one superpower left in the world, and it uses its power to satisfy its own interests. However, the larger edifice constructed on the foundation of Left conspiracy theories does go further. Daniel Pipes, author of *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From*, claims that Chomsky is the prime architect of a left-wing "conspiracy theory that blames the U.S. government for virtually every ill in the world, including environmental pollution, militarism, economic poverty, spiritual alienation, and the drug scourge. It manipulates the mainstream media (to divert the revolutionary potential of workers), sponsors academic postmodernism (to bewilder the uninitiated), and encourages professional sports (to distract attention from serious issues)" (Pipes, 160).

Although this is a bowdlerized description of Chomsky, it does capture the totalizing tendency and the "can do no good" flavor of his writings. A perception that Chomsky offers a conspiracy-tinged analysis because he connects neglected issues together into a narrative, which operates by what it reveals, is suggested by his method, namely the exhaustive plotting of a mass of detail—a skill for which many on the Left have praised Chomsky a great deal. Alexander Cockburn recalled "the nights I've stayed at Noam and Carol Chomsky's house in

Lexington and I've watched him at even-tide working his way through a capacious box of the day's intake of tripe—newspapers, weeklies, monthlies, learned journals, flimsy mimeo-ed mailers—while Carol Chomsky does the same thing on the other side of the room" (Chomsky, 1992, x).

This does seem very reminiscent of the method classically employed by conspiracy theorists on the Right—the deep mining of the world's detail for evidence. Chomsky might easily be defined as a guerrilla academic from MIT who mines for the "Truth." The embrace, not of hard-edged conspiracy theories but of a softer conspiracy "mindedness," bears upon the major source for New World Order conspiracy theories in the later 1990s, namely the anti-globalization movement. The protests in Seattle in late November–early December of 1999 brought together figures from Right and Left as different as Pat Buchanan (who a month before had quit the Republican Party, declaring himself against the New World Order) and Situationist Anarchists intent on trashing the home of Starbucks. Organized via the Internet and coordinated "live" via cellphones, the protests united for a few days over 50,000 demonstrators and led to the so-called "Battle of Seattle." Follow-up protests have since taken place in at other meetings in Davos, Switzerland, Washington, D.C., London, and Venice. It is fair to say that these events were bred from a conspiratorial vision of the contemporary global order. Why else did this hardly very secretive meeting of the World Trade Organization, a bureaucratic body of 135 nations, whose membership was publicly known, serve as a focus for such protest? The concern came from the Left perspective that it was responsible for large corporations being set free to ruthlessly exploit Third World peoples and ruin the global environment, and this proved a significant motivation for many young people. As an explicitly titled "global" organization, the WTO therefore symbolized a great deal. The 1960s radical Tom Hayden claimed much for the protests: "For the first time in memory, the patriotism of the corporate globalizers is in question, not that of their opponents. Do the Clinton administration's investor-based trade priorities benefit America's interest in high-wage jobs, environmental protection and

human rights? Are American democratic values and middle-class interests secondary to those of transnational corporations? As a grass-roots movement seeking the overthrow of what it sees as an oppressive system, Seattle 99 was more like the Boston Tea Party than the days of rage we knew in the late 60s” ([http://www.portaec.net/library/mai\\_wto/tom\\_hayden\\_on\\_the\\_battle\\_in.html](http://www.portaec.net/library/mai_wto/tom_hayden_on_the_battle_in.html)).

At the heart of this seems to be less a defined conspiracy theory than a softer, diffuse suspicion that the post-cold war world is as not as it seems, or as it could be, or should be, and that somebody (the “corporate globalizers”) is responsible—a New World misordered, perhaps?

As of 2003, the right-wing version of the New World Order seems to be tired and declining (as are the militias themselves), and the conspiracy theories of vitality about world order come from the Left. Focusing on corporate globalization, their foundation is more concerned with servicing a generalized mistrust and suspicion of the contemporary world order than with constructing baroque conspiracy theories like those of old. Of course, such servicing became much easier after the controversial election of the second President Bush in 2000, the attacks of September 11, Enron and other corporate scandals, and the War on Iraq. From the evidence of sales of his book *Stupid White Men*, Michael Moore’s view that corporate America stole the election has considerable popularity. Indeed, Vice-President Cheney has assumed for many liberal-minded Americans a place in the Bush government every bit as conspiratorial as any Birchite view of Charles Wilson. Conspiracy theories about September 11 have not found the same appeal in the United States as in Europe (notably in France), but Gore Vidal’s contention that the attacks were suspiciously convenient for a business-oriented Bush administration anxious to secure oil pipelines in Afghanistan did meet with considerable attention after he wrote it up in a 7,000-word essay entitled, without irony, “The Enemy Within.” The war in Iraq and the tension between the Bush administration and the United Nations have acted largely to confirm what many seemed to suspect already.

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**See also:** Bilderbergers; Council on Foreign Relations; Illuminati; John Birch Society; Militias; One-World Government.

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#### Newburgh Conspiracy

In March 1783 allegations erupted surrounding an attempted coup d’état by Continental Army officers encamped at Newburgh, New York. The relationship between Congress and the Continental Army had been strained throughout the Revolutionary War. As Congress was notoriously short on cash, payments to soldiers and officers were insufficient and erratic; many went without remuneration for several consecutive years. Officers hoped for a recognition of their services in the form of pensions, and Congress had in 1780 voted to award them half pay for life. However, the impost tax of 1781, designed to finance pensions, failed to achieve ratification by the states. Furthermore, as the financial situation of many officers worsened, they started to call for a lump sum instead of a lifetime of small payments, a demand known as commutation. In late 1782, the army sent a delegation under the leadership of General Alexander McDougall to Congress in order to demand a redress

of their grievances. Despite the general's vigorous and outspoken lobbying effort, Congress voted against commutation in January 1783. With commutation rejected, no feasible prospect of financing pensions, and a peace treaty with Britain imminent—which meant the subsequent disbanding of the Continental Army—discontent grew among officers who had sacrificed much for the Revolution and now feared being left out in the cold.

A group of young officers connected to Major General Horatio Gates, an old rival of George Washington's, started spreading a series of anonymous pamphlets around the Newburgh encampment in early March 1783. These Newburgh Addresses, written by Major John Armstrong, accused Congress of betraying the army, lambasted the ineffectiveness of McDougall's petition, criticized Washington for undue moderation, and called for a meeting of officers on 11 March in order to decide on further measures. It was quite possible to see in the Newburgh Addresses a call for rebellion against civil authority, or even a full-scale coup d'état, but more moderate readings were also possible. At the very least the pamphlets proposed an ultimatum to Congress and advocated a refusal to disband the army until their demands were met. In any case, Washington stepped in to defuse the situation. Forbidding the meeting on 11 March, he called for another a few days later to discuss the results of McDougall's petition. At this meeting, Washington condemned the Addresses and made an emotional appeal to remain loyal to Congress and the American Republic. Washington's speech won over the officers, who passed a resolution asking Congress for redress, but also affirming their loyalty and condemning the Newburgh Addresses.

The most controversial aspect of this crisis in military loyalty, which became known as the Newburgh conspiracy, did not involve the officers responsible for the Newburgh Addresses as much as a group of nationalist politicians, especially Robert Morris, the congressional superintendent of finance, as well as Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton. They hoped that lobbying efforts by the military would induce Congress to pass a second impost law, thus fulfilling their hope of securing the power of taxation

for Congress. Robert Morris had been in touch with McDougall's delegation and had urged the officers to impress upon Congress in no uncertain terms the level of discontent in the army. After Congress had rejected commutation, McDougall wrote to Major General Henry Knox under the pseudonym Brutus, suggesting that the army refuse to disband until its demands were met. Knox, however, refused to spearhead so blatant a defiance of civil authority.

At this point, theories diverge considerably. One interpretation holds that, spurned by Knox and thoroughly discouraged with Congress, the Morrises and Hamilton turned to Gates and his followers to start a coup and finally consolidate national government in this way. Another theory argues that the nationalists did encourage Gates's group to make their move, but that Hamilton warned Washington of the danger in a letter, thus making sure the coup was quelled before it really started. Some evidence exists to support the second claim, but much remains unclear and inconclusive. It seems doubtful that Washington actually needed a warning from his former aide Hamilton to be aware of trouble brewing in Newburgh, and there is some controversy over whether Gates was actually involved. Nevertheless, the impression of a narrowly averted rebellion shocked Congress into voting in favor of commutation as well as a new impost law designed to secure an independent income for Congress, endorsing central demands of both officers and nationalists. Eventually, however, this new impost failed to achieve ratification by the states, and thus the pension question remained unanswered. Distrust of the officer corps, nationalist politicians, and special privilege remained contentious throughout the early Republic; they figured prominently in the controversy surrounding the Society of the Cincinnati and the ratification of the Constitution.

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**See also:** Society of the Cincinnati; Constitution, U.S.

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### Nixon, Richard

The political career of Richard Milhous Nixon (1913–1994), thirty-seventh president of the United States, was framed by suggestions of conspiracy, from his rapid rise to prominence as a result of his involvement with the Hiss case to Watergate, which ended his career. Furthermore, the frequent diagnosis of Nixon as “paranoid” placed him as both subject and object of numerous conspiracy theories. Nixon’s connection to the conspiratorial even predates the Hiss case, beginning with his response to the advertisement by the “Committee of 100” for a candidate to oppose Congressman Jerry Voorhis. The Committee was a group of local businessmen, sometimes considered to have sinister motives, who met at an elitist rural retreat, Bohemian Grove in California, itself connected to a set of conspiracy theories through groups such as the Bilderbergers. Mae Brussell insists that “That ad was typical, a covert method of pretending this was an open contest for office” (Brussell, 44). Brussell’s argument invokes an article of faith that frequently exceeds the “conspiracy research community”: that Nixon’s entire career constituted a form of conspiracy.

Nixon’s early political success was largely dependent on public recognition of his preeminent position on the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), most notably in his investigation of espionage charges against Alger Hiss. Nixon coauthored the first piece of legislation produced by the HUAC, the Mundt-Nixon Bill, which was anticorruption legislation in that it would have forced “Communist front” organizations to reveal themselves by declaring Communist Party affiliation. While Nixon’s ensuing prominence can only be credited in a period in which the “international Communist conspiracy” or “red scare” was a widespread belief, his status as perceived conspirator and object of conspiracy exceeded the zeitgeist. Nixon not only responded to, but also contributed to, conspiratorial beliefs, intending, for example, to investi-

gate “communistic art” in federal buildings and insisting that filmmakers make films that warn the American people about the dangers of communism.

Throughout his career, Nixon was linked to financial corruption and to organized crime. As the journalist Jeff Gerth argued during Nixon’s presidency, Nixon was located at the center of a tangled web of conspiracy: “Somewhere within the classic alliance of money, power, and politics lies this particular sharp-edged triangle: the Teamsters Union . . . ; the shadowy empire of organized crime and its power; and the political fiefdom of Richard Nixon” (Gerth, 43). This interconnection of a “shadow government” and organized crime, termed “deep politics” by Peter Dale Scott, is frequently aligned with Nixon in conspiracy theories. In the document “A Skeleton Key to the Gemstone Files,” for example, Nixon first appears in 1956, having been “bought” by Howard Hughes in his conspiratorial attempt to control the U.S. electoral process. Nixon’s significant financial dealings with Hughes inspired a number of conspiracy theories, including a purported Hughes involvement with Watergate. This contributed to a model for the perceived power structure of the Nixon administration, which “replaced public politics with the politics of secrecy” (Rogin and Lottier, 19).

### Watergate and Beyond

While many of Nixon’s political actions have been considered to be conspiratorial, such as the secret bombing of Cambodia or his obstruction of the Paris peace talks to end the Vietnam War before the 1968 presidential election (detailed by Anthony Summers), the latter part of Nixon’s political career coincided with shifting models of power, which tended to identify his power as overt and, therefore, largely symbolic. Some conspiracy theories correspondingly place Nixon as the victim of the covert “invisible government.” Some critics have argued that Watergate was a constitutional coup d’état against Nixon; Robert Altman’s *Secret Honor* (1984) presents it as an operation designed to finally remove him from the control of the “deep politics”—of the “Committee of 100.” But it was after the investigations into Watergate revealed the power operations of the Nixon administration that Nixon became linked,



through conspiracy theory, to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

On the White House audiotape of 23 June 1972, known as the “Smoking Gun” tape, Nixon instructs Chief of Staff Bob Haldeman to have the CIA pressure the FBI into dropping its Watergate investigation, because it would “open up the whole Bay of Pigs thing again.” Haldeman would later write, “It seems that in all those references to the Bay of Pigs, he was actually referring to the Kennedy assassination” (Haldeman, 39). Some conspiracy researchers would specifically link the assassination to Watergate, arguing that White House burglar Frank Sturgis and fellow “Plumbers” unit member E. Howard Hunt were the assassins, a claim investigated by the U.S. President’s Commission on CIA Activities within the United States, also known as the Rockefeller Commission. While there is no substantial evidence to verify these theories, the perception of the conspiring Nixon revealed by Watergate was transposed onto many of his actions. For example, Nixon, who was revealed to have been in Dallas on the day of Kennedy’s assassination, told the Warren Commission that he had only been in Dallas on 20 and 21 November. Nixon gave varying explanations for this mistake, giving rise to jokes that Nixon was the only member of his generation who did *not* remember where he was when Kennedy was shot (Vankin, 275).

Of the many reasons proffered for why Watergate occurred, one of the most enduring is that it was an extension of Nixon’s personal paranoia. Both opponents and some administration members referred to this, either indirectly, by alluding to Nixon’s “isolation” or “bunker mentality,” or directly, by claiming he suffered from a form of persecutory paranoia. But whether or not Watergate was initiated as an attempt to preempt Nixon’s “enemies,” Nixon could never escape Watergate. The verified criminality and conspiracy of Watergate would forever conjoin Nixon, the “unindicted coconspirator” (in the legal jargon), to the realm of conspiracy theory, with the revelation of his actions and motivation projected onto his entire life and career. After Watergate forced the end of his official political career, Nixon spent the remainder of his

life writing books on foreign policy and attempting to rehabilitate his public image. For many critics, the laudatory eulogies at his funeral—Senator Bob Dole said that the latter twentieth century would be known as the “age of Nixon”—testified to the success of this, Nixon’s greatest conspiracy.

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**See also:** Bilderbergers; Brussell, Mae; Cambodia, Secret Bombing of; Hiss, Alger; House Un-American Activities Committee; Hughes, Howard; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Kissinger, Henry; Paranoia; Pentagon Papers; Red Scare; Watergate.

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## Nuclear Freeze Movement

After Watergate, Vietnam, and the economic/cultural malaise of the 1970s, the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency appeared to offer a new beginning for the United States. Reagan promised to unleash U.S. business by reducing taxation and government regulation, while simultaneously calling for major increases in defense spending so that the United States could assume its role as the “arsenal of democracy” against the forces of aggression in the Soviet Union. Pointing to perceived Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Central America, Reagan reinvigorated the cold war. However, the rhetoric and policies of the Reagan administration also reenergized



Protesters march down a New York street to show their support of a nuclear arms freeze. (Robert Maas/Corbis)

the U.S. peace movement with the call for a freeze on nuclear weapons by both the Soviet Union and the United States. Many conservative supporters of the Reagan administration reacted to the nuclear freeze proposal by labeling the peace movement as a conspiracy supported and financed by the Soviet Union. In a new guise, McCarthyism had reentered U.S. politics.

The peace movement of the 1980s had its origins in the protest politics of the 1960s and 1970s, which had opposed deployment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile system and urged ratification of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This coalition of peace groups included the American Friends Services Committee (AFSC), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Federation of American Scientists (FAS), Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (CSNP), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Mobilization for Survival (MfS), and Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). In 1979, Randall Forsberg of the MfS published *Halt the Arms Race*, call-

ing for a broad coalition to support a "bilateral freeze on the production, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles" (Meyer, 157). Forsberg's appeal proved promising to many in the peace movement, for it was intelligible to the general public, as well as to arms control experts, and it provided a rallying point for a mass protest movement.

However, tension was manifest in the nuclear freeze movement between those who perceived the issue as part of a larger social movement and those who pursued a more pragmatic political strategy. In November 1980 the freeze campaign was given impetus when three Massachusetts Senate districts endorsed a nonbonding freeze resolution. This successful campaign was followed by international protest against the deployment of cruise missiles by the Reagan administration in Western Europe, as well as the introduction, by Democratic Representative Jonathan Bingham of New York and Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, of the nuclear freeze resolution into Congress.

The apparent momentum of the freeze forces led opponents of the movement to question the motives of the peace alliance. For example, the State Department in 1981 charged that the World Peace Council was a Soviet-front organization that funneled money to the European peace movement, seeking to neutralize the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In March 1982, Secretary of State Alexander Haig called a news conference to denounce the congressional resolution for a freeze, asserting that the concept was bad defense, security, and arms control policy. Conservative groups and publications rallied behind the State Department and Haig. Writing in *Commentary*, Vladimir Bukovsky, a Soviet dissident who had been imprisoned for his political activities, asserted that the Soviets were behind the freeze movement, and he was shocked to observe “the ease with which presumably mature and intelligent people had by the thousands fallen into the Soviet booby-trap” (Bukovsky, 19). Rev. Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority organization issued fund-raising letters insisting that “freeze-niks” were undermining U.S. security. In a piece for the *Reader’s Digest*, Frank Chapple wrote, “Those nuclear disarmers who cry ‘Better Red than Dead’ should examine the record: since 1917, some 25 million people have died under Soviet repression inside Russia and its satellites . . .” (Chapple, 70). Not to be left out of the debate, President Reagan stated during an October 1982 press conference that nuclear freeze supporters were being manipulated and used by forces “who want the weakening of America” (Meyer, 215).

Proponents of the nuclear freeze invested valuable time and resources defending the movement from the accusations of a Soviet conspiracy. Popular opinion against the Soviet Union was further galvanized by the Soviet downing of Korean Air Lines flight 007 in the fall of 1983. Meanwhile, the nuclear freeze movement moved increasingly from protest into electoral politics, only to be disappointed by the landslide reelection of President Reagan in 1984. Nuclear freeze proponents found it difficult to recapture momentum after the election and became increasingly marginalized, splintering into more narrow special-interest groups. Nevertheless, the nuclear freeze movement may be credited with

placing the debate on nuclear weapons firmly within the political mainstream, and establishing the framework for the arms reduction talks of Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s.

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**See also:** Anticommunism; KAL 007; Reagan, Ronald, Attempted Assassination of.

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## Nullification

Nullification is the assertion of power or constitutional authority by a state or subnational government that negates or nullifies an act of the national or federal government. Because nullification inherently involves a high level of intergovernmental conflict, those instances where nullification becomes a dominant policy preference typically coincide with allegations of unconstitutionality and conspiratorial theories. Nullification is a concept that developed in U.S. constitutional thought associated with federalism and states rights. Under the compact theory, the U.S. Constitution was created by the thirteen sovereign states. The sovereignty of the U.S. states originated with their each having distinct and separate creation and governing structures as British colonies, and that, as equal states coordinately declaring independence from Britain, each state was an equal party to the Articles of Confederation. The original sovereignty of the states and the interpretation associated with the establishment of the U.S. constitutional system are important foundations from which the concept of nullification developed.



The origin of the U.S. constitutional compact through thirteen sovereign states makes the nature of the new union a point of historical, political, and legal contention. As varied interpretations develop around the nature and meaning of federalism, the almost religious sanction attributed by the interpretive schools of thought contribute to the development of conspiratorial allegations when the federal system reaches periods of crisis. Federalism is defined as “a form of government in which a union of states recognizes the sovereignty of a central authority while retaining certain residual powers of government” (American Heritage Dictionary, 2002). Federalism describes a system of governing authority apportioned between central and regional governments. This definition assumes limitations on both national and state “spheres of authority,” and that within these spheres they are supreme and sovereign, but that there are overlapping authorities that they cooperate in, and within these cooperative spheres the national government retains supremacy. The U.S. system of federalism was described by James Madison in *The Federalist* no. 39 as “neither a national nor a federal Constitution, but a composition of both” (qtd. in Rossiter, 265). Because the United States has a “mixed” constitution, there has always been debate over the extent, intent, and direction of national policy in the federal system, and one of the principal sources of political conflict in the United States is between state and national governments. In almost all cases, major conflict translates ultimately into major conspiracy theories.

As public policy conflict increased, the frequency and severity of intergovernmental conflict increased as well. Nullification was a concept developed by those asserting “states rights” over national authority. Essentially, any act of the national government that a state determined to be beyond the constitutional authority of the national government was declared null and void. The earliest and most powerful assertions of nullification authority were written by Thomas Jefferson in the Kentucky Resolution and James Madison in the Virginia Resolution.

The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 were passed by the Federalist Congress under the support and direction of President John Adams, who vigorously

enforced them. The national government was given broad police powers to arrest, hold, and dispense with foreign nationals and citizens who criticized the U.S. government. This affront to civil liberties was met with strong opposition, from individuals as well as subnational governments. The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were drafted by their respective state legislatures in 1798 as statements of nullification with regard to the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Kentucky Resolution, drafted by Jefferson, clearly states the nullification view of federal law enacted unconstitutionally as “not law,” being “altogether void, and of no force.” It further fuels the conspiratorial views of the time by attributing as “obnoxious,” “suspicious” and “tyrannical” the motives and designs of the president. The critics at the time saw Adams as being controlled by the British government, and alleged that the Alien and Sedition Acts were designed to usurp American rights to free speech as a prelude to monarchy (Rhenquist, 48).

In 1832, President Andrew Jackson signed into law a new tariff bill that lowered the protective tariff that protected southern economic interests. South Carolina responded by calling a state convention on the matter, which resulted in its declaring the new tariff void within the state. The work of John C. Calhoun had further developed the Jeffersonian position on constitutional authority, and the political actions of Calhoun, then a senator from South Carolina, only further fueled the legitimacy and popular appeal of his theory (Calhoun, xvii). The only major point of common ground between Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs during the American Second Party System came in response to this nullification crisis. On this central question of states rights, both Democrats and Whigs agreed that national authority must prevail over the states. This unholy alliance of bitter enemies fueled speculation that a national conspiracy to destroy southern economic interests was at work among the tariff opponents because the maneuverings of Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun had frustrated a more popularly supported effort by Van Buren to lower the tariff further, and Jackson’s defenders paradoxically included his longtime enemies Daniel Webster, Joseph Story, and John Quincy Adams (Schlesinger, 96).



Ultimately, the American Civil War was fought in large part to resolve the issues associated with the underlying constitutional theory that justifies nullification, as it also justifies secession. Nullification has been less utilized since the nineteenth century as the Civil War resolved the question of political authority. Ronald Reagan has been the most recent political leader to revive the legitimacy of the states rights position. In his 1981 inaugural address, Reagan stated that “All of us need to be reminded that the Federal government did not create the States; the States created the Federal government.”

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**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Anti-Federalists; Jefferson, Thomas.

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## October Surprise

The October Surprise conspiracy theory holds that in October 1980, Ronald Reagan conspired with the Islamic Republic of Iran to beat Jimmy Carter in the U.S. presidential elections on 4 November. The deal: in return for the Khomeini government keeping its U.S. hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran until after the election, damaging Carter's candidacy, Reagan would reward it with armaments. The conspiracy theory endured for over a decade, from 1980–1993, but has since disappeared.

The idea originated with Lyndon LaRouche, one of the most prolific, original, and bizarre of U.S. conspiracy theorists. Just after the 1980 election, one LaRouche magazine (*Executive Intelligence Review*, 2 December 1980) first laid out the conspiracy theory, then another one repeated it three years later (*New Solidarity*, 2 September 1983). The idea attracted minimal attention, however, until the Iran-Contra scandal of late 1986 seemed to fulfill the terms of the alleged deal. The former president of Iran, Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, tentatively tried out this theory in an article on 12 April 1987 in the *Miami Herald*. When commentators in the United States (Christopher Hitchens in particular, writing in the *Nation*, 4–11 July 1987) endorsed the idea, Bani Sadr felt emboldened to make ever-larger and more elaborate claims (the *New York Times*, 3 August 1987; the *Miami Herald*, 9 August 1987; and an August 1987 interview [Cockburn, 192–193; 281]).

A handful of conspiracy theorists in the United States (Barbara Honegger, Martin Kilian, David

Marks, Robert Parry, Jurgen Roth, and Craig Unger) began researching Bani Sadr's allegations and stumbled upon an array of self-promoters, con men, and criminals from several countries. The cast included Israelis (Ari Ben-Menashe, Ahran Moshell, and Will Northrop), Frenchmen (Robert Benes and Nicholas Ignatiew), Iranians (Jamshid Hashemi, Ahmed Heidari, Houshang Lavi, and Hamid Naqashan), Americans (Richard Babayan, Richard Brenneke, William Herrmann, Oswald LeWinter, Heinrich Rupp, and Gunther Russbacher), and even a South African (Dirk Stoffberg). Not only did they confirm the story and add their own elaborations, but the researchers carelessly contaminated their sources by informing them of others' statements, further stimulating them to grandiose claims.

After a year, Bani Sadr returned to the topic and found his conspiracy outline fully fleshed out; he was especially impressed by Brenneke's allegations at a 1988 trial in Denver, which in his eyes offered official documentation of the plot. Encouraged by this new information, the former Iranian president now hypothesized a much larger and longer-lasting conspiracy between Reagan and Khomeini (*Playboy*, September 1988; and the interviews he granted to Jean-Charles Deniau in September and October 1988, forming the basis of their joint book [Deniau and Sadr, 48; 57]).

Although the October Surprise theory had now ripened, it remained the guilty pleasure of die-hard conspiracy theorists. Only when the *New York Times* on 15 April 1991 devoted an exceptional two-thirds of



Editorial cartoon showing President Reagan on his knees behind an empty television, presumably announcing the release of hostages in the Middle East, at the same time that he hands Ayatollah Khomeini, who stands to the right of the television, an “arms payoff for hostage release.” (Library of Congress)

its opinion page to this thesis did it become a public issue. The author of this article, Gary Sick, brought to the issue an establishment pedigree (navy captain, Columbia University Ph.D., Ford Foundation program officer, Human Rights Watch board member) as well as the credibility of having served as principal White House aide for Iran during the Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis. Sick alleged that “individuals associated with the Reagan-Bush campaign of 1980 met secretly with Iranian officials to delay the release of the U.S. hostages until after the U.S. election. For this favor, Iran was rewarded with a substantial supply of arms from Israel.” Sick also raised

the possibility that George Bush was one of those Americans, thereby impugning the legitimacy of at least one subsequent Republican president.

The October Surprise instantly vaulted to national importance. Leading television shows devoted hours to the subject, weeklies made it the subject of cover stories, and Jimmy Carter called for an investigation. A January 1992 poll showed 55 percent of Americans believing these allegations to be true and just 34 percent finding them false (Goertzel, 733). As part of his preparations to run for the presidency, H. Ross Perot sent his associates to talk with Gunther Russbacher in his Missouri jail cell. In February 1992, the House of Representatives voted in favor of an investigation of the charges and the Senate followed suit soon after.

Sick himself expanded his op-ed into a 278-page book, *October Surprise: America’s Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan*. Here, Sick characterized the 1980 election as a “covert political coup.” To give his story the feel of authenticity so important to a conspiracy theory, he chronicled in loving detail events that (it turned out) never took place. Thus, discussing a phantom meeting in Madrid on 27 July 1980, for example, he provided this little touch: “The conversation was interrupted twice, when hotel waiters arrived to serve coffee” (Sick, 83).

So much attention to the October Surprise theory meant it had to be checked in sober and exhaustive detail, and under such scrutiny it promptly collapsed. Several journalistic investigations started the process, especially Frank Snepp, “Brenneke Exposed,” *Village Voice*, 10 September 1991; John Barry, “Making of a Myth,” *Newsweek*, 11 November 1991; Steve Emerson and Jesse Furman, “The Conspiracy That Wasn’t,” *New Republic*, 18 November 1991; and Frank Snepp, “October Surmise,” *Village Voice*, 25 February 1992.

Two congressional inquiries then confirmed these conclusions. The Senate stated that “by any standard, the credible evidence now known falls far short of supporting the allegation of an agreement between the Reagan campaign and Iran to delay the release of the hostages” (Committee on Foreign Relations 1992, 115). The House report went fur-

ther, declaring that “There was no October Surprise agreement ever reached.” It found “wholly insufficient credible evidence” that communication took place between the Reagan campaign and the Iranian government and “no credible evidence” of an attempt by the campaign to delay the hostages’ release. The report also expressed concern that “certain witnesses may have committed perjury during sworn testimony” (Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union 53; 7–8; 239).

Surprisingly, given that once started, conspiracy theories tend to live on indefinitely, this one did not. For once, research successfully discredited a conspiracy theory. Symbolic of this was that Oliver Stone decided not to make a movie on this topic. But a devout conspiracy theorist sticks to his guns and Sick continued to forward the October Surprise thesis, writing (*New York Times*, 24 January 1993) that the House report “does not lay . . . to rest” his claims of campaign contacts with Iranians; and that it “leaves open the possibility” of Republican interference with the Carter administration’s foreign policy negotiations.

The October Surprise episode holds much interest as a conspiracy theory case study. In particular, two features stand out: Gary Sick’s having single-handedly transformed it from a story only taken seriously on the left-wing fringe into a credible mainstream claim; and the clarity with which it confirmed the conspiracy theorists’ tendency to accuse others of what they themselves are doing. On this latter point: again and again, one finds that whereas the conspiracy theorists’ accusations of collusion and illegal behavior were unsubstantiated, *they themselves engaged in precisely such behavior*. Examples include:

- They claimed Casey and Bush pretended to be in the United States when they were in Paris and Madrid. Richard Brenneke, perhaps the single most important informant for the October Surprise thesis, claimed to be in Paris and Madrid when credit card receipts proved he was in Portland, Oregon.
- They accused Reagan campaign officials of plotting to save their necks, when this is what

the conspiracy theorists were doing; at least seven of them (Robert Benes, Richard Brenneke, Ahmed Heidari, Nicholas Ignatiev, Oswald LeWinter, Hamid Naqashan, and Will Northrop) were implicated in a 1986 sting operation and the October Surprise offered a way to rehabilitate their reputations.

- Sick, a former Carter administration official, accused the Reagan campaign of secretly working out an arms deal with the Iranians. In fact, as Sick himself already disclosed in 1985, Jimmy Carter initiated such a deal.
- Sick accused others of withholding information, yet this is precisely what he did, keeping quiet about the hundreds of thousands of dollars he received from Oliver Stone for the movie rights to the October Surprise story.
- Sick accused U.S. government officials of lying, yet he was less than honest himself. He wrote in his *New York Times* article that he had heard rumors of a Reagan-Khomeini deal during the 1988 election campaign but he “refused to believe them.” Not so: on 30 October, 1988, at the very peak of the 1988 election campaign, he told the *Rocky Mountain News*, “At first I dismissed this, but not any more. I’m convinced on the basis of what I heard that there were some meetings in Paris.”

Daniel Pipes

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## Octopus

"The Octopus" was researcher Danny Casolaro's term for the vast series of interlocking conspiracies he believed he had uncovered when investigating the Inslaw case before his death. The suspicious circumstances of his death (he was found with his wrists slashed in a hotel room on 10 August 1991) and the fact that some of his research notes seemed to be missing just as he had apparently been on the verge of a major breakthrough have led many in the conspiracy research community to believe that Casolaro had indeed uncovered something big.

Casolaro had been investigating the alleged theft by the Justice Department of a software program called PROMIS developed by the Inslaw company. A database software program, PROMIS was originally designed as a tool to aid prosecutors in tracking criminals in the justice system. According to Casolaro, however, the program had been stolen by members of the Octopus, who first engineered a secret, digital "back door" capacity allowing them undetected access, before selling it to other intelligence agencies in the United States and around the world. The illegal acquisition and subsequent sale was allegedly masterminded by President Reagan's attorney general, Edward Meese, and his coconspirator, Earl Brian, as part of the reward to the Ayatollah Khomeini for the "October Surprise," the much-rumored but probably untrue story of a plan to delay the release of the U.S. hostages held by Iran in order to aid Reagan's campaign for the presidency. The charge of theft was rejected by a federal court, although the revelations in the Iran-Contra hearings seemed to bear out some of Casolaro's ideas—at the very least, many of the same names and associations came up.

As Casolaro began to investigate further, he saw signs of the Octopus in Hughes Aircraft, in the Wackenhut corporation, which for a time supplied security for Area 51, the secret military base in the Nevada

desert, and in a series of murders in the Cabazon tribe of Native Americans in California, which had supposedly been engaged in a joint venture with the Wackenhut corporation. Many of Casolaro's leads, however, were supplied by Michael Riconosciuto, who was at the time serving a prison sentence for fraud, but who claimed he had inside knowledge of the PROMIS case.

As with the investigation into the Kennedy assassination, Casolaro believed he had uncovered a pattern of suspicious deaths of anyone who became involved in the story, a factor that led later researchers to consider Casolaro's own suicide as suspicious. These later researchers have continued from where Casolaro's fragmentary notes left off, with claims that the complicated and often contradictory tentacles of the Octopus conspiracy have been connected with the death of Vince Foster (one theory is that banks had got hold of the PROMIS software and had thrown light on secret accounts), the death of Princess Diana (Dodi Fayed's uncle, an arms dealer, appears in Casolaro's notes), and September 11 (it is rumored that Osama bin Laden purchased an enhanced version of PROMIS from the Russians that enabled him to evade capture).

*Peter Knight*

**See also:** Area 51; Hughes, Howard; October Surprise.

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## Oil Industry

Oil is an essential economic and strategic commodity. Oil power enabled the internal combustion engine to revolutionize industry, society, and the conduct of warfare in the twentieth century. Necessarily, the oil industry is one of the world's largest industries, and plays a major political and economic role in many nations. Conspiracy theories, however, hold that the oil industry secretly controls U.S. pol-

itics and foreign policy from behind the scenes. These theories reject conventional explanations for wars, terrorist attacks, and assassinations, and assert instead that these events were “really about oil.”

### **Actual Conspiracies**

The oil industry has often behaved in a conspiratorial fashion. In the early 1870s, John D. Rockefeller resolved to monopolize the oil industry, and his Standard Oil Company soon controlled 90–95 percent of U.S. production and refining. Standard derived considerable advantage from large size and superior organization, but also ruthlessly used espionage, price-cutting, intimidation, and bribery to destroy or absorb rivals. Standard negotiated secret agreements with the railroads to charge Standard lower transportation rates than rival companies, and to pay Standard a percentage of every dollar the railroads charged Standard’s rivals. Antitrust legislation, and the emergence of new sources of supply, ultimately prevented Standard from eliminating all competitors. However, the Rockefeller family amassed a vast fortune and political influence that persists even today.

In 1928, British, Dutch, and U.S. oil companies divided the Middle Eastern market and agreed to prevent overproduction, allocate quotas, fix prices, and deal jointly with outside producers. After World War II, the United States abrogated these agreements and secured an increased presence for U.S. companies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran. The U.S. Congress, Justice Department, and Federal Trade Commission investigated these agreements. Consequently, in 1952 the Justice Department convened a grand jury to pursue civil and criminal antitrust charges against the oil companies. Ironically, even as the antitrust case progressed, the State Department was negotiating with Britain to create the cartel that controlled Iranian production and refining. President Eisenhower wanted to use the oil industry to exclude Soviet influence from Iran, and this national security consideration trumped antitrust concerns. At length, the antitrust case petered out without significant result.

The Enron case is a recent example of a criminal conspiracy in the oil industry. After Enron went

bankrupt in 2001, company officials were indicted on charges of fraud and money laundering. Other allegations included improper accounting, falsification of financial statements, and conspiracy to manipulate energy prices in California. The full extent of Enron’s political influence remains unknown, although several senior Bush administration officials have Enron connections.

### **Oil and U.S. Foreign Policy**

Most historians agree that the U.S. government uses the oil companies as instruments of foreign policy. Conspiracy theorists, however, cite the above examples from the sordid history of the oil industry to support the argument that the U.S. government is an instrument of the oil companies. Such theorists insist that government policy (especially foreign policy) usually benefits the oil industry.

The theory that the oil industry exerts undue influence on U.S. politics and foreign policy emerges partly from the large number of government officials drawn from the so-called Eastern Establishment. The Eastern Establishment includes northeastern (especially New York) law firms, financial institutions, foundations, media corporations, Ivy League schools, and think tanks such as the Trilateral Commission and Council on Foreign Relations. Conspiracy theorists contend that “the Rockefellers” (a term synonymous with the oil industry) control the Eastern Establishment, and thereby control the government. The secretary of state, in particular, has always been a member of the Rockefeller faction since World War II, as have many CIA directors.

Conspiracy theories maintain that Middle Eastern coups and wars are manufactured in Washington to increase U.S. hegemony over the region’s oil. Daniel Pipes shows that such theories are strongly held in Middle Eastern countries themselves. Even responsible national leaders fear that the CIA will overthrow them at the behest of the oil industry, or that Israel and western countries will conspire to attack them for reasons related to oil. (Of course, such a coup actually occurred in Iran in 1953, and Britain, France, and Israel indeed conspired to attack Egypt in 1956.) Conspiracy theorists contend that the Yom Kippur War, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and

the current “War on Terrorism” all resulted from U.S. manipulation and were intended to benefit the U.S. oil industry.

In 1967, Israel inflicted a crushing defeat on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The Arabs rearmed, and attempted to recapture their lost territories on Yom Kippur in 1973. Arab armies made initial progress until Israel counterattacked. OPEC oil producers embargoed the United States, Portugal, the Netherlands, and South Africa for their support of Israel, and oil prices skyrocketed. Conspiracy theorists argue that then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (the Rockefellers’ principal pawn) engineered this war in order to raise oil prices as part of his strategy of détente. The price increase rewarded the Soviet Union (an oil producer) and punished America’s principal economic competitors (Europe and Japan), who were more dependent on Middle Eastern oil than the United States. Supposedly, Kissinger told the Arabs that the United States could not induce Israel to begin the “peace process” until the Arabs scored a victory on the battlefield. Moreover, Kissinger restrained Israel from launching a preemptive strike before the Arabs attacked.

In 1979, growing unrest in Iran led to the overthrow of the shah and the rise of an Islamic fundamentalist regime, which seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran. The humiliating hostage crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, triggered a spike in oil prices, and contributed to Ronald Reagan’s electoral victory in 1980. Just before the election, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq tried to seize Iran’s oilfields, leading to eight years of bloody, indecisive warfare. These events provoked many conspiracy theories. The shah himself believed that foreign conspirators overthrew him, at times naming the oil companies as his nemesis. Many Iranians still believe the CIA ousted the shah. Some contend that the Reagan campaign conspired with Khomeini to ensure that the embassy hostages were not released before the 1980 election (known as “the October Surprise”).

Other theories insist that Washington wanted high oil prices in 1979 in order to slow European and Japanese economic growth vis-à-vis the United States. Part of this reprise of the 1973 strategy was President Carter’s “green light” for Saddam to attack

Iran. Carter and the oil industry hoped that Saddam’s attack would bring Iranian oil under the control of a de facto ally, and would force Iran to cooperate with Washington, since the Iranian military depended on U.S. equipment. Carter also hoped this pressure would lead to the overthrow of Khomeini and the release of U.S. hostages before the 1980 elections. Proponents of this alternative “October Surprise” theory observe that the United States “tilted” toward Iraq from early 1980 until early 1990.

Some authors argue that Washington manipulated oil prices downward in the 1980s in order to bankrupt the Soviet Union. To reward cooperative Soviet policies after 1989, however, Washington decided to use Iraq to raise the price of oil. In July 1990, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq told Saddam Hussein that the United States had “no opinion” on Iraq’s border dispute with Kuwait. Conspiracy theorists consider this a U.S. “green light” for Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The “green light” was a deliberate trap—the U.S. never intended to permit Saddam to keep Kuwait. Instead, the U.S. intended to use the resulting crisis and war to increase the price of oil and to introduce major military forces into Saudi Arabia and neighboring oil-rich states, where they remain to this day. The oil industry further profited from the rebuilding of Kuwait after the war.

Conspiracy theorists cite the connections between President Bush, administration officials such as then-Defense Secretary Cheney, and the oil industry to support the claim that the 1991 Gulf War was “really” about oil. Such theorists again cite the connections between President George W. Bush, Vice-President Cheney, other administration officials, and the oil industry to support their views of the September 11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath.

The conspiracy view of September 11 is that the Bush administration knew the attacks were coming, but deliberately let them happen to provide a pretext for military aggression. The “War on Terrorism” is thus a fig leaf to cover the “real” U.S. agenda—to control Central Asian oil resources and the potential pipeline routes through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Allegedly, the United States initially backed the vicious Taliban regime in Afghanistan because the

Taliban were receptive to pipeline construction. However, pipeline negotiations failed in 1998, and the United States then began to subvert the Taliban. After September 11, the United States simply executed a long-prepared plan for an invasion of Afghanistan. The increased U.S. military presence in Central Asia and the Saudi peninsula allowed the U.S. to tighten its grip on the region's oil, and to prepare for an invasion of Iraq. Conspiracy theorists believed that if the U.S. invaded Iraq, the "real" objective would have been to allow U.S. oil companies to exploit idle Iraqi oilfields.

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**See also:** Bush, George; Council on Foreign Relations; Kissinger, Henry; October Surprise; Rockefeller Family; Trilateral Commission; Trusts.

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## Oklahoma City Bombing

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City took place on 19 April 1995 and Timothy McVeigh was later convicted for the act. Conspiracy theories played a role in both the cause and the interpretation of the bombing. On the one hand, McVeigh had been active on the fringes of the militia movement and held conspiratorial views about the role of the government. On the other, a

range of conspiracy theories have emerged, from the suggestion that the bombing was the work of the government seeking to justify a crackdown on militias and citizens' rights in the guise of antiterrorism legislation, to the possibility that McVeigh was part of a larger conspiracy.

The blast killed 168 people, including 19 children, and over 500 were injured. On 10 August 1995, a federal grand jury indicted Timothy James McVeigh and Terry Lynn Nichols on several counts relating to the bombing, including conspiracy to use a "weapon of mass destruction, namely an explosive bomb placed in a truck . . . to kill and injure innocent people and to damage property of the United States" (Keith, 220). On 2 June 1997 McVeigh was found guilty of all the charges against him by a federal court jury in Denver and on 13 June he was sentenced to death. On 23 December 1997 Terry Nichols was convicted in his trial of one count of conspiracy in the bombing and eight counts of involuntary manslaughter. He was not convicted of any of the murder charges against him, or of using a weapon of mass destruction. Nichols was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. A third person, Michael Fortier, a former colleague of McVeigh's from the U.S. Army, admitted to having had advanced warning about the bombing and to having helped McVeigh and Nichols traffic in stolen firearms. He was given a reduced twelve-year sentence by agreeing to testify against both McVeigh and Nichols.

This is what might be called the "official version" of the Oklahoma City bombing. It takes the position—one challenged by numerous conspiracy theories—that although McVeigh had assistance from both Nichols and Fortier, it was McVeigh who was principally responsible for the bombing of the Murrah Building; that essentially McVeigh carried out the bombing alone. This is the same version of events McVeigh described to his biographers, Dan Herbeck and Lou Michael, in their book *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*. According to McVeigh, it was he alone who drove a rented Ryder truck containing almost 7,000 pounds of explosive material to Oklahoma City from Kansas, he alone who parked the truck bomb in front of the Murrah Building just before 9:00 A.M. on 19 April,



and he alone who lit the fuses to detonate the explosives. There was, say both McVeigh himself and the U.S. government, no wider conspiracy beyond McVeigh and Nichols (as many others have suggested). For this reason, the “official” version of the Oklahoma City bombing is also referred to as the “lone bomber theory.”

McVeigh’s motivation for the bombing, according to this explanation, was his belief that the federal government was increasingly becoming a threat to the rights and liberties of U.S. citizens, especially with regard to their Second Amendment “right to keep and bear arms.” McVeigh was particularly concerned by the events at Waco, Texas, in 1993. He was convinced that the FBI had deliberately set fire to the Branch Davidian’s complex and then tried to cover it up. By bombing the Murrah Federal Building, McVeigh hoped to prevent any more Wacos in the future. (The bombing took place on the second anniversary of the ending of the Waco “siege” on 19 April 1993.) McVeigh was also heavily influenced by *The Turner Diaries*, a racist novel written by William Pierce—under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald—a former officer in the American Nazi Party and leader of the extreme right National Alliance. The novel tells the story of Earl Turner’s part in a violent struggle against the Jewish rulers of the United States, and contains a detailed account of the explosion of a truck bomb placed outside the headquarters of the FBI in Washington, D.C.

Despite the successful convictions of McVeigh and Nichols, and McVeigh’s own endorsement of the official “lone wolf” theory of the bombing, numerous conspiracy theories have developed around it. Many contend that the U.S. government itself was involved in the bombing of the Murrah Building. This idea is one that has been particularly pronounced within the far right of U.S. politics, especially within the Patriot and militia movements.

### **A Government Plot?**

One of the most widespread of these conspiracy theories is that the bombing was planned and carried out by the government in order to secure the passage of counterterrorism legislation that would allow it to crack down on far-right activists. Refer-

ring to the burning of the German Parliament in 1933, which was used as a justification by the new Nazi government to move against its opponents, advocates of this theory commonly refer to the bombing as America’s own “Reichstag Fire.” Counterterrorism legislation first proposed in the immediate aftermath of the bombing was eventually signed into law by President Clinton as the Terrorism Prevention and Effective Death Penalty Act in April 1996.

At the time of the bombing many Patriots also expressed fears that it might have been carried out by the government as part of a plan to impose a “one-world government” on the United States under the control of the United Nations. Others took the view that the bombing was a deliberately manufactured crisis that might be used to inflict martial law upon the United States, thereby allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to take over the running of the country. For the antigovernment activist Eustace Mullins, the bombing was “a deliberate conspiracy by corrupt and treasonous elements in the federal agencies in Washington as part of a plan to provoke martial law, confiscate legal guns from American citizens, and to wipe out the citizens militia of the several states” (Stern, 206). Waco also features prominently in these conspiracy theories, with some in the Patriot and militia movements suggesting that the bombing was intended to destroy evidence of the government’s wrongdoing at Waco, which was being stored inside the Murrah Building.

Another, often related, conspiracy theory in this regard is the “Manchurian Candidate” theory. Named for the 1959 novel by Richard Condon (filmed in 1962 by John Frankenheimer) about the assassination of a presidential candidate by a brain-washed U.S. Army officer, this theory suggests that Timothy McVeigh was “programmed” by the government to do the bombing. “Evidence” to support this theory appeared to come from McVeigh’s claims that a computer chip had been implanted in his buttocks during his time in the army. Yet according to his biographers this was just a “tall tale” McVeigh liked to tell, rather than something he actually believed (Herbek and Michel, 133). However, if he wasn’t a “pre-programmed” government agent, other conspiracists

nonetheless still see McVeigh as a “useful idiot” or a Lee Harvey Oswald–like “patsy” acting on the government’s behalf.

Conspiracy theories concerning the Oklahoma City bombing also posit the possibility that more than one bomb was detonated on 19 April. Militia groups such as the Militia of Montana, for example, have circulated seismographic evidence showing two “blips” on a seismographic chart in the belief that this provides evidence that two bombs exploded on that day (a copy of the chart can be found in Keith, 141). The Oklahoma Geological Survey which recorded these “blips” refuted this suggestion, however, explaining that the second “blip” was caused by the Murrah Building falling down rather than by another bomb. J. Orlin Grabbe, though, has claimed that a secret Pentagon report describes how explosives were in fact placed on five columns inside the Murrah Building, and that it was these that caused the building to fall rather than the truck bomb placed outside. In contrast, the far-right publication the *Spotlight* suggested that it was a secret and sophisticated “A-neutronic” bomb that was used—a device too sophisticated and technically demanding for either McVeigh or Nichols to have created themselves.

There is also the “government sting gone wrong” version of events. According to this theory, agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) had advanced warning about the bombing, but failed to act upon it because they wanted to arrest the perpetrators in front of the Murrah Building itself, in order to generate “massive publicity” following the public relations problems the agency had suffered as a result of its handling of the confrontations at Ruby Ridge in Idaho in 1992 and Waco in 1993. Unfortunately, however, the agents tracking the truck lost it when a double agent the BATF had been working with “turned off the concealed beeper on the truck” (Skolnick). Advocates of this theory point to the absence of BATF agents from their offices inside the Murrah Building at the time the bomb went off to support their claims. Trying to reconcile this theory with the secret Pentagon report of the five demolition charges being placed inside the Murrah Building, J. Orlin Grabbe considers the possibility that someone was “using their

knowledge” of the sting operation as “a cover for the actual bombing.” “Either way,” Grabbe concludes, “it suggests an inside job.”

All of these charges and claims have been strongly refuted by the BATF and others, and there is no convincing evidence to support any of the conspiracy theories that the U.S. government was involved in the Oklahoma City bombing.

### **John Doe No. 2 and “Others Unknown”**

Members of the far right in the United States are not the only people to have suggested that more people than Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols might have been involved in the Oklahoma City bombing. Relatives of those who died in the explosion, journalists, academics, politicians, and lawyers have all raised doubts about the official “lone bomber” theory. One of the reasons for this is that on the day after the bombing, 20 April 1995, the FBI issued composite sketches of two unidentified suspects, known as “John Doe No. 1” and “John Doe No. 2,” whom several witnesses had connected with the rented Ryder truck containing the bomb. John Doe No. 1 was quickly identified as McVeigh, but the identity and even the existence of John Doe No. 2 has remained a matter of great controversy. The original grand jury indictment against McVeigh and Nichols also encouraged speculation about a wider conspiracy because of its reference to McVeigh and Nichols having planned to carry out the bombing with “others unknown” (Keith, 220).

Glenn and Cathy Wilburn, who lost two grandsons in the bombing, were the most prominent relatives of those who died in Oklahoma City to call for an investigation into the possibility of a wider conspiracy. Drawing on the work of an Oklahoma journalist, J. D. Cash, they persuaded Republican state representative Charles Key to campaign for a grand jury to investigate not only the existence of other perpetrators behind the bombing, but also allegations that the government had had prior knowledge of the attack. One of Cash’s claims, for instance, was that he had evidence linking John Doe No. 2 to some of the inhabitants of Elohim City, a Christian Identity community in eastern Oklahoma. This theory was picked up by Stephen Jones, McVeigh’s

chief defense counsel during his trial, and Cash's work also appeared in an Internet newsletter, *The John Doe Times*, created by the First Alabama Cavalry Regiment (Constitutional Militia) in Birmingham in 1996, which was widely circulated by both Patriot and mainstream media sources.

Stephen Jones simply didn't believe that McVeigh could have acted largely alone, as the government maintained. Following Cash, he was particularly concerned that the government hadn't properly investigated possible links between the Oklahoma City bombing and Elohim City, especially those involving Andeas Strassmeir—known as “Andy the German”—who was Elohim City's chief of security and weapons training, and Dennis Mahon, a former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan and leader of the White Aryan Resistance. Jones, for example, had uncovered reports from a BATF informant called Carol Howe from 1994 in which she claimed that Mahon and Strassmeir were planning a terrorist campaign that would include the blowing up of a federal building and that “the Oklahoma City Federal Building” was one of the possible targets (Jones and Israel, 187). Further, Jones also arranged for McVeigh to undertake a polygraph test. The results of this revealed that McVeigh was being truthful when he described his own part in the bombing, but that he was being evasive when asked whether others, besides those already charged, had been involved. McVeigh provided an explanation for this discrepancy by explaining to his biographers that the polygraph “was thrown off by his anxieties over being asked the same questions again and again,” as well as by his concern that the federal authorities might be trying to implicate his sister Jennifer in the bombing (Herbeck and Michel, 296).

McVeigh consistently denied that anyone else other than Nichols and Fortier had any involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing. He claimed that he had met Strassmeir once, at a gun show in Tulsa, and said that he had never met Mahon. In a letter to the *Houston Chronicle* on 2 May 2001, he argued that Jones's claims concerning a wider conspiracy—which the trial judge Richard G. Matsch had ruled to be inadmissible, and which, in addition to a link with the residents of Elohim City, had also raised

the possibility of overseas involvement in the bombing by Islamic extremists such as Osama bin Laden, Iraq, and the Irish Republican Army—had been “thoroughly discredited.” “Does anyone honestly believe,” McVeigh asked, “that if there was a John Doe No. 2 (there is not), that Stephen Jones would still be alive? Think about it.” (Cobb).

On 29 January 1997, the Justice Department announced that those witnesses who had claimed to have seen John Doe No. 2 had been mistaken. No John Doe No. 2 existed. On 31 December 1998 the Oklahoma grand jury petitioned for by Glenn and Cathy Wilburn, among others, also concluded that there was no John Doe No. 2. There were no additional perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing, it said, no evidence of any connection to Elohim City, and no evidence that the government had received any advanced warning of the bombing.

Despite this, the belief that there was a wide-ranging conspiracy behind the Oklahoma City bombing refuses to disappear. It was given renewed emphasis as a result of the publication of Mark S. Hamm's book *In Bad Company: America's Terrorist Underground* in 2002.

### “Multiple John Doe No. 2s” and Some Continuing Questions

Also building on the investigations of J. D. Cash, Hamm contends that there was a wider conspiracy behind the Oklahoma City bombing, and that this conspiracy was the work of a neo-Nazi influenced antigovernment paramilitary gang known as the Aryan Republican Army (ARA). According to Hamm's “multiple John Doe 2 theory,” four cells of the ARA were involved in the bombing. The first cell contained “the bomb builders,” Steven Colbern, Dennis Malzac, and a third unidentified man whom Hamm refers to as the “phantom bomb builder.” The second cell was made up of McVeigh, Nichols, and Fortier, and according to Hamm their role was “to plan and develop a strategy for the bombing.” A third cell was to deal with “information, training, weapons, and logistical support,” and this, Hamm says, was led by Andreas Strassmeier. It also included Denis Mahon and a Elohim City resident, Michael Brescia, whom many people, including the government informer

Carol Howe, have identified as the infamous John Doe No. 2. The final cell handled financing—which came in part from the proceeds of bank robberies—and security. Led by Pete Langan, its members, says Hamm, included Brescia again, as well as four others, Richard Guthrie, Kevin McCarthy, Scott Stedeford, and a Ku Klux Klan leader, Mark Thomas (Hamm, 195–196). According to this theory, the bombing is best understood as being part of a plot to set a race-based civil war into motion and to recruit others to the ARA's antigovernment and revolutionary agenda. By denying the involvement of anyone else, McVeigh, in this scenario, was hoping to be seen as a martyr for the cause. As Denis Mahon explained to the journalist J. D. Cash, McVeigh was “a good soldier, who from the beginning wanted to be the fall guy in the bombing—securing his place in history as a patriot hero” (Hamm, 200).

Concern that the full story of those involved in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City has yet to be told was intensified in May 2001 when the FBI revealed, just six days before McVeigh was due to be executed, that it had withheld more than 3,000 documents from his defense team during his trial. McVeigh's execution was postponed, and he was eventually put to death by lethal injection in the U.S. penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, on 11 June 2001. A *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup Poll published the day after the execution revealed that “65 percent of American adults believe that McVeigh did not name everyone who helped him build and detonate the bomb” (Johnson).

D. J. Mulloy

**See also:** Militias; Pierce, William.

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#### Onassis, Aristotle

As the alleged head of the international Mafia in the 1960s and 1970s, the Greek oil and shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis plays a particularly important role in parapolitical accounts of the time. According to conspiracy lore, Onassis built his fortune at first by cornering the Argentinean opium market through



deals with Joseph Kennedy (John F. Kennedy's father), Eugene Meyer, and the mobster Meyer Lansky. He then bought every oil tanker he could in the late 1940s and early 1950s, taking advantage of the U.S. attempt to increase oil exports from the Middle East. The oil flowed, along with, the story goes, drugs and weapons to make Onassis extremely wealthy, with far wealthier and more powerful political figures beholden to him. Financiers then poured over a half-billion dollars into a new class of supertankers owned by Onassis and his brother, Stavros Spyros Niarchos. The fleet eventually moved over 5 billion gallons of crude oil to Western Europe by 1956, a fifth of all Middle Eastern imported crude.

The "Gemstone File" conspiracy text, based on a series of letters written by a man named Bruce Roberts and summarized in a hand-circulated outline, maintains that Onassis kidnapped Howard Hughes in 1957. According to this motherlode of contemporary conspiracy lore, an international Mafia run by Onassis then held Hughes captive for ten years in his own hotels. It put the billionaire adventurer Hughes's assets, Hughes Aircraft, and related companies among them, under Onassis's control. From there, the Gemstone File details the role played by Onassis and his associates in the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and his subsequent marriage to Jacqueline Kennedy, the president's widow. It also traces these connections to the Watergate break-in; Ted Kennedy's disaster at Chappaquiddick and many other mob interactions with the Rockefellers; Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, and many well-known figures from the 1970s; the Bay of Pigs; and the Watergate Plumbers E. Howard Hunt, James McCord, Frank Sturgis, and G. Gordon Liddy.

John F. Kennedy visited Onassis on his yacht, the *Christina*, after losing the vice-presidential nomination at the Democratic Convention of 1956. The Gemstone maintains that Onassis promised him the presidency at that point. Six years later Onassis invited Jackie Kennedy onto the yacht, ostensibly to help her recover from the death of her infant son Patrick. She came back from that visit about a month before JFK's murder, and Onassis was among the few to visit her directly after it. In 1968, they started dat-

ing. Their marriage arrangement included separate bedrooms and \$750,000 allowances for Jackie and her children. Some commentators have noted that, in marrying President Kennedy's widow, Onassis was following an old Mafia dictum about shooting one's enemy and taking his girl, but others have seen in the Onassis/Jackie Kennedy marriage merely a widow's search for protection and seclusion for her children after the deaths of her husband and his brother.

Onassis never recovered from the loss of his son Alexander in a plane crash near Athens in January 1973. He descended into conspiracy paranoia about that crash, offering a \$1 million reward for evidence of wrongdoing. He died the following year.

*Kenn Thomas*

**See also:** Hughes, Howard; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Mafia.

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## One-World Government

Many Americans, often those associated with extreme right-wing groups and fundamentalist Christian churches, believe that the trend of economic globalization is part of a secret plot by a small group of international bankers and powerful politicians to erode national sovereignty and institute a one-world government (sometimes also called the New World Order). While there have been attempts by ambitious rulers throughout history to gain worldwide domination—from the ancient empires of Greece and Rome to the imperialistic ambitions of Napoleon and Hitler—the forces of the one-world government are said to use more deceptive means. The theory is that they have amassed power not through the use of

military force, but by controlling international financial markets. Although there are many versions of the theory, all agree that the one-world government operates through powerful international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Trilateral Commission (TC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the secretive Bilderberger group.

In the 1960s, the one-world government theory was promoted by the ultra-conservative John Birch Society. According to the Birchers, the CFR and the TC were organs of international communism, whose goal was to overturn democracy and replace it with a repressive global socialist regime. In post-cold war America, many right-wing extremist groups like the modern militias believe the push for one-world government is the work of “international Jews” with origins in secret societies of the eighteenth century, like Adam Weishaupt’s Bavarian Illuminati and the Freemasons. Proof of the plot is found in *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forgery written in the early twentieth century and first popularized in the United States by Henry Ford’s “The International Jew,” which appeared in his *Dearborn Independent* in the 1920s. The *Protocols* purport to detail the plans of a super-secret cabal of Communist-Jews to seize world power by manipulating international finance and installing their own government pawns in positions of high political office. Although they were exposed as a forgery in 1920, the *Protocols* continue to be cited as evidence of a one-world government conspiracy. Militias and other survivalist groups further claim that foreign troops, under the orders of the UN, are gathering in several locations around the United States, preparing to disarm U.S. citizens and impose martial law. They report sightings of unmarked black helicopters and the creation of concentration camps where resisters will be detained once the siege begins.

In more recent manifestations, the theory is promoted by Christian millennialists, who link the one-world government theory to biblical prophecies of the Last Days. According to the visions reported in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Revelation, sometime after the Rapture, when Christ returns to earth to remove the elect to heaven, a beast with ten

horns, the Antichrist, will rise from the sea to unite “all kindreds and tongues and nations” (Rev. 13) and rule over the earth for a period of “forty and two months” (Rev. 13). During this time of widespread peace, in which the Antichrist deceives mankind into worshiping him, everyone will receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead bearing the Antichrist’s name or number, 666. Those who follow him by accepting this mark will be granted unlimited prosperity, since “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark” (Rev. 13). Eventually, Christ will once again return to earth and defeat the Antichrist in the final battle of Armageddon. Interpreted according to these prophecies, the facts of economic globalization offer proof of this satanic plot, instituted by Jews and foretold in the Bible, to turn people away from Christianity, erode national sovereignty, and institute global governance. Rather than a single individual, the Antichrist is often believed to be a composite, such as the small group of elites who control the UN, the IMF, and other organizations. These organizations and the opening of worldwide financial markets in treaties like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) offer clear signs of the Antichrist’s attempt to unite all nations into a single federation. The ten horns of the beast, symbolizing a ten-nation alliance, refer to the European Union or to the members of the UN Security Council, working to establish global tyranny. And the mark of the beast is found in the increasing prevalence of credit cards rather than cash or the push to develop a national identification card.

Jeff Insko

**See also:** Antisemitism; Apocalypticism; John Birch Society; New World Order; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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### Operation Paperclip

Between 1945 and 1955, more than 1,600 German and Austrian technicians and scientists were brought to the United States through a project code-named Operation Paperclip and a series of sister programs. Despite the fact that many of those scientists—among them Wernher von Braun, the father of the U.S. rocket program—were rumored to be Nazi war criminals, U.S. government and military officials allegedly concealed information about many of them in a major cover-up effort aimed at facilitating their legal entry into the United States. U.S. officers identified the chosen German scientists by attaching a paperclip to their personal file.

Even before the end of World War II, U.S. scientists and military personnel had begun the search for German scientists under Operation Paperclip's predecessor, Project Overcast. They felt the need for German expertise because outstanding German design and technology had often offset Allied advantages of manpower during the war. Therefore, they were particularly interested in locating experts in rocketry, aircraft design, and aviation medicine, to use their capabilities to shorten the war against Japan. Hundreds of Germans were taken to interrogation centers, among them many of the scientists who had been engaged in developing the V2 rocket at the Peenemünde missile base on the Baltic Sea under Wernher von Braun. Other prominent German scientists included von Braun's close associate, General Walter Dornberger; the latter's wartime chief of staff, Herbert Axter; the deputy technical director, Arthur Rudolph; and an aviation doctor, Hubertus Strughold. The group included other scientists not involved in rocketry, such as infectious diseases expert Walter Schreiber, desalinization specialist Konrad Schaefer, and Kurt Blome, who was engaged in biological warfare research.

U.S. government agencies decided that the United States should secure their services permanently and allow them to immigrate. The reasons for the apparent willingness of government and army officials to overlook and actively conceal information about German scientists' active involvement in war crimes were manifold. In addition to exploiting German technical know-how, the process assured that

Germany could not use its scientists and their knowledge to rebuild its forces. Finally, an intense competition for German technical expertise, not only with the Soviet Union, but also with France and Great Britain, triggered a policy of denial born out of the fear that America's competitors could tip the strategic balance in their favor. Therefore, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee formulated the policy paper SWNCC 257/5, which allowed the admittance of specialists from Germany in the national interest. This required a special policy as U.S. immigration law forbade the entry of members of fascist organizations. Official Paperclip policy prohibited the utilization of war criminals or active Nazis, but did not explicitly rule out nominal party members. According to Linda Hunt, a former CNN investigative reporter, who was the first researcher to have access to formerly closed material, the first background checks of possible candidates for Project Paperclip by the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA)—the agency under the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for the implementation of the operation—revealed that many had participated in brutalized slave labor and experiments on humans, and had committed other crimes. Therefore, State Department officials, especially the liaison to the JIOA, Samuel Klaus, refused to accept many of the applicants, believing that Nazi war criminals constituted a threat to U.S. security. In reaction to this deadlock between the State Department and the JIOA, the latter apparently advised the army to withhold or change incriminating dossiers about German scientists. The report on Wernher von Braun from September 1948, for example, described him as a potential security threat. Five months later the army had upgraded his classification to the role of a mere opportunist.

The expertise the Germans brought with them played a vital role in the U.S. space program, in particular in the development of the Saturn rockets and the astronauts' preparation for high-altitude flying. For decades, government agencies and the public were not concerned that alleged Nazi war criminals lived in the United States and were employed in government programs and private corporations. The mid-1970s saw the first legislative investigations into

the matter, partly due to a growing awareness that the last survivors of the Holocaust and slave labor would die soon. A subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee under the leadership of Joshua Eilberg (D-PA) held hearings in 1977 and 1978. Its members concluded that government agencies had been more concerned about Communist propaganda than bringing these criminals to justice. Partly as a result of these deliberations, the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) was founded in 1979, with the goal to locate and try Nazi war criminals living in the United States. It renewed its efforts after the opening of Russian archives to U.S. OSI researchers in the early 1990s, but due to the death of most suspects their investigations are destined to be short lived. As most Germans who participated in Operation Paperclip entered the United States legally, none of them have been prosecuted.

*Christoph Schiessl*

**See also:** Atomic Secrets; Cold War.

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### Opinion Polls about Conspiracy Theories

According to polls, most Americans today agree that the scenario posed by at least one popular conspiracy theory is very likely or somewhat likely. On 25–29 June 1997, a survey was conducted of 1,009 people nationwide, with participants from every state and the District of Columbia. Guido H. Stempel III, distinguished professor of the EW Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University and Thomas Hargrove of the Scripps Howard News Service conducted the survey. The results have a 4 percent margin of error with a 95 percent confidence

interval, meaning that the results are projectable to all U.S. households 95 times out of 100 plus or minus 4 percentage points. At that time:

- More than half (51 percent) believe it is very likely or somewhat likely that government officials were "directly responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy."
- More than half (60 percent) believe is likely that military officials covered up the dangers of the Agent Orange chemical.
- Four-fifths (80 percent) believe it is likely that military officials are covering up information about U.S. soldiers' exposure to nerve gas or germ warfare in the Gulf War.
- More than one-third (40 percent) believe it is likely that the FBI burned down the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.
- More than half (52 percent) believe it is likely that the CIA allowed drug dealers from Central America to sell crack cocaine to African Americans in U.S. inner cities.
- More than one-third believe it is likely the navy shot down TWA Flight 800 either intentionally or accidentally.

Respondents were asked if the above situations were likely to some degree. The above responses included the "very likely" and "somewhat likely" answers. Note that believing that something is "somewhat likely" may be the admission of possibility, not a firm belief.

### JFK Assassination

Most Americans say that more than one person was involved in the JFK assassination. A Gallup Poll was conducted 26–28 March 2001 with telephone interviews of a randomly selected sample of 1,024 adults aged 18 and older. The results are projectable to all U.S. households with a 95 percent confidence and 3 percent margin of error. At that time, when asked, "Do you think that one man was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy, or do you think that others were involved in a conspiracy?"—with the possible answers "one man," "others involved" and "no opinion":



- Fourth-fifths (81 percent) responded that they believed that other people were involved in a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy, an all-time high.

The historical results of this poll, which has been conducted periodically by Gallup since 1964, are as follows:

	One Man	Others Involved	No Opinion
March 2001	13%	81%	6%
November 1993	15%	75%	10%
February 1992*	10%	77%	13%
October 1983*	11%	74%	15%
December 1976**	11%	81%	9%
December 1966**	36%	50%	15%
November 1963**	29%	52%	19%

\*Wording included, “one man, Lee Harvey Oswald . . .”

\*\*Slight variations in wording:

1963—“Do you think that the man who shot President Kennedy acted on his own, or was some group or element also responsible?”

1966—“Do you think that one man was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy, or do you think others were involved?”

1976—“Do you think that one man was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy, or do you think others were involved?”

In the 1997 Scripps Howard News Service/Ohio University nationwide poll, the question concerned not more than one person, but government officials with direct involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. The poll discovered:

- More than half (51 percent) of Americans believe it is very likely or somewhat likely that government officials were “directly responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy.”

### AIDS and Drugs

A sizable number of people would agree with at least one of the accusations that the government manufactured AIDS or made drugs available in inner cities to attack African Americans. In a 1990 poll, reported in the 29 October 1990 edition of the *New York Times*:

- Nearly one-third (29 percent) of black New Yorkers indicated belief that AIDS was “deliberately created in a laboratory in order

to infect black people,” versus one in twenty (5 percent) among white New Yorkers.

- More than half (60 percent) of black New Yorkers indicated belief that the government “deliberately” made drugs available to poor black people, versus a little more than one in ten (12 percent) among white New Yorkers.

In another 1990 survey, reported in the 2 November 1995 edition of the *Boston Globe*:

- More than one-third (34 percent) of black churchgoers polled in five cities agreed “the AIDS virus was produced in a germ warfare laboratory.”

The 1997 Scripps Howard News Service/Ohio University nationwide poll discovered:

- More than half (52 percent) of Americans believe it likely that the CIA allowed drug dealers from Central America to sell crack cocaine to African Americans in U.S. inner cities.

### Pearl Harbor

About one in three Americans say that President Roosevelt knew about the attack on Pearl Harbor in advance. The Gallup Organization reports that in December 1941, 84 percent of Americans said the president had done “everything he should have to prevent war with Japan,” with only 9 percent disagreeing.

Fifty years later, in 1991, Gallup found that nearly one-third of Americans (31 percent) agreed with the statement, “Roosevelt knew about Japanese plans to bomb Pearl Harbor but did nothing about it because he wanted an excuse to involve the United States on the side of the Allies in the war,” with 47 percent disagreeing and 22 percent with no opinion. As an interesting side note, 19 percent said they still have not forgiven the Japanese.

### Moon Landings

The conspiracy theory that the moon landings were a fake is less popular. A Gallup Poll was conducted

13–14 July 1999 with telephone interviews of a randomly selected sample of 1,061 adults aged 18 and older. The results are projectable to all U.S. households with a 95 percent confidence and a 3 percent margin of error. When asked, “Thinking about the space exploration, do you think the government staged or faked the Apollo moon landing, or don’t you feel that way?”—with answers being, “Yes, staged,” “No,” and “No opinion”:

- Less than one in ten (6 percent) believes that the landing was faked while nearly nine in ten (89 percent) do not believe that the lunar landing was faked or staged.

Time/CNN/Yakelovich Partners, Inc., conducted a similar poll 19–20 July 1995, with virtually identical wording, and produced similar results:

- Less than one in ten (6 percent) believes that the landing was faked while more than four-fifths (83 percent) do not believe that the lunar landing was faked or staged.

## UFOs

Many Americans say that the government is hiding information about UFOs. In the 1997 survey conducted by Guido H. Stempel III of the EW Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University and Thomas Hargrove of the Scripps Howard News Service mentioned above, nearly half of Americans (47 percent) indicated that it is very likely or somewhat likely that “The U.S. Air Force is withholding proof of the existence of intelligent life from other planets.”

Another study, sponsored by the SCI FI Channel and conducted 23–25 August by RoperASW, found that 72 percent of Americans believe the “government is not telling the public everything it knows about UFO activity,” and 68 percent believe the “government knows more about extraterrestrial life” than it says. The study was conducted among a representative example of 1,021 adults aged 18 and over, with a margin of error of +3 percent.

Further, 60 percent of respondents in the RoperASW poll said the government “should not with-

hold information about UFO sightings,” while 58 percent said the government shouldn’t conceal information about “potential encounters with extraterrestrial life.”

## Trust in Government

The above RoperASW study also discussed the issue of trust in government. The same poll found that about half of Americans (53 percent) say their “level of trust in the government has remained stable over the past five years,” while 29 percent say they trust the government “less than they did five years ago.” More than half of Americans (55 percent) said the government “does not share enough information with the public in general.”

After the Oklahoma City bombing, a poll was conducted by the Gallup organization that found that 39 percent of Americans believed that the federal government had become too powerful and large and therefore was a threat to the freedoms and rights of average citizens.

In 2000, this number increased to 45 percent, with 51 percent disagreeing that the federal government poses such a threat. The 2000 study was conducted 7–9 April 2000 among a randomly selected national sample of 1,006 adults aged 18 and over, with a margin of error of +3 percent.

*Craig DiLouie*

**See also:** Agent Orange; AIDS; African Americans; CIA; Drugs; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Oklahoma City Bombing; Pearl Harbor; UFOs; Waco.

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### Oswald, Lee Harvey

Lee Harvey Oswald (1939–1963) has been U.S. “Public Enemy #1” ever since his posthumous conviction in the court of popular opinion for the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. For most people, his supposed acts in Dallas on 22 November 1963 remain the single most memorable event of Oswald’s short life. Nevertheless, the facts and enigmas of his twenty-four years have inspired as much scholarly debate and public controversy as any number of longer-lived, more colorful and influential U.S. antiheroes such as J. Edgar Hoover, Jimmy Hoffa, or Richard Nixon. To this day, there is no firm consensus regarding his actions in those fateful hours or the circumstances leading to them, although in recent years the balance of popular and scholarly opinion has begun to favor the theory that he was involved—perhaps unwittingly—in some kind of conspiracy to assassinate the president.

#### From Communist Novice to U.S. Marine

Born on 18 November 1939 in a downtrodden neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana, Oswald had a family life that was, by any standards, unsettled. Although his father’s early death meant that Lee’s childhood was, like that of many youngsters born during the war, dominated by his mother, it is fair to say that Marguerite Oswald was a remarkable character. A succession of relationships and family connections with figures on the fringes of organized crime have proven fertile ground for conspiracy researchers like Anthony Summers and Peter Dale Scott, who have often depicted these connections as the source of Lee’s own involvement with the Mafia and other groups during his later years. Certainly, the family’s poverty and rootless wanderings across the Deep South and the Bronx seem to have acted as a catalyst in the young man’s political education. By the

age of sixteen, already a frequent truant and briefly an inmate of the Bronx’s Youth House correctional institute, Oswald had begun to describe himself as a Communist. He claimed to have been won over to the beleaguered U.S. Left by the plight of the Rosenbergs, whose ongoing court case brought about a short-lived revival of the Communist Party’s fortunes in the early 1950s. From his own fascinating but still unpublished writings, and the hundreds of pages of testimony given during the official inquiry into Kennedy’s death, the picture emerges of a hostile, potentially violent and impressionable youngster who was inflamed by the lurid rhetoric of the Left and turned to the uncompromising radicalism of the Communist movement at the height of McCarthyism. Borne out by contemporary school reports, and lent credence by the careers of other leftists and political assassins like Leon Czolgosz, killer of President McKinley in 1901, this became the standard narrative of Oswald’s early years.

However, the interpretation of Oswald as a loner has not convinced everyone. In some accounts he emerges as a typical teenager, prone to scrapping with his peers and voicing extreme opinions maybe, but hardly a callous agent of U.S. communism steeling himself for a final conflict with the U.S. establishment. For one thing, Oswald never actually joined either the Communist Party (CPUSA) or any of the other leftist groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) with whom he frequently corresponded. Even more significant, in 1956, having left school the previous year, he enlisted with that bastion of U.S. neoimperialism, the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). Early scores from aptitude tests and other assessments of his conduct and proficiency taken during his military service all reveal a slightly below-average performer. For obvious reasons, his ability with a rifle has long been the subject of fierce controversy on which the most that can be said with any certainty is that, while not an exceptional marksman, he was far from the worst in his unit. That he could have accomplished the fatal, once-in-a-lifetime result in Dealey Plaza was asserted first by the Warren Commission following lengthy ballistics tests, and is a conclusion recently bolstered by computer assessments performed for Gerald Posner’s 1993 book, *Case Closed*.

For many other authors, however, the extraordinary, almost superhuman performance Oswald would have needed to achieve on the day, together with analysis of the wounds on the president's body, is enough in itself to imply the presence of a much larger team of gunmen installed in various positions around the Plaza, and therefore, by definition, a conspiratorial interpretation of the event.

Certainly, Oswald's military career was unorthodox, and this period has been subjected to increasing scrutiny by conspiracy theorists. He seems to have made no secret of his Marxist leanings and indeed continued to learn Russian and subscribe to *Pravda*, facts that undoubtedly marked him out as highly suspect among fellow marines in the midst of the cold war. No less anomalous were his bizarre assignments with members of the local leftist and criminal underworld while on maneuvers in the South China Sea. For Edward Epstein, one of the pioneers of Kennedy assassination conspiracy theory, these mysterious connections, coupled with his training in sensitive radar-control techniques as part of the U-2 spy plane program, point toward the presence of intelligence communities on one side or other of the Iron Curtain influencing his actions. Recently, following Epstein, other writers, including Anthony Summers and former army intelligence officer John Newman, have explored the possibility that Oswald may have been recruited by U.S. military intelligence to work as a "deep cover" agent in the Soviet Union. This is one of the theories dramatized in Oliver Stone's controversial movie *JFK* (1992), itself based on the writings of Jim Garrison and Jim Marrs, and it certainly provides a plausible explanation for the wealth of unanswered questions in the standard narrative of Oswald's military service established by the Warren Commission.

### Oswald's Russian Years

In spite of their suspicions of his left-wing interests and tendencies, few of Oswald's fellow marines could have predicted his dramatic next move. In the summer of 1959, after his discharge from the USMC, Oswald began to set in train a complicated plan that would result in his defection to and residence in the then Soviet Union. This act—impressive in itself

given his youth—has, like every other aspect of his life, been scrutinized for evidence of the hidden hand of possible agents of conspiracy. And for good reason: on 31 October 1959, he presented himself to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, saying that not only did he wish to renounce his American citizenship, but that he also planned to furnish Soviet intelligence with the military secrets he had learned during his training in the U-2 program. After several months of unhappy isolation in the Metropole Hotel in Moscow, during which he met future biographer—and suspected CIA agent—Priscilla McMillan, and even attempted suicide, Oswald was finally sent on a "Stateless Persons Identity Document" to the industrial city of Minsk, in the province of Belorussia. That Minsk was located near an espionage training school, and that he was supported by a Soviet government allowance that amounted to a small fortune in the Soviet Union, has led some commentators to speculate that he may indeed have passed intelligence to his hosts, in return for which he was given the "red carpet" treatment.

In any event, Oswald would remain in the Soviet Union for around three years, working in the Belorussian radio and television factory and socializing with some decidedly suspicious members of Minsk society. When, in April 1961, he married a young student named Marina Prusakova—whose own family background is thought to have been tainted by her stepfather's involvement in Stalin's purges of the 1930s and 1940s—it seems that the weight of Soviet intelligence and surveillance was brought to bear on the American defector. Certainly, the couple's every conversation in their relatively luxurious apartment overlooking the Svisloch River was now recorded and monitored by local KGB agents. Whether or not this was because Oswald represented a valuable intelligence source and potential agent or was merely an asset in the cold war diplomatic chess game remains unclear. However, the balance of evidence from sources such as the frequently unreliable Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko and Norman Mailer's extensive research for his book *Oswald's Tale* (1995) now suggests that, after their initial interest in Oswald, the KGB quickly lost faith in his value as a potential operative.



In spite of the circumstances of his defection, Oswald soon grew disillusioned with life in the Soviet Union. To judge from the large and compelling body of essays, diaries, and letters he produced during his time in Minsk, it is clear that, like many other ideological defectors, he was most distressed by the gap between Communist rhetoric and Soviet realities, and by the regimented, repressive conditions inside Khrushchev's empire. In fact, at around the same time as he met Marina, Oswald had reopened negotiations with the U.S. Embassy. There followed well over a year of diplomatic wrangling, including several dangerous, illegal visits to Moscow and hostile KGB interrogations of his wife. Finally, early in 1962, Lee secured exit visas for himself and his family. For some conspiracy critics like Anthony Summers and Jim Marrs, the progress of the Oswalds' return to the United States appears to have been far too smooth, especially given Lee's record of anti-American statements and actions. Likewise, the departure of Marina and their baby daughter June seems to have been achieved with a striking lack of the usual Soviet bureaucratic obstruction. Having said all that, according to some of Posner's and Mailer's intelligence sources, the Soviets may simply have been glad to see the back of this troublesome family. On balance, it seems that, just like in the United States during his teenage years, Oswald had proved unable to keep his criticism of the Soviet regime to himself and had made many powerful enemies in the Soviet Union.

### **Oswald the New Leftist?**

Oswald spent his last eighteen months in the southern cities of New Orleans and Dallas. During this period, according to the story established by the Warren Commission, he gave every sign of seeking to create for himself a reputation as a dynamic and forceful radical. In these months, he was in regular contact with several of the remaining parties of the U.S. Left, including the CPUSA and the SWP, as well as parties of the "New Left" such as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC), which, due to the rise of Fidel Castro's socialist regime, could claim scores of powerful supporters in the early 1960s. In addition to the various series of correspondence

between Oswald and the leaders of these parties, many of which are contained among the Hearings and Exhibits of the Warren Commission and make fascinating reading, there are also several texts—apparently written for his wife in the event of his imprisonment—in which Oswald apparently seeks to justify an assassination attempt on Major General Edwin Walker. As one of the South's most aggressive segregationists and John Birch Society leaders—and, ironically, an enemy of Attorney General Robert Kennedy—Walker was certainly a natural target for a leftist, especially one like Oswald, who is remembered at this time as being an outspoken advocate of desegregation. That Oswald confessed to his wife and others to having taken a shot at the general in April 1963 was, for obvious reasons, seized upon by the Warren Commission as evidence of an existing propensity to act out his leftist beliefs in a violent and potentially murderous way.

And yet, as with every other event in his life, the circumstances of Oswald's attempt on Walker's life become more mysterious the more scrutiny is paid them. Indeed, in these confusing last months, Oswald's actions seem to have become even less comprehensible and more subject to debate. As the House Select Committee on Assassinations found during their reinvestigation of the case in the late 1970s, there is evidence to suggest that Oswald was not alone outside Walker's house on the night of the shooting, and that he may well have attended several of the right-wing extremist's rallies and meetings in the months thereafter. Such suspicions, fleshed out by later conspiracy critics like Anthony Summers, raise the contentious but central question of the nature of Oswald's political affiliations, and how they may have run contrary to his stated opinions at this time. If relations with his wife abruptly deteriorated after their arrival in the United States, then Oswald was certainly consorting with a bizarre cast of radicals and activists of both Left and Right. One of these obscure figures was George de Mohrenshildt, a shadowy Russian exile and flamboyant businessman with provocative connections in the worlds of U.S. intelligence and organized crime in the United States and Latin America. According to Norman Mailer's account of the strange friendship that devel-

oped between the two men, de Mohrenshildt was most likely a CIA contract agent charged with the task of debriefing Oswald about his experiences behind the Iron Curtain. However, this may well have been only half the story. For Peter Dale Scott, the same person was instrumental in embroiling Oswald in what the author describes as the “deep politics” of “gray alliance” between active elements of the intelligence, Mafia, corporate, and extremist political communities in the southern states. Certainly, there was more to Oswald’s relationship with de Mohrenshildt than the Warren Commission were prepared to concede in their report, in spite of the unsettling evidence to the contrary that they suppressed when it was published in 1964.

Much of this evidence, and indeed the most continually perplexing aspect of Oswald’s life as a whole, concerns his involvement in the complicated politics of Cuban-American relations throughout his last eighteen months. On the face of it, the stories of Oswald single-handedly establishing a cell of the FPCC in the hostile environs of New Orleans would seem in keeping with the Warren Commission’s narrative of a radical activist growing increasingly dissatisfied with the parties of the Old Left, and searching for an alternative model in the politics of Third World revolution. Certainly someone, if not Oswald himself, seems to have been careful to create a convincing paper trail indicating the presence of such a figure, including extensive correspondence with Vincent Lee, then general secretary of the FPCC, appearances in the New Orleans news media, and even a trip to Mexico City, ostensibly to present himself as a potential defector to the Cuban Embassy. And yet now, after many years of research into just this aspect of the case, there exists a substantial body of evidence to suggest that Oswald’s connections and activities at this time were far less straightforward. For one thing, according to many accounts, he appears to have been in contact with both *pro* and *anti*-Castro forces massing in New Orleans and other cities in 1962–1963. While he undoubtedly was in touch with members of the FPCC and other groups, it also appears that Oswald was working—perhaps as a double agent—with a much larger group of anti-Castro Cuban exiles then being coor-

inated by the CIA and financed by their allies in the national organized-crime network. It is for this reason that his name has been plausibly linked with a range of key players in the underground world of deep politics, including Mafia generals and footmen such as Santos Trafficante, Sam Giancana, John Roselli, and his own future killer Jack Ruby; rogue CIA contract agents like George de Mohrenshildt, David Ferrie, and Guy Bannister; and renowned local Cuban exile leaders like Carlos Bringuier and Antonio Veciana, who had links with both. Although they characteristically use these various suspicious connections as a way of exploring the much larger question of the possible nature of a JFK assassination conspiracy rather than clarifying Oswald’s precise role in such a conspiracy, the work of authors such as Anthony Summers, Peter Dale Scott, and Jim Marrs has served to debunk the Warren Commission’s central conclusion that Oswald acted throughout his life as a “lone agent.”

### Oswald’s Death

Oswald’s own death, no less than that of President Kennedy, remains shrouded in mystery. According to the official record of marathon interrogation sessions conducted by the combined forces of the Dallas Police Department, FBI, and the Secret Service between 22 and 24 November 1963, Oswald was initially arrested for the shooting of Patrolman J. D. Tippit during his supposed getaway dash from Dealey Plaza. Within twelve hours, he had also been charged with President Kennedy’s murder. In all that time, he remained unrepresented by legal counsel, in spite of repeated calls to renowned left-wing lawyer John Abt. If the legal profession apparently distanced itself from Oswald, the international press corps were an almost constant presence; according to one contemporary estimate, over 300 representatives of the news media descended on the Dallas Police Department, creating a media circus. In a remarkably short time, a detailed account of Oswald’s defection and leftist career had emerged, presumably from the FBI, who had long maintained a file on him, and had been fed to the waiting press. Oswald’s “fifteen minutes of fame” came to an abrupt end, however, on the morning of Sunday, 24 November,

when, en route to Captain J. Will Fritz's office for a further round of questioning, he was shot dead by local club-owner and small-time mafioso Jack Ruby.

Ever since his death, there have been many who have maintained that the official record of that dark and chaotic weekend was woefully inadequate. For some, Ruby's sudden appearance among the police officials and newsmen at precisely the moment Oswald emerged from his temporary jail cell leaves the strong suspicion that the killer was forewarned by someone on the inside. This has led some authors to explore Ruby's links with corrupt elements within the Dallas law-enforcement community. No less significant is the possibility that Oswald may have known both Tippit, whose involvement in several right-wing enclaves has long been suspected, and Jack Ruby. For the 1979 Assassinations Committee, such suspicions aligned with their conclusion that, if there was a conspiracy to kill the president, it was undoubtedly instigated by the Mafia in collaboration with extreme right-wing elements, both of which would have had a vested interest in silencing Oswald soon after his arraignment for the murder.

### Oswald's Disputed Legacy

In the forty years since his death, Oswald's reputation and the meaning of his actions and possible affiliations have played a central role in our comprehension of the Kennedy assassination. Over the years, he has been seen as an archetypal psychopath or "lone gunman" with delusions of political agency, and as a scapegoat or "patsy" for the larger machinations of secret, unaccountable branches of the so-called shadow government like the FBI, the CIA, and the Mafia. Between those two extremes, Oswald was briefly reclaimed in the late 1960s by the Weathermen, a terrorist offshoot of the Black Panther Party, some of whose members cited him as a role model of direct action and carried his iconic image on their posters. More recently, reflecting increasing interest in some of the CIA's more esoteric operations, several writers have sought to explain Oswald's paradoxical behavior and radical shifts of allegiance as evincing the influence of covert mind-control and "parapsychological"

experiments carried out by the CIA as part of the MK-ULTRA program.

Complementing the research of political and social historians, Oswald's singular odyssey has also inspired some of the best work by major novelists such as Norman Mailer and Don DeLillo. In DeLillo's *Libra* (1988), for instance, the specific nature of Oswald's involvement in the assassination is left deliberately unresolved, his story told in dramatic counterpoint to the convoluted plans of rogue secret agents and political extremists. On the other hand, in Mailer's recent account, Oswald emerges as the culmination of that pantheon of lone agents like D.J. from *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967) and Gary Gilmore in *The Executioner's Song* (1979), whose violence and psychoses have long populated the author's fiction. Regardless of his culpability or otherwise in the murder of President Kennedy, the figure of the lone gunman, as much the product of the Warren Commission's influential interpretation of them as of Oswald's own actions, has become a recurrent character-type in popular media and literary fiction alike, from Robert DeNiro's Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* (1976) to the villains of recent movies such as *In the Line of Fire* (1993), *Speed* (1994), and *Seven* (1996).

Dorian Hayes

**See also:** Bay of Pigs Invasion; Brussell, Mae; Castro, Fidel; Central Intelligence Agency; DeLillo, Don; Federal Bureau of Investigation; John Birch Society; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Mailer, Norman; MK-ULTRA; Ruby, Jack; Stone, Oliver; Warren Commission; Weathermen.

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## **Pakula, Alan J.**

Filmmaker Alan J. Pakula (1928–1998) is best known for his direction of films that have been collectively termed the “paranoia trilogy,” consisting of *Klute* (1971), *The Parallax View* (1974), and *All the President’s Men* (1976). While these films chart a general trajectory from private to public paranoia and belief in conspiracy, Fredric Jameson states that the trademark of Pakula’s most successful films is that they cut across “the traditional opposition between public and private” (Jameson, 52). Pakula produced and wrote films and began directing with *The Sterile Cuckoo* (1969). He later made films such as *Sophie’s Choice* (1982), the political conspiracy thriller *The Pelican Brief* (1993), and his final work, *The Devil’s Own* (1997).

The paranoia trilogy is unified by the cinematography of Gordon Willis, who produced a stark visual representation of paranoia, as well as by a thematic concern with surveillance and the connection between conspiracy and the process of investigation. *Klute* details a missing persons investigation in which Bree Daniels (Jane Fonda) is scrutinized by murderer Peter Cable (Charles Cioffi) and private investigator John Klute (Donald Sutherland), and plagued by her own increasing paranoia. Daniels’s unease can be linked to contemporary social forces, such as the changes initiated by the burgeoning feminist movement. With its recurring use of audiotapes as a visual and aural theme, *Klute* presciently evokes the social paranoia of the Watergate era, the direct subject matter of *All the President’s Men*.

Based on the book by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, *All the President’s Men* follows the investigation of the Watergate burglary as it becomes increasingly linked to the White House. The Nixon administration deceit, manipulation, and paranoia that led to the break-in are replicated by the investigation of journalists Woodward (Robert Redford) and Bernstein (Dustin Hoffman). But *The Parallax View* epitomizes the U.S. conspiracy film canon. It invokes the social unease that followed the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the findings of the Warren Commission, and subsequent assassinations. After the assassination of Senator Charles Carroll (Bill Joyce), reporter Joe Frady (Warren Beatty) uncovers “The Parallax Corporation,” a conspiratorial security company that recruits assassins and “patsies.” The film’s most famous sequence, “The Parallax Test,” is a dazzling montage of images and words that suggests the pervasive interrelation and reach of paranoia and conspiratorial belief that had become prevalent in U.S. society.

*Karen Gai Dean*

**See also:** Film and Conspiracy Theory; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Watergate.

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## **Pan Am 103**

On 21 December 1988, Pan Am Flight 103, en route from London to New York, exploded over

Lockerbie, Scotland just half an hour after departure, killing 259 passengers and crew and 9 people on the ground. A bomb was suspected, and authorities recovered the “black box” (the flight voice recorder and data recorder) and examined radar evidence. Britain’s Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) and Scottish detectives collected 35,000 photographs and interviewed 15,000 people, but it was the discovery of an electronic timer circuit board, which had been placed in a Toshiba cassette player and then loaded into a piece of Samsonite luggage, that provided the necessary clues as to the source of the plane’s destruction.

The subsequent investigation, as with the later crash of TWA Flight 800, produced endless analysis, suspicion, claims, and counterclaims. Victims’ families wanted someone to blame; politicians wanted to establish whether the event was an attack; and conspiracy theorists tried to insert the event into existing theories of global politics. Although the explosion occurred while George Bush was president, links were quickly made to President Ronald Reagan, and then, during the investigation and trial, to President Bill Clinton. Ultimately, a vast array of individuals and organizations were implicated in some way or another to the explosion.

The AAIB, led by forensic expert James Thomas Thurman, found the small circuit board in the debris, and could trace the scrap of the circuit board to a Swiss manufacturer. This, in association with specimens from two types of chemicals used to manufacture Semtex, a plastic explosive, convinced authorities there was a bomb aboard the plane that was triggered by a timing device. In 1989, the 350 tons of debris was reassembled at an army base near Carlisle. Investigators then examined the evidence and concluded that it was a bomb, or, in their words, an “intentional explosive device.” The cockpit voice recorder verified a tremendous sound just prior to the aircraft going down, and burn marks on luggage indicated that something exploded in the luggage compartment.

Although at first Iran was suspected of what the authorities viewed as a bombing—although the word “bomb” did not appear in the actual report, but rather “improvised explosive device”—the timer

shifted the investigation to two Libyan intelligence agents, Abdel Basset al-Megrahi and Lameen “The Egg” Fhima, who were indicted in 1991 and named by both British and U.S. governments as the culprits.

There were, however, numerous other theories and suspects:

- Ahmed Jibril, head of the General Command of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC). Supported by Syria, the PFLP hated Israel and wanted to punish the United States for its support of the Jewish State. Conspiracy theorists claim that Jibril, however, could not be brought to justice because Palestine is not a sovereign state or a member of the United Nations. This conspiracy theory is also tied to Iran, which supposedly bankrolled the operation, but Syria could not be implicated because, by the time the United States learned all the details, it was involved in the Gulf War and President George Bush needed Syria as part of the coalition to defeat Saddam Hussein.
- Iran. One of the most widely held conspiracy theories is that Iranian agents blew Pan Am 103 out of the skies in retaliation for an incident that occurred in July 1988 when the USS *Vincennes*, mistaking an Iranian passenger aircraft for a hostile plane over the Straits of Hormuz, shot down the Iranian plane filled with civilians, killing 290. Iranian leaders vowed to “avenge the blood of our martyrs.”
- Drug runners and/or the CIA. In this version of events, “rogue” CIA agents in the Reagan administration, working through Oliver North, were attempting to free U.S. hostages in the Middle East. The middlemen in the operation were heroin runners from Syria who transported drugs to the United States through Frankfurt, Germany. According to one “informant,” a smuggler (with the CIA’s knowledge) would check luggage onto a plane and an accomplice in the baggage department would substitute an identical bag containing narcotics. (There is no explanation for the need for two people here, or why anyone with

access to the baggage department would not be able to just plant the bogus bag himself.) At any rate, Monzer al-Kassar, a Syrian drug smuggler, who was behind the operation, learned that a hostage rescue team had discovered the smuggling operation, and that the team was aboard Pan Am 103. PBS's television program *Frontline* claimed in January 1990 that these "intelligence officials" were a "strong secondary target." At that point, the various theories reach a confluence of sorts, with Jibril handling the actual details of the bombing, switching a suitcase bomb for the drug luggage.

- Yet another version involved Oliver North and the CIA, especially as it related to another aircraft explosion, over Gander, Newfoundland, in December 1985. In this iteration, a group of special operations forces smuggled a small nuclear "backpack" bomb aboard the aircraft in Cairo, which they originally were to have transported to Iraq to blow up the Iraqi nuclear weapons development facility under the guise of a nuclear accident. Supposedly, when these soldiers understood that their mission was a suicide mission, they backed out, but to keep them quiet, the government ordered their Arrow Air DC-8 destroyed by a bomb, which caused the aircraft to crash at Gander, killing 248. The connection to Pan Am 103 is that supposedly the same timing device was found at each site, and in a letter to the U.S. House Intelligence Committee in 1998, the president of the firm that made the timers claimed that the circuit board in both explosions was made for the CIA.
- There was no bomb at all. As in the case of TWA 800, which exploded in 1996, one theory maintains that there was no bomb at all. This theory suggests that there was an explosion, which has been attributed to, among other things, a shotgun or a flare gun going off, a structural defect in the airplane causing the cabin door to rip free, or an electrical fault. Like other theories, this theory hinges on the absence of bomb fragments at the

crash site, and, as with TWA 800, this version mostly arose from passengers in litigation who wanted to prove negligence by the aircraft manufacturers. In particular, rapid decompression theories emphasized the location in both Pan Am 103 and TWA 800 of the nose section as having fallen off before the aircraft finally crashed, indicating an explosion separated the front section of the aircraft from the aft. Carl A. Davies, author of *Plane Truth*, and John Berry Smith, a British investigator, comparing tests of Pan Am 103, TWA 800, and Air India 182, found no evidence of bomb-type explosions that totally demolished the section in which a bomb was located in controlled bomb tests. Other "explanations" have included an "electromagnetic high-energy slug" either deliberately or accidentally fired from Alaska.

- The Mossad. A view popular with antisemites, this version maintains that the Mossad planted a bomb to kill Americans so as to "discredit" Palestinian Liberation Organization chairman Yassir Arafat's "peace initiative." This version lacks the details of most of the other explanations, but still manages to place blame on President George Bush.
- The Palestinians. National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* program produced a "confession" in 1994 by Youssef Shaaban, a Palestinian who was standing trial for the killing of a Jordanian diplomat. Many observers, however, considered his confession a desperate attempt to gain a stay on a sure death sentence.
- In addition to possible guilty individuals or groups, charges were also leveled at Pan Am and/or airport security for weak security measures in England.

Due to the fact that the incident occurred over Scottish airspace, the trial took place under Scottish law, but because of the international nature of the bombing, with multiple possible locations and passengers of all nationalities, the trial was held at Camp Zeist in the Netherlands by way of treaty agreement



between Libya, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In May 2000, the court under Scottish High Court judge Lord Randal Sutherland convened. The following January, the court delivered a mixed verdict of guilty for Abdel Basset al-Megrahi and an acquittal for Lameen Fhima. Al-Megrahi immediately appealed. Meanwhile, the families of the Pan Am 103 flight had begun a long quest to sue Libya for damages, overturning a traditional principle of international law. Allan Gerson, a former diplomat, took the case for the families and, partly as a result of changes in antiterrorism legislation following the Oklahoma City bombing, in 1996 the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act was amended to permit lawsuits like Gerson's to proceed. In 1998, a federal appeals court ruled that lawsuits against Libya could proceed. Among the victims was twenty-year-old Theodora Cohen, whose parents waged a campaign to sue Libya, calling the attack a "ghastly act of war." Susan and Daniel Cohen, Theodora's parents, who wrote *Pan Am 103*, claimed that Clinton administration efforts at "normalizing" relations with Khaddafi's Libya had interfered with prosecution of the case against the terrorist state.

Larry Schweikart

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## Panama Canal

The building of the Panama Canal linking the Atlantic to the Pacific was mired in international political and financial skulduggery. More recently,

with the transfer of U.S. control of shipping facilities at the entrances to the canal at the end of 1999, many on the conspiratorial Right warned that a long-standing Communist conspiracy to dominate the strategic passage had finally come to fruition.

### Early Plans to Build a Canal

The idea of building an isthmian passage linking the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts dates back to the time of the conquistadores, but the issue was slowly narrowed down to a rivalry between the United States and Great Britain. In the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850, both Britain and the United States pledged to collaborate on the building of the future passage on a nonfortification and nonexclusive basis. However, this agreement only settled the issue on the surface. In the following years, both governments contrived to obtain exclusive rights from the states of Central America, especially those which were considered the ideal location for the future canal and vital to its security. The United States obtained a treaty with New Granada (later Colombia) in 1846 guaranteeing the "perfect neutrality" of the Isthmus of Panama. The Panama railroad was completed by the United States in 1855. Nicaragua also signed a treaty in 1867 granting privileges, but these were not exclusive.

The issue came back to the fore when it was announced that the French Panama Canal Company, under Ferdinand de Lesseps, the famous builder of the Suez Canal (1869), had undertaken to build a canal in Panama (excavations had even started in 1883 but were later abandoned). There remained the diplomatic obstacle of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty but it was modified in the second Hay-Pauncefote treaty of 18 November 1901, which gave the United States the exclusive right to build and fortify a canal, provided its use was accorded to all nations on equal terms (the first treaty, signed on 5 February 1900, had been rejected in March 1901).

### U.S. Involvement

Once this obstacle was removed, a choice had to be made between the Nicaragua route and the Isthmus of Panama (a province of Colombia) route. Meanwhile the French Panama Canal Company had

ceded its assets to the New Panama Canal Company for \$40 million in 1901, which lobbied actively for the Panama route. A treaty was signed with Colombia, the Hay-Herran treaty (22 January 1903), whereby they granted the United States a ninety-nine-year lease over a 6-mile-wide zone in the province of Panama, in return for \$10 million in cash and an annual rental of \$250,000 beginning nine years after the ratification of the treaty. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty, but the Colombian Senate refused for nationalistic reasons (Colombia had recently gone through a civil war) and also because they hoped to obtain better terms. The Colombians made a series of miscalculations, by misjudging U.S. President Roosevelt and Secretary of State John Hay's commitment to the canal, and by underestimating the New Panama Canal Company and the separatist feelings of the inhabitants of the province, who saw their hopes of economic prosperity thwarted by the central government of Bogota, against whom they had often rebelled. These revolutionaries were manipulated by external forces—U.S. government and private interests—including Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a lobbyist for the company who assured the revolutionaries of U.S. support, understanding that Roosevelt preferred that course to open land grab.

Meanwhile, invoking an obscure treaty signed with Colombia in 1846, Bidlack's treaty, by which the United States was supposed to help maintain "free and uninterrupted transit" across the isthmus, the United States dispatched a fleet to Central America with express orders to prevent Colombia from landing troops on the isthmus if a revolution started. However, at the time it was signed, this treaty was not meant to be used against Colombia, but rather to maintain security in the area if Colombia found itself incapable of doing so. The chronology of the revolution clearly points to active U.S. complicity and *a priori* knowledge of the events to come. So the revolutionaries, who sparked off their revolt on 3 November 1903, were successful because of the presence of U.S. troops. Roosevelt's role in this affair was extremely important, since he recognized the new republic within seventy-six minutes.

A 2001 book by Oviodio Diaz claims that a cabal of Wall Street interests led by the lawyer William Nel-

son Cromwell and the banker J. P. Morgan worked behind the scenes, first to buy up the shares of the French Panama Canal Company (for only \$3.5 million), second to persuade Congress to shift the route from Nicaragua to Panama, and then to reap the profit when the U.S. government backed the New Panama Canal Company. It is also alleged that in order to succeed in making Panama the preferred route, Cromwell helped maneuver Panama into seceding from Colombia.

What is certain, however, is that Bunau-Varilla, the newly appointed foreign minister of the independent Republic of Panama, negotiated a more favorable treaty, the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty, two weeks after the revolution, on 18 November 1903. It granted to the United States in perpetuity the use of a canal zone 10 miles wide, and transferred to the United States government the properties of the New Panama Canal Company and the Panama Railroad Company. In exchange, Panama was awarded \$10 million and an annuity of \$250,000 for its concessions. When the canal was completed in 1904, the canal zone had become an "unorganized possession," with a government fixed by executive order and run by U.S. naval officers serving as appointed governors, while the rest of Panama was a *de facto* protectorate.

### **International Communist Conspiracy**

With the transfer of U.S. control of the port facilities at either entrance to the canal in December 1999 to a company called Hutchison Whampoa, right-wing groups such as the John Birch Society warned that what they term the International Communist Conspiracy had finally succeeded in its mission of gaining control of such strategic routes. The argument was that Hutchison, a Hong Kong-based company, was in fact controlled by the Communist Chinese. The John Birch Society and other groups warned that this was the latest in a long series of attempts by the Communists to gain control of the zone. These include the long history of Communist agitation in the region, and the attempt by Alger Hiss, the former state department official who was convicted in the anticommunist trials in the late 1940s and early 1950s, to interest the United Nations in taking over

the zone as a protectorate in the aftermath of World War II.

Aïssatou Sy-Wonyu

**See also:** Morgan, John Pierpont

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## Paranoia

The psychiatric concept of paranoia is commonly traced to ancient Greece, where Hippocrates inaugurated it among several other mental maladies, coining the term from the Greek *para* (meaning "beside," or "changed") and *nous* (signifying "mind," or "reason"). Its etymology can also be traced back to Plato's and Aretaeus's identifications of "religious madness" and "divine mania," or citations in the work of Francois Boissier de Sauvages (*Pathologie Methodica*, 1759) to transformative delusions in which patients believed they were being transformed into either animals or the opposite sex. It was not until Etienne Esquirol's *Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity* (1845) and, later, Emil Kraepelin's *Textbook of Psychiatry* (1883-1915) that the concept of paranoia, as it is understood today, began to take shape. Esquirol's descriptivist account catalogued,

among others, erotic, reasoning, theomaniacal, incendiary, and homicidal monomanias. Paranoia was identified as a *délire partiel* (monomania), a *folie raisonnée* (a reasoning madness). Kraepelin's influential definition of *dementia praecox* (early-onset dementia, now classed under the broad category of schizophrenia) most deeply informs the contemporary understanding of the concept as a delusional disorder that builds a highly organized, grandiose system that is held with great conviction. From this tradition and that which followed, paranoia has come to be characterized by symptoms such as projective thinking, hostility, suspicion, centrality, delusions, fear of the loss of autonomy, and grandiosity. Even though paranoids are often able to achieve a high level of occupational functioning, unlike other psychoses, there is no pharmaceutical or therapeutic "cure" for paranoia.

The most famous case of paranoia, which has served as the basis for most of the major contributions on the study of the subject as well as being a remarkable autobiography of paranoia, is Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (*Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* [1903]). Schreber, a high-ranking German judge, describes the slow and torturous process of being transformed into a woman by God in order to bring forth a new race of men; being made into God's sexual slave; and being the victim of a "soul murder" at the hands of Dr. Paul Emil Flechsig, the director of the psychiatric hospital in which he first stayed. Sigmund Freud's influential study of the case read paranoia as a defense against (unconscious) homosexuality, or homosexual attack. Although this theory has largely been cast aside, it is notable for Freud's first theorization of projection. Freud also argued that paranoia is a recuperative process, one in which the paranoid attempts to rebuild his or her world after a psychotic break through delusion. Interestingly, "paranoia" as a discrete medical-psychiatric definition no longer exists. The current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) instead classifies it as an aspect of other psychoses, such as schizophrenia.

The category of paranoia gradually moved beyond the psychiatric domain and began to be used by

philosophers and social theorists to explain literary texts, social formations, and historical epochs. The discourse of heroic “enlightenment”—which seeks to uncover, reveal, and disclose knowledges that are otherwise concealed, shrouded, and hidden—is firmly entrenched in Western philosophical traditions. The notion of “suspicion” as an interpretive strategy can be traced from academic and Pyrrhonian skepticism through to the work of Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Hobbes. Paul Ricoeur identifies Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud as the key proponents of a tradition that sought to redirect its Cartesian doubt from a regard of things, to doubt consciousness itself. In *Crowds and Power* (1962), Elias Canetti describes paranoia as an “illness of power” (Canetti, 520) that can help to explain the nature of political power in general. Canetti establishes an equivalence between paranoids like Schreber and despots and rulers such as Adolph Hitler and Genghis Khan. Richard Hofstadter’s famous 1964 essay, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” continues this genealogy by theorizing paranoia as a political style, rather than a pathological category. Conducted under the banner of “Studies on the American Right,” it charted the paranoid style in U.S. political life since independence, through the central characteristic of persecution and its systematization in conspiracy theory. Hofstadter sought to describe a generally right-wing style of mind, and chose to refer to it as “paranoid” because “no other word evokes the qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy” that characterizes this mindset (Hofstadter, 3).

The concept of paranoia has dispersed into popular culture in a vast array of forms including films such as *JFK* (dir. Oliver Stone 1991) and *Conspiracy Theory* (dir. Richard Donner 1997), television programs such as *The X-Files* and *Nowhere Man*, pamphlets, rants, and tracts of every political color, magazines such as *Paranoia*, and books such as Jim Keith’s *Secret and Suppressed: Banned Ideas and Hidden History* (1993). Rhetorics of paranoia can be identified in popular music, from Black Sabbath’s classic anthem “Paranoid” to Radiohead’s *Paranoid Android*, and Garbage’s “I Think I’m Paranoid.” The paranoid ethic of hypervigilance even extends to

managerial advice books such as Andrew S. Grove’s *Only the Paranoid Survive: How to Exploit Crisis Points that Challenge Every Company and Career* (1999). The cultural sensibility expressed in these works, one that has wholly digested Delmore Schwartz’s adage that “even paranoids have real enemies,” suggests that there is less danger in being paranoid than in not being paranoid enough.

Like the term “conspiracy theorist,” “paranoid” represents a heavily loaded political and epistemological description, one that is used at certain times as an ironic form of self-identification, and at others, as a condemnatory indictment. In a fashion similar to the way “conspiracy theory” is used as a description of false history, the accusation of paranoia has become a powerful tactic in the marginalization of one’s ideological opponents. Cultural critics and pop psychologists have in recent years taken up the psychiatric history of paranoia, and (consciously or not) Freud’s contribution to it, in their attempts to delegitimize those they consider conspiracy theorists. The conspiracy theorist (or paranoid), it is argued, takes an object or figure that was once revered and transforms it into the focus of persecutory anxiety, so that their conspiracy theories tell us more about the subject’s own desire and fear than they do about anything in the world. Paranoia, so the story goes, is a disease of disaffection: the WASP patriot, the militant feminist, and the Islamic fundamentalist are united by their marginality, one which organizes their thinking in a paranoid or conspiratorial fashion. Other critics have argued that such theories form appropriate responses to actual circumstances: for example, the widespread belief in the African American community of the early 1990s that the government was spreading drugs such as crack cocaine in poor black communities should not be read simply as “paranoid,” but as a dramatization of very real fears of an institutionally sponsored program of genocidal neglect, one that is based on the historical revelation of actual conspiracies such as COINTELPRO and the Tuskegee syphilis experiments.

Tony Elias

**See also:** African Americans; Cocaine; COINTELPRO.



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### Patriarchy

The emergence of feminism in the United States has involved a struggle to identify and name the problems that women face in society. In the early days of the movement, in the middle of the nineteenth century, feminist leaders likened the condition of women to the oppression of slavery, but in the second wave of feminism, which arose in the middle of the twentieth century, some women began to claim that patriarchy (the dominant rule of men in society) amounted to a systematic conspiracy against women. In *The Feminist Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan reported that many women, returning to being housewives after World War II, felt emotionally and intellectually confined in their domestic setting, and were anxious that they were failing, in the therapeutic wisdom of the day, to adjust successfully to their roles as wives and mothers. Friedan argued that what these housewives felt in isolation was not the result of an individual psychological failure to adapt to the new postwar emphasis on domesticity, but a structural consequence of a whole host of pressures placed by men and male-dominated institutions upon women. She identified the advertising industry, education, and psychologists as particular culprits in this concerted effort to persuade women to accept a constrained role in life, but was careful to insist that, no matter how much this might

look like a conspiracy to brainwash and imprison women, it was not necessarily the result of a deliberate plot.

Later feminist activists, however, began to take the idea of a patriarchal conspiracy against women more literally. With the rise of radical feminism in the late 1960s, groups such as Cell 16 of Boston and The Feminists of New York began to talk of conditioning, internalized oppression, and conspiracy, employing a vocabulary of “brainwashing,” “self-surveillance,” “infiltration,” “complicity,” and “double agency” to account for why women seemed to conform to stereotypes of their inferiority and submissiveness. The popular film *The Stepford Wives* (dir. Bryan Forbes 1975) echoed but also satirized this idea, with its story line of a woman new to the affluent suburbs who discovers that the local men’s organization is quite literally plotting to turn their wives into robotized domestic slaves. At the same time, in the tense atmosphere of suspicion created by the FBI’s COINTELPRO surveillance and infiltration program, there was also discussion in the women’s liberation movement of the possibility of an all-too-literal conspiracy by the government to undermine feminism in some of its more radical guises. However, other groups from this period such as WITCH (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) and the Lavender Menace latched onto these claims and counterclaims, deliberately (and humorously) identifying themselves as an underground conspiracy.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the comparison of patriarchy with conspiracy began to be taken more literally, in the works of cultural feminists like Mary Daly and Andrea Dworkin. The former, for example, asserted that “males and males only are the originators, planners, controllers, and legitimators of patriarchy” (Daly, 29), while the latter identified rape as a weapon used by men in general to keep women submissive. This picture of women as the victims of both a society-wide, age-old conspiracy and of a more recent, concerted backlash against the advances of feminism became popular in the 1990s. Other feminist writers, however, insisted that the patriarchal oppression of women was not a conscious conspiracy but the inevitable result of the

underlying structures of social organization that valorized male achievement and underplayed women's work. Identifying patriarchy as a conspiracy, even if only metaphorically, nevertheless enabled the feminist movement to make a convincing case that what women were suffering from was not merely personal but part of a larger political problem.

*Peter Knight*

**See also:** COINTELPRO.

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## Pearl Harbor

On Sunday, 7 December 1941, at 7:55 A.M. the Japanese Imperial Navy launched a surprise attack on the United States Pacific Fleet located in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The theories and explanations of the events surrounding the Japanese attack on U.S. forces have become a cottage industry for historians of World War II. Questions about U.S. military involvement, and theories of how it happened and who knew what and when, reappear with each tenth anniversary. As early as 1942 opponents of President Roosevelt accused him of working to bring the United States into World War II and using the Japanese attack on the United States as an excuse to do just that.

The events surrounding the attack have been subject to multiple interpretations. John Toland, Robert B. Stinnett, James Rusbridger, and Eric Nave have been among those who argued that a conspiracy existed to use an attack on Pearl Harbor to bring the United States into the war and was the real reason for the Japanese success. Others led by Gordon Prange, Roberta Wohlstetter, and Henry Clausen have argued that it was a series of errors on the part of the United States that gave Japan its opportunity. Since the end of the war, large

amounts of information about who knew what have emerged, often providing more smoke than light.

The attack caught a large number of U.S. warships in the harbor. The Japanese sank or damaged eight battleships, two beyond repair. They also damaged three light cruisers, three destroyers, and four other ships beyond repair. In the U.S. Navy and Marines, 2,086 were killed and 749 wounded, and in the army 194 were killed and 360 wounded. In addition, the United States lost 188 aircraft. Japanese losses were fewer than 100 personnel and 29 aircraft. The event shocked the United States, which had been used to the idea of security within the territories.

The United States and Japan had become significant competitors in Asia prior to the war. U.S. policy in the Pacific during the 1930s and early 1940s was perceived by the Japanese as hostile to their interests in the region. At the same time, Japanese expansion in the region was seen in Washington as hostile to U.S. interests in Asia. U.S.–Japanese relations were deteriorating throughout 1940–1941 and as the situation became more likely to move to a military solution, U.S. planners foresaw a potential Japanese attack on U.S. interests in the Pacific, especially in the Philippines where the United States had a significant military presence, led by General Douglas MacArthur. The movement of the U.S. Pacific Fleet from San Diego to Hawaii in 1940 was done with a purpose as well. Its placement there was a statement of U.S. interest and intent in the region.

Hawaii was a less secure location than California. There had already been a number of studies showing the possibility of an air attack against Pearl Harbor. The possibility was considered significant enough that on 7 February 1941, General George Marshall (U.S. Army chief of staff) sent Lieutenant General Walter Short (commanding general of the Hawaiian Department) a message informing him that “the risk of sabotage and the risk involved in a surprise raid by air and by submarine constitute the real perils of the situation” (Clausen, 423). Then on 5 March 1941 another message from Marshall informed General Short: “I would appreciate your early review of the situation in Hawaiian Department with regard to defense from air attack. The



The USS *West Virginia* burns in Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor was the worst naval disaster in U.S. history, with sixteen ships damaged or destroyed. (National Technical Information Service)

establishment of a satisfactory system of coordinating all means available to this is a matter of first priority” (Clausen, 423). On 27 November 1941 the commanders in the Pacific were sent what has become known as the “war warning” message. Marshall’s message cautioned of potential Japanese action “at any moment” and also informed General Short, “Prior to hostile Japanese action, you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary” (Clausen, 438). In the navy message it noted the movement of an “amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, or the Kra Peninsula or possibly Borneo” (Clausen, 439).

The use of intelligence has been a significant problem in clearing up the questions around the attack. The United States had broken a number of Japanese codes including the “Purple Code” (the highest Japanese diplomatic code) and realized that relations with Japan were deteriorating toward war.

The most famous message intercepted in the last twenty-four hours before the attack was the “Fourteen Part Message,” which was itself of little intelligence value except that it showed the state of U.S.–Japanese relations. More important was the order setting the time of delivery of the Fourteen Part Message as 1 P.M. in Washington, 7:30 A.M. in Hawaii. General Marshall ordered that the information be communicated to the Pacific commanders by the fastest possible method. There is a discrepancy in the number of times Marshall was alleged to have sent officers to check on the delivery time, but he is known to have done so at least once. Due to atmospheric conditions the message was sent to Pearl Harbor by telegraph and did not arrive until after the attack on the base. There were other significant messages, including one from Hawaii to Japan laying out the positions of U.S. ships in the harbor. In December before the attack, the United

States had access to information that the Japanese diplomats had been ordered to prepare to destroy their codes. On 6 December 1941 Colonel Bicknell, the assistant chief of staff, announced to General Short's staff that "he had received information to the effect that the Japanese counsels were burning their papers. . . . It would at least show that something was about to happen, somewhere" (Clausen, 445). In spite of these successes, it needs to be remembered that the number of codes broken by the United States was limited, as was the completeness of the information about Japanese intentions. Thus, preparations for war were conducted with only partial knowledge.

Another source of concern is the location of aircraft carriers. The U.S. Navy's Pacific aircraft carriers were not present on the day of the attack. The *Saratoga* was in San Diego, while the other two U.S. carriers were off to reinforce forward bases with aircraft. The USS *Enterprise* had gone to Wake Island and was scheduled back to Pearl Harbor around 7 A.M. on 7 December, but was held up by bad weather, and the USS *Lexington* was on its way to Midway Island. The *Enterprise* was close enough at the time of the attack that its aircraft were able to make contact with Japanese aircraft. Their missions saved them for use in the important sea battles to come, Coral Sea and Midway.

### The Theories

One theory argues that President Roosevelt knew about the coming attack, but was willing to sacrifice the aging battleships in order to give cause to the American people to fight the war. In order to do this, Roosevelt and the military command structure in Washington not only placed the U.S. battleships in harm's way, they also sent U.S. aircraft carriers away from the site of the attack to protect them. Then Washington conspired to deny U.S. commanders in the Pacific important intelligence data that would have led them to assign a higher state of alert on 7 December. There is significant circumstantial evidence for this theory, based on the idea that Roosevelt needed a military disaster to enter the war. This theory does not account for the possible impact of an attack on other U.S. forces, or a successful

defense against a strong attack on Pearl Harbor. It also does not account for Roosevelt's love of the navy, which makes his willingness to sink ships less likely. This theory assumes that Roosevelt and the naval leadership understood that aircraft carriers would dominate the next naval war; the evidence for this idea is limited. It also assumes that the intelligence clearly pointed to an attack on Pearl Harbor. The challenge when investigating the subject is in separating the information that is meaningful and important from a flood of extraneous information. As one historian notes: "we failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for a want of relevant material, but because of a plethora of irrelevant one" (Wohlstetter, 387). Without a message specifically stating an attack on a site, an analyst must interpret the message and weigh its value based on what they know about an adversary's potential and preferences. It is often easier to see a clear meaning in a message with hindsight. Another variant of this conspiracy argues that the British government knew about the attacks and did not inform the United States in order to force it into the war. It is based on the existence of both British intercept operations, based on U.S. efforts, and British agents in the regions. The strength of this theory is that the British did have the technology to break the "Purple Code," which they gained from the United States and from the timely sale of British interests in Asia. This theory assumes superior British knowledge of Japanese intentions, for which the evidence is weak. And like Roosevelt, Churchill loved the navy. It was unlikely he would risk lives, or potentially the war, by allowing the U.S. Pacific Fleet to be destroyed.

### The Conspiracy's Place in History

There were numerous official investigations of the events around Pearl Harbor from the very beginning. The army and navy each conducted board and individual inquiries, such as the Roberts Commission, the Hart Inquiry, the Army Pearl Harbor Board, the Navy Court of Inquiry, the Clarke Inquiry, the Clausen Investigation, and the Hewitt Inquiry. In 1946 Congress conducted its own investigation and pulled together all of the previous efforts. There has been renewed interest in events around Pearl Harbor



since its fiftieth anniversary in 1991. This has spawned a renewal in many conspiracy theories, but also created a growing interest in understanding the actual events and causes of the events of 7 December 1941.

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**See also:** Roosevelt, Franklin Delano

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## Pentagon Papers

The Pentagon Papers was a forty-seven-volume Pentagon study into U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It was commissioned by the then secretary of defense, Robert McNamara, in 1967 and it provided an in-depth analysis of events from 1945 to 1968. In effect, it amounted to a genuine "secret history" of the war, exactly the kind of document that conspiracy theorists have always dreamed of finding. In June 1971, the report became an important political issue once Daniel Ellsberg, a former hawk who had worked for the CIA in Vietnam, leaked it to the press. President Nixon and, especially, his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, were incensed by the leak and their increased paranoia and determi-

nation to "get" Ellsberg started the descent into Watergate.

Nixon was initially relaxed about the leak as the first installment, printed in the *New York Times* on 13 June 1971, seemed to be an opportunity to embarrass his Democratic opponents. It focused upon Lyndon Johnson's 1964 presidential election campaign against Barry Goldwater and clearly documented Johnson's deception over his Vietnam policy. However, within a few days the leak had turned into a flood as the *New York Times* started printing pages of top secret cables from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. The massive national security violation was clearly damaging the Nixon administration and it could have undermined Kissinger's secret negotiations with China and North Vietnam. A number of foreign countries were also pressing for action to stop the flow of embarrassing reports about their roles in the war.

The White House responded by starting an FBI investigation and seeking a court injunction against the *Times* preventing further publication. A federal appeals court agreed to the government's request but the *Washington Post* started printing extracts instead. A different federal appeals court refused to grant an injunction against the *Post*, and other papers, including the *Boston Globe* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, started printing parts of the report as well. Eventually, a dozen newspapers took part while a Democratic senator, Mike Gravel, started reading the Papers into the Congressional Record. The Nixon administration pursued the case to the Supreme Court, but on 30 June the justices voted six to three against it. The Court found that the government had failed to justify prior restraints against publication and had hence breached the First Amendment guarantees of press freedom.

Despite the Court's decision, the government was still able to prosecute Daniel Ellsberg, who had been quickly identified as the source of the leaks. Ellsberg was then an MIT research assistant but he had worked on CIA pacification programs in Vietnam in the 1960s. He had also worked under Kissinger at both Harvard and in the White House—which further inflamed the national security advisor—before joining the Rand Corporation,

where he had photocopied the papers over a number of months. Kissinger and Nixon became determined to discredit Ellsberg, whose denunciations of them and the war in Vietnam were making him into a peace movement hero. A cheering crowd greeted him when he turned himself in to federal authorities in Boston on 28 June.

A grand jury had already been impaneled to investigate the leaking but the White House prevented full cooperation in order to cover up its previous misdeeds. Ellsberg's lawyers were told that the government had no wiretap records involving their client but he had been taped fifteen times on one of the secret "Kissinger taps." These taps were not run through the usual FBI channels and revealing the records of Ellsberg would have divulged the whole secret (and illegal) operation.

Nixon also wanted to connect Ellsberg to a Communist country as this would not only discredit him but would also increase his maximum possible jail sentence. No such link could be found, however, and Nixon was convinced that this was because the FBI wasn't performing a thorough investigation. (Ellsberg's father-in-law was an old friend of J. Edgar Hoover.) He therefore ordered a White House investigation that was started by E. Howard Hunt, an ex-CIA man. Nixon also wanted action to prevent further leaks, so a new White House unit, which became known as the Plumbers, was formed involving David Young, Egil Krogh, G. Gordon Liddy, and Hunt.

The unit soon decided that a CIA psychological profile of Ellsberg would greatly help to discredit him. Ellsberg's psychiatrist had already refused to give his files to the FBI and when the CIA drew up a profile using the Plumbers' material it was very short and superficial. The Plumbers, with the approval of the president's chief domestic advisor, John Ehrlichman, therefore decided to perform a covert operation to retrieve the files. Liddy and Hunt organized it but, despite their men wrecking the psychiatrist's office, nothing was found. No further such operations were carried out, but the Plumbers continued to dream up schemes to discredit Ellsberg, including drugging him with LSD. They also persisted in pursuing the CIA profile and were eventu-

ally rewarded with an eight-page analysis blaming Ellsberg's actions upon aggression against his father, the president, and Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

The CIA profile probably wasn't used for anything, but the White House did use other material on Ellsberg. An article drawing together the left-wing causes his lawyer had supported was leaked to the press by Nixon's "hatchet man," Charles Colson, who later served seven months in jail after pleading guilty to infringing on Ellsberg's right to a fair trial. Ellsberg, however, avoided a prison sentence as his trial collapsed in May 1972 in the midst of Watergate. During the trial, Judge Matthew Byrne had been made aware of the "Kissinger taps" and the Plumbers' break-in, as well as being publicly offered the post of director of the FBI. The cumulative effect of this government misconduct, he said, offended a sense of justice and, instead of ordering a retrial, he dismissed all of the charges against Ellsberg and his codefendant, Anthony Russo of the *Times*. Coming just after the resignation of Nixon's chief aides, H. R. Haldeman and Ehrlichman, the trial's collapse added to the air of crisis and corruption engulfing the White House.

Neil Denslow

**See also:** Hoover, J. Edgar; Kissinger, Henry; Liddy, G. Gordon; Nixon, Richard; Watergate.

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### Philadelphia Experiment

If it happened, the Philadelphia Experiment would represent the greatest government cover-up of World War II, with scientific importance rivaling that of the Manhattan Project but surrounded by even greater secrecy. Had the story appeared during the war, it might have seemed too fantastic to believe. But a decade later, the hydrogen bomb was a reality, UFOs had become a staple of U.S. popular

culture, and people were more willing than ever to accept the fantastic. Beginning in late 1955, a drifter named Carl Allen (alias Carlos Allende) wrote three letters to astronomer Morris Jessup, whose book *The Case for the UFO* had recently been published. In these letters, Allen claimed that during World War II he was a merchant seaman on the USS *Andrew Furuseth* and an eyewitness to U.S. Navy invisibility experiments involving a destroyer escort, the USS *Eldridge*. According to Allen, Albert Einstein's unified field theory was tested on the *Eldridge* in October 1943, causing the ship to vanish from its berth at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, appear briefly hundreds of miles away in Norfolk, Virginia, and then reappear in Philadelphia. Caught in a high-energy force field, the ship's crew was said by Allen to have suffered a variety of ill effects, with some burned, others driven insane, and a number who disappeared forever. Jessup later learned that in 1955, a curiously annotated copy of his book had been sent anonymously to the navy's Office of Naval Research. Although the annotations were written as if by three nonhuman entities, Jessup suspected that they were the work of Allen. After Jessup died (an apparent suicide) in 1959, other writers on UFOs began to incorporate references to the Philadelphia Experiment into their books, and its notoriety grew over time.

William Moore and Charles Berlitz took Allen's story seriously after establishing that he had been a seaman on the *Andrew Furuseth* in 1943 and 1944. Despite the fact that they could not locate logs for either ship, they deduced that the *Andrew Furuseth* and the *Eldridge* could have been in the same vicinity in August 1943 and that the *Eldridge* might have been involved in magnetic invisibility research that was carried out during the war to make warships less vulnerable to enemy mines. One of their sources, given the pseudonym "Dr. Rinehart," claimed to have been one of the scientists who conducted the research in its earlier stages, and they also found that Albert Einstein was working as a navy scientific consultant in 1943. As further corroboration, Moore and Berlitz cited the experiences of two airmen who claimed to have been told about the experiment by an unidentified survivor of the episode during a

chance encounter in 1970, and the story of a UFO witness who said he was told by U.S. and Canadian officials in 1975 that both governments had known about the existence of aliens since a 1943 navy invisibility experiment. In the end, however, Moore and Berlitz confessed their inability to provide proof without access to secret government files.

### The Problem of Fact Versus Fiction

A popular film, *The Philadelphia Experiment* (1984), added the element of time travel to the original story, with two sailors from the *Eldridge* being transported across forty-one years to the Nevada site of a top secret missile-defense project. Although the element of time travel was fictional, it was not long afterwards that an individual came forward claiming to be an *Eldridge* crewman with a newly restored memory of time travel even more elaborate than that shown in the film. The story of the Philadelphia Experiment grew over the years to include alien contact, mind control, and mysticism, and a series of books (beginning with Nichols and Moon in 1992) linked the original experiment to covert government research allegedly conducted at an abandoned air force base in Montauk, New York. This forging of links is reminiscent of the "mystery merging" that UFO researcher Jacques Vallée imputed to UFO research in 1991, in which mysteries are linked together and thus made more compelling despite their actual lack of connection.

Moore and Berlitz identified three possible explanations for Allen's story of the Philadelphia Experiment: a fraud, a true account of a real event, or an exaggerated and distorted account of a real event. The problem with the last two alternatives is that no independent evidence has surfaced to show that any radar or magnetic invisibility experiment was performed on the *Eldridge* during the war, or even that the ship was ever in Philadelphia. Sources whose testimony allegedly corroborate Allen's story have almost invariably been anonymous or unidentified, or hidden behind a pseudonym as in the case of "Dr. Rinehart." Allen reportedly confessed that his story was a hoax, but later repudiated the confession. In 1967 and 1968, he wrote to Jacques Vallée, whose book *Anatomy of a Phenomenon* had just

appeared in paperback. Along with an offer to sell certain documents, Allen repeated his tale of the Philadelphia Experiment and added a new story of a ship that survived the explosion of a UFO in 1947, leading Vallée to conclude that he was dealing with a con man. A few years later, Allen is reported to have written to his parents and boasted of having written the annotations to Jessup's book. Considering the lack of corroborative evidence, and the dubious nature of the evidence in favor of it, the Philadelphia Experiment appears to deserve the treatment given it in a navy form letter, which states that the Office of Naval Research never conducted invisibility experiments nor would they be possible outside the realm of science fiction.

Larry Haapanen

**See also:** Area 51; UFOs.

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### Pierce, William L.

An arch racial conspiracy theorist as well as a white supremacist leader and publisher, William Pierce is most widely known for his novel *The Turner Diaries*. The novel, like most of Pierce's writings, depicts a racial revolution to overcome a national, multicultural conspiracy against Anglo-Saxon Americans in the late twentieth century. *The Turner Diaries* generally had an underground existence as a magazine serial among many white supremacist movements until its publication as a book in 1978, when the Federal Bureau of Investigation denounced it as the most dangerous book in the United States. Pierce's pseudonymous novel became notorious, however, when Timothy McVeigh bombed the Oklahoma City Mur-

rah Federal Building in April 1995, killing 168 people in an enactment of one of the novel's key scenes. An excerpt from *The Turner Diaries* was found with McVeigh at the time of his arrest and has since propelled Pierce's name as well as his organization, National Alliance, into the mainstream media. Pierce justifies his extremist writings with a conspiracy theorist's fear of ethnic diversity; in his writing, the liberal conspiracy to pollute the United States with multiculturalism represents the end of the white race. Ironically, Pierce's work depicts and even exhorts a conspiracy of its own: the targeting and killing of those who represent or support racial diversity in the United States. While his fiction depicts the political strife of war in an imagined social transition from a multicultural to a white United States, Pierce also expresses his extremist politics through other political modes such as Libertarian and militia ideologies.

Pierce's incendiary rhetoric has been effective with some of his readers; *The Turner Diaries* is known to have inspired other crimes. In the early 1980s, a group named for *The Turner Diaries*' highest echelon of resistance fighters (the Order) committed murder, robbery, and counterfeiting, and bombed a synagogue in Colorado. In the early 1990s, a group calling itself the Aryan Republican Army committed bank robberies and bombings across the Midwest. Later in the 1990s, members of the New Order in St. Louis were arrested for plotting to bomb the Anti-Defamation League's New York headquarters, the Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. Although Pierce denies the influence of *The Turner Diaries* or any other of his many publications and broadcasts in inspiring violent acts, he has a history of generating conspiracy rhetoric that exhorts those who would seek a white United States to take action.

Pierce has been active in right-wing extremist movements since the 1960s. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, 11 September 1933, he holds a B.Sc. from Rice University (1955), and an M.A. (1958) and a Ph.D. (1962) in physics from the University of Colorado. Pierce was an assistant professor of physics at Oregon State University from 1962 to 1965. He then became a senior research scientist at the Advanced Materials Research Development Laboratory of



United Aircraft's Pratt and Whitney Division in 1965–1966. During this time he was involved with the John Birch Society. By 1966, Pierce left his employment and the John Birch Society for full-time neo-Nazi activism with the American Nazi Party, run by George Lincoln Rockwell. There, he edited the *National Socialist World*, a quarterly journal for academics and intellectuals. When Rockwell was assassinated in 1967, Pierce became one of the leaders of the National Socialist White People's Party, which succeeded the American Nazi Party. By 1970, Pierce left the National Socialist White People's Party to join the National Youth Alliance, a far-right political group whose aim was to disrupt liberal causes on college campuses. Infighting between Pierce and the Nazi Youth Party's founder, Willis Carto, split the group into factions. Pierce's wing came to be known as the National Alliance, a group he has run since 1974.

Pierce relocated the National Alliance from Arlington, Virginia, to a 346-acre farm in Mill Point, West Virginia. In many ways, Pierce is the National Alliance; he runs all aspects of the organization and writes most of and entirely oversees all its media. Pierce edits and writes for its magazine, *National Vanguard* (originally *Attack!*), and an internal newsletter, *National Alliance Bulletin* (formerly titled *Action*), as well as *Resistance* magazine. He also oversees several businesses as part of the National Alliance: National Vanguard Books, Resistance Records, and Cymaphane Records. Additionally, Pierce broadcasts a weekly radio program, *American Dissident Voices* on AM/FM and shortwave radio and writes articles for *Free Speech*, the program's newsletter.

The National Alliance aims to become the world's largest umbrella organization for white supremacy and is well on its way to meeting that goal. Domestically, Pierce created affiliations with the antigovernment Patriot movement during its rise in the 1990s. A decade later, he reached out to neo-Nazi youth groups, once again, through his record labels. With chapters in twenty-three states and a web page that is translatable into eight languages, the National Alliance has become well established. The use of technology has driven Pierce's outreach efforts and

allows for unique associations: in 2002, a large excerpt from one of his radio speeches, downloaded to a National Alliance listserv, ended up on a Hezbollah website two weeks later. The National Alliance provides a range of literature, radio, and music targeting both general and specific audiences that disseminate white supremacist conspiracy theories.

Specifically, Pierce's work describes a national crisis for white racial purism—a conspiracy of multiculturalism—and urges political activism and the recruitment of new members to build a political movement. However, National Alliance's ideology frequently describes force as the means to this reclamation of a white ancestry and a commitment to building a white nation. Pierce's fiction, written under the name Andrew Macdonald, depicts conspiracy theorists reacting to a perceived conspiracy of racial treason. Largely critical of Jewish media and business in the United States, these novels also focus on miscegenation and other racial “pollution” of the Anglo-Saxon bloodline. In these imagined scenarios, race patriots intend to provoke a racial war that will allow for armed rebellion and the creation of a white nation.

In *The Turner Diaries*, the United States is represented as severely intolerant of a specific “racism”—defined as acts perpetrated by whites against people of color—and has created a climate in which white people are under scrutiny for racist transgressions while people of color exploit the situation. The seemingly liberal government extends its oppressive influence with a law that repeals the Second Amendment right to own firearms. The consequent insurrection—which eventually becomes a global race war—is chronicled by one of its unassuming heroes, Earl Turner, whose fellow patriotic, militant white supremacists have prepared to fight “the System's” despotism. Turner's diary describes his experiences as he organizes small resistance cells and goes about the daily labor of domestic terrorism in the conspiracy to overthrow the government. Some of the novel's major scenes include a mortar attack on Washington, D.C., and a truck bombing of FBI headquarters (which McVeigh borrowed for his terrorism in Oklahoma City). One of the most graphic scenes is “the Day of the Rope,” in which the group

publicly hangs tens of thousands of race traitors with placards describing their treason. Turner's heroic acts lead to his induction into the group's inner circle (the Order)—a transcendence that concludes with Turner's suicide mission and subsequent martyrdom as the group's savior. By the novel's end, the New Era of white dominance has overcome the racial conspiracy.

Pierce's second novel, *Hunter*, published in 1989, reaches out to a different readership, moving away from the working-class emphasis of *The Turner Diaries* and focusing on a highly educated audience. The conspiracy of multiculturalism is the same, but the focus is the Jewish-owned media's social role. Protagonist Oscar Yeager is a talented engineer who, although highly educated and extremely rational, is being uncharacteristically reactionary—literally hunting black and white “miscegenating” couples in his disgust about the decline of the race. Unlike Turner, however, Yeager seeks a deeper, intellectual contextualization of his white supremacism as well as a solution that speaks to the social ambiguities he perceives. *Hunter* chronicles Yeager's hunt for a philosophy, his subsequent education about the Jewish media conspiracy, and his own answer to the racial conspiracy of a multicultural United States. In the novel's solution, Yeager becomes a media mogul who educates the U.S. public about white supremacism with a fundamentalist television preacher and deposes the Jewish media monopoly by gaining the largest market share of the viewing audience. The novel depicts Yeager's media counterconspiracy as a success both in reaching white America and beginning the transition to a racially pure nation with less large-scale bloodshed but, rather, key behind-the-scene assassinations at high levels.

In addition to his two novels, Pierce published *Serpent's Walk*, another racial conspiracy text, in 1991, under the name Randolph D. Calverhall, and has two other books published with National Vanguard Books: *The Best of Attack! and National Vanguard Tabloid* (1984) and *Gun Control in Germany, 1928–1945* (1994). Pierce's organization has reached out to other spheres of influence: from the purchase of AT&T stock in order to use the shareholder meetings as a platform for antisemitic

speech, to the targeting of youth markets in his newest ventures. The most diverse products in his catalog include the 1993 comic title, *New World Order Comix #1, The Saga of . . . White Will!* and a computer game depicting a virtual race war: “Ethnic Cleansing: The Game!” In 1999, Pierce became involved in the music industry through white power music labels Resistance and Cymophane Records.

Pierce finds conspiracy everywhere he looks: organizations working against hate-speech have targeted Pierce's various businesses and have worked to discredit his tax-exempt status (through his Church of the Creator organization) as well as to direct attention toward his enterprise. In 1996, the Southern Poverty Law Center won an \$85,000 judgment against Pierce for his role in an effort to keep Church of the Creator assets from the family of a murdered member, Harold Mansfield. Pierce continues to refer to these groups as part of the conspiracy against white values and white supremacism, just as he continues to find ways to bring his extremist politics to mainstream media.

Ingrid Walker Fields

**See also:** Antisemitism; Neo-Nazis; Oklahoma City Bombing.

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## Pontiac, Chief

A war leader of the Odawa tribe, Pontiac (often called Chief Pontiac) was identified by many contemporary British colonial officials as the chief

instigator of a devastating succession of military attacks against Anglo-American forts and settlements throughout the Great Lakes region during the summer of 1763. As rumor and speculation grew, the British feared that his actions were part of a wider French conspiracy, but it is more likely that Pontiac was pursuing his own plot.

His reputation as the architect of one of the most substantial Native American military actions in North American history was cemented by the prolific U.S. historian Francis Parkman. In his *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), Parkman credited Pontiac's intellect and bravery in executing the plot, but characterized his actions as a doomed effort on the part of "savages" to stave off the inevitable advance of Anglo-Saxon civilization across the continent. While subsequent historians have disputed the extent of Pontiac's political influence and military organizing beyond his home settlement near Detroit, he was undoubtedly the principal catalyst for a Native American resistance movement unprecedented in both its geographic scope and its ultimate diplomatic success.

An active partisan on behalf of the French during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), Pontiac remained loyal to his allies after the conquest of Canada by Great Britain on 8 September 1760. Many of his subsequent activities were devoted to trying to bring about a return to the relationship his people experienced with the French civil and military officials. Following the takeover of former French forts in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley by British Army troops (1760–1761), many of the local Native American nations grew aggrieved by the parsimony of British officials in diplomatic negotiations, as well as by the failure of the British to fulfill an earlier promise to ban settlement west of the Appalachian mountains. Pontiac worked to meld this growing anti-English sentiment among the region's native peoples with nativist messages of spiritual revival emanating from Delaware villages in the Ohio country. Pontiac also collaborated with the local French population at Detroit, some of whom promoted the notion of the defeated French king sending an army up the Mississippi River to join with the natives against the British. Jittery British traders and officers, upon

hearing this news, proved all too ready to believe that the ensuing war was the product of a French conspiracy, but in fact Pontiac and his followers fought for their own ends.

Pontiac commenced his siege of the key British fort at Detroit on 9 May 1763. Within a month, he had nearly 1,000 Odawa, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, and Huron warriors fighting with him. Pontiac followed up his initial attack by sending wampum belts with encoded messages encouraging similar attacks against other British posts. For this reason, he has been characterized as the orchestrator of the entire conflict. Yet while other native nations followed Pontiac's lead, a lack of unity in timing and an emphasis on local tribal objectives proved the rule for the duration of the war. This did not, however, compromise the overall impact of Native American military actions. Their well-conceived ruses, gunfire from entrenched positions, and flaming arrows had, by the end of June 1763, destroyed or forced the abandonment of nine British-occupied forts between western Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The troops at Detroit held out until reinforcements arrived on 3 October 1763. On 30 October 1763 Pontiac learned that his appeals for assistance from French troops still posted in Illinois had been categorically rejected, and he raised his siege.

Hostilities in Pontiac's War continued intermittently for the next two years, and during that time Pontiac visited Native American communities throughout modern Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, urging continued resistance to the British regime. With most of the interior forts razed, Native American warriors turned their attention to frontier settlements. Ultimately, historians have estimated that native attacks in Pontiac's War accounted for the deaths of 2,000 Anglo-American settlers and 400 British soldiers.

As Pontiac's notoriety grew, he came to be seen by the British authorities as crucial to prospects for ending the conflict. Despite the success of two military expeditions sent to the Great Lakes region over the summer of 1764 in securing the submission of many of the principal combatants, Pontiac remained elusive. Fearing that the war would continue unless he was dead or conciliated, the British

pursued him relentlessly. In talks with British negotiators at Fort Ouiatanon (near modern Lafayette, Indiana) in July 1765, Pontiac agreed to preliminary terms of peace. Pontiac's principal demand that the British make clear purchases of land in the Great Lakes region in advance of any settlement was endorsed in the July 1766 Treaty of Oswego, which ended Pontiac's War.

After fighting the British to a military stalemate and securing a key diplomatic victory for his native allies, Pontiac attempted to live a peaceful life of hunting. Yet his reputation attracted attention and fear, and he was murdered under suspicious circumstances by a Peoria Indian in the Illinois village of Cahokia on 20 April 1769.

*Jon Parmenter*

**See also:** Native Americans.

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## Populism

The agrarian movement in the West, South, and mountain regions of the United States in the late nineteenth century, known as Populism, contained several elements of conspiracy thinking directed at New York City, politicians, and the railroads. Although mainstream Populists did not generally embrace the notion of a "New York money power,"

many nevertheless were convinced that powerful forces had united to oppress farmers, miners, and industrial workers. This sentiment was epitomized in the 1896 speech at the Democratic convention in which William Jennings Bryan, the party's nominee for president, warned that these forces "will not crucify mankind on a cross of gold."

Following the Civil War, a general price deflation set in that especially hurt farmers who had long-term (five- to fifteen-year) mortgages by making the dollars they repaid much more valuable than the dollars they borrowed. At the same time, new silver discoveries in the West unleashed a torrent of silver onto the market. Advocates for farmers and debtors saw a way to combine the blessings of silver and the plight of the farmers by monetizing silver at a fixed rate of 16:1 (or sixteen silver ounces for one ounce of gold). In fact, the market rate was closer to 17:1, but the "silverites" hoped to force the government to purchase the silver at inflated prices, thus putting more money into the economy, especially in the West.

At the same time, agrarians became concerned about the level of prosperity in railroads and banking while agriculture—the backbone of the Republic since Jefferson's time—languished. As the historian of the Populist movement, John D. Hicks, noted, the farmer believed that he "worked longer hours, under more adverse conditions, and with smaller compensation for his labor than any other man on earth." (Hicks, 55). Farmers also felt exploited by the railroads and grain elevators, which they deemed to have a "monopoly" over local shipping and storage. In truth, few rural areas in states such as Kansas lacked access to at least two railroads, but the inconvenience of hauling grain to sites farther away was deemed unprofitable by many farmers.

Complaints about the railroads were preeminent within the young Populist Party. The party originated with various farmers' organizations, such as the National Farmers' Alliance and the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, as well as local antimonopoly parties, such as the People's Antimonopoly Party in Minnesota, the National Greenback Party, and the local Grange organizations. Various groups met in 1889, and the national convention of the "People's Party of the U.S.A.," known as the



“Populists,” met in May 1891 to draw up a platform and nominate a candidate. Key leaders of the agrarian movement were present, including Ignatius Donnelly of Minnesota, “Sockless Jerry” Simpson of Kansas, Tom Watson of Georgia, and James Weaver of Iowa. The convention nominated Weaver to run on a platform that demanded “free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16:1,” an income tax, and restrictions on immigrants. Although the platform did not specify government ownership of the railroads, mainstream Populists all agreed on that measure as well, but most agreed it was not likely in the near future, and they therefore settled for government regulation of the railroads.

Weaver, of course, had no impact on the 1892 election. Congress had already passed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, which was a half-measure in which the government planned to purchase large amounts of silver—not at 16:1, but at 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>:1. This created a window for arbitrage among speculators, resulting in a massive outflow of gold from the United States Treasury and major banks and triggering the panic of 1893. Although Congress repealed the act that year, the damage had been done and the erosion of the gold reserve undermined the nation’s banking system.

The panic gave the Republicans a campaign issue—the gold standard—and the Democrats took the bait by nominating William Jennings Bryan, a Democrat with strong populist leanings, as their presidential standard bearer. Bryan’s positions so closely paralleled those of the Populist Party that it did not nominate its own candidate, but supported Bryan. At the convention, Bryan delivered his famous speech in which he railed at those who would impose the gold standard and “crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.” (Bryan, the Populists, and the entire silver issue all became an allegory that emerged as one of the most famous children’s books and then films of all time, L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.) The Populists did gain control of some legislatures and judgeships, passing a law in Nebraska that imposed a cut in railroad freight rates.

But railroad and elevator freight rates had taken a backseat to the silver issue. Moreover, as reform

elements within the Republican Party gained momentum, the Populists lost ground. Unable to win at the ballot box with any regularity, they faced either fusion into the Democratic Party or allying themselves with the hated Republicans, who were actually enacting reforms. And despite the original lofty goals of a party that had no discrimination between races, the southern Populists had much different attitudes than those in the Midwest.

The Populists embodied the late-nineteenth-century agrarian anxiety about the declining status of the farmer in U.S. society. Farmers had gone into the Civil War era as a majority, and had controlled the electoral college through the votes of the South, West, and Midwest—all essentially hinging on the power of the farm bloc. But after the Civil War, the United States shifted to a manufacturing society, and farm states lost their electoral clout. While literature and culture still held the farmer in high esteem, neither his income nor his political power seemed to confirm that status. This produced an anxiety noted by Richard Hofstadter in his *Age of Reform* (1955), where, despite the fact that falling prices across the board actually made most farmers better off, they in general perceived they were losing ground in the economy.

Along with railroads, banks increasingly became targets for agrarian attacks. The unwillingness to permit branch banking ensured that in the Midwest especially, small country banks relied ever more heavily on big-city banks, particularly those in New York City. This, in turn, magnified conspiracy theories involving a “money trust” or “Jewish bankers” who controlled the nation’s finances. Publications such as William “Coin” Harvey’s *Coin’s Financial School* (1894) contributed to such views. Like other third parties in U.S. history, however, the Populists melted into one or the other of the two established parties, and had largely disappeared by 1900 . . . except in the fictional account of Frank Baum.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Donnelly, Ignatius; Gold Standard.

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## Posse Comitatus

In the 1980s, the Posse Comitatus spread its conspiracy-minded antigovernment and antisemitic message in the name of white, Christian, males to counter what they saw as attacks on their rights. Concentrated in eighteen states, arching from the Southwest, up the Pacific Coast through the Rocky Mountain region, and into the Midwest, the organization sought to decentralize all government above the county level. Their message resonated strongly in economically stressed rural areas of the United States and their rhetoric and ideology continued to instruct Christian Patriots into the twenty-first century.

The current Posse movement started in the late 1960s. William Porter Gale helped organize the Posse Comitatus—Latin for “power to the county”—on the principle of local governmental authority at the county level and elimination of federal authority. Gale argued that the local sheriff constituted the supreme law of the county and should be the only recognized law. Henry Lamont “Mike” Beach of Portland, Oregon, another early Posse provocateur, echoed Gale’s message and helped the movement spread throughout the West, from Mariposa County, California, to Bonner County, Idaho. By 1976, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated the movement to have between 12,000 and 50,000 members.

For the Posse Comitatus, political evil manifested itself in three areas: corruption of the nation’s government, perversion of the financial system, and degradation of Christian beliefs. First, democracy had usurped the founding framers’ republican form of government in the United States. Believers argued that the rabble now ruled governmental decisions, robbing “Freemen characters” of their God-given rights. Accordingly, the Posse attempted

to restore vested power of government into local hands with the blessing of the supreme law of the land, the Constitution.

Two actions, according to the Posse, corrupted the national government and granted it unlawful supreme power. First, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution allegedly created an entirely new class of citizens to join those so-called Freemen characters who had always had rights. Racial and cultural minorities, as well as women of all ethnicities, had now gained rights from the government as “federal citizens,” unlike “Freemen” who had received their rights from God. The Fourteenth Amendment, they thought, had thus undermined the original intent of the Constitution.

The second setback had supposedly come with the expansion of government during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Roosevelt administration, Posse conspiracists said, attempted to end the distinction between “federal citizens” and “Freemen” by eliminating the natural rights of the “Freemen.” In order to induce “Freemen characters” to give up their God-given rights, the governmental cabal plotted methods for citizens to unknowingly sign away their rights by applying for a hunting license, social security, or even a bank account. Participation in these government programs, according to Posse ideology, must remain voluntary, with only the local sheriff enforcing the law on white Christian men.

The Posse also developed strong ties to the Christian Identity movement. Followers of Christian Identity believe that they are the true Israelites, the chosen of God. The Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, Germanic, and other northern Europeans reportedly migrated to their homeland from Israel. Some later moved to the true holy land, the United States. Conversely, the movement stated, Jews sought to help Satan destroy earthly civilization. Therefore, according to the movement, to maintain civilization, whites must band together to drive out the evil forces of Satan consisting of the Jews, minorities, and nonbelievers. The Jewish faith has purportedly undermined white citizens’ rights by producing the Federal Reserve banking system and the Internal Revenue Service.

By 1974, the Posse's rhetoric extended from the West Coast into the Midwest, where a local Wisconsin Posse kidnapped an Internal Revenue Service agent, held him for several hours, and assaulted him. The following year, an Illinois Posse member earned a contempt charge during a divorce hearing for refusing to acknowledge the court. In San Joaquin County, California, the Posse attempted to prevent organizers from the United Farm Workers from speaking to laborers. Richard Butler, later of the Aryan Nations, and his Posse tried to arrest a Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, police officer who was testifying in court on an assault charge against a Posse member. In Stanfield, Oregon, a Posse armed with dogs and guns attempted to appropriate a large wheat and potato farm to settle a land dispute.

From its singular inception, the Posse Comitatus's membership remained steadfast in the desire to secede from the existing national government, separate from society, and restore the authority of the local sheriff. According to one Posse pamphlet:

The unlawful use of County Sheriffs as LACKEYS of the Courts should be discontinued at once. There is no lawfull [*sic*] authority, for Judges and the Courts to direct the law enforcement activities of a County Sheriff. The Sheriff is accountable and responsible only to the citizens who are the inhabitants of his County.

The literature of the Posse Comitatus exhorted fellow "Patriots" to do their duty against those who "destroy our freedoms and mak[e] us serfs of a ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT, ruled by the ANTI-CHRIST."

In the late 1970s, the Posse Comitatus movement tapped rural America for membership. Between 1983 and 1990 at least 500,000 people had their farms foreclosed each year. The economic hardship provided an opportunity to recruit from an audience disenchanted with the current system.

In the mid-1980s, Posse members reacted to the increasing surveillance by the government. In February 1983, Gordon Kahl resisted receipt of a warrant for outstanding taxes and shot two federal agents outside Medina, North Dakota. While Kahl

escaped the initial gunfight, authorities killed him when he resisted arrest after a nationwide manhunt. Twenty months later, Arthur Kirk engaged the highway patrol SWAT team outside Grand Island, Nebraska. Authorities shot Kirk during the gunfight. In the wake of media coverage of these and other such violent events, the Posse broke into secretive cells, following Louis Beam's "leaderless resistance" model. The Posse's rhetoric for decentralization, local government, economic reform, and religious beliefs, however, continued to encourage like-minded groups in the development of their own movements.

*Steve Shay*

**See also:** Antisemitism; Freemen; Militias; One-World Government.

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**Pound, Ezra**

One of the most influential and controversial figures in twentieth-century literature, Ezra Pound was a great poetic innovator and one of the essential shapers of the cultural movement known as Modernism. He was also a purveyor of conspiracy theories, some concerning heretical medieval religious cults, and others focusing on modern war and international finance, with the latter type often demonizing Jews. Ultimately, Pound wove these threads together into a grand conspiracy myth.

Born in Hailey, Idaho, in 1885, Pound attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania, where he distinguished himself in the study of Romance languages and medieval literature. In 1906, Pound traveled to Europe to do thesis research and, though he never completed his dissertation, he made fruitful discoveries, among them a rare collection of troubadour manuscripts at the Ambrosian Library in Milan.

**Troubadours, Cathars, and the "Mediterranean Sanity"**

Troubadours, the singer/poets who came to prominence in twelfth-century Provence, became for

Pound a focus of inspiration and fascinated inquiry. The troubadours were also associated with the Cathars, a religious movement based in Provence, against which the Catholic Church waged a bloody war, the Albigensian Crusade, from 1208 to 1229. The brutality of the crusade was such that few if any actual Cathar documents survived, a fact that allowed later writers, often of an occultist bent, to contradict Church accounts of the heresy.

In 1909, in London, Pound gave a series of lectures concerning such matters, collected as *The Spirit of Romance* (1910), in which he suggested that troubadour art reflected an ecstatic state of consciousness rooted in sensuous experience, highly attuned perception, and a sacramental vision of nature. Framing this sensibility as an outgrowth of Greco-Roman paganism and later labeling it “the Mediterranean sanity” (Pound 1935, 154), Pound contrasted it with what he saw as the otherworldly, life-denying thrust of Hebrew and Hindu religiosity. Eventually, he speculated that troubadour culture indicated the survival, underground in Provence, of the Eleusinian mysteries and Hellenistic goddess worship.

Pound’s version of Provençal spirituality contrasted sharply with the Church’s account of Catharism, a fact that aroused Pound’s suspicion. According to the Church, the Cathar heresy was “Manichean”—that is, it preached a pessimistic dualism that framed the body as a prison and the cosmos as the devil’s creation. But, argued Pound, “If there were any Manicheans” in twelfth-century Provence, they “left no trace in troubadour art” (Pound 1973, 159), a point that begged the question: Could two such radically different spiritualities flourish at the same time, in the same small cultural niche? Pound’s answer was that the heresy was not what the Church had claimed it to be. Rather, Cathars and troubadours must have been united in devotion to a neopagan religiosity that the Church had conspired to destroy and misrepresent.

### ***The New Age, Social Credit, and the “Causes of War”***

Pound spent much of the period from 1911 to 1921 in England, where he married Dorothy Shakespear

and collaborated with older artistic masters like W. B. Yeats as well as avant-garde innovators like Wyndham Lewis. He produced a large body of poetry, translations, and criticism while studying theosophy, Japanese theater, and Chinese language and philosophy. He also labored generously to promote the work of then-obscure contemporaries like T. S. Eliot and James Joyce.

Pound published much of his prose from this period in *The New Age*, a London-based journal of politics and the arts edited by A. R. Orage, a proponent of Guild Socialism. Through Orage, Pound met C. H. Douglas, whose theory of Social Credit proposed to right economic problems by counting the cultural inheritance as a form of wealth held in common by all people of a nation. Like other socialist groups, the *New Age* circle opposed British entry into World War I, viewing the conflict as benefiting only ruling elites and financial profiteers. Pound lost several close friends to the war and depicted it in his poetry as the self-destruction of “a botched civilization” (Pound 1957, 64). In a biographical sketch from 1949, he wrote: “1918—began investigation of causes of war, to oppose same” (Pound 1957, n.p.).

In 1921 Pound moved to Paris and, by 1924, on to Italy, where he resided until the end of World War II. During this period, he made headway on an ambitious epic poem, *The Cantos* (1972), and became increasingly isolated from friends and collaborators. He devoted great energy to a campaign to popularize Social Credit, which he now saw as the cure for modern social ills. Pound became enthusiastic about Mussolini due to the fascist dictator’s apparent openness to Social Credit policies. In various tracts, Pound argued that there were parallels between the thoughts of the *Duce* and that of U.S. founders like Jefferson and Adams, and he railed against the power of central banks like the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Bank of England. In 1939, he voyaged to the United States for a lecture tour. In Washington, D.C., he spoke with some congressmen about Social Credit and sought, unsuccessfully, to meet with President Franklin Roosevelt, whose policies he detested. Audiences and old friends were disturbed by his obsession with money and outbursts of antisemitism. Pound now



attributed economic insecurity and modern war to a conspiracy of powerful financial interests and, increasingly, he identified those interests with the Jews.

### **Fascism, Antisemitism, and Private Mythology**

Soon back in Italy, Pound began in 1941 to make radio broadcasts sponsored by the fascist regime that, he later claimed, were used only for “personal propaganda in support of the U.S. Constitution” (Pound 1957, n.p.). The broadcasts consisted largely of obscure lectures about money and culture laced with rants about alleged Jewish conspiracy. At times the twisted logic of his conspiracism seemed to catch Pound up, as in the following passage where he mentions *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the notorious antisemitic forgery purporting to document a Jewish plan for world domination. Pound acknowledges the document to be a forgery, but still attempts to recuperate his conspiracy scenario: “Certainly they are a forgery, but this is one proof we have of their authenticity. The Jews have worked with forged documents for the past twenty-four hundred years” (Pound 1978, 283). In 1941, in a conversation that “shook” Pound, the leftist Romano Bilenchi conveyed the story of an SS massacre of German Jews and insisted that “it was Hitler and Himmler who had organized a conspiracy” (qtd. in Carpenter, 613); nonetheless, Pound clung to his antisemitic beliefs.

Indeed, these beliefs were key to a private mythology that integrated the many divergent strands of Pound’s intellectual concern. An idiosyncratic variation on Matthew Arnold’s idea that Western civilization swings between phases of Hebraism and Hellenism, this mythology framed European history as a struggle between embattled exponents of the Hellenistic “Mediterranean sanity,” like the Cathars, and groups, like the Calvinists, or the Jews themselves, who supposedly pulled the West in a Hebraistic direction.

Pound’s aversion to abstractions did not prevent him from building his mythology around the crudest racist stereotypes. Far from being part of some imagined Jewish “essence,” the association of Jews

with usury tracked back to the late medieval period Pound knew so well, where moneylending, deemed by the Church a sinful occupation for Christians, became for Jews one of the few available professions. Similarly, the image of the Jew as unnatural alien, poisoning the wells of Christendom, was a staple of medieval rhetoric concerning enemies of the Church.

### **Treason, Mental Illness, Silence**

In 1943, the United States indicted Pound for treason and, when the Allies took Italy in 1945, he became a prisoner of war. Initially held in Pisa, he spent thirty-one days in an outdoor cage, eventually being moved to Washington, D. C., to face charges. With a conviction holding out the possibility of the death penalty, defense lawyer Julien Cornell decided to plead Pound as insane. Indeed, old friends like Ernest Hemingway pointed to Pound’s radio broadcasts as proof that he had lost his wits years before. Ultimately, a panel of psychiatrists and a U.S. jury found Pound unfit to stand trial and he was confined to St. Elizabeth’s, a Washington, D.C., hospital for the mentally ill, where he remained from 1946 to 1958. St. Elizabeth’s director, Dr. Wilfred Overholser, found Pound to be suffering from some sort of debilitating mental disorder and at times used the word “paranoid” to describe his mental state, though he never diagnosed him as paranoid (i.e., schizophrenic) in the clinical sense of the term.

In 1949, amid much controversy, Pound was awarded the Bollingen Prize in American poetry. In 1957, literary supporters of Pound petitioned the attorney general to drop the treason indictment and in 1958 Pound gained release from St. Elizabeth’s, shortly thereafter returning to Italy. He remained mostly there until his death in 1972 and for many of his last years he was seldom heard to speak, the silence seeming to some like a sign of illness and to others like self-imposed punishment. On rare occasions when he conversed with visitors, he characterized his work as a wrongheaded failure and “the prejudice of antisemitism” as his “worst mistake” (qtd. in Carpenter, 899).

*John Kimsey*

**See also:** Antisemitism; Bank of England; Federal Reserve System; Holocaust, Denial of; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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### **Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, sometimes entitled *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* or *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, are a collection of statements supposedly made at a meeting of a secret, conspiratorial Jewish cabal. The statements of the “elders” are taken to reveal the cabal’s plans for dominating the entire world. Through their secret government, it is alleged, they will ultimately succeed in overthrowing nations, introducing a single world economic system, and preparing the way for a King of the Jews who will be “the real Pope of the Universe, the patriarch of an international Church” (*Protocols*, 58). For many believers in the *Protocols*, this King of the Jews is none other than the Antichrist; for more secular conspiracy theorists, the outcome is a “one-world government” or “New World Order” run by international (Jewish) bankers (although these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive).

The *Protocols* were first proven to be a forgery in 1921 and are now almost universally recognized as such. Yet their dubious authenticity has never substantially reduced their effectiveness as antisemitic propaganda, and they have been used to support anti-Jewish conspiracy theories from their first appearance around 1900 right up until the present day, perhaps most famously and most tragically in Nazi Germany.

### **The Composition of the Protocols**

Although the “writer” of the *Protocols* is unknown, much of the text is derived from a nineteenth-century political satire written in France by Maurice Joly. In Joly’s *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel* (1864), the political philosophers Montesquieu and Machiavelli are engaged in debate, with Montesquieu (the hero of the piece) arguing the case for liberalism and Machiavelli (the villain and stand-in for Napoleon III) arguing the case for cynical despotism. As Norman Cohn points out in his indispensable *Warrant for Genocide* (1981), whoever compiled the text of the *Protocols* seemed to do so “in a hurry” (Cohn, 75) because the elders can be found offering the arguments of *both* Montesquieu *and* Machiavelli. Yet, ironically and tragically, this apparent mistake resulted in one of the text’s great “strengths” as right-wing propaganda, for the apparent contradiction between the two political philosophies is resolved as follows: the elders’ “true” goals for world conquest through sinister political machinations are revealed in the Machiavelli passages, while the Enlightenment liberalism advocated in the Montesquieu passages is merely a ploy the elders use to delude the “goy cattle.” Whether by accident or by intention, the compiler of the *Protocols* managed to forge the conceptual matrix that would allow generations of antisemitic conspiracy theorists to view every liberal-progressive development in politics (e.g., the formation of the UN, the development of labor unions, the liberalization of trade, secularization, etc.) as merely a ploy of the international Jewish conspiracy.

The rampant forces of globalized capitalism were indeed causing many changes throughout Europe, and the *Protocols* are quite clearly offering a dis-

torted—and ultimately deadly—metaphor for the new economic world order. The elders want wars, for instance, to be fought “on economic ground” (*Protocols*, 17), which is, of course, the sphere of their power, for, as they remind us throughout the text, they control the world’s gold. When nations subsume their own sovereignty under the general rule of international economy, they are playing right into the elders’ hands. Money knows no national boundaries; it is the international force par excellence. The elders speak of capital in awed tones as an entity “which possesses millions of eyes ever on the watch and unhampered by any limitations whatsoever,” and it is this that provides a clue about what lies behind the antisemitic conspiracy theories the *Protocols* generate. As the U.S. literary scholar Frederic Jameson points out, conspiracy theory can be understood as a flawed attempt to comprehend a social totality that is, ultimately, beyond comprehension. In this case, the awesome power of globalization (i.e., global capitalism) itself is misunderstood as somehow being the *conscious* scheme of a few individuals, rather than as an impersonal force driven on by markets and banal, everyday consumer self-interest. This particular flawed understanding of the social totality is distinguished by its cruel scapegoating and its ability to generate violence.

### **The History of the *Protocols* from Nineteenth-Century Russia to the Holocaust**

Though the origin of the *Protocols* is a complex subject, the general consensus is that the text resulted at least in part from labors of Pyotr Ivanovich Rachkovsky, the head of foreign operations for the czarist secret police force, Okhrana. Rachkovsky may well have commissioned the work as an attempt to create support for a Franco-Russian league, ostensibly to counter the international Jewish conspiracy, but no doubt more practically to offset other European military powers. While references within the text to the French political scene cause scholars to argue that the text was produced in France in 1897 or 1898, the *Protocols* first appear in print in Russia (as early as 1903), with their “canonical” formulation coming in the mystical writer Sergey Nilus’s ominously titled work, *The Great in the Small: Antichrist*

*Considered as an Imminent Political Possibility* (1905). Nilus revised and expanded his work for publication just in time for the revolution, and it was predominantly the 1917 version, entitled *He Is Near, at the Door . . . Here Comes the Antichrist and the Reign of the Devil on Earth*, that furnished the world with what was to become a startlingly popular explanation of both the October Revolution and World War I.

Very quickly, the Bolsheviks’ opponents, the White Russian forces, seized upon the *Protocols* as a foreign policy tool. They believed, or at least wanted others to believe, that the revolution was the work of the elders. By distributing copies of the *Protocols* to delegates at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and to government officials throughout Europe and the United States, the White forces hoped to persuade foreign powers to intervene in their civil war against the Bolsheviks. In 1920 the *Protocols* were being taken quite seriously in mainstream newspapers such as the *London Times*. Editions began to appear in many languages throughout Europe. Then Henry Ford’s *Dearborn Independent* published a series of ninety-one articles “explaining” the mysterious power of Jews in the United States and introducing the *Protocols* to a wide U.S. audience (the journal had a readership that often neared 500,000). Reprinted as *The International Jew*, Ford’s particularly U.S. version of the antisemitic conspiracy theory was shipped back to Europe and ultimately, in the words of Norman Cohn, did “more than any other work to make the *Protocols* world famous” (Cohn, 159).

One of the many inconsistencies in the worldwide dissemination of the *Protocols* is the ways in which the conspiracy theory was subtly warped within each nation to fit the national strategic interests. While antisemites in each country believed the Jews to be behind a secret world government or conspiracy, they were in wild disagreement as to who exactly was supposed to be in league with the international Jewish conspiracy. In Germany, it was believed that the City of London was the elders’ center of operations, and that the English actually financed the Bolsheviks. In England, on the other hand, it was supposed that Germany was in league

with the Bolsheviks and the elders. In both cases is quite clear that the Jews were being made a scapegoat in order to drum up opposition to each country's strategic military and economic rivals.

Interest in the *Protocols* dramatically tapered off in Britain when the London *Times* proved them to be a forgery in August 1921. Yet certain radical elements in Germany refused to believe this. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler perversely argued that even if the *Protocols* turned out to be a forgery, that did not mean that the contents were untrue. In fact, for Hitler, all of the public denunciations of the *Protocols* in the British papers and elsewhere proved all the more that the *Protocols* represented things the way they really are; after all, the elders themselves announce in the *Protocols* that they already control the press (*Protocols*, 30). In the end, the *Protocols* formed one of the pillars of the Nazi ideology. Yet not only did the Nazis found their antisemitism on the *Protocols*, they also seemed entranced and profoundly influenced by the elders' conspiracy. The great irony of the situation has been pointed out by Hannah Arendt: "the Nazis started with the fiction of conspiracy and modeled themselves, more or less consciously, after the secret society of the Elders of Zion." As is too often the case, the conspiracy theorists end up mirroring the very conspiracy they ostensibly hope to eradicate (perhaps revealing the psychological "projection" that all along formed the basis of the racial hatred). The tragic result of this ideology is well known—at least 6 million lives destroyed in the Holocaust.

### The *Protocols* Today

Though the Holocaust is the obscene climax of the *Protocols*' history, it is far from the end of the story. To this day the *Protocols* are still used effectively in anti-Israeli propaganda in the Middle East. The Islamic Resistance Movement ( Hamas ) refers to the *Protocols* in its "Covenant" as evidence of Zionist expansionist policy. It suggests that the *Protocols* are "the best proof" of its claim that Israel intends to "expand from the Nile to the Euphrates." The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) keeps a running record of positive references to the *Protocols* in more mainstream Middle Eastern media as well (particularly

those references found in *Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda*, the official newspaper of the Palestinian authority). In the United States, Neo-Nazi groups, right-wing separatists, and the Nation of Islam have all distributed (or been accused of distributing) copies of the *Protocols* (these groups are also tracked by the ADL). The Internet has provided a cheaply accessible forum for such groups to publicize their views, and no doubt ensures that *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are more widely accessible today than ever.

Marlon Kuzmick

**See also:** Antisemitism; Coughlin, Father Charles; Ford, Henry; Freemasonry; Holocaust, Denial of; Nation of Islam; Neo-Nazis; New World Order; One-World Government.

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### Puritans

More than one commentator has noted the irony of Puritan New England: that a society founded so idealistically as a haven of religious liberty would in turn persecute religious dissenters. This observation reflects significant misunderstandings about Puritan beliefs, ideology, and identity. The existence of a royal conspiracy to suppress the Puritan movement in England was a key element in New England's founding mythology. However, the Puritans fled to New England not to permit unfettered religious liberty but to acquire the "gospel liberty" to erect a godly society—a "New Israel"—in accordance with their specific beliefs. The Puritans saw themselves



as a righteous remnant surrounded by enemies, and admonished by the knowledge that God's blessing on their society was predicated on its order and obedience, their religious and political psychology was reflexively defensive. Tracing the New England Puritans' obsession with conspiracy theories helps clarify the motivations for fleeing England and the rationale for some of the acts of intolerance that still give them a bad reputation.

The Puritans who began to arrive in America in the 1630s were but a small portion of the participants in a fifty-year-old reform movement that originated in the Elizabethan Church of England. Best understood as a loose, incomplete alliance of progressive Protestants composed of both clergy and laypeople of middling and gentry status, the Puritans worked to extend the Protestant Reformation in England. Forsaking the "papist" rituals of the established Church of England, Puritans gathered in autonomous congregations or "conventicles," in which membership was only extended to demonstrably pure individuals, called "saints" or the "elect." Moral legislation was also a key strategy to remedying England's "halfly reformed" society (Foster, 5). Distressed by what they saw as Anglicanism's turn back to Roman Catholic practices, they agitated vociferously in their parishes and in Parliament for religious purity in ways that earned them their name, a derogatory epithet hurled by their many detractors.

Opposition to Puritan reforms from the monarchy and the moderate elements in the Church of England was unending, but increased particularly under the Stuarts, James I and Charles I, and through the efforts of the bishop of London, William Laud, who became archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. James I, who believed that abolishing the national church would represent a threat to royal prerogative, famously declared of the Puritans that "I will harry them out of the land." Laud, meanwhile, harassed Puritan clergy by manipulating the Church of England bureaucracy. A climactic development occurred in 1629, when Charles I suspended the Puritan-dominated Parliament. This effectively ended Puritan efforts by putting out of reach the only possible avenue for legislating reli-

gious reform within the Church of England, and hinted at a more menacing and repressive royal posture toward nonconformity.

### **The City on a Hill**

Frustrated by these defeats, and fearful of more persecution, a sizeable cohort of Puritans made the difficult decision to leave an England they now found intractably corrupt. A small vanguard left in the late 1620s, founding Salem, Massachusetts, in 1629. What became known as the "Great Migration" began in 1630, when a flotilla of ships carrying the colony's first governor, John Winthrop, left England for the New World. In a defining sermon that set out the ideological and religious foundations for the new colony, Winthrop declared that the emigrants were a covenant people of God, a "New Israel" whose purpose was to create a godly "City on a Hill" that would be a Christian beacon for a lost and corrupt England.

The Puritan attempt to create a model society in New England depended on a unique and durable synthesis of church and state that came to be known as the "Congregational Way." Godly life was ordered collectively, and the pillars of social purity were the clergyman and the "godly magistrate." Church and state were separate, unlike the state-supported Anglican Church, but their roles were complementary. At the center of each town was the church, or meeting house, which often doubled as the local court or town hall. Membership to the congregation was carefully limited to those who could demonstrate evidence of their conversion or sanctification. Electoral franchise in local politics, meanwhile, was only offered to church members. Further, although they were not allowed to hold public office, clergymen performed valuable civic functions by preaching election sermons, or presiding over days of fasting in times of trouble. Moral codes, such as New Haven's famous "blue laws," were legislated and enforced to maintain order and purity.

### **Maintaining Orthodoxy**

While Puritan society was notable for the cohesiveness of its governing institutions, its divine mandate

and its precarious place on the American frontier made it deeply susceptible to rumors and conspiracy theories. Particularly troubling was the problem of religious sectarianism. As a last enclave of true Christianity, it was easy for Puritans to see conspiracies of heretics arrayed against them, plots that ultimately were of satanic derivation. Samuel Sewall, a prominent Boston merchant, like many of his compatriots, was deeply fearful of “the plots of papists, Atheists, &c.” (Sewall, 10). That New Englanders dealt with heterodoxy in ways that often were immoderate reflected their belief that conspiracies to gospel liberty—real and imagined—lay behind religious dissent and diversity.

The first challenges to New England’s religious orthodoxy emerged in the first decade of settlement, and were led by two brilliant and charismatic individuals, Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Beginning in 1634 Williams rocked the still evolving orthodox Puritan establishment in New England by arguing that the colony’s church-state matrix was contrary to scriptural law. He objected to the idea that civil authorities should suppress religious dissent, enforce church attendance, or protect the practice of religion. His views advocating “soul liberty” and the strict separation of church and state seem to anticipate the ideas of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, but his intention was quite different: he believed that any church-state alliance invariably corrupted the church. Since gospel liberty depended on submission to proper civil and religious authority, his ideas and popularity attacked the nexus of Puritan social order and raised fears of a wider sectarian conspiracy. He was banished from Massachusetts in 1636 and settled in Rhode Island.

Anne Hutchinson’s challenge to New England’s religious order, meanwhile, incited what came to be known as the Antinomian Crisis (1636–1638). A brilliant woman, she expressed dissatisfaction with the theology and preaching of many of the colony’s ministers. She held meetings in her Boston home that attracted crowds of men and women, in which she discussed and criticized the weekly sermons she had heard. While the Puritan movement encouraged lay participation in theological debate, her dissent, gender, and large following made her ministry particu-

larly controversial. As a threat to the clerical establishment, she was, like Williams, banished from the colony—but not without a significant political struggle, because many of her male supporters included a number of powerful merchants.

Having quelled dissent from within, New England Puritans next faced a sectarian invasion from without. Beginning in the 1650s, members of the Quaker sect—an offshoot of radical Protestantism in England—began to arrive in Massachusetts, settling mainly in Salem and Boston. Beyond significant theological differences, the Quakers were a threat to Puritan society because they recognized the authority of no civil government, refused to pay taxes and serve in the militia, and acknowledged no hierarchy of political leadership. They publicly denounced the Puritan ministers as a bunch of hacks or “hirelings.” Aggressive in their proselytizing, the most radical form of Quaker witness was called “going naked for a sign,” when Quaker women would run naked through Puritan churches and civic courts. In the words of a Puritan broadside, Quakerism was “destructive to fundamental trueths [*sic*] of religion” (Pestana, 33). But New England’s leaders, who were not amused by the accusations of ungodliness, ultimately failed to quell the threat to their godly commonwealth. Faced with Puritan repression—beatings, imprisonment, and even executions—the Quakers would not desist. The most famous Quaker “martyr,” Mary Dyer, was a former follower of Anne Hutchinson who converted to Quakerism in the 1650s. In 1659 she and two comrades were convicted for apostasy in Boston and sentenced to death. Because the Puritan magistrates feared a public outcry or possibly even an attack on the town by other Quakers, her sentence was commuted and she was banished from Boston with the threat of death should she return. She did, and she was hanged on 1 June 1660 along with three other Quakers. News of these executions spread to England and attracted the negative attention of King Charles II, and the Puritans were gradually forced to amend their repressive tactics.

Unable to enforce religious uniformity, Puritan clergy and magistrates resorted to persuasion to maintain the godliness of New England society.

While Quakers were the most visible challenge to Puritan society, a more insidious threat came from vice and disorder within New England. Puritan fear of “declension,” or the perception that New England was falling away from its divinely ordained mission, was the impetus for the pastor-led “Reformation of Manners,” a moral-reform campaign that began in 1679. In sermons and laws, authorities targeted a whole host of practices and behaviors as immoral: folk magic and witchcraft, harvest revels, tavern culture, and sexual vice. Resisting immorality required vigilance, since pastors and magistrates believed that disorder was not simply the random expression of human nature, but was part of a satanic plot to undermine the last enclave of true Christianity.

### **From Colony to Province**

If fears of heterodox conspiracies and moral laxity preoccupied the Puritan ruling class, New England’s vulnerable position as an isolated colonial outpost was also a source of conspiracy theories. The Puritans fancied that they had founded their “City on a Hill” in a “howling wilderness,” surrounded by real and imagined enemies. Their Native American neighbors were objects of suspicion and fear, and New England fought two vicious wars against them, the Pequot War (1637) and King Philip’s War (1675–1676). Rumors of imminent Indian attack were constant throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The “Eastern Indians” allied with the French in Quebec and began attacking New England in the 1680s, initiating a cycle of warfare that would not cease until the 1760s. This combined French and Indian threat had special connotations in the Puritan religious and political imagination. As a powerful Catholic nation, France and its imperial ambitions represented nothing less than the temporal instrument of the papal Antichrist.

Thus Puritans refracted geopolitical developments and imperial adversaries through the lens of their collective identity as a people with a divine mission. More complicated, however, were New England’s increasingly contentious relations with England. While the Puritans had fled persecution,

they had never disavowed the mother country, nor had they formally rejected the Church of England. The founding charter signed by Charles I gave the first Puritan colonists unprecedented powers of self-rule, allowing them to select their own governor and erect the institutions that supported their godly identity. Events in England—the Civil War, the execution of Charles I, the rule of Oliver Cromwell, and the Restoration of Charles II in 1660—meant that New England was effectively independent for the first thirty years of its existence. Displeased with New England’s commercial and religious independence, Charles II began to reassert English control over the colonies. Historians debate when Puritan New England can be said to have “ended,” but certainly a pivotal transition occurred when Charles II revoked Massachusetts’s charter in 1684. Authority was wrested from the Puritan-elected governor and handed to a new royal appointee, Governor Edmund Andros. This inaugurated a decade of the politics of conspiracy as the established Puritan leadership and the newly arrived royal representatives struggled for power.

Andros arrived in Boston in 1686 and immediately alienated the Puritan leadership. A devout Anglican, he deliberately flouted Puritan religious sensibilities and refused to defer to the deposed Puritan elite in colonial decision-making. Fearing their religious liberties were at risk, the Puritans retaliated in two ways: they spread rumors about Andros’s corruption and incompetence, and they sent Increase Mather, the colony’s most important clergyman, to London in 1688 to renegotiate the charter with the new king, James II. However, in another outbreak in the conflict between monarch and Commons, James II—a Catholic advocate of absolute monarchy—was overthrown in 1688 and replaced by William III, a Protestant who was much more conciliatory to parliamentary powers.

This “Glorious Revolution” had significant effects in the American colonies. Hearing this news, the New England Puritans acted preemptively. Declaring that Andros, as the appointee of James II, was no longer the legitimate ruler, on 18 April 1689 the leadership of Puritan Boston rose up and overthrew

Andros. In documents justifying this coup, they argued that Puritan New England had been oppressed by Andros's tyranny; he had led the colony to disaster since the revocation of the old charter in 1684. "[A]ll our concerns both Civil and Sacred, have suffered by the Arbitrary Oppressions of *Unreasonable Men*," they wrote, and produced an often hyperbolic litany of grievances and conspiracy theories. They accused Andros of bungling a military campaign against the Eastern Indians, which resulted in great loss of life to New Englanders, and of willfully suppressing news of the Glorious Revolution in England—which they characterized as “the rescue [of] the *English* nation from imminent POPERY and SLAVERY”—in order to stay in power. Implausibly, they also believed Andros to be complicit in an imminent attack on New England by Catholic France, and claimed that the French planned to kidnap the last Puritan governor of the colony, Simon Bradstreet (A. B., 48–53). In short, the Puritan leaders constructed from a potent stew of rumor and conspiracy theories an ideological justification for overthrowing Andros, by which they hoped to reconstitute the authority and political institutions they had enjoyed under the old charter. Significantly, however, the political rhetoric they employed did not invoke so much the religious idioms of godly liberty but reflected a new, more secular vocabulary and claimed—in a premonition of the American Revolution—that they acted in defense of their “English liberties.”

This was a fleeting victory, however, since William III was unwilling to restore the old charter. In 1691 Mather returned to New England with a new charter that irrevocably reshaped Puritan political life. Electoral franchise based on church membership and a government elected entirely within the colony was replaced by a franchise based on property and a government supervised from London (Hall, 252–253). Mather was convinced that this new charter was the best he could have obtained, but from then on New England was governed through the language of English constitutionalism, not the spiritual vision of the Puritan founders.

*William Van Arragon*

**See also:** Anti-Catholicism; Hutchinson, Anne; Witchcraft.

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#### Pynchon, Thomas

The defining figure of what has been called the “paranoid style” of U.S. fiction, Thomas Pynchon is also the most reclusive and mysterious U.S. novelist of the 1960s generation. Using paranoia and conspiracy to shape both the form and content of much of his work, Pynchon's fiction is, like conspiracy theory itself, huge and seemingly uncontrollable in scope, exceptionally complex, consistently absurd and surreal, and quite possibly (or possibly not) totally interconnected. His novels include *V.* (1963), *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), a collection of short stories, *Slow Learner* (1984), *Vineland* (1990), and *Mason & Dixon* (1997).



Pynchon's novels defy any effort at easy summary and freely combine complex scientific concepts with dirty limericks, philosophical ruminations on historical causality and theological predestination, and investigations of clandestine mail-delivery services and sentient lightbulbs, and like to pit dope-smoking freaks against military cabals, fascist corporate syndicates, and competing mind-control cliques. Pynchon fills his novels with hundreds of strange characters bearing stranger names like Meatball Mulligan, Genghis Cohen, Mike Fallopian, Brock Vond, and the Revd Wicks Cherrycoke. Although meticulously precise, his prose has the outward appearance of being loose and uncontrollable, deluging the reader with a textual excess that brilliantly embodies the collision of seemingly self-contained conceptual universes in postmodern U.S. culture. The reader is faced with the delightful if paranoia-inducing task of searching out meaningful connections within the narrative's frenetically multiplying plots, wild conspiracies, and allegorical details. Pynchon's distinctively nonlinear and fragmented stories are nonetheless built around a quest for knowledge or to uncover some "plot," but, as he writes in *V*, "in this search motive is part of the quarry." Yet every quest and every plot seems too complex, too interconnected for the protagonists to unravel, let alone take control of. The result is a series of novels and meanings that are, as he writes in *Gravity's Rainbow*, "not a disentanglement from, but a progressive knotting into."

Unlike his novels, what is known of Pynchon's biography can be easily summarized. Thomas Ruggles Pynchon was born on 8 May 1937 on Long Island, New York. He attended Oyster Bay High School and won a scholarship to Cornell University. There he began as a student of engineering physics, but after leaving to join the Navy Signal Corps for two years, Pynchon returned to Cornell where he graduated with a degree in English in 1959. While at Cornell, Pynchon is known to have taken a class from Vladimir Nabokov, befriended the novelist Richard Fariña, and edited the *Cornell Writer*, where he published his first short story. In a rare personal essay, Pynchon wrote about the highly

contradictory literary and cultural influences of the late 1950s that, in retrospect, are flawlessly synthesized in his mature style: Kerouac and Henry Adams, surrealism and Spike Jones, the *Evergreen Review* and Cybernetics, jazz clubs and British spy thrillers, marijuana and Edmund Wilson.

After college, Pynchon moved to Greenwich Village where he began writing his first novel. In 1960 he moved to Seattle and worked for Boeing as a writer of technical manuals. Two years later, Pynchon moved to southern California and on to Mexico where he finished *V*. A picaresque novel of two deeply opposite men and "the whole sick crew," *V* is ostensibly centered around a search for conspiratorial meaning, which animates the novel's movement. Unlike the perfect "schlemihl," Benny Profane, Herbert Stencil is a joyless adventurer dedicated to searching for *V*, a woman who may or may not exist, but who he nonetheless believes is connected to the "century's great cabals" that periodically reappear during moments of rebellion around the world. *V* may embody the secret history of the twentieth century or she may simply be the paranoid's conspiracy theory incarnate. *V* received the William Faulkner award for the best first novel of the year, and the *New York Times* said of *V*'s "recluse" of an author, "no matter what his circumstances, or where he's doing it, there is at work a young writer of staggering promise."

*The Crying of Lot 49* is Pynchon's second novel and by virtue of its brevity and linear plot, it continues to be his most widely read and least Pynchonesque work. *Lot 49* tells the story of Oedipa Maas and her quest to unravel the estate of her fabulously wealthy former lover Pierce Inverarity. In her pursuit, Oedipa encounters a broad range of southern California subcultures including LSD-experimenting doctors, right-wing nuts, a rock band called the Paranoids, and a gang of engineers at Yoyodyne Aerospace. Across the highways and undergrounds of San Narcisco, Oedipa learns to read the signs and experience "revelations which now seemed to come crowding in exponentially, as if the more she collected the more would come to her, until everything she saw, smelled, dreamed, re-

membered, would somehow come to be woven into The Tristero.” Indeed, Oedipa finds evidence for the Tristero—a sinister alternative postal delivery system—in everything from a sixteenth-century Jacobean revenge tragedy to a machine based on Maxwell’s Demon. After reaching the point of exhaustion, Oedipa realizes that either the Tristero is real (i.e., an actual conspiracy), or Pierce has been playing a joke on her (which would fuel her paranoia), or, most unsettling of all, everything is just random and meaningless in a universe devoid of coherence. Or, perhaps, she, like everyone around her, is just losing her mind. But in the end, Oedipa, like Stencil, realizes that she would rather believe in the connection—no matter how absurd or cruel—than in no connection at all. But, of course, the final revelation in this parodic detective novel is ultimately withheld.

*Gravity’s Rainbow* is Thomas Pynchon’s masterpiece, an 800-page blend of rocket science with B-movies, organic chemistry with Rilke, and German history with silly songs and innuendoes, which many critics believe to be postmodernism’s equal to *Moby Dick* and *Ulysses*. When it is discovered that Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop’s erections can predict the impact sites of V-2 rockets falling on London, the quest is on to uncover the mystery of Rocket 00000. What follows, or more properly, what is woven into this ostensible plot is a wild series of adventures across war-torn Europe. *Gravity’s Rainbow* features a strange collection of slobs, lovers, and “preterite” wanderers foolishly led by Slothrop—including a submarine full of Argentine anarchists and an army of suicidal African “Schwarzkommandos”—who eventually merge into a motley “Counterforce” to do battle with the international intelligence agencies and corporate conspiracies of the elect.

In the course of his adventures, Slothrop comes across five “Proverbs for Paranoids” that, like unreliable signposts, guide Slothrop and the reader alike through “the Zone”: (1) “You may never get to touch the Master, but you can tickle his creatures,” (2) “The innocence of the creatures is in inverse proportions to the immorality of the Master,” (3) “If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they

don’t have to worry about answers,” (4) “You hide, they seek,” and (5) “Paranoids are not paranoids because they are paranoid, but because they keep putting themselves, fucking idiots, deliberately into paranoid situations.”

*Gravity’s Rainbow* is encyclopedic in scope, and probably more frequently abandoned than actually read cover to cover. The experience of reading it is perhaps best described in a passage from the book itself: “Like other sorts of paranoia, it is nothing less than the onset, the leading edge, of the discovery that *everything is connected*, everything in the Creation, a secondary illumination—not yet blindingly One but at least connected, and perhaps a route In for those . . . who are held at the edge.” While in *V.* and *Lot 49* conspiracy and paranoia are the ideas of a single character, *Gravity’s Rainbow* turns this into a universal logic, and not just of individual psychology or political organization, but as a metaphysical category behind technology and the physics of gravity itself.

In 1990 Pynchon returned with *Vineland*, a novel set in 1984 amidst the forests of northern California and structured around a young woman’s effort to understand her parents’ lives as 1960s hippies and (counter)revolutionaries. Seven years later, Pynchon published his own eighteenth-century novel, *Mason & Dixon*, about two friends whose efforts at imposing a scientific order upon the world through measuring the transom of Venus or surveying the southern border of Pennsylvania find only mayhem and chaos in the Age of Reason.

As of 2002, Thomas Pynchon is believed to live in New York City and continues to refuse any offer to be photographed or interviewed. Of course, this obsessive privacy has generated a kind of cult of personality around Pynchon, suggesting that the paranoia of his novels is also a factor in his own life. But whatever his reasons, Pynchon’s friends evidently do a good job of protecting his anonymity, for he is neither a loner nor hermit, but rejects the kind of public personality that he could easily claim as one of most important living novelists in the English language.

Michael Cohen

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# Q

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## **Quebec Act**

Both the timing and provisions of the Quebec Act (passed into law by the British Parliament on 22 June 1774, with a date of enactment of 1 May 1775) convinced many residents of the original thirteen British North American colonies that metropolitan officials were conspiring to deprive them of their liberties. American colonists, predisposed by parliamentary legislation over the previous decade to see evil intent in any policy initiative of the British ministry, were joined by the Whig opposition in British Parliament in their vehement protests against the Quebec Act because of its apparent threat to the colonies' political, religious, and economic interests. Passed hastily late in a parliamentary session, with all official papers connected to its preparation suppressed, and with the public barred from the most controversial debates, significant colonial and British interests regarded the Quebec Act as part of a larger plot to subvert the English constitution on both sides of the Atlantic.

While the Quebec Act appeared shortly after the Coercive Acts (it was explicitly associated with those acts by American supporters of independence from Great Britain), considerable evidence indicates that most of the act's basic provisions had been under consideration by imperial officials for nearly a decade. Designed to resolve problems of British governance in French-speaking Canada (renamed Quebec after the conquest of 1760), the Quebec Act provided for the establishment of the Catholic Church in the province, preserved existing French

civil law alongside English criminal law, maintained the system of seigneurial land tenure, and arranged for all political authority to reside with the governor and an appointed executive council. A final significant element, the imposition of a western boundary that extended provincial jurisdiction into the Ohio River valley, was added to the draft legislation of the Quebec Act after news of the Boston Tea Party (16 December 1773) reached England.

Clearly intended to reconcile the Canadian population to life under British rule, the act has been praised by modern historians for its liberal and tolerant elements. Yet many American colonists, as well as the small British population residing in Quebec, expressed shock and horror over the unprecedented nature of the Quebec Act's provisions for the hated Catholic Church. Strident anti-Catholicism explains why, although the Quebec Act nullified the western claims of four American colonies and imposed non-representative government on a vast expanse of the continental interior, the loudest protests against it came from Protestant New England. There memories of devastating raids by parties of French Canadians and allied Native Americans during intercolonial wars still haunted the collective consciousness. The view that the Quebec Act represented a conspiracy arose principally out of speculation over British Prime Minister Sir Frederick North's aims in enacting the law. Suspicious critics on both sides of the Atlantic interpreted the content and timing of the Quebec Act as a signal of the North ministry's intention to restrict the recalcitrant thirteen colonies to



the Atlantic seaboard, and to employ a pacified Canadian territory and population as a base for offensive operations in the event of armed conflict with the colonial American population.

Unbeknownst to many of its opponents, strategic considerations regarding Canada were in fact at the heart of the Quebec Act. Imperial policymakers placed great weight on the opinions of Sir Guy Carleton, Quebec's military governor. Carleton thought of Quebec in military terms, and considered his key problem to be one of securing the allegiance of the French Catholic majority, especially in the context of increasing instability in the thirteen colonies after 1765. His recommendations, based on his belief in the social influence of Quebec's seigneurs and clergy, were intended to insulate the province from the growing radicalism of the thirteen colonies.

The omnibus nature of the Quebec Act meant that it likely offended more colonial Americans and British Whigs than any other single piece of imperial legislation during the decade prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. The American Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia in October 1774, determined to insist that Parliament repeal the Quebec Act on the grounds that it constituted a parliamentary effort "by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices, to dispose the inhabitants [of Quebec] to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked ministry shall chuse to direct them" (Ammerman, 70). Opponents of the Quebec Act in Britain went even further, arguing that the Quebec Act subverted the church, law, and constitution of England at one stroke, and warning of the grave consequences of "digging the pit for America into which we ourselves must fall" (Lawson, 135). Additionally, had the terms of the Quebec Act been followed to the letter, the Canadian habitants might have realized that this ostensibly liberal policy actually placed severe limitations on the traditional exercise of church authority in Quebec, and that it reflected a policy of "gen-

tle but steady and determined anglicization" (Neatby, 140).

If the Quebec Act's creators truly believed that in 1774 they could pass such legislation without bothering to consider the broader context of potential reaction to its provisions on both sides of the Atlantic, it would appear to indicate, at best, their astonishing political tone-deafness in the midst of an imperial crisis. At worst, the Quebec Act could be viewed as a reflection of the North ministry's desire to permit the appearance of conspiratorial policymaking against constitutional interests on both sides of the Atlantic in order to present a show of force against colonial and domestic opposition. Expressions of suspicion concerning the Quebec Act, emanating in Britain and America, represented more than simply "a stick with which to beat the ministry" (Lawson, 149). The Quebec Act violated the imperial axiom of the British constitution following the flag, it appeared to repudiate the idea of Protestant ascendancy, and it appeared amidst a number of other political developments that appeared to threaten the constitution at home and throughout the larger empire.

Jon W. Parmenter

**See also:** American Revolution; Boston Tea Party; Coercive Acts.

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# R

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## Rap

It should come as little surprise that conspiracy thinking circulates in rap music. This black musical form—comprising rapping MCs, record-spinning DJs, and studio producers—first emerged in America’s deteriorating urban centers in the late 1970s. From these subcultural beginnings, it has developed and diversified into a mass market form, while sustaining vital connections to black lived experience. Reasons why rap music, which has deep roots in black oral culture, should include conspiracy motifs extend all the way back to the first coordinated conspiracy directed against black people in the United States: the slavery system of race-based labor exploitation. In the contemporary era, white supremacy is of course less state-sanctioned, following gains made by blacks culminating in the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. However, though often harder to identify, institutional discrimination and race-based prejudice are still widespread in contemporary America. Many black and working-class Americans have lost ground economically over the past thirty years, casualties of rising inequality and free-market fundamentalism. These social conditions have given rise to new kinds of conspiracy stories and “urban legends” (Turner), which found rich and varied expression in rap music.

Rap’s conspiracy mode was often highly politicized. Black nationalist rap, peaking in the years around the turn of the 1990s, compellingly critiqued white power structures, often construed as a vast conspiracy. The highly influential group Public Enemy

released *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990), the title playing with white fears about black power. The title of the group’s follow-up album, *Apocalypse 91: The Enemy Strikes Black* (1991), sensationally casts political struggle as a global race conflict. Other groups aestheticized their distrust of official knowledge and dominant structures in less pointedly political ways. East Coast ghetto-centric rapper Prodigy, from Mobb Deep, among many others, fashioned images about clandestine power elites: “Illuminati wants my mind, soul, and my body / Secret society, trying to keep an eye on me” (rapping on LL Cool J’s “I Shot Ya Remix,” 1995). In more pedagogic and religious terms, Poor Righteous Teachers released an album entitled *New World Order* (1995). These artists shift between fantastical, other-worldly visions and more socially driven expositions of frightening *actual* world order developments: technologized surveillance and exploding incarceration rates (Smith and Fiske). For rapper Coolio, the neighborhoods of South Central Los Angeles became a “penitentiary culture” in the 1980s, its bounds traveling well beyond the many actual prisons located in “Fortress LA” (Davis).

Of the more psychologized and hallucinatory rap portrayals, Tupac Shakur, Geto Boys, and Wu-Tang Clan are notably inventive. Houston’s Geto Boys are best known for their 1991 hit “My Mind Is Playing Tricks on Me,” which, according to *Source* magazine, “took us on a terrifying trip through the mind of a gangster under the gun.” Tapping into the masculinist paranoia of “ghetto survival,” such tracks were highly compelling, telling tales of insomnia,



Members of the rap group NWA, including DJ Yella, MC Ren, Eazy-E (2nd from right), and Dr. Dre (right), standing in front of an abandoned convenience store. (Corbis)

heavy alcohol consumption, suicidal thoughts, and paranoid delusions. Wu-Tang Clan's hallucinatory journeys, by contrast, were much more expansive and surreal. This nine-strong collective from Staten Island, New York, launched its esoteric, black-nationalist philosophy of "living mathematics" on its debut *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* (1993). Adopting a dizzying array of personas and monikers (leading rapper Method Man is aka Johnny Blaze, Iron Lung, Johnny Dangerous, etc.), Wu-Tang combines Five Percent philosophy (an off-shoot of the Nation of Islam religion) with manifold pop-cultural references taken from Mafia lore, ufology, children's television, and above all martial arts. The recipe produces paradoxically gritty but trippy albums and a full-blown but coded conspiracist mode. Notable examples include the age-old mysticism of GZA's *Liquid Swords* (1995) and Method Man's mentally claustrophobic and apocalyptically titled *Tical 2000: Judgement Day* (1998).

As rap flooded the mainstream in the mid-1990s, rap stars continued to mobilize apocalyptic, conspiracy-laced images to less political ends. Busta Rhymes, for instance, offers Armageddon-style prophesies on his best-selling albums, *When Disaster Strikes* (1997) and *Extinction Level Event* (1998)—usually amounting to high-decibel boasts about his own vocal prowess. The style and themes of celebrated video director Hype Williams are also decidedly futuristic, including his award-winning clip for Tupac and Dr. Dre's "California Love" (1996), which depicts a dystopian future-desert of campfires and rusty cyber-technology reminiscent of the Mad Max films. Although politically conscious and alternative rappers continue to deploy conspiracy themes to express and explain the confounding experiences of America's black youth, mainstream acts more routinely explore the grandiose, explosive, and marketable dimensions of power, conspiracy, and paranoia.

Eithne Quinn

**See also:** Shakur, Tupac.

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### Reagan, Ronald, Attempted Assassination of

On 30 March 1981, John Hinckley, Jr., shot and nearly killed President Ronald Reagan outside a hotel in Washington, D.C. Hinckley was fascinated with the movie *Taxi Driver*, and imagined himself as Robert DeNiro's character, Travis Bickle. Just as Travis Bickle stalked a presidential candidate, Hinckley stalked a number of politicians. Hinckley became fixated on Jodie Foster, who played a prostitute in the movie, and hoped to prove his love for her by killing the president. Conspiracy theorists note the links between the Hinckley family and the Bush family, and between the Bush family and the CIA, and suggest that Hinckley was a chemically programmed assassin (like Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert Kennedy) designed to remove Reagan and bring Bush to power.

John Hinckley enjoyed a life of affluence and privilege growing up as the son of a petroleum engineer in Oklahoma and Texas. Hinckley's elder brother and sister were popular and successful, but John became increasingly withdrawn and isolated in high school. After graduating in 1973, he drifted for seven years, too lazy, immature, and irresponsible to hold a job or obtain a college degree. He depended on his parents for money, and several times returned to live with them. He became fascinated with assassins, extremist groups, and death, and purchased a number of firearms. He was also obsessed with the movie *Taxi Driver*, and after his efforts to achieve any sort of personal relationship with Jodie Foster proved futile, he

began to think of assassinating politicians to get her attention. In 1980, he stalked President Jimmy Carter and Senator Edward Kennedy. When his father threw him out of the family home in March 1981, Hinckley took the bus to Washington to stalk President Reagan.

Hinckley loitered outside the Washington Hilton, and when Reagan emerged, Hinckley fired six shots from a distance of 10 feet with a .22-caliber pistol loaded with "Devastator" exploding bullets. Shots hit the White House press secretary, a policeman, and a Secret Service agent, and one shot ricocheted off the limousine and struck the president under the arm. The bullet lodged in Reagan's lung, a short distance from the heart, but the president eventually recuperated. Hinckley was arrested, but his father hired powerful attorneys and psychiatrists to defend him. Acquitted on grounds of insanity, Hinckley remains institutionalized today.

Conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination attempt focus firstly on the connections between the Hinckley family and the Bush family. Vice-President Bush and Jack Hinckley (John's father) were both Texas oilmen, and naturally knew each other. Jack Hinckley had contributed heavily to Bush's 1980 presidential campaign, and the day of the assassination John's older brother was scheduled to meet Neil Bush, the vice-president's son. Bush obviously would have benefited from the death of Reagan, not least because Bush was the leader of the northeastern "liberal" faction and Reagan was the leader of the western "hawkish" faction. The northeastern faction—which conspiracy theorists usually associate with Kissinger and the Rockefeller—favored détente with the Soviet Union, and in 1981 was locked in a bitter policy struggle with the westerners, who favored confrontation with the Soviets. Reagan's death would instantly have brought the détente faction to power, but his survival meant that U.S.-Soviet confrontation continued until the westerners were fatally compromised in the Iran-Contra scandal (which conspiracy theorists regard as a "silent coup").

Conspiracy theorists note that Bush was long associated with the CIA. Bush was director in the late 1970s, but some theorists contend that he



served CIA interests as far back as the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. In this view, Bush could have employed his CIA contacts to turn John Hinckley into a chemically programmed assassin, like Frank Sinatra's character in *The Manchurian Candidate*. Some conspiracy theorists note that the CIA has experimented with mind control in the past (Project MK-ULTRA), and believe that the CIA has manipulated many notable "nuts"—including Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan, James Earl Ray, David Berkowitz, Charles Manson, and the 2002 Beltway Snipers—into committing murder. These theorists note that before the assassination attempt, Hinckley's father hired psychiatrists to treat John. They believe that these psychiatrists gave John psychoactive drugs and hypnotically programmed him to kill.

Some conspiracy theorists argue that Hinckley was a patsy—he was at the scene of the crime, and fired a gun, but did not shoot the president. They reject Hinckley's testimony on his actions that day, since Hinckley was mentally disturbed and under the influence of valium. They analyze the videotapes of the event with the same painstaking attention to detail applied to the Zapruder film, and insist that Reagan was already inside the limousine when Hinckley fired the shot that supposedly hit him. They note the confusion at the hospital regarding exactly what type of bullet struck the president, and argue that a second gunman would explain this confusion and the discrepancies in the government version of events. Interestingly, just after the assassination attempt, NBC correspondent Judy Woodruff reported that someone fired a shot from the hotel above the presidential limousine. Other theorists contend that the Secret Service was part of the plot—they deliberately "gave Hinckley a chance" outside the hotel, or shot the president themselves. These theories are analogous to the theories that the Secret Service purposely botched their protection of John F. Kennedy and may even have shot him themselves.

There can be no doubt that conspiracy theories would flourish even more richly around this assassination attempt if Reagan had died. This assassination attempt has parallels in other assassinations—the lone nut, sloppy security, the question of "who benefits?"—but the theories in the Reagan case

have not been as fully fleshed out as in the cases of successful assassinations. A successful assassination of President Reagan would doubtless also raise conspiracy questions about Soviet involvement, since Reagan was relentlessly anti-Soviet, and at the time of the attempt, the Soviets were on the verge of invading Poland.

*James D. Perry*

**See also:** Bush, George; Central Intelligence Agency; Iran-Contra; LSD; *The Manchurian Candidate*; Mind Control; MK-ULTRA.

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## Red Scare

As early as 1848, the color red was used to refer to socialism, and was derived from the color of a party badge. With the revolution in Russia in 1917, it became common to use the color red to refer to anything remotely revolutionary, including anarchism, bolshevism, or communism. When the United States became nearly hysterical with a fear of revolutionary infiltrators, the phrase "red scare" was coined. The term has been used to describe two different periods in U.S. history, both of which were characterized by a pervasive fear of a worldwide conspiracy, and both scares resulted in wide-ranging societal reactions. The first period occurred during the years after World War I, from 1919 to about 1921, and the sensitivity then stemmed from a fear that the 1917 Russian Revolution was the beginning of a worldwide spread of bolshevism. The first red scare has been overshadowed by the second, which, of much longer duration, followed World War II and endured until about 1955, fueled by a fear of the spread of communism.

Each red scare was characterized by a willingness on the part of the U.S. societal and governmental infrastructure to take seriously the possibility that an

antidemocratic, anticapitalist international conspiracy was afoot. Existing agencies at the federal, state, and local levels were expanded, and new entities were created, to observe, analyze, and address this amorphous, unidentified threat.

### Red Scare of 1919–1921

Each red scare is identified with a high-ranking federal official, who acted as a promoter and driving force. In the first, it was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, whose inflammatory rhetoric often used the word “red.” Attorney General Palmer was afraid of a “red menace” made up of anarchists, radicals, “Bolshevik propagandists,” and revolutionaries, whom he suspected of trying to infiltrate and pollute the U.S. labor movement. He feared the theme song of the proletarian revolution, “The New International,” and believed that it would help spread the socialist philosophy “like wildfire.” Labor unrest and a series of letter bombs served as evidence for Palmer that unprecedented, sinister organizing at a national level was taking place. Palmer argued persuasively before Congress that any aliens deemed dangerous should be deported without need to show cause. Eventually this led to a series of mass arrests known as the Palmer Raids, in which thousands of suspected radicals in several cities were detained pending deportation, including the well-known socialist Emma Goldman. Of the thousands detained, only a fraction were actually deported, because so many civil liberties were violated during the arrests that the cases were eventually thrown out. The Palmer Raids were ultimately an embarrassment to Attorney General Palmer and anyone else associated with them.

Groups with national reach took up the red scare cause, promoting fear through pamphlets, exposés, and news releases. From the National Security League, the American Defense Society, the National Civic Foundation, and the American Legion, to the American Federation of Labor and the U.S. Army and Navy, the message was that the United States was in danger of subversion.

Race was a focus of red scare fear. The federal government was convinced that American blacks as a group were vulnerable to the persuasions of the Bolsheviks, and much money and resources were

allotted to monitoring and infiltrating radical black activity. The Justice Department, the Bureau of Investigation, the State Department, the General Intelligence Division, the Department of the Post Office, the Military Intelligence Division, and the Office of Naval Intelligence are all on record as having made it their business to find a link between Bolshevik propaganda and black militancy. Black publications, including the *Messenger*, the *Defender*, the *Whip*, the *Crusader*, and the *Emancipator* were carefully watched for what was referred to as “negro subversion.” Some of the weekly newspapers and monthly magazines were investigated and censored, and in some cases were withheld from distribution, or confiscated altogether. The Post Office sometimes revoked the second-class permit of a publication, forcing an underfunded publisher to pay first-class postage rates, effectively silencing the issue (Kornweibel).

During the first red scare, many state governments formed committees to address rising fears. The New York state legislature, for example, established the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, known as the Lusk Committee, which published in 1920 a four-volume report numbering 4,450 pages, entitled *Revolutionary Radicalism: Its History, Purpose, and Tactics*. As an extreme example of the general timbre of the moment, the Lusk Committee devoted an inordinate amount of time and personnel toward thoroughly investigating all aspects of the potential radical threat. While much of what they documented was accurate—for example, they quoted extensively from Socialist publications—somehow the conclusion they reached, that the United States was vulnerable to the ideals of bolshevism, proved unfounded.

A component of the first red scare was the perception that a radical trade unionism, referred to as syndicalism, was gearing up to destroy capitalism in the United States and establish a new social order, ruled by the workers. Personified by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or the “Wobblies”), syndicalism’s major tactic was the general strike and syndicalists were widely believed to support the use of violence to achieve their aims. The Seattle general strike of 1919, the first general walkout in the United

States, as well as the Boston police strike, the Lawrence textile strike, the national coal strike, and the great steel strike, led state governments, such as Michigan, Kansas, California, and Washington, to put into place antisindicalism legislation. Under these laws, anyone holding a gathering suspected of being radical in nature could be charged, and anyone so charged who was an alien could then be deported.

In reality, the radical movements at this time were not a tight-knit conspiracy of violent antigovernment activists, and there was great dissension among radicals, in philosophy as well as strategy. Socialists differed from Communists, who themselves were diametrically split. Socialists believed in Marxism, and one Communist group supported Stalin while the other favored Lenin and Trotsky. One group advocated change from within, and moderate political action, while the other preferred revolutionary activism. Congruent conventions held by the different groups in 1919 were clear demonstrations of their lack of unity and purpose.

### **Red Scare of 1947–1955**

The champion of the second red scare was Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy. While a growing conservative movement at both the national and local level was an integral component in the manifestation of the scare, McCarthy's association with the second red scare is so complete that the phenomenon itself and the extreme behaviors associated with it are referred to as McCarthyism. McCarthy, like Palmer, was afraid of a red menace, but by the time McCarthy's menace surfaced, the various strains of socialism and radicalism had coalesced to form a threat that was simpler and easier to name—communism. When the Soviet Union demonstrated that it had the atomic bomb in 1949, its action gave concrete weight to the doctrine of the conservative movement in the United States at that time. Many who might not otherwise have been concerned suddenly embraced the fear that unless the United States became more vigilant, it would not be safe from, at the least, Communist subversion and spying and, at worst, a Communist takeover.

With the second red scare, the federal government moved into action. The House Un-American

Activities Committee (HUAC) had been established in 1938 as a temporary committee, but in 1945 it was made permanent and given great budgetary latitude to investigate Communist propaganda and membership. At the local level, many states, including Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Arizona, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Michigan, established comparable entities, sometimes called "little HUACs." California's little HUAC was perhaps the longest running, publishing its reports into the 1970s.

Washington State's Joint Legislative Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities, headed up by the avid anticommunist Albert Canwell, was created to investigate any organization with Communist members. The Canwell Committee held hearings to determine Communist leadership of labor organizations such as the Washington Pension Union, and other targets as diverse as the state university and the Seattle Repertory Playhouse. These activities were typical of all the little HUACs, as their goal was to disarm the red menace through exposure.

Another measure popular with the state and federal governments was the loyalty oath. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman instituted a loyalty program for federal employees. The federal loyalty program consisted of an investigation of each employee, usually conducted by the Civil Service Commission, which could include an examination of any files held by any government agency, including those of the FBI, military intelligence, HUAC, local law enforcement, and schools. Once charged with disloyalty, an employee would be entitled to a hearing, at which the local Loyalty Review Board would recommend removal from the job or not, as they deemed appropriate. Refusal to participate in any phase of the program was considered evidence of disloyalty. Many states, including New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and the territory of Hawaii, followed suit. Particularly popular on the local level were loyalty oaths for teachers. Perhaps the most active controversy was in California, when, in 1949, the Board of Regents of the University of California instituted a loyalty oath requirement for all university employees. Many faculty and staff refused to sign as a matter of princi-

ple, finding the requirement to be a violation of academic freedom, and many were summarily dismissed from their jobs. Such loyalty legislation is still on the books in some states. In Georgia, for example, the Sedition and Subversive Activities Act of 1953 still requires all state government job applicants to fill out a state security questionnaire/loyalty oath form. Every state employee working more than thirty days in Oklahoma must sign a loyalty oath, as well.

Anticommunist legislation passed during or near the red scare years included the Smith Act of 1940, making it illegal to advocate the overthrow of the government by force; the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which had a provision requiring an affidavit from all labor union officials attesting to a noncommunist stance; the Internal Security Act of 1950, requiring Communist organizations and their members to register with authorities; and the Communist Control Act of 1954, disallowing Communist candidates for elective office. The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee established in 1951 went after university professors, organizations, and government officials, particularly diplomats.

While there was an active Communist Party and there was authentic Soviet espionage in the United States during the second red scare, the threat of the former and the extent of the latter were highly exaggerated. In recent years many documents from the Soviet archives have become available and many U.S. government documents from the era have been declassified. In 1995, for example, the National Security Agency (NSA) declassified the work of the Venona Project, which had been examining encrypted Soviet diplomatic communications since 1943. According to the NSA, U.S. Army Signal Intelligence analysts ultimately decrypted more than 2,000 messages, most of which are now accessible to the public. Researchers have gleaned from this and other material specifics regarding an active Soviet espionage program. The red scare, however, must be understood as a phenomenon existing apart from that reality, because of those accused by McCarthy or investigated by the HUAC and the little HUACs, few were actively promoting communism, and even fewer were actually spies. The individuals and parts

of the federal government that were aware of the actual participants and their level of activity in the Soviet espionage program were not the people and agencies that were the governmental voices of the red scare.

### The Cost of the Red Scares

All of the formal government activity helped maintain the general climate of fear and distrust out of which it was generated. In the first scare, the result of the exercise of governmental vigor was the deportation of many aliens; in the second, many citizens were blacklisted and many lives and careers ruined.

With both red scares, there continues to be disagreement among scholars as to whether public opinion drove the government to its vigorous response, or whether the government incited public opinion. In either case, in spite of grueling interrogations, elaborate investigations, the involvement of many people at all levels of government, and seemingly limitless financial resources and administrative support, no definitive evidence was found supporting the kind of conspiracy feared. Eventually both red scares lost momentum as their cheerleaders discredited themselves in various ways and the majority of people came to value peace, stability, and their own civil liberties over constant vigilance against an unquantifiable and unsubstantiated enemy.

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**See also:** Anticommunism; House Un-American Activities Committee; Industrial Workers of the World; McCarthy, Joseph; Red Summer of 1919; Venona.

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## Red Summer of 1919

In the long summer of 1919, from May to October, an unusual pattern of white mob violence swept across the United States. As the world had begun to recover from the years of World War I, there was a great deal of social unrest in the United States. Among the general population there were class and race tensions. Among governmental officials there were political tensions and turf wars as departments tried to justify their existence in the postwar economy. The first “red scare” was inflamed by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, while labor unions went on strike, and a series of letter bombs were mailed to prominent government figures.

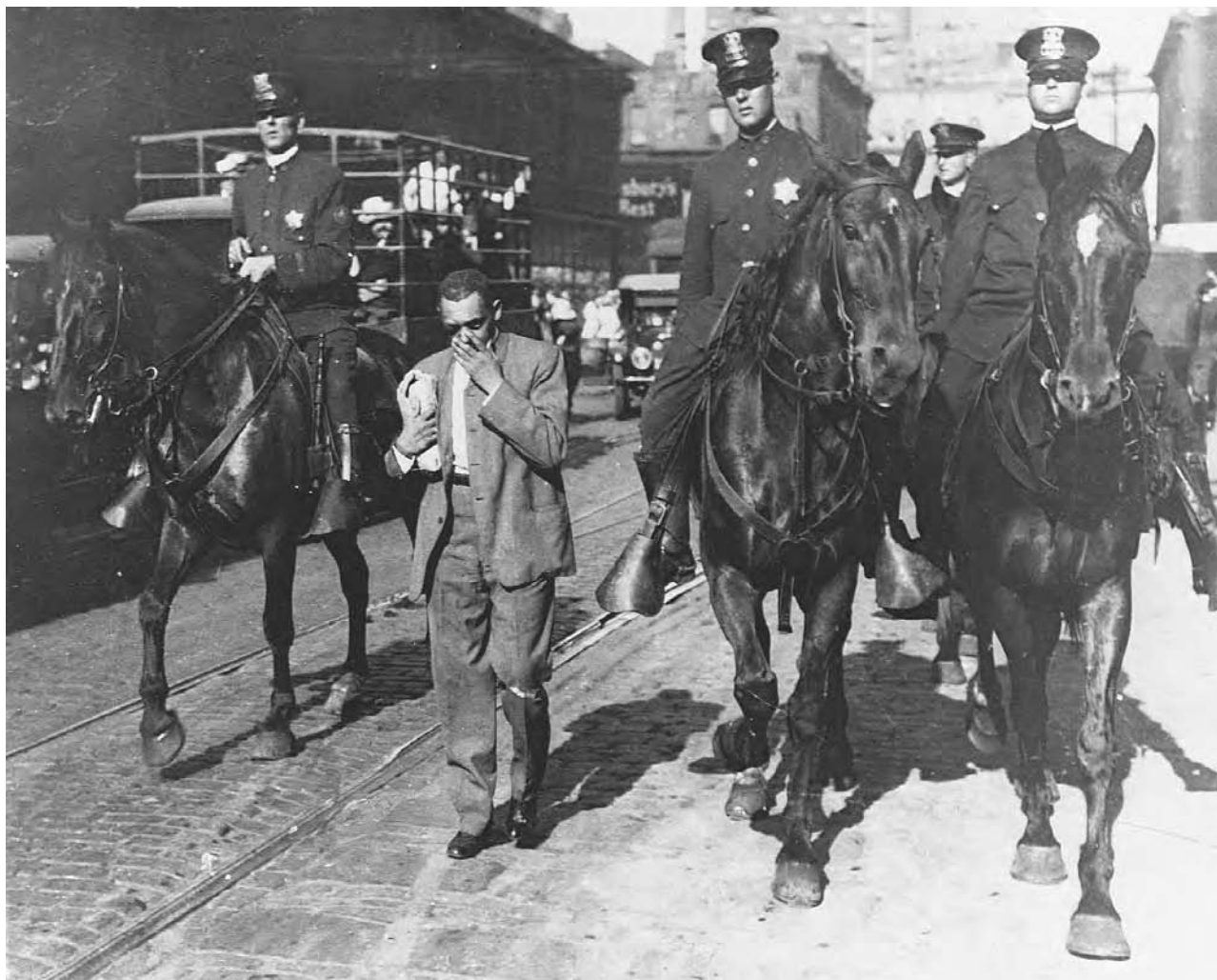
It was in this climate that at least twenty-seven incidents of white mob violence erupted. Often referred to as “race riots,” these incidents were scattered throughout the continental United States, in locations that varied from major cities like Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C., to smaller cities such as Omaha, Nebraska, and Knoxville, Tennessee, to rural areas like Longview, Texas, and Elaine, Arkansas. Representative Leonidas C. Dyer’s Anti-Lynching Bill, introduced in the House in May of 1920, lists the riots as Bisbee, Arizona; Elaine, Ar-

kansas; New London, Connecticut; Wilmington, Delaware; Washington, D.C.; Blakely, Georgia; Dublin, Georgia; Millen, Georgia; Putnam County, Georgia; Bloomington, Illinois; Chicago, Illinois (2); Corbin, Kentucky; Homer, Louisiana; New Orleans, Louisiana; Annapolis, Maryland; Baltimore, Maryland (2); Omaha, Nebraska; New York City; Syracuse, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Charleston, South Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; Memphis, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Port Arthur, Texas; and Norfolk, Virginia. More than 100 people were reported killed, and more than 1,500 people injured.

These incidents differed in several ways from the long-standing traditional practice of lynching: the perpetrators of the action were not just a small group of adult male vigilantes, but included a wide range of townspeople, male and female, adults and youths; their target was not a specific person, but rather the local black community in general; and the black community in many cases fought back, to a level unprecedented at that time. James Weldon Johnson called it the “red summer.” And while many people suspected a conspiracy at work, there was as much disagreement about the nature of the conspiracy as there has been disagreement about whether Johnson meant “red” as in blood or “red” as in Bolshevik.

One of the most popular theories favored by government officials to explain the violence was that it was the work of a well-coordinated group of German agitators. This theory fed into, or was fed by, the red scare active at that time. The belief was that these agitators, perhaps with the help of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), used carefully trained “black Bolsheviks” to incite their brethren to riotous provocation. In spite of much federal money and personnel spent to investigate this theory, it was never substantiated (Kornweibel).

A similar but alternate theory popular with the government was that the IWW or organized labor was behind the activity. The theories varied, depending on the local politics. In many areas of the North, industries had encouraged black migration as a source of cheap labor and, when necessary, these industries used nonunionized blacks as strikebreakers. In such a setting, the theory was common that organized labor was coordinating and inciting the



Mounted police round up African Americans and escort them to a safety zone during the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. (Bettman/Corbis)

white mob violence to frighten or stymie the effectiveness of the black strikebreakers. The converse theory was found in communities where the white workers were not unionized, and the belief was that the IWW was motivating an insurgent black community to fight back against the white mobs. Authorities were never able to substantiate any of the theories.

The American Protective League (APL) is implicated by another theory. The APL was a national volunteer organization with the informal imprimatur of the federal government. It served a watchdog role in the United States during World War I. These local bands of white men, full of nationalistic fervor,

would watch the skies for German bombers and turn in their neighbors for any gesture deemed anti-American. They did work for the government, on a volunteer basis, that government agencies would not have been able to do either for lack of personnel and other resources or for issues of accountability. APL records document many incidents of accusation and investigation, with some cases ending up in trial and jail time for citizens who had committed such “offenses” as speaking German, having too much sugar, or refusing to buy Liberty Bonds. The APL enjoyed an unusual status, for while it was funded by contributions from corporations and businesses, it

had the explicit logistical support and guidance of the Bureau of Investigation (the precursor to the FBI) (Jensen). Once the war was over, however, the federal government insisted the organization disband, and it appeared to do so, although very reluctantly. In many of the locations of red summer white-mob violence, there had been active APL chapters, and because the people participating in these mobs were often of the same demographic composition and nationalistic temperament as those who had formerly been American Protective League members, a case has been made that a causal relationship exists, but research into this theory is scant. Records of individuals' participation in mob action is virtually nonexistent, even in cases where a murder trial or other court cases followed, so a definitive link between any individual's membership in the APL and participation in a red summer riot is elusive.

"Bossism" is the cornerstone of another conspiracy theory encircling some of the red summer riots, particularly the ones in Chicago, Omaha, and Longview. This theory holds that the force behind a riot was a political "boss" who bribed, paid, or otherwise motivated a band of agitators to lead a malleable mob to racial violence. For decades in Omaha, for example, a powerful boss, Tom Dennison, controlled the mayoral office, and through it, the rest of the city, before and after, but not during, the year 1919. In October of that year, in the waning days of the red summer, a white mob burned down the brand-new courthouse and fought the sheriff's department to take a black man, accused of assaulting a white woman, from the jail. The crowd hanged the man and burned his corpse. When the mayor had tried to stop them, they tried to hang him, too. The theory is that Dennison had hired the men who incited the mob's violence, in order to kill, or at the very least discredit, the mayor. While this theory has not been proved or disproved, the following year a Dennison man was elected mayor. The federal government investigating this incident was unable to support its own theory that the IWW was behind the riot.

In attempting to explain a cause for the riots in 1919, the general practice of the authorities seemed to be to look first at the black people involved. If they had fought back at the white mob, the cause of

the riot was believed to be black Bolsheviks or the IWW. If the black people had not fought back against their attackers, or were grievously outnumbered or outfought, the blame was put on organized labor or German agitators. For the most part, the riots were not investigated thoroughly, and this is certainly true of the phenomenon as a whole. An exception to this is the Chicago riot, for which the Chicago Commission on Race Relations was formed and assigned to investigate. The commission did publish an extensive study of the incident and the factors leading up to it. Also, at the time of the riots, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) did at great risk send its own investigators to some of the riot locations to interview people and report back. In the years since the red summer, the Chicago riot, the Knoxville riot, and the violence in Elaine, Arkansas, have been the most studied by scholars.

The violence of the red summer abated gradually as winter arrived in 1919, and while lynching was not completely stopped for a number of years, and isolated rioting occurred sporadically throughout the rest of the century, there has not been another such epidemic of rioting since. While the various conspiracy theories associated with the red summer have never been proved or disproved, the generally accepted analysis, for now, is that an overall climate of instability and unrest allowed tensions of various types, based in local issues, to manifest in patterns of extreme group violence.

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**See also:** Anticommunism; German Americans and World War I; Industrial Workers of the World; Red Scare.

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## Regulator Movement

The frontiers of early America were notoriously hard to control. While states, nations, and tribes fought epic battles, agricultural communities removed from the cities of the eastern seaboard found themselves caught in a sweeping economic and political transformation. In an effort to defend themselves and assert their rights against what they saw as a conspiracy of the eastern elite, backcountry homesteaders and squatters formed regulator groups—extralegal organizations designed to provide local order and defend the interests of the community against both internal and external threats. As the regulator movement grew, governors, merchants, and soldiers began to see frontiersfolk as a threat to the stability of the frontier, and thereby to American order as a whole. As the eighteenth century progressed, European settlement pressed westward and wars opened new lands to settlement, prompting eastern elites to expand their political and economic hold on the profitable American backcountry. These attempts fueled rural communities' fears of a plot to deprive farmers of their rights to freehold land and self-governance. Backcountry inhabitants tended to view reinvigorated tax collection, expansion of capitalist ideas of land value, and the consolidation of distant centers of political power as direct threats to their liberties and homesteads. Eastern proprietors and merchants, they argued, conspired to increase their own wealth and power at the expense of their fellow subjects. While this conflict paused and shifted in various ways through the political upheavals of the American Revolution, the core conflict remained consistent throughout the majority of the eighteenth century.

In response to what they perceived as a growing autocratic threat, local committees, militia units, and other groups of organized frontiersfolk took the law into their own hands in newly aggressive ways. These

groups formed the backbone of a regulator movement that, while disjointed in places, collectively used both passive resistance and open force of arms to defend their rights. While the activities of groups in the regulator movement proved predominantly peaceful, media attention at the time and historians since have tended to focus on the violent manifestations of this conflict. Some of these notable flash points were, in chronological order, the New Jersey antiproprietary movement (c.1667–1755), the New York anti-rent movement (c.1753–1766), the “Paxton Boys” Regulation (c.1763–1773), the North Carolina Regulation (c.1764–1771), the South Carolina Regulation (c.1767–1769), the “Green Mountain Boys” movement (c.1770–1784), Shays’ Rebellion (c.1780–1787), the Whiskey Rebellion (c.1780–1794), Fries’ Rebellion (c.1799), and the resistance of Maine’s “Liberty Boys” (c.1790–1810).

Whether punishing vagrants, killing Native Americans, or resisting the established government, these groups shared common methods, ideals, and sometimes personnel. Centering their arguments in common-law traditions of local governance and property ownership, regulators claimed rights to land and property that stood in direct contrast to the deeded and surveyed claims of distant capitalists. Agrarian essayist William Manning summed up a common regulator argument in *The Key of Liberty* (1799): “Labor is the sole parent of all property . . . therefore no person can possess property without laboring, unless he gets it by force or craft, fraud or fortune, out of the earnings of others” (Merrill and Wilentz, 135–136). This philosophy, which placed property rights firmly in the hands of those white men who physically worked the land, pitted regulators against an array of speculators, surveyors, Native Americans, and magistrates. Political and economic power, regulators argued, should lie in the hands of white male heads of households, not distant governments or deed holders.

Regulators’ assertions of white male power equally threatened outsiders without gainful employment, surveyors, tax collectors, and local elites who sought to enforce the law of colonial, state, or federal authorities. While, in keeping with long-standing British traditions of popular protest, regu-



latory violence generally focused on destruction of property, in the racially charged atmosphere of the eighteenth-century frontier vigilante attacks on indigenous people, massacres, and massive organized jailbreaks for the perpetrators of such violent crimes also characterized the resistance of many regulators. Native Americans were particularly targeted as competing landholders (without legitimacy, as indigenous traditions of land use did not conform to regulators' definitions of labor and improvement) and threats to homestead security during the waves of "Indian wars" that swept the West through the mid-eighteenth into the nineteenth centuries.

The specific frontier conditions that spurred regulator activity waned with General "Mad" Anthony Wayne's crushing victory over a Shawnee-led Native American coalition at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. With the frontier effectively "opened" for American settlement, some pressure lifted from western settlements, slowing the need for organized resistance. Regulator actions and philosophies, however, lingered on, later informing southern vigilantism in the wake of Reconstruction and the late-nineteenth-century Populist movement. Traces of regulator language and action continue as part of U.S. culture and conspiracy theory in both left- and right-wing, violent and nonviolent radicalism—influencing, for example, the Granger movement, the protest movement against the Vietnam War, and the late-twentieth-century militia movement.

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**See also:** Militias; Populism; Shays' Rebellion; Whiskey Rebellion.

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**Report from Iron Mountain**

*Report from Iron Mountain* (1967) was originally published as if it were a secret government document, supposedly spirited out from inside the military-industrial complex. In fact, the book was an elaborate and brilliant publishing hoax orchestrated by left-liberal critics of U.S. cold war policies, who saw the U.S. government as favoring the arms race at the expense of a healthy domestic social welfare economy. It was written by Leonard C. Lewin as a parody of the rhetoric and analysis of cold-war era think tanks such as the Hudson Institute that supported a strong military establishment.

The hoax was concocted by a group of writers that included Lewin, Victor Navasky, E. L. Doctorow, Richard Lingeman, and Marvin Kitman. Originally, the idea was for the participants in the hoax to write articles as if they had seen a secret report that had been suppressed by the government. Lewin successfully argued that it made more sense to write an actual report on which to base comments. The upper echelons of the publisher, Dial Press, were aware that the book was a hoax, but the sales department was not informed, and was told to market the book as a work of nonfiction. The book proved so popular that it went into multiple printings.

In introductory material to *Report from Iron Mountain*, Lewin states that the report was drafted by a high-level government commission that held

meetings at a secret underground facility called Iron Mountain, said to be located in New York State. Lewin claims that the report was provided to him by a pseudonymous John Doe, described as a social science professor at a large university in the Midwest. Following his introduction, Lewin reproduces the transcript of an “interview” with Doe where details of the Iron Mountain meetings are discussed. Doe tells Lewin he attended the meetings of the Special Study Group at Iron Mountain, but developed a minority position that led him to make the report public through Lewin.

The “report” itself reviews the relationship of the economic health of the United States to periods of war or preparation for war as opposed to periods of peace. It concludes that a semipermanent state of war or some other aggressive ritualized form of public combat is beneficial to the economy, and should become the conscious (although secret) policy of U.S. ruling elites until acceptable alternatives can be found. It proposes the establishment of a War/Peace Research Agency to explore future options that will guarantee the economic and political survival of the society.

Although there was immediate speculation that *Report from Iron Mountain* was a hoax, the book was such a skillful parody that it also prompted serious discussions in reputable publications ranging from daily newspapers to scholarly journals. Some of the original group involved in the hoax encouraged this debate while not revealing their knowledge of the book’s origins. It was not until 1972 that Lewin officially admitted he was the author in an article in the *New York Times Book Review*.

After the book went out of print, right-wing groups, including Noontide Press, publishing affiliate of the Institute for Historical Review (IHR), circulated several bootleg editions of the book. Originally founded by Willis Carto of Liberty Lobby fame, IHR was primarily devoted to challenging the accepted facts of the Nazi genocide of Jews. IHR and other right-wing groups would note that the book was called a hoax, but in a sly way that suggested it might actually be true. This “decide for yourself” approach acknowledges the hoax while suggesting the text is nonetheless a model guide

that explains the logic behind world events. Offended by this turn of events, Lewin successfully filed suit to block distribution of the bootleg copies.

In 1996 the Free Press issued a new edition of the book with a new preface and several appendices that discussed how the hoax was perpetrated and included some of the early responses to its publication. Nevertheless, some admirers of the book across the political spectrum continue to insist it is an actual government document. Discussion of the *Report from Iron Mountain*, including the debate as to whether or not it is a hoax, continues on the Internet.

Chip Berlet

**See also:** Liberty Lobby.

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## RICO

The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization statute (18 U.S.C. Sections 161–168), part of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, was designed to create an expansive legal definition of criminal conspiracy that would aid the authorities in their fight against organized crime. Usually referred to as RICO, this statute has become the most powerful tool federal law enforcement has ever had in its fight against organized crime. The statute includes a vague definition of racketeering that incorporates a list of crimes traditionally excluded from federal jurisdiction. The list includes such crimes as murder, gambling, arson, robbery, and extortion. With this new tool and expanded federal jurisdiction, federal law enforcement and prosecutors have used RICO to convict and incarcerate more than a thousand organized crime figures by the end of the 1990s.

Traditionally, law enforcement tried to use the standard conspiracy laws and statutes to convict organized crime members. Thus, prosecutors had to prove an agreement within the group (two or more) and one overt act regarding a specific crime. Because of the often varied and isolated criminal activities of an organized crime group, this was difficult. Under RICO, instead of focusing on specific crimes and the

related conspiracy, law enforcement can focus on patterns of racketeering by an organized crime group. That is, with RICO it is now illegal to belong to a group or “enterprise” that displays a pattern of racketeering even if another member of the enterprise is committing the illegal activities. To meet the “pattern of racketeering” requirements under RICO, only two crimes within a ten-year period need to be committed, with at least one of the crimes since 1970.

RICO includes both a criminal and a civil penalty. The maximum criminal penalty includes a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for twenty years, with all properties and interest related to the racketeering violation forfeited to the government. Civil penalties include treble damages and the attorney’s fee awarded to the successful plaintiff.

In an expansion of RICO, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1994 that there did not have to be an economic motive for the illegal activities to fall under RICO. Using the civil section of RICO in 1998, two abortion clinics sued and received treble damages from antiabortion leaders. This noneconomic expansion of RICO was also the basis for the April 2001 U.S. district judge’s decision allowing the Los Angeles Police Department to be sued as a racketeering enterprise.

Common criticisms of the RICO statute include its overreaching scope. Individuals who may be involved in illegal activities, even when it is evident that they are not involved in organized crime, are still being prosecuted under RICO. Another criticism is that RICO allows an individual’s assets to be frozen before trial, which often forces defendants to plead guilty in an effort to save their business and savings. RICO also brings with it a negative characterization of the defendant as an organized crime figure.

RICO has been and continues to be the most effective legal tool ever brought against organized crime. Through the expanded list of racketeering crimes and the enterprise conspiracy clause, federal law enforcement agencies and prosecutors are now succeeding where in the past they had failed in both convictions and sentencing of organized crime figures.

*Kenneth L. Mullen*

**See also:** Mafia.

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#### Robertson, Pat

A prominent figure on the religious Right, Pat Robertson, with his brand of conspiracy-infused politics, reached a wide audience in his bid for the presidency in 1988 and with the success of his controversial book *The New World Order*, which has been accused of antisemitism. The son of a senator, Robertson purchased a Virginia television station in 1960, marking the beginnings of the Christian Broadcasting Network, one of the most important elements of the burgeoning evangelical media that was to become so important in the latter part of the twentieth century. When evangelicals also established the Christian Right at the end of the 1970s, Robertson played a relatively minor role, but the subsequent decline of its leading organization, the Moral Majority, and the impending end of the Reagan years brought him to prominence following his decision to pursue the 1988 Republican presidential nomination. While he was unsuccessful, an important effect of his campaign was the creation the following year of the Christian Coalition. Concentrating much of its energies on opposition to abortion and homosexuality, the Coalition rapidly became a key component of the Republican Party and although it was to decline in the late 1990s (and Robertson to resign from its presidency in 2001), during the early years of the Clinton administration it was a central force in the resurgence of conservatism.

Shortly after the creation of the coalition, Robertson published a book in which he declared that in calling for a “New World Order,” President Bush was unknowingly carrying out the mission of a vast, global satanic conspiracy. In arguing this,

Robinson claimed that a conspiratorial elite could be traced back to the eighteenth century, when a secret society, the Illuminati, had plotted the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century Illuminism had mutated into Marxism, while in the twentieth century the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia had been secretly funded by European financiers. In later years, he argued, much of the work of the conspiracy was carried out by such organizations as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

Initially little noticed outside the evangelical milieu, *The New World Order* began to attract attention following a front-page attack in a 1994 issue of the prestigious *New York Review of Books*. Authored by Michael Lind, a former conservative, it argued that Robertson's work was not the usual brand of evangelical Protestant theology but originated instead in "the underground literature of far-right populism." He was supported by another former conservative, Jacob Heilbrunn, who convincingly demonstrated that Robertson had relied on material by the early-twentieth-century antisemitic conspiracist, Nesta Webster. The *New York Review's* attack drew angry replies from Robertson and other conservatives. Subsequently, Robertson blamed a research assistant for introducing Webster's material into his work and he continued to deny any suggestion that he held antisemitic views.

A closer examination of both Robertson's book and the writings of his critics shines a critical light on both sides of the argument. Robertson, while rightly pointing out his long record of support for Israel, had nonetheless produced a book that linked the Illuminati to the Rothschild family. Conversely, Lind, who had suggested Robertson's writings were "far more bizarre and sinister" than the conspiracist writings of the John Birch Society, missed both the Society's praise for Robertson's book and the strong links between what Robertson argued and what the Society had long believed. Having itself drawn on Webster's work, the Society had also been accused of antisemitism, and while both have denounced claims that conspiratorial forces are Jewish in origin, it is understandable that critics should take them to be antisemitic. The situation is, however, more com-

plicated, because conspiratorial claims that the hidden rulers of history are bankers, or Masons, or extraterrestrials might often be motivated by a racist view, but is not always necessarily so.

If Robertson has had the misfortune to have his conspiracy theory attacked more for what it did not say than what it did, he has also been accused of being a secret adherent of the New World Order, rather than an opponent. In the 1980s, one conspiracy text with a considerable impact upon evangelicals was Constance Cumbey's *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, which, like Robertson's later volume, saw the New Age movement as part of Satan's attack on Christianity. In a later book, *A Planned Deception*, Cumbey suggested that Robertson's announcement that he intended to provide live coverage of the Second Coming fitted well with a supposed New Age plan to launch a false Christ figure upon the world.

Martin Durham

**See also:** Antisemitism; Illuminati; New World Order.

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#### Robison, John

A professor of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, John Robison (1739–1805) was a distinguished scientist and writer. He was also author of *Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe Carried On in the Secret Meetings of the Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies, Collected from Good Authorities*



(1797), which alleged that the Illuminati (a secret society originally founded in Bavaria in 1776) were behind many of the major events of the day, and the French Revolution in particular. Robison's exposé was widely circulated and much discussed in the conspiratorial climate of the late 1790s (not least among New England leaders fearful of foreign threats to the fledgling American republic), and, remarkably, it is still much cited and remains in print today.

The son of a Scottish merchant, Robison was born in 1739 and attended the University of Glasgow while in his teens. After serving as tutor to the son of Admiral Sir Charles Knowles, he was next commissioned to conduct sea trials of the newly invented nautical chronometer, before accompanying Sir Charles to Russia. Returning to Scotland, Robison took up the chair of natural philosophy (what would now be termed physics) at the University of Edinburgh in 1773. He developed a reputation as a distinguished scientist, and was invited to write entries for the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on topics such as electricity, fluid dynamics, and magnetism. In 1783 he was elected general secretary of the newly formed Royal Society of Edinburgh (an organization, like its London counterpart, devoted to furthering scientific knowledge).

Like many leading figures in eighteenth-century society Robison was a Mason, and *Proofs of a Conspiracy* was careful to make a distinction between the respectable, charitable activities of British freemasons, and the dangers of what the author saw as an immoral, godless, and secretive, corrupt version of masonry that had flourished on the continent. In his lengthy book, Robison alleged that the Illuminati had merely gone underground after they had been disbanded by the Elector of Bavaria in 1787, and had then plotted to overthrow the Christian religion and all established governments. He argued that the French Revolution could only be explained by such a theory, since the eruption of revolutionary agitation right across the country could not have been the result of a spontaneous uprising, but must have been the result of a secret, concerted plan. His proof of the connection between the banned German secret

society and the leaders of the French Revolution was some rather slim evidence of an association between some middle-ranking Illuminati and Mirabeau and Talleyrand, French freemasons who went on to become important politicians in the 1790s.

Robison's book also warned that cells of the suppressed Illuminati had been set up in America. Along with Augustin de Barruel's four-volume exposé of the dangerous reach of freemasonry (the first two volumes of which just beat *Proofs of a Conspiracy* to the press), Robison's book caused a stir in the fevered climate of the late 1790s in America. His claims were widely reported in the press, and influential figures such as Jedidiah Morse expanded on Robison's theory in sermons and speeches. The scare stories about the dangers of an underground Illuminati conspiracy plotting to undermine America's liberties fed into the Federalist agitation that resulted in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

Although Robison's book fell into obscurity once the immediate political climate changed in the later nineteenth century, it has continued to be cited as a major source on the existence of an all-powerful ultrasecretive conspiracy ever since. Since the 1960s the work has become a mainstay of, on the one hand, right-wing diatribes against the power of shadowy, power-hungry, atheistic globalists (the Illuminati in this view become forerunners of Communism) and, on the other, anti-authoritarian versions of conspiracy theory that create an account of a long-running, semimystical conspiracy of the elite that its unmaskers believe dates back to beyond even the eighteenth century.

*Peter Knight, with Jeffrey L. Pasley*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Barruel, Abbé; Freemasonry; Illuminati.

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## Rockefeller Family

Associated with almost every conspiracy theory from the era of the Populists to the modern Trilateral Commission, Bilderbergers, and the Council on Foreign Relations, the Rockefeller family holds a unique place in U.S. conspiracy history. Even the powerful banker J. P. Morgan and steel magnate Andrew Carnegie have not been the center of conspiracy theories as have focused on John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil Company, although one conspiracy website refers to Andrew Carnegie—at one time, the richest man in the world—as a “Rockefeller stooge.”

Rockefeller (1839–1937) was born in Richford, New York, and began working as a bookkeeper at age sixteen. Seven years later, he joined entrepreneur Henry Flagler and inventor Samuel Andrews to begin refining crude petroleum. The three incorporated the firm as Standard Oil Company in 1870, bringing in John’s brother William to join the company. Rockefeller emphasized cost-cutting and demanded that the “common man” have cheap kerosene, employing chemists to develop better methods of refining and to search out new ways to use petroleum by-products. Although Rockefeller bought out other refiners, creating for Standard Oil a near-monopoly position, consumer prices on kerosene plummeted—and continued to do so until the time of the Standard Oil breakup in 1911.

The claims leveled against John D. Rockefeller and his descendants are so many and diverse as to defy easy categorization. Populist groups tended to ignore Rockefeller personally and attack his connections with the large (in their view, monopolistic) railroads. The critique of the railroads involved traditional concerns with price-fixing and monopolies, but also contained a criticism of “long-haul/short-haul” price differentiation, in which large shippers, such as Rockefeller, received rebates not extended to those shipping over shorter distances. Other reform groups and “muckrakers” such as Ida Tarbell maintained that Rockefeller unduly pushed smaller competitors out of business and used ruthless pricing tactics in an attempt to “corner the market.” Rockefeller’s new mechanism for controlling

multiple companies, called the trust, was viewed as fundamentally undemocratic and, with the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, was outlawed. That act, ironically, had the effect of driving companies from the inefficient trust structure into much more efficient vertical combinations, which in turn increased—rather than decreased—their power.

A tither to his church all his life, Rockefeller had a fortune of nearly \$1 billion, and gave away charitable contributions totaling \$550 million through the Rockefeller Foundation, the General Education Board, the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. These philanthropic organizations became the source of yet other conspiracy theories. The Institute for Medical Research, for example, has been accused of conducting a massive propaganda campaign to eliminate non-drug “holistic” treatments for diseases, in order to increase profits for the “Rockefeller-Farben combine.” In this theory, Rockefeller, through the Institute, hoodwinked the medical profession into adopting drug therapies by shaping the treatment of medical research in the universities.

In 1952, Emanuel Josephson published *Rockefeller; “Internationalist”: The Man Who Misrules the World*, one of the first book-length conspiracy attacks on the Rockefellers. Josephson claimed that the Rockefeller family sought “to control all necessities from the time they are produced until they are consumed” (Josephson, 20). The foundations, in Josephson’s view, were only attempts to remain free of taxation, allowing the family to dominate U.S. Steel, Westinghouse, Republic Iron and Steel, and dozens of other U.S. companies. Not only did the family own stock in these companies, but they also, through marriage and appointments, dominated the boards of other important companies. Winthrop Aldrich, chairman of Chase National Bank, was John D. Rockefeller’s brother-in-law through Rockefeller’s marriage to the daughter of Senator Nelson Aldrich—one of the creators of the Federal Reserve System.

According to the theory, Rockefeller, Morgan, Paul Warburg, and other “internationalists” sought to use the Federal Reserve and the newly imposed income

tax to control the U.S. economy and to then implement a socialist/Bolshevik agenda. The classic conspiracy book, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (1971) by Gary Allen and Larry Abraham, place Rockefeller, Warburg, and Morgan, as well as National City president Frank Vanderlip and financiers Bernard Baruch and Jacob Schiff, at the center of a world conspiracy through the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), which is directed, in turn, by the Rothschilds. Through the CFR, the Rockefellers controlled not only Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, Eastman Kodak, Xerox, IBM, and Firestone, but also dominated the media by owning or influencing NBC, CBS, *Time* magazine, *Life* magazine, and all the major newspapers and publishing houses. Like most theories, Allen and Abraham only imply or infer a Rockefeller presence in this and other conspiracy networks.

Not only did the Rockefellers play prominent—some would say “shadow”—roles in business, but they were also active in politics. John, Jr.’s son, Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, worked in Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal administration, then held a number of appointed positions in the Eisenhower administration or on public commissions. He ran for the Republican nomination for president three times, and lost, before being named vice-president after Gerald Ford was sworn in to replace President Richard Nixon, who resigned. Winthrop Rockefeller, the youngest of John, Jr.’s sons, was elected governor of Arkansas in 1966.

Through the work of David Rockefeller (b. 1915), the son of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the head of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace in the 1950s, the family’s internationalist pursuits continued. David Rockefeller set up the Trilateral Commission in 1973 to promote cooperation in international matters. Through the influence of the CFR and the Trilateral Commission, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Rockefeller influence promoted “multilateralism” and international lending as a means to destroy national sovereignty and produce a “one world government.” The fact that David Rockefeller wrote a 1980 *Wall Street Journal* editorial attacking notions that he was the “mastermind of an international conspiracy” (Gilmour, 1) only served to convince conspiracy the-

orists even more of his guilt. Instead, theorists pointed to Rockefeller’s work with President Jimmy Carter’s national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, on a white paper dealing with international technology issues as clear evidence of his agenda. Thus, to the present, the name “Rockefeller” infuses virtually every major conspiracy theory except those dealing with UFOs and the Kennedy assassination.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Bilderbergers; Council on Foreign Relations; Federal Reserve System; One-World Government; Trilateral Commission.

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**Roosevelt, Franklin Delano**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was president from 1933 to 1945. He greatly expanded presidential authority, and his policies infuriated conservatives who saw them as evidence of a deeper conspiracy to increase presidential power and undermine the Constitution. His domestic policy (the “New Deal”) dramatically increased federal government power in an effort to end the Great Depression, and his foreign policy sought cooperation with Stalin in order to deter and eventually defeat fascist aggression. Conservatives constructed numerous conspiracy theories around these policies, since they regarded the New Deal as despotic and unconstitutional, and cooperation with Stalin as naïve or treasonous. Conspiracy theorizing about FDR crested in the 1950s, although attacks on the New Deal and his foreign policy continue even today. Conspiracy theories were perhaps inevitable given FDR’s leadership style: subtle, devious, and disingenuous, he told different people different things, and hated having his discussions docu-

mented. The historical record is thus unclear enough to permit widely divergent interpretations, including views of FDR as the master manipulator.

FDR was born in 1882 and educated at Groton, Harvard, and Columbia. A lifelong Democrat, FDR entered New York State's senate in 1910. Appointed assistant secretary of the navy under President Wilson, FDR favored U.S. involvement in World War I and the League of Nations. FDR ran for vice-president in 1920, when the Republicans won a crushing victory. Polio permanently paralyzed his legs in 1921, but undaunted, he spent the 1920s involved in internationalist causes and Democratic politics. He became governor of New York in 1929, was elected president in 1932, and was then reelected three times, and died in April 1945.

In the 1930s, leftist conspiracy theorists feared that Wall Street financiers and industrialists would sponsor a fascist coup. Some observers considered that Wall Street (or the Mafia) was behind the February 1933 attack that narrowly missed FDR and mortally wounded Chicago mayor Anton Cermak, but most considered the perpetrator, Giuseppe Zangara, a "lone nut." Communist journalist John L. Spivak claimed that in 1934 Wall Street plotted to supersede FDR with a fascist dictatorship under marine general Smedley Butler. The plot collapsed when Butler betrayed the cabal to Congress—though when forced to testify, the alleged conspirators naturally denied Butler's accusations. Spivak's contention that "Jewish finance" was behind the Butler affair—and was financing Hitler—casts considerable doubt on the credibility of his assertions. Some leftists held that Wall Street was behind the far-right Father Charles Coughlin, the Liberty League, and a supposed coup plot by General Douglas MacArthur. Many Marxists, however, considered Wall Street opposition to FDR a sham. Marxists viewed FDR as Wall Street's lackey, since the New Deal co-opted liberalism, defused revolutionary discontent, and "saved capitalism" for Wall Street.

Conservatives believed that the New Deal was a socialist conspiracy to "collectivize America" and tighten federal control of the economy, education, and the individual. Ever since the 1930s, moderates and extremists have regarded the New Deal as the

origin of pernicious "big government." Extremists, however, considered that the Soviets and their traitors inside the U.S. government excessively influenced FDR's policies. In their view, FDR was either a naïve dupe (or a willing tool) of communism. The John Birch Society believed FDR was the creature of the "Insiders," a group of financiers who control the United States through front organizations like the Federal Reserve and Council on Foreign Relations. The Insiders wanted to cooperate with the Soviet Union to create a one-world government, and FDR supposedly aided the Soviets to advance this goal.

In the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy agitated against an "immense" Communist conspiracy to infiltrate the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. For decades thereafter, leftists successfully argued that McCarthy was a demagogue who manufactured evidence and slandered innocents for partisan and cold war purposes. They viewed McCarthyism, not Communism, as the real danger to the United States. In the 1990s, however, declassified National Security Agency intercepts ("Venona") and KGB archives proved that hundreds of U.S. traitors under Soviet control penetrated the Roosevelt administration. These traitors infiltrated the White House, State Department, Treasury Department, and the Manhattan Project, among other organizations. Venona did not prove all of McCarthy's claims, and provided no support for his wild assertions that Roosevelt was a traitor or abetted communism, but McCarthy's many false charges obscured the truth and greatly hindered anticommunism by allowing real traitors to portray themselves as innocent victims of McCarthyite hysteria. Venona proved that Communist traitors were a real danger, and that they transferred important information and technology to the Soviets.

The Soviets bought U.S. technology as well as stealing it. From 1929 to 1941, U.S. assistance dramatically enhanced Soviet industrial development and completely modernized Soviet heavy industry. American technology and training contributed to over two-thirds of the major Soviet industrial enterprises built in the 1930s. Far-right theorists attributed this aid to Communist infiltration of the U.S. government, to blind Wall Street greed, and to the





President Roosevelt signs declaration of war. (Library of Congress)

Insiders' long-term plan for a one-world government. A more compelling explanation was the evident need to strengthen the Soviet Union against future German and Japanese aggression. This need became especially urgent after Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and Hitler assumed power in 1933. From 1941 to 1945, Soviet arms produced in U.S.-modernized factories destroyed Hitler's Wehrmacht, proving the wisdom of these technology transfers.

U.S. entry into World War II provided fertile ground for conspiracy theory. "Revisionists" argued that "establishment" histories were a whitewash that needed revision. They asserted that after war erupted in Europe, Roosevelt sought pretexts for U.S. participation. He subverted neutrality legislation, provided money and equipment to Britain,

and fought an undeclared war against German submarines in the Atlantic. Revisionists claimed that when Hitler refused to take the bait, FDR maneuvered Japan into attacking Pearl Harbor.

In 1947, George Morgenstern wrote the "classic" Pearl Harbor work of revisionist history. Since then, other revisionists like Stinnett have added details to his argument. Revisionists claimed that, in 1941, FDR embargoed Japanese oil and made intolerable diplomatic demands in order to force Japan to attack. FDR knew the Pacific Fleet was vulnerable in Pearl Harbor, and knew—through decoded Japanese transmissions—where and when Japan would attack. FDR, the revisionists assert, withheld vital intelligence from commanders in Honolulu, because an alert there would cause Japan to cancel the attack. Sacrificing the "tethered goat" at Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war and ensured wartime unity. Afterwards, Roosevelt successfully deflected blame for the attack from himself onto the commanders in Hawaii.

Revisionists were ignored or reviled in the 1940s and 1950s, since they cast doubt on the prevailing internationalist foreign policy consensus and attacked FDR, a liberal icon. In 1962, Roberta Wohlstetter produced a counterargument to revisionism. She believed that conflicting "signals" and "noise" confused U.S. intelligence analysts before Pearl Harbor ("signals" were evidence of Japanese intentions to attack Pearl Harbor, and "noise" was evidence of Japanese plans to attack elsewhere). Most historians accepted her thesis that America's prewar intelligence apparatus was too poorly organized to put the right information together in time to warn Honolulu. Unfortunately, many commentators focused not on the facts, but on personally attacking the revisionists, scorning them as right-wing paranoid extremists who hated the New Deal. Interestingly, in the 1970s, revisionism gained currency on the Left, after Vietnam and Watergate increased distrust of the government. Some leftists today accept the Pearl Harbor revisionist argument because they believe that analogously, President Bush knew the September 11 attacks were coming and let them happen.

FDR's wartime diplomacy provided additional conspiracy fodder. Rightists argued that FDR "sold

out” China and Eastern Europe into “Communist enslavement” at the February 1945 Yalta Conference. Most rightists attributed this to the pernicious influence of traitors like Alger Hiss and Harry Hopkins, although some accused FDR of deliberate appeasement. This fixation on Yalta was odd, since FDR actually made the crucial decisions on Eastern Europe at the 1943 Teheran Conference. Historian Warren Kimball convincingly showed that FDR’s wartime diplomacy reflected not treason or naïveté, but a consistent strategy designed to achieve a peaceful postwar world order.

FDR died of a cerebral hemorrhage, but apparently Stalin suspected assassination. Fletcher Prouty (the former Air Force officer and Pentagon insider who was the model for Mr. X in Oliver Stone’s film, *JFK*) alleged that Stalin told FDR’s son, Elliott Roosevelt, that British intelligence poisoned FDR. Some rightists believed that Stalin poisoned FDR, although right-wing claims that FDR was Stalin’s dupe should lead to the conclusion that Stalin had no motive to kill FDR.

*James D. Perry*

**See also:** Atomic Secrets; Council on Foreign Relations; John Birch Society; McCarthy, Joseph; National Security Agency; Pearl Harbor; Venona; Wall Street; Yalta Conference.

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## Roswell

After mysterious events in 1947, a small town in New Mexico became synonymous with visitors from outer space, UFOs, alien autopsies, and government cover-ups. The “Roswell Crash” and ensuing “government cover-up” have become a staple in modern conspiracy theories and have moved almost to the level of a modern myth. Several movies have made reference to Roswell—most recently *Independence Day* (dir. Roland Emmerich, 1996)—and a television show, *Roswell*, has been developed around the events that allegedly took place that summer. While there is some agreement on the general details, even the specific dates, locations, and comments by the major participants are a matter of hot debate. The “Roswell Incident” has not only pitted UFO “believers” against “skeptics,” but has generated charges and countercharges by various writers within the UFO “believer” community itself, and has resulted in no fewer than three major theories (and several sub-theories) of what happened at Roswell.

At the time leading up to the alleged incident, Americans had already started to report flying objects at an increasing rate. In early June 1947 a private pilot flying west from Boise, Idaho, radioed that he had spotted dish- or saucer-shaped aircraft, and a rash of UFO sightings ensued. But the events at Roswell added an entirely new perspective on the sightings—physical evidence of a crash.

On 14 June, a local New Mexico rancher, William W. “Mac” Brazel, who was making the rounds of the J. B. Foster Ranch (which he operated), found debris, but thought it was unimportant. It had odd writing on it, almost like hieroglyphics. The debris was strewn over several hundred yards. Brazel and his son both saw it, but Brazel, who “did not pay much attention to it,” did not deal with it for about three weeks. When he returned, on 4 July, Brazel loaded some of the debris in his truck, and upon a visit to the nearby town of Corona, he heard of several sightings of “flying discs.” (Apparently, he heard

about these discs on Saturday 5 July, although again any date in the timeline poses difficulties for ufologists.) He did not report the findings to authorities, and did not immediately go to Roswell—some 75 miles away—but waited until his regular trip to the town on Monday. Versions differ on whom he showed the wreckage to, and who was allowed to handle it. When he finally arrived in Roswell, Brazel told the sheriff, George Wilcox, about the debris. Wilcox contacted the authorities at Roswell Army Air Field, where Major Jesse A. Marcel (the 509th Bomb Group's intelligence officer) and a captain accompanied Brazel back to his home. Brazel showed the officers the debris, which filled a few feed sacks and did not weigh more than five pounds. The major tried briefly to fit some of the pieces together into a kite.

On 8 July, after Marcel had returned, Walter G. Haut, the public information officer at the airfield, provided a press release in which he used the terms “flying disc” and “flying object,” but not “flying saucer.” Meanwhile, the debris was boxed up and flown to Fort Worth, Texas, where Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey of the Eighth Army Air Force took authority over it. The same evening as Haut issued his press release, Ramey gave an interview to a radio station in which he stated that the wreckage was the remains of a radar reflector and a special weather balloon used to carry it aloft. He even invited reporters to inspect the debris. The following day, newspapers had headlines proclaiming, “Flying Disc Explained.”

Unknown to Brazel, Marcel, Haut, and probably even Ramey, in 1946 the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved a secret project (MOGUL) to use high-altitude balloons to carry radar and other measurement equipment aloft so as to determine the behavior of atomic fallout over the U.S. mainland. Charles B. Moore, the Balloon Group's project engineer, in 1993 began to speak publicly about the previously classified government program. Moore and his group had used radar reflectors that they had attached to the balloons by “scotch-like tape that had . . . flower-like designs” on the back. The group released a balloon train on 4 June 1947 and lost contact with several balloons, one of which was on a direct line for

Mac Brazel's ranch. (Indeed, on 10 July, the *Alamogordo News* carried an article on these tests, though not the specifics of them.) Reports of new “UFO” sightings soared in the wake of the news articles—some 800 reports of UFOs were received by the government in June and July of 1947 alone—but no reporters claimed any “stonewalling” or cover-up. Nevertheless, fifty years after the “crash,” Philip Corso in *The Day after Roswell* alleged that the Army Air Force engaged in “suppression” as early as 8 July. One problem with Corso's claim is that FBI documents showed that the FBI had already been informed that the wreckage was from a balloon.

In 1948, a newspaper editor in Aztec, New Mexico, wrote a fictional column about a crashed saucer involving “little green men,” and the myth was born. Two years later, a Denver disc jockey at radio station KMYR claimed to have seen the men from “Venus.” That was followed by a best-selling book, *Behind the Flying Saucers*, the same year. Nevertheless, the lack of physical evidence led UFO “believers” to drop the Roswell incident from their regular discussions for more than two decades.

It resurfaced near the end of the 1970s when Leonard H. Stringfield published a number of articles claiming that the wreckage and alien bodies were recovered by the military. Stringfield also provided, as anthropologist Charles Ziegler points out, a remarkable paradox of the UFO “true-believers”: the stories were essentially impossible to “prove” as untrue, and thus, if not discredited they were true, and if discredited, they were also true because they “proved” a government cover-up. But the first real revival of the Roswell story appeared in 1980 when occult writer Charles Berlitz joined ufologist William L. Moore to write *The Roswell Incident*. This version had the spaceship getting hit by lightning and traveling to the Plains of San Agustin before it crashed. At that point, the military showed up and sanitized the site, taking the bodies. But the military missed the initial parts of the ship, discarded 100 miles back because of the lightning, forcing a cover story. The Berlitz-Moore version had gained widespread approval from the UFO community because of the cover-up aspects, and in 1984, Moore and television producer Jaime Shandera re-

ceived an anonymous report supposedly outlining the existence of a secret government committee, “Majestic 12” or MJ-12. However, the MJ-12 document painted a much different picture of the events at Roswell than Berlitz and Moore suggested.

As a result, a second version of the Roswell myth evolved. In this version, the saucer malfunctioned and exploded on its own, but north of Roswell Army Air Field. The crash left four alien bodies that had ejected, and the army removed all evidence and spread it to different locations. Meanwhile, the authenticity of the MJ-12 documents had come into question, not only by skeptics such as Philip Klass, but also some within the UFO community itself. Perhaps coincidentally, a new book, *UFO Crash at Roswell* (1991), by Kevin D. Randle and Donald R. Schmitt, had a scenario that mirrored that of the disputed MJ-12 documents, even though Randle and Schmitt tried to distance themselves from that report. In their version, the UFO touched down on Brazel’s ranch, then took off before bouncing along the New Mexico landscape to its final resting place. The significance of this story is that it added crash sites, and complicated the story, but brought in a group of archeologists who claimed to have seen the bodies.

In 1991, an article exposed as a fraud the MJ-12 document and a subsequent “memo” supposedly “corroborating” it. The article, written by researchers who specialized in forensic analysis of documents and sponsored by a UFO journal, claimed that William L. Moore was likely the forger of the documents. But while some ufologists abandoned the MJ-12 documents, many others claimed that the forgeries only “proved” the government was conspiring to discredit the entire movement, and claimed that Moore was a “plant.”

No sooner had the dust settled on the MJ-12 scandal than Stanton Friedman and Don Berliner published *Crash at Corona* (1992), which argued that *two* crashed saucers were recovered, along with one alien who was still alive. An internal struggle between conflicting versions of what happened led Randle and Schmitt to amend some details in yet another book in 1994, although the basics of their new story still resembled earlier versions. A

significant variation did appear that year, though, by Karl Pflock, who had learned of the MOGUL balloon tests, and incorporated them into a crashed saucer story. When the U.S. Air Force released its Roswell report a few months later—with photos of humanlike dolls hung from balloons and parachutes to test wind drift—the UFO community rejected it out of hand. Some ufologists wrote articles in UFO journals analyzing the report.

The most recent work, and the one least likely to be accepted by the UFO believers, is one issued by the U.S. government by author James McAndrew, *The Roswell Report: Case Closed* (1997). McAndrew produced the evidence on MOGUL and the parachute-drop dummies, as well as a review of other government space-related programs of the era. No doubt, however, other Roswell books are being prepared at this time.

Writing about the Roswell “crash” has become a cottage industry, supported in no small part by the town of Roswell, which has an economic stake in visitors coming to see the site. With the advent of cable television and inexpensive videotapes, Roswell writers sought to get their stories on screen, spinning off television exposés such as *Alien Autopsy*, a “documentary” film that purported to show doctors conducting an autopsy on an extraterrestrial creature. The classified nature of the balloon trials in MOGUL, combined with the subscale lifelike dolls, provided the necessary props for a “cover-up” by the army: soldiers immediately cordoned off areas and removed debris and “evidence,” while “bodies” were taken away. It was not until Curtis Peebles wrote *Watch the Skies!* in 1994 that anyone had attempted to conduct a serious study of the UFO phenomena and of Roswell.

The Roswell “incident,” which did not emerge as a hot conspiracy topic until the 1980s, was covered by the press fairly and objectively at the time, despite a spate of UFO stories in the major national papers, when reporters examined the possible phenomenon with inquisitive, but skeptical eyes. Indeed, the government had contributed to the UFO craze by establishing an office to review and catalog all “sightings,” and even when incidents were clearly shown to be natural phenomena, the pres-



ence of such a government office itself seemed to ufologists to indicate a “cover-up” was in progress.

Since the 1980s, when the UFO community embraced the Roswell incident as a possible visitation of extraterrestrials, it has evolved into a modern myth. Roswell scholars Benson Saler, Charles Ziegler, and Charles B. Moore note that three images of Roswell have emerged. The first is the public image, which they label “a case of mistaken identity.” Emerging mostly through television and the tabloids, the public image is one of an exposé that reinforces the reality of UFOs and thus results in a view that extraterrestrial visitations are real. A second image, the scholarly image, is necessarily more critical. Scholars have pointed out that the Roswell stories display a series of substantive changes involving key events that are modified or abandoned in later stories. Thus, many of the major Roswell proponents do not even agree on the location of the crash or the numbers of “saucers.” Equally important to scholars is the fact that many of the pieces of evidence exist in the already public record under the perfectly logical explanations of the U.S. Air Force, and thus Ockham’s razor is brought to bear (i.e., explaining something in the simplest hypothesis needed to explain that thing). Not unexpectedly, with the “real” evidence of the balloons and radar reflectors available, the most recent of the Roswell versions account for both the crash and the air force radar detector. It is this level—that of scholars lending credence to the idea of a U.S. Air Force crash—that has prevented it from being accepted by the public as a legitimate explanation. Whatever “proof” is offered by the ufologists has involved changing the rules of evidence in such a way as to nullify claims of scientific knowledge.

The final image, of course, is the most romantic: true believers who claim that the government and/or powerful forces have combined to conceal the truth. Recent use of the Freedom of Information Act to obtain documents has tied up government resources in providing records of past activities. So far, to the extent that believers seek to elevate the Roswell incident to the same historical level as the *Titanic*, they have failed because the absence of evidence does not justify such a certitude. The public knows of Roswell mostly through

television, a dramatic medium, and the frequent use of “docudramas” to validate the claims of ufologists has produced a view of Roswell that is one-sided and unscientific, but full of drama. It is the quintessential modern myth and the ultimate cosmic urban legend.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** MJ-12; UFOs.

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#### Ruby, Jack

On 24 November 1963, at 11:21 A.M., Jack Ruby fatally shot Lee Harvey Oswald, eliminating the need for a trial for John F. Kennedy’s alleged assassin, and thereby entering the annals of conspiracy theory. To many Americans, Ruby’s act seemed instant evidence that Kennedy’s assassination was the work of a conspiracy.

Ruby claimed he shot Oswald in order to prevent Jackie Kennedy from having to participate in a lengthy trial. He also noted his ire at the famous anti-Kennedy ad placed in the *Dallas Morning News* on the day of the assassination. Ruby feared the ad, signed by right-wing activist Bernard Weiss-

man, would cause the public to blame the assassination on the Jews—to Ruby, Weissman’s name sounded “Jewish.”

Ruby’s activities between the time of the assassination and the Oswald shooting are well documented. Seth Kantor, a former Dallas journalist then working as a White House correspondent, claimed to have seen Ruby at Parkland Hospital shortly after the assassination. Ruby then closed his nightclub, the Carousel Club, for the weekend, and spent the rest of the day running around the city talking about the assassination. He bought sandwiches for the police, bringing them to radio station KLIF where he learned the police had already eaten. He visited the police station anyway, talked with Kathy Kay, an employee of his at the Carousel, and stopped by the *Dallas Times Herald*. At 4:30 A.M. on 24 November, he and his roommate, George Senator, took photographs of an “Impeach Earl Warren” billboard near a Dallas freeway. Later that morning, Ruby drove downtown to the Western Union office and wired \$25 to Karen Carlin, another Carousel employee, at 11:17 A.M. Four minutes later, he headed to the nearby Dallas Police station, where Oswald was at that moment being transferred to the Dallas jail. Moving quickly through the crowd, Ruby shot Oswald once in the stomach.

### Ruby’s Biography

Ruby was born Jack Rubenstein on 25 March 1911, in Chicago. His family was Orthodox Jewish, and Ruby’s Jewish identity emerged early on, as he participated in breaking up American Nazi Bund marches in Chicago. Dropping out of school after the sixth grade, Ruby spent his youth fighting and hustling on the streets. He was placed in a foster home for eighteen months beginning in 1923. In 1933, he left for California, returning to Chicago in 1937. Between 1937 and 1943 he was union organizer for Scrap Iron Junk Handler Local 20467 in Chicago; the union’s books were later seized by the state of Illinois because of connections with organized crime (it has often been claimed that Ruby was more widely involved with organized crime in Chicago). He enlisted in the army air force in 1943, and was discharged in 1946. He moved to Dallas in



Dallas night club owner Jack Ruby stands for a portrait at the Dallas police station. Ruby shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy. (Corbis)

1947, to help his sister Eva run a nightclub. That same year, he changed his name to Jack Ruby. Between 1947 and 1963, Ruby ran a string of Dallas nightclubs. Eva’s Singapore Club became the Silver Spur in 1953, and Ruby invested in the Vegas Club, which he partly owned until his arrest. In 1959, Ruby acquired an interest in the Sovereign Club, on Commerce Street in downtown Dallas. When Ruby’s friend Ralph Paul became his partner, they changed the Sovereign’s name and format to a striptease joint called the Carousel Club.

After his arrest for the Oswald killing, Ruby was tried and convicted by Judge Joe B. Brown. San Francisco lawyer Melvin Belli defended him, making the case that Ruby suffered from psychomotor epilepsy, which affected his judgment. After the

guilty verdict was returned on 14 March 1964, Ruby's lawyers began an appeal, which culminated in Brown's removal from the case. On 24 June 1966, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals reversed Ruby's death sentence and granted him a change of venue. While this appeal continued, Ruby died of cancer on 3 January 1967, expiring in the same Parkland Hospital where Kennedy was taken. Though Ruby's claim that he was injected with cancer is medically impossible, his Parkland doctor asserted that if his cancer had been detected earlier by Dallas jail physician John W. Callahan, it could have been treated, prolonging Ruby's life.

### Ruby and Kennedy Conspiracy Theories

Up until his death, Ruby offered flickering assertions that he was involved in a conspiracy, asserting in a television interview that his entire story had not been told. Ruby figures in every conceivable assassination conspiracy theory. In particular, his connections with organized crime have helped produce theories describing collusion between the Mafia and Cuban exiles, the CIA, or right-wing Texas militants. Ruby's alleged Mafia ties begin with his youth in Chicago, where he supposedly ran errands for Al Capone, and continue through his union organizer work in the same city. Many of Ruby's associates in Dallas are also linked to organized crime. For example, Paul Roland Jones, an associate of the Chicago Mafia who offered to bribe the Dallas Police Department, frequented Ruby's Singapore Club during the late 1940s. In addition to these links, Ruby's activity in the months before the assassination also indicates an organized crime connection. For example, according to Bell Telephone records, Ruby's phone activity increased dramatically during this period, and many of these calls are to figures connected with organized crime. Ruby explained these calls as resulting from troubles with the American Guild of Variety Artists, the union to which Carousel Club performers belonged. Ruby also made several documented trips to Cuba between 1959 and 1963, supposedly on Mafia gun-running or narcotics errands.

In addition to the Mafia connection, conspiracy researchers point to Ruby's testimony before the

Warren Commission, in which, among other strange notes, he repeatedly asks to be taken to Washington because his life is in danger. Ruby's involvement in a conspiracy also surfaces elsewhere in the hearings. In his testimony, Marguerite Oswald's lawyer Mark Lane infamously claimed that Ruby met with Weissman at the Carousel Club, along with J. D. Tippit, the policeman whom Oswald shot shortly after the assassination. Lane's reference to Tippit carried weight because of Ruby's close association with the Dallas Police Department. For example, he regularly hosted Dallas Police Department members at the Carousel Club, and sent policemen gifts of whiskey at Christmas. With fifty-one policemen guarding Oswald, researchers often assume that Ruby must have had inside help to fire such a close shot.

*Andrew Strombeck*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Warren Commission Report.

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## Ruby Ridge

Along with the siege at Waco, the Ruby Ridge incident has become one of the most prominent events for conspiracy-minded opponents of the government and the "New World Order." In August 1992, U.S. marshals engaged in a weeklong standoff with the family of Randall J. Weaver at the Weavers' mountainside home in northern Idaho, now popularly known as Ruby Ridge. The raid resulted in the deaths of Weaver's wife Vicki, his son Samuel, and federal agent William Degan. A number of conspiracy theories cluster around the Ruby Ridge incident. On one side, the Weavers believed that Zionists had taken control in the United States and planned to institute a tyrannous one-world government. In the

wake of the siege, Randy Weaver has insisted that federal officials conspired to hide the truth of their own conduct prior to and during the siege. On the other side, federal authorities believed that Randy Weaver was involved in a conspiracy by white supremacist groups to commit terrorist acts and subvert the U.S. government. And, finally, the events at Ruby Ridge confirmed the suspicions among many right-wing extremists that a Jewish-controlled U.S. government intends to disarm patriotic U.S. citizens.

### **Randy Weaver**

Randy Weaver grew up in a small town in southwestern Iowa. Two years after graduating from high school in 1966, he enlisted in the army and underwent Special Forces training with the Green Berets, but never went to Vietnam. In 1971, he married Vicki Jordison. The Weavers became interested in biblical prophecy after reading Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), which interpreted the Old Testament through events in the modern world. The Weavers quickly came to believe in the literal truth of the Bible and, through their readings, developed the belief that the Old Testament predicted many of the global conflicts in the modern world, such as the rise of communism. They also came to believe that the forces of evil—controlled by Communists and Jewish bankers—were preparing to invade the United States and usher in the Last Days. In 1983, the Weavers moved to northern Idaho with their two children, Sara and Samuel, in order to separate themselves from modern society and await the Tribulation. They built their own home on the mountain, stockpiled food and other provisions, and trained their children in the use of firearms. While in Idaho, the Weavers came into contact with many people who held beliefs similar to their own: white supremacists, survivalists, and members of the religious movement called Christian Identity. But even in rural Idaho, which in the 1980s was home to some of the most notorious white supremacist groups in U.S. history, the Weavers' beliefs were iconoclastic. They considered themselves separatists, not supremacists, and lived their lives according to the strict rules of the Old Testa-

ment and other arcane religious writings, such as the biblical apocrypha. Although they made friends with members of groups like the Aryan Nations, the Weavers never officially joined any organized group. They did, however, attend the Aryan Congress meetings at the Aryan Nations compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho. Their attendance at the Aryan Congress was significant for two reasons. First, in the mid-1980s, the American West, and Idaho in particular, was a principal concern for both the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF). In 1983 and 1984, an offshoot of the Aryan Nations calling itself the Bruders Schweigen, or the Order, launched a wave of crime that included bank robbery, an armored car heist in Seattle that netted a half million dollars, and the murder of Alan Berg, a prominent talk-radio host in Denver. By 1985, following tips from informants and a series of raids, federal authorities had successfully captured and convicted twenty-two members of the Order. Following that success, FBI and BATF investigations of Aryan Nations were ongoing. The Weavers' attendance at the Aryan Congress was also significant because it was there, in 1986, that Randy Weaver befriended Kenneth Fadeley, an undercover BATF informant calling himself Gus Magisono. Three years later, in October 1989, Weaver agreed to sell Fadeley two sawn-off shotguns and soon after, federal agents threatened to arrest Weaver unless he agreed to become an informant himself. When Weaver refused, a grand jury indicted him on federal weapons violations. At his indictment hearing, Weaver's trial date was set for 19 February 1992. On 7 February of that year, Weaver was sent a notice by the U.S. attorney that his trial date had been changed to 20 March, when in fact it had been changed to 20 February. The Weavers maintained that this and other dealings they had with law enforcement officials were deliberate acts of deception, further proof that they had been targeted for their beliefs and purposely set up as part of a government conspiracy.

### **The Siege**

After Weaver failed to appear for his appointed court date, federal agents began what would eventually be



an eighteen-month surveillance of the Weaver cabin. During this time, they developed a threat assessment of Weaver that a subsequent investigation by a Senate subcommittee determined was deeply flawed. That assessment included the charges that Weaver was a neo-Nazi, that he had been convicted of engaging in white supremacist activities, that he was a suspect in a number of bank robberies meant to finance antigovernment terrorism, that the Weaver home was protected by booby-traps and explosives, that Weaver had made threats on the life of the president, and that he was to be treated as extremely dangerous. In fact, Weaver had never been convicted or charged with any crime prior to his arrest on the federal gun charge and the subcommittee determined that the threat assessment was greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, based on these assessments, the BATF deployed its Special Operations Group (SOG) to help bring Weaver in. On 21 August 1992, a group of federal marshals, under heavy camouflage, approached the Weaver cabin. At the same time, fourteen-year-old Samuel Weaver and a family friend named Kevin Harris were out hunting with the family dog, Stryker. When the dog approached the agents, it was shot, setting off a flurry of gunfire that wounded Harris and killed Samuel Weaver and one of the agents, William Degan. The following day, an FBI sniper, Lon Horiuchi, fired two shots into the Weaver cabin, one of which wounded Randy Weaver. The second shot, which traveled through a window of the Weaver cabin, hit Vicki Weaver in the face as she held her infant daughter Elisheba. Vicki was killed instantly. Following the sniper fire, the remaining members of the Weaver family continued to resist surrender. Finally, after another week of negotiations and the intervention of Christian Patriot leader Bo Gritz, Randy Weaver agreed to turn himself over to authorities. Weaver and Harris were charged with murder in the death of Marshal Degan and several other felonies, including assault and conspiracy to subvert the United States government. Represented by celebrity defense attorney Gerry Spence, both men were acquitted of all charges and, in addition, a jury found that Weaver's original arrest on a weapons violation was the result of entrapment. Weaver was convicted only of a failure to appear for trial.

### Aftermath

Following the trial, Weaver filed a wrongful death suit in the killing of Vicki, which was settled out of court in 1994 for over \$3 million. In 1995, a Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Government Information held public hearings to address allegations of government misconduct. At issue were questions regarding FBI and BATF handling of the investigation of Randy Weaver, the rules of engagement used by SOG during the raid, and allegations of a subsequent cover-up during the trial. In each case, the committee determined that the government had acted irresponsibly and, in the case of the rules of engagement, unconstitutionally. Among their findings were FBI orders that instructed federal snipers to shoot on sight any member of the Weaver family seen to be carrying a weapon, despite the fact that only Randy was charged with a crime. The committee also concluded that Horiuchi's second shot, which killed Vicki Weaver, was unjustified under FBI policy and the United States Constitution. Further, the committee found that federal officials attempted to cover up their misconduct in several ways: by failing to follow proper investigative protocols, failing to provide or delaying the release of relevant documents for the court, and showing favoritism when reviewing the actions of friends and colleagues. For many on the extreme Right, the findings of the Senate subcommittee provided evidence of a conspiracy that they had long suspected. According to Timothy McVeigh's own statements, the treatment of the Weavers in the Ruby Ridge incident, coupled with similar government handling of the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas, played a significant role in his decision to bomb a federal building in Oklahoma City. A decade later, Ruby Ridge continues to anger antigovernment activists: in June 2001, a federal appeals court ruled that Lon Horiuchi could stand trial on an involuntary manslaughter charge for the killing of Vicki Weaver. But the following week, an Idaho prosecutor declined to pursue the case, citing insufficient evidence, and dropped the charge. Randy Weaver lives with his remaining children in Iowa.

*Jeff Insko*

**See also:** Aryan Nations; Christian Identity; One-World Government; New World Order; Waco; ZOG.

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## **Sacco and Vanzetti**

Anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were sentenced to death in July 1921 for the murders of Frederick Parmenter and Alessandro Berardelli, employees of the Slater and Merrill Shoe Company who were killed by robbers during a payroll holdup in South Braintree, Massachusetts, in April 1920. Among others implicated in a conspiracy to frame Sacco and Vanzetti for crimes they did not commit were the district attorney of Plymouth and Norfolk Counties, Frederick G. Katzmann, the assistant district attorney, Harold Williams, and Walter Ripley, the foreman of the jury during Sacco's and Vanzetti's trial. Debates regarding the existence of a conspiracy have focused upon significant flaws in the testimony of several prosecution eyewitnesses, the dubious quality of evidence offered by ballistics experts, and the "Medeiros Confession," in which a convicted murderer would later admit to carrying out the killings himself.

Were Sacco and Vanzetti the victims of a conspiracy to frame them for murders they did not commit? In the febrile political climate marked by outbursts of "red scares" in the United States during the immediate postwar years, it is certainly safe to say that few on the U.S. Left were confident that left-wing anarchists like Sacco and Vanzetti would receive a fair trial. As the postwar U.S. economy went into recession, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and a series of bitter confrontations between employers and organized workers at home fueled the red scare of 1918–1920, a wave of beatings, arrests, and deporta-

tions whose scale would dwarf the more infamous McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s, and that would cripple significant constituencies within the U.S. Left throughout the 1920s. The highly charged political atmosphere in U.S. cities was intensified in April 1919, with the discovery of an anarchist plot to bomb a list of prominent public figures, including Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, John D. Rockefeller, and J. P. Morgan. Whether or not Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent victims of a conspiracy (Sacco's guilt was widely assumed even by members of his own defense teams, as was Vanzetti's innocence), the widespread collusion of the courts in the political purges of the red scare suggests that once charged the anarchists stood little chance of acquittal. Prosecuting District Attorney Katzmann became famous for his closing address to the jury, in which he implied that a successful conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti would amount to a patriotic duty well discharged. After the trial, the first of eight eventual motions for a retrial would cite the jury foreman for his observation that, guilty or not, the anarchists "ought to hang anyway."

## **Flawed Trial**

From its opening on 31 May 1921, the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, in Dedham, Massachusetts, was steeped in controversy. After four days of jury selection, only seven jurors had been selected from a pool of 500 interviewees. Instructing the local sheriff to round up a further 200 suitable candidates, Judge Webster Thayer dismissed defense objections





Bartolomeo Vanzetti (left) and Nicola Sacco, manacled together and surrounded by a heavy guard and onlookers, about to enter the courthouse at Dedham, Massachusetts, where they will receive the death sentences for a murder they were convicted of committing in 1920 (photograph taken in 1927). (Library of Congress)

about the “arbitrary” manner in which the jury had been assembled. When proceedings finally began, a number of witnesses for the prosecution offered testimony that conflicted with statements they had previously made to the police. Of the seven eyewitnesses who had placed Sacco at or close by the scene of the murders, no witnesses were consistently sure that they had correctly identified the defendant, and no one at all was able to testify that Vanzetti had been present during the shootings.

Sacco’s alibi, placing him in Boston on the day of the murders, was supported by seven witnesses, while Vanzetti’s claim that he was selling fish in Plymouth was supported by another six. Despite the testimony of two defense experts who advised that none of the bullets fired at the crime scene could have come from Sacco’s pistol, the jury chose to

believe the evidence of a ballistics expert for the prosecution, who offered the opinion that one of the bullets was “consistent” with having been fired by the defendant’s gun (his careful choice of language being seen by some at the time as a deliberate attempt to mislead the jury as to Sacco’s guilt). From the pool of circumstantial evidence brought against Vanzetti, the prosecution made much of the fact that the weapon Vanzetti was carrying when he was arrested had undergone a similar repair to the gun carried by the victim Berardelli on the day he was shot. Documents made public in 1977, however, would show that the weapon found on Vanzetti was of a different caliber than the one carried by Berardelli.

By mid-June the defense had attempted to impeach the testimony of one of the prosecution “eyewitnesses,” on the grounds that a larceny charge made against him had been dropped as “payment” for his testimony. By the end of the month another witness had told the court that the prosecution eyewitness Lola Andrews, who would later retract her testimony, was unable to identify either of the defendants and had been coerced into doing so by a “government agent.” Following the return of guilty verdicts on both defendants, the eight different motions for a new trial (the penultimate one made to the Supreme Court in May 1926) were all refused. The second of these motions, made in May 1922, raised the prospect of a serious scandal when it cited the retraction of one eyewitness’s testimony locating Sacco at the scene, and accused the assistant district attorney of leaning on witnesses to fabricate testimony. Two weeks after the Supreme Court decision a final motion for retrial was filed on the grounds that a confession by Celestino Medeiros, a Portuguese convict who had himself been imprisoned for murder in the United States, made the convictions of Sacco and Vanzetti unsafe. Medeiros was a member of the Morelli Gang, a well-known group of freight-car robbers whom police had originally listed as suspects for the South Braintree murders. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed on 23 August 1927. Celestino Medeiros was executed with them.

*David Holloway*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Anticommunism, Industrial Workers of the World; McCarthy, Joseph; Morgan, John Pierpont; Nativism; Red Scare; Rockefeller Family.

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## Salem Witch Trials

The Salem Witch Trials (February to October 1692) comprise the largest witch-hunt in North American history. A keynote of the Salem Witch Trials and the history of their interpretation is conspiracy: secret plots, involving members of groups perceived to be conspiring with the devil, and acting covertly to carry out harmful ends requiring intricate cover-ups.

### Background

Of the 150 individuals imprisoned (from 24 towns and villages), 44 individuals confessed, 20 individuals were executed (19 accused witches hanged; one man pressed to death), and 4 individuals died in prison.

The events leading up to the trials center on a small group of girls from Salem Village (now Danvers, Massachusetts) who met in the home of Rev. Samuel Parris for stories and fortune-telling with Tituba, the minister's Caribbean slave. By January 1692 the minister's daughter and niece (followed by the rest of the group) displayed symptoms of demonic possession. Pressured to name their tormentors, the girls accused Tituba and two others (Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne). When Tituba confessed to witchcraft, accused Good and Osborne, and claimed the existence of other witches, panic engulfed the Puritan community.

### Conspiracy Theories

From the start, the Salem Witch Trials have been seen through the lens of conspiracy theory. Seven-

teenth-century witnesses interpreted the events as part of a satanic world takeover. Reflecting this mindset is Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), one of the first histories of the trials. Salem villagers perceived witches, not as isolated practitioners of the "craft," but instead as a network of individuals with links to the upper class and the colonial center at Boston. Reflecting in part Puritan millenarian traditions, Salem villagers militarized their concepts of witch covens. Witches were said to meet secretly to plot the overthrow of the country and to set up a new, diabolical form of government. While this satanic conspiracy theory of Salem was discredited before the close of the seventeenth century, modern research has uncovered evidence for the presence of practicing witches in Salem.

A second conspiracy theory of the Salem Witch Trials centers on the belief that the young girl accusers were deliberately lying, their motives being power, attention, even entertainment. In the nineteenth century, this conspiracy theory became the standard interpretation. Ranging in ages from nine to twenty, the group of accusers included Elizabeth Parris, Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, Jr., Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, Mary Warren, Sarah Churchill, Susannah Sheldon, and Elizabeth Hubbard. While the girls were swept along by events they may not have preconceived, once begun, they were committed to continuing and to naming fresh victims to prolong the delusion. While their first accusations targeted social outcasts, the girls soon began accusing people from higher stations; according to one rumor, the girls were about to accuse the wife of Governor Williams Phips, who abruptly dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer on 29 October 1692.

A third influential conspiracy theory involving the Salem Witch Trials proposes a power acting behind the accusing girls. Proponents of this theory argue that the girls were guided by a small group of adults seeking revenge and political gain. The clearest indicator of adult intervention is the unprecedented support authorities lent the girls. Ministers and magistrates kept the girls in public view, accepted their word, and—most importantly—allowed spectral evidence (evidence based on the actions of specters

of both the living and the dead seen only by the accusing girls).

The belief in a conspiracy of adults guiding the accusing girls relies on competing factions characterizing seventeenth-century Salem, which was divided geographically and politically into Salem Town (the seaport) and Salem Village (a small farming community). In Salem Village two factions struggled for supremacy, one led by the Porter family advocating close ties with the town, and another group led by the Putnam family fighting for independence. Rev. Parris was aligned with the Putnams, in part because the church at Salem Village symbolized autonomy from Salem Town.

A sinister pattern begins to emerge, with many of the accusers belonging to the Putnam faction, and many of the accused belonging to the Porter faction. In the households of Thomas Putnam and Samuel Parris resided five of the nine accusing girls. A total of eight members of the Putnam clan helped sentence nearly fifty accused witches. All of the accusing girls had direct links to the household of Rev. Parris, who testified against ten accused witches, and who beat his slave Tituba to confess to witchcraft, a confession instigating a large-scale witch-hunt. While the desire to crush opposition is the motive in this conspiracy theory, personal interests also seem to have played a role, such as the desire for land on the part of Thomas Putnam, and the desire to salvage an unsuccessful ministry on the part of Parris.

Another theory containing conspiratorial elements centers on the inherent misogyny of the trials and their links to the interests of an emerging medical profession. Witch-hunts were part of a larger system of patriarchal control, and the women first accused in Salem were those (like Bridget Bishop, a contentious businesswoman married three times) who deviated from Puritan standards of womanhood. One problem with this theory concerns the extent to which patriarchy, as a pervasive social system, relies on the intentional collusion of individuals. More in keeping with a traditional conspiracy theory is the thesis that the Salem Witch Trials, like other witch-hunts, were used by a male medical profession to eliminate competition from midwives. Although it

is impossible to provide precise numbers of midwives in Salem, in most households women were responsible for healing, and thus competed with the relatively small number of male practitioners. Sarah Osborne, Ann Pudeator, and Elizabeth Proctor were all accused of witchcraft in relation to midwife practices, and one of the accusing girls (Elizabeth Hubbard) was a niece of Dr. William Griggs, who incidentally made the first diagnosis of witchcraft in Salem, claiming the girls were “under an evil hand.”

The trials have bequeathed to the U.S. lexicon—and the vocabulary of conspiracy theory—a key term, “witch-hunt,” meaning any attempt to expose subversive activity, but which is really an attempt to crush political opposition.

Marcus LiBrizzi

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### San Francisco Vigilance Committee

Was the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 an unselfish citizen effort to establish law and order or was it a cleverly disguised conspiracy to gain political power? Although opinions may differ, it appears

that, after disbanding the committee, several of its members ran for office as Republicans rather than the party that created the Vigilance Committee to promote itself.

San Francisco can be seen as a lesson in what happens when people fail to perform their civic duties. Many tried “to get rich quick,” neglecting public affairs, including jury duty, so only those with an ulterior motive tended to serve on juries. For example, justice was often perverted when the only willing jurors were friends of the accused.

On the other hand, a case may be made that partisan politics was the fundamental motivating factor in San Francisco. With the Whigs defunct, Democrats divided over slavery, and Know-Nothings offensive to most voters (despite their having elected Governor J. Neely Johnson in 1855), a vacuum welcomed a new party, the Republicans. All that those with political ambitions needed was to find a cause, and the issue of law and order provided that.

Life was turbulent in San Francisco during the gold rush and early days of independence from Mexico. Without strong government, gangs roamed the streets, demanded free drinks, and abused the Latino community. On 15 July 1849, when a bunch of ruffians launched a raid against the Chilean neighborhood, 230 men retaliated. They took the law into their own hands, formed a special police force, arrested the gang, elected two new judges, and appointed a new district attorney. Two years later, after law and order was again neglected, 700 men banded together as the Vigilance Committee of 1851 to supplement local law enforcement. But, within a short time after the group disbanded, the situation returned to near anarchy. Arson, murder, and election fraud continued to go unpunished.

Two particular events sparked public concern. On 19 November 1855, a gambler, Charles Cora, shot and killed popular U.S. Marshal General William H. Richardson. Cora was apprehended but remained in jail pending trial. Then, on 14 May 1856, San Francisco Supervisor James P. Casey, publisher of the *San Francisco Sunday Times*, shot and killed James King, noted banker and publisher of a rival newspaper, the *Daily Evening Bulletin*. Casey surrendered and sought protective custody in the county jail.

Mayor Van Ness asked a menacing crowd gathering outside the jail to disperse and ordered 300 armed volunteers, the Light Dragoons, the National Lancers, and the First California Guard to surround the area and protect Casey from the mob.

During this demonstration King’s bodyguards and some members of the 1851 committee, led by William T. Coleman, met secretly in the chambers of the Society of California Pioneers, forming the Vigilance Committee of 1856. They required candidates to complete an application, to obtain the sponsorship of two members, to pay a fee from \$1 to \$20, to meet the approval of a Qualifications Committee, and to swear an oath of allegiance. Many Catholics, who did not wish to join a secret society, swore a special oath not to take up arms against the committee, while 1,500 merchants and service providers as well as lawyers and clergymen joined. They used secret signs, grips, and passwords, responded to an alarm bell, and marched together waving banners.

For more than three months the committee enforced its brand of law and order. It set up court and maintained a jail in its downtown headquarters fortified with sandbags and two artillery pieces. It tried and hanged four people, including Casey and Cora, contributed to the suicide of another, tried and incarcerated a state supreme court justice for stabbing one of its members, posted a \$5,000 reward for the arrest of arsonists, and banished numerous rapists, thieves, abortionists, and ballot-box stuffers. The 5,000-man army captured four city armories and a ship loaded with weapons from a U.S. arsenal, and boarded all vessels entering San Francisco Harbor, excluding 90 percent of prospective immigrants.

On 18 August 1856, the committee disbanded, opened its tastefully decorated headquarters to visitors, and concluded with an all-day parade through the streets of San Francisco. It returned all the arms it had taken from the city, county, and state, and on 3 November, Governor J. Neely Johnson lifted his insurrection proclamation.

The committee failed in its attempt to schedule a state constitutional convention and hold special county elections, but some of its members won public office as members of the new Republican



Party in November 1856, ensuring their amnesty from prosecution.

JeDon A. Emenhiser

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## Satanic Ritual Abuse

Conspiracy-infused accusations of satanic ritual abuse (SRA) came to the forefront in U.S. culture in the mid-1980s through intense media attention, and spread to Britain and Australia, and most recently continental Europe. Those believing in SRA, commonly known as true believers, maintained that secretive groups were involved in forcing people, mainly children, to have sex and engage in satanic rituals such as the sacrificing of babies and drinking their blood. In the United States the main period of SRA accusations is from 1984 to 1994, but this is not an entirely recent trend. In early Christian cultures those thought to be in allegiance with the devil were believed to be involved in forms of satanic abuse. This reached its zenith in the Middle Ages with witch trials and the publication in 1481 of *Malleus Maleficarum* by Heinrich Kraemer and Johann Sprenger, known in English as *The Witches' Hammer*.

During the 1960s U.S. Christianity became focused on the personal and obsessed with personal evil, typified in Roman Polanski's 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby*. In 1969 Anton Szandor La Vey wrote *The Satanic Bible* and those looking for clear evidence of occult activity across the United States believed they had found it. This was followed by other texts such as *The Satan Seller* by self-declared ex-satanic high priest Mike Warnke in 1972, claiming that occult and SRA activity was proliferating. In 1973 William Friedkin's film *The Exorcist* shockingly depicted the results of demonic possession,

and was supposedly based on fact. Personal stories, such as *Michelle Remembers* by Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder published in 1980, were taken as evidence of the existence of SRA, with no substantial proof given.

A major incident in 1984, known as the McMartin case, sparked accusations of SRA. At McMartin Preschool in Manhattan Beach, California, 360 children were diagnosed with being abused via SRA. Child abuse allegations were also levied at other schools in the area, such as St. Cross Episcopal Church in Hermosa Beach, and in all, 100 teachers were accused of belonging to a satanic cult involved in ritual molestation. The majority of charges were dropped and the case led to further investigations into false memory syndrome, a belief that in such cases psychologists working with the victims of alleged abuse place false memories through suggestion, hypnosis, and other techniques. However, this itself is often considered another conspiracy: false memory syndrome or recovered memory system is not a clinical medical term and was, it is alleged by believers of SRA, invented by those parents charged with abuse.

Groups such as Breaking Free, an SRA survivors' organization, have linked SRA rings to other conspiracy theories relating to disparate groups from the Jesuits to the Freemasons, seeing SRA as another way of bringing about the New World Order. To true believers 60,000 people are killed each year via SRA. Numerous cases may exist but evidence of a more substantial conspiracy is lacking. After the 1980s movement away from liberalism and the rise of the Christian Right during the Reagan era, in 1994 the U.S. saw a backlash against belief in SRA. The general public, and therefore juries, became skeptical of accusations made of SRA, seeing it as the product of vivid imaginations imbued with stories from popular U.S. Christianity rather than a reality, making prosecution in such cases problematic.

Jason Lee

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## Savings and Loan Crisis

When a trickle of failed savings and loan (S&L) institutions in the 1970s turned into a torrent by the end of the decade, blame was apportioned everywhere. More than a few prominent politicians found themselves implicated in the collapse—some through direct ownership, such as Neil Bush, the son of then-Vice-President George H. W. Bush—and some through investments “placed” by others, such as Bill and Hillary Clinton. Before the scandal was over, five politicians were investigated on charges of peddling their influence on behalf of Charles Keating. Although none were indicted, the “Keating Five” sparked calls for renewed campaign finance laws.

The S&L crisis had its origins in the laws under which S&Ls operated. Early S&Ls were intended to finance mortgages, and to do that they needed a more stable deposit base than commercial banks (which made loans to individuals and businesses). Congress therefore allowed S&Ls to pay slightly higher interest rates for deposits, but in turn restricted their lending, prohibiting them, for example, from having checking accounts or lending on consumer items, such as cars or appliances. This strategy worked well for S&Ls in the 1950s and early 1960s, when interest rates were stable or moved slowly. As long as the S&L had a chance to adapt its new mortgage structure to higher interest rates over time, it could remain stable. What threatened the existence of the entire industry, however, was rapid inflation.

In the early 1970s, the combination of federal deficits, union wage increases, and oil price increases sent prices skyrocketing, reaching levels nearing “hyperinflation” by the end of the decade. To obtain funds, S&Ls had to pay increasingly higher interest on deposits. After 1973, regulators

permitted S&Ls to offer “Jumbo Certificates of Deposit.” But with their loans tied up in long-term (fifteen- to thirty-year) mortgages, the institutions experienced “disintermediation”—a term that describes a gap between the deposit interest paid and the loan interest received. In short, the S&Ls were “selling” their product—their mortgages—for far less than they were paying for the money to finance new mortgages, and the long-term nature of the thirty-year fixed mortgages meant that there was no way for the S&Ls to adjust. “Variable rate” mortgages appeared, but that did nothing to address the immediate shortfalls.

Another factor, traced back to Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal, came into play. During the banking “reforms” of the Great Depression, Congress had established deposit insurance for banks (the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or FDIC) and for S&Ls (the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, or FSLIC). These “corporations” provided government funds to insure depositors against losses in their accounts should the banks or S&Ls fail. (Many observers of the day had credited the creation of the FDIC with shoring up the banks in the 1930s, but in fact the key policy move involved Roosevelt’s decision to take the United States off the gold standard.) No substantial runs had threatened either system since the 1930s, and thus little attention was paid to the “moral hazard” posed by, in essence, separating the welfare of the depositors from the health of the institution itself. Put another way, with the government insuring deposits, potentially corrupt bank managers or owners had an incentive to take risks they would not otherwise take.

Until the disintermediation crisis occurred, S&L owners and managers had no need to engage in particularly risky operations. But faced with a sudden shortfall in profits that could not be met through normal means, they pursued two avenues of escape. One involved the time-tested appeal to Congress for special assistance. In 1982, the Garn-St. Germain Act expanded the power of S&Ls by allowing them to pursue investments aggressively in a variety of areas previously denied them, such as offering checking accounts. S&Ls, in short, were permitted

to act like banks. That did little to stop the hemorrhaging, and between 1981 and 1982, the S&Ls lost between \$11 and \$12 billion. Worse, seeing that their customers were “protected” by deposit insurance, many S&L owners sought quick fixes by investing in highly speculative ventures, especially land.

Critics of the day claimed that the S&L industry’s collapse was tied to “junk bonds,” as in the case of Michael Milken and his placement of junk bonds with Columbia Savings and Loan in Beverly Hills. A more important connection of wheeler-dealers came when Milken hooked up with Charles Keating of Cincinnati who received \$119 million in Drexel Burnham Lambert–underwritten bonds to finance the American Continental Corporation, a real estate development firm that Keating tapped to purchase Lincoln Savings and Loan in Irvine, California. Keating then used the S&L money to purchase more junk bonds. When these investments collapsed, Keating was investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission. During the investigation, Keating met with five senators, John McCain (R-AZ), Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), John Glenn (D-OH), Alan Cranston (D-CA), and Don Riegle (D-MI), each of whom had received \$1 million in campaign contributions from Keating. The Senate Ethics Committee found that Cranston, DeConcini, and Riegle had interfered with the investigation, but only Cranston was censured. (McCain later made a political career out of calling for “campaign finance reform”—after he had benefited from the largesse!) Lincoln lost \$3.4 billion, and Keating served time in jail for fraud.

Despite these examples, most of the failed S&Ls had their money in land and development projects. The worst of these were “daisy chains,” in which one piece of speculative property was used as collateral for a loan at another S&L, whose loan was then used to purchase another piece of speculative land, and so on. It was no surprise that the states with the largest numbers of S&L failures were those states with plenty of land yet to develop—Texas, Florida, California, and Arizona. After the government shut down the S&Ls in a series of acts aimed at dealing with the failed institutions, Uncle

Sam acquired their land assets. Wisely, the government held on to most of the land and, over time, land values returned. The “bill” for the S&L crisis was never as high as had been predicted in the 1980s (the Office of Management and Budget, in 1989, estimated \$257 billion would be needed), although fixing a final cost of the debacle is still an exercise in futility depending on which dates are used. Conspiracy literature attempting to link the “Reagan-Bush” administrations to the “looting” of the S&Ls claimed that the final tab would be \$400 billion to \$500 billion, an amount that is wildly exaggerated by any evidence provided from either the banking industry or the government. From 1960 to 1990, the number of S&Ls fell from 6,000 to about 3,000, and even as conditions improved, the government changed both the examination procedures and the capital requirements, which further reduced the number of troubled institutions.

By the time the S&L debacle was over, well-known celebrities such as Keating, Milken, and several politicians had been investigated. President George Bush’s son, Neil, who was a director of Silverado Savings and Loan in Colorado, was the target of ethics charges for his defaults in that S&L, while his brother Jeb was loosely associated with Broward Savings and Loan in Florida. Publications such as *Mother Jones* railed about the “involvement” of the Bushes, yet no evidence has yet shown them to have been directly involved in any malfeasance.

Quite different was the involvement of Bill and Hillary Clinton in the infamous “Whitewater” scandal, in which the Clintons, with Arkansas developer James McDougall, the owner of Madison Guaranty and Loan in Arkansas, purchased ownership in a development project called Whitewater. Madison was investigated, and put into conservatorship as insolvent after lending considerable money through Susan McDougal, James’s wife, to Whitewater and other development projects. Hillary Clinton, through her position at the Rose Law Firm, was the primary attorney preparing all the documents and signed them all (as well as billed her hours based on that work), although she later claimed that she did none of the work. By the time Bill Clinton became president, the Whitewater scandal demanded the ap-

pointment of a special prosecutor, Robert Fiske, who soon was replaced by Judge Kenneth Starr. Ultimately, the failed Arkansas S&L would lead to Clinton's impeachment in 1999.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Clinton, Bill and Hillary.

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### Scaife, Richard Mellon

It might be argued that Richard Mellon Scaife pursues conspiracies from two perspectives from his base in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On the one hand, as a wealthy donor to numerous right-wing institutions in the United States, Scaife has funded many articles and studies blaming liberals and Communists for conspiring against the economic well-being, security, and morality of the U.S. people. On the other hand, his critics charge that Scaife has launched numerous conspiracies attacking his political enemies on the Left. Furthermore, many of Scaife's associates have noted his long-standing predilection for conspiracy theories (Kaiser and Chinoy).

Scaife is heir to a family fortune that, through enterprise and marriage, grew to include the Mellon Bank and major investments in Gulf Oil and Alcoa. In addition to substantial personal wealth,

Scaife also controls three foundations: the Sarah Scaife Foundation, with 1999 assets of \$302 million; the Allegheny Foundation, with \$39 million; and the Carthage Foundation, with \$24 million. Scaife's children control a fourth entity, the Scaife Family Foundation, with \$170 million in assets.

Scaife's funding of conservative groups began in the early 1960s and he backed ultraconservative presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, Jr., who was trounced in the 1964 general election. Scaife contributed \$1 million to the 1972 election campaign of Richard Nixon, and some \$45,000 ended up in an illegal fund tied to the Watergate scandal.

Scaife went on to fund scores of right-wing policy think tanks, legal groups, and publications. He joined with beer magnate Joseph Coors to start the Heritage Foundation, the flagship think tank of the U.S. New Right. Heritage supplied the working papers for many of the conservative policies of the Reagan administration, which began in 1981. During this period, various Scaife entities funded conservative causes at the rate of about \$10 million per year, with a cumulative total of \$340 million by 1999.

Scaife is fascinated with intelligence agencies and military affairs, and reportedly was a fan of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. In the 1970s Scaife owned a publishing enterprise that included an international news agency based in London that Scaife shut down shortly before it was accused of cooperating with the CIA to produce anticommunist propaganda.

Scaife has also funded the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Maldon Institute. Both groups publish studies stressing global conspiracies of Communists and socialists, and, more recently, anarchists and Muslims. Maldon features the work of John Rees, who infiltrated and spied on left-wing groups in the late 1960s and 1970s with information being shared with right-wing publications and the FBI.

Other Scaife-funded organizations include the Western Journalism Center, *American Spectator*, Accuracy in Media, Landmark Legal Foundation, and Judicial Watch—all of which were especially active in the anti-Clinton network.



When Hillary Clinton said her husband, President William Jefferson Clinton, was the target of a vast right-wing conspiracy seeking impeachment, her comments echoed a study prepared by a Democratic Party analyst that placed Scaife at the hub of a covert anti-Clinton campaign. While Ms. Clinton may have been overstating the case, Scaife funding was important in sustaining anti-Clinton conspiracy theories, especially around the case of Clinton's aide Vince Foster, whose suicide early in the Clinton administration was widely regarded as suspicious by the political Right.

Scaife hired former *New York Post* reporter Christopher Ruddy to pursue the idea that Vince Foster's death was not a suicide, as well as other stories about Clinton's alleged involvement in various conspiracies. Scaife published these articles in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, one of a number of publications controlled by Scaife. Ruddy helped bring the conspiracy allegations about Clinton floating across the Internet and the front pages of the tabloid press into mainstream coverage in major daily newspapers and network television news.

Scaife's foundations gave \$2.4 million to the American Spectator Education Foundation while its sister organization, the conservative *American Spectator* magazine, was running a series of anti-Clinton articles, one of which prompted Paula Jones to sue the president, alleging sexual misconduct. The foundation also launched the "Arkansas Project," financing anti-Clinton information-gathering operations involving reporters, private investigators, former law enforcement officers, and political operatives. Between 1993 and 1996, \$1.7 million of the Scaife funds reported as legal fees were apparently used for the Arkansas Project. Some of this money was used to promote the idea that the Clintons were involved in a massive real estate scam dubbed "Whitewater."

Scaife, who turned sixty-seven in the year 2000, can be personable and gracious, but he is secretive and avoids public scrutiny. He also has a creative, if nasty, temper. Investigative reporter Karen Rothmyer doggedly pursued an interview with Scaife for a 1981 article in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. When she finally tracked Scaife down and con-

fronted him outside a corporate meeting, Rothmyer asked about Scaife's funding of the New Right. Scaife's now-legendary retort—printed in an article sidebar—was, "You fucking Communist cunt, get out of here" (Rothmyer).

Rothmeyer and reporter David Warner were the first to note that Scaife funded conservative projects in a very strategic manner to maximize the propaganda value of his dollars. Scaife accomplishes this by simultaneously funding several different projects at different groups on the same topic. According to Rothmeyer, the result is that in matters of defense and economic policy Scaife has helped to foster the illusion that there is a far greater diversity of views than actually exists. This has helped shift political discourse further to the right in the United States.

*Chip Berlet*

**See also:** Clinton, Bill and Hillary; Foster, Vince; Whitewater.

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## Scientology

The Church of Scientology, to its promoters, or cult of Scientology, to its detractors, began in the United States in the 1950s and is characterized by a notion of personal psychology that verges on the conspiratorial. Scientology became well known in the 1980s and 1990s due to a number of controversies surrounding it and the media obsession with prominent members, in particular the actor John Travolta. Scientology originated with L. Ron Hubbard, an English science

fiction writer. His book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* outlined his theories and is the practical text of the so-called religion. Estimates vary widely on worldwide membership; cynics put numbers as low as 70,000, while Scientologists claim membership is more like 15 million.

Several conspiracy theories are connected with Scientology. First, in relation to personal psychology, Scientological theory holds that the self has been manipulated and warped by external factors. Linked to this idea on a global scale, groups such as drug companies and financiers are manipulating the world. The Scientologist must therefore reach the state of “Clear,” in order to be free from bad memories and external, controlling influences. Devices such as the “E-Meter” are used to determine the level of treatment needed by the individual. Overall, Scientologists hope that the world will become Clear, an idea that has provoked fears about Scientology’s plans for global transformation and domination among some critics. Second, at a deeper level, through “Auditing” a Scientologist aims to remove the influence of “Body Thetans.” For believers these are the traces of those beings brought to earth millions of years ago by the alien Xenu due to overpopulation in the Galactic Federation. These beings were exterminated by hydrogen bombs and their souls ended up in humans. Mental anguish and problems have resulted from this and the Scientologist must reengage with the moment of the extermination to be healed. Thus, at the heart of Scientology there is an alien conspiracy theory.

Scientology’s detractors claim that the organization is a manipulative, brainwashing cult dedicated to gaining members’ money and encouraging bankruptcy and suicide; for many of its critics, Scientology is seen as a major world evil. The core conflict has taken place on the Internet. Due to copyright laws, much of Scientology’s material is unavailable to the public, yet its detractors, frequently disgruntled ex-members, have published this material on the Internet. In the 1980s eleven members were jailed for theft of material that was thought to be damaging to the organization, suggesting that the organization is aware of a conspiracy against it. Scientology has been banned from Germany and France, while

Hollywood has rallied around it, with producers and directors signing a petition in support of freedom of religion.

Jason Lee

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### Secular Humanism

In 1933 a group of liberal intellectuals, including education reformer John Dewey, published the Humanist Manifesto, which argued that “the traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species” (Martin, 195). Revised and reissued in 1973, the manifesto was little noticed by most Americans. Among some Christian traditionalists, however, the ideas propounded by the Humanist Manifesto came to be perceived as a form of godless secular religion competing with the Judeo-Christian ethic for the heart and soul of the nation.

Catholic ideologues in the 1960s launched the current crusade to define secular humanism as a threat to Christianity, but it was Protestant evangelicals, especially fundamentalists, who made it a major battleground in what became known as the Culture Wars of the 1980s. At first, Christian activists such as protestant doctor C. Everett Koop, active in the mostly Catholic antiabortion movement, and Francis A. Schaeffer, a popular Protestant theologian, developed intellectual arguments and a theological approach to combating secular humanism. Together they wrote a book titled *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* A film version was screened across the country in church auditoriums and rented halls.

This was a time when some Protestant fundamentalists were discussing the work of Christian

evangelical writer Hal Lindsey, who argued that contemporary world events revealed the signs of the End Times heralding the apocalypse and the Second Coming of Christ. One way of reading the prophecies in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament is that the End Times bring a conspiracy of leading political and religious leaders, who join forces with Satan to build a one-world government and new world order ruled by the Antichrist. Soon there was a discussion in fundamentalist circles as to whether the spread of secular humanism was just a symptom of liberal permissiveness, or part of a long-standing secret Communist conspiracy to spread Godlessness, or even part of the satanic End Times conspiracy.

Already angered by a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions permitting the sale of pornography and allowing abortion, Christian evangelicals created a battle line over new educational curricula featuring books that frankly discussed human sexuality, criticisms of foreign and domestic policies, and race relations. This was seen as an example of secular humanism infecting the public schools. In 1974 a parents' revolt against new textbooks in Kanawha County, West Virginia, hit the headlines as national conservative groups including the Heritage Foundation rallied to the side of the parents.

During the 1970s and 1980s there were dozens of books published exploring the liberal "conspiracy" to promote secular humanism and take God out of the United States. Some argued that the very idea of public education was part of a plot to brainwash children to defy authority, disobey their parents, and reject religion. During the cold war, this was linked to a liberal conspiracy to weaken the United States and pave the way for a Soviet Communist invasion.

According to George Marsden, the new focus on secular humanism "revitalized fundamentalist conspiracy theory." The threats of "Communism and socialism could, of course, be fit right into the humanist picture," wrote Marsden, "but so could all the moral and legal changes at home without implausible scenarios of Russian agents infiltrating American schools, government, reform movements, and mainline churches" (109). When the

Soviet Union collapsed, the belief in a conspiracy of secular humanists provided continuity, and allowed for a seamless shift in targets from the red menace to contemporary threats such as the feminist movement, the pro-choice movement, and the gay rights movement.

Conservative groups that at various times have publicized the idea of a secular humanist conspiracy include the Christian Coalition (Pat Robertson), the Eagle Forum (Phyllis Schlafly), Concerned Women for America (Beverly LaHaye), American Coalition for Traditional Values (Tim LaHaye), Christian Anti-Communism Crusade (Fred Schwarz), and the John Birch Society (Robert Welch).

Christian Right activists Gary Bauer and James Dobson described the struggle between Christians and secular humanists for the hearts and minds of Americans as a "great Civil War of Values" (Martin, 344). Dobson's organization, Focus on the Family, is a huge national operation that publishes numerous magazines and sponsors a daily nationally syndicated radio program. Through these and other media the Christian Right continues to warn of the dangers of secular humanism, and frequently suggests it is part of a decades-old secret conspiracy.

*Chip Berlet*

**See also** Abortion; Anticommunism; Apocalypticism; John Birch Society; Robertson, Pat.

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## **September 11**

The attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon, and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania on the morning of 11 September 2001 have brought forth a plethora of conspiracy theories, most of which arose outside the United States and

have only slowly been gaining ground among the U.S. people. In Muslim countries, many people immediately doubted that Osama Bin Laden was behind the attacks, suggesting instead that they were a plot by the Bush administration to discredit Muslims and justify greater world domination. While not suspecting U.S. government involvement, other Muslims remain unconvinced by the sparse evidence of Osama Bin Laden's guilt. For instance, the open letter entitled "How We Can Coexist" (May 2002) signed by Islamic scholars and intellectuals and addressed to the U.S. authors of the open letter "What We're Fighting For" (February 2002) speaks openly of "alleged perpetrators."

But accusations of a plot by the U.S. government are by no means limited to Muslim nations. Frenchman Thierry Meyssan states as much in *L'Effroyable imposture* (published in English as *9/11, The Big Lie*). He bases his suspicions among other things on reports that several of the nineteen alleged hijackers are still alive. He also doubts that flight 77 ever flew into the Pentagon. The proposal that a bomb or missile—not a plane—hit the Pentagon has been gaining popularity, especially with the appearance on the Internet of numerous photos of the Pentagon that seem to belie the impact of a plane.

Meyssan's theory has been under harsh criticism both in the United States and in France. One of his critics is compatriot Guillaume Dasquié, coauthor (with Jean Guisnel) of *L'Effroyable mensonge* (no English translation to date), which takes Meyssan to task on a number of messy details, such as the eyewitnesses of the crash at the Pentagon and the whereabouts of flight 77 and its passengers if there was no crash. Dasquié is perhaps eager to disprove Meyssan because he has his own conspiracy theory. In *Ben Laden: La Vérité interdite* (published in English as *Forbidden Truth*), coauthored with Jean-Charles Brisard, the theory is that the Bush administration had already been planning to invade Afghanistan before September 11 to build a natural gas pipeline and that it used the attacks as a front. Specifically, U.S. officials are said to have met with mediating Pakistani officials in July of 2001 to present an ultimatum to the Taliban: a carpet of gold (the pipeline) or a carpet of bombs.

Dasquié and Brisard also point out that both the Bush and Clinton administrations actively protected Bin Laden from investigations. For instance, FBI agent John O'Neill, who had been in charge of investigating Bin Laden in the 1990s, quit his post out of frustration in the summer of 2002 to become—ironically—security chief at the WTC. He died trying to save lives in the attack. O'Neill claimed he had been obstructed by colleagues trying to protect the oil interests of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, but the FBI claims that O'Neill was making too many enemies in the Arab world—and too many espionage mistakes.

In addition, Dasquié and Brisard document the failure of the United States to prosecute Osama Bin Laden: in March 1998, it was Libya's Gaddafi, not Clinton, who asked Interpol for the first international arrest warrant for Bin Laden. Gaddafi suspected fundamentalist Bin Laden of destabilizing Libya's moderate Muslim state—at the behest of the U.S. Interpol ignored the warrant, Dasquié and Brisard write. But even before that, in March 1996, the U.S. refused an offer by the government of Sudan to extradite Osama Bin Laden to the United States.

The similar theory that the U.S. government knew about the attacks beforehand and prepared to take advantage of them politically rather than prevent them has been gaining more ground inside the United States than the more far-fetched theory that the U.S. government is itself responsible for the attacks (the planes that flew into the WTC would then have been remote-controlled). While the former theory is far from proven, it at least seems to be supported by five widely accepted facts: there were warnings of upcoming attacks from U.S. allies (such as France and Egypt); the FBI itself had evidence but failed to "connect the dots"; the U.S. government has a long history of supporting Bin Laden and the Taliban; the Bush family has a history of business deals with the Bin Laden family; and the Bush administration was quick to make political capital of September 11, such as with the Patriot Act, which some claim was prepared in advance of the attacks.

Two websites have collected information and posed tough questions (almost all of which remain



unanswered to date) without themselves aiming to formulate a unified conspiracy theory. One is Canada's Centre for Research on Globalization (particularly Michel Chossudovsky, author of *War and Globalization, the Truth behind 9/11*), and the other is Germany's Telepolis (featuring in particular the work of Mathias Bröckers). Bröckers describes himself as an "anti-conspiracy theorist," believing that Bush has no idea who is behind September 11 and so invented the al Qaeda conspiracy to suit his purposes.

The unanswered issues include: Why was a plane able to penetrate the world's most heavily guarded no-fly zone at all, much less 50 minutes after the first plane hit the WTC and 80 minutes after air controllers reported it hijacked, which by law requires interceptor jets to be scrambled? Why are seven of the eight flight recorders irreparably damaged, though they are made to withstand such crashes? Why has the unusual volume of stock transactions (especially put-options) in the few days preceding 11 September 2001 not been traced back to its sources? And why has no one investigated the payment of \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta's account in Florida from Pakistan's Ahmad Omar Sheikh on behalf of Lt-Gen Mahmud Ahmad, former director of ISI (Pakistan's intelligence agency)? The *Times of India*, which originally reported the transaction on 9 October 2001, argued that a direct link between the ISI and the WTC attack would be of immense significance. Instead, researchers into September 11 note, not only has this matter not been investigated, but there was also no mention of Omar Sheikh's role in the transactions when he was later found guilty of murdering reporter Daniel Pearl and sentenced to death.

The list of unanswered questions is much longer, but the central unanswered question for conspiracy theorists is probably: why did George W. Bush personally limit investigations into all matters related to September 11 in January 2002? The official reason is that the available resources are to be used to fight the war on terrorism. But the Bush administration seems to be well versed in withholding resources, beginning with its refusal to disclose papers relating to its connections to the Enron scandal. And in October 2002,

U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Bob Graham, a Florida Democrat who is privy to the limited investigations into September 11, began calling for declassification of what he deemed to be most important information.

In late November 2002, Bush appointed Henry Kissinger (himself a familiar figure in conspiracy theories) to head the September 11 investigation commission, whose purpose according to the *New York Times* is to "help the administration learn the tactics and motives of the enemy," rather than to uncover mistakes on the part of the government or security agencies that might have prevented the attacks, a limit that is much to the chagrin of the families of September 11 victims. Within two weeks, however, Kissinger resigned from the commission, citing potential conflict of interests with his public relations work, details of which he was unwilling to disclose in the usual fashion.

At the time of writing, major newspapers in the United States are full of reports about how September 11 could have been prevented. At the end of October 2002, American ex-patriot novelist Gore Vidal published his conspiracy theory (in the British press) entitled "The Enemy Within," in which he points the finger at Bush Sr. and Jr. as well as Pakistan. But the most widely accepted "explanation" for September 11 within the United States is still sheer incompetence on the part of U.S. intelligence.

Craig Morris

**See also:** Domestic Terrorism; Kissinger, Henry.

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### Seventh Day Adventists

Seventh Day Adventism (SDA) is a form of Christianity whose theology is marked by an apocalyptic and at times conspiratorial tone. According to the Adventist Church itself, SDA is a worldwide community of over 8 million members, with millions of others regarding the church as their spiritual home. Doctrinally, SDA was formed from the interfaith Millerite movement of the 1840s. Importantly, it was during this period that much of U.S. Protestantism became pessimistic about the work of God and his followers on earth. The earth was thought to be a corrupt place in Satan's hands and thus the only hope lay in the apocalypse. Elements of this theology can be found in a number of movements, such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and their offshoot, the Branch Davidians.

Between 1831 and 1844, William Miller, a Baptist preacher and former army captain, launched the second-advent awakening. Based on his study of the prophecy of the Book of Daniel 8:14 ("It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be consecrated"), Miller calculated that Jesus would return to earth sometime between 1843 and 1844. Others within the movement calculated a specific date of 22 October 1844. When Jesus did not appear, Miller's followers experienced what came to be called the Great Disappointment. Most left him, but some concluded that 22 October had been correct and became convinced that the Bible prophecy predicted not the return of Jesus in 1844, but that he would begin at that time a special ministry in heaven for his followers. James and Ellen G. White and Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain, took on leadership roles in the newly formed Adventist Church. Ellen G. White became the spiritual counselor of

SDA for more than seventy years until her death in 1915. Early Adventists came to believe that she enjoyed God's special guidance, while Christian Protestant groups that denounce the Seventh Day Adventists believe they have placed Ellen G. White as a prophet, heretical to orthodox theology. In 1860, at Battle Creek, Michigan, the wide group Adventists chose the name Seventh Day Adventist and in 1863 formally organized a church body with a membership of 3,500.

The movement began to slowly spread through the rest of the world during the twentieth century. Since the early 1980s SDA has experienced much division, with groups splitting off, some known as "the remnant church," and perceived as more fundamentalist. Many outside these splinter groups believe in the conspiratorial theory that the remnant church is trying to dominate the world, but in turn that group believes that the rest of the world, including all other Protestants, will face the fires of hell and are part of a global conspiracy of evil, linked to the "New World Order." Some Christian groups are prepared to believe that SDA is a Christian church holding the core Christian doctrines, but others are convinced that it is a secretive and malevolent cult.

*Jason Lee*

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Millenarianism; Millerites; New World Order; Waco.

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### Shakur, Tupac

Conspiracy narratives pervaded the life, death, and art of rapper and film star Tupac (2Pac) Shakur (1971–1996). He was born into the black nationalist Shakur family in times of intense political activism. This was the golden age of political conspiracy, as Tupac's "parent culture" battled with the covert actions and government informers of the Nixon administration. His mother, Afeni, was one of the

famous Panther 21, tried for and acquitted of conspiring to blow up several New York department stores while pregnant with Tupac.

A wide assortment of conspiracy motifs punctuated Tupac's rap rhymes. His politically insurgent debut album *2Pacalypse Now* (1991) critiqued the racist and exploitative U.S. social order, particularly brutal and corrupt policing. Lamenting a perceived racial genocide of young black men, he raps, "one by one we are being wiped off the face of the earth" ("Words of Wisdom"). In 1995, he released his most critically acclaimed album, *Me Against the World*, pervaded by paranoid testaments and suicidal ruminations ("Death Around the Corner," "If I Die Tonight"). Here he explored the old paranoid adage that to be insane is the only sane response to a crazy world. In the year of his tragic murder, he produced his most conspiratorially redolent album: *Don Killuminati: The 7-Day Theory*, released under the stage-name "Makaveli." Here Tupac throws all sorts of plots into the mix, achieving an overblown, baroque conspiracist mode. The album cover depicts Tupac martyred on a cross, and the title marries religion and numerology ("7-Day Theory"), the Mafia ("don"), and ancient conspiratorial beliefs (the play on "Illuminati"). Taken together, Tupac's aesthetic gives expressive shape to the idea of "insecure paranoia" (Knight, 229), arising from the confounding complexities and inequalities of contemporary society marked by economic uncertainty and information overload.

Tupac was gunned down in Las Vegas in 1996, generating a fresh spate of conspiracy theories. Two theories predominated: Tupac was still alive and had only faked his own death to increase sales or to evade assailants; his murder was the result of an elaborate plot by the police, by his music industry rivals, or by his own record label, Death Row Records. Fueling the first of these theories was the macabre video for the single "I Ain't Mad at Cha," filmed one month before his death and endlessly rotated on MTV posthumously, portraying Tupac being shot and going to heaven. Influential hip-hop figure Chuck D entered the conspiratorial fray by posting "Thirteen Reasons Why Tupac Is Still Alive" on his website. These included the con-

tention that Tupac died on Friday the 13th (which is true), and that there was no autopsy (which is not). Despite the best efforts of fans, who tend to rewrite events when confronted with the sudden and premature death of their celebrity idols, the stark fact of Tupac's demise has become increasingly inescapable—aided by photos of the post-autopsy rapper published in Cathy Scott's book about his death. However, debate about those responsible for the star's murder continues to flourish, fueled by the likes of Nick Broomfield's recent ill-informed film *Biggie and Tupac* (2002), which—unpersuasively—points the finger for the slaying at Tupac's Death Row boss, Suge Knight.

Eithne Quinn

**See also:** African Americans; Cocaine; Illuminati; Nation of Islam.

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## Shays' Rebellion

The economic crisis that followed the American Revolution sparked a contraction of credit that hit poor frontier inhabitants particularly hard in the wake of shaky harvest seasons. To pay the war debt, creditors and collectors demanded specie—hard coin—instead of the inflation-prone paper money that had funded the revolution and provided debtors with reasonable means toward solvency. Backcountry economic systems, which predominantly functioned in networks of barter rather than cash exchange, could not readily accommodate the change. As western towns exercised only the weakest influence over the Commonwealth Assembly, direct action provided their only recourse against this imposition. Throughout the frontier, protestors

shut down courts, obstructed sheriffs and tax collectors, and at rare moments took up arms to defend their understanding of economic liberty against what they understood as a Federalist plot to impose a renewed economic and political hierarchy over a newly democratic land.

Drawing on colonial and revolutionary methods of popular protest, resistance to the renewed surge of debt enforcement and taxation spanned the new nation from South Carolina to Maine. While most historical accounts center on rare incidents of violence, the vast majority of this resistance proved entirely peaceable, centering on evading court appearances and obstructing sheriffs and tax men. One Pennsylvania town went so far as to erect a 4-foot-high “wall of stink” out of fifteen wagon loads of manure to defend their main road against officials (Bouton, 856)

The Regulator Movement that became known as “Shays’ Rebellion” provided a particular focal point for this struggle. Fearing a conspiracy to destabilize the new nation and the depredations of unruly “mobs,” political opponents of the resistance dubbed the western Massachusetts movement “Shays’ Rebellion” after Captain Daniel Shays, a Revolutionary War veteran who participated in the protests. Casting Shays as an insurgent leader provided the spin that the Massachusetts government needed to set off fears of despotism and rebellion against the Republic itself.

Neither led by Shays nor engaged in revolt against government, farmers organized in committees to coordinate what they termed a “Regulation” to defend the lands and liberties they claimed as a result of the Revolutionary War. In a society where basic political rights stemmed from economic independence (primarily in the form of freehold land), foreclosures and excessive tax demands seemed to threaten the core liberties of men and women who had fought long and hard for their independence. Regulators organized marches, harried magistrates and tax men, evaded summons, petitioned against the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, and held their own extralegal county conventions. These activities, in the making since Rev. Samuel Ely’s 1782 agitations against court and constitution, came to a head

in 1786 and 1787 with a coordinated series of attacks on debtors’ courts.

Organized in detail and conducted in large part by seasoned militia units, these aggressive protests brought national attention to the situation in western Massachusetts. Massachusetts governor James Bowdoin hired a private army to quell the disturbance, pitting poor easterners against poor westerners in an effort to restore order to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Republic at large. After a disastrous attempt to capture the federal arsenal at Springfield, the Massachusetts Regulator Movement disbanded, torn over questions about the use of force and facing an army ready to retaliate against future action. Realizing their fears of democracy and despotism, Federalists were provided by “Shays’ Rebellion” with the catalyst they needed to advance their plan of a more powerful centralized state. In May 1787, a collection of wealthy elites, called by private invitation, met behind closed doors and locked shutters to write a federal constitution designed, in part, to prevent such popular protest by “insur[ing] domestic tranquility.”

*James Carrott*

**See also:** Regulator Movement.

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#### Silver Shirts

The League of the Silver Shirts was an avowedly fascist and antisemitic paramilitary organization active in the United States in the period between the two world wars. Created in 1933 by William Dudley Pelley (1890–1965), a Vermont novelist, newspaper editor, and onetime Hollywood scriptwriter, its activities peaked before Pelley’s presidential bid of 1936, and had largely imploded by 1942 when Pelley was



imprisoned for sedition. Most of its membership was concentrated on the West Coast and in the Great Lakes region and numbered at most an estimated 15,000 members. The Silver Shirts stood for a corporatist and communitarian program that was modeled on Italian fascism. They also sympathized with German National-Socialism and envisioned the systematic eradication of Jewish power in finance, politics, and culture, and the eventual reorganization of the United States as a “Christian Commonwealth.”

To explain and legitimate their radical program, the Silver Shirts proffered various conspiracy theories and tried to produce an overarching, eclectic conspiracist synthesis. This conspiracist synthesis combined elements from various occult philosophies, from more traditional Christian millennialism, and from modern political, economic, and racist antisemitism.

For most of its members, the Silver Shirts’ conspiracism was cohered by the radically dualist worldview of Christian millennialism. This conception of historical time postulated a cosmic conspiracy by satanic forces of evil, a continual conflict between these forces and the Christian forces of good, and an ultimate millennial victory by the Christian side. Both of the two main types of Christian millennialism—pre- and postmillennialism—were interchangeably espoused by Pelley, who preached both an imminent victory over the cosmic anti-Christian conspiracy, presumably through the Silver Shirts’ militant agency, and a more distant, direct divine intervention to establish a millennial theocracy. Apparently rooted in Pelley’s own background as the son of an itinerant Methodist minister, the millennialist theme provided the Silver Shirts’ public doctrine its least controversial and most widely appealing dimension. It would also appear to have been the root of most of the Silver Shirts’ conspiracism, for the majority of the movement’s members came from traditional Christian Protestant backgrounds.

After an epiphanic out-of-body religious experience in 1928, however, Pelley radically decentered traditional Christian millennialism and refocused his own conspiracism through the influence of various occult speculations. These were gathered especially

from Great Pyramidism and spiritualism but also from Theosophism, Rosicrucianism, sexology, and telepathy. Pelley professed to have received direct “master messages” from Jesus, from various angelic beings, and later also from the founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, and he claimed that these messages had identified Jews and Communists as the primary actors of the millennial cosmic conspiracy and exposed them as reincarnated “demon” spirits. Spiritualist and Great Pyramidist influences provided Pelley’s speculations further fixity, of a type unavailable to traditional Christian millennialists. By their means Pelley came to calculate the precise future trajectories and timelines of the conspiracy’s unfolding and coming destruction. He settled eventually on 17 September 2001, as the moment of millennial victory and Jewish defeat.

The fairly uniform public political doctrine that was constructed out of these theoretical beliefs and proffered by the Silver Shirts during the 1930s obscured Pelley’s personal occult beliefs and emphasized his more consensually held forms of antisemitic conspiracism. Thus the Silver Shirts claimed that in the twentieth century the cosmic world conspiracy was embodied in the Illuminati, a secret society founded in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt and allegedly dominated by an inner core of Jewish conspirators. The Illuminati was portrayed as using socialist, Communist, and liberal movements—as well as finance capitalism, modernist religion, and the “lower” races—as its tools in the undermining “Christian” civilization that was to pave the way for its own global domination. Consequently, most of the Silver Shirts’ political effort was predicated on an attempt to defuse and destroy the most important, overt manifestations of the alleged conspiracy—the New Deal, the Federal Reserve, international communism, the League of Nations, and, above all, the purported financial, political, and cultural power of Jews of which all of these were alleged aspects.

One of a number of religious and political mass movements that in the 1930s assailed a putative Jewish world conspiracy, the League of the Silver Shirts was exceptionally driven by an eclectic, all-inclusive conspiracism. Despite its relatively small

numbers it played a significant role in molding extremist opinion in the 1930s, as was attested to by its suppression by the federal government. The impact of their leader Pelley on the ideology of such subsequent conspiracist and antisemitic movements as British-Israelism and Christian Identity was also considerable, and provided a posthumous influence that other similar movements of the interwar period could not equal.

*Markku Ruotsila*

**See also:** Antisemitism; Illuminati; Millenarianism.

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### Skolnick, Sherman

Sherman Skolnick reigns as the elder spokesperson of the conspiracy mindset. For many years, he held court at the River Flame restaurant outside of Chicago, Illinois, circulating information about current affairs that barely makes it onto the Internet, let alone the mainstream news. Although a paraplegic and wheelchair-bound since childhood, Skolnick has been exchanging information with friends and contacts since the 1960s. Since the River Flame days, he has developed an arsenal of alternative broadcasting outlets. He founded his Committee to Clean Up the Courts in 1963, and used it to mount a successful legal challenge to court corruption in Illinois. Skolnick began a news phone-line in 1971, and since 1992 has served as the producer and moderator of *Broadsides*, a Chicago-area, local access, cable-television talk show. The committee, the phone line, and the cable show all still exist, and,

even at advanced age, Skolnick shows no sign of slowing down.

Skolnick was first brought to national attention in the 29 August 1969 edition of *Time*, which included a photo of him being hoisted into a paddy wagon in his wheelchair. His offense had been a contempt citation in the aforementioned corruption proceedings, which successfully exposed influence-peddling involving two Illinois supreme court justices. The trial also launched the judicial career of John Paul Stevens, who headed a special commission to investigate Skolnick's claims, and now serves on the U.S. Supreme Court. Stevens has since resisted court rules limiting the petitioning rights of "in forma pauperis" litigants like Skolnick.

Almost immediately after the conclusion of the corruption case, however, Skolnick went on to investigate many other conspiracy-related facets of the court and U.S. political life. He was arrested again for violating a camera ban at the conspiracy trial of the Chicago 7. He ferreted out details of a pre-Dallas Kennedy assassination plot in Chicago, using documents uncovered by a black Secret Service agent named Abraham Bolden. In 1973 he demonstrated to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) that the probable reason for a crash at Chicago's Midway Airport was sabotage, aimed against the wife of E. Howard Hunt and eleven other Watergate figures. The NTSB nevertheless concluded that that the crash was an accident due to pilot error.

During the 1990s, Skolnick did extensive interviewing of individuals connected to the Inslaw affair, a scandal supposedly involving the theft by members of the Reagan administration of a high-tech tracking software known as PROMIS. Skolnick also unearthed a great deal of information on connections between business interests of George H. W. Bush and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. Although he has been criticized for allowing his work to be used by outlets such as the *Spotlight*, long seen as a crypto-fascist and antisemitic newspaper, rarely have the merits of his research work been challenged successfully. Skolnick remains a paradigm of the citizen-critic that many "conspiracy theorists" strive to become.

*Kenneth Thomas*

**See also:** Chicago 7; Watergate.

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## Skull and Bones Society

Including among its members both President George W. Bush and Monty Burns from *The Simpsons*, the Skull and Bones may be the most powerful and most mythologized secret society left in the twenty-first century United States. Known as "the Order" to its initiates and housed in a windowless crypt known as "the Tomb," the Skull and Bones is the oldest and most prestigious of Yale's secret societies. Each year since its founding by William H. Russell and Alphonso Taft in 1832, fifteen juniors are selected, or "tapped," to become members in their senior year. Given its almost frighteningly elite honor roll of members, and its long trail of rumors and exposés, the Skull and Bones has been said to run everything from the Bavarian Illuminati and the New World Order, to the CIA and the East Coast establishment. But whatever conspiratorial designs one wishes to believe about this quite real secret society, the Skull and Bones has long fulfilled its critical role of, in Ron Rosenbaum's words, "converting the idle progeny of the ruling class into morally serious leaders of the establishment."

### Secrets of "the Order"

It is said that members are required to leave the room if they are ever asked about the Skull and Bones. Nevertheless, lists of its most illustrious members are readily available. They include political leaders such as the only president to become chief justice of the Supreme Court, William Howard Taft; Franklin D. Roosevelt's secretary of war, Henry Lewis Stimson; and three members of the Bush clan: Prescott, George, Sr., and George W. Bush.

Yale has long been the center of CIA recruitment, and a large segment of America's foreign policy and intelligence establishment has been shaped by Bonesmen, including Kennedy's national security advisor McGeorge Bundy and his brother William, who was a leader of both the CIA and the Council on Foreign Relations; Hugh Cunningham, former director of Clandestine Services for the CIA; and Dino Pionzio, the CIA station chief in Chile during the overthrow of Salvador Allende. Skull and Bones members continue to be connected to every "insider" and potentially sinister international society, including the Bilderberg group and the Trilateral Commission. In the world of business, the Skull and Bones not only operates several major investment and law firms including Brown Brothers Harriman, but their members include Averell Harriman, Dean Witter, Harold Stanley, and Thomas Daniels, founder of ADM (a large agricultural company). Other prominent Bonesmen include Time-Life founder and media tycoon Henry Luce and conservative pundit William F. Buckley. Although its membership has been overwhelmingly of a WASP-Republican type, the Skull and Bones was open-minded enough to tap its first African American member in 1949; its first Jewish members in the 1950s; and includes among its members the gay, socialist literary critic F. O. Matthiessen, anti-Vietnam activist William Sloane Coffin, and novelist John Hersey (author of *Hiroshima* and *The Conspiracy*).

The rites of membership are among the Skull and Bones' most coveted secrets. It remains largely a matter of conjecture whether or not the tapped are forced to lie naked in a coffin, or what lies behind the "Mystery of 322" (322 is supposedly the society's magic number, and also the number of the room that forms the inner sanctum). Yet stories of the confessional and intensely intimate nature of the initiation rituals have been widely confirmed. Initiation is said to consist of marathon sessions in which members tell their new brothers their life stories and provide, in excruciating detail, a complete record of their most private sexual experiences. The contents of the Tomb itself are also a source of mystery: it is widely believed that Skull and Bones possesses the skulls of Geronimo (procured by Prescott Bush) and



Inside this windowless tomb on the Yale campus many current and future members of the American ruling class participate in a series of peculiar and still somewhat secret rituals to be inducted into the Skull and Bones, the oldest and most powerful secret society in America today. (Michael Cohen)

Pancho Villa, both of which have caused public controversy. Among the rumored perks of membership is a \$15,000, no-strings-attached gift, plus a promise that members will receive an income for life. For fun and relaxation of the most exclusive kind, the Skull and Bones maintains a members-only island resort in the St. Lawrence River that is the site of their annual retreats. But more than their undergraduate bonding in the crypt, the real benefits of membership in the Order come after graduation, through the society's vast network of connections and contacts within the U.S. ruling class. It is, of course, here that the Skull and Bones ceases to be an old and silly college fraternity and transmogrifies into what many believe to be a nearly omnipotent conspiracy.

### **Barbarians at the Gates**

The Skull and Bones may have many traditions that remain secret, but this is not due to a lack of trying

by curious and rebellious outsiders (referred to as "barbarians" by Bonesmen). The first "raid" of the Skull and Bones tomb occurred on 29 September 1876 when a small group, mockingly calling itself the "Order of the File and Claw," managed to break into the "sanctum sanctorum." Inside they found occult symbols, plenty of skulls and bones, portraits of the founders, and strange German slogans about death and such (from which John Birch Society types have concluded that the Skull and Bones is, in fact, the second house of the Bavarian Illuminati).

The second major rash of break-ins occurred nearly a century later as waves of radicalism and feminism swept over the Yale campus, leaving the impression that the Skull and Bones was simply a WASPish boys' club irreparably in decline. John Pogue, the writer and producer of the 2000 film *The Skulls*, claimed to have infiltrated the Tomb during his days as a Yale student in the 1980s. And in the latest violation of its sacred rituals, a team of students



armed with a night-vision camera and climbing equipment managed to capture videotape footage of the Skull and Bones' melodramatic initiation rites, filled with shrieking and mock violence in which a member dressed up as George W. Bush can be heard saying, "I'm gonna kill you like I did Al Gore!"

During George H. W. Bush's run for the presidency in 1988, Bob Woodward (a member of competing Yale secret society Book and Snake) managed to find several of Bush's fellow Bonesmen who were willing to talk openly about "the Order," including several (nonsexual) details of Bush's life-story confessions. These members revealed that one of the two men who were killed when Bush's plane was shot down in World War II was a member of Skull and Bones, and that Bush grieved deeply for years with this knowledge. As the first oil baron turned CIA director to become president, Bush could not shake the establishment aura of Yale and the Skull and Bones, and during his reelection bid in 1992, the reactionary-populist Pat Buchanan accused Bush of "running a Skull and Bones presidency."

However, no such slights or loose lips could be found when it came time for the New Haven-born Texan George W. Bush to make his bid for the White House. In one campaign interview, George W. refused to publicly admit that he was a member and claimed not to know if the society still existed. However, it is widely rumored around the Yale campus that George W. had his 1968 class of Skull and Bones as guests in the White House shortly after the inauguration to thank them for their assistance and their silence. One can only imagine what they might recall from his "bright college years."

In 1991 another break-in of sorts occurred when the Skull and Bones engaged in a semipublic debate over the admission of women. Given the highly sexualized nature of the initiation rituals and the masculine bonding that members believe gives the Order its cohesion and loyalty, many members bitterly opposed the inclusion of women. However, the Bonesmen finally voted to admit women, with an as yet unknown modification to their rites and rituals.

At the start of the twenty-first century, with a member in the White House, the Skull and Bones continues to recruit a mix of the well-bred (George

W.'s daughter Barbara is certain to be tapped) with the most forward thinking and brightest campus leaders, thereby continuing to fulfill its self-ascribed mission of reproducing the U.S. ruling class.

*Michael Cohen*

**See also:** Bush, George; Illuminati.

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**Slave Power**

During the antebellum period, northerners opposed to slavery feared that a small group of southern slaveholders was conspiring to gain control of the federal government and use it to further southern slaveholding interests. These northerners argued that the conspiracy sought to expand the South's political power at the expense of northern whites' liberties. The Republican Party, which developed during the tense sectional politics of the 1850s, made the fullest use of this argument. Its leading figures, such as Charles Sumner, William Seward, and Joshua Giddings, were among the most active proponents of the theory that a "Slave Power Conspiracy" existed in the South. Their arguments asserted that this conspiracy was committed to the defense of slavery and was an aristocratic relic in democratic America, one that failed to respect such basic rights as freedom of speech, assembly, the press, and conscience. From 1845 to 1860, the number of northerners who came to believe in the existence of the conspiracy increased considerably. Though there was no cabal of slaveholders who actually tried to assume control of the federal government, the words and actions of the men of the slaveholding southern states led many northerners to fear that such a conspiracy existed.

Fear of conspiracies had a historical precedent in the United States, and was one of the reasons why northerners gave credence to the Slave Power Conspiracy. They could refer to a number of conspiracy theories believed to have threatened republican liberties in America. During the colonial era, England had sought to deprive American colonists of their liberties. After the Revolution, there were charges

that the Bavarian Illuminati sought to subvert the American Republic. Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans traded allegations that the other party sought to sell out the new nation to either Great Britain or France. Burr's conspiracy of 1804, fear of Masonic subterfuge in the 1820s and 1830s, and the suspected designs of the Catholic Church were three more examples of alleged conspiracies in the midst of republican America (Davis, 3–31).

Antislavery northerners could not agree upon the number of southern members of the conspiracy. William Seward believed there were 350,000 southerners involved, but Gamaliel Bailey included all family members of slaveholders and thus came up with the figure of 2 million. Other proponents of the "Slave Power" theory included in the count northerners who had business relationships or political sympathies with the slaveholding South. Despite these varying estimates, all agreed that the political power of this conspiracy was considerable as it drew upon the wealthiest, most politically influential segment of southern society (Gienapp).

Members of the "Slave Power" shared a belief in several principles. First, they accepted the premise of the "positive good" argument about slavery, believing that slavery lifted the African out of savagery and heathenism and turned him into a Christian servant, cheerfully laboring for a kindly master who then cared for the slave in his declining years. Second, these slaveholders believed that they had a right to own the labor, as well as the bodies, of their slaves. Third, the slaveholders argued that slavery was legal and constitutional. They believed that nothing in the Constitution precluded the ownership of slaves; in fact, they asserted that the Constitution protected their ownership of slaves through the protection of private property afforded by the Fifth Amendment, which protects life, liberty, and property from state seizure without due process. They asserted that slavery was largely a state matter, regulated by individual states, which supported the institution through the creation of elaborate slave codes (Nye, 293).

### Origins of the Conspiracy

Abolitionists were the first group to make the charge that a "Slave Power" existed. Their postal campaign

of 1835, which sent abolitionist literature to southern slaveholders, and petition drives, which inundated Congress with abolitionist petitions, drew the immediate ire of southern whites. President Andrew Jackson instructed southern postmasters not to deliver this literature. In 1836, the House of Representatives, under pressure from southerners, adopted the "gag rule," which tabled without discussion all abolitionist petitions sent to that body. Protection of slavery superseded protection of First Amendment rights for northerners. Abolitionists began to publicize these attacks on the liberties of northern whites, and this proved to be an effective strategy that would pay dividends in later decades.

Though abolitionists began to use the concept of the "Slave Power" around 1835, some abolitionists and northern politicians went back to the beginning of the federal government to seek the origins of the "Slave Power." They discovered the roots of the problem in some of the compromises made at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. These compromises included the three-fifths clause, which gave the South additional political power; a provision for a fugitive slave law, later passed in 1793, which obligated northern states to return runaway slaves to their original states; and the twenty-year extension of the international slave trade until 1808 (Wilson 1872, 1: 39–56).

The Missouri Crisis of 1819–1821 reawakened fears of the expansion of slavery among many northerners. Missouri was part of the Louisiana Purchase and lay on the west bank of the Mississippi River, where it served as the gateway to the western territories. Northern concerns included the damaging effect of slavery on the free labor economy of the western territories, the preservation of western lands for white non-slaveholding men, the failure of the United States to live up to the ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the growth of southern political power, and the growing opposition to the institution of slavery. The Tallmadge Amendment, proposed by James Tallmadge, sought to ban the further importation of slaves into Missouri and to begin the process of gradual emancipation in that state. The Missouri Compromise of 1820, however, permitted Missouri

to form a state government without regard to slavery, but it also created a geographic line at 36°30' north latitude (the southern boundary of Missouri) above which slavery could not expand into the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase. It also admitted Maine into the union, thus preserving the sectional balance between free and slave states.

The next major event that contributed to the fear of a “Slave Power Conspiracy” was the Texas annexation issue of 1845. Texas had gained its independence from Mexico in 1836, but U.S. presidents had rebuffed Texans’ requests for annexation. Fear of war with Mexico and sectional discord at home over the slavery issue were the deciding factors in those decisions. There was an equal number of free and slave states in the Union, and Texas, which would be a slave state, threatened to disrupt this balance of power. John Tyler, hoping to win reelection in 1844, used the issue of Texas annexation as a political tool. His reelection bid failed, but Texas entered the Union as a slave state in 1845. Some extreme northerners, such as John Smith Dye, charged that John C. Calhoun led the plot to annex Texas, and when President William Henry Harrison refused to assent to the plan, the president died of an illness that resembled arsenic poisoning. Calhoun claimed Tyler, the recently inaugurated vice-president, was fully in agreement with Calhoun’s plan, pointing to the fact that Tyler appointed Calhoun secretary of state and several years later, Texas was a slave state. However, this interpretation left out two key points: first, the United States had long sought Texas, and second, the United States feared that Great Britain might form an alliance with Texas, a diplomatic move that would have derailed the expansionist goals of Manifest Destiny (Dye cited in Davis, 7–8).

The annexation of Texas helped pave the way for a war with Mexico, a war that antislavery northerners believed to be motivated by southern slaveholders bent on the acquisition of more territory for slavery south of 36°30'. During this war, David Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, proposed an amendment to a spending bill that demanded that slavery not be permitted to spread into any territories that the United States might acquire from Mexico. The amendment, known as the Wilmot Proviso, attracted

great support among northern Democrats and Whigs, and passed in the House of Representatives, thanks to a northern majority in that chamber. The amendment died in the Senate, where the two sections enjoyed parity. The Wilmot Proviso thus went the way of the Tallmadge Amendment, supported in the House but rejected in the Senate. Antislavery northerners chalked up this defeat to southern political power aided by its northern allies.

### **The Growing Threat of “Slave Power”**

Out of the Mexican War came the Mexican Cession, which gave the United States a massive addition of land in the southwest and along the Pacific coast. When the territory of California asked to be admitted into the Union as a free state in 1850, southerners feared the loss not only of valuable territory but also of political power. California’s entry into the Union would tilt the balance of power in the Senate in the North’s favor and fierce debates erupted in Congress. Out of the sectional bitterness emerged the Compromise of 1850, which allowed California to become a free state and also resulted in a new Fugitive Slave Law. This law concerned many northerners because it placed the national government in the position of aiding the recapture of fugitive slaves. Federal marshals could require any northerner to aid in a search for runaway slaves, without regard to northern citizens’ feelings about slavery. The law also stripped the accused fugitive of the rights of habeas corpus, trial by jury, and testifying on his or her own behalf. Abolitionists used these features of the law to argue their case to good effect, warning that what happened to the accused fugitive slaves could happen to free white men. They also warned that slaveholders wished to spread slavery throughout the nation and the Americas.

In the 1850s, many antislavery northerners grew concerned about growing ties between southern expansionists and the national government and the possible addition of new slave states to the union. One such example of these close ties was the Ostend Manifesto (1854). Three U.S. ministers met in Ostend, Belgium, and issued this manifesto, which declared that Spanish claims to Cuba were unnatural and that Spain ought to sell the island to the

United States. The manifesto asserted that the United States should seize Cuba if it failed in its efforts to purchase it from Spain. At this time there were also several efforts led by southern filibusters to establish U.S. control over Cuba and Nicaragua. Fears of presidential support for these ventures were greatly exaggerated, as the actions taken by the administrations of Presidents Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan to disavow them or to halt filibustering expeditions attested (May).

Northern fears of southern expansionism were not limited to overseas activities. There was even greater concern that slavery would spread to the western territories. When Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1853, which would create territories through which a transcontinental railroad would be constructed, he needed southern support in order to win its passage. Douglas seized upon the idea of popular sovereignty, which allowed the residents of a territory to determine if it would be slave or free. Since the territories in question lay north of the Missouri Compromise line, Douglas's proposal meant the repeal of the 1820 line. The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed Congress in 1854, but led to increased fear of the existence of the "Slave Power Conspiracy."

Both North and South sent settlers to Kansas, the territory most likely to become a slave state, to determine the territory's free or slave status. After a fraudulent ballot, in which Missouri "border ruffians" illegally cast ballots, a proslavery government began in Lecompton. Under the proslavery constitution, men who espoused antislavery opinions lost their right to vote, while supporters of slavery from outside the territory could vote, as long as they swore to support the Fugitive Slave Law and the Kansas-Nebraska Act and paid a dollar on election day. Newspapers that opposed slavery committed a felony and their editors faced imprisonment, while the death penalty awaited those who helped slaves escape (Cairnes, 229–230). Free-state Kansans established a rival government in Topeka and during the ensuing impasse, Kansas descended into a civil war. Proslavery forces "sacked" the free-state town of Lawrence in May 1856, an action widely reported in northern newspapers sympathetic to the new Republican Party, whose stated

goal was to halt the western expansion of slavery in the territories. These accounts strengthened the conviction that the Slave Power was at work, attempting to spread slavery into Kansas by any means possible.

Additional evidence of the willingness of the "Slave Power" to use violence to defend slavery occurred that same week in Washington when Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina assaulted Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. Sumner had spoken against the outrages in Kansas, slavery, and the defenders of slavery, including Senator Andrew Butler, Brooks's uncle. Brooks hit Sumner on the head with a cane several times and inflicted serious injuries that kept Sumner from his Senate duties for two and a half years. Southern newspapers and popular opinion defended this attack. These defenses prompted renewed fears in the North that the civil liberties and physical safety of slavery's opponents were in grave peril.

#### **From the *Dred Scott* Case to Secession**

In 1857, the Supreme Court decided the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. The court decided that Dred Scott, a slave from Missouri, could not sue because he was not a citizen, and that blacks could never be citizens, that slaves were constitutionally protected property, and therefore that Congress could not regulate or restrict slavery in the territories. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 and popular sovereignty were declared unconstitutional and thus the case opened the way for the expansion of slavery throughout the territories. Many Republicans accused President James Buchanan, who had discussed the case with several justices before his inauguration, and the Supreme Court of conspiring with the Slave Power to bring about this outcome. This conclusion was untrue as the Supreme Court was bitterly divided over the case and Buchanan's remarks about the impending decision were typed before he spoke with the justices at his inauguration (Potter, 287–289). Notwithstanding, many northerners now feared that the next step of the Supreme Court would be to strike down northern state laws that forbade slavery's existence, thus nationalizing slavery.

Buchanan became the focus of another struggle involving the "Slave Power" in 1858 when he pre-



sented the Lecompton Constitution to Congress and defended it as the will of the people of Kansas. Voters in Kansas had overwhelmingly rejected the proposed constitution, but Buchanan asserted that Kansas was a slave state and that free-state forces were disloyal. To deny Kansas admission to the union as a slave state, he asserted, would anger the South. Republicans denounced Buchanan as a willing tool of the “Slave Power,” and charged that southerners sought a slave state to counterbalance California and restore a sectional balance of power. In the end, with the aid of Stephen Douglas, Congress rejected the Lecompton Constitution. Kansas would eventually join the Union as a free state during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

In the late 1850s, strong sentiment for reopening the African slave trade emerged in the cotton-producing states of the Deep South. Supporters of this movement claimed that the 1808 prohibition was unconstitutional and a response to northern anti-slavery fanaticism. Defenders of this policy argued that additional slaves would give the South greater political power in the House of Representatives, where the three-fifths clause held sway, and restore a sectional balance of power (Cairnes, 239–245).

The last great act of the “Slave Power” was secession from the Union, beginning with South Carolina on 20 December 1860. Slaveholders feared that the new Republican administration of President Lincoln, elected in 1860, would embrace an abolitionist policy toward slavery in the South. What began as an effort to protect slavery from government interference ended in failure as the Confederacy lost the Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment put an end to slavery and fears of a “Slave Power.”

*James C. Foley*

**See also:** Anti-Masonic Party; Brown, John; Burr, Aaron; Fugitive Slave Act; Illuminati.

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## Slave Revolts

Although there is disagreement among scholars about the actual level of rebelliousness among slaves, most agree that during the slaveholding era there

was widespread white fear about slave revolts. Looking at similar time periods and using remarkably similar definitions of what constitutes a slave conspiracy (more than one conspirator involved, freedom as the motivating factor, and contemporaneous recognition of the conspiracy as a conspiracy), scholars have come up with widely varying numbers of historical instances of revolts throughout U.S. history. While one historian claims to have found records of “approximately two hundred and fifty revolts and conspiracies” (Aptheker, 162), another asserts that only nine major insurrections occurred (Blassingame, 125).

However, while people might disagree about how many slave conspiracies actually occurred, almost everyone agrees that the fear of such revolts was almost universal in the United States. This is because slave insurrections had more impact on U.S. culture as an idea—“If slaves in Charleston can burn down homes and kill their masters, what is to stop them from doing it here in Savannah?”—than as actual events. Although tragedies for all involved personally—both white and black—slave conspiracies in the United States were fairly limited in the scope of their activities. All of them were quickly contained by the better-armed, better-equipped white slavocracy. Like all conspiracies, then, U.S. slave revolts had greater potential energy than kinetic energy. The number of people affected by the paranoia of slave conspiracy was far greater than those ever personally affected by the actual violence of those conspiracies. This anxiety permeating the United States before 1865 certainly makes slave conspiracies one of the most significant cultural phenomena of pre-Civil War America.

Looking at the entire history of slave revolts in the United States, it is easy to generalize some conditions that proved fecund ground for the development of slave conspiracies. These certainly aren't the only historical circumstances responsible for the development of insurrections. They each, however, contributed significantly to the development of an atmosphere that allowed many slaves to dream of freedom through conspiratorial means.

The first condition involves the number of black citizens in the community that were not slaves. For

slave owners, free blacks and maroons—runaway slaves who lived in nearby swamps, mountains, or other inaccessible areas—were the greatest dangers for fostering slave unrest. The presence of free blacks in the community gave slaves a reason to continue to hope and strive toward freedom. They also often served as a resource for conspiracies in terms of weapons, money, or sanctuary. Escaped slaves often created maroon communities where runaway slaves could find a home. Often these communities could exist for years hidden in hard-to-reach areas. Such havens were beacons of hope for would-be slave conspirators, serving not only as potential sanctuary but also as additional fighting forces when the time for insurrection came.

Another condition that the slavocracy feared was a disproportionate growth in the black population compared to the white population. As the South began to produce crops—cotton, sugar, and tobacco—that made slavery more profitable, more slaves meant more profit. However, this led to a larger growth in the black population compared to the whites of many southern communities. The anxiety on the part of white Southerners living in counties where they were outnumbered by their black slaves cannot be overestimated. Such superiority of numbers also gave many slave conspirators hope that they might succeed where so many had failed.

A third condition that greatly increased the potential for slave conspiracies was economic downturns. When the economy worsened, the slave owners had to tighten their collective belts, and one of the first places that they would cut their expenses was the money they spent on and for their slaves. Consequently, people who never had much at the best of times had even less food and clothing and had to work harder. This periodic worsening of conditions often turned slaves into conspirators looking for an escape.

Another cultural condition that encouraged slave insurrections was the circulation of a revolutionary rhetoric in the public sphere. While often unrelated specifically to the situation of U.S. slaves, such discourse served as a spark to start many conspirators thinking of freedom. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw an explosion of revolu-

tionary thought completely reevaluating the fundamental rights of all people, resulting most famously in the American and French Revolutions. This new discourse of freedom and equality obviously spoke eloquently to slaves in bondage. As the American community as a whole pulsed with such talk, slaves expected to see their own situations improve. Hadn't Jefferson said, "All men are created equal"? Such discourse was followed by successful slave revolts in the Caribbean and Latin America, most spectacularly in Haiti. This news of successful slave conspiracies in addition to the general discourse of revolution certainly gave inspiration to many unsuccessful conspirators in the United States.

Last, slave revolts relied upon sympathetic whites as a resource. These whites were in a position to provide much to nascent conspiracies, including weapons and the hope that some of the white community would support the freedom of the conspiring slaves. While there is a danger of oversimplification to generalize about the motivations of these white supporters of slave revolts, some interesting similarities do suggest themselves. Most of them were poor southerners who apparently saw slavery as an act of class warfare as much as an act of racism. George Boxley, a Virginian, is a good example of this phenomenon. In 1816, he helped foster a slave revolt and actively took part in the violence. According to an official at the time, Boxley had openly declared that "the distinction between the rich and the poor was too great" and this was his motivation for the insurrection (Aptheker, 255). George Boxley and other white conspirators in slave revolts suggest a very interesting reading of slavery as a battle between the rich and the poor instead of the whites and the blacks, a reading that seems to have largely fallen out of post-Civil War discourse about slavery.

Faced with these numerous slave insurrections, how did the white slavocracy respond to these threats? It deployed many tools to help maintain the status quo, some of them more obvious and violent than others. The first weapon deployed by slave owners at any sign of conspiracy was a show of force. The most obvious and most direct form of white control over slaves was physical. Chains prevented movement of suspected slave conspirators and nooses,

whips, and other devices wrote the white power directly on the bodies of slaves for all would-be conspirators to read. There was no doubt what would happen to failed slave revolutionaries. Another form of that force was state-sponsored: the military. Every patrol, every fort, every militia showed slaves that their owners were not the only ones concerned with maintaining the status quo of slavery. The state itself in the form of military bodies patrolled to control possible slave rebellions.

Another way in which the state showed its participation in maintaining slavery was its passage of innumerable laws that regulated every conceivable activity in which slaves might participate. With every major slave conspiracy that was discovered, more laws would be passed, attempting even stricter control of the lives of slaves. Almost as soon as the military was dispatched the legislature of the state facing the conspiracy would go to work, crafting laws to further control the movements of free blacks, limiting the importation of slaves, increasing the penalties for rebellion, and further curtailing the movements of slaves off of their master's property. In this way, the state attempted to contain slave conspiracy through sword and pen.

A third method of attempting to derail slave revolts was by creating dissension within the black community itself. In order to create divisions among the slaves, slave owners created different classes within slave society. They did this by treating male slaves differently from female slaves; by treating house slaves differently from field hands. By making some slaves the personal servants of their masters, often from an early age, they could create a more intimate bond between the servant and master. This proved very successful since the personal servants of whites often proved the downfall of slave conspiracies by informing on nascent insurrections.

A fourth approach the slavocracy took to control slave insurrections was to attempt to control the ratio of blacks to whites in any given community. White slave owners considered a disproportionate growth in the black versus the white population as one of the greatest dangers to inspire would-be conspirators, and so they attempted to limit that ratio to ensure that blacks never became too big a percentage of the

overall population. One way they attempted this was by promoting recolonization plans for free blacks. While returning blacks to Africa might seem to be a movement inspired by abolitionists, it actually was embraced by southern slave owners who saw it as a way to remove free blacks from their communities and thereby remove potential conspirators from their midst. Various states—even southern ones—also enacted laws to limit the importation of slaves, thus hoping to limit the numbers of the black population. The slavocracy also promoted all plans for the national annexation of land such as Florida or Louisiana. The South was a huge supporter of the Mexican War, for example, because it hoped to dilute the high concentration of potential conspirators in its midst. By shipping off enough slaves to any newly acquired areas, slave owners hoped to water down the black population proportionate to the white population and thus discourage insurrection.

Last, the slavocracy hoped to control future slave conspiracies by limiting the public discussion of any past conspiracies. Fearing copycat conspiracies, southern states radically limited publication of stories of slave revolts. Because of this official censorship, it is extremely difficult for current-day scholars to know how many conspiracies actually existed and how many insurrections occurred. Although public discussion of these events was officially discouraged—except after the violence of Nat Turner's Rebellion—many accounts of these slave conspiracies are found in private venues—letters and diaries, for example.

Why did slave revolts have some dramatic successes in other parts of the Americas—Latin America and the Caribbean—while slave conspirators in the United States never succeeded? There are at least four reasons that allowed Toussaint L'Ouverture's Haitian insurrection to succeed while Nat Turner's Virginia rebellion failed. First, there were greater numbers of potential conspirators in Latin America and the Caribbean compared to slave owners than in the United States. The ratio of black to white was as high as 7 to 1 in the British West Indies, 11 to 1 in Haiti, and 20 to 1 in Surinam. This huge disparity in numbers was a weapon that slaves in the United States never had. While disparate numbers in population growth was a danger sign for slave owners

in the South, they never had to worry about such odds. Second, nineteenth-century Latin America didn't have the infrastructure for transportation and communication that the United States did. On top of this, most Latin American plantations had even closer proximity to dense jungles, impenetrable swamps, and unassailable mountains for runaway slaves to hide in. Thus their problems with maroon communities and isolation made their situation much more dangerous than that of the slavocracy of the United States. Third, unlike the United States, both regions had a chronic shortage of a military presence. This made it nearly impossible to impress the slaves with the power and ubiquity of a state-supported slavocracy in Latin America. Consequently, would-be conspirators there were more emboldened by this lack of a show of force. Last, since a slave conspiracy never succeeded in the United States, potential conspirators always had to face a history of futility when planning their rebellions. This might well have stopped many potential conspirators from joining the ranks of rebels.

Riley Vann

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### Smith, Gerald L. K.

From the 1940s until his death in 1976 Gerald Lyman Kenneth Smith was one of the most outspoken and prolific antisemitic conspiracy theorists in the United States. Smith stands out, not so much for the originality, quality, or even the consistency of his ideas, but rather for his ability to communicate them.

Born in Pardeeville, Wisconsin, in 1898, Smith was the scion of a fundamentalist Christian family who adhered to a literal interpretation of the Bible based upon the New Testament. After graduating from university in 1922, Smith became a preacher and, following a meteoric rise through a succession of ministries in the Midwest, arrived in Shreveport, Louisiana, during the 1929 Stock Market Crash. Thereafter Smith rose to prominence as the charismatic chief lieutenant to Huey P. Long, the demagogic governor of Louisiana, on whose behalf he ran the Share Our Wealth organization, which gave him access to its 200,000-strong mailing list, his most vital asset in future years. However, when Long was assassinated in 1935, Smith proved incapable of rallying his political legacy.

Shedding his populist support for the New Deal, Smith became increasingly led by antisemitic conspiracy theories, veering rightward and fiercely criticizing President Roosevelt. In 1937 Smith formed the Committee of One Million as a vehicle for his alternative brand of Christian “Americanism.” By 1942 the organization had brought Smith 3 million followers and an impressive range of influential and wealthy backers, including Henry Ford, who shared his analysis of the impending danger of “Jewish Communism,” which mirrored that of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. As his admiration for Nazism grew, Smith briefly joined William Dudley Pelley’s Silver Shirts. He was also associated with Dr. Francis Townsend and Father Charles E. Coughlin, the antisemitic “radio priest,” with whom he founded the Union Party and which made him a truly national figure. However, Smith was expelled from the party in 1942 because of his allegedly disruptive behavior. That same year Smith went public with the “call” he had received to save Christian America from the “enemies of Christ.”

Smith’s obstreperous support of the Dies Committee’s investigation of “un-American” activities ensured that, unlike many less prominent antisemites, he escaped indictment during the Grand Sedition Trial in 1944. Unscathed, Smith reemerged after the war at the head of the Christian Nationalist Party (CNP), envisaged as a continuation of the isolationist America First Party upon whose founder, Captain Earl Southard, Smith had exerted considerable influence. The CNP was complemented by the formation in 1947 of his personal vehicle, the Christian Nationalist Crusade (CNC), whose mouthpiece, *Cross and Flag*, drew upon the Committee of One Million’s all-important subscription lists. Smith’s tireless evangelizing was remarkably successful in weaving together Judaism, communism, and civil rights as part of one vast conspiracy, which he traced back to the Order of the Illuminati. However, while this gave the politics of McCarthyism an added antisemitic dimension, Smith never regained his prewar stature.

Although he continued his wide-ranging correspondence with many public figures, his antisemitism, not to mention his personal idiosyncrasies, had effectively pushed him beyond the pale. His once powerful voice continued to be muted by the American Jewish Committee’s (AJC) policy of “dynamic silence,” which effectively smothered his access to the media by depriving him of publicity. Smith retired to Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in the late 1960s where, despite the objections of the AJC, he built a religious theme park centered upon a seven-story statue of Jesus, Christ of the Ozarks. Smith died and was buried at the foot of this crumbling edifice in 1976, the title of his posthumously published autobiography, *Besieged Patriot*, an unconscious commentary on his subsequent descent into political oblivion.

However, despite this litany of personal failure his longevity ensured that Smith provided a formative influence for successive generations of far-right activists whose influence continues to resonate today. Having moved to Los Angeles in 1953 Smith, the CNC, and its youth movement became the organizational focus for a burgeoning clique of Christian Identity preachers centered in Southern

California. Paradoxically derived from some elements of philosemitic British Israelitism, the vehemently antisemitic theology of Christian Identity believes that Christians, not Jews, are God's "chosen people," the true descendants of Abraham, while Jews are viewed as the literal "seed of Satan" descended from Cain, the progeny of an unholy union between Eve and Satan in the Garden of Eden. At a stroke, world history became the titanic struggle between two diametrically opposed bloodlines representing good and evil, Aryan and Jew, God and the Devil.

While Smith played a prominent role in popularizing Christian Identity and linking it to political extremism, he was not responsible for the antisemitic perversion of British Israelite theology. This had occurred earlier under the influence of Howard Rand and William J. Cameron, the latter the editor of Henry Ford's infamous *Dearborn Independent*. Smith's importance for the evolution of Christian Identity is to be judged not by his ideas, but by the coherence of the sophisticated modern propaganda network that he bestowed upon its adherents. Indeed, many influential Christian Identity preachers like Wesley Swift, who often accompanied Smith on his speaking tours and acted as his bodyguard, first achieved prominence through CNC-sponsored Bible lectures. This ideological transmission traveled both ways and Swift appears to have had a powerful reciprocal influence on Smith, whom he introduced to the fundamental "truth" of Christian Identity. In this respect Smith held a position of pivotal importance, forming a personal and ideological bridge between the traditions of Depression-era antisemitism and the violent neo-Nazi groups of the 1970s like Aryan Nations and the Christian Defense League, whose leaders saw themselves as heirs to Swift's ministry and, by implication, to that of Smith himself.

*Graham D. Macklin*

**See also:** Coughlin, Father Charles; Ford, Henry; Illuminati; Long, Huey; *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Silver Shirts.

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### Society of the Cincinnati

The Society of the Cincinnati was founded in May 1783 as an association of veteran Revolutionary War officers; it quickly became the focus of a conspiracy theory in which the society was accused of trying to establish a hereditary aristocracy in the United States. In spring 1783, the last months of the existence of the Continental Army, a group of officers surrounding Major General Henry Knox and Major General Friedrich von Steuben planned a way to continue the friendship and solidarity of Revolutionary War commanders in peacetime. The aim was twofold: first of all, Knox and the others envisioned a mutual aid and benefit association, which could help impoverished members as well as the widows and orphans of deceased comrades. Second, the officer corps had important political interests in common: Congress had promised to convert officers' pensions into a lump sum equal to five years' pay, a policy known as commutation. However, the precarious financial situation of the United States made the payment of commutation dubious, a problem that had already figured prominently in the so-called Newburgh conspiracy. Many officers supported the formation of a stronger national government that was more likely to be able to honor its obligations. As a result, the planned association of veteran officers could also function as a political pressure group.

Knox and the others chose as their patron Cincinnatus, a Roman general who had briefly assumed dictatorial power only to return to his plow as quickly as possible. They planned a Society of the Cincinnati on the federal level as well as state societies, annual meetings, a badge of honor, the possibility of admitting foreign and honorary members,

and the continuation of membership through the oldest male descendant. In its early months, the society was virtually unknown to the general populace, but officers joined in large numbers and state societies were founded, including a French society. George Washington, although uninvolved with the organization of the society, was elected its president. On the state level, typically the highest-ranking officer from the state line became the society's leader. On the whole, the Cincinnati were quite successful at organizing veteran officers from the various states, making the society one of the very few associations existing in the entire United States.

Both the political and the organizational aspects of the society came under attack throughout the 1780s. American tradition, especially in the wake of the Revolution, included a deep distrust of standing armies, special privilege, and aristocracy; the Cincinnati seemed to include elements of all three. In New England, extralegal conventions protested commutation as a policy designed to privilege a specific class of citizens over others; the society became the focal point of these accusations. In South Carolina, Judge Aedanus Burke published a widely read pamphlet that described the society as a nascent nobility. While Burke acknowledged the heroism of the veteran officers, he feared that their descendants would be less virtuous and eventually constitute an aristocracy that would doom republican government. A conspiracy theory emerged that saw the Cincinnati as a group bent on gaining special financial privileges through commutation; forming an aristocracy through the rule of descent, connected to the nobility of Europe through the membership of foreign officers like Steuben and the French society; meeting annually to make political decisions, and then enforcing those decisions through political influence and implicit military power. In short, the Cincinnati were seen as the nucleus of a secret government, operating outside republican rules, to the benefit of the few and the detriment of the many.

### **The Cincinnati and the Constitution**

To combat these allegations, Washington—spurred on by criticism from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams—convinced the society to drop the heredi-

tary clause and honorary memberships, and put their funds under the control of the state legislatures in 1784. This measure temporarily quieted criticism, but the topic soon flared up again. In 1787, the Cincinnati were suspected of fomenting Shays' Rebellion only to put it down, in order to impress upon the populace the need for a stronger national government. That same year, the annual meeting of the society took place in Philadelphia, at the same time and city as the Federal Convention that drafted the Constitution. Given Washington's position as president of the Cincinnati and chairman of the Federal Convention, and the fact that several delegates were also members of the society, there was ample room for suspicions. During the debates about the ratification of the Constitution, radical Anti-Federalists repeatedly charged that the new political system was the work of the Cincinnati, a new attempt to establish an aristocracy in the United States, with the presidency as a transitional institution that would eventually lead to monarchy. Similar accusations were voiced when members of the society became involved in settling the Ohio territory (and the subsequent founding of the settlement Cincinnati); critics saw this as the genesis of a new nation ruled by the society.

On the whole, the accusations against the Cincinnati were largely unfounded. During the tempestuous 1780s, radical members might well have wished for a monarchy, possibly with Washington as king, to impose political order. However, the society never pursued any such policies, especially as Washington himself was adamantly opposed to anything that might threaten civilian, republican government. While most Cincinnati strongly supported the new Constitution, there were also members among Anti-Federalist leaders, most notably governor George Clinton of New York. Similarly, during the first party system, most Cincinnati tended toward the Federalists, but there were also many among the Jeffersonian Republicans. If the society furnished the largest part of the new national army's officer corps, this was only to be expected and had little political effect. Even when Congress debated the fate of commutation certificates in 1790, the society did not make a strong lobbying effort on behalf of its members.

Consequently, the accusations against the society largely faded away at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even though by that time most state societies had reverted to the formerly controversial succession by heredity. The Society of the Cincinnati nearly faded during the first half of the nineteenth century, but experienced a revival after 1854 and exists to the present. The conspiracy theory can still be encountered, but usually as a bit of conspiracy trivia rather than a full-fledged theory.

*Markus Hünemörder*

**See also:** Anti-Federalists; Constitution, U.S.; Newburgh Conspiracy; Shays' Rebellion.

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### Spotlight

Originally known as the *National Spotlight*, for much of its existence the *Spotlight* was the most important conspiracist publication in the United States. Established by Willis Carto, whose involvement in the U.S. Right goes back to the mid-1950s, the paper was launched in 1975 and appeared for just over a quarter of a century. Its contents ranged widely but a number of themes were particularly evident. One was an indictment of the banking system, in which the creation of the Federal Reserve immediately before World War I was seen as the work of America's enemies, while one of its more unusual concerns focused on what might be termed "fringe" or alternative medicine. A cure for cancer, it declared, had been discovered but this breakthrough was being suppressed by the Rockefeller family. Amidst the different conspiracies that the paper sought to expose, the most important involved the activities of a series of international organizations. In late 1994, for instance, it published a supplement that suggested the United States was about to be occupied by troops under United Nations control. Other subjects of the paper's attentions included the activities of the Trilat-

eral Commission and its particular bête noire, the Bilderberg Group.

None of these concerns was unique to the *Spotlight*, but by the beginning of the 1980s the paper had achieved a circulation of some 300,000. In the 1990s, however, this had fallen to some 90,000, a decline that was particularly connected with its denunciation of the Reagan government as a tool of the Trilateral Commission. If its base among conservatives was substantially lost during the Reagan years, it found support instead among the Patriot movement, and in the 1990s was a key publicist for the militias. This did not preclude an involvement in electoral politics, and while during the 1990s it supported the Populist Party (whose 1988 presidential candidate was the former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke), it subsequently supported the presidential candidacies, first for the Republican Party, then the Reform Party, of the "America First" conservative, Pat Buchanan.

While conspiracy theory is often seen as inherently antisemitic, Patriots vary greatly as to how they explain the plot against the United States. One of the secrets of the *Spotlight's* success was not only the diversity of its conspiratorial interests but also its downplaying of the overt racism of some other far-right publications. But the paper's claim that Israeli intelligence had been involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy was only one indication of the underlying basis of its arguments. This was even more evident in Carto's creation in the late 1970s of the Institute for Historical Review, an organization that rapidly became the central force in Holocaust revisionism. It was singularly appropriate, then, that the paper's support for Holocaust denial should lead to its demise. In 1993, disputes over the whereabouts of a bequest led to a breach between Carto and key members of the staff of the Institute for Historical Review, and the ultimate result of the legal actions that followed was the closing down of the *Spotlight* in the summer of 2001. A successor publication, *American Free Press*, quickly emerged.

*Martin Durham*

**See also:** Bilderbergers; Holocaust, Denial of; Liberty Lobby; Trilateral Commission.



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## Stamp Act

The Stamp Act was a tax on a variety of print material, legal documents, dice, and playing cards intended to raise an estimated £60,000 to pay the costs of housing British troops stationed in North America to provide for colonial defense. George Grenville, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer under King George III from 1763 until 1765, called for its enactment as part of a larger plan for more effectively managing Great Britain's North American territories. Grenville announced his intention to levy a stamp tax on the American colonies in March 1764 and indicated that they had one year to post their objections. Although some opposed the measure, Grenville did not expect any sort of widespread opposition to the tax. Consequently, Parliament passed the measure with little debate or opposition on 22 March 1765, but the measure did not go into effect until 1 November 1765. Yet, from this innocuous beginning, the American colonists quickly interpreted Grenville's call for a stamp tax as part of a vast conspiracy to deny the colonists their basic rights as Englishmen and to economically enslave them.

Two events led to the passage of the Stamp Act: the debt crisis caused by the Seven Years' War and a Native American uprising in the Great Lakes region and Ohio River Valley led by an Ottawa chieftain named Pontiac. The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) was fought between Great Britain and France for control of North America; this war led to British domination in North America with the exception of New Spain—the territory west of the Mississippi River. The war left Britain with a large debt and a new North American empire to manage—both of which required additional revenues. After waging a long war against the French for control of the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys, Britain had to face another crisis. Chief Pontiac and his followers launched a series of strikes that led to the loss of almost every fort west of Niagara within a few weeks. The systematic Native American effort targeting British forts began tapering off in 1764, and hostilities formally ceased when Pontiac surrendered to the British in July 1766. Pontiac's rebellion highlighted the need for more effective management of the colonial settlements in America as well as the need to bolster colonial defense; the uprising also gave an added sense of urgency to Parliament's need to secure additional revenue through the Stamp Act.

Grenville started to implement a comprehensive plan to address the emerging imperial crisis developing in America. To prevent future Native American uprisings, Grenville sought to adjust colonial boundaries in North America, which basically meant to separate the English colonists from Native American tribal lands. In pursuit of this goal, the Grenville ministry implemented the Proclamation of 1763 and set the Appalachian Mountains as the western border of American settlement; the proclamation reserved the bulk of the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys as tribal lands for the Native Americans who inhabited the region. Once the new borders were set, they would be enforced by the construction of a string of frontier forts that would house British troops, should there be another Indian uprising. The implementation of the Proclamation of 1763 necessitated the collection of additional revenues to pay for colonial defense. In the quest of such revenue, Grenville secured passage of the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act.

Many American colonists, however, did not regard Grenville's agenda as an attempt to manage more effectively Britain's new transatlantic empire; they viewed his efforts as part of a vast conspiracy to redefine the relationship between crown and colony to their disadvantage, by stripping away their basic rights as Englishmen. The logic behind this fear of conspiracy stemmed from the simple reality that the taxes would have to be paid in specie (i.e., gold and silver coin). The problem for the colonists who had to pay the taxes related to the absence of specie in America—they did not have the means to pay the tax. Yet, if they did not pay, they would be in violation of the law. Grenville made it clear he intended to enforce these measures and that all infractions would be tried in the vice-admiralty courts—a move that effectively denied those who violated the law a jury trial. The simultaneous passage of a fourth measure, the Currency Act of 1764, fanned American fears of conspiracy because it mandated that private debts could no longer be paid with paper currency; such debts would also have to be paid in specie. The American colonists did not have enough coin to pay their taxes, let alone their private debts as well.

The combined effects of the Proclamation of 1763, the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, and the Stamp Act led many prominent American colonists to the conclusion that Grenville's ministry sought to enslave them economically. Grenville's reliance on the vice-admiralty courts to prosecute violators convinced many Americans that they did not have any legal recourse to combat these measures; consequently, those who were adamantly opposed to Grenville's agenda took extralegal (or illegal) action. In many respects, the Stamp Act represented the final straw, and widespread protests against the Stamp Act ensued. In cities throughout the colonies, radical groups, led by men such as Samuel Adams of Massachusetts and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, organized mob activity that, through violence and intimidation, forced the appointed stamp distributors to resign before the 1 November 1765 enactment date. More moderate groups in America voiced their opposition in a more staid manner. In October 1765, a group of colonists convened the



Burning of the Stamp Act, August 1764. (Library of Congress)

Stamp Act Congress, which met in New York. Those who attended the congress sought to achieve the same goals as Adams and Lee, but without the threat of violence. The congress lasted just over two weeks and presented a list of fourteen grievances justifying the repeal of the Stamp Act. The ninth grievance summed up the sentiments shared by both radicals and moderates: "That the Duties imposed by several late Acts of Parliament, from the peculiar Circumstances of these Colonies, will be extremely Burthensome and Grievous; and from the scarcity of Specie, the Payment of them absolutely impracticable." The widespread colonial protests against the Stamp Act that forced the stamp distributors to resign nullified the measure before it actually went into effect. On 18 March 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, essentially acknowledging

the state of affairs in America. The damage, however, was already done: the Stamp Act protests set the tone for the relationship between crown and colony until the beginning of the War for American Independence, as radical groups intensified their opposition toward Parliament and moderates sought to heal the widening rift.

J. Kent McCaughy

**See also:** Pontiac, Chief; Quebec Act.

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### Steamshovel Press

*Steamshovel Press* is a zine with accompanying web page that is published in St. Louis, Missouri. Originally the *Press* was entirely the work of Kenn Thomas, an archivist at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. *Steamshovel Press* focuses primarily on politically based conspiracy theories, particularly those dealing with assassinations. The zine is not strictly a political one, however; UFO cover-ups are frequently examined. Thomas refers to himself as a “parapoliticalist,” suggesting one who works on the fringes of the normal realm of politics. *Steamshovel Press* also regularly discusses beat literature, which Thomas sees as having ties to conspiracy studies. The

magazine is not hesitant to endorse even the most outlandish conspiracy notions; its motto is “All conspiracy. No theory.” Still, the zine is highly regarded within the conspiracy community; *Immerse* magazine calls it “the Bible of conspiracy theory” and disinformation.com says it features “cutting-edge conspiriology research at its finest.”

Thomas traces his interest in conspiracy theory back to John F. Kennedy’s assassination, which occurred when Thomas was five years old; the Kennedy assassination continues to inspire articles in *Steamshovel Press* and in 1997 Thomas coauthored the book *Mind Control, Oswald and JFK: Were We Controlled?* Paul Krassner’s radical magazine of the 1960s, the *Realist*, was also an influence on *Steamshovel Press* and Thomas’s writing in general. Thomas was working as a rock music critic and freelance journalist when he founded *Steamshovel Press* in the late 1980s. The publication began as a newsletter and did not adopt the magazine format until its fourth issue. Like many zine editors, Thomas admits to starting a zine simply in order to receive free product to review; book reviews remain an important feature. *Steamshovel Press* was also born out of Thomas’s inability to find a market for some of his freelance work, particularly an interview with Ram Dass, a spiritual leader and contemporary of Timothy Leary. Thomas also felt there was a void in conspiracy publications; Mae Brussell had recently died and the conspiracy zine *Critique* had ceased publication.

When *Steamshovel Press* made the transition from newsletter to zine in 1992, other writers began contributing. Since then the *Press* has run articles by such well-known conspiracy journalists as Jim Keith, Jonathan Vankin, Jim Martin, and Robert Anson Wilson. Keith and Thomas also collaborated on the influential *The Octopus: Secret Government and the Death of Danny Casolaro*. Since 1993 *Steamshovel Press* has published one or two issues a year; the issue bearing the unlucky number thirteen was never published and is referred to as the “phantom” issue. A web page was established in 1996; much of the material on the page, including a regular column titled “The Latest Word,” does not appear in the zine.

In addition to the zine and web page, three collections of writings from *Steamshovel Press* have



been published. *Popular Alienation: A Steamshovel Press Reader* was brought out by IllumiNet Press in 1995; it consists of issues four through eleven of the zine along with material from the phantom issue. *Cyberculture Conspiracy: Volume One* (1999) and *Volume Two* (2000) were published by Book Tree; each contains writings from the web page.

Randall Clark

**See also:** Mae Brussel.

**Reference**

*Steamshovel Press:* <http://www.steamshovelpress.com>.

**Stock Market Crash of 1929**

One of the most surprising aspects of the “Great Crash,” as the stock market crash of October 1929 is called, is that there are not more conspiracy theories concerning its origins and results. However, there are plenty to keep any researcher busy. Among the most prominent:

- Webster Tarpley, in his *Against Oligarcy*, claims that the crash was the result of “economic warfare” by Great Britain and the Bank of England against “the rest of the world.” A similar view appeared in *The Greatest Story Never Told: Winston Churchill and the Crash of 1929*, which has the British prime minister somehow causing the crash . . . even though Churchill did not become prime minister for another decade!
- Pundits of the day, supported by the United States Congress, investigated charges that the crash was perpetrated by the “banksters,” such as Charles Mitchell, of National City Bank, for personal gain.
- It was a “secret commitment” to the gold standard (and indirectly, the Bank of England) made by the “House of Morgan” that caused the crash.
- The Federal Reserve perpetrated the crash, mistakenly trying to keep bank profits up. A related conspiracy theory views the Fed as rapidly inflating the money supply in the

1920s in order to pump up the profits of men such as Rockefeller and Morgan.

- Some Christian extremists, seeking to demonize Franklin D. Roosevelt, portray the Great Crash as the result of a bank conspiracy to plunge the nation into chaos so that Roosevelt could take over as a dictator, end all private ownership of gold, and centralize government further.
- A less conspiratorial-sounding, but equally removed-from-reality viewpoint was expressed in the famous tirade by John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Great Crash, 1929* (1955) in which he blamed “inequities in wealth”—a conspiracy of the rich against the poor—for the crash.

Seventy-three years after the Great Crash, scholars still have not reached a consensus on the causes of the stock market plunge, but have tested some of the conspiracy theories well enough to have ruled them out. It is useful to begin in the boom of the 1920s, and the notion that the boom embodied wild speculation. Not so, say a battery of studies. White (1990), Santoni and Dwyer (1990), and White and Rappoport (1994) all debate the size of the “bubble” or the speculation, but all agree also that whatever level of speculation can be proven remains insufficient to explain the crash. Santoni and White especially contend that securities records show that investors were generally well informed, that the securities matched up well with their earnings projections, and that bond ratings had up to that point tended to correspond accurately to securities prices. In short, most academics today—aside from the Keynesian Left and the radical Christian Right—discount or completely reject the “great bull market” theory as an explanation for the bust.

What about the view that the Federal Reserve pumped up the money supply—by more than 100 percent in the 1920s as one source claimed? Money supply expansion must be measured against growth in the aggregate economy, as money is only a symbol of wealth created. The fact is that the U.S. economy in the 1920s was growing faster than, possibly, any economy at any time in the history of the world. There were entirely new products available for the



first time to middle-class consumers: radios, automobiles, electrical appliances, and securities themselves. Charles Merrill, of Merrill Lynch, pioneered securities sales to the middle class during this time. Manufacturing according to most indices nearly doubled from 1920 to 1929; price indices reveal virtually no increase in prices for goods or services; unemployment dropped to the unheard-of levels of under 2 percent in 1926, and remained under 4 percent for most of the decade; and work hours fell. By the end of the decade, the United States held more than one-third of *world* production. At essentially full employment and robust production, the Fed would have had to crank out money at far higher rates just to stay even with the booming economy.

This has produced another set of scholarly studies, which, though hardly conspiratorial, do not paint a flattering picture of government's ability to deal with financial matters. In 1963, economists Milton Friedman and Anna J. Schwartz published their seminal work, *A Monetary History of the United States*, in which they demonstrated that in fact the Federal Reserve barely kept up in the 1920s, then failed miserably to supply liquidity after the crash started and banks started failing. Normally, Friedman's book would have been hailed by conspiracy theorists, in that it portrayed the government (via the Fed) as incompetent. But Friedman maintained that it was not the Fed itself that failed, but only short-sighted officials. Had New York Federal Reserve President Benjamin Strong lived past 1928, Friedman hypothesized, the Great Depression never would have happened.

To have Friedman give conspiracy theorists a great victory with one hand and take it away with the other took his works off their "must read" lists. Indeed, Friedman remained an oddity: he favored near-total market freedom in every economic activity *except* banking, where he rejected the notion that competitive money could provide an answer to financial uncertainties. Nevertheless, his work effectively demolished the Keynes/Galbraith view of "under-consumption" and "over-saving," and took the blame nearly completely off business and put it on the shoulders of government.

The gold standard, a central theme in conspiracy theorists' arguments about the Great Crash and Great Depression, next came under a withering fire from other academics, such as Barry Eichengreen (*Golden Fetters*), who showed that far from international cooperation to maintain the gold standard at the "expense" of the "common man," each national bank was engaged in cutthroat competition to sustain its own position relative to that of other national banks. In other words, the Bank of France, rather than secretly working with the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve to conduct monetary policy conducive to the interests of the Rothschilds and the Morgans, in fact undercut the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve to gain market advantages. Ultimately, each nation in the world left the gold standard except the United States, which, Eichengreen contends, resulted in a massive gold drain from U.S. vaults. Put another way, foreign speculators could get U.S. gold for French, German, or British paper. Thus, ironically, the gold standard *was* responsible for the Depression, although Eichengreen does not tie the gold standard as clearly to the Great Crash. Still, it is the ultimate irony that if Eichengreen is correct, it was Franklin D. Roosevelt's act of taking the United States off the gold standard that saved the banking system in 1933! Once again, though, in Eichengreen's system, the gold standard could only work in the best of all worlds, where politicians did not follow national interest, but rather sought the welfare of the international community through the gold standard first.

If notions about the Federal Reserve "causing" the Great Crash have been fairly well disproved, and if the gold standard has been demonstrated to have at best played a harmful role in accelerating the economic decline, and if "disparities in wealth" do not explain the Crash, then what does? The answer is that economists still don't know. They can show, as Eugene White does, that the involvement of banks in securities operations did not weaken the banks, but in fact strengthened them. They can show, as several scholars have, that it was the middle class purchasing stocks and bonds, not "the rich." Is there a "smoking gun," though?

In 1978, economist (though not an academic) Jude Wanniski published *The Way the World Works*, in which he tied fluctuations in the stock market to the progress through Congress of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff. This tariff bill would have increased duties across the board, but would have hit particularly hard raw materials needed in manufacturing, thus ensuring that prices on finished goods would have to rise, and that sales would fall. Likewise, most analysts expected that if the bill passed, foreign countries would immediately respond with their own tariffs on U.S. goods, causing U.S. sales overseas to fall. Foreseeing this impact, businesses braced themselves by selling off their own securities in anticipation of the need to “get liquid.” The business sell-off, in turn, triggered a market-wide panic. Without the tools of econometricians, Wanniski was left to “qualitative” evidence—links between critical points in the bill’s passage and downturns in the market. He points to the key meeting of a congressional committee on 28 October that guaranteed the bill’s final passage (the floor vote was assured if Smoot-Hawley got out of committee), claiming this sparked the sell-off.

Until recently, Wanniski’s lack of academic credentials allowed some scholars to ignore him. But several new studies, by Doug Irwin and Mario Crucini, have thrown new fuel on the Smoot-Hawley fire: they have not only applied modern econometric tools, but have found that Wanniski actually *substantially understated* the expected harm of Smoot-Hawley due to the fact that he had not accounted for the Federal Reserve’s deflation (see Friedman, above). When the impact of dollar deflation was combined with the tariff bill, it had the potential, by itself, with no other “New Deal” or Federal Reserve policy, to reduce U.S. gross national product by 5 percent.

Wanniski, Irwin, and Crucini, along with Eichengreen, have thus turned the conspiracy theorists’ world upside down: protective tariffs, as advocated by politicians such as Pat Buchanan and “New World Order” theorists, may have caused the Great Crash, and the gold standard likely made it worse. Of course, most conspiracy theorists can rejoice that virtually all scholars pretty much agree that the

Federal Reserve bungled badly in the 1920s, although exactly how the Fed failed remains a matter of heated debate.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Gold Standard; Federal Reserve System.

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#### Stone, Oliver

Oliver Stone is a filmmaker whose politically charged films have often provoked controversy. However, Stone’s 1991 film *JFK*, a docudrama centered upon New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison’s investigation during 1967–1969 into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, is undoubtedly the most controversial of Stone’s works. In fact, no other film in U.S. cinema history has attracted quite the same level of critical outrage and scrutiny as *JFK* did before, during, and after its theatrical run. Given the

negative media coverage of Garrison's failed attempt during the late 1960s to convict New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw of conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy, it is not surprising that a film that recasts that same event in a manner much more favorable to Garrison, and further accuses most of the governmental apparatus of the United States of murdering its own president, would create yet another media tumult.

Stone's early life in many ways had prepared him for such public combat. He was born on 15 September 1946 in New York City to a Jewish stockbroker father and a French Catholic mother whose marriage ended in divorce. Stone entered Yale in 1965 but dropped out after one year and moved to Vietnam and then Mexico. In 1967, Stone joined the army and returned to Vietnam as a soldier. He served fifteen months in the 25th Infantry Division, where he was wounded twice. Upon his return to the United States in 1968, he entered New York University Film School. His subsequent film career included screen-writing credit for *Midnight Express* (1978) and *Scarface* (1983) and directorial credit for *The Hand* (1981), *Salvador* (1985), *Platoon* (1986), *Wall Street* (1987), *Talk Radio* (1988), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), and *The Doors* (1991). During this productive period, Stone read Jim Garrison's 1988 book, entitled *On the Trail of the Assassins*, about the investigation and trial of Clay Shaw. Stone believed that Garrison's narrative could form the basis of a powerful film.

Inspired by the book, Stone began his own investigation into the intellectual netherworld of JFK conspiracy theories to augment Garrison's story. Stone purchased the rights to Jim Marr's book *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy* (1991) and hired a Yale graduate named Jane Rusconi to assemble a team of researchers and interviewers. Stone and his team thus joined the ranks of those who had long sought to establish the existence of a conspiracy to murder the thirty-fifth president. Almost since the moment the president was killed in Dallas, conflicting eyewitness accounts suggested that shots were directed at the presidential motorcade from more than one direction (most infamously, from the grassy knoll in front of the president's limousine). The 1964 Warren

Commission, formed to investigate the truth behind the shooting, produced a twenty-six-volume report that named Lee Harvey Oswald as the sole assassin of the president but instantly generated intense criticism of its conclusions from early assassination researchers such as Mark Lane, Josiah Thompson, Sylvia Meager, and Harold Weisberg. The untimely deaths of many participants or witnesses to the events fostered a climate of mystery and paranoia that only aggravated researchers' feeling that something sinister was afoot. In the years following the assassination, the public followed the early skeptics' lead and a majority increasingly came to believe that a conspiracy, not just a lone gunman, had killed President Kennedy. Even the United States House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations in 1979 concluded that Kennedy "was probably assassinated as the result of a conspiracy." Stone and co-writer Zachary Sklar then began incorporating all of these disparate elements into a lengthy screenplay (first draft of 190 pages), which in its final form is a distillation of most of the varied conspiracy theories advocated by assassination researchers over the years. Beginning in 1990, Stone also met with a former colonel and Pentagon chief of special operations named Fletcher Prouty, whose career and theories about the motives behind the assassination provided the inspiration for one of the film's most important informants. Securing studio backing from Warner Brothers in 1989, Stone proceeded to active production, filming, and post-production during 1990 and 1991.

*JFK* in its final form is primarily a murder mystery based in part on Garrison's memoirs of the investigation and trial of Clay Shaw and further incorporating various aspects of Stone's own research into the presidential assassination. As the cinematic narrative unfolds, authentic footage is frequently and rapidly intercut into the film's re-creation of historical events to give the movie its startling verisimilitude. As Chris Salewicz observes, the film also interweaves at least four separate storylines in an impressionistic, almost stream-of-consciousness manner, influenced heavily by the multiple perspectives in Akira Kurosawa's famous 1950 film *Rashomon* and the 1969 Constantin Costa-Gavras political film *Z* (Salewicz, 81). *JFK*

begins with a prologue depicting the election, presidency, and assassination of President Kennedy. Then the film shifts to Garrison's investigation of a New Orleans connection to supposed assassin Lee Harvey Oswald—a connection that ultimately implicates private detective and ex-FBI agent Guy Banister, homosexual former Eastern Airlines pilot David Ferrie, and Clay Shaw. Garrison gradually becomes convinced that these men are part of a larger, right-wing conspiracy directed against President Kennedy and comprising a devil's brew of anti-Castro exiles, Mafia gangsters, the CIA, military intelligence, and even the Lyndon B. Johnson White House. Garrison concludes that Oswald, slain in Dallas in 1963 by gangster Jack Ruby, was a patsy, set up to look guilty by the larger forces behind the president's shooting. As Garrison retraces the Warren Commission investigation and tries to build a case against David Ferrie and Clay Shaw, Garrison is continually stymied by staff defections, governmental interference, media scorn, and even the mysterious deaths of key figures such as David Ferrie. Only Clay Shaw survives to be arrested and tried for the murder of the president. However, given the insurmountable obstacles arrayed against Garrison, the trial's outcome is a foregone conclusion. Shaw is acquitted, but Garrison vows to continue the crusade to bring Kennedy's killers to justice.

Garrison, portrayed by Kevin Costner as a relatively uncomplicated seeker after the truth, obviously believes in the merits of his case, even if few others do. Since the film is portrayed from Garrison's point of view and those of the people he interviews, his conclusions may appear to be presented as absolute fact to the indiscriminating viewer. But the film is ultimately more complex than it seems, as Susan Mackey-Kallis observes, because it searches "for the 'truth' with the realization that there is no single, ultimately knowable truth about the Kennedy assassination" (Mackey-Kallis, 38). Indeed, *JFK* raises more questions than it solves. The film considers several possible conspiracies in the assassination but finally suggests that President Kennedy was killed in a coup d'état organized by a shadowy U.S. cabal of governmental and industrial concerns. In a covert meeting in Washington, D.C., a government inform-

ant based on Fletcher Prouty ("Colonel X") tells Garrison that this cabal's primary agenda was to profit from an escalation of war in Vietnam. Through X, the film postulates that Kennedy's refusal to support the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1963, and his intention to abolish the Central Intelligence Agency and diminish the power of the military-industrial complex by withdrawing advisors and troops from Vietnam during a second term of office, resulted in his murder by those committed to wartime militarism. Yet careful attention to the film reveals that no matter how persuasively argued or visualized, the theories proposed by X or even Garrison remain conjecture, not absolute fact. Stone himself claims that *JFK* is deliberately designed as a "counter-myth" to provoke scrutiny of the official "myth" of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in shooting President Kennedy from the sixth floor of the Texas Schoolbook Depository. In this goal of reopening a national dialogue about a possible conspiracy behind the Kennedy assassination, Stone succeeded beyond all expectations. His success also placed him at the center of a media and political firestorm.

Stone was denounced and vilified by numerous high-profile media and governmental critics even before *JFK*'s public premiere. After an early draft of the screenplay was leaked, *Washington Post* writer George Lardner, Jr., and *Chicago Tribune* writer Jon Margolis began attacking *JFK* in May 1991, before the film's winter release. Other negative articles appeared during the film's post-production phase. As the film opened, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Francisco Weekly*, the *Chicago Sun Times*, the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *L.A. Times*, and *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines all weighed in repeatedly with decidedly negative appraisals of Stone's film, in essence labeling it demagoguery. For example, *Newsweek* ran a cover story headlined, "Why Oliver Stone's New Movie Can't Be Trusted." The *New York Times* in particular devoted much column and editorial space to the assault on the movie. Noted journalists, commentators, media figures, and politicians joined forces to savage not only the film's conspiracy theories but seemingly the director himself. Writers Alexander



Cockburn, Tom Wicker, and George Will; film critic Leonard Maltin; director Nora Ephron; president of the Motion Picture Association of America Jack Valenti; former U.S. President and Warren Commission member Gerald Ford—all went on the record as strongly, almost viscerally, opposed to Stone and his project.

These and other critics insisted that Stone heavily distorted history, invented characters that never existed and slandered others that did, mixed speculation and fact to an irresponsible degree, and unfairly influenced younger audience members whose exposure to history presumably came only from the simplistic exaggerations of television and film. Some critics insisted that the film was homophobic in its depiction of David Ferrie and Clay Shaw as homosexual. Also troubling to many critics was the film's flattening of the complex, tarnished character of the real-life Jim Garrison. Frank Beaver calls the cinematic Garrison a "representational icon rather than a human being—in the end, a symbolic teacher lecturing a class" (Beaver, 172). Most journalists reporting on the real trial of Clay Shaw regarded the prosecution as a ludicrous farce perpetrated by a grandstanding, publicity-seeking, and quite possibly corrupt district attorney. Allegations of underworld connections, illegal gambling, and witness tampering and bribery persistently dogged Garrison's career as district attorney and, later, elected judge. Even many conspiracy theorists believed that Garrison's true agenda in the trial of Clay Shaw had been to divert attention away from a Mafia connection to the assassination. Stone was not unaware of the negative sentiment about Garrison (in fact had even confronted Garrison about these charges early in the process of researching *JFK*) but chose to disregard them, as he was making a film about the conspiracy to kill Kennedy, not a biography of Jim Garrison. But to see Garrison practically sainted by Stone's version of events and played as a straight arrow by Kevin Costner in the best Jimmy Stewart/Frank Capra tradition was likely more than some critics could bear.

Stone did have his share of media supporters, such as Garry Trudeau, Garry Wills, Norman Mailer, David Denby, and David Ansen, but at first the neg-

ative press far outweighed the positive. Stone defended himself in various public and media forums, and eventually his lonely campaign began to pay off. Even as the editorial elite pounded him, public sentiment shifted toward Stone. He began meeting with congressmen to advocate the release of sealed assassination files. Also, in response to the widespread charge that Stone had distorted or fabricated fact for the movie, Stone and Zachary Sklar published *JFK—The Book of the Film*, in 1992. The book contained the annotated screenplay, extensive sources and references, and pro and con commentaries by the film's supporters and critics.

The film itself, after an initially slow box-office start, became a commercial success. It was nominated for eight Academy Awards, including best picture and best adapted screenplay, and won two in the categories of film editing and cinematography. *JFK* personally garnered Stone a Golden Globe Award for best director, and Director's Guild of America and Academy Award nominations for best director, as well as political and civic recognition such as the Torch of Liberty Award from the Civil Liberties Union of Southern California. Eventually, the film's publicity resulted in the token release of a few formerly secret files and culminated in the congressional Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, which released many of the previously classified government documents related to the assassination. Although the released records provided no conclusive evidence of an assassination conspiracy, enough tantalizing clues emerged to provide conspiracy researchers with more fodder for their particular theories. *JFK* thus joins the relatively rare ranks of films that have inspired direct political action.

The film's notoriety also revitalized the political conspiracy thriller genre. Throughout its history, U.S. cinema had often trafficked in conspiratorial or even paranoid topics, often by depicting dastardly external enemies such as Communists or even inhuman ones such as body-snatching space aliens. However, in the political conspiracy genre entries of which *JFK* is the apotheosis, the fascistic threat is even more insidious, as it originates from within the very social institutions charged with protecting

democracy and the American people. Even the president of the United States, *JFK* tells the audience, is a helpless (and disposable) pawn of such forces. This view displaces the individual and assigns power to a decentralized, self-contained system lethal to the kind of humanistic values touted by Kennedy in his university address during the film's prologue. Stone's sweeping indictment of what his cinematic alter ego Garrison calls "the ascendancy of invisible government" went much further than any previous film had done. The public acceptance of *JFK*'s grim message illustrates dramatically just how entrenched the mistrust of governmental institutions had become since the great disillusionments of the 1960s and 1970s.

Nevertheless, in the decade since *JFK*'s release, much of the assassination controversy has subsided. (In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attack upon the United States, the film's antimilitarism message may even seem momentarily out of favor.) Norman Mailer's fictional biography, *Oswald* (1995), faded quickly from sight, and Gerald Posner's book *Case Closed* (1993) seemed to satisfy most media observers, if not the public, that Oswald was indeed the lone assassin. Meanwhile, Stone has weathered other controversies over his films *Natural Born Killers* (1994) and *Nixon* (1995). Both films ventured into some of the same thematic and stylistic territory as *JFK*. *Nixon* created a minor flare-up among many of the same political and editorial elite who had been outraged by *JFK*. Stone's second presidential film portrays Richard M. Nixon as a hapless figure caught up in tangential involvement with the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, assassination attempts against Castro, and escalation of the Vietnam War, all of which are central to *JFK* and ultimately conspire, in Stone's rendition of history, to topple the Nixon regime in the Watergate scandal. But mostly because of *JFK*, Oliver Stone's name has become synonymous with "conspiracy theory."

Philip L. Simpson

**See also:** Film and Conspiracy Theory; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of.

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## Stono Rebellion

The Stono Rebellion of 1793 was the largest uprising of African slaves on the mainland of North America during the colonial period. It began when about twenty slaves, likely first-generation Africans, attacked a local shop about fifteen miles southwest of Charles Town, South Carolina, and secured guns, powder, and other weapons. Throughout the encounter, the slaves demonstrated a familiarity with military tactics, learned from military training in Africa. After all of the slaves had been killed or captured by the militia, South Carolina authorities instituted draconian measures in an effort to control the black majority in the colony. Despite the apparent success in suppressing the rebellion, a grave and often unwarranted fear of slaves conspiring to kill their masters and escape from bondage would persist among white South Carolinians throughout the colonial and antebellum periods.

The uprising began early on Sunday morning, 9 September 1739. The slaves surprised and killed local storekeepers and then began attacking whites who lived in the surrounding countryside, as they slowly made their way toward the Spanish fort at St. Augustine, Florida. The slaves believed they would receive freedom and sanctuary from the Spanish, who had long encouraged runaway slaves from the British colonies. In a fateful coincidence, the rebels encountered the mounted party of Lieutenant Governor William Bull, Sr., and his entourage. The lieutenant governor and his party evaded capture and made their way on horseback to sound the alarm. Meanwhile, the rebellious slaves, flushed with both their success and seized liquor, encamped. They raised a banner and beat drums in an effort to attract more slaves to their revolt and by afternoon, their numbers had increased to between sixty and one

hundred. At the same time, the white militia had mustered and embarked for the African camp. Possessing superior numbers, training, and firepower, the militia overwhelmed the slaves in a brief, fierce fight. About a dozen of the rebels were killed by the first volley and most of the rest were caught while others fled into the countryside. The escapees were pursued for a week before a large group of them was caught and killed 30 miles south of the original struggle. Others managed to evade capture for months and one slave was captured more than two years after the uprising. Most of those captured were interrogated, tried, and summarily executed.

The Stono Rebellion generated considerable conspiracy-minded hysteria in South Carolina. More than twenty whites had been killed with relative ease during the uprising. The slaves had acted in a manner that demonstrated prior planning and discussion, and without Lieutenant Governor Bull's chance encounter with the rebels, the devastation to the colony could have been far worse. A state of emergency prevailed in Stono through the winter, as fears remained elevated and the white colonists passed rumors of further revolts.

In the aftermath of the uprising, South Carolina took several steps in an effort to control its African majority. The first was a stronger and more regular system of patrols, greatly expanding the power of the militia. In the spring of 1740, a thorough revision of the colony's slave codes was enacted. Slaves would now be held as personal chattel, enabling stricter control over humans held as property. Furthermore, prohibitions on slave assemblies and gatherings, on teaching Africans to write, and on possessing liquor were all reinforced. However, the new slave code also mandated that masters provide their slaves with adequate clothing and prohibited masters from requiring work on Sundays. In an effort to limit the number of Africans entering the colony, especially because it was believed that recently arrived slaves had led the rebellion, a duty of £100 was enacted for each new African imported during the next three years. It was hoped that this duty would sharply reduce the number of blacks entering the colony and help the colony to achieve a white majority population. Despite these efforts, South Carolina had little

success in attracting white settlers to the colony. The black majority persisted and legislative efforts to curtail the activities of black slaves largely failed.

The Stono Rebellion remains the bloodiest known conspiracy of African slaves in North America. In the eyes of whites living in South Carolina and other colonies with significant enslaved populations, it highlighted what could happen if the vigilant control of blacks was relaxed, and fueled a conspiracy-minded fear of future slave uprisings.

*Jonathan Mercantini*

**See also:** Slave Revolts.

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## Students for a Democratic Society

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was established in 1960 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as an outgrowth of the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the youth affiliate of the Old Left organization League for Industrial Democracy (LID). Believing that "industrial democracy" was too narrow and outdated a term, young members of the SLID felt a need to break with the older labor-oriented leadership of the LID and establish an organization that not only saw the political power of working-class unions, but also realized the importance of organizing middle-class students in the struggle for social justice. Under the leadership of two recent University of Michigan graduates, Al Haber and Tom Hayden, the SDS became a small but increasingly influential network of campus activists that organized students around such issues as civil rights throughout the early 1960s.

In June 1962, approximately fifty SDS members gathered in Port Huron, Michigan, to draft a guiding document for the fledgling organization. The finished document, which became known as the Port Huron Statement, was a detailed examination of the arms race, the cold war, racism, capitalism, and the

future of U.S. government. Drafted primarily by Hayden, the Port Huron Statement highlighted the SDS's intellectual debt to such thinkers as Albert Camus, Paul Goodman, and especially C. Wright Mills. While never fully embracing any sort of conspiracy theory, early SDS literature did refer rather ominously to such groups as "the power elite" (a phrase borrowed from Mills), the members of which held the highest positions of authority in the realms of big business, the federal government, the press, and the nation's largest and most prestigious universities. The worldview of such elites, according to SDS leaders, was termed "corporate liberalism," a philosophy of governance described by one historian as "a smooth blend of demotic sophistry, symbolic legislation, and fantasies of endless consumption" (Kazin, 197). Such a philosophy alienated people from the political process and kept them from questioning the validity of U.S. forms of government—an outcome that corporate liberals welcomed and strove to maintain. What was needed to challenge such apathy, according to Hayden and other SDS members, was a turn toward "participatory democracy," where the governed could govern themselves directly and begin to see through the rhetoric and propaganda of the corporate liberal order.

By 1965, the focus of the SDS had become foreign affairs, specifically U.S. policy on the burgeoning conflict in Vietnam. Although the SDS did not often assume organizational responsibility, "it was symbolically and politically at the center" of the anti-war movement (Breines, 12). As the SDS became more and more concerned with issues of U.S. foreign policy, it displayed a greater willingness to turn to concepts of conspiracy to describe global events. At the heart of this turn to conspiratorial thinking was the SDS's growing disillusionment with the country's universities. Due to their connections and cooperation with the government in the form of military research, as well as military and corporate recruitment, SDS members now saw such universities as willing participants in the expansion of U.S. imperialism. Not only were university researchers conspiring with corporate leaders to create new weapons of mass destruction, but these institutions of higher learning were also indoctrinating students

to become unquestioning cold warriors. Knowing that much of the public would disagree with such policies, university officials (and their counterparts in the worlds of business and government) worked to conceal their involvement in the Vietnam War and to suppress the voices of those who attempted to draw attention to such attempted cover-ups. Here, history has supported SDS's turn toward conspiracy. Many universities did attempt to cover up their involvement with the war effort, and the June 1971 publication of the *Pentagon Papers* revealed that U.S. leaders had frequently misled and often outright lied to the American people regarding policies dealing with the Vietnam conflict.

By 1968 the intensity of the political situation domestically and internationally moved many in the SDS toward a militant revolutionary program and rhetoric, and toward a greater reliance on conspiracy theory. In the aftermath of the bloody confrontations at the Chicago Democratic convention in the summer of 1968, most SDS members abandoned whatever hopes they still cherished of reforming the existing political system. Declaring themselves allies of Third-World Communist revolutionaries like Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara, as well as domestic groups such as the Black Panthers, SDS leaders now conceived their principal role as one of "bringing the war home" to an "imperialist mother country" that now actively conspired against them. In 1969, the SDS collapsed as small, self-proclaimed revolutionary vanguards squabbled over control of the organization. One such group was the Weathermen, who believed that the capitalist, imperialist conspiracy against them was so large and well funded that they had no choice but to "go underground" and launch a guerrilla assault on the U.S. political system. As the Weathermen spiraled into a pattern of increased paranoia, they began to believe that the only answer to such an all-encompassing conspiracy was a campaign of violence and intimidation, a campaign that ultimately ended with three members accidentally blowing themselves up while constructing bombs in a Greenwich Village townhouse in March 1970 (Sale).

Such paranoia, however, was not entirely unwarranted, as there is evidence that a number of groups did conspire against the SDS. Throughout the orga-



nization's history, such figures as FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, believing the SDS itself to be a part of a Communist conspiracy to infiltrate the United States, actively monitored SDS membership and activity. Hoover ordered SDS phones to be tapped, and the FBI also secretly solicited students to work as undercover agents infiltrating SDS chapters. Across the nation, numerous SDS chapters suffered daily harassment and surveillance by local law officials, often with the support of the FBI. While such realities do not fully explain the SDS's turn to violence, they make it easier to see the appeal of conspiracy theory to many of the group's members.

*Michael H. Carriere*

**See also:** Black Panthers; Civil Rights Movement; Cold War; Hoover, J. Edgar; Weathermen.

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## Subliminal Advertising

Although there has been no scientific research that has ever proven the effectiveness of any form of subliminal influence on the human mind, subliminal advertising is a conspiracy theory that has entered popular culture as a generally accepted truth. In the main, this is a result of a general cultural paranoia over the rise of the media industry to a position where it dominates the production of cultural meaning and ideology in society. The fact that most media forms (television, radio, newspapers, and films) are dominated by large companies or corporations, in addition to their commercial and mass imperatives, creates an anxiety over their apparently systematic control of the beliefs and political opinions available in society.

The fear of subliminal advertising unsurprisingly begins in the 1950s at the inception of the television

age, although the first claims about its use actually involve the broadcast of subliminal messages at cinemas. Vance Packard was the person responsible for bringing subliminal advertising to the public's attention in his 1957 book, *The Hidden Persuaders*, when he mentioned experiments undertaken by an advertising executive, James Vicary. Vicary had apparently tested subliminal advertising in cinemas by flashing the messages "Eat Popcorn" and "Drink Coke" on the screen for a fraction of a second. As a result of these trials, Vicary claimed an 18 percent increase in sales of Coke and a 58 percent rise for popcorn, which led not only to an acceptance of the reality of the effectiveness of subliminal advertising, but also to fears that the U.S. public was being insidiously brainwashed simply by going to the cinema or watching television. An investigation was launched by the Federal Communications Commission and a ban on the use of subliminal advertising was imposed in some U.S. states as well as in Britain and Australia.

A few years later, Vicary admitted that he had exaggerated the impact of subliminal advertising and, indeed, that there had been no noticeable effect on the tested cinema-goers. However, subliminal advertising had already become accepted as a "fact" (62 percent of Americans currently believe in its existence) and has remained as a pervasive cultural paranoia that has reappeared at various times. For example, the liberalization of U.S. society as a result of the 1960s counterculture led to fears that media industries were using subliminal messages not to brainwash people into buying certain products, but to corrupt the minds of the public. In a series of books, published from the 1970s onward, Wilson Bryan Key claimed that both television and print advertising contain subliminal commands that bombard Americans with images of sex, drugs, and death. According to Key, groups of people he tested felt sexually aroused when shown certain adverts, including one for Gilbey gin in which the word "sex" is apparently embedded in an ice cube. When he was later called to give "expert" testimony at the Judas Priest trial in Reno, Nevada, in 1990, he even went as far as claiming that Ritz crackers had subliminal messages imprinted on them.

In recent years, attention has moved away from advertising to a more pervasive fear of subliminal messages in commercial and cultural products. The Columbine killings led to a fear that contemporary music (notably Marilyn Manson) included messages that were having an effect on the unconscious minds of American youth. This, however, was a continuation of paranoias that had begun with the trial of the heavy metal band Judas Priest when they were accused of placing subliminal messages in one of the songs from their *Stained Class* album. These messages had allegedly induced suicidal impulses in two teenage listeners, James Vance and Ray Belknap, who had, as a result, attempted to kill themselves. Although the band were found not guilty of any wrongdoing (which may be fortunate for Nike, as the phrase at issue was “Do It”), the fact that a trial took place at all demonstrates how far subliminal messages have become accepted as a reality.

The reason for this general belief in subliminal advertising and unconscious commands is primarily a result of fears that media industries have too much power in the creation of American values and have replaced traditional values (such as religion and the family) with a secular and materialist ideology. The implications of brainwashing that attach to subliminal advertising have also led to a belief that the mass media is in the service of a government propaganda machine or in the hands of a conspiracy group that is attempting to corrupt American minds in order to make its “perverted” values acceptable when it comes to power. Most frequently this is the New World Order (with its anti-American totalitarian vision), but other groups are also seen to be using the media, such as the Illuminati or Skull and Bones, both of whom wish to impose a satanic or occult religion on America.

*Fran Mason*

**See also:** Mind Control.

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### Survivalism

Survivalism is the practice of disaster preparedness. Although there are many types of survivalists, all believe that the collapse of society is imminent, either as a result of man-made disasters like nuclear holocaust or overpopulation, or natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and famine. Survivalist practices range from the merely cautious (the building of bomb shelters during the 1950s or stockpiling water and canned goods in anticipation of Y2K) to the conspiratorial (preparing for a coming race war or biblical apocalypse). Kurt Saxon, a survivalist writer, claims to have coined the term in the 1970s. Saxon (given name Don Sisco) is a former John Birch Society member, and the author of numerous self-published books and pamphlets, including *The Poor Man’s James Bond*, a guide to homemade explosives, and *Granddad’s Wonderful Book of Chemistry*, featuring methods of home manufacturing of bombs. Saxon gained notoriety in 1970 after appearing before a Senate subcommittee investigating bombings and terrorism.

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, survivalism has become closely associated with several white supremacist groups, like the Posse Comitatus, the Christian-Patriots Defense League, the Covenant, Sword, Arm of the Lord, and Aryan Nations. Unlike Saxon, an atheist whose writings often debunk conspiracy theories favored by right-wing extremists, members of these groups subscribe to Christian Identity theology, which teaches that Aryans are the true Israelites and that Jews are the literal children of Satan. Believing that the United States is on the verge of collapse and a race war, in the 1980s several of these groups created armed compounds in rural enclaves. They stockpiled food, water, and weapons and began paramilitary training in preparation for the defense of the white race against the forces of the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG), a Jewish-controlled shadow government they believed was amassing United Nations troops near the U.S.–Canadian border. Many of these groups disbanded in

## Survivalism

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the mid-1980s, after well-publicized skirmishes with federal authorities: leaders of the Posse Comitatus and the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord were convicted after separate shootouts with the FBI in rural Arkansas in 1983 and 1985 respectively. Aryan Nations and various splinter groups persist, however, with the movement energized after the incidents in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and Waco, Texas.

*Jeff Insko*

**See also:** Aryan Nations; Posse Comitatus; Ruby Ridge; Waco; ZOG.

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### Website

Kurt Saxon: <http://www.kurtsaxon.com/index.htm>.



## **Tobacco Industry**

The tobacco industry has recently been accused of covering up the extent of its knowledge about the harmful effects of smoking, but tobacco has a long history in the United States. English settlers in Virginia began cultivating tobacco in 1612. It was first exported to England in 1619, and its use soon became widespread on both sides of the Atlantic. The first clinical report linking tobacco use to cancer was made in 1761 by an English physician, Dr. John Hill, and an antitobacco movement was in full swing by the middle of the following century. During the Industrial Revolution, cigarette manufacturing was achieved on a mass scale, and by 1880 a billion cigarettes were being sold in the United States each year. Following World War I, medical researchers began to accumulate growing evidence that smoking was leading to a variety of diseases, particularly lung cancer, which had once been considered quite rare but was increasingly being noted as a cause of death. The first large-scale scientific study of smoking appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1950, and marked the beginning of a heated and protracted battle between the tobacco industry and opponents of smoking. It soon became apparent that cigarettes could not be sold to the public simply by asserting that they were mild and good tasting.

Since cigarettes have always been a legal product, it is difficult to construe their mere manufacture and sale to the public as a conspiracy. If the tobacco industry is guilty of any conspiracy, it must be found in the way in which the industry has portrayed its

products to the public. In 1994, a tobacco industry insider leaked thousands of pages of documents that shed new light on the industry's marketing activities (Glantz et al.). The creation in 1954 of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, which at the time was announced as a means of funding scientific research on the medical effects of tobacco, was exposed by the documents as a public relations scheme designed to provide a counterbalance to the growing evidence of a link between tobacco use and cancer. The committee (renamed the Council for Tobacco Research in 1964) made the argument that the supposed link was supported only by a statistical correlation that failed to prove causality, and claimed that only through additional research could the controversy be resolved. It continued to make this argument even as medical evidence piled up.

## **The Industry on the Defensive**

When the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health concluded in its historic 1964 report that "smoking contributes substantially to mortality," and that "appropriate remedial action" was called for, the tobacco industry faced a grave crisis that prompted a strong attack on the report and a vigorous defense of smoking, and the industry was clearly—and permanently—put on the defensive. In 1966 a mild warning label was placed on cigarette packages, but in 1970 it was strengthened to a warning that "The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health," and all cigarette advertising was halted on radio and tele-



vision (Whelan). One key issue facing the industry was the question of whether nicotine, a key ingredient in cigarettes, is addictive. Publicly, the industry took the position that it is not, as that meant that smoking is strictly voluntary and smokers can stop smoking whenever they decide that their health might be at risk. The industry's own in-house research, however, had shown that increasing levels of nicotine are required to maintain its satisfying effect, and one of the documents leaked in 1994 contained a statement by an industry lawyer admitting that "nicotine is addictive" (Glantz et al.).

Another tactic adopted by the industry was to defend the "right to smoke," which it touted as if it were a basic civil right under siege by the forces of tyranny. In some cases, articles defending smoking appeared in popular publications without the public knowing that their authors were tobacco industry hirelings. At the same time, industry lawyers played an important role in deciding what scientific research would be funded.

To lessen its apparent responsibility for any harm to the health of smokers, the tobacco industry claimed that its advertising was aimed at getting people to switch brands rather than take up smoking, but a variety of methods were used to promote smoking in subtle ways. For example, payments were made in exchange for the showing of characters smoking in movies, and the industry cooperated with makers of candy cigarettes who were willing to make their packages resemble actual cigarette packages (and thus entice young smokers).

In the realm of conspiracy theory, it seems that conspiracies are often charged, and even proved in the "court of public opinion," without any validation in the legal system. The tobacco industry proved to be an exception to this. After years of successfully evading lawsuits, the industry was finally hit hard by court judgments that reflected a widespread acceptance of the notion that it had pursued a conspiracy of silence and deceit about the harms of smoking. Although some far-fetched charges went unproved (for example, the theory that Bill Clinton, a president who had taken a hard line toward the tobacco industry, faced an impeachment effort that was engineered by the industry's Republican allies), big

tobacco's decades-long campaign to deny culpability for harming the public's health proved transparent, and in 1998 five tobacco companies agreed to pay state governments \$256 billion over a period of twenty-five years to compensate for the cost of providing medical care to persons made ill by tobacco products. Moreover, a string of civil suits resulting in billions of dollars in awards to plaintiffs made it clear that the tobacco industry had secured a place at the top of the list of corporate supervillains.

Larry Haapanen

**See also:** Corporations; Health Scares.

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## Toledo War

A long-running border dispute between Michigan and Ohio was eventually settled through a clandestine operation. At 1 A.M. on 7 September 1835, Colonel Mathias Van Fleet chose thirty of his best Ohio militiamen, each armed with a musket and two pistols. They rode into Toledo with members of the Lucas County Court to enforce the orders of Governor Robert Lucas. By candlelight and with guards standing watch, the court conducted its business in secret session. This covert meeting of Ohio officials exercising jurisdiction within the disputed Toledo Strip virtually settled the boundary controversy that had raged for years with numerous skirmishes threatening confrontation between the militias of the state of Ohio and the territory of Michigan.

The issue that led to hostilities over the Ohio-Michigan boundary resulted from an inaccurate survey and conflicting language in four documents. As Michigan moved closer to statehood, the precise boundary became increasingly important.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided for the admission of three states, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and specified that “if Congress shall find it expedient, they shall have the authority to form one or two [additional] states in that part of the said [Northwest] Territory, which lies north of an east and west line drawn through the southerly bend or extreme of Lake Michigan” (1 Stat. 51).

The Ohio Enabling Act of 30 April 1802, as passed by Congress and signed by the president, set the northern boundary of Ohio as: “an east and west line drawn through the southerly extreme of Lake Michigan, running east after intersecting the due north line from the mouth of the Great Miami River, until it shall intersect Lake Erie, or the territorial line, and thence with the same through Lake Erie to the Pennsylvania line” (2 Stat. 173).

On the advice of an old fur trapper who was familiar with the remote area in question, the Ohio Constitutional Convention added section 6 to Article VII of its new constitution, proclaiming:

That if the southerly bend or extreme of Lake Michigan should extend so far south, that a line drawn due east from it should not intersect Lake Erie, or if it should intersect said Lake east of the mouth of the Miami river of the Lake, then and in that case, with the assent of the Congress of the United States, the northern boundary of the State shall be established by, and extend to, a direct line running from the southerly extremity of Lake Michigan to the most northerly cape of the Miami Bay, Maumee, after intersecting the due north line from the mouth of the Great Miami river as aforesaid, thence, northeast to the Territorial line and by the said Territorial line to the line of Pennsylvania. (2 Stat. 201)

When Congress admitted Ohio to statehood, it accepted the Ohio Constitution with the addition of section 6, but it did not expressly approve the added section.

Louis Joliet’s eighteenth-century map of the Great Lakes created the error. John Mitchell, a Virginia botanist, physician, and fellow of the Royal Society, accepted Joliet’s plot when he mapped

western America for the British Lords of Trade. His drawing became the authority for the Proclamation Line of 1763 and the Peace Treaty of 1782. Thomas Hutchins, geographer-general of the United States, endorsed it. The error in the maps arose from the mistaken belief that a line of latitude drawn eastward from the southern tip of Lake Michigan would strike Lake Erie somewhere north of Maumee Bay. Lake Michigan actually extends so far that a line of latitude drawn eastward from its southern extremity strikes Lake Erie southeast, not north, of Maumee Bay.

In 1807, 1809, and 1811 the Ohio legislature instructed the state’s congressional delegation to have the national government fix its boundary line. On 20 May 1812, Congress directed the surveyor-general to mark the boundary on a due east-west line, but the War of 1812 prevented immediate action. After the war, on 22 August 1816, Deputy Surveyor William Harris discovered that a line due east from the most southern point of Lake Michigan intersected Lake Erie seven miles south of the most northerly cape of Maumee Bay. Harris plotted a line directly from the southern tip of Lake Michigan to the northern cape of Maumee Bay in conformity with section 6 of the Ohio Constitution, not in accordance with the state’s enabling act.

The next year Governor Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory protested that the line took a strip of land, including the city of Toledo, “seven miles and forty-nine chains” wide from Michigan and gave it to Ohio. On 24 June 1818, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford agreed with Cass and directed the commissioner of the Land Office to have the northern boundary of Ohio redrawn to agree with the order of 1812.

The controversy continued for years. Then, as progress halted in Congress, a newly appointed acting governor of the Territory, twenty-seven-year-old, Virginia-born Stevens T. Mason, sent a letter to Ohio governor Lucas, stating that his legislature had passed a law on 26 December 1834 opposing any measures to rob Michigan of its soil. He said he had appointed three commissioners to meet with a like number from Ohio to adjust the boundary. On 6 February 1835, Governor Lucas informed his leg-

islature of Mason's proposal. He said he did not wish to appoint any commissioners and requested the legislature to declare Ohio authority all the way to the Harris line and to direct local officials to exercise jurisdiction over the Toledo Strip. Michigan responded with a statute of 12 February 1835 "to prevent foreign jurisdiction" within the limits of its territory, providing penalties of \$1,000 fine or five years' hard labor or both for persons other than Michigan officials exercising authority in the area.

The confrontation grew. Both sides anticipated armed conflict. On 9 March, Governor Mason wrote to General Joseph W. Brown, commander of the Michigan Militia Third Division:

[Y]ou will perceive that a collision between Ohio and Michigan is now inevitable, and you will therefore be prepared to meet the crisis. . . . You will use every exertion to obtain the earliest information of the military movements of our adversary, as I shall assume the responsibility of sending you such arms, etc., as may be necessary for your successful operation, without waiting for an order from the Secretary of War, so soon as Ohio is properly in the field. (Killits, 140)

Governor Lucas with members of his staff and General John Bell, commanding the 17th Division of the Ohio Militia, marched into Perrysburg in the disputed territory with surveyors to begin marking the Harris line on 31 March.

Michigan conducted three raids. Between midnight and 3 A.M. on the morning of 8 April, the sheriff of Monroe County and his posse rode into Toledo, broke into two homes, and seized a couple of people. Three days later they returned, pulled down Ohio's flag, dragged it through the streets, threatened some of the residents, and indicted several persons for holding Ohio office. Another assault of nearly 200 posse men failed to take any prisoners since most officers had fled.

As the armies prepared to engage, the president appointed two commissioners, Richard Rush of Pennsylvania and Colonel Benjamin C. Howard of Maryland, who arrived in Perrysburg on 6 April.

They conferred with the governors, examined a few witnesses, ordered running the Harris line, and recommended to the residents of the area that they should choose which authority to obey. But on 25 April a Michigan force of over fifty men captured nine members of the survey party after firing about forty shots, one piercing the clothes of a surveyor.

Hostilities continued. On 15 July the deputy sheriff of Monroe County, Michigan, rode into Toledo and made 150 arrests. When the deputy tried to arrest Two Stickney, the man drew his knife and inflicted a 4-inch slash to the hand of the Michigan officer. Later that day Michigan forces returned, broke into the local newspaper, demolished its press, and arrested Stickney and six or seven others.

On 6 September Governor Mason invaded Toledo with an armed militia of 1,200. They threatened to burn the town, shot a horse, again damaged the newspaper office, and set fire to a cornfield. Even after the secret 7 September meeting a few skirmishes continued. For example, on 9 September a Michigan sheriff captured an Ohio sheriff in a 100-shot battle in which one man was wounded.

President Jackson removed Mason from office and appointed a new territorial governor to create harmony. Then, in October the people of Michigan petitioned Congress for statehood, adopted a constitution, and elected Mason their first governor. On 2 March 1836, the House Judiciary Committee reported a bill to admit Michigan to the Union, minus the 500-square-mile Toledo Strip but with the 20,000-square-mile Upper Peninsula. The bill became enmeshed in the slavery controversy, so that Michigan, a free state, was eventually paired with Arkansas, a slave state. Finally, on 7 January 1837, Toledo held a gala celebration as part of Ohio, and Michigan was admitted to statehood on 26 January 1837.

*JeDon A. Emenhiser*

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### Tonkin Gulf Incidents

On 31 July 1964, the United States navy destroyer *Maddox* began reconnaissance patrols off the coast of North Vietnam. Its presence in the Gulf of Tonkin was a major catalyst in bringing about overt U.S. military participation in Vietnam. At first, President Johnson politically profited from the Tonkin Gulf incidents, receiving a swell of support for his decisive action against supposed enemy aggression. Later, however, it became increasingly clear to the U.S. Congress and the American public that they had been misled about the events leading up to the alleged incident. Further, the uncertainty surrounding the Tonkin Gulf incidents soon began to feed into a popular conspiracy theory that the attacks were deliberately provoked in order to escalate U.S. involvement in the conflict.

On 2 August 1964, the first open confrontation between Democratic Republic of Vietnam forces and the U.S. military took place when three North Vietnamese patrol boats attacked the *Maddox* in the Gulf

of Tonkin. When the *Maddox* returned fire two of the enemy vessels fled, while one was sunk. This attack by the North Vietnamese, however, was not unprovoked. The *Maddox* had been operating in North Vietnamese territorial waters (which the U.S. government denied), as part of a string of covert operations (the DeSoto Missions) against the North Vietnamese coast. While not technically an electronic espionage ship, the *Maddox* was outfitted with additional electronic surveillance equipment and personnel to monitor Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) radio communications. These missions, part of a campaign code-named OPLAN-34A (Operations Plan 34 Alpha), consisted of attacks carried out by Republic of Vietnam (RVN) ships, but coordinated by the U.S. Navy. One of these missions included the shelling of two Democratic Republic of Vietnam coastal islands on the night/early morning of 30–31 July. On the following night, the *Maddox* approached one of the islands that had been shelled, apparently in an effort to ascertain the extent of enemy defenses for the



USS *Maddox* (DD-731) at sea. (Library of Congress)



planning of future missions. After being harassed by the *Maddox*, the North Vietnamese dispatched three torpedo boats that launched an unsuccessful attack.

On 3 August 1964, the *Maddox* was joined by a second U.S. navy destroyer, the *C. Turner Joy*, and continued patrolling the Gulf of Tonkin. This assignment, however, was carried out much farther from the North Vietnamese coast than the *Maddox*'s mission of the night of 30–31 July. The following evening, while still operating in the gulf, radarmen aboard the *C. Turner Joy* picked up “blips” on their screens, which they interpreted as attacking enemy vessels, and fired at these supposed targets. The *C. Turner Joy*, however, was unable to pick up sounds of these ships with its sonar. On the USS *Maddox*, radar was unable to discern any enemy attackers, but sonar detected some noises that were interpreted as North Vietnamese torpedo motors. As the destroyers fired at “ghost” targets, carrier aircraft were also called in and two torpedo boat sinkings were claimed.

Captain John Herrick, patrol commander of the U.S. forces in the Gulf of Tonkin, immediately expressed doubts that an attack by the DRV had taken place. However, in Washington, intercepted North Vietnamese communications were examined and were said to provide evidence that an attack had been launched by the DRV. It seems likely, however, that the messages actually referred to the attack of 2 August, and were misinterpreted by U.S. officials including President Lyndon Johnson, who had been reassured by Pacific naval commander Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp of the authenticity of the attack. In response, Johnson ordered retaliatory air strikes (Operation Pierce Arrow) against the North Vietnamese. The sixty-four sorties destroyed eight and damaged another twenty-four DRV gunboats and laid waste to 10 percent of North Vietnam's oil storage facilities at a cost of two U.S. aircraft.

Johnson then requested the U.S. Congress to pass a joint resolution of support for South Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution provided Johnson with a free hand to escalate U.S. military action in Southeast Asia that had already been rapidly increasing since 1961.

*Nicholas Turse*

**See also:** Johnson, Lyndon Baines

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## Torbitt Document

The Torbitt Document, also called the Torbitt Memorandum or just “the Torbitt,” started circulating in 1970. It came in the form of a multigenerational photocopy passed among Kennedy assassination researchers during the time of New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison's JFK investigation. The Torbitt contained information that came from Garrison's investigators, but also included material later found important to Garrison.

Its only photographs were of the three tramps picked up in the rail yard at Dealey Plaza, which Garrison had displayed on the Johnny Carson Show on U.S. television. The Torbitt names these tramps as Fred Crisman, Thomas Edward Beckham, and Albert Osborne. According to the Torbitt, the three were working for a secret group called Defense Industrial Security Command (DISC), through a right-wing front group known as the American Council of Christian Churches. In the film *JFK* (1991) Oliver Stone popularized Garrison's later attempt to bring a prosecution in the Kennedy assassination, but the film left out the main thrust of Garrison's arguments, namely that JFK's death resulted from espionage within the machinations of the transnational aerospace industry.

At 157 pages, the Torbitt claims to have information on a wide range of subjects, notably another secret spy group known as Division Five of the FBI, and J. Edgar Hoover's continuing involvement in the assassination and its cover-up. It also details the involvement of Werner Von Braun, deputy NASA administrator, in obtaining the Apollo contract for North American Aviation in 1961. Von Braun was a

Nazi rocket scientist brought to the United States under the auspices of Operation Paperclip who became a leading NASA administrator after the war. He and his associate Walter Dornberger, mentioned in the Torbitt as a directing officer of Bell Aerospace, had used slave prison labor at the Nordhausen underground rocket works in Nazi Germany.

The Torbitt also claims that Ferenc Nagy, the former prime minister of Hungary, actually appears on the Zapruder film of the assassination as the infamous “umbrella man.” The “umbrella man” holds up an umbrella during the shooting sequence, seemingly to coordinate shots from the grassy knoll, the book depository, and the Dal-Tex building. Congressional investigators later produced a man named Louis Stitt as the umbrella man, who claimed he was trying to use the umbrella as a symbol for Neville Chamberlain (although that explanation seemed far-fetched to some investigators).

A now deceased Texas lawyer named David Copeland is credited with having pieced together the Torbitt document and presenting it under the pseudonym of “William Torbitt” in order to defend “honest right-wing conservatives” from accusations that they murdered Kennedy. In original form, the document contained mismatched, awkward, and missing references as well as odd capitalization and punctuation. It was cleaned up for the Internet and published in book form for the first time in 1996. Conspiracy researcher Robin Ramsay called it “typical smart-ass CIA stuff to muddy the pool,” while other theories have emerged that it was disinformation planted by the Soviets to destabilize the U.S. government. The Torbitt Document only had one legal challenge, with the publication of the 1996 book, when David Ferrie (the former airline pilot implicated in Garrison’s investigation of the Kennedy assassination) sued the publisher for defamation. The case was thrown out of court.

*Kenneth Thomas*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Operation Paperclip.

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### Trilateral Commission

The Trilateral Commission was the brainchild of David Rockefeller, chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank and grandson of John D. Rockefeller. Rockefeller got the idea for the commission after reading Columbia University professor Zbigniew Brzezinski’s book *Between Two Ages*, which called for strengthened alliances between the world’s three dominant economic regions—North America, Western Europe, and Japan. At Rockefeller’s request, Brzezinski formed the Trilateral Commission in 1973, its stated purpose being “to help think through the common challenges and leadership responsibilities of these democratic industrialized areas in the wider world.” The commission, essentially a glorified discussion group, was originally intended to survive for only three years—a triennia—but it has continually elected to renew its mission. Since 1973 its membership has broadened and diversified: the Japan Group is now the Pacific Asian Group, Mexican members have been invited into the North American Group, and the European Group has expanded to accommodate an expanding European Union.

There are two conspiracy theories regarding the Trilateral Commission. The first theory says that the Trilateralists schemed to make enormous loans to Third World nations in the 1970s oil crisis and then conspired to strengthen the International Monetary Fund, which would offer additional credit as a way of guaranteeing their previous loans. The second and more pervasive Trilateral conspiracy theory dictates that the commission is designing to take over the world through control of the U.S. presidency. This idea dates to the commission’s 1973 debut. Among its initial membership was Georgia governor Jimmy Carter—who was considering a bid for the presidency in 1976. Rockefeller and Brzezinski were so impressed with Carter, the theory holds, that they began engineering Carter’s eventual victory through backroom deals and manipulation of media elites.

Once elected, Carter appointed a number of Trilateralists to his administration, including Cyrus Vance as secretary of state and Brzezinski as national security advisor. Conspiracy theorists, as upset as they were about Trilateral machinations in the 1976 elections, were stunned by the field of presidential candidates in 1980, which included two more commission members: Congressman John Anderson and former United Nations ambassador, CIA director, and Congressman George H. W. Bush. Theorists were temporarily relieved when it became clear that Bush and Anderson were out of the running for the presidency, but recoiled when Republican nominee Ronald Reagan named Bush as his running mate and, when he succeeded Carter, appointed commission member Casper Weinberger as his secretary of defense. The Trilateral conspiracy theory reached its apogee in 1984 when Reagan hosted a White House reception for commission members. Since that time, however, the Trilateralist conspiracy has lost some of its appeal, despite the fact that two more commission members have been elected president of the United States—George Bush, Sr., in 1988 and William Jefferson Clinton in 1992 and 1996.

*R. Volney Riser*

**See also:** Rockefeller Family.

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## Trusts

Since the Civil War and the industrialization of the United States in the late nineteenth century, the corporate monopoly, or trust, has been a central problem in the ongoing struggle between capitalism and democracy. From the railroads to Microsoft, economists tend to explain the formation and persistence of trusts as the inevitable result of basic capitalist processes of accumulation and centralization (such as mergers and acquisitions). Given the

extraordinary economic power of amassed wealth, a monopoly is able to overcome—if not dictate—what are generally held to be basic market forces such as pricing, distribution, and demand. But on a political and even moral level, large sectors of U.S. society have historically viewed trusts, and the hugely powerful plutocrats who dominate them (J. P. Morgan or Bill Gates), as a vast economic conspiracy destined to subvert competition, undermine democratic freedoms, and enslave society.

Beginning, perhaps, with Andrew Jackson's fight against the Bank of the United States before the Civil War, U.S. popular politics has maintained a deep distrust of centralized economic power. Many historians have pointed out how the belief in free competition has long been an essential moral and political component of the national identity and Americans' sense of individualism. Following the tremendous economic growth fed by the Civil War, northern industries—led by the railroads—expanded and restructured themselves into the first modern corporate enterprises. Fueled by major innovations in banking and finance capitalism, single incorporated entities began to seize hold of entire industries like steel, oil, shipping, lumber, tobacco, textiles, and beef. Headed by a board of trustees and owned by stockholders, the new corporate trusts generated so much capital that they easily subsumed the smaller, family-owned or proprietary capitalists. Shortly before his assassination, Abraham Lincoln is alleged to have warned the nation of the growing power of the trusts: "I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. . . . Corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money-power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed." At their origins, the modern corporation was seen by union members, poets, and politicians alike as predatory, insatiable, totalizing in its influence, and rapidly growing beyond the power of even the growing federal government to control.

By the 1880s many Americans believed that Lincoln's warning (or, at the very least, the quotation

mistakenly attributed to him) had come to pass and the “incorporation of America” was complete. The Gilded Age had given birth to the “Robber Barons,” a plutocracy of capitalists like J. J. Hill, Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller. The previously unimaginable personal fortunes of these few (Rockefeller was the first billionaire in the world) were proof of the severe inequalities produced by the trusts. On a political level, these “Lords of Industry” seemed simply to pull the necessary strings and the powers of state and civil society would bend to meet their every need. To combat this awesome threat, a wide range of popular social movements spread across the country: labor unions, farmer’s cooperatives, populists and socialists, middle-class reformers, and a new breed of investigative journalists, known as Muckrakers. Together these voices demanded that some limit be placed upon the power of centralized capital.

In 1890, Congress tried to co-opt this popular cause by enacting the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. In the words of Senator Sherman himself, this law was needed because “the popular mind is agitated with problems that may disturb the social order.” In the language of the law itself, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act declared illegal “every contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce.” With this phrase, the Sherman Act seemed to give voice to the popular perception of trusts as criminal conspiracies as well as vast political conspiracies destined to restrain freedom. However, in the court of law this wording is so deliberately loose that many historians believe that the Sherman Act was never really designed to effectively limit capital accumulation at all. In fact, during its first several decades of enforcement, the “conspiracy in restraint of free trade” clause of the Sherman Act was more frequently used to ban labor unions than it was to ensure competition among their employers.

By the Progressive Era, every individual area of industry was colonized and dominated by an “interlocking directorate” of trusts. “The Trust Question” was the political problem of the day. In a carefully calculated gesture to popular demands, several politicians including Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wil-

son effectively pitched themselves as “trust busters.” Wilson especially made his bid for the presidency with the conspiratorial rhetoric of the antitrust movement, asserting that “an invisible empire has been set up above the forms of democracy.” Upton Sinclair, a committed socialist, attacked the dangers behind beef trust in his novel *The Jungle*. Muckraking pioneer Ida Tarbell grew famous through her scandalous exposés of the competitive secrets (such as blowing up their competitors’ wells) of the Standard Oil corporation. And political cartoonists loved to depict trusts as an enormous octopus or as a giant plutocrat grabbing for power. Of course, though some changes were made, it would take decades for the Justice Department and the courts to break up effectively such obvious monopolies as the U.S. Steel Company or Rockefeller’s Standard Oil.

In the years after World War I, the Sherman Act was successfully used to break up several major trusts, including Standard Oil and the American Tobacco Company. In its day-to-day function, the Sherman Act proved far more effective as a regulatory statute, preventing mergers and corporate conspiracies before they could occur. In the latter half of the twentieth century, two of the biggest trusts effectively busted were the motion picture “Studio System” and AT&T. And while these antitrust actions have been decidedly nonconspiratorial, the 1990s witnessed the return of the giant corporate trust conspiracy in the form of the Clinton administration’s antitrust case against Microsoft. Whether or not Microsoft constitutes a conspiracy in restraint of free trade, there is certainly no shortage of people around the world (mostly hanging out in Internet chatrooms) who would argue that Microsoft and its sinisterly geeky chairman represent a vast conspiracy to take over the world—or at least the computer software market.

*Michael Cohen*

**See also:** Bank of the United States; Corporations; Jackson, Andrew; Microsoft; Populism; Rockefeller Family.

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### Turner, Nat

Nat Turner (1800–1831), the leader of the 1831 Southampton Conspiracy, was born in Virginia as the property of Benjamin Turner. His mother was a first-generation slave born in Africa and took care to instill a deep resentment of slavery in her son as well as to pass along traditional African customs, which included the belief in physical signs of success and greatness that she found on Nat's face and body in the form of birthmarks. The Turner family allowed Nat to be educated alongside their own children as a playmate and confidante, so that Nat became literate, and with great scientific curiosity conducted experiments with explosives, papermaking, and construction.

Financial failures and deaths among the Turner family, however, meant that Nat lost his favored place in the master's family, and was inherited, sold, and traded to three different groups of relatives, each time forced to change his surname and accept the lower status of a field slave. Nat's activities soon centered around his lay preaching, based on his Methodist education but flavored with African traditions and a growing millennialism slaves found attractive, since it promised them escape from bondage. A series of visions, beginning in 1828, led Nat to believe he was a chosen leader, meant to free the slaves in a violent war against their masters, and he cultivated the reputation of a holy man, shunning alcohol, tobacco, and rich foods. Far from restricting his preaching and travels, the Turners encouraged Nat, since they believed Christianity helped keep the slaves subdued and obedient, and they trusted Nat to traverse the area at all hours.

During Nat Turner's lifetime, slave revolts had been occurring with regularity, including the Andry plantation insurrection in Louisiana, the failed conspiracy of Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, and Gabriel Prosser's rebellion in Richmond, Virginia. Nat used his ability to read and to accumulate information in order to study these failed revolts and plan his own without their flaws. Fearing betrayal from house servants sentimentally attached to their master's families, Nat drew his six lieutenants from the field hands of the Turner and neighboring plantations and small farms, and organized them in independent cells, without the fatal knowledge of each other's existence. Plans for the coming rebellion remained in Nat's hands, written in detail as encoded maps, lists, and prophetic statements, sometimes written on handmade paper in his own blood.

After seeing an eclipse on 13 August 1831, Nat believed he had received a sign for the rebellion to commence. His coconspirators, eager to begin, received their instructions: gather their cells of supporters and move quickly to kill all slave owners as they moved toward the county seat of Southampton, Jerusalem, leaving no one alive to warn others. En route, they would free slaves, secure supplies and arms, and eventually raise all of Virginia's enslaved population in revolt. The men set off in the evening of 13 August and attacked first their masters' farms, then ranged outward, striking with great speed and discipline, killing the whites and gathering more rebellious slaves to their cause. Interestingly, the rebels spared the small farm of a poor white family without slaves, judging them to be as disadvantaged as slaves themselves.

The following morning, the bloodied bodies of the slain were discovered, triggering a panic in which whites fled their farms, often running into parties of the rebels, who slaughtered them. The Virginia militia, hastily summoned, moved to defend the county seat and set up an outpost at Parker's Farm, one of the last before the city of Jerusalem. The rebels scattered the first party of men they encountered, but were thrown into disarray by militia reinforcement when they attempted to pursue them. Unable to take the arsenal at Jerusalem, the rebels attacked more



The discovery of Nat Turner. (North Wind Picture Archive)

outlying plantations, but had lost their advantage of surprise, and found themselves hampered by the slaves roaming the area trying to join them. The militia, meanwhile, called on federal reinforcements from Fort Monroe, and these fresh, professional soldiers skirmished successfully against the tired, hungry, and poorly supplied rebels.

Nat Turner, hoping to rally his forces for another assault, went into hiding at Cabin Pond, his original

headquarters, but none of his lieutenants survived to join him. Federal soldiers, joined by marines from the port of Norfolk and an enlarged Virginia militia, scoured the countryside, arresting and then executing sixteen slaves found armed and in revolt. Torture of prisoners, including Nat's common-law wife, free blacks in Richmond, and Turner farm slaves eventually led to Nat's surrender on 30 October after two months in hiding. While Nat was imprisoned, his

lawyer, T. R. Gray, took a careful account of his experience and the conduct of the rebellion, noting that the insurrection had not been triggered by any specific mistreatment, but was instead an outpouring of resentment and rage against the slaveholding system. Gray later published these documents as the *Confessions of Nat Turner*. Nat pleaded guilty, refusing to admit any feelings of guilt for the deaths of approximately sixty slave-owning whites, and was hanged on 11 November. The state of Virginia paid his owners a compensation of \$375 for the loss of their property.

The rebellion terrified slave owners and resulted in the introduction of draconian slave codes throughout the South, restricting slaves' ability to meet in groups, punishing possession of printed materials thought to inspire rebellion, and increasing border and slave patrols. The state of Georgia even went so far as to single out abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison as the chief instigator of the revolt and offered a reward for his death. The immediate success of Nat Turner's rebellion was based on his ability to conceal his plans and maintain discipline among his coconspirators. Their defeat at the hands of the militia and federal troops came only after several days, and was restricted by their inability to secure more ammunition and supplies. As a rebellion, these men compare favorably to modern guerilla movements in their effectiveness and their ability to throw the majority population into terror and disarray.

*Margaret Sankey*

**See also:** Slave Revolts.

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## TWA 800

Trans World Airlines Flight 800, a Boeing 747-131 en route from John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York to Charles De Gaulle International Airport in Paris, exploded in a fireball on 17 July 1996 at 8:31 P.M. All 230 passengers, as well as the 18 crew, were killed. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which was responsible for the investigation, determined that the probable cause of the crash was an explosion in the center wing fuel tank that had a "flammable mixture of fuel/air" in the tank, although the source of ignition could not be determined by the investigators. They theorized that "a short circuit" outside the tank allowed "excessive voltage to enter it through electrical wiring associated with the fuel quantity indication system." These and other details were included in the NTSB's final report.

Multiple witnesses, however, claimed to have seen trails that resembled those made by a missile. Many reported seeing objects "streaking" toward the aircraft. Investigators later explained those "sightings" as after-the-fact *falling* debris. Above all, NTSB investigators seemed to have difficulty identifying the "red residue" on some of the recovered seats—residue not typical of an internal explosion, but rather of (depending on the expert) a "pass through" missile's exhaust motors or an outside explosion.

Only a few months after the crash, James Sanders, a former police officer and investigative journalist, published *The Downing of Flight 800*, which contended that a U.S. Navy missile, fired from an Aegis cruiser on exercises in the waters below Flight 800, had accidentally brought down the aircraft. Among Sanders's claims:

- A "bullet-like" entrance and exit wound in the aircraft cabin
- Thirty-four independent witnesses to a missile-type streak
- Photographic "proof" of the missile
- An "original" Federal Aviation Administration radar report that indicated an "unidentified object" approaching TWA 800, which the "FBI tried to suppress"



- Confirmation of navy exercises below
- The by-then famous “red residue”

Later, in 2001, Ian Williams Goddard, in *Ubiquity* (a magazine for self-touted “mega-IQs”), analyzed the tests performed by the NTSB, and concluded that the agency had precluded the question of whether or not the impact could have been caused by a missile by adopting test criteria that excluded missile explosions outside a certain proximity. Goddard claimed that the evidence associated with the hole showed fragments “moving downward” and striking TWA 800 behind the center wing tank. Goddard, like Sanders, makes a case for “evidence tampering” by the investigators.

Goddard had been the lead “missile” advisor to Pierre Salinger, the former ABC newsman who on 8 November 1996 claimed to have evidence that the navy accidentally shot down TWA 800. Ironically, Salinger offered yet another view of the explosion—rather than a missile, Salinger claimed it was a kinetic energy or continuous rod-type weapon. Of course, that undercut Goddard’s theory and, while the effect of a kinetic energy weapon may have been to cut the aircraft in half, it would not leave the “red residue” claimed by Sanders and others.

The evidence assembled by Goddard and Sanders, as well as many others, appears convincing . . . until compared to each other. Indeed, so far the greatest single argument against a missile theory of any one of the conspiracy theorists is the evidence produced by another. For example, in Sanders’s scenario, the navy fired a BQM-74E drone missile, which was to be the “target” for a test involving the Aegis antimissile/antiaircraft defensive systems. When the navy fired a Standard antimissile missile, it failed to acquire the drone, and instead acquired TWA 800, but, lacking a warhead, simply “passed through” the aircraft, slicing it in half prior to an explosion some eight seconds later. This “pass through” missile was, in Sanders’s explanation, what accounted for the “red residue” on the seats. The strength of Sanders’s story is that it eliminates shoulder-fired “Stinger” missiles that might be used by terrorists because of both the radar signature and

the range limitations of the Stinger. But, according to Sanders, the FBI encouraged talk of Stinger missiles to throw investigators off the trail of the real culprit, a rogue navy Standard missile.

However, Ian Goddard maintains that several witnesses had reported seeing the same missile trail, in virtually the same spot if their viewpoints were adjusted for their land location. So far, Goddard’s theory does not contradict Sanders’s. But his evidence of outside penetration behind the center fuel tank is starkly contrasted with Sanders’s claim that the fuselage was penetrated by the Standard missile *in front of* the fuel tank. Sanders more accurately accounts for the odd separation of the front part of the aircraft from the rear, but Goddard more accurately explains the cause of a midair explosion. Again, however, there is not radar data to support either a pass-through missile or a missile that exploded outside the rear of TWA 800.

The NTSB failed to address either of these allegations, instead testing Stinger missiles and concluding (some would say, obviously) that the Stingers did not have the range to reach TWA 800. Thus, mysterious reports about “escape boats” that might have carried ground-based terrorists cannot be reconciled with a “navy-did-it-accidentally” theory. (Both Sanders and Goddard point out that there were previous suspicious explosions, such as Pan Am 103, which blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, leading some to link TWA 800 with those “attacks” as well.)

But the NTSB also failed to consider other theories that would have proved equally damaging to the allegations of Sanders and Goddard. Elmer Barr, for example, contends that a faulty forward door not only caused the TWA 800 crash, but also several other (in his view, unexplained) crashes. Barr does not attempt to explain the “red residue,” and makes no bones about it, saying he is not a chemist. However, his timeline of the front-door collapse tracks more closely with the events of TWA 800 than either the Sanders pass-through missile or the Goddard outside-explosion scenario.

Two things can be stated with certainty as of 2002 about the TWA 800 crash: there are a number of unexplained aspects of this case (as there are in every



case), and so far, no single piece of physical evidence or uncorrupted firsthand sworn testimony has been produced to indict the otherwise admittedly tenuous NTSB finding. Theories such as Barr's are intriguing, but again do not explain other odd elements of the case. One theory seems to be easily ruled out—that of a terrorist using a Stinger missile to down the plane. And, in the wake of the arrest of the London “shoe-bomber,” it would be worthwhile for the NTSB or FBI to revisit the cause of the explosion as perhaps involving such a terrorist strike, as that tactic was not considered at the time of the explosion.

*Larry Schweikart*

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## UFOs

Although the modern UFO era dates from Kenneth Arnold's 1947 sighting in Washington State, the first mass sighting of UFOs in the United States took place between November 1896 and May 1897. Described as "airships" by the people who witnessed them, these early UFOs were usually characterized as silent with white and colored lights, and, like modern UFOs, were said sometimes to land and, rarely, to carry occupants. Unlike twentieth-century UFOs, however, the occupants of nineteenth-century airships were, with very few exceptions, described as human. While some theories of the time speculated that the airships were Martian in origin, in general the public believed that they were invented and operated by humans, despite the fact that the modern dirigible was not developed until several years later. There was no sense that the government had any additional information about the phenomenon or that facts were being withheld from the public—the idea that there is a government conspiracy to hide the truth about UFOs did not emerge until the twentieth century.

During World War II anomalous lights and aircraft sighted by military pilots as early as 1941 came to be known as "foo fighters." The Allies speculated at the time that they were of German or Japanese origin, and later discovered that German and Japanese pilots had reported the same phenomena and had assumed they were Allied craft. In 1946–1948 sightings of what were called "ghost rockets" began in Sweden. These "rockets" were said to crash on

land and water, and the U.S. and Swedish governments erroneously believed that the Soviets were firing V-2 rockets taken from the Germans during the war. The "foo fighters" and "ghost rockets" have never been fully explained to the satisfaction of some UFO believers, but the only conspiracies they suggested were those of enemy countries.

Conspiracy theories about UFOs were born in the twentieth century, but were not a part of the controversy surrounding the next appearance of spacecraft on 24 June 1947. Kenneth Arnold, a Boise, Idaho, businessman and private pilot, saw nine bright objects traveling at a speed he estimated at 1,700 miles per hour in the area of Mount Rainier, Washington. The term "flying saucer" was not used by Arnold to describe what he saw; rather, it was created by a newspaper writer who adapted it from Arnold's description of the crafts' movements as resembling "a saucer skipping over water." The opinion of both Arnold and the press was that he had seen guided missiles, and there was no hint of a governmental effort to deceive the public. On 8 July 1947, the Roswell, New Mexico, newspaper the *Roswell Daily Record* carried the headline "RAAF Captures Flying Saucer on Ranch in Roswell Region," but the air force quickly denied the claim and insisted on 9 July that what had been found was "the crushed remains of a ray wind target used to determine the direction and velocity of winds at a high altitude." The "Roswell Incident," as it became known when the story reemerged as a conspiracy narrative in the late 1970s, later included the assumption that the air

force had captured the remnants of alien spacecraft and alien bodies, but at the time it received little publicity after the air force's denial. An August 1947 Gallup Poll revealed that while 90 percent of the American public was familiar with "flying saucers," most people believed that they were in actuality secret weapons or hoaxes.

In December 1947 the United States Air Force began its first formal inquiry into UFOs. Called Project Sign, it was located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, then known as Wright Field, and had as its scientific consultant Dr. J. Allen Hynek, an astronomer from Ohio State University who headed the McMullan Observatory. Hynek, who was early on a skeptic, later became an advocate of the extraterrestrial theory of UFOs, and at the time of Project Sign the air force contained both terrestrial and extraterrestrial factions. The two most important cases investigated by Project Sign were the 7 January 1948 crash of Kentucky Air National Guard captain Thomas Mantell, whose F-51 crashed as he chased what he described as a large metallic object (the air force first claimed he had seen the planet Venus and later explained the object was a Skyhook balloon), and the sighting on 24 July 1948, by Clarence Chiles and John Whitted, who were piloting a DC-3 over Alabama. Both men, a passenger, and a witness on the ground reported a cigar-shaped UFO. The Chiles-Whitted case, as it became known, has never been explained.

By September 1948 the Project Sign team had written a top secret "Estimate of the Situation," which determined that UFOs were probably extraterrestrial. When the report reached air force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg, he claimed it had not proven its case, declassified the report, and ordered all copies burned. No copy of the document has survived. Later, Project Sign admitted that it could not explain 20 percent of the cases it chose to investigate. When on 16 December 1948 Project Sign was reorganized and renamed Project Grudge, those supporting the nonterrestrial explanations of UFOs were in ascendancy, and the air force, which increasingly considered UFOs a public relations problem, characterized sightings and reports as hoaxes, hysterical responses, or misidentifications.

One of the first known attempts by the air force to manipulate media coverage of UFOs came in 1949, when it cooperated with Sidney Shallett of the *Saturday Evening Post* to produce a two-part article that appeared on 30 April and 7 May 1949. The article, which assumed a very skeptical stance toward its subject, was meant to discourage public interest in the phenomenon; instead, days after the articles appeared, UFO reports increased significantly and Shallett's piece aroused the interest of retired marine major Donald Keyhoe, who became a well-known and aggressive advocate of the extraterrestrial theory of UFOs and a spokesperson for government conspiracy theories. His January 1950 article in *True* magazine titled "The Flying Saucers Are Real" asserted that "living, intelligent observers" from another planet had been watching the earth for 175 years. The article received a great deal of attention and was followed in March by a second article arguing for the extraterrestrial explanation of UFOs written by navy commander Robert McLaughlin. The release in 1951 of two major motion pictures, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing*, reflected Hollywood's understanding of increased public interest in UFOs. Both films, which did well at the box office, provide the future models for attitudes toward alien involvement in human life: in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* the UFO occupant is concerned with eliminating violence, particularly nuclear war, on earth, while the creature who crashes to earth in *The Thing* is a dangerous and predatory entity that must be eliminated.

In 1951 Project Grudge was reorganized with Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, who was less hostile to UFO research, at its head. Because of increased sightings in early 1952, the air force changed Project Grudge's name to Project Blue Book, and under Ruppelt's direction Blue Book began actively investigating UFO reports. During the summer of 1952 one of the most famous UFO events took place over the Washington, D.C., area from 10 to 26 July. Objects reported by commercial pilots, ground observers, and air force pilots were picked up on radarscopes at Washington National Airport and Andrews Air Force Base, and air force jets were sent in pursuit of the objects, which eluded the aircraft. During a 29 July

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air force press conference, Major General John Samford stated that the air force believed the incidents were a result of temperature inversions, an explanation that for the most part satisfied the public and the media. However, the increased media attention to UFO reports led to the formation of the first two civilian UFO research groups, the Civilian Saucer Investigation group (CSI) of Los Angeles and the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), headed by Jim and Coral Lorenzen.

By the end of 1952 sightings had decreased, but the CIA had become involved in UFO reports because it feared that the phenomenon might be dangerous for national security. The Robertson Panel, which took its name after Dr. H. P. Robertson, was formed to determine if UFOs posed such a threat. On 14 January 1953, the panel convened for twelve hours of study and determined that while UFOs posed no military threat, they could cause mass hysteria and were taking up too much time to investigate. The panel advised the air force to “debunk” UFOs in order to reduce public interest and to begin “education” by the mass media. The panel concluded that UFOs could “cultivate a morbid national psychology in which skillful hostile propaganda could induce hysterical behavior and harmful distrust of duly constituted authority,” and civilian UFO groups “should be watched because of their potentially great influence on mass thinking.” The conclusions of the Robertson Panel, which were later made public incrementally, created an attitude of distrust in those who began to suspect the U.S. government of attempting to hide information about UFOs. Edward Ruppelt’s departure from Project Blue Book in 1953 and the proposals of the Robertson Panel meant that serious investigation of UFOs by the air force effectively ended. Until Blue Book’s demise in 1969, the air force treated UFO sightings, for the most part, as a public relations problem.

Several books published in 1953 illustrate the wide spectrum of opinion about UFOs that was present at the time. Donald Keyhoe’s *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* sold a half million copies; as in his earlier *The Flying Saucers Are Real* (1950), he maintained that the air force knew that UFOs were extraterrestrial, and he continued to voice this opinion

until his death in 1988. Dr. Donald Menzel, Harvard astronomer and head of the Harvard Observatory from 1954 to 1966, published *Flying Saucers* in 1953, the first of several books that attacked the extraterrestrial theory of UFOs. Menzel, who explained UFOs as hoaxes, practical jokes, and interactions between light and atmospheric conditions, would remain the most vocal and respected UFO debunker until his death in 1976. Also published in 1953 was “Professor” George Adamski’s *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. Adamski was the most famous member of the contactee movement in the 1950s. The contactees claimed to have had direct contact with aliens, who were usually described as tall, blond, and beautiful, and several contactees insisted that they had traveled to other planets, usually Venus, with their intergalactic friends. These aliens were said to live on utopian planets and to have come to Earth to spread their message of peace and love to less evolved human beings. The publicity that surrounded contactees continued to be a problem for more serious UFO researchers and led to resistance on the part of UFO civilian research groups to investigate cases that involved UFO occupants.

In 1955 Project Blue Book released Special Report Number 14, which stated that there was no reason to believe that UFOs were interplanetary craft and that most UFO sightings had mundane explanations. This was a controversial report that elicited much criticism from UFO proponents. One year later the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), a civilian investigative group, was formed, and in January 1957 Donald Keyhoe became its director. Public interest and UFO sightings had declined by 1958, but the number of reports to Project Blue Book remained between 500 and 600 per year.

One of the most famous and well-documented UFO sighting cases occurred on 24 April 1964, in Socorro, New Mexico. Lonnie Zamora, a policeman, was pursuing a speeding car when he witnessed a landed oval-shaped metallic object from which two small figures in white coveralls had emerged. He reported that the craft later elevated with a roaring sound and disappeared, but left behind four trapezoid-shaped imprints. The case



was investigated by J. Allen Hynek for Project Blue Book and was important in changing his former skeptical attitudes toward UFOs. The head of Blue Book at the time, Major Hector Quintanilla, endorsed Zamora's reliability as a witness and characterized the incident as "the best documented case on record" in an article for the CIA journal *Studies in Intelligence*. The Zamora case is the only Blue Book case categorized as "unidentified" that combined a landing, trace evidence, and sighting of occupants. One result of Zamora's experience was that NICAP, like APRO, began to investigate more seriously reports that involved UFO occupants.

The increased number of sightings from 1965 to 1967 led to a renewed public interest in UFOs. In August 1965 many sightings in Texas were reported, and the air force received criticism from a number of newspapers when it dismissed the objects as stars and the planet Jupiter. Hynek suggested that the air force create a panel of nonmilitary scientists to look into the UFO problem and to recommend a course of action. The six-member "Ad Hoc Committee to Review Project Blue Book," headed by Dr. Brian O'Brien, met on 3 February 1966. It recommended strengthening Project Blue Book and that the air force should begin discussing contracts with universities to investigate UFOs.

Reports from eighty-seven students at Hillsdale College in Michigan on 20 March 1966 that they had seen a football-shaped UFO, and a subsequent sighting in the nearby town of Dexter by five individuals, including two policemen, led to a Blue Book investigation in which Hynek told a press conference that what was seen was probably "marsh gas." This explanation was mocked by the media, particularly by *Life* magazine and the *New Yorker*. Republican congressman and minority leader Gerald R. Ford demanded hearings by the House Armed Services Committee on the subject of UFOs, which were held on 5 April. Hynek testified that the data on UFOs accumulated since 1948 "deserves close scrutiny by a civilian panel of physical and social scientists." Mendel Rivers, who chaired the committee, and the air force agreed. Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Cal-

ifornia refused the assignment, but on 6 October 1966, the University of Colorado agreed to undertake the study, with the respected physicist Dr. Edward U. Condon at its head.

The Condon Report, as it became known, was given \$525,000 to study the UFO phenomenon. It experienced serious difficulties from the beginning because it contained warring factions of believers and nonbelievers, and Condon was criticized for his attitudes toward UFOs. Unabashedly skeptical, he tended to focus on contactee claims and made speeches that ridiculed the subject of UFOs. Released on 9 January 1969, the 963-page report concluded that "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge. . . . further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby." The result was the termination of Project Blue Book, announced by Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans on 17 December 1969, who, citing the Condon Report, informed the public that UFOs were not a threat to national security, that they did not represent a technology beyond the abilities of present-day science, and that there was no evidence that they were extraterrestrial. While most scientists agreed with Condon's findings, J. Allen Hynek wrote in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* that the report could be compared with "Mozart producing an uninspiring pot-boiler, unworthy of his talents." The end of air force involvement in UFO research was paralleled by the sharp decline in UFO sightings in the late 1960s and the worsening fortunes of NICAP, which after a series of financial fiascoes dismissed Donald Keyhoe as its head in December 1969.

In the 1970s, public interest in UFOs once again lessened, as did membership in civilian UFO groups; in particular, NICAP's membership continued to decline. During this decade the focus shifted from unexplained spacecraft to other anomalous phenomena such as the Bermuda Triangle, cattle mutilations, and alien abductions, all of which believers claimed to be implicated in UFO phenomena. Some speculated an extraterrestrial involvement in missing aircraft in the Bermuda Triangle and that aliens were

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responsible for livestock found missing blood and body parts; other theories espoused that the U.S. government was killing cattle as part of an ongoing secret experiment with biological weapons or that the animals were victims of satanic cults.

The original alien abduction story is that of Barney and Betty Hill, who under hypnosis in 1964 related being taken aboard a spacecraft on 19 September 1961, so that small, gray extraterrestrial entities could perform medical experiments upon them. John Fuller's book *The Interrupted Journey*, published in 1966, made the Hills' story public, but it was not until the 1970s that abduction stories became more common. Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker insisted that on 11 October 1973, they were taken aboard a UFO while fishing in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Travis Walton claimed that he was abducted by aliens on 5 November 1975, in the Sitgreaves National Forest near Snowflake, Arizona, and was returned six days later. Skeptics noted that Walton's alleged abduction occurred days after the made-for-television film of the Hills' abduction, *The UFO Incident*, aired on NBC on 20 October 1975.

While early abduction stories contained references to UFOs, as abduction became more prominent, spacecraft became less important and in some cases disappeared completely from stories of interactions with aliens. In 1981 New York artist Budd Hopkins published *Missing Time*, a book that proposed that Americans were being regularly abducted by aliens who erased memories of the encounters, but that these could be retrieved through hypnosis. This book was followed in 1987 by his *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods*, the story of a woman named "Kathie Davis" who described being used by aliens for reproductive purposes. Dr. David Jacobs, a history professor at Temple University, published *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* in 1992, a book that continued Hopkins's speculations into the connections between alien abduction and the creation of an alien-human hybrid race; the aliens, Jacobs argued, were harvesting human DNA and using human women as breeders. In 1987, horror novelist Whitley Strieber's *Communion: A True Story*, a rendering of his experiences with unearthly "visitors," became a best-seller that

established the now-stereotypical narrative of alien activity. The short, large-eyed, large-headed, emotionless gray extraterrestrial was later joined by other common alien types, including the more predatory insectoid and reptilian aliens and the tall, benevolent Nordic types.

In the 1990s Harvard psychiatrist Dr. John Mack's involvement in alien abduction research garnered even more publicity for the phenomenon; his 1994 *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens* and more recent *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformations and Alien Encounters* (1999) explored the abduction phenomenon as a spiritual quest in which abductees are instead "experiencers" whose encounters with alien beings are enlightening and beneficial. Mack found himself at odds with Hopkins and Jacobs, who continued to insist that alien beings were conspiring to breed a new species from human DNA. Mack, along with award-winning MIT physicist David Pritchard, organized the five-day 1992 Abduction Study Conference at MIT, which resulted in the publication of C. D. B. Bryan's *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind: A Reporter's Notebook on Alien Abduction, UFOs, and the Conference at MIT* (1995). Although conspiracy theories of governmental knowledge of the phenomena had some mention at this conference, the bulk of the papers and lectures approached abduction from a psychological and physiological perspective.

The 1980s also saw the reemergence of the Roswell story in Charles Berlitz and William L. Moore's *The Roswell Incident* (1980), which claimed alien spacecraft had indeed crashed and been retrieved by the U.S. military. The release of the MJ-12 document in the spring of 1987, which purported that on 24 September 1947 President Truman set up a secret group of twelve well-known scientists and military and governmental experts to deal with crashed UFOs and the bodies of extraterrestrials, became the focus of an ever-increasing number of conspiracy theories about governmental knowledge of and involvement with extraterrestrials. Two of the most outrageous theories were those of John Lear, son of William P. Lear, the aviation expert who invented the Lear jet, and Milton William Cooper. John Lear claimed that he had knowledge of

crashed saucers and that the U.S. military had attempted to learn how to operate these crafts at secret military installations outside Las Vegas, Nevada (known as Area 51), and another near Dulce, New Mexico. The government, according to Lear's scenario, cooperated with the aliens in an exchange of alien technology for permitted abductions of humans; the aliens needed human and cattle DNA both to create android creatures at secret bases in Nevada and New Mexico and to rejuvenate their own dying species. One of Lear's sources was Robert Lazar, who stated that he saw documents and photographs of UFOs and alien autopsies while working at Area 51; Lazar also said that he saw nine extraterrestrial craft and witnessed some of them in flight.

Cooper's imagination exceeded even Lear's. He claimed to have seen secret documents that confirmed the existence of crashed spacecraft and alien corpses, and in his 23 May 1989 document titled "The Secret Government: The Origin, Identity, and Purpose of MJ-12" he described a secret government of CIA agents who actually run the U.S. government, unknown even to various presidents of the United States. A global international group called the Bilderbergers controls all of the earth and, according to Cooper, Eisenhower signed a treaty with aliens from the planet of Betelgeuse that allowed the Betelgeusians to abduct humans for their own purposes; the treaty also established secret underground bases in the Southwest that house thousands of humans and aliens. Cooper theorized that Secretary of Defense James Forrester had been murdered and his death made to appear to be a suicide by the secret government when he threatened to go public with his knowledge of U.S. involvement with the aliens. Cooper's story, a complex and mind-boggling combination of science-fiction fantasies, fears of global takeovers by secret organizations, and speculations about the birth in 1992 of the Antichrist, together with John Lear's tales, were as embarrassing to the more mainstream UFO community as had been the contactee claims of the 1950s. These "Darkside" theories, as they came to be called, became the basis for the continuing conspiracy narrative of alien abduction and governmental involve-

ment in the Fox Network's very successful television series *The X-Files*.

Reported sightings of UFOs and accusations of governmental cover-ups continued in the 1990s, with the most famous example being the Arizona sightings on 13 March 1997, when a large V-shaped formation of lights was said to have flown silently over 300 miles from the Nevada state line through Phoenix to the north of Tucson. Later that night, a series of bright lights that hung over Phoenix's southern horizon were videotaped by a number of witnesses. The military explanation was that the V-formation was a squadron of military planes and that the balls of light were high-intensity flares. As in so many cases in the past, UFO believers accused the government of a cover-up and mocked the military explanation of the events.

The 1990s also saw an increase in the activities of the Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS), a group that was formed in the 1980s by Executive Director Peter A. Gersten. Gersten, a former New York criminal defense attorney, has represented CAUS as the plaintiff in two legal actions under the Freedom of Information Act, the first a lawsuit against the National Security Agency for 135 UFO-related documents and the second against the CIA for 57 documents. On their website CAUS states that the earth is in contact with a "non-human form of intelligence" and that the judicial process is the only effective way to establish governmental knowledge of this fact. CAUS has attempted to retrieve documents on the subject of "flying triangles" from the Department of Defense, which insists that no such documents exist. After the dissolution of citizen research groups such as APRO and NICAP, the remaining citizen group that investigates UFO and alien reports and to some degree discusses conspiracy theories is the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON). Formerly the Midwest UFO Network, MUFON's membership has been declining in recent years as the Internet and talk-radio shows such as those of Jeff Rense and Art Bell have become the forum for discussions of alien activity and governmental cover-ups.

A return to scientific inquiry into UFO activity occurred in the fall of 1997 when Dr. Peter Sturrock, a plasma physicist and former director of the

Center for Space Science and Astrophysics at Stanford University, organized a panel of scientists to study the physical evidence of UFOs. The committee included a number of well-known scientists who met over a four-day period to hear reports from eight respected UFO investigators. The panel concluded that the UFO problem is complex and probably will not yield a simple answer, that scientists can learn from unexplained observations and should concentrate on cases that include strong physical evidence and reputable witness testimony, and that there should be regular contact between scientists and the UFO community with institutional support for research into the UFO phenomenon. The report received much media attention. At the present time only pornographic websites are more visited than UFO/abduction sites on the Internet, and radio, television, and films focusing on the subject attest to the enduring public interest in UFOs and the conspiracy theories that have always surrounded this phenomenon.

*Angela Hague*

**See also:** Area 51; Bell, Art; Cattle Mutilations; MJ-12; Roswell; *The X-Files*.

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## The Unabomber

In April 1996, following what had been the longest criminal investigation in the history of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), law enforcement agents arrested Theodore John Kaczynski, who later admitted to being the elusive Unabomber. Kaczynski's contribution to U.S. conspiracy theory was twofold. First, his conspiracism represented a new turn in anti-statist, anarchistic ideas. His eclectic, anti-technology beliefs were completely idiosyncratic

and drew their inspiration from the conviction that a technophile elite in world society would soon control the global population and, in the process, destroy human freedom.

Second, Kaczynski's lengthy bombing campaign sparked an intensive wave of media attention and resulted in much heated paranoid rhetoric about the identity of the mysterious figure. Because no group ever took responsibility for the bombings, the U.S. media and law-enforcement "profilers" generated numerous theories about the perpetrator's identity. Some of these pointed to the bomber's alleged anti-semitic beliefs, due to the Jewish names of a few targeted victims, while other theories suggested that the suspect was either an extreme right-wing populist or a mentally unbalanced thrill seeker. Despite spending approximately \$50 million in their nearly twenty-year search, authorities long remained stymied in the effort to apprehend the serial bomber whose modus operandi involved mailing concealed explosive devices to university professors with research specializations in fields including genetics, psychology, and computer science, as well as to some corporate executives. Given the pattern of the bomb attacks, which commenced in 1978 and resulted in the deaths of three victims and the wounding of over twenty others, authorities began to call the case "Unabomb," a reference to the university-oriented targeting preferences of the unknown assailant.

The Unabomber's eventual arrest took place following the September 1995 publication in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* of his rambling magnum opus, a 35,000-word manifesto entitled "Industrial Society and Its Future." In letters to both newspapers, the Unabomber offered to end his attacks if his lengthy, apocalyptic statement of anarchist principles was published. Although initially reluctant to submit to this blackmail, the newspapers were urged by FBI Director Louis Freeh and Attorney General Janet Reno to agree to the strange proposal in the hope that readers of the manifesto might recognize its author. Following the full-length printing of the essay, a major breakthrough was made in the case. Having discerned similarities between the writing in the Unabomber's manifesto and the letters of an eccentric family member, David



Kaczynski alerted FBI officials about the connection he perceived to his brother, Theodore Kaczynski.

The origins of the Unabomber's route to violence were unusual. Born in 1942, Theodore Kaczynski grew up in a middle-class home in the suburbs of Chicago. He excelled at school and, at age sixteen, entered Harvard on a scholarship to study mathematics. From 1962 to 1967, Kaczynski was enrolled at the University of Michigan, where he pursued a Ph.D. in mathematics and ultimately was awarded the annual Sumner Meyers Prize for the best doctoral dissertation in the field. In 1967, the shy and introverted Kaczynski was hired as an assistant professor of mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley. Within two years, however, he resigned his position and, following a brief period of travel in the American West and Canada, purchased a tiny piece of property in the mountains near the hamlet of Lincoln, Montana. At this remote site Kaczynski constructed a small cabin and spent the next twenty-five years living the life of a mountain recluse.

### **The Unabomber's Conspiratorial Belief System**

During his long stay in the rugged mountains of western Montana, Kaczynski shaped the highly idiosyncratic, extremist philosophy that led him to adopt a violent strategy. A lifelong lover of nature, Kaczynski harbored deep concerns about the rapid growth of a vast industrial and technological "system" which he felt was leading to great social disruption and the extinction of the natural world. In his view, modern technology and those who advanced it threatened an older and more pristine way of life, one that involved living simply and in interdependence with nature. He saw the early-nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution, in particular, as the marking point from which human society began to degenerate on a "supertechnological" path that left people powerlessly dependent on the "progress" made by modern science. The institutions of science and technology not only had disastrous consequences for the environment, but, according to Kaczynski, also stripped people of their individualism and autonomy as they became pawns in a modern system of global technology dominated

by governments, corporations, and other large organizations.

In his manifesto, Kaczynski laid out with great precision the conspiratorial plot he saw being employed by an elite, global class of technocrats, scientists, and "leftists" bent on subjugating human society to the power of the industrial-technological system. Believing that the growing infiltration of supertechnology into everyday existence would further erode at human independence, Kaczynski argued that the ruling "technocracy" was creating a slave race with an ever-diminishing connection to the ideal, primitivist life he advocated. While his politics have been a matter of some debate, Kaczynski makes clear in his manifesto his hatred of "leftist collectivists," whom he considered (along with the technological elite) to be playing an active role in the degradation of human freedom. As he pointed out in his treatise, the political Left benefited from the technological collectivization of humankind insofar as this trend made it impossible for dissident groups and individuals to control the circumstances of their own lives. Kaczynski believed that the "collectivist philosophy" of the Left, while superficially appealing to many, actually masked a darker impulse to control human behavior.

Although he spoke for no one other than himself in his manifesto, Kaczynski attempted to convey that a small group of revolutionaries (named "FC" to suggest the existence of a multi-person "Freedom Club") opposed the industrial system and was engaged in planning its destruction. His idealized plan involved having this revolutionary cadre work to weaken the economic and technological foundations of modern society to such a degree that a popular revolution against it would be possible. In addition, he maintained that a "counter-ideology" to that of modern technology had to be developed and propagated in order to replace the current system in the postapocalyptic period when "Wild Nature" again returned to guide the course of humankind. From the tenor of the manifesto, Kaczynski clearly believed that the industrial system was already unstable and heading for collapse. However, he believed that its ultimate destruction would take much time and require the assistance of a deter-

mined minority of revolutionaries absolutely devoted to the task. His package bombs, sent to those perceived to be associated with the scientific, organizational, and technological aspects of the system, appear to have been an effort at expediting the revolution by fomenting chaos in the time before the death of the current civilization.

In fall 1997, in Sacramento, California, Kaczynski faced trial in federal court on numerous counts of illegally manufacturing and using bombs, as well as three counts of murder. After receiving the reports of psychiatrists, Kaczynski's lawyers devised a defense that portrayed their client as insane. However, Kaczynski refused to cooperate with the legal strategy and, instead, pleaded guilty to the charges in exchange for the prosecution's word that the death penalty would not be sought. Kaczynski is currently incarcerated at the "Supermax" prison in Florence, Colorado, where he is serving four life terms without possibility of parole.

*Brad Whitsel*

**See also:** Corporations; Militias.

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## The United Nations

The United Nations (UN) has become a central target of contemporary right-wing conspiracy theories. It was established on 24 October 1945 to replace the League of Nations, which had collapsed following its failure to prevent World War II. According to its charter, the UN has four main purposes: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a center for harmonizing

the actions of nations. The six main institutions of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). All of these with the exception of the ICJ are based at UN headquarters in New York. The ICJ is located at The Hague in the Netherlands. Organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization are linked to the UN through cooperative agreements. Together with the United Nations, these organizations make up what is known as the UN system. One hundred and eighty-nine countries are currently members of the UN. The UN does not consider itself to be a "world government." It does not make laws, and each member state remains a sovereign country. The United Nations has, however, been the subject of conspiracy theories almost since it was first created.

As early as 1951 the antisemitic newspaper *Common Sense* expressed concerns about U.S. troops who had issued proclamations in the name of the UN during training exercises in California. The Republican Senator Joseph R. McCarthy investigated the existence of communist plots within the UN during the 1950s, and the far-right John Birch Society, formed by retired candy manufacturer Robert H. Welch in 1958, also saw the UN as part of a Communist conspiracy against the United States. The John Birch Society believed that plans were afoot through the UN for "the establishment of a one-world Communist tyranny over the population of the whole earth." U.S. armed forces would be turned over to the command of the UN, it was argued, and UN troops were actively preparing to take over the country. As a consequence Birchites campaigned vigorously, as they continue to do, to "get the United States out of the United Nations, and the United Nations out of the United States." The Minutemen, a paramilitary organization formed in 1960 by Robert DePugh, further contended that beginning in 1952 U.S. troops acting under UN command had been making "practice seizures" of U.S. cities as part of a communist plot to confiscate the firearms of U.S. citizens.

Although concerns about the UN's role in the creation of a global government have been a staple of

far-right politics in the United States since the 1950s, they were given renewed emphasis by members of the Patriot and militia movements during the 1990s. Publications such as *The Patriot Report*, *Spotlight*, *The Free American*, *Wake-Up Call America*, and *The Resister*; and groups including the Militia of Montana, the Michigan Militia, and Police Against the New World Order all routinely denounced the UN for its conspiratorial intent. Thousands of foreign troops were said to be training in the United States in preparation for a UN takeover of the country. Russian and German tanks had been spotted throughout the nation, as had numerous unmarked “black helicopters” operating under UN command. Yellowstone National Park and other national parks were believed to be under UN control, and secret plans were thought to exist for the mass disarmament of America’s gun owners. Reflective stickers, it was warned, had been added to the backs of road signs to direct UN forces during the takeover and concentration camps had been constructed to house U.S. dissidents. Many Patriots believed that in response to some kind of national emergency, either real or deliberately manufactured, the president would declare martial law and that this would be the signal for the UN occupation of the United States to begin. Some even took the view that the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was the beginning of such a strategy.

Members of the Christian Right have also connected the UN to a conspiracy against the interests of the United States. One of the best examples of this is provided by Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, who published a book called *The New World Order* in 1991. Tracing the conspiracy back to the Bavarian Illuminati in the late eighteenth century, Robertson argued that sinister forces had been at work throughout America’s history to make it part of a “new world order.” The League of Nations had been formed to assist with plans to bring about a one-world government, a one-world army, and a one-world economy, he claimed, and when this failed the United Nations was established to replace it. For Robertson, this “new world order” was close to coming to fruition. Having noted

that the UN’s authorization of military action against Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991 was the first time that the world’s nations had come together since the Tower of Babel had been built, he suggested that President George Bush was “unwittingly carrying out the mission . . . of a tightly knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers.”

D. J. Mulloy

**See also:** Antisemitism; John Birch Society; McCarthy, Joseph; Militias; New World Order; Robertson, Pat.

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## Universal Price Codes

A widely circulated contemporary conspiracy theory holds that the Universal Price Code (UPC) has the number “666” hidden in it (the symbol 666 is the “mark of the beast” according to the New Testament Book of Revelation). The Universal Price Code, sometimes called a “barcode,” was introduced in 1973 to speed up and eliminate human cashier errors in U.S. supermarkets. According to the conspiracy theory, the 666 code appears as the three longer “guard bars,” to the left, center, and right of a UPC barcode.

Since their introduction, UPC barcodes have been placed on many items. A fear has spread that one day barcodes will be placed on humans, allowing the government to keep track of a person’s movements. The basic root of this fear lies in a passage from Revelation, the final book of the Bible:

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13:16–18)

The theory suggests that every person will be marked with a barcode in which the 666 is hidden. The barcode will be used to buy and sell things and engage in every form of commerce. Particularly frightening to those who believe in this conspiracy theory is the trend toward a cashless society, one in which credit cards using barcodes embedded in magnetic strips are used for all financial transactions. The growth in the use of smart cards, which resemble credit cards but have tiny computer chips on them, also raises the concern of those who take the Revelation passage literally. Smart cards have the possibility of storing private information including medical records and financial information. The technology has not been widely accepted in the United States, but is quite common in Japan and Europe.

Conspiracy theorists claim that not long after the introduction of smart cards, security concerns will cause the computer chip to be placed on the body to prevent theft of this information. This will be the mark of the beast as predicted in Revelation.

*John David Rausch, Jr.*

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Identification Cards.

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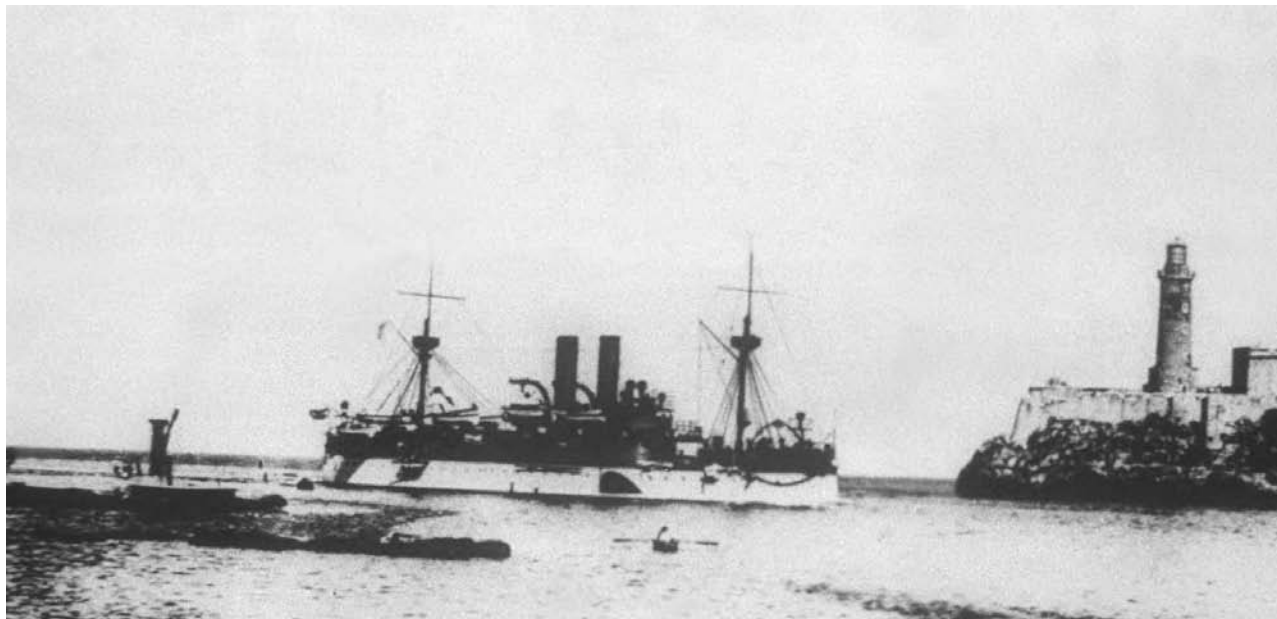
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## USS *Maine*

At 9:40 P.M. on 15 February 1898, the USS *Maine*, moored in Havana Harbor, Cuba, exploded, killing 266 men. The destruction took place in an already tense situation between Spain, which had imperial control over Cuba, and the United States, where sympathy for Cuban independence was strong. The cause of the explosion was not immediately apparent, and in the United States speculation that it was perpetrated by the Spanish was rife, a theory that was actively promoted by the sensationalist press. Although war between Spain and the United States was probably inevitable, the sinking of the *Maine* and the theory that Spain had caused it led to an overwhelming public sentiment in favor of war and the avenging of the *Maine*. The Spanish-American War began on 24 April 1898, after Congress recognized Cuban independence on 20 April. The slogan “Remember the *Maine*!” was to be a popular one in rallying U.S. support for the war.

The United States had taken an interest in Cuba since the middle of the nineteenth century when Cuban nationalists began to fight for independence. Motivations for this interest were numerous: sympathy for the goal of independence and freedom from a corrupt Old World power (a long cherished American ideal); humanitarian interest in the state





The battleship USS *Maine* entered Havana Harbor on January 25, 1898, to protect and possibly evacuate U.S. citizens if riots over Spanish independence led to violence. On February 15, an explosion sank the ship and killed 266 of its 370 crewmen. Although the cause was never determined, many Americans believed Spain was responsible. Despite Spanish efforts to offer more autonomy to Cuba as a conciliatory gesture, war became inevitable, with a battle cry of “Remember the *Maine*, to Hell with Spain!” sweeping the nation. (National Technical Information Service)

of the Cuban people; and economic interests in trade with, and assets in, Cuba. The U.S. people supported the Cubans’ struggle and provided them with money, guns, and supplies. The Cleveland administration was reluctant to intervene, but when William McKinley assumed the presidency in 1897, the push for intervention became stronger.

Diplomatic events in 1898 revealed Spain’s unwillingness to negotiate with the United States over the Cuban situation. It was also unclear just what the U.S. demanded from Spain—many in the administration were unsure whether Cubans were capable of governing themselves. A letter from the Spanish ambassador, Dupuy de Lôme, was published in the William Randolph Hearst newspaper the *New York Journal* on 9 February. In the letter de Lôme insulted President McKinley, outraging the American public. Only six days later, news came that the *Maine*, which had been sent to Havana in January as an ostensibly friendly gesture, had been sunk.

The *Maine* had been commissioned as a battleship (although it was originally classified as an

armored cruiser) on 17 September 1895. Her captain in 1898 was Charles D. Sigsbee, who sent the note to Washington informing them of the disaster. In part it read: “*Maine* blown up in Havana Harbor and destroyed. Many wounded and doubtless more killed and drowned. . . . Public opinion should be suspended until further report” (March, 316). Despite Sigsbee’s plea against jumping to conclusions and the refusal of the U.S. government to speculate on the cause of the explosion, public opinion began to make its own judgment, inflamed by the “yellow press” of Hearst and his rival, Joseph Pulitzer. Pulitzer’s *New York World* of 17 February 1898 ran the headline, “Maine Explosion Caused by Bomb or Torpedo?” with a graphic illustration of the *Maine* exploding (complete with bodies being thrown from the ship) beneath. Articles quoted “experts” speculating that “a torpedo was used,” and the wounded survivors of the *Maine* expressed their opinion that it was “a deep laid plot of Spaniards.” Three days later, Sigsbee himself was quoted as believing “a submarine mine blew up the *Maine*”

(*New York World*, 20 February 1898). By 24 February, not even ten days after the explosion, headlines ran in the *World* that left no doubt that the papers believed that it had been no accident: “Experts at Havana Say Some Great Exterior Force Rent and Sunk the Ship” and “Fifty Physical Proofs that Maine Was Blown Up by a Mine or Torpedo.”

The speculation in the press in the first days after the explosion was based on little actual evidence, but fed into the growing public clamor for action against the Spanish. The government continued to refuse to comment, instead waiting for the results of the official investigation that had been launched immediately after the disaster. Divers and armor experts were sent to investigate the physical evidence of the wreck, and a Naval Court of Inquiry was held. The public believed that it would provide concrete evidence of Spanish guilt. At the same time, the Spanish conducted their own investigation (as the *Maine* had blown up in their territorial waters) and concluded that it was caused by an internal explosion. On 28 March, the official report was submitted. It concluded that two explosions had occurred: “In the opinion of the Court, the *Maine* was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines. The Court has been unable to obtain evidence, fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the *Maine* upon any person or persons” (March, 327). While it was clear that Spain had most to lose in going to war, the public was more than willing to attribute the guilt for this to them. The neutral findings of the court opened the way to this. The press jumped at the chance to inflame the issue. Hearst’s slogan was “Remember the *Maine*, and to hell with Spain!” On 22 April, the United States blockaded Cuba, and a day later volunteers were called for. The theory that the Spanish had sunk the *Maine* clearly contributed to a strong public opinion encouraged by the press favoring war. While it was not the only factor present in a complicated diplomatic situation, it was a significant one. The *Maine* remained a patriotic symbol around which support for the war cohered.

What, then, was the “true” story? Admiral H. G. Rickover conducted a new examination into the explosion in 1976. He noted the problems of the orig-

inal 1898 U.S. inquiry: limited expertise, poor diving conditions in the harbor, and inadequate questioning during the hearings all contributed to an inquiry that was not as comprehensive as it should have been, given the import of its result. Even contemporary experts questioned the likelihood of a mine having been the cause of the disaster. Public pressure to do something with the *Maine* wreck led to Congress appropriating \$650,000 in 1910 to remove the wreck and recover the bodies still there for burial in Arlington Cemetery. The Army Corps of Engineers were given primary responsibility for the endeavor. In 1911, a new board of investigation arrived in Havana with more expertise than 1898. They took detailed records of the damage and many photographs and diagrams. Nevertheless, their ultimate conclusion (while differing from 1898 in technical detail) was that the primary explosion was still due to the placing of a mine, which had set off another explosion in the magazines. For the purposes of Rickover’s study, two experts reexamined all the evidence and concluded that in fact the primary explosion had been an internal one, possibly caused by fire in a bunker setting off explosions in the magazines.

The story of the sinking of the USS *Maine* is clearly central to the story of the Spanish-American War; but it also raises issues that have to do with the role of the press in creating “conspiracy theories” to suit their purposes (increased circulation and jingoism), as well as the issue of scientific evidence and its role in establishing “truth.” In this story, technical evidence is central in determining the “true” story of the *Maine* and whether a war was started over an accident. Certainly the role of technical or scientific evidence continues to be central to society’s need to determine the “truth” of events, but this story also reveals that technical evidence (which is not infallible) can be given too much power. Rickover speculates whether a different outcome might have occurred if the 1898 inquiry had come to a different conclusion. While that can only ever be hypothesis, it nevertheless raises the issue of just how important the “conspiracy theory” about the *Maine*—reinforced by the “truth” of a scientific inquiry and the inflammatory actions of the press—was in shaping the course of history.

*Amanda Laugesen*

**See also:** Hearst, William Randolph; Yellow Journalism.

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# V

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## Venona

In 1995 the National Security Agency (NSA) released details of the Venona Project, a top secret U.S. military intelligence program to decipher Soviet cablegrams that had begun in 1943 and was formally closed in 1980. For some historians (e.g., Haynes and Klehr), the information contained in these messages about Soviet spies in the United States offers conclusive proof that McCarthy-era fears about Communist infiltration of the U.S. government—often dismissed as bordering on the paranoid—were quite accurate after all. Other historians, however, question the reliability of the decryptions as a “smoking gun” because of the incomplete and tentative nature of the deciphering, and therefore dispute the conclusion that the red scare of the 1940s and 1950s was justified.

Hearing rumors of a secret German–Soviet peace deal, in February 1943 Colonel Carter Clarke of the U.S. Army’s Special Branch instructed the Signal Intelligence Service (forerunner of the NSA) to attempt to decode Soviet diplomatic cable traffic to and from its embassies and consulates passing through the United States. The two-stage cipher system used by the Soviet Union was in theory unbreakable, but, by a mixture of skill, perseverance, and luck (the accidental duplication by the Soviet manufacturer of the “one-time pads” used in the encipherment produced a recurrent flaw), the army code-breakers managed to render the first of 2,900 intercepted messages sent between 1940 and 1948 partially readable by 1946—by which time the

war was over. However, the messages turned out to reveal not secret peace-deal negotiations but evidence that the Soviet Union had been organizing an espionage campaign against the United States since 1942. The deciphered cables indicated that the Soviet Union had recruited informants in most U.S. government and military agencies at all levels, and they mentioned several hundred U.S. citizens or resident aliens (almost always by code name) who were involved with the Soviet Union in some capacity (Haynes and Klehr put the figure at 349).

The task of deciphering the original messages continued slowly, on and off, until 1980. During the McCarthy years, the FBI and CIA used the Venona decryptions to identify new spies, to corroborate existing information gained from prominent Communist defectors like Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers, and to confirm the guilt of atomic spies such as Klaus Fuchs and Julius Rosenberg. It is arguable, however, that the method of deciphering the messages meant that their revelations were potentially circular: the cryptographers sometimes used as a working hypothesis an identification of the real person behind the code name that had been fed to them by other intelligence agencies, which then in turn used the partially decrypted messages as confirmation of their suspicions about a particular individual. In many cases, the association of a code name with a particular individual remains speculative or unknown. Nevertheless, in combination with the partial opening up of the Soviet archives after 1991, the Venona cables offer the possibility of significant



new interpretations of the emergence of the cold war, placing it much earlier than commonly thought.

The project remained secret until 1995, as U.S. intelligence agencies insisted that it was more important not to reveal how successful it had been in cracking Soviet codes. There was also a recognition that the cables would be ruled as hearsay and hence inadmissible as evidence in a court of law, so their release would not have been of immediate use. Some commentators (Moynihan) have argued recently that this continuing secrecy was a mistake, as the Venona Project would have clarified a lot of the muddled water about Communist infiltration during the cold war, allowing the American people to have a clearer picture of the extent of Soviet espionage based on fact rather than rumor and paranoia. While the Venona documents would have been taken to confirm, for example, that Julius Rosenberg was indeed guilty of passing on atomic secrets, they would also have demonstrated that Dean Acheson (secretary of state in the Truman administration) was not the Communist conspirator that Senator Joseph McCarthy accused him of being.

*Peter Knight*

**See also:** Anticommunism; Atomic Secrets; Chambers, Whittaker; Cold War; House Un-American Activities Committee; McCarthy, Joseph.

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**Website**

National Security Agency: <http://www.nsa.gov/docs/venona>.

**Vesey, Denmark**

Denmark Vesey was a free black carpenter who led a conspiracy of about 9,000 slaves in Charleston, South Carolina, in the summer of 1822. The goal of this conspiracy was to seize the federal arsenal, set fire to the city, slaughter as many of the white inhabitants as possible, and then seize ships and flee to Haiti.

Vesey had been a slave, but had purchased his freedom after he won \$1,500 in a lottery in Charleston in 1800. He was intelligent, fluent in several languages, and possessed leadership skills that he demonstrated in the planning of his conspiracy. He informed only a small number of trusted lieutenants, usually skilled slaves and members of the African Church, of the details of the plot, keeping the rank and file ignorant of such information. He recruited few domestic slaves because he feared they would betray the plot to their masters. His main coconspirators were “Gullah Jack” Pritchard, Ned and Rolla Bennett, Monday Gell, Bacchus Hammett, Mingo Harth, and Peter Poyas. Ned and Rolla Bennett were slaves of the South Carolina governor, Thomas Bennett, who lived three blocks from Denmark Vesey. Gell was a harness maker, and Poyas was a shipwright. “Gullah Jack” was an Angolan priest and carpenter as well as an effective recruiter of slaves for the conspiracy. Gell, Harth, and Poyas also played integral roles in spreading word about the uprising and recruiting slaves for the cause. Vesey instructed his lieutenants to keep separate lists of volunteers so that if one of them was arrested, that conspirator would be unable to provide the names of the other volunteers to the white authorities. In the wake of an arrest, the other conspirators would then be able to destroy their lists and protect themselves and their volunteers. Vesey maintained a tight-knit conspiracy through this control of information and threats of reprisals against those who informed white authorities of the plot.

The attack on Charleston was to occur on 14 July, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille in the opening days of the French Revolution. It was also a time when many of Charleston’s white citizens would be out of town, escaping the summer heat, and thus reducing the strength of the militia the conspirators would have to face. That date happened to fall on a Sunday, which was a day when many slaves came to the city to visit the markets. A large number of black slaves would thus not raise apprehensions among the city’s whites. The attack was to begin at midnight. Rolla Bennett was to murder the governor and mayor, while house servants were to murder their

masters. "Gullah Jack" was to lead a company of Angolan slaves, Poyas was to seize the arsenal and its weapons, and slaves from the countryside were to enter Charleston. For those slaves who entered Charleston that night, Vesey made arrangements to procure some weapons, such as swords and pikes, for their use. For the conspirators who had to overwhelm white defenders near key installations such as the arsenal, Vesey contracted with a white barber to provide these men with white wigs and whiskers as disguises.

### The Conspiracy Unravels

The conspiracy came undone on 22 May, when William Paul, one of Vesey's recruiters, tried to convince Peter Prioleau, the mulatto cook for Colonel John Prioleau, to join the plot. Peter rebuffed Paul and then informed his friend, William Penceel, another mulatto, of the plot. On 30 May, Peter told his master of the plot and of Paul's attempt to get him to join. Prioleau told the mayor, James Hamilton, of the plot, and the mayor then convened the city council. Paul had already been arrested and gave the authorities the names of Harth and Poyas. Both men were arrested but laughed off the suggestions of a plot. Paul implicated Ned Bennett, who personally went to the mayor to defend himself from the charges. Bennett then told Vesey of the developments and Vesey decided to move the date of the uprising to 16 June. Thus far, the white authorities remained unsure if a conspiracy actually existed. That uncertainty soon evaporated.

On 9 June, Rolla Bennett told George Wilson, a mulatto blacksmith and a fellow parishioner of the African Church, of the plot and asked him to join. Wilson refused to join and told his master, Major

John Wilson, of the plot on 14 June. Wilson told Hamilton, who now felt his suspicions were confirmed because two slaves had implicated the same conspirators, slaves who belonged to the governor. Governor Bennett ordered the arrest of almost a dozen slaves, including Harth, Poyas, and Rolla and Ned Bennett. The Charleston authorities instructed the militia to patrol the city and asked for, and received, additional military support from the federal government. The planned uprising on 16 June never occurred because Vesey's remaining coconspirators could not leave the city and coordinate their efforts with slaves in the countryside. The heightened state of alert of the local militia, and the military resources of the federal government, doomed the chances for the conspiracy. Charleston authorities arrested the remaining fugitives, Vesey on 22 June, Gell on 27 June, and Pritchard on 5 July. Trials of the accused began in the Workhouse, where the prisoners were held, and a committee of local leading white men oversaw the judicial process. In all, 101 men were put on trial and 35 were hanged, including Vesey, Poyas, Ned and Rolla Bennett, Harth, and Pritchard.

*James C. Foley*

**See also:** Slave Revolts; Turner, Nat.

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# W

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## **Waco**

Events at Waco, Texas, in 1993 have been the subject of numerous conspiracy theories. Many simply involve allegations of government misconduct and subsequent cover-up, but others, particularly those from within the American Patriot movement, suggest a more extensive conspiracy on the part of the U.S. government to make the United States part of a global “New World Order.”

First, the events themselves: On 28 February 1993 the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) attempted to serve a search and arrest warrant on David Koresh, the leader of a religious sect called the Branch Davidians that was based at Mount Carmel, near Waco. The sect, an offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, had first moved to Mount Carmel in 1935, and about 130 Davidians lived on the site in 1993. The BATF suspected that Koresh and his followers were involved in the manufacture and sale of illegal weapons and explosives. There were also concerns that children were being abused at the site and that it contained a drug-making laboratory. The secrecy of the planned operation had not been maintained, however, and when the BATF agents entered Mount Carmel, accompanied by three Texas National Guard helicopters, a gun battle erupted. It is disputed whether the Davidians or the federal agents fired first, but four BATF agents were killed and twenty more were wounded during the shooting. Five Davidians were also killed—two by the BATF and three by fellow Davidians—and five others were wounded.

Following the failure of the initial raid, the FBI was called in to take control of events. A standoff lasting fifty-one days then ensued, as over 700 officers from various government and law enforcement agencies surrounded the Davidians’ property. During this time, unsuccessful negotiations took place to persuade the Branch Davidians to surrender peacefully. The standoff was brought to an end on 19 April 1993 when armored tanks, modified for demolition duty with battering rams, began punching holes in the walls of the Davidian complex to inject CS gas, in the hope of “flushing out” the Davidians. Over 300 canisters of tear gas were pumped into the complex for over four hours. Finally, a fire broke out in which at least seventy-four men, women, and children were killed. The whole operation was broadcast live on U.S. television. In the immediate aftermath of the fire, there was much speculation as to whether it had been caused by the CS gas, or whether it had been started deliberately by the Davidians themselves, perhaps as part of a suicide pact. More conspiratorial explanations also abounded, but a report by Special Counsel John C. Danforth has concluded that it was the Davidians who burnt down the Mount Carmel complex.

In addition to Danforth’s report, there were several other investigations and inquiries into the events at Waco, including a fire investigation, congressional hearings in 1993 and 1995, a 1993 Department of Treasury report about the BATF’s role in the affair, and a 1999 General Accounting Office report on the use of armed forces. In 1994 eleven survivors from



the fire stood trial in San Antonio for conspiracy to murder federal agents and other lesser offenses. Five were convicted of voluntary manslaughter, two were convicted of weapons charges, and four were acquitted of all charges.

Waco, along with the siege at Ruby Ridge in Idaho in 1992 and the passage of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act in 1993, was a crucial factor in the creation and subsequent growth of the U.S. militia movement. Two of the most important militias, the Michigan Militia and the Militia of Montana, both of which were formed in early 1994, claimed that the “attack” on the Branch Davidians served as a “wake-up call” for them. They saw it as evidence of a conspiracy within the U.S. government to attack and disarm its own citizens, arguing that Waco was only the beginning of the attempt by “global elitists” to impose a “New World Order” or “one-world government” on the United States.

Two videos produced by Linda Thompson’s American Justice Federation were instrumental in spreading these kinds of conspiracy theories throughout the United States, influencing both the militia movement and groups within the wider Patriot movement. *Waco: The Big Lie* and *Waco II: The Big Lie Continues* contended that the FBI had deliberately started the fire that destroyed Mount Carmel; that federal agents had killed children during the “siege”; that “black helicopters” had fired on the Davidians; and that the federal government had conspired to lie and cover up what had really happened. The Internet-based Waco Holocaust Electronic Museum (WHEM) also believes that the Branch Davidians were deliberately killed by the U.S. government. It argues that the whole operation was a “test” for a future “military/police occupation of civilian society” under a National Response Plan, and that the fire at the complex was started by the Special Operations Command of the U.S. military to cover its murders of the Branch Davidians (WHEM 2001b). According to WHEM, many of the Davidians were already dead before the 19 April “tank attack and fire.” Their bodies, it says, were “selectively beheaded, mutilated and incinerated (‘laundered’) to disguise the time, cause, and circumstances of death.” The tank attack

and fire were “diversions to hide the truth and destroy the death scene” (WHEM 2001a).

The Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was convinced that the government was covering up its atrocities at Waco. He visited the site during the fifty-one-day standoff, watched and was influenced by Thompson’s video *Waco: The Big Lie*, and sold videos and pamphlets with titles such as “U.S. Government Initiates Open Warfare Against American People” at gun shows. The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City took place on the second anniversary of Waco on 19 April 1995. It was intended as a warning to the United States that the nation was in danger of becoming a police state, and McVeigh hoped that it would prevent any further “Wacos” in the future. The blast killed 168 people, and injured over 500. Fresh concerns about what happened at Waco arose in August 1999, when, after six years of denials by government and law enforcement officials, the founder of the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team, Danny O. Coulson, admitted that the FBI had used pyrotechnic devices during the 19 April raid on Mount Carmel. A *Time* magazine poll on 26 August 1999 indicated that 61 percent of the American people believed that federal law enforcement officials had started the fire at the Branch Davidian complex. On 9 September Attorney General Janet Reno appointed former U.S. senator John C. Danforth as special counsel to investigate the events at Waco. Danforth investigated allegations that federal agents had caused the fire that destroyed the Davidian complex; that they had pinned children in the burning building with gunfire; that they had illegally employed the armed forces of the United States; and that they had lied and covered up their alleged misconduct.

The investigation lasted fourteen months, employed seventy-four personnel and cost approximately \$17 million. One thousand and one witnesses were interviewed and over 2.3 million pages of documents were reviewed. Danforth’s final report, published in November 2000, concluded that government agents did not start or spread the fire at Waco; that they did not direct gunfire at the Branch Davidian complex; that they did not improperly use the armed forces of the United States; and that they did

not engage in a massive conspiracy and cover-up. Responsibility for the tragedy at Waco rested, the report said, with certain of the Branch Davidians and their leader, David Koresh, who had shot and killed four BATF agents and wounded twenty others, shot at FBI agents trying to insert tear gas into the complex, burned down the complex themselves, and shot some of their own people, including at least five children. Danforth was critical of the FBI and Department of Justice officials who had failed to disclose the use of pyrotechnic tear gas rounds until August 1999, but overall he noted that “what is remarkable is the overwhelming evidence exonerating the government from the charges made against it, and the lack of any real evidence to support the charges of bad acts” (Danforth, i).

D. J. Mulloy

**See also:** Militias; New World Order; Oklahoma City Bombing; Ruby Ridge.

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#### Walker, William

William Walker was an infamous nineteenth-century American soldier of fortune and privateer (a “filibuster,” in the jargon of the day), who led a conspiracy in the 1850s and 1860s to grab land in Mexico, Honduras, and Nicaragua in order to assist the United States in its perceived Manifest Destiny to dominate the Americas, and to garner glory and riches for himself.

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1824, Walker was raised in a religious household. His parents hoped that he would become a minister, but Walker decided instead to study first medicine and then law. After becoming a doctor and a lawyer, and being dissatisfied with both, Walker turned his attention toward journalism and eventually found himself in California as one of the founding editors of the *San Francisco Herald*, established in 1850. Once again unhappy with his profession, Walker returned to law for a short time before succumbing to the clamor for glory and riches promoted by the idea of the United States’ Manifest Destiny.

Enticed by the Western land grab that followed the Mexican–American war and refused a grant to establish a settlement by the Mexican government, Walker named himself a colonel and attempted to establish his own state in parts of Baja California and Sonora. Aided by a mere forty-five men, Walker landed in La Paz on 3 November 1853, where his troops imprisoned Governor Rafael Espinosa, replaced the Mexican flag with their own and declared



William Walker's men reposing in the convent of San Francisco, during entrance into Granada in 1855. (Library of Congress)

a new republic with no allegiance to Mexico, with Walker as its president. Walker was not the first such person to attempt to seize a territory and declare it a sovereign nation, nor was his sovereign state in Mexico his last attempt at filibustering. (The term *filibuster* was taken from the Portugese and Spanish term for a pirate that held a ship for ransom, and was later used as a term in the U.S. Senate for an action taken in preventing a vote. In the nineteenth century, it also became a term—for some of treason, for others of glory—applied to mercenaries or soldiers of fortune who attempted to seize a portion of land for their own fame, fortune, or glory.)

Walker's foray into nation-building in Mexico failed when supplies and troops ran low, and he surrendered to the United States government in May 1854. Revered as a hero by some in the United

States and reviled by many in Mexico, Walker was tried and acquitted of violating the neutrality law set forth in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. After his acquittal, Walker returned to journalism in San Francisco for a short time, but, undaunted by his failure in Mexico, returned to his filibustering pursuits, this time with his sights set on Nicaragua.

Taking full advantage of the civil war between the conservative Legitimists and the Liberal Democrats then being waged in Nicaragua, Walker's new partner, Byron Cole, was awarded a colonization grant by the president of the provisional government, Francisco Castellon. Hoping that Cole and Walker would aid them economically, the Democrats, led by Castellon, welcomed their plan. But Walker had no intention of reestablishing a Nicaraguan government. When Castellon died Walker signed a treaty with the



Legitimist General Ponciano Corral, and, after the country was reunited with Patricio Rivas as president, Walker became Rivas's commander-in-chief of the army.

Not content with being mere commander-in-chief of the army, Walker used his influence within the Rivas cabinet to eventually oust Rivas and call for a new election, with himself as a candidate. Never forgetting the notion of Manifest Destiny, Walker was planning to unite all five Central American states into a confederacy and to reintroduce slavery into the region in order to shore up that institution's strength when his ultimate goal was achieved: the annexation of Central America by the United States.

Walker succeeded in becoming president in July 1856, but his success was short lived. Recognizing that Walker's plans were to conquer the entire region, the Costa Rican government, led by President Juan Rafael Mora, organized an army to stop Walker's band before it could invade Costa Rica. Nicaraguan patriots, also unhappy with the thought of becoming a part of the United States, rose up against Walker and joined the Costa Rican army in defeating him.

Walker surrendered to the U.S. Navy in May 1857 and was escorted back to the United States, leaving behind 407 of his American soldiers, many sick and wounded. Walker was once again acquitted for violating the neutrality laws. Still set on conquering Central America and forging a union with the southern states of America, Walker spent most of 1859 and part of 1860 writing *The War in Nicaragua*, the sale of which helped to finance his final expedition in 1860. Working from Honduras, Walker made his last attempt at conquering the region when he was captured by the British Navy and turned over to the Honduran government.

Although Walker emerged from his American trials both victorious and lauded by many as a hero, he was not so fortunate in his final trial in Honduras. The Honduran government, unimpressed with Walker's heroism and the idea of the United States' Manifest Destiny, sentenced him to death. Walker was killed by a firing squad and buried in Trujillo.

Walker's failure in Nicaragua and the Civil War at home prompted many filibusters and potential fili-

busters to rethink their plans, and filibustering as a heroic U.S. pursuit lost its appeal. Though quite famous in the nineteenth century for his exploits—Walker's fame even inspired a musical comedy on Broadway called "Nicaragua"—William Walker is all but forgotten in the United States today. In Nicaragua and Costa Rica, however, Walker's exploits and subsequent defeat will never be forgotten.

Michele Ren

**See also:** Iran-Contra; Mexican-American War.

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#### Wall Street

Viewed suspiciously by people as far apart politically as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Pat Robertson, Wall Street is seen as the fulcrum of money manipulation and shenanigans involving the U.S. economy. The "insider trading" scandals of the 1980s added to the perception that Wall Street was soaked in corruption, full of phoney deals, and a front for nefarious interests of all types.

The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), the largest securities exchange in the United States, began in 1792 when twenty-four New York merchants and brokers agreed to charge standard commissions on their sales. Formally organized in 1817 as the New York Stock Exchange Board, the NYSE adopted rules to govern the sales of securities. Members paid an admission fee of \$25 and had to have a year's experience in the brokerage business before the entire membership could vote to allow them to join. In its early years, the NYSE traded thirty different securities, including federal, state,



and municipal bonds, but soon railroads and other private corporations traded shares on the Exchange.

Financing the Civil War led to immense growth in the NYSE, and the sales of war bonds led to charges of corruption and “speculation.” (Defining speculation is difficult, in that it is trading in a security for a “short-term” gain. What constitutes “short term” to one person is a lifetime to another.) The collapse of Jay Cooke’s investment banking house triggered the panic of 1873, raising suspicions about the “New York money power,” “Jewish interests” (linked to the Rothschilds), and Wall Street. By the end of the 1800s, some 1,300 securities were traded on “the Street,” and in 1901 daily volume reached 3 million shares.

In reality, the sheer volume of Wall Street transactions made it nearly impossible for any consortium—let alone individual—to “control” even a single major stock, let alone the “market.” Quite the contrary, the NYSE has been buffeted by external events: in 1914, along with all exchanges in Europe, Wall Street closed for more than four months after World War I broke out, and in 2001 the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center shut down the NYSE for three business days.

The strongest criticisms of Wall Street came over its purported role in causing the Great Depression. During the 1920s, in what was called the “Great Bull Market,” stock prices skyrocketed, some rising several hundred percent in a few months. Americans of almost every social strata participated in the market, with one survey of a new bond issue showing teachers, janitors, maids, and cab drivers among the most frequently represented occupational groups. Charles E. Merrill pioneered securities sales to the middle class. But concerns were raised over the perception that most people invested through “margin loans,” which involved using the value of the stock that was to be purchased as collateral for a broker to advance the loan. A second major concern focused on the role of “securities affiliates,” which were brokerage houses associated with major banks. Critics charged that banks used bank deposits to fuel lending by the securities affiliates, feeding speculation even more.

When the market crashed on 29 October 1929, the Dow Jones Industrial Average witnessed a stun-

ning decline as 16 million shares changed hands. The Crash brought investigations by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee led by counsel Ferdinand Pecora (“the hellhound of Wall Street”). Pecora hauled America’s top bankers before the committee, especially hammering Charles Mitchell of National City Bank. Convinced that the banks and brokers had created the boom with pure speculation, Congress passed the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934, set up the Securities and Exchange Commission, and then, in 1935, passed the Glass-Steagall Banking Act that separated investment from commercial banking. Subsequent research by scholars has shown all these premises to be false: virtually no academic has been able to verify that any genuine speculation occurred—and certainly no speculation of proportions that would generate the “Great Bull Market”—and rather than harming banks, having a securities affiliate tended to make a bank more stable and solvent than banks that lacked those affiliates.

No one has yet been able to explain the specific cause of the Great Crash. Contrary to some Keynesian economists, there is little evidence to suggest that money was funneled into speculation or the market. One view that remains intriguing is that the movement through Congress of the Hawley-Smoot Tariff, which dramatically increased tariff rates, triggered a sell-off based on future expected price hikes (and sales slumps).

It is also interesting to note that if the Crash was somehow manipulated to increase profits of the “moneyed interests,” the wealthiest industrialists on Wall Street poured billions of dollars into securities in an attempt to keep the market afloat. Many of them lost their entire fortunes. Only a few, such as Joseph P. Kennedy, a liquor-runner and father of the future president, who entered the market after the Crash, made money.

Among the conspiracy theorists, Wall Street has always been a villain responsible for starting wars and “electing” totalitarian leaders. Some groups see a “Bolshevik-Wall Street” connection, while those subscribing to the “Reformed Christianity” doctrines of Gary North and R. J. Rushdoony claim that Wall Street aided and abetted the rise of Adolph Hitler.

After World War II, Americans slowly returned to the markets, especially investing indirectly through large pension funds. The Dow Jones rose steadily after World War II, but truly exploded after the tax cuts under the administration of President Ronald Reagan. With both income tax cuts and capital gains tax cuts enacted, Wall Street witnessed phenomenal and steady increases that continued until the World Trade Center attack in 2001. During that time, a new group of bond traders appeared on the scene using a newly created security, the “junk bond.” In fact, junk bonds were far from junk: they financed MCI Telephone, Disney, McCaw Cellular, and dozens of other business start-ups or expansions. They were called junk because they had not yet been rated by the NYSE—but many securities with an AAA rating represented nearly bankrupt companies, while junk bonds financed some of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, especially the new high-tech ventures. Both the “junk king,” Michael Milken of Drexel Burnham Lambert, and Ivan Boesky became wealthy through their transactions with junk bonds. Boesky, who was the character upon whom Michael Douglas’s “Gordon Gekko” was based in the movie *Wall Street*, was arrested on charges of insider trading with some of these securities, and in turn provided information that implicated Milken. Both men served time in jail for fraud.

In the 1990s, many viewed the “dot.com” boom as a speculative manipulation similar to that of the 1920s. Nevertheless, the Dow Jones continued to surge, topping the 11,000 mark, before the events of September 11 brought a temporary sell-off. By that time, however, it was unfathomable for any individual to control enough securities to even move a single company’s stock a point or two, let alone to affect the entire market.

Larry Schweikart

**See also:** Roosevelt, Franklin Delano; Rockefeller Family; Trusts.

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### Warren Commission Report

The Warren Commission was established by President Lyndon Johnson on 29 November 1963, one week after the assassination of his predecessor, President John F. Kennedy. The FBI was already working on assembling its findings into a report, which Johnson had hoped would serve as the last word on the subject, but his political advisors were urging him to appoint a presidential commission, and he decided that it would be a superior alternative to a looming U.S. Senate investigation of the assassination. The commission included Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren as chairman, four U.S. congressmen (Senators John Cooper and Richard Russell and Representatives Hale Boggs and Gerald Ford), and two members from the private sector (former Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy and ex-Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles). By the time its investigation was over, the commission and its staff of lawyers had interviewed 488 witnesses and received thousands of reports from dozens of government agencies.

On 24 September 1964, the commission reported to President Johnson that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy, that nightclub owner Jack Ruby had acted alone in killing Oswald, and that the commission could find no evidence of a conspiracy in either murder. The Warren Commission Report initially reassured an anxious public. However, its methods and findings were soon questioned by critics (e.g., Epstein), and by 1967 a majority of Americans had come to believe that a conspiracy was behind the assassination. The

hundreds of books that were written on the assassination over the years arrived at three different views of the commission. Its defenders (e.g., Ford and Stiles) portrayed it as an honest and competent body that explored every avenue in search of the truth. Its legion of critics, on the other hand, saw it as either a bungled inquiry that ignored obvious evidence of conspiracy or, more ominously, as a deliberate cover-up intended to protect the conspirators. These critics raised questions about the commission's "single bullet theory," which ascribed to one almost pristine bullet all seven nonfatal wounds sustained by Kennedy and Texas Governor John Connally, and they used the "Zapruder film" to argue for the existence of a "second gunman" in the assassination. Despite the commission's characterization of Oswald as a disaffected loner, the critics portrayed him as a man enmeshed in the covert world of espionage and/or an innocent patsy used to divert investigators from the conspirators behind the assassination. It was eventually discovered that the commission was never informed about a note delivered by Oswald to the FBI before the assassination or about plots pursued by the CIA against the life of Fidel Castro, facts that could have had a significant bearing on the commission's investigation. Members of the commission staff assured the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) in the late 1970s that they carried out an honest and thorough probe of the assassination. Although the HSCA found no evidence of a deliberate cover-up, its conclusion was that the Kennedy assassination was probably the result of a conspiracy that had gone undetected by the commission.

### **Constraints on the Commission**

In hindsight, it can be seen that the commission operated under several constraints that made it unlikely that it would find a conspiracy. With a limited investigative staff of its own, its inquiry relied largely on the FBI, an agency that had already satisfied itself that there was no conspiracy and behaved as if its reputation rested on the truth of that conclusion. High government officials sided with the FBI and were determined to see that the public accept Oswald's guilt and that suspicions of conspiracy,

whether foreign or domestic, be rebutted by the commission. Johnson's own fears were clearly revealed when, while urging Warren to head the commission, he warned that rumors of conspiracy could provoke a nuclear war with the Soviet Union in which 40 million Americans would perish. Johnson's aides also wanted to remove the assassination as a possible factor in the 1964 presidential election by having the commission complete its report before election day in November, a deadline that the commission managed to meet by halting its hearings in June and assigning the task of writing the report to two staff members who worked nonstop until September. When three commissioners (notably Senator Russell) took exception to the single-bullet theory, the disagreement went unresolved but the report was written as if there were consensus on all of its findings.

Indeed, the report referred to all allegations of conspiracy as "rumors," implying that they were not worthy of being taken seriously.

The question of whether or not the commission failed to discover a conspiracy rests on whether a conspiracy actually existed. Regardless of the persuasiveness of their criticisms, or their success in making the idea of conspiracy appealing to many Americans, the commission's critics never proved beyond a doubt the existence of any particular conspiracy. The commission's shortcomings may have been understandable in view of the constraints placed upon it, but the commission was not as objective in its fact finding as it pretended to be, or as fully informed. Like many of its critics, it too produced a theory about the assassination, but it presented its theory as if it were fact, in a sense inviting the plethora of conspiracy theories that have competed with its lone gunman theory. The heritage left by the Warren Commission Report was a lingering belief in conspiracy on the part of most Americans, the very outcome that the commission was supposed to avoid.

*Larry Haapanen*

**See also:** Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Oswald, Lee Harvey; Ruby, Jack.

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## Watergate

The series of events that collectively became known as "Watergate," after the break-in at Democratic National Committee (DNC) offices at the Watergate building in Washington, D.C., on 17 June 1972, represents the major verified top-level conspiracy in U.S. political history. Watergate is a *Ur-text* of U.S. conspiracy theory, evidenced by the ubiquitous use of the suffix "-gate" to denote any major conspiracy, cover-up, or scandal, and the belief that it forever changed the way the public would view electoral politics. Watergate has remained an episode of immense interest to conspiracy researchers for several reasons. First, Watergate was a verified and wide-reaching conspiracy that was perpetrated by government officials, reaching to the highest level of civil life. Second, while the break-in itself was discovered and became publicly known almost immediately, questions remain about specific details, enabling conspiracy theories to fill this absence of definitive knowledge. Finally, Watergate came to represent a series of interwoven events and conspiracies, revealing the machinations of high politics. As a consequence, the legacy of Watergate has endured not only politically, but also socially and culturally.

The origins of Watergate lay in attempts by the Nixon administration to deal with protest against the Vietnam War. In July 1970, Nixon approved the Huston Plan, which called for increased surveillance and "black bag" operations (the FBI and CIA term for illegal entries, usually to plant surveillance devices) against domestic targets. Although the plan was officially abandoned after opposition from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, its recommendations

would resurface in other forms. In June 1971, the *New York Times* published extracts from "The Pentagon Papers," confidential Vietnam War strategy documents that had been leaked by former Pentagon aide Daniel Ellsberg. While initial material concerned previous administrations, it was feared that further disclosures would expose hitherto secret aspects of the Nixon administration's negotiations regarding the Vietnam War. The overt response was direct, in that elements of the Nixon administration began a campaign of harassment against the press and the *Times* in particular. Covertly, it established the White House Special Investigations Unit, known as the "Plumbers," because its specific task was to "plug leaks."

A background in covert operations set the tone for the Plumbers unit and later for Watergate. Among those recruited were G. Gordon Liddy, a former FBI agent; E. Howard Hunt, a former CIA member who had helped plan the Bay of Pigs invasion; former associates of Hunt who had participated in the Bay of Pigs operation; and James W. McCord, a retired senior CIA officer. The first Plumbers operation was a break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist in an attempt to steal Ellsberg's medical files. The unsuccessful burglary was preceded by an "offensive intelligence–defensive security" plan named Operation Sandwedge. This wide-ranging plan proposed "black bag" operations against the Democrats. Although approved by the administration, it was superseded by Liddy's even more expansive espionage plan, Operation Gemstone. While the original was considered too extreme, a revised version of Gemstone, which included among its illegal activities a plan to surreptitiously enter DNC offices in the Watergate building, was approved in April 1972.

## Watergate Investigations

Working for the Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP), the Plumbers staged their first break-in of the Watergate building in May 1972. Successfully completed, transcripts of conversations recorded by surveillance devices were passed to White House officials. The second break-in was apparently under-



taken to replace a faulty bug. The Plumbers were caught after security guard Frank Wills discovered a re-taped door lock. Although carrying false identification documents, “burglars” McCord, Bernard Barker, Virgilio Gonzalez, Eugenio Martinez, and Frank Sturgis were accurately identified soon after their arrest. As McCord was security coordinator for CRP, their links to the White House were quickly established, as was Hunt’s involvement with the break-in. Although the Nixon administration characterized Watergate as a “third-rate burglary,” attempts to cover up its involvement began almost immediately. This cover-up would ultimately prove most damaging to the Nixon administration, because it entailed an extensive conspiracy to obstruct justice. In January 1973, the five burglars and Liddy and Hunt were convicted on charges of illegal wiretapping, burglary, and conspiracy. Prosecutors charged that Liddy and Hunt were solely responsible for planning the break-in.

While several top-ranking Nixon aides had already resigned due to revelations about Watergate, the cover-up began to unravel in April 1973 when McCord wrote to Judge John J. Sirica, who had presided over the trial, stating that members of the Nixon administration had participated in the planning of the operation that included Watergate, that government witnesses had committed perjury, and that the defendants had been placed under “political pressure” to plead guilty and remain silent. On 30 April Nixon announced the resignations of Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, and Chief Domestic Policy Advisor John Ehrlichman and the forced resignation of Presidential Counsel John Dean III. Accepting full responsibility for the actions of his subordinates, Nixon also stated that new Attorney General Elliot Richardson had been given “absolute authority” in “uncovering the whole truth” about Watergate, including the provision to appoint an independent special prosecutor.

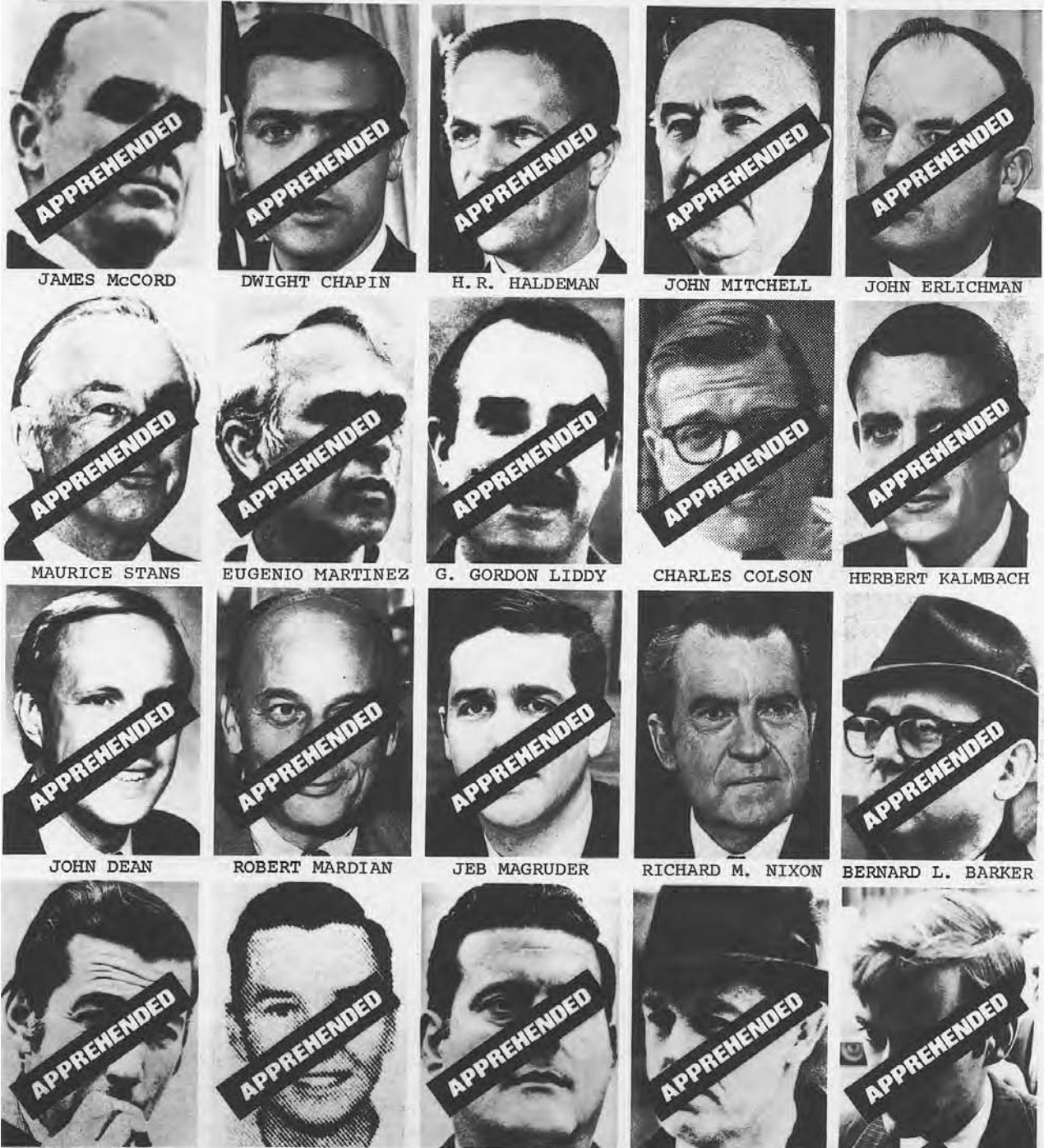
Although popular belief largely ascribes the uncovering of the Watergate case to elements of the press, authorities including the FBI, the General Accounting Office, and the Watergate Special Prosecution Force (WSPF), headed by Archibald Cox, undertook investigations. The WSPF had an expan-

sive charter to investigate not only Watergate and its cover-up but all allegations against Nixon, White House staff, and presidential appointees, including offenses relating to the 1972 presidential election campaign. The WSPF could examine evidence “from any source” and contest in court White House refusals to produce evidence. Because of such investigatory powers, “Watergate” came to represent a range of illegal activities, including the espionage operations that led to the break-in; previous break-ins by the Plumbers including those directed against Daniel Ellsberg; the Watergate cover-up (which included destruction of evidence and the perjury of numerous witnesses); “dirty tricks” used against the 1972 Democrat campaign and candidates (which the *Washington Post* called a “massive campaign of political spying and sabotage”); the illegal use of campaign contributions (some of which had been used to “pay off” the burglars); and contributions for services (including a “shakedown” of the dairy industry in exchange for price supports and an ITT contribution connected to a favorable Justice Department settlement in an antitrust case). Nixon’s financial records and taxation returns were also investigated.

### Gaps and Deletions

Watergate became a public text largely due to the televised Senate Select Committee (also known as the “Ervin Committee”) hearings, which began on 17 May 1973. Replacing usual daytime programming, all 319 hours of the “Watergate hearings” were broadcast. Although the key witness was John Dean, who implicated Nixon in the cover-up, White House aide Alexander Butterfield made the major revelation. Butterfield reluctantly disclosed that Nixon had taped almost all White House conversations since February 1971, meaning that a record of Watergate-related conversations must exist. From this moment, Nixon fought to retain physical control of the tapes, beginning a series of legal battles that were continued by his estate after his death, and which only concluded after the estate reached a financial settlement with the Justice Department in June 2000. One week after Butterfield had disclosed their existence, Archibald Cox subpoenaed the

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Poster showing members of the Watergate affair, all labeled "apprehended" except for Richard M. Nixon. Pictured with Nixon are James McCord, Dwight Chapin, H. R. Halderman, John Mitchell, John Erlichman, Maurice Stans, Eugenio Martinez, G. Gordon Liddy, Charles Colson, Herbert Kalmbach, John Dean, Robert Mardian, Jeb Magruder, Bernard L. Barker, Virgilio Gonzalez, Donald Segretti, Frank Sturgis, E. Howard Hunt, Jr., and Hugh Sloan, Jr. (Library of Congress)

tapes. In response to the Supreme Court decision that he must hand over the tapes, Nixon stated that he would neither appeal the decision nor comply with it. The following day Nixon pressured Richardson to fire Cox. Richardson instead resigned, followed by his deputy William Ruckelshaus; Cox was then fired, the WSPF abolished, and its offices sealed by FBI agents. Known as the “Saturday Night Massacre,” the events of 20 October 1973 were perceived by many people as a form of constitutional coup d’état. The resulting public outcry and calls for impeachment forced Nixon to accede to giving the tapes to the court.

Still attempting to contain their disclosures, Nixon announced on 29 April 1974 that edited transcripts of some requested tapes would instead be released. The transcripts effectively codified Nixon’s words; they gave them a material existence, and they entered and reentered the public realm in various forms. Paperback editions became immediate best-sellers. The Nixon White House revealed by the transcripts was as shocking for its pettiness as its viciousness. But when the House Judiciary Committee released its own transcripts, discrepancies between the two versions provoked accusations that the White House transcripts had been “doctored” to appear more favorable to Nixon. Nixon claimed the discrepancies were the result of the committee having access to electronically enhanced tapes, enabling them to identify words that had been, and were labeled as, “unintelligible” in the White House transcripts, but historian Stanley Kutler insists that “significant material” was omitted under the guise of the phrase “Material Unrelated to Presidential Action” (Kutler, 452). Perhaps the most damaging deletions from the White House transcripts were marked “(adjective deleted),” and most notoriously, “(expletive deleted).” Into this erasure the public read unspeakable language and unimaginable crimes.

While Nixon claimed that several of the subpoenaed tapes had never existed, the most startling omission was in the form of the legendary “18-minute gap.” The gap was during a tape of a Nixon-Haldeman meeting held three days after the Watergate break-in, and, as Haldeman’s notes showed, occurred at the moment they began to discuss

Watergate. The gap was viewed by many with derision and as a sure sign of guilt, but Nixon staffers claimed the erasure was accidental. Chief of Staff Alexander Haig testified that a “sinister force” was perhaps responsible for the erasure. An expert panel on acoustics testified that the gap had almost certainly been produced on the president’s tape machine, was caused by between five and nine separate erasures, and while it could not be judged as either deliberate or accidental, was consistent with the traces left by deliberate erasure. In September 2000, the National Archives and Records administration (NARA) announced a feasibility project on the possibility of recovering the erased material.

Nixon’s personal secretary Rose Mary Woods testified that she had accidentally erased part of the tape when she answered a telephone call, pressed “record” instead of the “stop” button, and left her foot on the play pedal. When she attempted to reenact this for the court, she physically could not do so; her contorted pose, which became known as the “Rose Mary Woods stretch,” appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* with the headline, “Rose Mary’s Boo-Boo” (Emery, 414ff). Woods’s counsel suggested she had been made a scapegoat, and her resulting humiliation reflected the widespread perception of the role of women within the Watergate scandal. Watergate exposed not only the workings of government, but also a patriarchal system. Through the various investigations, women in roles such as secretaries and wives were shown to possess much of the information that could “break” the case, but were largely relegated to social positions that allowed proximity to knowledge and power but not the capacity to exercise such knowledge or power directly.

### **Conspiracy Theories**

Nixon faced certain impeachment when the 23 June 1972 taped meeting of Nixon and Haldeman was finally released on 5 August 1974, and he resigned on 9 August. Known as the “Smoking Gun,” this tape proved that Nixon was party to the Watergate cover-up and had entered into a conspiracy to obstruct the FBI Watergate investigation. On the tape, Nixon instructs Haldeman to have the CIA



pressure the FBI to drop its investigation by claiming national security interests, as a continuing investigation would reopen the “whole Bay of Pigs thing.” Haldeman would later write that this was perhaps a coded reference to the John F. Kennedy assassination. Warren Commission critic Mark Lane claims that in identifying “Bay of Pigs” as signifier of “CIA involvement in the Kennedy assassination,” Haldeman “provided a Rosetta Stone for the decipherment of the Nixon tapes” (Lane, 110). Although there is no evidence to suggest that Nixon was referring to anything other than the Bay of Pigs invasion itself, the intelligence backgrounds of the Watergate burglars, and their connection to the failed invasion, inspired the interest of some conspiracy researchers who believe that President Kennedy was assassinated because Robert Kennedy had failed to provide sufficient air cover for the invaders. Several researchers claimed to have identified Hunt and Sturgis as two of the “three tramps” photographed at Dealey Plaza soon after Kennedy’s assassination, going on to allege that they were the shooters.

While some researchers drew a literal connection between the assassination of John F. Kennedy and Watergate, others metaphorically connected them in a way that has had a more significant cultural influence. For some in the conspiracy research and wider communities, these two events, each so difficult to decipher or delimit, were perceived to have been caused by conspiratorial forces, with actual or purported participants who were members of the government or intelligence forces conspiratorially acting against the Constitution. Rather than the official and visible government ruling the nation, such theories posited that control was in fact held by the invisible “para-government” or forces of “deep politics,” in the terminology of Peter Dale Scott.

As a result, Watergate is a central part of many conspiracy theories. It features prominently in “A Skeleton Key to the Gemstone File,” an edited version (put together by Stephanie Caruana, a reporter for *Playgirl*) of an intriguing, much photocopied manuscript that began to circulate in conspiracy research communities in the 1970s. According to this document, the name of Liddy’s Operation Gemstone was inspired by some of the actual gem-

stones of the manuscript’s supposed author, Bruce Roberts. Reminiscent of claims about the “mysterious deaths” of Kennedy assassination witnesses, the “Skeleton Key” claims that Beverley Kaye, secretary to Stephen Bull (special assistant to Nixon and one of three people who knew of Nixon’s taping system) was “sodium morphate ‘heart attacked’” after hearing the erased “18-minute gap” tape (Caruana, 30). In an article written only weeks after the break-in, the conspiracy researcher Mae Brussell accurately identified elements of the Watergate conspiracies that were not discovered by the various investigatory bodies for months. Many events connected to Watergate were recontextualized in light of the conspiracy theories that surrounded it. When Dorothy Hunt, wife of E. Howard Hunt, was killed in a plane crash in December 1972, some argued she had been murdered in the “Watergate Plane Crash” while carrying hush money to pay off the burglars.

### The Significance of Watergate

Indeterminacy remains about certain aspects of Watergate, such as the motive for the break-in. Early theories proposed that the burglars intended to search the office of DNC Chairman Larry O’Brien, either for material that would prove embarrassing to the Democrats because of O’Brien’s links to Howard Hughes, or for damaging information that O’Brien may have held on financial connections between Nixon and Hughes, such as the illegal campaign contribution Hughes had made to Nixon, or the Hughes loan to Nixon’s brother, Donald. Such uncertainty has inspired “revisionist” histories as well as conspiracy theories. A prominent revisionist reading is Jim Hougan’s *Secret Agenda: Watergate, Deep Throat and the CIA* (1984), in which he argues that the official version of Watergate is a “counterfeit history.” He claims that McCord and Hunt had never left the CIA, with Hunt effectively spying on the White House while working for it, and that McCord had deliberately sabotaged the break-in to protect CIA operations. For Hougan, Watergate was not so much a political operation and scandal as one instigated by the intelligence community. Developing Hougan’s thesis, Len Colodny and Robert Gettlin’s *Silent Coup: The Removal of Richard Nixon* (1991) argues



that Watergate was a John Dean “operation” designed to retrieve information that would otherwise link his future wife Maureen to a powerful prostitution ring. According to this theory, Watergate was part of a covert “reactionary” coup against Nixon by elements of the military.

Colodny and Gettlin propose that Alexander Haig, Nixon’s chief of staff after the resignation of Halde- man, was *Washington Post* journalist Bob Wood- ward’s informant known as “Deep Throat.” The identity of the mysterious inside informant has inspired intense speculation since the character was immortalized in the book by Carl Bernstein and Bob Wood- ward, *All the President’s Men* (1974), and the Alan J. Pakula film of the same name (1976). In fact, almost every person involved with the Nixon White House, including Nixon, has at one time or another been proffered as Deep Throat, as have countless others. While some consider the character to be a compos- ite, or even a literary device introduced to heighten suspense, Woodward, Bernstein, and then-editor of the *Washington Post* Benjamin Bradlee—the only people who know the “identity” of Deep Throat—insist that he is an actual individual whose identity will only be revealed upon his death. The identity of Deep Throat is one of the enduring mysteries of Watergate, in that it emblematically represents the uncertainties that still surround the entire event.

While some of the “facts” about Watergate are a matter of the public record, including details of its investigation, the records of criminal trials, and the conviction and imprisonment of many of its partici- pants, others are still open to speculation. But debate regarding its overall “meaning” has a larger social resonance. For some, Watergate was an over- arching constitutional crisis; for others, such as Noam Chomsky, who said it was “small potatoes” compared to more severe—and unremarked—gov- ernment crimes, Watergate was little more than the revelation of “politics as usual.” Nixon wrote in his *Memoirs* that “there was not one truth about Water- gate. . . . it was like a Rorschach ink blot: others, looking at our actions, pointed out a pattern that we ourselves had not seen” (Nixon, 831–832). Water- gate is not an “empty signifier,” but an open one; it is an interconnected series of conspiracies, the

interpretation of which has almost innumerable possibilities. As a publicly known and “proven” con- spiracy, Watergate has a unique status, in that it serves to validate other conspiracy theories. From the time these interconnected conspiracies became known, Watergate was the measure against which other conspiracy theories could be judged. The ver- ified criminality of the Watergate conspiracy was projected onto numerous others. Watergate effec- tively changed the social status of conspiracy theory, for if this conspiracy could take place at the height of power, at its most visible, then any could.

Karen Gai Dean

**See also:** Brussell, Mae; Central Intelligence Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hughes, Howard; Kennedy, John F., Assassination of; Liddy, G. Gordon; Nixon, Richard; Pakula, Alan J.; Patriarchy; Pentagon Papers.

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National Archives and Records Administration, "Nixon Tapes:" <http://www.nara.gov/nixon/tapes/index.html>.

## Weathermen

A radical offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Weathermen organization was formed as a vanguard to promote armed struggle in the United States. The group, alternatively referred to as "Weatherman" or simply "Weather," saw its purpose as attacking U.S. imperialism and supporting black liberation by, in the words of Weathermen leader Bernardine Dohrn, "building a fucking white revolutionary movement."

Published in the 18 June 1969 edition of the SDS's newspaper *New Left Notes*, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows . . ." (a lyric borrowed from Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues") was the founding statement of the Weathermen organization. In the position piece, the Weathermen emphasized the primary importance of attacking U.S. imperialism by supporting black liberation in the United States; recognized the black community as an oppressed "colony" within the United States; stated that socialism would necessarily replace capitalism once the current U.S. system was overthrown; held that working with reform movements in a united front was counterrevolutionary; and pledged support to all struggles for self-determination in colonial environments. Three days after publication, at the 1969 Students for a Democratic Society National Convention, the SDS split apart as the Weathermen faction expelled the Maoist Progressive Labor bloc and allied with another faction, the Revolutionary Youth Movement II (RYM II).

In October 1969, vowing to "bring the war home," the Weathermen took to the streets of Chicago to demonstrate against the war in Vietnam, show support for the Black Panther Party, and to evidence solidarity with all political prisoners, especially Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton and the Chicago 8

(later 7), who were on trial for conspiracy to incite riots during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The Weathermen had hoped that tens of thousands of youths would descend upon the Windy City and "tear the motherfucker apart." However, from 8 to 12 October, the "Days of Rage," only several hundred revolutionaries, donning helmets and carrying clubs, rampaged through the streets, vandalizing property and clashing with police. When the actions, which began with the Weathermen's bombing of the Haymarket police statue, had ended, there were a total of 284 arrests (40 felonies) with bail charges in excess of \$1.5 million. In addition, fifty-seven police officers had been hospitalized and over \$1 million in damages had resulted.

In December 1969, the Weathermen convened a "War Council" in Flint, Michigan. In the wake of the low turnout during the "Days of Rage," the council came to a decision that attempting to build a large-scale white revolutionary force was fruitless and that street-fighting tactics were too costly for the organization. Instead, the Weathermen decided to go underground and engage in a clandestine, armed struggle in support of black militants and national liberation movements. By February 1970, all remaining members (several hundred at this point) of the Weathermen had gone underground and formed small cells of three to five people that were committed to armed action. On 7 March 1970, one of these cells, operating in Greenwich Village, New York City, was building bombs when an accidental explosion occurred. Three members of the Weathermen were killed in the blast. Just ten days later, indictments were handed down in connection with the October 1969 "Days of Rage." Twelve Weathermen members, most of the group's leaders, were charged with conspiracy to cross state lines with intent to incite a riot.

On 9 June 1970, the Weathermen bombed New York City police headquarters, and on 26 July a military-police guard post in San Francisco's Presidio Army base and a Manhattan Bank of America branch were similarly struck. On 13 September 1970, the Weathermen orchestrated the prison escape of Harvard psychologist-turned-LSD guru Timothy Leary, followed by the bombing of the police statue in



Members of the Weathermen march across the Chicago River bridge to the downtown Loop, October 11, 1969. Militant radicals went on a window smashing spree and battled police before the eyes of startled shoppers. At least thirty-five people were arrested and the Illinois National Guard was called out. (Bettman/Corbis)

Chicago's Haymarket Square (the second time in one year that the group had done this) on 5 October, a blast at the Marin County, California, courthouse on 8 October, and the 9 October bombing of a Long Island, New York, court building.

On 10 December 1970, the organization publicly changed its name, signing its latest communiqué, titled "New Morning, Changing Weather," as the "Weather Underground." In the statement, a stronger role for women within the Weathermen was evidenced, a critique of the group's past actions and ideology was made, and philosophical changes taking place within the organization were outlined. Throughout 1971, the Weather Underground continued its bombing campaign with attacks on the U.S. Capitol, prison offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Mateo, California, the New York commissioner of corrections' offices, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology offices of former

presidential advisor and Vietnam War escalation-advocate McGeorge Bundy.

In May 1972 the Weather Underground exploded a bomb in the air force wing of the Pentagon and, in the face of new government indictments of conspiracy to bomb police departments handed down in December 1972, continued its terrorist campaign throughout 1973. In the summer of 1974, the Weather Underground issued *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*. The first detailed statement of the group's politics since June 1969, *Prairie Fire* included self-criticism, aims for the future, and a history of the organization. The document also revealed the group's new understanding that a U.S. revolution was not imminent and that such an event would be "complicated and protracted." *Prairie Fire* also issued a challenge to the anti-imperialist movement to continue its rebellion. Finally, the text provided detailed analysis of



feminism and the role of women in the revolutionary movement.

The Weathermen's bombing campaign continued in 1975, with attacks on the Washington, D.C., offices of the Agency for International Development and the Oakland, California, offices of the Department of Defense on 23 January, and the bombings of the Banco de Ponce offices in New York City's Rockefeller Center and the Salt Lake City, Utah, headquarters of the Kennecott Corporation on 16 June. In 1976, the Weather Underground split into two factions, due to philosophical differences over issues of race, gender, and organizational approaches. By the end of the year, however, one of the factions—the Central Committee—saw its members leave or be expelled from the group while the other, the Bay Area Revolutionary Committee (BARC), assumed the mantle of the Weather Underground.

In 1977 and 1978, six members of the Weather Underground surfaced and surrendered to authorities, leaving fifteen Weather fugitives still living underground. Weather Underground members continued to surface voluntarily or to be captured by law enforcement during the 1980s, with the final Weather fugitive wanted under federal charges arrested in 1987.

*Nicholas Turse*

**See also:** Chicago 7.

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## Whiskey Rebellion

In October 1794, President George Washington called out roughly 13,000 militia men from Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to march to Pittsburgh and crush an armed rebellion against federal tax collectors in western Pennsylvania. Washing-

ton, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, and fellow members of the governing Federalist Party were convinced that certain popular "republican" societies were conspiring against the administration. The Federalists feared that local organizations, hostile to federal policies, were secretly fomenting open rebellion among disgruntled farmers and distillers in the rural counties west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The events leading up to muster of troops resulted from a series of clashes between farmers and tax collectors over an excise tax on whiskey. Hamilton ostensibly launched the tax in 1791 to pay for debts incurred during the American Revolution and for the protection of settlers on the western frontier. For the backwoods farmers of western Pennsylvania, Hamilton's tax seemed overly burdensome and evidence of an eastern conspiracy among wealthy elites and the government. The farmers needed to distill their grain into whiskey, or "Monongahela Rye," as an economical way to transport their produce across the Allegheny Mountains to profitable markets in the east. Due to a shortage of money in the west, whiskey also served as a form of currency in the rapidly expanding frontier. This taxation brought to the forefront western resentment of the economic power maintained by the government and the wealthy east of the Alleghenies. The tax seemed to be a direct assault on the economic lifeblood of the area. Not to be intimidated, farmers often responded by tarring and feathering local collectors, destroying compliant stills, and routinely blocking roads to the east with piles of manure, ditches, and fallen trees (Bouton). Over the next three years, tensions increased as those who did not comply were threatened with fines and imprisonment.

### The "Rebellion"

By the summer of 1794, opposition to the tax had become increasingly violent and solidified against federal authority. On 16 July in Washington County, a mob of angry farmers attempted to destroy records of the fines and taxes they owed by laying siege to and eventually burning the house of federal collector General John Neville. In an ensuing gunfight, two of the insurgents were killed. On 23 July, these



farmers met with the “Mingo Creek Society” and other residents of the area to solidify their position against the federal government. It was decided, largely at the request of lawyer and author Hugh Henry Brackenridge, to wait until August when a more formal meeting could be called to assess the collective will of western Pennsylvania. However, ten days later, some of the insurgents intercepted and read U.S. mail from citizens in nearby Pittsburgh to determine the town’s attitudes toward the rebellion. Some of the letters were written to prominent Federalists and contained threats against the insurgents and denunciations of their cause. The insurgents were outraged. Under the leadership of self-appointed general David Bradford, a prominent but eccentric lawyer, they proposed a march on Pittsburgh to capture and imprison those who had written the letters. By this time, the whole of western Pennsylvania had heard about the killings at Neville’s house and, in response to a general muster called by Bradford, approximately 7,000 men turned up on 1 August at Braddock’s Field outside Pittsburgh, ready to march on the town. Largely through the negotiations and delay tactics of moderates like Brackenridge and the quick-thinking Pittsburghers (they fed and welcomed the insurgents as they paraded through the streets), the rebels had little energy for destroying the town by the time they marched. Only a few houses were looted, and the barn of General Neville’s son was burned. By the end of the day, less than 100 of the “whiskey rebels” remained in Pittsburgh.

### Federal Reaction

On 7 August Washington issued a proclamation that detailed his interpretation of the events leading up to the rebellion, blaming “certain irregular meetings” and “combinations” in Pennsylvania’s western counties for creating unrest among the farmers. The Federalists publicly sought a peaceful solution by dispatching a commission to negotiate an end to the rebellion. Tensions lessened, and the majority of westerners favored reconciliation. However, there were still sizable numbers of radicals advocating rebellion, and while negotiations continued through August, Hamilton and Washington secretly pre-

pared for war. Seeking a show of federal strength and worried that “committees of correspondence” were trying to unite conspirators against the union in other western states, Hamilton asked Governor Henry Lee of Virginia to secretly draft a 12,950-man army and postdate his orders to 1 September so that it would appear the government had sought a peaceful solution in good faith. By the end of September, the commission, unable to reach complete reconciliation with the farmers, asked Washington to send troops to western Pennsylvania. But when the troops eventually reached Pittsburgh at the end of October, the rebellion had subsided through the efforts and negotiations of moderates (Brackenridge). Hoping to maintain peace and support for the federal government, Washington magnanimously pardoned the known insurrectionists, with the exception of David Bradford, who escaped down the Ohio River in a canoe to Spanish territory.

### Analysis

While historians recognize the Whiskey Rebellion as the first great test of America’s federal government against subversion, they also suggest that the “conspiracy” accusations launched by Federalists and rebels alike were really passionate reactions to a number of social, political, and economic factors central to the new Republic. To the whiskey rebels, the government was unfairly generating revenue from produce grown in the west instead of taxing the eastern land speculators who actually owned much of the western Pennsylvania farmland the grain was grown on. The tax, in their estimation, was proof that the government was conspiring with economic and political elites in Philadelphia and the east to oppress the western country. Scholarship does suggest that Hamilton initially launched the whiskey tax as an ideological power play, designed to prove the federal government could tax anywhere within its boundaries. He welcomed the rebellion as a way to display the integrity of the newly formed federal system and show its ability to enforce domestic policies (Slaughter). From the federal side, Washington’s accusations that the Whiskey Rebellion was part of a larger western conspiracy against the government indicate a fear early Anglophile Federalists enter-

tained that the liberalism and violence of the French Revolution would spill over into the less “civilized” populace of America. The existence of several Francophile political societies (some established by French foreign minister Edmond Genet) in Philadelphia and the western states (Koschnik) was evidence enough to convince Washington that a network of subversives was at work to undermine the Federalists’ power. While much of the resistance to the tax was random and loosely organized, some western Pennsylvanians, following the lead of Philadelphia, did create Jacobin-like “Republican societies” for the purpose of reducing federal power, and the whiskey tax was a perfect rallying point for them.

*Charles Bradshaw*

**See also:** Genet, Citizen Edmond Charles; Hamilton, Alexander; Shays’ Rebellion.

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## White Slave Trade

During the Great White Slavery Scare of 1907–1914, the U.S. public devoured a flood of speeches, pamphlets, magazine articles, plays, novels, books, and films about the so-called white slave traffic. These sensational materials, which included the first full-length feature film, spread the alarming

message that a secret vice syndicate was reaping huge profits through forced prostitution. Sixty thousand innocent women a year, it was said, were held as sex slaves by means of force, trickery, seduction, drugging, debt peonage, social shame, and venereal disease. The belief in white slavery was widespread: cities formed investigative commissions and Congress passed laws (notably the Mann Act of 1910). Historians doubt that white slavery existed, yet the campaign to abolish it was arguably one of the most important moral crusades of the Progressive Era. The scare waned when evidence repeatedly failed to emerge and World War I diverted attention to other threats, but remnants of white slavery lore have survived the century.

The image of the prostitute as an innocent white slave began in Europe, where by the 1880s the alarm was raised that white, European women who ventured abroad—sometimes to work as prostitutes—were being captured for sexual exploitation by colonial subjects. In the United States, similarly, white slavery fears took hold in reaction to stepped-up immigration and women’s expanding opportunities and increasing mobility. The term “white slavery” implies that the victims are racially distinct; and indeed, the earliest U.S. white slavery fears expressed a racist, nativist fear of foreign infiltration, particularly by Jews and southern Europeans, and the first white slavery laws were immigration controls.

But the scare reached its peak when a U.S. version of white slavery evolved. Drawing on the national shame and horror over black chattel slavery, white slavery writings—which were clearly intended for a white consumer—exploited the term’s implication that the enslavement of whites is especially evil. Using proto-abolitionist rhetoric to call for the abolition of this heinous, “blacker” form of slavery, white slavery writers suggested that to be roused to moral indignation on the part of these poor women—who might, after all, be one’s “own” sister or daughter—was tantamount to joining an abolitionist crusade.

U.S. white slavery writing also incorporated the central reformist impulse of the Progressive Era: to save democracy from erosion by big business. Starting in 1907, when *McClure’s* magazine published a

serial exposé of the vice business in Chicago, the U.S. public got a complex version of white slavery in which the traffickers included harmless-looking U.S. citizens and the crime syndicate was a nationwide industry working hand in hand with foreign traffickers and corrupt officials. The white slavery business, with its network of related enterprises—liquor and drugs, abortionists, procurers, beauticians, government infiltrators—was a sinister reflection of the vertically integrated corporations and monopolies, the trusts and syndicates, that were being exposed and broken up by Progressive Era reform efforts.

Other major cities published similar pieces on big-city vice and the growing public outcry provoked the Senate to extend government's power to bar and deport aliens suspected of trafficking, while the 1910 Mann Act (aka the White Slave Traffic Act) made it a felony to "aid, entice or force a woman to cross state lines for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose." Aside from these laws and some stepped-up brothel-raiding, the so-called Great War on White Slavery involved very little in the way of actual reform. The scare probably brought increased financial and moral support to social welfare work among working-class women and prostitutes: Jane Addams, for example, used white slavery rhetoric to draw attention to the struggles and worthiness of the women she served. But for the most part, the scare was a textual and representational phenomenon made possible by the boom in urban populations consuming popular media and fueled by competition for that market as much as by the generally reformist climate of the time.

### **The White Slavery Genre**

The set piece of white slavery collections was the white slave narrative, which drew on the conventions of melodrama to portray a sunny, innocent girlhood brutally severed by the evil traffickers. The heroic exploits of lawmen were also featured; these tales of investigation, rescue, and punishment, which often incorporated criminals' sensational confessions, are related to the detective story and to the earlier "mysteries and miseries of the city" genre, which offered shocking glimpses of the exotic degra-

dations of the urban poor. In lawmen's narratives, undercover heroes adopted elaborate concealments and disguises, penetrating the secret criminal enterprise by means of an equally conspiratorial law enforcement network.

The great popularity of white slavery materials was clearly due to their titillating entertainment value. But at the same time, their content—particularly their disturbing depictions of a ubiquitous conspiracy—reflected and grappled with unsettling social changes. Prostitution had boomed as the cities grew, and criminalization of the sex trade had created vice districts and driven prostitutes onto the streets, forcing residents to wonder where all these young, white prostitutes came from, and where they ended up. And where were the increasing numbers of daughters and sisters who were leaving towns and families for big city life, never to be heard from again? Answering these unsettling questions, the white slavery conspiracy theory gave assurances that prostitution was never freely entered into by anyone resembling a middle-class white woman and that prostitutes never reemerged into mainstream society (the white slave nearly always ends up dead). The conspiracy theory foreclosed on the perceived threat to family life posed by a booming market economy that offered women increased independence by depicting women as doomed without the protective agency of the family.

Portrayals of secret white slavery syndicates transposed anxiety about big business into a melodrama with clear moral demarcations. Progressive Era campaigns to regulate business and break up trusts and monopolies were often set in motion by exposés uncovering the secret machinations and tyrannical reach of corporate barons like Rockefeller. White slavery conspiracy depictions, similarly, portrayed a consolidation of power in the hands of coercive economic agents, with resulting corrosion of democratic institutions, families, and even individual self-determination. In white slavery materials, however, readers were given a sense of empowerment against such vast forces. Enabled to see through the veil of secrecy and to learn how to protect women, and privileged to vicariously take part in brothel raids, the consumers of white slavery

materials could experience themselves as moral agents with a clear position and purpose.

The scare peaked during a period of significant demographic shifts when urban growth, spurred by booming industry and commerce, coincided with the effects of vastly increased immigration. Geographical, national, ethnic, racial, and social boundaries were in flux. White slavery writings reflected the fear of corrupting alien presences whose foreign ways—not least their foreign languages—made them seem sinister and mysterious. Weakened social boundaries were reinstated in white slavery writings' demarcation between "us" and "them," while cultural integrity was boiled down to a contest over woman as the repository of cultural stability and familial and social identity.

### Conspiratorial Sex Trafficking since 1980

In recent decades, sex trafficking media stories and reform campaigns have reemerged. That this contemporary fear over international "trafficking in persons" coincides with stepped-up globalization lends additional plausibility to the hypothesis that sex slavery conspiracy theories can reflect anxieties caused by weakened geographic and demographic boundaries. A growing number of international and domestic organizations, campaigns, and legislative reforms seek to uncover and punish those who use deception and force to coerce women into sex work. The Progressive Era fear of corrupting foreign infiltration is echoed in depictions of the foreign traffickers as gangs linked up with crooked foreign governments. The U.S. media is giving increasing coverage to tell-all exposés and accounts of brothel raids, which sometimes closely resemble Progressive Era materials—except that the imported female "sex slaves" are usually not white, but Asian or Latin American women presented as vulnerable and helpless (i.e., innocent) due to their poverty. In media stories and in reports generated by reform organizations, prostitution is foregrounded over other kinds of labor exploitation, and women migrants are rarely acknowledged to be knowingly entering prostitution.

*Margit Stange*

**See also:** Nativism.

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### Whitewater

"Whitewater" refers to U.S. president William Jefferson Clinton's alleged financial wrongdoings in a labyrinthine Arkansas land deal during the late 1970s and 1980s. The scandal, which emerged in 1992, also generated various conspiracy theories accusing Clinton and his wife Hillary of going to great lengths, including murder, to cover up incriminating evidence.

The Whitewater controversy originated in 1978, when Clinton, who served as Arkansas attorney general, his wife, and friends James and Susan McDougal created the Whitewater Development Corporation to turn 220 acres of riverfront property into vacation homes. According to financial filings by the Clintons, they eventually lost \$40,000 in this



partnership. James McDougal's other business, the Madison Savings and Loan Association, for which Hillary Clinton did legal work as a partner at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, also went bankrupt because of several fraudulent loans.

Both of the McDougals served jail time for illegal loan and land schemes, and a federal grand jury headed by special prosecutor Robert F. Fiske, Jr., then Kenneth W. Starr, then Robert Ray, investigated the Clintons from 1994 to 2000 to determine their involvement in this fraudulent bankruptcy. On 20 September 2000, Ray eventually concluded that there was insufficient evidence to indict the Clintons, thus ending the six-year Whitewater investigation, but various incidents during the investigation sparked many conspiracy theories according to which the Clintons actively, and successfully, covered up their past illegal activities.

Among other bizarre incidents, Hillary Clinton insisted that she miraculously discovered in January 1996 in her White House private quarters documents regarding her legal work for Madison Savings and Loan. These documents had been subpoenaed by Whitewater investigators two years before and claimed lost.

Bill Clinton insisted that he did not know about a fraudulent \$300,000 federally backed loan to Susan McDougal, even though McDougal invested part of the money in the Whitewater Development Corp., and even though Little Rock judge David Hale, who made the loan, testified that he lent money under Clinton's orders. Susan McDougal, who denied Clinton's involvement and served eighteen months in jail for contempt of court, allegedly refused to talk because Clinton pressured her to do so.

Friends of Bill Clinton gave more than \$700,000 to former associate attorney general and partner in the Rose Law Firm Webster L. Hubbell, whom Whitewater investigators were interrogating, suggesting that they hoped to buy Hubbell's silence. Hubbell was sentenced for tax evasion and misleading testimony, but he continually maintained that the Clintons were not involved. The Supreme Court cleared him of the misleading testimony charge because evidence obtained under an immunity agreement was used in the case.

The most ardent conspiracy theorists also argue that White House counsel and Clinton friend Vince Foster, who shot himself on 20 July 1993 in Fort Macy Park, Virginia, under the strain of the Whitewater investigation and other scandals, was in fact murdered on Clinton's orders. Suspicions arose when documents disappeared from Foster's office following his death, and when his suicide note was not released for thirty hours.

Evidence remains insufficient to substantiate these conspiracy theories. Various federal investigators, including Starr himself, concluded that Foster killed himself. Republican senators, after months of Whitewater hearings, uncovered no hard evidence that the Clintons had committed illegal wrongdoings. In 1998, Starr shifted the focus of his investigation to another scandal, investigating whether Clinton and White House intern Monica Lewinsky had had sexual relations, then lied about it. This investigation proved more fruitful. The day before leaving office, Clinton reached a deal with independent prosecutor Robert Ray under which he confessed to having given false testimony regarding his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky, lost his law license for five years, and paid a \$25,000 fine.

Republican congressmen's eagerness to investigate various scandals, including Whitewater and others involving Lewinsky, Paula Jones, the White House travel office, FBI files of prominent Republicans, and Arkansas state troopers, along with prosecutors' inability to substantiate many of these charges, pushed Hillary Clinton to declare on 27 January 1998 that there was an ongoing plot, not to cover up Clinton's misdeeds, but to smear him and his wife as part of a "vast right-wing conspiracy."

*Philippe R. Girard*

**See also:** Clinton, Bill and Hillary; Clinton Body Count; Foster, Vince.

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## Witchcraft

Few episodes from America's colonial past are as well known or as notorious as the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692. For many, the Salem trials have represented the defining moment in the history of Puritan conspiracy-minded intolerance and superstition; however, belief in magic and witchcraft was an inextricable part of the seventeenth-century worldview. Witches were prosecuted in Europe and in all of the American colonies, not just in Puritan New England. While historians have produced competing explanations for colonial witchcraft belief, and though perhaps no ultimate explanation is possible, they have described many of the social, cultural, and religious conditions in which witches could be identified and witch-hunts could gain momentum. Briefly stated, a witch was understood to be a person who had made a pact with Satan to harm neighbors, the community, or the state through supernatural means. A witch, in other words, was a devil-worshipper, someone whose actions constituted a criminal and heretical conspiracy to destroy orderly Christian society.

### A World of Wonders

Colonial Americans lived in an enchanted universe, a "world of wonders," as historian David D. Hall has phrased it (Hall, 71). Their world was one where the supernatural infused the natural, where God and Satan were active agents in daily events, and where storms, disasters, illness, and crop failure were "special providences" demonstrating God's will or displeasure. Existence and livelihood were often precarious in early America, and from a rich fund of popular religious beliefs people chose the practices or rituals that might offer some sort of added protection from catastrophe. Magic and countermagic, spells, astrology, divination, palmistry, and witch lore were employed to predict the future, or heal the ill, to harm enemies, or to defend against occult attack (Godbeer, 7). In the seventeenth century, local folk magic practitioners called "cunning folk," "conjurers," "white witches," or "wizards" were omnipresent—though often suspicious—members of English and American society to whom people could turn for assistance.

Witches were a malevolent part of this world of wonders. While the practice of magic was an accepted component of folk belief, witchcraft had more sinister connotations. A witch was someone who had acquired superhuman powers through a covenant with Satan; chief among these powers was the ability to perform *maleficium*, or to cause harm through supernatural means. The types of *maleficium* varied. Witches were often accused of causing illness or death, or causing miscarriages, or spoiling beer or butter. They were believed to torment their enemies in other ways, by invisibly entering the rooms of sleeping people and choking them, or turning themselves into animals to carry out their evil deeds. They were also said to be able to tempt others to join in their satanic pact by a look or glance, or by sending out their specters to haunt their enemies. People under this kind of satanic influence were believed to be "possessed," a condition that often manifested itself in inexplicable physical contortions or illnesses. And while belief in magic and witchcraft was characteristic of popular and elite layers of early American society, for clergymen especially the real or imagined presence of witches was profoundly troubling. In making a covenant with Satan, the witch was rejecting God and godly society. This import of heresy had deep resonance among the Puritans, who believed themselves to be a covenant nation of God and a last bastion of Protestantism. Witches in New England represented nothing less than a satanic conspiracy against God's "city on a hill."

Identifying these witches was a social process, a means by which people controlled society and punished "antisocial" elements. Most accusations of witchcraft were of a face-to-face variety and reflected local tensions between neighbors. What is often surprising about these cases is the apparent banality of their origins. Testimony in the 1651 trials against Mary and Hugh Parsons of Springfield, Massachusetts, shows that untidy business transactions lay at the root of the accusations. Hugh Parsons, a brick maker, exchanged threatening words with neighbors who later argued that he had bewitched them: their children had fallen unaccountably ill, their cow's milk had curdled—all evidence of "bewitchment." Other witchcraft trials have similar quotidian origins. Unex-

plained illness, crop failures, missing farm implements, or sudden deaths could easily be attributed to a suspicious neighbor's demonic intervention. Many of these cases never came to trial since the accused would often countersue for defamation. Yet the confluence of personal or communal misfortune and the need for explanation and retribution often meant that individuals who exhibited "antisocial" behavior or who existed on the margins of society were identified as witches.

Most of the individuals identified as witches in colonial America were women. Historians dispute the numbers and gender proportions of witchcraft accusations, but one scholar, Carol F. Karlsen, has argued that of the 344 known people accused of witchcraft in New England between 1620 and 1725, 267 (78 percent) were women (Karlsen, 47). Most of these were women who, purposefully or not, refused to accept their place in society. For example, most accused witches in New England were middle-aged or older women who were eligible for inheritances; they interfered with the traditional patriarchal patterns of succession. Women accused of witchcraft in New England usually faced a familiar litany of sins that defined their deviance: excessive pride, sexual promiscuity, lying, discontent, or anger. They stuck out, in other words, in a society that prized them chiefly as submissive Christian wives. If witchcraft was defined as a rebellion against God, rebellion against the gender norms and hierarchy of early American society was equally threatening to godly order. In times of trouble or misfortune, marginalized or deviant women were thus among the most vulnerable to be social scapegoats and accused of being "handmaidens of the devil" (Karlsen, 117–152).

### **The Salem Witchcraft Trials of 1692**

These patterns can be seen writ large in the Salem outbreaks, which lasted from late 1691 to May 1693. This was not the first major witch-hunt in colonial America; there had been a significant one in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1662–1665, during which at least three people were executed. And the Salem trials, during which nineteen people (fourteen women and five men) were hung as "witches" and hundreds were imprisoned, were dwarfed in scale by the mas-

sive witch-hunts that had swept Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which reputedly led to the executions of tens of thousands of women (Levack, 1–21). Salem in the 1680s was a troubled town. Flooded with refugees from frontier wars with the Native American tribes allied with France, facing a failing economy, and split by deep class and factional fissures, the town was a tinderbox of the kinds of social antagonisms where witchcraft accusations could thrive (Boyer, 80–109).

The outbreak itself began in late 1691. Several young women began to experiment with magic and spells, and some of them, including the daughter and niece of Samuel Parris, a local clergyman, began to exhibit the signs of "possession." When consulted, physicians and clergy could only conclude that the fits and trances that afflicted these women were evidence that they were under the influence of an "Evil Hand." When interrogated, the girls at first would not name their "tormenters" but eventually gave out three names, Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and Tituba. These "witches" were arrested and presumed guilty. Good and Osborne denied the charges, but Tituba, a Carib Indian woman who was also Parris's slave, confessed. She implicated Good and Osborne as accomplices and claimed that there were many other witches at large and conspiring against the community.

This confession initiated a cycle of accusations and trials that extended far outside of Salem; even the wife of Governor William Phips in Boston was accused. Some people quickly came to the conclusion that the scale and reach of the accusations meant that the outbreak was all a delusion, if perhaps a satanically inspired one. Others were not so moderate in their opinions. Samuel Parris, for one, argued that Salem witchcraft was nothing less than a "War the Devil has raised amongst us." Judicial moderation was not an option, according to Parris, for "If ever there were Witches, Men & Women in Covenant with the Devil, here are Multitudes in New-England" (Parris, 202). Other members of the clergy were more ambiguous in their assessment of the situation. When the judges in Salem asked New England's clergy for advice, Boston pastor Cotton Mather prepared on behalf of his colleagues a doc-

ument entitled “Return of Several Ministers” (15 June 1692) that gave mixed directives. On the one hand, the document declared, the judges must be scrupulous and exacting as they weighed the evidence. On the other hand, if witchcraft was afoot, the prosecution against it must be speedy and vigorous. The hunt raged on until Governor Phips suspended the proceedings in late 1692; in the spring of 1693 he pardoned everyone still in custody.

### From Magic to Metaphor

The Salem trials were not the last witch prosecutions in the American colonies; a case emerged in Colchester, Connecticut, in 1724. In general, however, witchcraft was no longer treated as a crime. Many scholars have argued that the growth of scientific rationalism, beginning with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, made belief in magic and the supernatural increasingly ludicrous. While this explanation has some credence, many people continued to believe in witchcraft after 1692, and still do.

The aftermath of the trials brought no immediate resolution and healing to Salem or New England, and the witch-hunt remained a source of controversy as people looked for scapegoats. Among those most visibly selected for censure were the Puritan ministers, especially Samuel Parris and Cotton Mather, whose actions many believed were catalysts for the trials. In Mather’s case, these accusations were largely unfair, since other than his published account of the trials, *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692), his dealings with the trials were relatively indirect. Nevertheless, in 1700 a Boston merchant named Robert Calef published a book, *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (1700), which claimed that the Puritan clergy, and Cotton Mather in particular, had conspired to encourage the witch hysteria in order to eliminate heterodox belief and to bolster their sagging religious and cultural authority in New England. The book was immediately labeled libelous by the Puritan authorities, and Increase and Cotton Mather were so angered by Calef’s accusations that they had copies of the book publicly burned in Harvard’s college yard. Whatever the immediate effect of the suppression of Calef’s book, the long-term consequences to Cotton

Mather’s reputation were catastrophic. No single figure is as closely identified with the trials as Mather, and his memory remains as the archetypal intolerant Puritan and superstitious witch-hunter.

In the twentieth century witchcraft and witch-hunting remained alive as a powerful metaphor for repression of many kinds: state-sponsored religious or political persecution, or for the oppression of women in a patriarchal society. Many contemporary believers in witchcraft or paganism, called Wicca, style themselves as the religious descendents of the victims of the Salem trials, and state a continuity of purpose between their own struggles for freedom of religious expression and the lives of those who died in 1692. Probably the most famous use of the witchcraft metaphor came with the production of Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible* (1952). Declaring that the “witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward greater individual freedom,” Miller used the Salem trials as an analogy for the political repression of McCarthy-era America (Miller, 7). In his view, the activities of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee represented a conspiracy against liberty of conscience akin to the Puritan backlash against witchcraft. Radical feminists in the 1960s, meanwhile, also employed the witchcraft metaphor. In 1968, the “action wing” of New York Radical Women was formed, and they chose the name WITCH, an acronym for Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell. The group attacked institutions that were seen as emblems of patriarchal power; they hexed the Chase Manhattan bank, for example, and disrupted a bride fair at Madison Square Gardens dressed as witches (Purkiss, 8–9). For these women, a witch was an emblem of female empowerment, not patriarchal victimization.

*William Van Arragon*

**See also:** House Un-American Activities Committee; McCarthy, Joseph.

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# X

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## **The X-Files**

*The X-Files* is a long-running television series, renowned for its atmosphere of suspicion and convoluted conspiracies. It was created by Chris Carter, a former writer and editor (of the magazine *Surfing*). It premiered on the Fox Network in the United States in September 1993, starring David Duchovny as Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) special agent Fox Mulder, and Gillian Anderson as Dr. Dana Scully, his partner. Though it gained little acclaim early in its run, this moody, visually stunning “quality TV” series went on to become first a cult hit and then a popular success, eventually making the top twenty in the Nielsen ratings. In a self-congratulatory but essentially accurate observation, Carter has acknowledged that “the show’s original spirit has become kind of the spirit of the country—if not the world” (qtd. in Knight, 54). This spirit is concerned with conspiracy theory, paranoia, and the paranormal.

*The X-Files* generated a wide variety of spin-off texts—including novels, official and unofficial guide books, an official magazine, and, of course, academic examinations of the series—not to mention a wide variety of *X-Files* merchandise. Hundreds of fan websites on the Internet have been devoted to the show, and its fans—who came to call themselves X-Philes—are among the most obsessed in all of popular culture. Its complex story lines, composed of both stand-alone “monster of the week” episodes and segments that are part of a multi-season narrative arc known as the *X-Files* “mythology,” have

unfolded in more than two hundred episodes over nine series, and (to date) one feature film, *X-Files: Fight the Future* (1998). Over its run, the show has become increasingly self-referential and intertextual, offering hilarious spoofs of its own conventions and sending up other media genres. With Duchovny’s limited participation in the 2000–2001 season (his last on the show), the series experienced for the first time significant cast changes (Robert Patrick as Agent John Doggett became Scully’s new partner). By general critical consensus the series began to decline. Many commentators even began to question the rationale (other than economic) for its continuance.

The degree to which *The X-Files* became part of our cultural vocabulary in the 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century can be demonstrated by an exchange from a first-season episode of the WB series *Angel* in which Kendrick, an obviously sexist male detective, hassles female detective Kate Lockley (Elizabeth Rohm), who has come to believe in the reality of vampires. The following dialogue ensues:

Kendrick: “Come on, Kate. Everybody knows you’ve gone all Scully. Anytime one of these weird cases crosses anyone’s desk you’re always there. What’s going on with you?”

Kate: “Scully is the skeptic.”

Kendrick: “Huh?”

Kate: “Mulder is the believer. Scully is the skeptic.”

Kendrick scratches his head: “Scully is the chick, right?”

Kate: “Yes. But she’s not the one that wants to believe.”

Although Kendrick does not seem to get the basic premise, the culture at large certainly did, and to “Scully” someone came to mean to doubt his or her questionable ideas—especially conspiracy theories. Mulder was open-minded about all sorts of paranormal possibilities, especially UFOs and alien abduction—had he not watched his own sister be abducted when he was twelve years old? Scully, however, was the ever-questioning, scientifically objective medical doctor assigned to partner with (and rein in) Mulder in his investigation of the X-Files, those aberrant FBI cases that do not lend themselves to normal forensic investigation.

“The Kennedy assassination, MIAs, radiation experiments on terminal patients, Watergate, Iran-Contra, Roswell, the Tuskegee experiments—where will it end?” Mulder asks his informant Deep Throat. For the critic Allison Graham, *The X-Files* is “television’s *fin de siècle* compendium of conspiracy theories” (Graham, 56), and is the apotheosis of U.S. conspiratorial thinking stretching back to the 1960s. Likening Scully and Mulder to Woodward and Bernstein, she notes that Mulder’s sister had been snatched by aliens while they were watching the Watergate hearings on television. (Not surprisingly, Chris Carter has called Watergate “the most formative event of my youth” [qtd. in Graham, 56], and has spoken too of the strong influence of Harvard psychologist John Mack’s controversial *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens*.)

Driven by its “perpetual motion of suspicion” (Knight, 28), *The X-Files* has contemplated much worse than mere political conspiracy. We learn in the mythology episodes that an international consortium (“The Syndicate”) involving mysterious, powerful men meeting in drawing rooms in London and New York, working in cooperation with scientists from the Axis Powers supplied through Operation Paperclip, have known since the crash of a UFO at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947 of a coming alien invasion. Over the years conscientious viewers

have very gradually come to realize that The Syndicate has been preparing for the end, bargaining for a delay so that they might, as a kind of peace overture to the invaders, offer them genetically engineered human-alien hybrids, purportedly as slaves for the powerful and ancient conquerors and (in secret) to prepare a cure, a serum, that would prevent their own colonization by the pathogenic Black Oil. They had long ago surrendered their own loved ones—wives, children (including Mulder’s sister)—as hostages, in return for their own survival of the impending “viral holocaust.” “Survival,” the Well Manicured Man tells Mulder in the *X-Files* movie, “is the ultimate ideology.”

The evil but compelling Cigarette Smoking Man (CSM)—Mulder calls him “Cancer Man”—one of the series’ most interesting creations, serves, it seems, as The Syndicate’s chief enforcer, one of them but working at their behest, though always putting his self-interest first. In the fourth-season episode “Musings of a Cigarette-Smoking Man,” we learn (or do we?) that his involvement in conspiracy is not limited to covering up the coming alien invasion. CSM assassinated both JFK and Martin Luther King, fixed the 1980 United States Olympic ice hockey upset of the Soviet Union, prevented the Buffalo Bills from ever winning the Super Bowl, and talks regularly on the phone with Saddam Hussein. . . . But then again we are not certain of the validity of any of these “facts,” which are buried two or three levels deep in the narrative, and CSM himself, it turns out, is a failed writer of bad Robert Ludlum-ish fiction. In “José Chung’s *From Outer Space*” (season 3), one of the series’ most masterful episodes, Scully completes her narration of the events to an author who is completing the “non-fiction science fiction” book of the title and then admits that it “probably doesn’t have the sense of closure you want, but it has more than our other cases”—a very self-conscious allusion to/defense of the often-complained-about tendency of Mulder’s and Scully’s cases (and every *X-Files* episode) to end enigmatically and without full resolution.

It was probably inevitable in the climate of post-modernism that a television series so focused on conspiracy would itself generate paranoid criticism. Christy Burns, drawing on Horkheimer and Adorno,

suggests that this “very postmodern show” (Burns, 200) might be considered part of “a grand governmental conspiracy to ‘keep the whole thing together,’ meaning capitalism and its mass suppression” (Burns, 213). The sealing off of the eyes of the Alien Rebels in the series, she suggests, “pokes fun at the fantasy that television might, like the black oil, sneak in through our eyes and ‘infect’ us with alien cultural influences” (Burns, 216). Although making “visible the buried social implications of centrist politics” (Burns, 198), the writers and producers of *The X-Files*, Burns proposes, have a more cynical secret agenda in mind: “step[ping] beyond the temptation simply to be noiresque and nihilistic, they realize their own roles as history bringers, via television, through which they may—wittingly or not—participate in yet another conspiracy: that of draining the agency out of the American masses” (Burns, 199). Adrienne McLean, too, finds the series both cause and effect of contemporary conspiracy culture. “Scully and Mulder cannot be joined sexually or legally,” we are told, “because they are both literally and figuratively alienated, penetrated, and probed to the molecular level by omniscient and omnipotent forces who have infiltrated, like television and, now, computers, virtually everything in our lives.” We remain fans of the series, she thinks, despite the anxiety it induces, because “We *have* to believe in the reality of *something*, even if that something is the paranoia induced by television itself” (McLean, 8).

From its inception *The X-Files* has given with one hand and taken away with the other, perpetually abandoning the viewer in a “hermeneutic limbo” (Knight). The series has not been content to merely “deny all knowledge”; it has, as Knight observes, taken as its subject “the *process* of repeatedly discovering everything you thought you knew is wrong.”

*David Lavery*

**See also:** Federal Bureau of Investigation; Operation Paperclip; Roswell; UFOs.

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#### XYZ Affair

The XYZ affair is a name given to a series of events involving French and U.S. relations during the latter half of the 1790s. In an attempt to settle disputes between the two countries arising from French raids on U.S. shipping and outstanding debts owed by the United States to France from the American Revolution, newly elected President John Adams sent a committee of three men—Charles Cotesworth Pinkney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry—to negotiate a peaceful settlement with France. Once there, however, the American emissaries found that the French minister of foreign relations, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, would not meet with them directly. Instead he sent John Conrad Hottinguer, Pierre Bellamy, and Lucien Hauteval as his agents to negotiate what amounted to a bribe before any formal negotiations could begin. Rather than agree to pay almost \$250,000 just to meet with Talleyrand, the commission wrote back to Adams describing their reception. When Adams made these dispatches public, he replaced the names of Talleyrand’s agents with the code names of X, Y, and Z.

The Federalist Party, in moves largely orchestrated by Alexander Hamilton, was able to use these events to turn a majority of U.S. citizens against the French and the francophile Jeffersonian Republicans at home. In fact, most of the real impact of the XYZ affair was seen in the domestic politics back in the United States, as it provided an excellent tool for



the pro-British Federalists to articulate and support their anxiety about France and cast it as a specific threat to the United States through tales of French intrigue and internal spies conspiring to topple the U.S. government. The Republicans also saw the XYZ affair through the lens of conspiracy theory as they interpreted the actions of Adams and other Federalists in response to these events as a subterfuge to reinforce U.S. ties, both political and economic, to Britain. Whatever international repercussions followed from the XYZ affair, they paled in comparison to the significance of the domestic struggles between the Republicans and Federalists as conspiracy theory followed counterconspiracy theory.

As the commission broke up over internal disagreement—Gerry remaining to attempt an amicable settlement, Marshall returning to the United States to a hero's welcome, and Pinckney taking a sick daughter to the south of France to recuperate—internal disagreements back in the United States began to boil over. The Federalists demanded that Adams declare war immediately and passed legislation readying the country for that war by setting up a new cabinet position of the secretary of the navy and establishing funds for a new naval force. The Jeffersonian Republicans instead insisted on peaceful negotiation and saw the Federalist activities as francophobic warmongering.

In order to support their side, Federalists such as Robert Goodloe Harper from South Carolina and Timothy Dwight from Boston promoted anti-France political paranoia by detailing various French-supported conspiracies against the United States. Harper suggested that the French and “internal agents” sympathetic to the Jacobin cause—read Republicans—were fostering an uprising of southern blacks by spreading French revolutionary ideas among slaves and that France itself would launch an attack on the southern states from Saint Domingue in the Caribbean. Dwight, a vehement Federalist

minister, on 9 May 1798 gave a sermon about a secret offshoot of Freemasonry—the Society of the Illuminati—that had already invaded the United States secretly and whose agents were hiding among the U.S. populace, waiting for a chance to attack from within. These are only two examples of many such conspiracy theories deployed by Federalists in an attempt to convince Americans of the danger of France. Their tactics worked well enough to pass the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798 as an attempt to regulate and control “enemies” to the United States, both internal and external.

Republicans also attempted to point out conspiratorial threats in order to win political points for their agenda. Republican newspaper editors such as Benjamin Franklin Bache and Albert Gallatin used their papers to promote conspiracy theories that cast the Federalists in power as warmongers who wanted to go to war with France only in order to strengthen political and trade ties with Britain. They even went so far as to suggest that Federalists wanted to reunify with England and were using this diplomatic crisis as an excuse to open the door for a British invasion.

The political crisis brought on by the XYZ affair was not settled until 1800 when the United States and France signed the Treaty of Mortefontaine that reestablished the grounds for commercial trade between the two nations. Through the excesses of the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Federalists finally lost favor with the American public and Adams lost his second bid for the White House to Thomas Jefferson.

*Riley Vann*

**See also:** Alien and Sedition Acts; Illuminati.

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# Y

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## Y2K

In the 1990s computer analysts began to warn that the date change from 1999 to 2000 at the millennium could cause some computer systems to malfunction. This potential problem, which soon became known as the Y2K (Year 2000) bug, attracted much media attention and a good deal of conspiracy speculation.

Many computer operating systems designed in the 1970s and 1980s had an internal date clock that only used two digits, and so could only go as far as 1999. Industry analysts feared that some computers would not recognize the year with the rollover from 1999 to 2000, and would either produce errors (mistakenly assuming the date to be 1900), or would shut down altogether. The Y2K “bug” was therefore not a computer virus as such, but a design flaw that hadn’t been anticipated in the early years of software development. Governments and businesses around the world spent huge sums of money in the years leading up to the millennium ensuring that their computer systems would be Y2K-compliant; it is estimated that the U.S. government spent \$8.5 billion, and U.S. business around \$100 billion.

Conspiracy theories took one of two main forms. On the one hand, many on the religious far right who were already concerned about the apocalyptic connotations of the millennium warned that the global meltdown of computer systems caused by the Y2K bug would result in civil mayhem, in turn provoking the U.S. government to declare martial law, and for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to initiate rumored plans for a complete

erosion of citizen rights with the imposition of the so-called New World Order. One posting to the Internet newsgroup alt.conspiracy in 1997, for example, warned, “In the year 2000, the United States Government, NATO and its armed forces will cease to exist, as will most of the organized economy, when all of the needed mainframe computers (and a good many others in consequence) become useless.” The writer went on to predict that “a third to two thirds of the population of Europe and the United States will die of thirst, starvation and disease, anarchy and crime” (Wilson). These fearful scenarios tapped into the existing apocalyptic, survivalist mentality, and a small but committed number of Americans stockpiled food and took to their basements or their cabins in the woods in the run-up to the year 2000.

The other form that conspiracy theories took was a cynical—some might say clear-sighted—dismissal of the Y2K problem as a panic promoted by the computer industry (and whipped up by the media and a compliant government) in order to fool everyone into spending a fortune on unnecessary technical fixes. This theory was circulated a good deal on the Internet, but was only held by a minority. However, many more people began to question the scale of the reported problem and the cost of fixing it, and many urban legends and rumors muddied the waters further (one common rumor, for example, suggested that most video recorders would not recognize the date change, but would work properly if set to 1972, a year that corresponded in day/date to 2000, a fact that the manufacturers were apparently

deliberately keeping quiet; unfortunately, the warning about the malfunction, the proposed quick fix, and the hint of a conspiracy of silence by the manufacturers were all off the mark).

According to an opinion poll reported in the *Wall Street Journal* on 7 September 1999, most Americans did not believe that the Y2K bug was deliberately created (as some of the far right claimed), but some 15 percent of Americans believed that “a person and/or company is hiding the solution to the Y2K bug.” For those holding this belief, 60 percent named Microsoft as the guilty party, while most of the rest blamed the government.

In the end, of course, very little happened at the millennium. Some power-generating companies in the United States, for example, reported that their computer systems had briefly malfunctioned, but then the date was quickly reset and the systems were restored; and there were other minor, temporary glitches (for instance, some slot machines at a Delaware race track shut down, but the problem was quickly fixed [CNN]). It became apparent very soon that there was to be no global computer systems crash, although some commentators—in the tradition of endlessly deferred millennial warnings—pointed out that the problem would not kick in until the return to work after the long bank holiday, and then that the true millennium would not begin until 2001. Although the first group of conspiracy theorists outlined above had little to say in the wake of the nonevents of 1 January 2000, some of the second group continued to question whether the threat had been unnecessarily exaggerated. The computer industry and the U.S. government, however, insisted that disaster had been avoided only because the vast sums of money had been well spent on curing the problem in advance. As the sociologist Anthony Giddens has argued, in issuing warnings about potential disaster scenarios (the AIDS epidemic and mad cow disease are the obvious examples) the authorities are in a no-win situation: either they downplay the potential danger, but then if something bad does happen they will be accused of a cover-up; or they give full credence to the scientific predictions, but, because people change their behavior accordingly and the disaster is averted,

they are vulnerable to accusations that the problem was deliberately exaggerated in the first place.

*Peter Knight*

**See also:** Apocalypticism; Internet; Militias; Millenarianism; New World Order.

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## Yalta Conference

On 4–11 February 1945, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin convened secretly at the Black Sea resort of Yalta in what proved to be the last meeting of the “Big Three” of World War II. With Nazi Germany collapsing, the Yalta conference focused upon postwar reconstruction plans for Europe, the formation of a new international organization, and the military defeat of Japan. Shrouded in military secrecy and driven by the imperative of getting the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan, the Yalta agreements generated only mild controversy in 1945. However, as the cold war intensified and the Truman administration embraced the policy of containment, conservative critics in the Republican Party began to brand Yalta as the appeasement of communism, suggesting that Roosevelt, under the influence of advisers such as Alger Hiss who were positively disposed toward communism and the Soviet Union, had conceded too much to Stalin. The 1952 Republican platform called for the repudiation of “all commitments contained in secret understandings such as those of



Crimean Conference—Prime Minister Winston Churchill, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Marshal Joseph Stalin at the palace in Yalta, where the Big Three met. (U.S. Signal Corps photo) (Library of Congress)

Yalta which aid Communist enslavements.” Rather than a diplomatic agreement, Yalta was in the eyes of anticommunists such as Senator Joseph McCarthy evidence of the Communist conspiracy to infiltrate the U.S. government.

The Yalta accords called for the Soviet Union to attack Japan within three months after the defeat of Germany. Stalin also agreed to self-determination for the areas of Eastern Europe, such as Poland, which the Soviet army had already “liberated.” Chiang Kai-shek was recognized as the leader of China in the struggle against Japan, but the Soviet Union was granted joint control of China’s Manchurian railroads, providing the Soviets a voice in the postwar governance of Korea and Manchuria. In exchange for Stalin’s pledge to enter the war against Japan, the Soviets were promised the southern half of Sakhalin Island, lost in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, and Japan’s Kurile Islands. The “Big Three” also committed their nations to the formation of the United Nations, reserving veto powers for themselves as permanent members of the Security Council.

An ailing and tired Roosevelt returned to the United States and remained seated while addressing Congress, arguing that the agreements made with the Soviets deserved the support of the nation. Initially, Yalta appeared to enjoy bipartisan support, and influential publications such as *Time* announced that no U.S. citizen could claim that his nation’s interests had been “sold down the river.” Perhaps the adroit Roosevelt might have maintained the initial enthusiasm, but, following his death from a stroke on 12 April 1945, international relations between the United States and Soviet Union rapidly deteriorated.

Stalin and President Harry Truman clashed at Potsdam in July 1945, while the successful testing of the atomic bomb in New Mexico rendered unnecessary any Soviet participation in an invasion of Japan. As the cold war intensified in the late 1940s, critics of the Yalta conference conveniently forgot military estimates of heavy casualties that would result from an invasion of the Japanese home islands. Republicans, seeking to attract votes from those of Eastern European ancestry, seized upon Yalta as a betrayal of



Poland by the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. The emergence of China as a Communist state in 1949 led to assertions that Yalta had betrayed Chinese democracy. Yalta critics also concentrated upon the conviction of Alger Hiss for perjury following the 1948 appearance by Whittaker Chambers before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Chambers accused Hiss, who had been an adviser to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr., at Yalta, of engaging in espionage for the Soviet Union. Alleging treason, Senator McCarthy and his supporters focused upon how Hiss influenced a “physically tired and mentally sick Roosevelt.”

Allegations of Democratic “softness” on communism played a role in the election of a Republican Congress and president in 1952. Once in power, the Republican administration of Dwight Eisenhower embraced containment rather than the “rollback” of communism. The more extreme voices of Republican dissent were marginalized in March 1955 with publication of the Yalta papers, demonstrating that no new secret agreements existed and documenting that Hiss played only a minor role at the Crimean conference. It was difficult to charge a Republican administration with a “whitewash” report, and the Senate censure of Senator McCarthy and negotiations between the Soviets and United States further undermined the conspiracy interpretations of the Yalta accords.

While the fervor of Yalta as a partisan issue declined after 1955, allegations of Communist conspiracy, fueled by misconceptions of the Yalta agreement, continued to be a mainstay of U.S. politics into the 1980s.

Ron Briley

**See also:** Anticommunism; Atomic Secrets; Hiss, Alger; House Un-American Activities Committee; McCarthy, Joseph; Roosevelt, Franklin Delano

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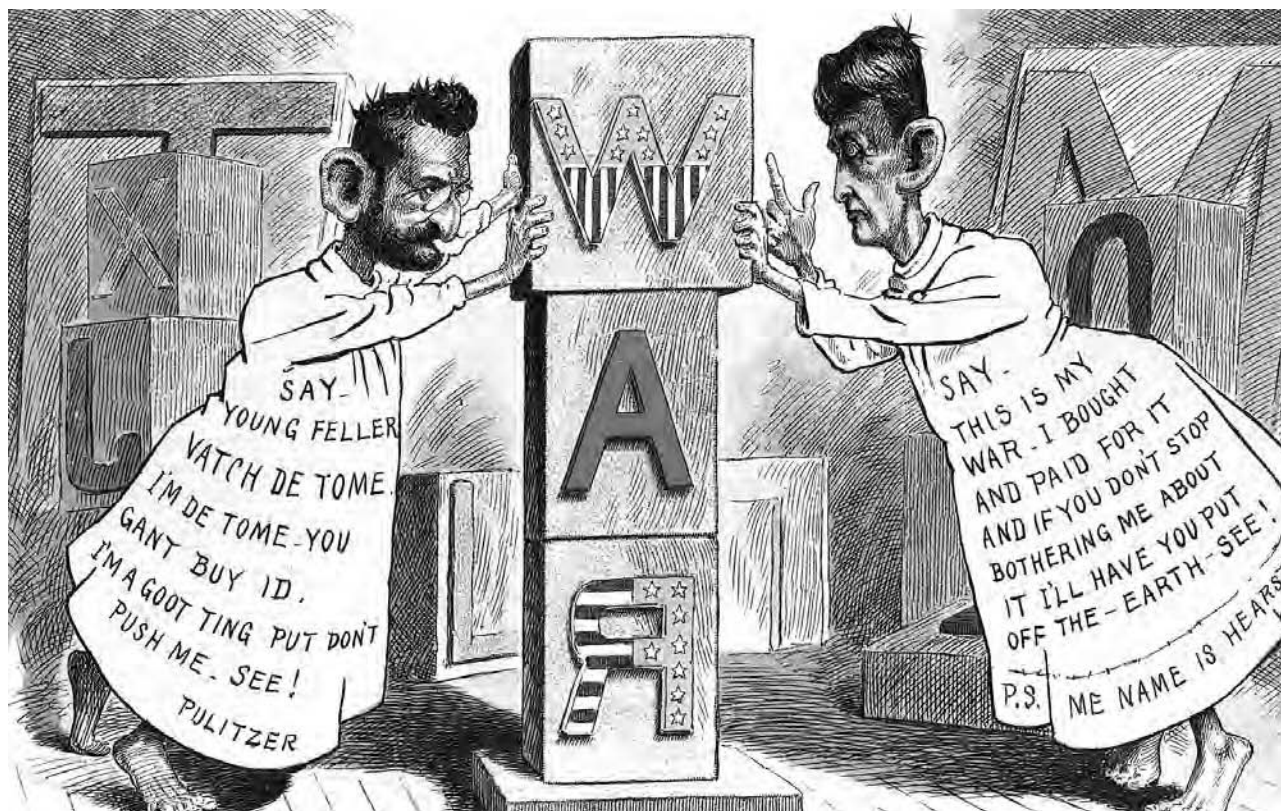
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## Yellow Journalism

A style of sensationalist newspaper writing that emerged in the late nineteenth century, “yellow journalism” has been accused, at best, of conspiracy-minded scaremongering and, at worst, of actively fabricating stories and conspiring behind the scenes to bring about historical events. Known by its proponents as “the journalism that acts” (Milton, xiii), it is a style of biased reporting designed to inspire specific opinions of its readership. This style makes use of multicolumn headlines, a wide variety of sensational subject matter, frequent, and some say excessive, use of illustrations of all sorts, intriguing and novel layouts, the use of anonymous sources, and a focus on self-promotion.

The term comes from the newspaper publicity wars of the late 1800s, when publisher William Randolph Hearst hired artist R. F. Outcault away from the *New York World* to work for his newspaper, the *New York Journal*. Hearst was interested in presenting one of Outcault’s newest creations, a comic strip named *Hogan’s Alley*. The strip featured what was to be Outcault’s most famous creation, a small Chinese boy who wore a giant shirt that reached from his neck to his toes. When color became available, this boy’s shirt was colored yellow, and the strip became colloquially known as “The Yellow Kid.” Following a fight over the character and the profits his immense readership would bring, eventually both papers won the right to print comics featuring him. The use of the color yellow, a novelty at the time, came to symbolize a new movement in journalism, namely a focus upon style and bold effects that often played fast and loose with the truth to attract readers.

The most famous example of yellow journalism is an alleged cable sent by Hearst. Reporter Richard Harding Davis and artist Frederic Remington were



Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, full-length, dressed as the Yellow Kid, each pushing against opposite sides of a pillar of wooden blocks that spells WAR. (Library of Congress)

sent by Hearst to Cuba to report on conditions there in the winter of 1896–1897. The expected revolution against the ruling colonial government of Spain was not visible in Havana, and Remington is said to have told Hearst, “Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return.” In reply, Hearst is said to have ordered, “Please remain. You furnish the pictures, and I’ll furnish the war.” Although Hearst denied the story, and no evidence of the telegrams has ever been found, the re-creation of the incident within Orson Welles’s epic *Citizen Kane* has only lent credence to the oft-told tale. It is entirely possible, however, that the story that best defined the term “yellow journalism” is also the finest example of the form, as James Creelman, who broke the story, did little to offer any evidence or proof of his claims concerning Hearst, and in decrying the lack of responsible

reporting of the Spanish-American War may have used the very techniques he was attempting to describe to make his point.

It is important to note, however, that Creelman was known to exaggerate in his stories, and had in fact previously been investigated by the U.S. minister to Japan, Edwin Dun, for a report to the U.S. State Department concerning his work. Conspiracies were often a feature within his prose, involving individuals at the highest level of the U.S. government. Hearst, on the other hand, only argued against the rumor on occasion, and may have preferred the circulation of the telegram story, which he could offer arguments against, as a defense against inquiry into his involvement in events leading up to the bombing of the *USS Maine*. If Hearst had truly been involved in either of these attacks, it would be in his best interest to encourage investigation into

events, such as the purported telegraphic exchange, that he could more easily deny.

Today the term “yellow journalism” is normally used to refer to a lack of ethical behavior on the part of journalists and commentators, whether it is by manufacturing sources and stories, or by tricking their sources into revealing far more of a story than they intended to in the first place.

*Solomon Davidoff*

**See also:** Hearst, William Randolph; USS *Maine*.

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## Yippies

On 31 December 1967, at a party hosted by Abbie and Anita Hoffman and attended by Jerry Rubin, Nancy Kurshan, and Paul Krassner, the movement known as Yippie!—the Youth International Party (YIP)—was born. Guided by Hoffman and Rubin, the clown-princes of “the Movement” during the Vietnam era, the Yippies attempted, through myth, media savvy, and guerrilla theater to bind the hippie counterculture and the politicized New Left into a powerful youth movement capable of creating an alternative U.S. society. By building on their earlier media attention-grabbing protest events, such as the August 1967 episode of money throwing and burning at the New York Stock Exchange and the October 1967 National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam march on the Pentagon where the duo took part in an attempted exorcism and levitation of the building, Hoffman and Rubin attempted to use the popular press to publicize YIP and garner support for their ideological views. The Yippies were one of a number of late 1960s countercultural movements who not only viewed the establishment as amount-

ing to a conspiracy, but also self-consciously styled themselves as a counterconspiracy.

The Yippies’ first major media event took place on 27 February 1968, when members of the group “raided” the campus of the State University of New York (SUNY)—Stoney Brook mimicking a recent on-campus drug-bust. Following this action, on 22 March 1968, the Youth International Party held a “Yip-In” at New York City’s Grand Central Station. Six thousand potential Yippies congregated amidst incense and balloons—so did officers of the New York Police Department. When a demonstrator removed the hands from a large clock, the police attacked, making fifty arrests and throwing one demonstrator through a plate glass door. This melee, however, was only a prelude to the major summer event the Yippies had planned—the Festival of Life.

Coinciding with the August 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC), the Yippie Festival of Life sought to bring tens of thousands of people to Chicago to launch a demonstration that would end the war in Vietnam and usher in a new, free society. The Yippies aimed to counterpose what they saw as the political “convention of death,” and they planned to include a huge rock-folk festival, numerous theater performances, educational workshops, and a “constitutional convention.” Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, who had promised to bring local, state, and federal powers to bear against anyone attempting to disrupt the convention, thwarted YIP efforts at achieving the full aims of the festival. Instead, Daley’s tactics forced confrontations between his police force and those who had come to protest the DNC. Despite repressive government tactics, the Yippies succeeded in nominating a pig, “Pigasus,” for president, providing a brief rock concert, causing an LSD scare by threatening to lace the Chicago water supply with the drug, and providing movement workshops on guerrilla theater and protest maneuvers. The events surrounding the convention drew to a climax when, on the night of 29 August, a “police riot” broke out when Daley’s lawmen violently assaulted protesters, journalists, and bystanders alike. Hoffman and Rubin would later be indicted on conspiracy charges, for their activities during the convention, as part of the Chicago 7 trial.



The Yippies continued to garner media attention within and outside the Movement for the remainder of the 1960s and into the 1970s. At the 1972 Democratic National Convention, held in Miami Beach, Florida, the younger faction of the Youth International Party, the “Zippies” (or Zeitgeist International Party) broke with the older YIP members. Hoffman and Rubin, who conditionally supported the peace platform of Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern, were seen as establishment “sell-outs” by the younger YIP faction, whereas the older Yippies objected to the Zippies’ outrageous street comedy, which they viewed as overly cruel satire.

As the power and momentum of the Movement declined, so did the visibility of the Yippies. Beginning in the 1970s, YIP published the *Yipster Times* (later renamed *Overthrow*) and the *Youth International Party Line* or *YIPL* (later known as *TAP* [Technological American Party or Technological Assistance Program]) magazine. By the 1980s, the Yippies were best known for their “smoke-ins” (which developed into annual “pot parades” pro-

moting the legalization of marijuana), crank phone call wars with Yippie enemies, and maintenance of their protest and demonstration staging point, the Yippie loft—an apartment in New York City’s East Village that has served as the group’s headquarters since 1973.

Nicholas Turse

**See also:** Chicago 7; Weathermen.

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## Zenger, John Peter

John Zenger (1680–1746), a German-born printer working in New York City, found himself at the center of a political brawl in 1732 by printing a letter from New York Supreme Court chief justice Lewis Morris. The letter was a minority opinion in the case of Governor William Cosby against respected and elderly statesman Rip Van Dam, who had acted as governor for almost a year awaiting Cosby's arrival from England to begin his term. Cosby insisted on receiving his salary for that time, and Van Dam refused. Since no court in New York would yield the decision Cosby wanted, he constructed a "Court of Exchequer" from the colony's Supreme Court, and instructed it to decide his case without a jury. Although two of the judges found for Cosby, under intense pressure, the third, Lewis Morris, dissented and, after being replaced by Cosby, circulated his opinion in the form of a pamphlet printed by Zenger.

Although Zenger knew that printers were held responsible for their work, his newspaper, the *New York Weekly Journal*, continued to publish songs, cartoons, and articles critical of Cosby and his activities, including taking money from the New York Assembly and violating the colony's laws by attempting to rig an election for assemblymen against Lewis Morris. A rival paper, the *New York Gazette*, controlled by Cosby's supporter, Francis Harison, rebutted these charges as libelous and untrue. Cosby pressured the Supreme Court to get an indictment against Zenger as a libeler, but two grand juries, noting that Zenger had not written the material, refused

to bring charges. Frustrated, the governor entered into a conspiracy to bring down Zenger, ordering a Supreme Court bench warrant issued on information filed by his attorney general, Richard Bradley. Unable to pay the £800 bail, Zenger remained under arrest for eight months in the Old City Jail as an object of much sympathy and support, much of it stirred by his wife's continuing publication of the *Journal*.

The case finally came to trial in August 1735. The governor intended to have the case tried by his handpicked Supreme Court justices Delancey and Philipps alone, but Zenger's lawyers objected successfully. Cosby and his conspirators then attempted to select a jury pool composed of Cosby's employees and supporters, but Judge Delancey, horrified at this transparent manipulation of the system, refused to comply. Cosby then attempted to disbar Zenger's attorneys, but was thwarted when the famous Philadelphia lawyer Andrew Hamilton agreed to act on Zenger's behalf. Prosecuted by Attorney General Bradley, who accused Zenger of seditious libel against Governor Cosby, the printer adopted a unique defense at Hamilton's insistence: Zenger would not contest the fact that he printed the materials, but would claim that it could not be libel because they were true.

Bradley pointed out that the libel law of New York did not recognize truth as a defense against a charge of libel, but Hamilton countered with the argument that the law ought to allow the complaints of men who had been oppressed or wronged to be aired pub-

licly. Although this had no legal support in the colony, Hamilton could turn to the jury and ask for nullification of an unjust statute. In his closing remarks, Hamilton spoke not of Zenger as an individual, but as the representative of the press, and asked them to vote in favor of a free press unrestricted by arbitrary government. Delancey instructed the jury to find Zenger guilty, which, under the law, he was, but they returned with a “not guilty” verdict.

This single nullification did not change New York law, but it sent a clear message that the people of the colony, and, by extension, those of the other British colonies in the Americas, would not tolerate unjust prosecutions by corrupt government, and that they valued an independent press in which to circulate their views. Despite the powerful conspiracy brought to bear by Cosby, and his misuse of the judicial and electoral system, Zenger and his case triumphed to become a bulwark against other conspiracies and restrictions on journalism.

Margaret Sankey

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## Zimmermann Telegram

In the winter of 1916–1917 the United States was still officially neutral in Europe's Great War, but the situation was changing. The German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, sent a telegram effectively proposing an alliance with Mexico in case the United States entered World War I. The turning over of the Zimmermann telegram to the U.S. government by the British government in February dramatically changed the course of World War I. The telegram would be one of the last factors leading the United States to enter the war. Since its release to the U.S. government the document has on occasion been the subject of questions as to how it came into the British government's possession, and why officials took so long after receiving it to turn it over to the United States. The

popular suspicion is that the Zimmermann telegram was deliberately forged, and was part of a conspiracy to force the United States to enter the war.

Barbara Tuchman laid out what has become the traditional interpretation in her book on the subject. German concerns over the ability to maintain the neutral status of the United States and a belief that Britain would be forced out of the war quickly if restrictions were lifted on its submarine commanders' ability to sink ships led the German imperial government to decide to take a gamble. It chose to return to unrestricted submarine warfare from 1 February 1917, even though it might bring the United States into the war. In order to deal with the potential U.S. involvement in the war the German government convinced itself that potential German allies to the south and west could divert U.S. attention from the continent. The idea would be to convince Mexico, and hopefully Japan, to go to war with the United States and keep it occupied in its own backyard.

The history of U.S.–Mexican relations at the time gave the Germans reason to hope. In 1836 Texas gained its independence from Mexico and was then annexed by the United States in 1845. Then in 1848 the United States gained possession of California and the western United States south of Oregon and west of Texas after defeating Mexico in the Mexican American War (1846–1848). More recently the United States had sent troops into Mexico in 1914 to occupy Vera Cruz and then again in 1916 to deal with bandits.

The German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, sent a telegram on 16 January 1917 to the German ambassador to the United States for forwarding to the German ambassador in Mexico. It explained the German position; although the message espoused a German desire to maintain U.S. neutrality during the Great War, if this failed it proposed as an alternative that Mexico assault the United States with German assistance. In exchange for Mexican cooperation they would receive German financial assistance and the return of territories of the American southwest that had been lost: “Mexico is to re-conquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona” (Tuchman, 146).

The telegram was intercepted by the British and decoded over the next few weeks. When the document was finished the British had a tool to use to convince the United States of its need to enter the war, but they first had to hide the evidence of how they came into possession of the document, causing a delay in its transmission to the U.S. government. The British need for security of their code-breaking operations led to a desire to find a second source; that source was a copy of the telegram sent from Washington to Mexico, which contained subtle but significant differences from the one to Washington the British were already working on. On 24 February Walter Page, the U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, telegraphed the contents of the telegram to Washington. He also sent along an explanation of the British delay in turning over the information to the United States, namely their desire to protect their sources (Hendrick, 334). The document became public on 1 March, after which a public uproar ensued with some Americans claiming the document was a fraud. They were convinced that the Allies, and particularly the British government, lied to the United States in order to convince the Americans to support them during the Great War. This was a response to a traditional U.S. concern about the British dating back to the American Revolution, an idea that would after World War I be replaced by the “special relationship.” The popular suspicion was that the telegram was not sent by the Germans but was the creation of British intelligence who used it to convince Americans of the immediate German threat to the United States. This theory withered away quickly on 2 March when Zimmermann admitted having sent the telegram. Even with this, America’s entrance into the war was not immediate, as Wilson did not ask Congress for a declaration of war against Germany until 2 April and it was not passed by Congress until 6 April.

More recently it has been proposed that the Zimmermann telegram and the Balfour declaration were tied together. In a letter of 2 November 1917 British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour stated the government’s support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine; this has since come to be known as the Balfour declaration.

John Cornelius has argued that the declaration was the price for the un-encoded text of the Zimmermann telegram. He argued that it was unlikely that the British were capable of breaking the German diplomatic code (or else the Germans would not have used it), and thus the information about the contents must have come from another source. He argued that Zionists in Germany worked with Zionists in Britain to make a deal in which the British would get the text of the telegram in exchange for the acknowledgment of their rights in Palestine. This theory assumes that since the Germans used a code they believed unbroken, it must have been unbroken, and thus the British needed help from German Zionists to get the contents of the telegram. British success in breaking the German Enigma code in World War II suggests the weakness of this logic. It is also based on a timetable of events that though interwoven, does not show any direct connection between the actions.

The ultimate impact of the Zimmermann telegram is unknown. As Tuchman noted, it was likely that at some point Germany would push the United States into the war. And while the theory of a relationship between the Zimmermann telegram and the Balfour declaration is potentially interesting for its impact in the Middle East, the theory does not answer as many of the questions about either document as the proponents believe.

*Donald E. Heidenreich, Jr.*

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**ZOG**

ZOG, an acronym for Zionist Occupied Government, is a term used by many on the survivalist and racist Right to refer to the United States government or its shadow government, which they believe is secretly controlled by a rich and powerful group of international Jews intent on establishing a one-world government. The phrase itself derives from *The Turner Diaries*, a 1978 novel written by William L. Pierce under the pseudonym Andrew MacDonald. The novel tells the story of white Christian patriots who start a guerrilla war against the forces of ZOG after all citizens are stripped of their right to own firearms. In their war against ZOG, white Americans assassinate government officials, blow up federal buildings, uproot and murder blacks and other minorities, and finally launch a nuclear strike that destroys Israel. Although for some, ZOG simply refers to a conservative antigovernment attitude and a suspicion of globalism, the term is more often associated with a panoply of extreme right-wing militias like the Montana Freemen, white supremacist groups like the Posse Comitatus, and apocalyptic Christians like Randy Weaver, as a more specific name for what they believe is an international Jewish conspiracy to undermine U.S. sovereignty and

true Christianity. These groups believe that ZOG controls the media, the major international financial institutions, schools, and liberal politicians who promote affirmative-action policies, immigration, multiculturalism, gun control, abortion, and the general erosion of liberty. Further evidence of a ZOG conspiracy is found in U.S. foreign policy toward Israel, its participation in the United Nations and other international organizations, and the apparent power of labor unions. Some who promote the ZOG conspiracy believe that UN troops are training and gathering in various locations around the country, preparing to disarm patriotic citizens and impose martial law. The term also often connotes a Christian apocalypticism that links the global Jewish conspiracy to biblical prophecies of the Last Days, when the Antichrist institutes one-world governance just before the final battle of Armageddon.

*Jeff Insko*

**See also:** Militias; One-World Government, Posse Comitatus; Ruby Ridge; Pierce, William L.

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**Website**

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## Primary Source Documents

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### Introduction

This final section of the encyclopedia contains approximately 100 extracts from primary sources that illustrate the history of conspiracies and conspiracy theories in the United States. They are arranged chronologically by date of composition (with a few exceptions where later reflections on particular events are located with other items about those events). Each has a brief headnote that explains the context of the piece. The selection is deliberately broad, in order to reflect the wide range of topics covered by this encyclopedia (but there is not enough space to cover every entry). The selection includes documents that are the “smoking gun” of actual conspiracies, and also accounts of proven conspiracy and conspiratorial rebellion. It also includes the whole gamut of conspiracy speculation and demonological rhetoric, from President Washington’s warnings about a “regular, systematic plan” to deprive America of its liberties to recent writings on the Internet about the threat of secret plans for a New World Order. The inclusion of a particular item is not meant to signal that it is either necessarily true or necessarily false.

This selection is intended as a supplement to *The Fear of Conspiracy: Images of Un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present* (1971), David Brion Davis’s seminal annotated collection of conspiracy theory extracts. The first way that the present selection supplements Davis’s volume is that it endeavors to bring the story of con-

spiracies and conspiracy theories up to date. Much has happened since 1971 (not least defining events like Watergate), and there has been an explosion in the popularity of conspiracy theories. The choice of items here is intended to reflect that resurgence in conspiracy thinking, and is weighted slightly more toward the present to complement Davis’s more historical choice of materials.

In addition to covering both conspiracies and conspiracy theories, the materials include both explicitly political items (such as the proceedings of the anti-Masonic conventions of the 1830s) and (in contrast to Davis’s volume) more popular musings from everyday culture that are not immediately political (such as accounts of alien abduction and mind-control experiments). This choice also means that although some of the items are by some of the most famous commentators of their time (for example, Jedidiah Morse’s denouncement of the Illuminati in the 1790s), many other items are from much lesser known writers. Indeed, many of the more recent items are taken from the Internet, the current home of self-publishing, which also means that they are usually far more ephemeral than the older, more established print items. However, given that the Internet has become such an important outlet for popular politics in general and conspiracy theory in particular, and given that so much of it disappears so fast, it is worth beginning to record some of the sheer profusion so as to make possible an ongoing history of the “paranoid style” in U.S. culture and politics.

*Every reasonable effort has been made to contact the copyright holders of items still in copyright. Please contact the publisher with any omissions and errors, and these will be corrected in subsequent editions.*

### **Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692)**

*The Salem witch trials of 1692 were the largest and most famous proceedings of their kind in the American colonies. In all, hundreds of people were imprisoned, several people died in jail or under interrogation, and nineteen "witches" were hanged. Cotton Mather, a Boston Puritan pastor, saw the scope of the outbreak as evidence of a wider satanic conspiracy against Puritan New England itself.*

Doubtless, the Thoughts of many will receive a great Scandal against *New-England*, from the Number of Persons that have been Accused, or Suspected for *Witchcraft*, in this Country: But it were easy to offer many things, that may Answer and Abate the Scandal. If the Holy God should any where permit the Devils to hook two or three wicked *Scholars* into *Witchcraft*, and then by their Assistance to Range with their *Poisonous Insinuation* among Ignorant, Envious, Discontented People, till they have cunningly decoy'd them into some sudden Act whereby the Toils of Hell shall be perhaps inextricably cast over them: what Country in the world would not afford *Witches*, numerous to a Prodigy? Accordingly, the Kingdoms of *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Scotland*, yes and *England* itself, as well as the Province of *New-England*, have had their Storms of *Witchcrafts* breaking upon them, which have made most Lamentable Devastations: which also I wish may be *The Last*. And it is not uneasy to be imagined, That God has not brought out all the *Witchcrafts* in many other Lands with such a speedy, dreadful, destroying *jealousy*, as burns forth upon such *High Treasons*, committed here in *A Land of Uprightness*: Transgressors may more quickly here than elsewhere become a Prey to the vengeance of Him, *Who has Eyes like a*

*Flame of Fire*, and, *who walks in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks*. [ . . . ]

But besides all this, give me leave to add, it is to be hoped, That among the Persons represented by the *Spectres* which now afflict our Neighbours, there will be found some that never explicitly contracted with any of the *Evil Angels*. The *Witches* have not only intimated, but some of them acknowledge, That they have plotted the Representations. [ . . . ]

But such is the descent of the Devil at this day upon our selves, that I may truly tell you, *The Walls of the whole World are broken down!* The usual Walls of defence about mankind have such a Gap made in them, that the very *Devils* are broke in upon us, to seduce the Souls, torment the *Bodies*, sully the *Credits*, and consume the *Estates* of our Neighbours, with Impressions both as *real* and as *furios*, as if the *Invisible World* were becoming *Incarnate*, on purpose for the vexing of us. And what use ought now to be made of so tremendous a dispensation? We are engaged in a *Fast* this day; but shall we try to fetch *Meat out of the Eater*, and make the *Lion* to afford some *Hony* for our *Souls*?

That the Devil is *come down unto us with great Wrath*, we find, we feel, we now deplore. In many ways, for many years hath the Devil been assaying to Extirpate the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus here. [ . . . ] But now there is a more than ordinary *affliction*, with which the *Devil* is Galling of us: and such an one as indeed Unparallelable. The things confessed by *Witches*, and the things endured by *Others*, laid together, amount unto this account of our Affliction. The *Devil*, Exhibiting himself ordinarily as a small *Black man*, has decoy'd a fearful knot of proud forward, ignorant, envious and malicious creatures, to lift themselves in his horrid Service, by entering their Names in a Book by him tendred unto them. These *Witches*, who of above a Score have now *Confessed*, and *shown their Deeds*, and some are now tormented by the Devils, for *Confessing*, have met in Hellish *Randezvouzes*, wherein the Confessors do say, they have had their diabolical Sacraments, imitating the *Baptism* and the *Supper* of our Lord.

In these hellish meetings, these Monsters have associated themselves to do no less a thing than, *To destroy the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in these parts of the World*; and in order hereunto, First they each of them, have their *Spectres*, or Devils, commission'd by them, & representing of them, to be the Engines of their Malice.

**Source**

Mather, Cotton. 1692. *Wonders of the Invisible World*. Boston: N.p.

**Robert Hunter, “Letter to the Lords of the Trade” (23 June 1712)**

*In this letter to the Lords of Trade, Robert Hunter, the royal governor of New York and New Jersey from 1710 to 1719, reports on the conspiratorial slave revolt in New York that had taken place in 1712.*

I must now give Your Lordships an account of a bloody conspiracy of some of the slaves of this Place, to destroy as many of the inhabitants as they could. It was put in execution in this manner, when they had resolved to revenge themselves, for some hard usage they apprehended to have received from their Masters (for I can find no other cause) they agreed to meet in the orchard of Mr. Crook in the middle of the town, some provided with fire arms, some with swords and others with knives and hatchets. This was the sixth day of April, the time of meeting was about twelve or one o'clock in the night, when about three and twenty of them were got together. One coffee and negroe slave to one Vantilburgh set fire to an out house of his masters, and then repairing to his place where the rest were, they all sallyed out together with their arms and marched to the fire.

By this time, the noise of the fire spreading through the town, the people began to flock to it. Upon the approach of several, the slaves fired and killed them. The noise of the guns gave the alarm, and some escaping, their shot soon published the cause of the fire, which was the reason that not above nine Christians were killed, and about five or six wounded.

Upon the first notice, which was very soon after the mischief was begun, I order'd a detachment from the fort under a proper officer to march against them, but the slaves made their retreat into the woods, by the favour of the night. Having ordered sentries the next day in the most proper places on the Island [Manhattan] to prevent their escape, I caused the day following, the militia of this town and of the county of West Chester to drive [to] the Island, and by this means and strict searches in the town, we found all that put the design in execution.

Six of these having first laid violent hands upon themselves, the rest were forthwith brought to their tryal before the Justices of this place, who are authorized by Act of Assembly to hold a court in such cases. In that court were 27 condemned, whereof 21 were executed, one being a woman with child, her execution by that means suspended. Some were burnt, others hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains in the town, so that there has been the most exemplary punishment inflicted that could be possibly thought of.

**Source**

O'Callaghan, E. B., ed. 1853–1858. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*. Weed, Parsons, and Co.

**Supreme Court of Judicature, New York City, “New York Conspiracy” (1741)**

*The following extract is taken from the grand jury investigation into the acts of arson and public violence in New York in 1741. Mr. Justice Philipse promised to get to the bottom of “the premeditated malice and wicked pursuits of evil and designing persons,” and harbored the suspicion that blacks might have been involved.*

*Mr. Justice Philipse gave the charge to the grand jury, as follows:*

Gentlemen of the grand jury,  
[ . . . ] The many frights and terrors which the good people of this city have of late been put into,



by repeated and unusual fires, and burning of houses, give us too much room to suspect, that some of them at least, did not proceed from mere chance, or common accidents; but on the contrary, from the premeditated malice and wicked pursuits of evil and designing persons; and therefore, it greatly behoves us to use our utmost diligence, by all lawful ways and means to discover the contrivers and perpetrators of such daring and flagitious undertakings: that, upon conviction, they may receive condign punishment; for although we have the happiness of living under a government which exceeds all others in the excellency of its constitution and laws, yet if those to whom the execution of them (which my lord Coke calls the life and soul of the law) is committed, do not exert themselves in a conscientious discharge of their respective duties, such laws which were intended for a terror to the evil-doer, and a protection to the good, will become a dead letter, and our most excellent constitution turned into anarchy and confusion. [ . . . ]

I am told there are several prisoners now in jail, who have been committed by the city magistrates, upon suspicion of having been concerned in some of the late fires; and others, who under pretence of assisting the unhappy sufferers, by saving their goods from the flames, for stealing, or receiving them. [ . . . ]

Arson, or the malicious and voluntary burning, not only a mansion house, but also any other house, and the out buildings, or barns, and stables adjoining thereto, by night or by day, is felony at common law; and if any part of the house be burned, the offender is guilty of felony, notwithstanding the fire afterwards be put out, or go out of itself.

This crime is of so shocking a nature, that if we have any in this city, who, having been guilty thereof, should escape, who can say he is safe, or tell where it will end?

Gentlemen,

Another Thing which I cannot omit recommending to your serious and diligent inquiry, is to find out and present all such persons who sell rum, and other strong liquor to negroes.

It must be obvious to every one, that there are too many of them in this city; who, under pretence of selling what they call a penny dram to a negro, will sell to him as many quarts or gallons of rum, as he can steal money or goods to pay for. [ . . . ] The many fatal consequences flowing from this prevailing and wicked practice, are so notorious, and so nearly concern us all, that one would be almost surprised, to think there should be a necessity for a court to recommend a suppression of such pernicious houses: thus much in particular; now in general.

My charge, gentlemen, further is, to present all conspiracies, combinations, and other offences, from treasons down to trespasses; and in your inquiries, the oath you, and each of you have just now taken will, I am persuaded, be your guide, and I pray God to direct and assist you in the discharge of your duty. [ . . . ]

**Source**

Supreme Court of Judicature, New York City. "New York Conspiracy." *Journal of the Proceedings against the Conspirators, at New York in 1741*. Available at <http://www.therblig.com/GLCSSRA/archive/912.htm>.

**Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1880)**

*This passage represents the classic statement of Pontiac's War as a "conspiracy" undertaken by evil and cunning "savages" against their British overlords after the conquest of Canada. Parkman, whose renowned flair for the dramatic at times led him to sweeping interpretive conclusions with minimum supporting evidence, consciously selected the Odawa chief Pontiac's uprising as an example of Native American character that resonated deeply with an American nation in the process of completing its military conquest of the Plains tribes. Although Parkman's Pontiac possessed formidable organizational capacities and an admirable degree of tenacity, he and his people were nevertheless unable to stave off the inevitable advance of a superior civilization into their territory. Subsequent historians have pointed out the flaws in Parkman's conspiracy thesis, but his early and powerfully*

*written description of the conflict has retained considerable influence to the present day.*

It was a momentous and gloomy crisis for the Indian race, for never before had they been exposed to such imminent and pressing danger. With the downfall of Canada, the tribes had sunk at once from their position of importance. Hitherto the two rival European nations had kept each other in check upon the American continent, and the Indians had, in some measure, held the balance of power between them. To conciliate their good will and gain their alliance, to avoid offending them by injustice and encroachment, was the policy both of the French and English. But now the face of affairs was changed. The English had gained an undisputed ascendancy, and the Indians, no longer important as allies, were treated as mere barbarians, who might be trampled upon with impunity. Abandoned to their own feeble resources and divided strength, they must fast recede, and dwindle away before the steady progress of the colonial power. Already their best hunting-grounds were invaded, and from the eastern ridges of the Alleghenies they might see, from far and near, the smoke of the settlers' clearings, rising in tall columns from the dark-green bosom of the forest. The doom of the race was sealed, and no human power could avert it; but they, in their ignorance, believed otherwise, and vainly thought that, by a desperate effort, they might yet uproot and overthrow the growing strength of their destroyers.

It would be idle to suppose that the great mass of the Indians understood, in its full extent, the danger which threatened their race. With them, the war was a mere outbreak of fury, and they turned against their enemies with as little reason or forecast as a panther when he leaps at the throat of the hunter. Goaded by wrongs and indignities, they struck for revenge, and for relief from the evil of the moment. But the mind of Pontiac could embrace a wider and deeper view. The peril of the times was unfolded in its full extent before him, and he resolved to unite the tribes in one grand effort to avert it. He did not, like many of his

people, entertain the absurd idea that the Indians, by their unaided strength, could drive the English into the sea. He adopted the only plan consistent with reason, that of restoring the French ascendancy in the west, and once more opposing a check to British encroachment. With views like these, he lent a greedy ear to the plausible falsehoods of the Canadians, who assured him that the armies of King Louis were already advancing to recover Canada, and that the French and their red brethren, fighting side by side, would drive the English dogs back within their own narrow limits.

Revolving these thoughts, and remembering that his own ambitious views might be advanced by the hostilities he meditated, Pontiac no longer hesitated. Revenge, ambition, and patriotism wrought upon him alike, and he resolved on war. At the close of the year 1762, he sent ambassadors to the different nations. They visited the country of the Ohio and its tributaries, passed northward to the region of the upper lakes, and the borders of the River Ottawa; and far southward towards the mouth of the Mississippi. Bearing with them the war-belt of wampum, broad and long, as the importance of the message demanded, and the tomahawk stained red, in token of war, they went from camp to camp, and village to village. Wherever they appeared, the sachems and old men assembled, to hear the words of the great Pontiac. Then the chief of the embassy flung down the tomahawk on the ground before them, and holding the war-belt in his hand, delivered, with vehement gesture, word for word, the speech with which he was charged. It was heard everywhere with approval; the belt was accepted, the hatchet snatched up, and the assembled chiefs stood pledged to take part in the war. The blow was to be struck at a certain time in the month of May following, to be indicated by the changes of the moon. The tribes were to rise together, each destroying the English garrison in its neighborhood, and then, with a general rush, the whole were to turn against the settlements of the frontier.

#### **Source**

Parkman, Francis. 1880. *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of*

*Canada*. 9th ed., 2 vols. Boston: Little, Brown, I: 184–187.

**Matthew Smith and James Gibson, "A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania" (1764)**

*Like Bacon's Rebellion before it, the conspiratorial uprising of the Paxton Boys fused racial violence with charges of political and social inequality to focus their force on a dual-headed enemy: a provincial elite and their indigenous allies. Smith and Gibson's focus on the plight of frontier families highlights the need for these regulators to take the law into their own hands.*

To the Honourable JOHN PENN, Esquire, Governor of the Province of *Pennsylvania*, and of the Counties of *New-Castle*, *Kent* and *Sussex*, on *Delaware*; and to the Representatives of the Free-Men of said Province, in Assembly met.

We *Matthew Smith*, and *James Gibson*, in behalf of ourselves, and his Majesty's faithful and loyal Subjects, the Inhabitants of the Frontier Counties of *Lancaster*, *York*, *Cumberland*, *Berks*, and *Northampton*, humbly beg Leave to remonstrate, and to lay before you, the following Grievances, which we submit to your Wisdom, for Redress.

1st. WE apprehend, that as Free-Men and *English* Subjects, we have an indisputable Title to the same Priviledges and Immunities with his Majesty's other subjects, who reside in the interior Counties of *Philadelphia*, *Chester*, and *Bucks*, and therefore ought not to be excluded from an equal Share with them in the very important Priviledge of Legislation. Nevertheless, contrary to the Proprietors Charter, and the acknowledged principles of Common Justice and Equity, our five Counties are restrained from electing more than ten Representatives, viz, Four for *Lancaster*, Two for *York*, Two for *Cumberland*, One for *Berks*, and one for *Northampton*; while the Three Counties (and City) of *Philadelphia*, *Chester*, and *Bucks*, elect Twenty-six; this we humbly conceive

is oppressive, unequal and unjust, the Cause of many of our Grievances, and an infringement of our natural Priviledges of Freedom and Equality, wherefore we humbly pray, that we may be no longer deprived of an equal Number with the Three aforesaid Counties, to represent us in Assembly.

2dly. WE understand that a Bill is now before the House of Assembly, wherein it is Provided, that such Persons as shall be charged with killing any *Indians* in *Lancaster* County, shall not be tried in the County where the Fact was committed, but in the Counties of *Philadelphia*, *Chester*, or *Bucks*. This is manifestly to deprive *British* Subjects of their known Priviledges, to cast an eternal Reproach upon whole Counties, as if they were unfit to serve their Country in the Quality of Jury-Men, and to contradict the well known Laws of the *British* Nation, in a point whereon Life, Liberty, and Security essentially depend: Namely that of being tried by their Equals in the Neighbourhood where their own, their Accusers, and the Witnesses Character and Credit, with the Circumstances of the Fact are best known, and instead thereof, putting their lives in the Hands of Strangers, who may as justly be suspected of Partiality to, as the Frontier Counties can be of Prejudices against *Indians* . . .

3dly. DURING the late and present *Indian* Wars, the Frontiers of this Province have been repeatedly attacked and ravaged by Skulking parties of *Indians*, who have with the most savage Cruelty, murdered Men, Women, and Children, without distinction; and have reduced near a Thousand Families to the most extream Distress. It grieves us to the very Heart, to see such of our Frontier Inhabitants as have escaped from savage Fury, with the loss of their Parents, their Children, their Husbands, Wives, or Relatives, left destitute by the Public, and exposed to the most cruel Poverty and Wretchedness; while upwards of One Hundred and Twenty of the Savages, who are with great Reason suspected of being guilty of these horrid Barbarities, under the Mask of Friendship, have procured themselves to be taken under the Protection of the Government, with a

view to elude the Fury of the brave Relatives of the Murdered; and are now maintained at the public Expence. . . .

4thly. WE humbly conceive that it is contrary to the Maxims of good Policy and extreamly dangerous to our Frontiers, to suffer any *Indians* of what Tribe soever, to live within the inhabited Parts of this Province, while we are engaged in an *Indian War*; as Experience has taught us that they are all Perfidious, and their Claim to Freedom and Independency puts it in their Power to act as Spies, to entertain and give Intelligence to our Enemies, and to furnish them with Provisions and warlike Stores. . . .

5th. WE cannot help lamenting that no Provision has been hitherto made, that such of our Frontier Inhabitants as have been wounded in defence of the Province, their Lives and Liberties, may be taken care of and cured of their Wounds at public Expence. We therefore pray that this Grievance may be redressed.

6thly. IN the late *Indian War* this Province, with other of his Majesty's Colonies gave rewards for *Indian Scalps*, to encourage the seeking them in their own Country, as the most likely Means of destroying or reducing them to reason. But no such Encouragement has been given in this War, which has dampened the Spirits of many brave Men, who are willing to venture their Lives in Parties against the Enemy. We therefore pray that Public Rewards may be proposed for *Indian Scalps*, which may be adequate to the Dangers attending Enterprises of this Nature.

7th. WE daily lament that Numbers of our nearest and dearest Relatives are still in Captivity amongst the savage Heathen, to be trained up in all their ignorance and Barbarity, or be tortured to death with all the Contrivances of *Indian* cruelty, for attempting to make their Escape from Bondage. We see they pay no regard to the many solemn Promises which they made to restore our Friends, who are in Bondage amongst them; we therefore earnestly pray that no Trade may hereafter be permitted to be carried on with them, untill our Brethren and Relatives are brought home to us. . . .

*SIGNED on Behalf of ourselves, and by Appointment of a Great Number of the Frontier Inhabitants.*

MATTHEW SMITH,  
JAMES GIBSON  
*February 13th, 1764*

**Source**

Dunbar, John R. 1957. *The Paxton Papers*. The Hague: Martinus Nijoff.

**Richard Henry Lee, "The Westmoreland Resolves" (1766)**

*The following document reflects the sense of alarm that the Stamp Act generated in certain circles and the lengths to which some Americans were willing to go in order to combat what they regarded as an infringement of their rights as Englishmen. The more propagandistic "Virginia Resolves," authored by Patrick Henry, emphasized the issue of taxation without representation; Richard Henry Lee, however, stressed the fear of a deliberate conspiracy both "foreign and domestic" to enslave the Americans, calling for violent resistance if necessary. Additionally, the threat of violence proved real. Shortly after the adoption of the "Westmoreland Resolves," Archibald Ritchie announced his intention to use stamped paper, and Lee led a group of associates against Ritchie's home and threatened public humiliation and bodily harm if Ritchie persisted. In the face of such challenge, Ritchie reluctantly relented and bowed to the association's demands.*

The Association of Westmoreland:

The following articles prepared and offered by RICHARD HENRY LEE were passed by the patriots of that day at LEEDSTOWN, Virginia, on the 27th day of February 1766.

"ROUSED BY DANGER, and alarmed at attempts, foreign and domestic, to reduce the people of this country to a state of abject and detestable slavery, by destroying that FREE and happy constitution of government, under which they have hitherto lived—WE, who subscribe to this paper, have associated, and do bind ourselves



to each other, to GOD and to our country, by the firmest ties that RELIGION and virtue can frame, most sacredly and punctually to stand by, and with our lives and fortunes, to SUPPORT, MAINTAIN, and DEFEND each other in the observance and execution of these FOLLOWING ARTICLES:

FIRST. We declare all due allegiance and obedience to our lawful sovereign; George the Third, King of Great Britain. And we determine to do the utmost in our power to preserve the laws, the peace and good order of this Colony, as far as is consistent with the preservation of our Constitutional rights and liberty.

SECONDLY. As we know it to be the Birthright privilege of every British subject (and of the people of Virginia as being such) founded on Reason, Law, and Compact; that he cannot be legally tried, but by his peers; and that he cannot be taxed, but by a consent of a Parliament, in which he is represented by persons chosen by the people and who themselves pay a part of the tax they impose on others. If therefore, any person or persons shall attempt, by any action or proceeding, to deprive this Colony of those fundamental rights, we will immediately regard him or them, as the most dangerous enemy of the community; and we will go to any extremity, not only to prevent the success of such attempts, but to stigmatize and punish the offender.

THIRDLY. As the Stamp Act does absolutely direct the property of the people to be taken from them without their consent expressed by their representatives and as in many cases it deprives the British American Subject of his right to trial by jury; we do determine, at every hazard, and, paying no regard to danger or to death, we will exert every faculty to prevent the execution of the said Stamp Act in any instance whatsoever within this Colony. And every abandoned wretch, who shall be so lost to virtue and public good, as wickedly to contribute to the introduction or fixture of the Stamp Act in this Colony, by using stamp paper, or by any other means, we will, with the utmost expedition, convince all such

profligates that immediate danger and disgrace shall attend their prostitute purposes.

FOURTHLY. That the last article may most surely and effectually be executed, we engage to each other, that whenever it shall be known to any of this association, that any person is so conducting himself as to favor the introduction of the Stamp Act, that immediate notice shall be given to as many of the association as possible; and that every individual so informed, shall, with expedition, repair to a place of meeting to be appointed as near the scene of action as may be.

FIFTHLY. Each associator shall do his true endeavor to obtain as many signers to this association as may be.

SIXTHLY. If any attempt shall be made on the liberty or property of any associator for any action or thing to be done in consequence of this agreement, we do most solemnly bind ourselves by the sacred engagements above entered into, at the risk of our lives and fortunes to restore such associate to his liberty, and to protect him in the enjoyment of his property.”

In testimony of the good faith with which we resolve to execute this association we have on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 1766, in Virginia, put our hands and seals hereto.

[115 signatures follow]

**Source**

Chitwood, Oliver Perry. *Richard Henry Lee: Statesman of the Revolution*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Library, 239–241.

**A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston (1770)**

*The following extract is from the official history of the Boston Massacre from the patriot's perspective. It seeks to place the engagement in the broader context of the British occupation of Boston and recounts the numerous encounters between Bostonians and soldiers in the months leading up to 5 March 1770. This account served to inflame the colonists by placing blame squarely on the British soldiers, and it also emphasizes colonists' fears*

*about a conspiracy to deprive them of their liberties as well as the tensions between the Redcoats and the city's residents.*

[ . . . ] The numerous instances of bad behaviour in the soldiery made us early sensible, that the troops were not sent here for any benefit to the town or province, and that we had no good to expect from such conservators of the peace.

It was not expected, however, that such an outrage and massacre, as happened here on the evening of the fifth instant, would have been perpetrated. There were then killed and wounded, by a discharge of musquetry, eleven of his Majesty's subjects [ . . . ].

The actors in this dreadful tragedy were a party of soldiers commanded by Capt. Preston of the 29th regiment: This party, including the Captain, consisted of eight, who were all committed to goal.

There are depositions in this affair which mention, that several guns were fired at the same time from the Custom-House; before which this shocking scene was exhibited. Into this matter inquisition is now making.—In the mean time it may be proper to insert here the substance of some of those depositions. [ . . . ]

Gillam Bass, being in King-street at the same time, declares that they (the party of soldiers from the main guard) posted themselves between the custom-house door, and the west corner of it; and in a few minutes began to fire upon the people: *Two or three of the flashes so high above the rest, that the deponent verily believes they must have come from the CUSTOM-HOUSE windows.* [ . . . ]

What gave occasion to the melancholy event of the evening seems to have been this. A difference having happened near Mr. Gray's ropewalk, between a soldier and a man belonging to it, the soldiers challenged the ropemakers to a boxing match. The challenge was accepted by one of them, and the soldier worsted. He ran to the barracks in the neighbourhood, and returned with several of his companions. The fray was renewed, and the soldiers were driven off.—They soon

returned with recruits and were again worsted. This happened several times, till at length a considerable body of soldiers was collected, and they also were driven off, the ropemakers having been joined by the brethren of the contiguous ropewalks. By this time Mr. Gray being alarmed interposed, and with the assistance of some gentlemen prevented any further disturbance. To satisfy the soldiers and punish the man who had been the occasion of the first difference, and as an example to the rest, he turned him out of his service; and waited on Col. Dalrymple, the commanding officer of the troops, and with him concerted measure for preventing further mischief. Though this affair ended thus, it made a strong impression on the minds of the soldiers in general, who thought the honor of the regiment concerned to revenge those repeated repulses. For this purpose they seem to have formed a combination to commit some outrage upon the inhabitants of the town indiscriminately; and this was to be done on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant or soon after: as appears by the depositions of the following persons, viz.

William Newhall declares that, on Thursday night the first of March instant, he met four soldiers of the 29th regiment, and that he heard them say *there were a great many that would eat their dinners on Monday next, that should not eat any on Tuesday.* Mary Brailsford declares, that on Sabbath evening the 4th March instant a Soldier came to the house of Mr. Amos Thayer where she then was. He desiring to speak with Mr. Thayer was told by Mrs. Mary Thayer, that her brother was engaged, and could not be spoke with. He said, your brother as you call him, is a man I have great regard for, and I came on purpose to tell him to keep in his house, for *before Tuesday next night at Twelve o'clock, there will be a great deal of bloodshed, and a great many lives lost* and added, that he came out of a particular regard to her brother to advise him to keep in his house, for then he would be out of harm's way. He said, your brother knows me very well: my name is Charles Malone. He then went away. [ . . . ]

By the foregoing depositions it appears very clearly, there was a general combination among the soldiers of the 29th regiment at least, to commit some extraordinary act of violence upon the town; that if the inhabitants attempted to repel it by firing even one gun upon those soldiers, the 14th regiment were ordered to be in readiness to assist them; and that on the late butchery in King-street they actually were ready for that purpose, had a single gun been fired on the perpetrators of it. [ . . . ]

These circumstances with those already mentioned, amount to a clear proof of a combination among them to commit some outrage upon the town on that evening; and that after the enormous one committed in Kingstreet, they intended to add to the horrors of that night by making a further slaughter.

**Source**

*A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston.* 1770. Boston: Printed by Order of the Town of Boston.

**Samuel Adams, "Letter to Arthur Lee" (1774)**

*This letter, written by Samuel Adams in January 1774 in which he reports on the Boston Tea Party, is filled with references to the British conspiracy to take away American liberties. He frequently refers to the British "design" and also notes the "cabal" involved.*

TO ARTHUR LEE.

Jan 25 1774

The sending the East India Companies Tea into America appears evidently to have been with Design of the British Administration, and to complete the favorite plan of establishing a Revenue in America. The People of Boston and the other adjacent Towns endeavored to have the Tea sent back to the place from whence it came & then to prevent the Design from taking Effect. Had this been done in Boston, as it was done in New York & Philadelphia, the Design of the Ministry would have been as effectually prevented here as in those Colonies and the property would

have been saved. Governor Hutchinson & the other Crown officers having the Command of the Castle by which the Ships must have passed, & other powers in their Hands, made use of these Powers to defeat the Intentions of the people & succeeded; in short the Governor who for Art & Cunning as well as an inveterate hatred of the people was inferior to no one of the Cabal; both encouragd & provoked the people to destroy the Tea. By refusing to grant a Passport he held up to them the alternative of destroying the property of the East India Company or suffering that to be the sure means of unhinging the Security of property in general in America, and by delaying to call on the naval power to protect the Tea, he led them to determine their Choice of Difficulties. In this View of the Matter the Question is easily decided who ought in Justice to pay for the Tea if it ought to be paid for at all.

The Destruction of the Tea is the pretence for the unprecedented Severity shown to the Town of Boston but the real Cause is the opposition to Tyranny for which the people of that Town have always made themselves remarkeable & for which I think this Country is much obligd to them. They are suffering the Vengeance of Administration in the Common Cause of America.

**Sources**

MS. Samuel Adams Papers. Lenox, MA: Lenox Library.

Cushing, Harry A., ed. 1968. *The Writings of Samuel Adams*. Vol. 3. New York: Octagon, 78–79.

**George Washington, "There Has Been a Regular, Systematic Plan" (1774)**

*Like other leaders of the American Revolution, George Washington argued that the actions of the British amounted to a systematic scheme to deprive the American colonies of liberty.*

Satisfied, then, that the acts of a British Parliament are no longer governed by the principles of justice, that it is trampling upon the valuable rights of Americans, confirmed to them by the charter and the constitution they

themselves boast of, and convinced beyond the smallest doubt, that these measures are the result of deliberation, and attempted to be carried into execution by the hand of power, is it a time to trifle, or risk our cause upon petitions, which with difficulty obtain access, and afterwards are thrown by with the utmost contempt? [ . . . ] I wish, I own, that the dispute had been left to posterity to determine, but the crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights, or submit to every imposition, that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves, as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway. [ . . . ] I am as fully convinced, as I am of my own existence, that there has been a regular, systematic plan formed to enforce [the acts], and that nothing but unanimity in the colonies (a stroke they did not expect) and firmness, can prevent it.

#### Sources

- Fitzpatrick, John C., ed. 1931. *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745–1799, III*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Davis, David Brian, ed. 1971. *The Fear of Conspiracy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

### Alexander Hamilton, "Remarks on the Quebec Bill" (1775)

*A mere eighteen years of age at the time, future American statesman Alexander Hamilton penned the following "Remarks on the Quebec Bill" shortly before abandoning his studies at King's College (now Columbia University) to form a volunteer artillery company. Hamilton appealed to anti-Catholic feeling in the American colonies in this paper, and his tone reflected a clear conviction that the Quebec Act represented a conspiracy on the part of the British ministry.*

This act develops the dark designs of the ministry more fully than any thing they have done, and shows that they have formed a systematic project of absolute power.

The present policy of it is evidently this: by giving a legal sanction to the accustomed dues of

the priests, it was intended to interest them in behalf of the administration; and by means of the dominion they possessed over the minds of the laity, together with the appearance of good-will toward their religion, to prevent any dissatisfaction which might arise from the loss of their civil rights, and to propitiate them to the great purposes in contemplation—first, the subjugation of the colonies, and afterward that of Great Britain itself. It was necessary to throw out some such lure to reconcile them to the exactions of that power which has been communicated to the king, and which the emergency of the times may require in a very extensive degree.

The future policy of it demands particular attention. The nature of its civil government will hereafter put a stop to emigrations from other parts of the British dominions thither, and from all other free countries. The preeminent advantages secured to the Roman Catholic religion will discourage all Protestant settlers, of whatever nation; and on these accounts, the province will be settled and inhabited by none but Papists. If lenity and moderation are observed in administering the laws, the natural advantages of this fertile infant country, united to the indulgence given to their religion, will attract droves of emigrants from all the Roman Catholic States in Europe, and these colonies, in time, will find themselves encompassed with innumerable hosts of neighbors, disaffected to them, both because of difference in religion and government. How dangerous their situation would be, let every man of common sense judge.

What can speak in plainer language the corruption of the British Parliament than this act, which invests the king with absolute power over a little world (if I may be allowed the expression), and makes such ample provision for the Popish religion, and leaves the Protestant in such a dependent, disadvantageous situation, that he is like to have no other subjects in this part of the domain, than Roman Catholics, who, by reason of their implicit devotion to their priests, and the superlative reverence they bear those who countenance and favor their religion will be the



voluntary instruments of ambition, and will be ready, at all times, to second the oppressive designs of the administration against the other parts of the empire.

Hence, while our ears are stunned with the dismal sounds of New England’s republicanism, bigotry, and intolerance, it behooves us to be upon our guard against the deceitful wiles of those who would persuade us that we have nothing to fear from the operation of the Quebec Act. We should consider it as being replete with danger to ourselves, and as threatening ruin to our posterity. Let us not, therefore, suffer ourselves to be terrified at the prospect of an imaginary and fictitious Scylla; and by that means, be led blindfold into a real and destructive Charybdis.

**Source**

Hamilton, Alexander. 1903. “Remarks on the Quebec Bill [1775].” Pp. 194–196 in *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 1. Edited by Henry Cabot Lodge. New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons.

**“The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies in Congress” (4 July 1776)**

*The less well-remembered parts of the Declaration of Independence are those that spell out all the grievances against the British monarchy. Though far from a literal accusation of conspiracy, the list of accusations and suspicions nevertheless builds up to a picture of a concerted, and at times underhanded, campaign by King George III to deny the American colonists of their rights.*

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should

be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and

unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the

inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

**Source**

“The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies in Congress.” 4 July 1776.

**Aedenus Burke, *Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati* (1783)**

*This pamphlet was written by Aedenus Burke, a judge on the high court of South Carolina, under the pseudonym Cassius, as a warning against the Society of the Cincinnati. Burke accused the Society, an organization of Revolutionary War officers, of being the origin of a hereditary nobility that would in short time subvert the liberty won in the American Revolution.*

The following publication is intended to convey a few observations to my fellow citizens, on a new *Society or Institution* lately established throughout the continent, composed of the Major-Generals, Brigadiers, and other Officers of our army. It is instituted by the name of “THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI,” and it has arrived to considerable strength and maturity already. [ . . . ]

The more I reflect on this institution, and the political consequences it will involve, the more am I filled with astonishment, that self created as it is, and coming upon us in so bold and questionable an appearance, so deeply planned, and closely executed, yet that it should have been so little attended to, that it is not even the subject of private conversation. Could I for a moment view this Order with indifference, it would be impossible not to smile, to behold the populace of America, in their town committees and town meetings, so keenly bent on petty mischiefs, in full chase and cry after a few insignificant tories, and running on regardless of an establishment, which ere long must strip the posterity of the middling and lower classes of every influence or

authority, and leave them nothing but insignificance, contempt, and the wretched privilege of murmuring when it is too late. So thoughtless are the multitude! [ . . . ]

The sixth article of our confederation says, “Nor shall the United States in Congress assembled, nor any of them grant any title of nobility.” But the order of Cincinnati usurp a nobility without gift or grant, in defiance of Congress and the states, as I shall shew presently. And though the order cannot, at present be sanctified by legal authority, yet that makes nothing against the consequences which will ensue. Though the Order is self-created, and in infringement of a general law of the Union; yet if the courage of the officers does not fail them; if they but keep up with firmness and perseverance against opposition, for this will be but trifling, so unthinking are the people; if they have but patience, subtilty, and address to cloke their design under a pious name of raising a charitable fund; so as to make it go down only for a few years; even if they are obliged from policy to lay aside the *badge and blue ribbon*: My life for it, they will have leisure to laugh at, and master their opponents. And the next generation will drink as deep of noble blood, and a hereditary peerage be as firmly settled in each potent family, and rivetted in our government, as any order of nobility is in the monarchies of Europe. This Order is planted in a fiery, hot ambition, and thrill for power; and its branches will end in tyranny. The Cincinnati will soon be corrupted, and the spirit of the people depressed; for in less than a century it will occasion such an inequality in the condition of our inhabitants, that the country will be composed only of two ranks of men; the patricians or nobles, and the rabble. This is the natural result of an establishment, whose departure is so sudden from our open professions of republicanism, that it must give a thinking mind most melancholy forebodings. This creating of a nobility, and breaking through our constitution, just as we were setting out in the world, is making that liberty which the Almighty has given us, a means for feeding our pride; and

turning the blessings of Providence into a curse upon us. [ . . . ]

I have proved I hope to the reader’s satisfaction, that the Cincinnati creates two distinct orders amongst us. 1<sup>st</sup>. A race of hereditary Nobles, founded on the military, together with the powerful families, and first rate, leading men in the state, whose view it will ever be, *to rule*: and 2d. The people or plebeians, whose only view is not to be oppressed; but whose certain fate it will be to suffer oppression under the institutions: I have shewed that it is a deep laid contrivance to beget, and perpetuate family grandeur in an aristocratic Nobility, to terminate at last in monarchical tyranny. And I shall now pass on to point out the constitutional means of opposing it. [ . . . ]

To crush this Order, then, without embroiling the state, there is but one way. Let the legislature immediately enter into spirited resolutions against it; let them tell the Order, and the world, that however pious or patriotic the pretence, yet any political combination of military commanders, is in a republican government, extremely hazardous, and highly censurable. But that instituting exclusive honours and privileges of an Hereditary Order, is a daring usurpation of the sovereignty of the republic; a dangerous insult to the rights and liberties of the people, and a fatal stab to that principle of equality, which forms the basis of our government; to establish which the people fought and bled as well as the Cincinnati; though the latter are now taking every measure to rob them of the credit, and of the fruits of it. [ . . . ]

These things I know too well, to entertain the vain hope of any individual succeeding in opposition. But although I foresee the consequences, yet I think it a point of duty to give this public testimony of my dislike of the Order. [ . . . ]

#### Source

Burke, Aedanus. 1783. *Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati; Lately Instituted by the Major-Generals, Brigadier-Generals, and Other Officers of the American Army. Proving That It Creates a Race of Hereditary Patricians or Nobility. Interspersed with Remarks on Its*

*Consequences to the Freedom and Happiness of the Republic. Addressed to the People of South Carolina, and Their Representatives.* Charleston: Timothy. Reprint, Philadelphia: Robert Bell.

**George Mason, "Objections . . . to the Proposed Federal Constitution" (1787)**

*George Mason was a respected Virginia planter and member of the Federal Convention. In this pamphlet he sets out his anti-Federalist objections to the constitution, arguing that it would give a dangerous and potentially corrupting amount of power to an unaccountable central elite.*

There is no declaration of rights: and the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitutions of the several states, the declarations of rights, in the separate states, are no security. Nor are the people secured even in the enjoyment of the benefit of the common law, which stands here upon no other foundation than its having been adopted by the respective acts forming the constitutions of the several states.

In the House of Representatives there is not the substance, but the shadow only of representation; which can never produce proper information in the legislature, or inspire confidence in the people.—The laws will, therefore, be generally made by men little concerned in, and unacquainted with their effects and consequences.

The Senate have no power of altering all money-bills, and or originating appropriations of money, and the salaries of the officers of their appointment, in conjunction with the President of the United States—Although they are not the representatives of the people, or amenable to them. These, with their other great powers, (viz. their powers in the appointment of ambassadors, and all public officers, in making treaties, and in trying all impeachments) their influence upon, and connection with, the supreme executive from these causes, their duration of office, and their being a constant existing body, almost continually sitting, joined with their being one complete

branch of the legislature, will destroy any balance in the government, and enable them to accomplish what usurpations they please, upon the rights and liberties of the people.

The judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the judiciaries of the several states; thereby rendering laws as tedious, intricate, and expensive, and justice as unattainable by a great part of the community, as in England; and enabling the rich to oppress and ruin the poor.

The President of the United States has no constitutional council (a thing unknown in any safe and regular government.) He will therefore be unsupported by proper information and advice; and will generally be directed by minions and favorites—or he will become the tool to the Senate—or a council of state will grow out of the principal officers of the great departments—the worst and most dangerous of all ingredients for such a council, in a free country; for they may be induced to join in any dangerous or oppressive measures, to shelter themselves, and prevent an inquiry into their own misconduct in office.

Whereas, had a constitutional council been formed (as was proposed) of six members, viz., two from the eastern, two from the middle, and two from the southern states, to be appointed by vote of the states in the House of Representatives, with the same duration and rotation of office as the Senate, the executive would always have had safe and proper information and advice; the president of such a council might have acted as Vice-President of the United States, *pro tempore*, upon any vacancy or disability of the chief magistrate; and long continued sessions of the Senate, would in a great measure have been prevented. From this fatal defect of a constitutional council, has arisen the improper power of the Senate, in the appointment of the public officers, and the alarming dependence and connexion between that branch of the legislature and the supreme executive. Hence, also, sprung that unnecessary officer, the Vice-President, who, for want of other employment, is made President of the Senate; thereby dangerously blending the



executive and legislative powers; besides always giving to some one of the states an unnecessary and unjust pre-eminence over the others.

The President of the United States has the unrestrained power of granting pardon for treason; which may be sometimes exercised to screen from punishment those whom he had secretly instigated to commit the crime, and thereby prevent a discovery of his own guilt. By declaring all treaties supreme laws of the land, the executive and the Senate have, in many cases, an exclusive power of legislation, which might have been avoided, by proper distinctions with respect to treaties, and requiring the assent of the House of Representatives, where it could be done with safety.

[ . . . ]

Under their own construction of the general clause at the end of the enumerated powers, the Congress may grant monopolies in trade and commerce, constitute new crimes, inflict unusual and severe punishments, and extend their power as far as they shall think proper; so that the state legislatures have no security for the powers now presumed to remain to them; or the people for their rights. There is no declaration of any kind for preserving the liberty of the press, the trial by jury in civil cases, nor against the danger of standing armies in time of peace.

[ . . . ]

This government will commence in a moderate aristocracy; it is at present impossible to foresee whether it will, in its operation, produce a monarchy, or a corrupt oppressive aristocracy; it will most probably vibrate some years between the two, and then terminate in the one or the other.

**Source**

Mason, George. [1787] 1888. *The Objections of the Hon. George Mason to the Proposed Federal Constitution*. Reprinted in *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States*. Edited by Paul Leicester Ford. Brooklyn: N.p.

**George Washington, "Farewell Address" (1796)**

*In 1796 George Washington decided not to stand for reelection, and in his farewell address, he*

*warned the nation of the "batteries of internal and external enemies" that he perceived to be gathering on the horizon.*

[ . . . ] Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. [ . . . ] The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts. [ . . . ]

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in

the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rival ships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other. [ . . . ]

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations, Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head; they have seen, in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in

regard to the Mississippi; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain, and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens? [ . . . ]

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion. [ . . . ]

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

**Source**

Available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>.

**Thomas Jefferson, "Minute of Conversation with Genet" (1793)**

*In the following document, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson describes his 5 July 1793 meeting with French Foreign Minister Edmond Genet, in which Genet tells Jefferson of his ambitious scheme to encourage a revolt among the inhabitants of Louisiana and Canada, as well as his plan to launch an attack upon New Orleans.*

Mr. Genet called on me, and read to me very rapidly instructions he had prepared for Michaud [French botanist Andre Michaux] who is going to Kentucky; an address to the inhabitants of Louisiana, and another to those of Canada. In these papers it appears that, besides encouraging those inhabitants to insurrection, he speaks of two generals at Kentucky who have proposed to him to go and take New Orleans if he will furnish the expense, about £3000 sterling. He declines advancing it, but promises that sum ultimately for

their expenses, proposes that officers shall be commissioned by himself in Kentucky and Louisiana, that they shall rendezvous *out of the territories of the United States*,—suppose in Louisiana, and there making up a battalion to be called the—— of inhabitants of Louisiana and Kentucky and getting what Indians they could, to undertake the expedition against N. Orleans, and then Louisiana to be established into an independent state, connected in commerce with France and the US; that two frigates shall go into the river Mississippi and cooperate against New Orleans—the address to Canada, was enough to them to shake off English yoke, to call Indians to their assistance, and to assure them of the friendly dispositions of their neighbors of the US.

He said he communicated these things to me, not as Secretary of State, but as Mr. Jefferson. I told him that his enticing officers and soldiers from Kentucky to go against Spain, was really putting a halter about their necks, for that they would assuredly be hung, if they commenced hostilities against a nation at peace with the US. That leaving out that article I did not care what insurrection should be excited in Louisiana, he had, about a fortnight ago sent me a communication for Michaud as Consul of France at Kentucky, and desired an Exequatur. I told him this could not be given, that it was only in the *ports* of the US. They were entitled to Consuls, and that if France should have a consul at Kentucky England and Spain would soon demand the same, and we should have all our interior country filled with foreign agents. He acquiesced and asked me to return the commission and his note, which I did. But he desired that I would give Michaud a letter of introduction for Governor Shelby. I sent him one a day or two after. He now observes to me that in that letter I speak of him as a person of botanical and natural pursuits, but that he wished the Governor to view him as something more, as a French citizen possessing his confidence. I took back the latter, and wrote another.

**Source**

"Jefferson's Minute of Conversation with Genet." 1897. In *Annual Report of the American*

*Historical Association for the Year 1896*. 2 vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1: 984–985.

**John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1797)**

*Scottish professor John Robison's sensational exposé of the Illuminati was enormously influential in America, from the Federalist writers of the early republic to the anti-Masonic movement of the nineteenth century. Perhaps more surprising is that the book is still in print today and remains a founding plank in all manner of conspiratorial writings on the Masons in general and the Illuminati in particular.*

The Association of which I have been speaking is the Order of the ILLUMINATI, founded, in 1775, by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, professor of Canon law in the university of Inglostadt, and abolished in 1786 by the Elector of Bavaria, but revived immediately after, under another name and in a different form, all over Germany. It was again detected, and seemingly broken up; but it had by this time taken so deep root that it still subsists without being detected, and has spread into all countries of Europe. It took its first rise among the Free Masons, but is totally different from Free Masonry. It was not, however, the mere protection gained by the secrecy of the Lodges that gave occasion to it, but it arose naturally from the corruptions that had gradually crept into that fraternity, the violence of the party spirit which pervaded it, and from the total uncertainty and darkness that hangs over the whole of that mysterious Association [ . . . ].

The great aim professed by the Order is to *make men happy*; and the means professed to be employed, as the only and surely effective, is *making them good*; and this is to be brought about by *enlightening the mind*, and *freeing it from the dominion of superstition and prejudices*. This purpose is effected by its *producing a just and steady morality*. This done, and becoming universal, there can be little doubt but that the peace of society will be the consequence,—that government, subordination, and all the

disagreeable coercions of civil governments will be unnecessary,—and that the society may go on peaceably in a state of perfect liberty and equality. [ . . . ] The [true] aim of the Order is not to enlighten the mind of man, and show him his moral obligations, and by the practice of his duties to make society peaceable [ . . . ] but to get rid of the coercion which must be employed in place of Morality, that the innocent may be robbed with impunity by the idle and profligate poor. [ . . . ] Their first and immediate aim is to get the possession of riches, power, and influence, without industry; they want to abolish Christianity; and the dissolute manners and universal profligacy will procure them the adherence of all the wicked, and enable them to overturn all the civil governments of Europe; after which they will think of farther conquests, and extend their operations to the other quarters of the globe, till they have reduced mankind to the state of one undistinguishable chaotic mass. [ . . . ]

That the Illuminati and other hidden Cosmopolitical had some influence in bringing about the French Revolution, or at least in accelerating it, can hardly be doubted. [ . . . ] Nothing can more convincingly demonstrate the early intentions of a party, and this a great party, in France to overturn the constitution completely, and plant a democracy or oligarchy on its ruins. The Illuminati had no other object. They accounted all Princes usurpers and tyrants, and all privileged orders as their abettors. They intended to establish a government of Morality, as they called it, [ . . . ] where talents and character (to be estimated by their own scale, and by themselves) should alone lead to preferment. They meant to abolish the law which protected property accumulated by long continued and successful industry, and to prevent for the future any such accumulation. They intended to establish universal Liberty and Equality, the imprescriptible Rights of Man. [ . . . ] And, as necessary preparations for all this, they intended to root out all the religion and ordinary morality, and even to break the bonds of domestic life, by destroying the veneration for marriage-vows, and by taking the



education of children out of the hands of the parents. *This was all that the Illuminati could teach*, and THIS WAS PRECISELY WHAT FRANCE HAS DONE. [ . . . ]

Hence it has arisen that the French aimed, in the very beginning, at overturning the whole world. In all the revolutions of other countries, the schemes and plots have extended no further than the nation where they took their rise. But here we have seen that they take in the whole world. They have repeatedly declared this in their manifestos, and they have declared it by their conduct. This is the very aim of the Illuminati.—Hence too may be explained how the revolution took place almost in a moment in every part of France. The revolutionary societies were early formed, and were working in secret before the opening of the National Assembly, and the whole nation changed, and changed again, and again, as if by beat of drum. Those duly initiated in this mystery of iniquity were ready everywhere at a call. And we see Weishaupt's wish accomplished in an unexpected degree, and the debates in a club giving laws to solemn assemblies of the nation, and all France bending the neck to the city of Paris. The members of the club are the Illuminati, and so are a great part of their correspondants. [ . . . ] The famous Jacobin Club was just one of these Lodges as has been already observed. [ . . . ]

We may also gather from what we have seen, that all declamations on universal philanthropy are dangerous. Their natural immediate effect on the mind is to increase the discontents of the unfortunate, and of those of the laborious ranks of life. No one, even of the Illuminators, will deny that these ranks must be filled, if society exists in any degree of cultivation whatever, and that there will always be a greater number of men who have no farther prospect. Surely it is unkind to put such men continually in mind of a state in which they might be at their ease. [ . . . ]

When we see how eagerly the Illuminati endeavoured to insinuate their Brethren into all offices which gave them influence on the public mind, and particularly into seminars of education,

we should be particularly careful to prevent them, and ought to examine with anxious attention the manner of thinking of all who offer themselves for teachers of youth. There is no part of the secret correspondence of Spartacus [Weishaupt] and his Associates, in which we see more varied and artful methods for securing pupils, than in his own conduct respecting the students in the University, and the injunctions he gives to others. [ . . . ] Weishaupt undoubtedly thought that the principles of civil anarchy would be easiest inculcated on minds that had already shaken off the restraints of Religion, and entered into habits of sensual indulgence. [ . . . ]

It is a great misfortune undoubtedly to feel ourselves in a situation which makes us damp the enjoyment of life with so much suspicion. But the history of mankind shows us that many great revolutions have been produced by remote and apparently frivolous causes. [ . . . ] We know that the enemy is working amongst us, and that there are many appearances in these kingdoms which strongly resemble the contrivance of this dangerous Association. We know that before the Order of the Illuminati was broken up by the Elector of Bavaria, there were several Lodges in Britain, and we may be certain that they are not all broken up. [ . . . ] I am very well informed that there are several thousands of subscribing Brethren in London alone, and we can hardly doubt but that many of that number are well advanced. The vocabulary also of the Illuminati is current in certain societies among us. [ . . . ] Seeing that there are such grounds of apprehension, I think that we have cause to be on our guard, and that every man who has enjoyed the sweets of British liberty should be very anxious to preserve it. We should discourage all secret assemblies, which afford opportunities to the disaffected, and all conversations which foster any notions of political perfection, and create hankerings after unattainable happiness. These only increase the discontents of the unfortunate, the idle, and the worthless.—Above all, we should be careful to discourage and check immorality and licentiousness in every shape. For this will of

itself subvert every government, and will subject us to the vile tyranny of the mob.

If there has ever been a season in which it was proper to call upon the public instructors of the nation to exert themselves in the cause of Religion and of Virtue, it is surely the present.

#### Sources

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### Alien and Sedition Acts (1798)

*During the revolutionary climate of the 1790s, the Alien and Sedition Acts instituted both an attitude of suspiciousness toward foreigners and a fear of foreign plots. Their pretext was concerns about the activities of the French government and navy, but they were directed more specifically at curbing the influence of foreign-born Jeffersonian anti-Federalists. Although the Alien Act was never invoked, the Sedition Act was used to curtail the freedom of federalist opponents of President John Adams.*

#### The Alien Act

25 June 1798

##### *An Act Concerning Aliens*

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it shall be lawful for the President of the United States at any time during the continuance of this act, to order all such aliens as he shall judge dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, or shall have reasonable grounds to suspect are concerned in any treasonable or secret machinations against the government thereof, to depart out of the territory of the United States, within such time as shall be expressed in such order, which order shall be served on such alien by delivering him a copy thereof, or leaving the same at his usual abode, and returned to the

office of the Secretary of State, by the marshal or other person to whom the same shall be directed. And in case any alien, so ordered to depart, shall be found at large within the United States after the time limited in such order for his departure, and not having obtained a license from the President to reside therein, or having obtained such license shall not have conformed thereto, every such alien shall, on conviction thereof, be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three years, and shall never after be admitted to become a citizen of the United States. Provided always, and be it further enacted, that if any alien so ordered to depart shall prove to the satisfaction of the President, by evidence to be taken before such person or persons as the President shall direct, who are for that purpose hereby authorized to administer oaths, that no injury or danger to the United States will arise from suffering such alien to reside therein, the President may grant a license to such alien to remain within the United States for such time as he shall judge proper, and at such place as he may designate. And the President may also require of such alien to enter into a bond to the United States, in such penal sum as he may direct, with one or more sufficient sureties to the satisfaction of the person authorized by the President to take the same, conditioned for the good behavior of such alien during his residence in the United States, and not violating his license, which license the President may revoke, whenever he shall think proper.

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it necessary for the public safety, to order to be removed out of the territory thereof, any alien who may or shall be in prison in pursuance of this act, and to cause to be arrested and sent out of the United States such of those aliens as shall have been ordered to depart therefrom and shall not have obtained a license as aforesaid, in all cases where, in the opinion of the President, the public safety requires a speedy removal. And if any alien so removed or sent out of the United States by the President shall voluntarily return thereto, unless by permission of

the President of the United States, such alien on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned so long as, in the opinion of the President, the public safety may require. [ . . . ]

### **The Sedition Act**

14 July 1798

*An Act in Addition to the Act, Entitled “An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes Against the United States.”*

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That if any persons shall unlawfully combine or conspire together, with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government of the United States, which are or shall be directed by proper authority, or to impede the operation of any law of the United States, or to intimidate or prevent any person holding a place or office in or under the government of the United States, from undertaking, performing or executing his trust or duty, and if any person or persons, with intent as aforesaid, shall counsel, advise or attempt to procure any insurrection, riot, unlawful assembly, or combination, whether such conspiracy, threatening, counsel, advice, or attempt shall have the proposed effect or not, he or they shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanor, and on conviction, before any court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, and by imprisonment during a term not less than six months nor exceeding five years; and further, at the discretion of the court may be holden to find sureties for his good behaviour in such sum, and for such time, as the said court may direct.

SEC. 2. And be it farther enacted, That if any person shall write, print, utter or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist or aid in writing, printing, uttering or publishing any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress of the United States, or the President of the United States, with intent to

defame the said government, or either house of the said Congress, or the said President, or to bring them, or either of them, into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them, or either or any of them, the hatred of the good people of the United States, or to stir up sedition within the United States, or to excite any unlawful combinations therein, for opposing or resisting any law of the United States, or any act of the President of the United States, done in pursuance of any such law, or of the powers in him vested by the constitution of the United States, or to resist, oppose, or defeat any such law or act, or to aid, encourage or abet any hostile designs of any foreign nation against United States, their people or government, then such person, being thereof convicted before any court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years. [ . . . ]

#### **Source**

*U.S. Statutes at Large*, vol. 1, p. 566 ff.

### **William Manning, “The Key of Liberty: Shewing the Causes Why a Free Government Has Always Failed and a Remedy against It” (1799)**

*William Manning’s writings present some of the earliest American anticapitalist arguments. Writing as a Laborer, Manning sought to lay bare the conspiratorial machinations of the wealthy “few” to exploit the rightful earnings of the working “many.” His work was never published during his lifetime.*

#### **To Show How the Few and Many Differ in Their Ideas of Interest**

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou get thy bread until thou return to the ground” is the irreversible sentence of heaven on man for his rebellion. And there is scarcely anything more terrible to human nature than to be sentenced to hard labor during life—especially if one is not brought up to it in youth. Yet it is absolutely necessary that a large majority of the world should labor or we should not subsist. For labor is the sole parent of all property. The land yieldeth

nothing without it, and there is no food, clothing, shelter, vessel, or any necessary of life but what costs labor and is generally estimated valuable according to what labor it costs. Therefore no person can possess property without laboring unless he gets it by force or craft, fraud or fortune, out of the earnings of others.

**Source**

Merrill, Michael, and Sean Wilentz, eds. 1993. *The Key of Liberty: The Life and Democratic Writings of William Manning, "A Laborer," 1747–1814*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 135–136.

**Jedidiah Morse, A Sermon, Exhibiting the Present Dangers (1799)**

*In the fevered atmosphere of the late 1790s, the New England minister Jedidiah Morse delivered a number of sermons that promoted a conspiratorial take on events. In particular he highlighted the work of John Robison, a Scottish professor whose Proofs of a Conspiracy (1797) brought sensational stories about the supposedly unlimited power of the Illuminati to an English-speaking audience.*

Our dangers are of two kinds, those which affect our religion, and those which affect our government. They are, however, so closely allied that they cannot, with propriety, be separated. The foundations which support the interests of Christianity, are also necessary to support a free and equal government like our own. In all those countries where there is little or no religion, or a very gross or corrupt one, as in Mahometan and Pagan countries, there you will find, with scarcely a single exception, arbitrary and tyrannical governments, gross ignorance and wickedness, and deplorable wretchedness among the people. To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoy. In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation, either through unbelief, or the corruption of its doctrines, or the neglect of its institutions; in the same proportion will the people of that nation recede from the

blessings of genuine freedom, and approximate the miseries of complete despotism. I hold this to be a truth confirmed by experience. If so, it follows, that all efforts made to destroy the foundations of our holy religion, ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all the blessings which fall from them, must fall with them.

[ . . . ] It has long been suspected that *Secret Societies*, under the influence and direction of France, holding principles subversive of our religion and government, existed somewhere in this country. This suspicion was cautiously suggested from this desk, on the day of the last National Fast, with a view to excite a just alarm, and to put you on your guard against their secret artifices. Evidence that this suspicion was well founded, has since been accumulating, and I have now in my possession complete and indubitable proof that such societies do exist, and have for many years existed, in the United States. I have, my brethren, an official authenticated list of the names, ages, places of nativity, professions, etc. of the officers and members of a Society of *Illuminati*, (or as they are now more generally and properly styled *Illuminees*) consisting of *one hundred* members, instituted in Virginia, by the *Grand Orient* of FRANCE. This society has a deputy, whose name is on the list, who resides at the Mother Society in France, to communicate from thence all needful information and instruction. [ . . . ] The members are chiefly Emigrants from France and St. Domingo, with the addition of a few Americans, and some from almost all the nations of Europe. A letter which enclosed this list, an authentic copy of which I also possess, contains evidence of the existence of a society of a like nature, and probably of more ancient date, at *New-York*, out of which have sprung *fourteen* others, scattered we know not where over the United States. Two societies of the some kind, but of an inferior order, have been instituted by the society first mentioned, one in Virginia, and the other at St. Domingo. How



many of equal rank they have established among us I am not informed.

You will perceive, my brethren, from this concise statement of facts, that we have in truth secret enemies, not a few, scattered through our country; how many and, except in three or four instances, in what places we know not; enemies whose professed design is to subvert and overturn our holy religion and our free and excellent government. And the pernicious fruits of their insidious and secret efforts, must be visible to every eye not obstinately closed or blinded by prejudice. Among these fruits may be reckoned our unhappy and threatening political divisions; the unceasing abuse of our wise and faithful rulers; the virulent opposition to some of the laws of our country, and the measures of the Supreme Executive; the Pennsylvania insurrection; the industrious circulation of baneful and corrupting books, and the consequent wonderful spread of infidelity, impiety and immorality; the arts made use of to revive ancient prejudices, and cherish party spirit, by concealing or disguising the truth and propagating falsehoods; and lastly, the apparently systematic endeavours made to destroy, not only the influence and support, but the official existence of the Clergy. [ . . . ]

And what have they [the Clergy] done to provoke this hostility? Why they have “*preached politics*.” This, so far as I know, is the princip[al], if not the only, charge alleged against them. But is this any new crime? No; it is as old as Christianity; nay it is as old as the priesthood itself. [ . . . ] And yet, for doing what only twenty years ago they were called upon to perform as a *duty*, they are now censured and abused, and represented as an expensive, useless, nay even, noxious body of men. In some of our newspapers, which are read by too many with more avidity, and more faith than the Holy Bible, they are continually reproached and vilified; and every low artifice is used to lessen their influence and usefulness; and what is deeply to be lamented, this poison is greedily swallowed, and assiduously disseminated by some even, who profess to be the warm friends and supporters of Christianity, and of the

Christian Ministry. Little are these good people aware of what they are doing. Little do they believe that, blinded by their prejudices, they are in fact aiding with all their influence, the adversaries of religion in subverting its foundations; that they are acting a part directly contrary to their prayers and their professions. I would to GOD the veil might be speedily torn from the eyes of such Christians, as are ignorantly assisting them to pull down the pillars which support the Christian fabric, lest they too late deplore their folly amidst its ruins!

The contest which now engages the attention, and fills with fearful apprehensions all the civilized world, is singular in its kind. “It is a contest of liberty against despotism; of property against rapine; of religion against impiety; of civilized society against the destroyers of all social order.” These terms feebly express the calamities which the principles and the arms of France have produced in their baleful progress; and which the wounds of a bleeding world will attest.

#### Sources

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- Davis, David Brian, ed. 1971. *The Fear of Conspiracy.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

#### Abraham Bishop, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1802)

*In Proofs of a Conspiracy Abraham Bishop attacks Federalism as a conspiracy against the liberties of ordinary Americans and a betrayal of the spirit of the Revolution and Christianity. Bishop sees the idea of centrally concentrated power in the hands of the elite as an affront against the “poor man’s government,” and as the first stage of a return to secretive, aristocratic tyranny.*

Professor Robinson undertook the gigantic task of proving a conspiracy against *all* the religions and governments in the world: I am contented with a small section of his subject.

My aim will be, to place charge of infidel conspiracy, where it ought to rest, in comparing which I shall pass rapidly, and without much ceremony, through the solemn forms, in which religion is presented, in order to arrive at the substance; and in examining this shall occasionally, and without much sensibility, advert to the passions and arts opposed to my process; and after fixing the character of federal religion, shall follow it through the political course, which it has taken from the infancy of our government to the day of the date of these presents—shall with much coolness call some classes of men hypocrites, who have passed for saints—and shall show that whether republicanism means something or nothing; yet that the allusions and distant hints of republicans about the existence of an hypocritical northern phalanx meant something.—And from premises thus constructed shall attempt to prove, that Christianity and the government of the United States have a constant, powerful, and efficient enemy in the New-England Union of Church and State.

[ . . . ]

#### Introductory View of this Conspiracy

Taking nature for our guide we shall find the unionists conspiring against the poor man's government under this influence of the same passions, which led them to conspire against the poor man's religion.

The history of the world presents two classes of men, as distinct in their motives and means, as if they were of an entire different species of being, and formed of different materials.

1st. The body of mankind, honest and industrious, contented with a little, labouring hard to support a class of men, who are always promising to bring them a degree of happiness and independence, which they have never seen and never will see, if they trust such promises; fighting when they are told that religion or their rights are in danger; trembling before court-martials; mounting the scaffold, when the pride of a courtier or the petulance of midshipman requires it; dying when they are bid to die; drawn by the force of fraud, falsehood and passion, from

the mild government of their heavenly Father, under the dominion of men, who fear no power but that of death, and no enemies but the intrepid asserters of the eternal rights of man.

2nd. The lordly tyrants of the world, known by different titles; the well-born, scorning the lowly talk of the Saviour, who had a feeling of human infirmity, because he took upon him our natures. These great men know not the value of labour, the stings of poverty, nor the sense of danger, nor the tenderness of affection, which binds together those, whose sphere of action is limited. These tyrants bind heavy burdens on the people; talk of millions of debt with as little concern as the people do of pence; declare war with perfect composure, and assume on themselves to answer for the blood of the slain, as if they considered the books of record to be forever closed, and as if a season would never arrive, when the sea would give up its dead. They enter peaceable families and drag their hopes into the field; desolate villages and destroy their thousands, and when vengeance says it is enough, they pray that swords may be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and that nations may learn war no more. The war serves as an apology for an increase of taxation, and having before taxed all which the labour of man produces, they tax the light which heaven bestows, and if discontent arises by reason of oppression, another war is declared in order to hush the tumult.

Thus wars are excited under pretence of serving the kingdom of peace, and all the rights of mankind are violated under a pretence of advancing those rights. Every thing has always been in danger; these men have affected to avert the danger, and the state of things has, under their management, been always growing worse: yet these pilots, who are always steering among the rocks, are still at helm, and multitudes of lifeless men, whose all is at stake, say, "let the ship sink, we are only passengers"—and this stupid confidence is among the "steady habits," which receive the constant eulogy of the great men.

Such is the history of the world—on the one hand an easy, unsuspecting confidence, and on the

other a bold and daring assumption of all power, human and divine; and through these two causes the earth has been filled with artificial miseries, and the souls of those, who have slain, have been crying, “How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwelt on the earth.”

When our declaration of independence was penned, all these facts were known and recognized by our people, and Britain was expressly charged with tyranny, and we called ourselves the oppressed. In that day we were resolved to be free and to have a republican government, in which the people were once to be foreign, and to take in charge their own rights. By the government, against which I claim that the unionists have conspired, is intended the government for which our revolution was effected; not that republic, which under Mr. Adams, meant any thing or nothing; nor any particular set of men, composing an administration; but that political system, which has been always denominated republican—By the conspiracy charged is intended that portion and kind of enmity against such a government, (arising from the same motives, and conducted by as insidious means) which animated the court of St. James and British army to conspire against our independence.

**Source**

Bishop, Abraham. 1802. *Proofs of a Conspiracy, against Christianity, and the Government of the United States Exhibited in Several Views of the Union of the Church and State in New England*. Hartford, CT: J. Babcock.

**David Bernard, *Light on Masonry* (1829)**

*Light on Masonry, a collection of documents compiled by David Bernard, set out the case against freemasonry in general, and the abduction of William Morgan in particular. It became a central text for the anti-Masonic movement of the 1830s. In the following section from the introduction, Bernard explains why he felt compelled to expose the secrets of the organization.*

I soon became convinced that the peace of society, the salvation of my country, the present and eternal happiness of my fellow men, and the glory of God, required the destruction of the institution. To accomplish this, I was confident but one effectual method could be adopted, and this was to make a full disclosure of its secrets.

[ . . . ]

But am I justifiable in pursuing this course? Will the law of God approve the violation of such solemn oaths? Passing by the arguments which might be adduced from the fact that the obligations were taken without a previous knowledge of their character—the assurances that they were not to interfere with my political or religious sentiments, when they are diametrically opposite to both—that I swore fealty to a professedly ancient, moral, benevolent, and righteous institution, when it proves to be “modern, corrupt, selfish, and unholy.” I rest the question upon the principles of moral obligation, by which I expect to be judged, and by which I must stand or fall. Are the oaths of Free Masonry, then, congenial with the duties which I owe to God and my fellow men? [ . . . ] Moral obligation requires me to keep such secrets and such only as are calculated to promote God’s glory and the best good of community; and my swearing does not effect the obligation at all. It also requires me to reveal those secrets, the keeping of which have a tendency to mar or prevent His glory and the best good of my neighbour; and my swearing to keep them does not, cannot, render the obligation void; for instance, if I had sworn to keep secret the intention of a highway-man to rob my neighbour’s house and murder his family; to keep secret a plot against my country, the government of which is founded upon the principles of truth and justice; to keep secret a grand conspiracy formed by a powerful society, the object of which was, like that of the *illuminati*, to abolish government and social order and extinguish Christianity—as the keeping of these secrets would be prejudicial to the interests of my neighbour, to the safety of my country, and the glory of God, the principles of moral obligation would require me to reveal them.

If I had sworn to assist the robber, to unite in the plot, or conspiracy, my refusal to *act* in either case, *simply*, would not fulfil the duties which I should owe to my neighbour, my country, or my God. So I did not *make known* the intention of the robber, *expose* the plot, or *reveal* the conspiracy, I should be guilty of a violation of moral obligation.

It will not be necessary here to inquire whether the oaths to keep secrets of a brother, with or without exception, to deliver a companion ‘right or wrong,’ to ‘take vengeance on the traitors of Masonry,’ to ‘sacrifice all those who reveal the secrets of the order,’ are in harmony with the Divine law—but whether the principles of moral obligation require the keeping or revealing of Masonic secrets?

It will be readily admitted that the *existence* of the institution depends upon the keeping of its secrets inviolate. It will follow, then, that if the existence of the institution is necessary, or has a tendency to promote God’s glory and the well being of society, the principles of moral obligations require me to keep its secrets, and by revealing them I am guilty of moral perjury! And on the other hand, if the institution is corrupt, has an evil tendency, is opposed to the order and well being of society and the glory of God, I am under moral obligation to break my oaths and reveal its secrets to the world, that it may come to an end. My refusing to meet with or support the institution, is not sufficient; I must renounce *fealty* to the order, *reveal* its secrets, *oppose* its influence, and use my exertions to *destroy* it, or I am guilty of a violation of moral obligation.

Let the reader carefully and thoroughly examine the following documents, and he will discover that Free Masonry, as system, is dark, unfruitful, selfish, demoralising, blasphemous, murderous, anti-republican, and anti-Christian—opposed to the glory of God and the good of mankind; and hence that the compiler in bursting asunder the bands of the fraternity, and publishing their secrets to the world, is doing no more than is required by the principles of moral obligation—is fulfilling the duties which he owes to God and his fellow men.

#### Source

Bernard, David. 1829. *Light on Masonry: A Collection of All the Most Important Documents on the Subject of Speculative Free Masonry*. Utica, NY: William Williams.

#### Anti-Masonic Convention (1830)

*At the first national Anti-Masonic Convention held in Philadelphia in 1830, the delegates called for various inquiries into the nature of freemasonry in general and the disappearance of ex-Mason William Morgan in particular. The report on Morgan concluded that the Masons were guilty of a far-reaching conspiracy to abduct and murder Morgan.*

Philadelphia, Saturday, September 11, 1830

Ninety-six delegates to the United States Anti-masonic Convention, assembled in the District Court Room, in the city of Philadelphia, on the 11th of September, 1830, at 12 o’clock, m.

[ . . . ]

Mr. Phelps, from the committee, to lay before this Convention, the subjects proper for its consideration, reported in part, by the following resolutions, viz:

[ . . . ]

3rd. Resolved, that a Committee be appointed, consisting of all the seceding masons belonging to this Convention, to report a summary of freemasonry; embracing the prominent points in each degree, sufficient to show the nature, principles, and tendency of the institution; and that the correctness of the same be certified by each member of the Committee, according to the number of degrees he has taken.

4th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to inquire and report, *when, where, and for what purposes*, freemasonry was first instituted; what has been its progress; where it has flourished most; and what is now the most probable number of the fraternity, in each country where it exists.

5th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to inquire and report what have been the pretensions of freemasonry, and how supported the facts.



6th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to take into consideration the true nature of masonic oaths or obligations; and to report whether they are, or are not, religiously, morally, or legally binding; and whether they are, or are not, in collision with the higher obligations of duty and allegiance, which every good citizen is under, to support the constitution and laws of his country.

7th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to examine the evidence, as to the truth of the disclosures contained in a work published by Elder David Bernard, entitled, "Light on Masonry;" and to report thereon.

8th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to report a succinct and lucid account of the abduction and murder of William Morgan; and of the conduct, and measures adopted by the fraternity, jointly and individually, to prevent a conviction in courts of justice, of their more prominent fellow masons, in that abduction and murder.

9th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to consider and report, whether an *adherence* to the oaths or obligations of freemasonry, does or does not, disqualify a man for the impartial discharge of all important offices in the gift of the people, according to the true nature of our free institutions.

10th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to report upon the effects of freemasonry of the Christian religion.

11th Resolved, that a Committee of six be appointed, to consider the nature and spirit of anti-masonry, from the disclosures of Professor Robinson, and the Abbe Barruel, to the present time; the arguments used by freemasons, in support of their institution; and the means resorted to by the fraternity, to prevent inquiry into the principles, nature, and tendency of the order, and to report thereon.

12th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to report what measures can constitutionally and properly be used, to effectuate the extinction of freemasonry; to guard against its revival; and to secure our free

institutions against the future insidious assaults of all secret societies; and to report an address on those subjects to the people of the United States.

13th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to prepare and report resolutions, expressive of the sentiments of this Convention, on the subject of freemasonry; and that each member of this body be requested to aid said Committee, by furnishing such resolutions as he may think proper.

14th Resolved, that a Committee of five be appointed, to consider and report the best system of a national correspondence of anti-masons, for the *sole* purpose of diffusing information extensively on the subject of freemasonry, and of other secret combinations, against the equal rights of mankind and our free institutions.

[ . . . ]

It will strike any one, on hearing a recital of the facts connected with the abduction of William Morgan, that the combination to effect that measure, must have been very extensive, embracing a large number of individuals. The judicial examinations of the subjects have brought out very many names as connected in a nearer or more remote degree, with the transaction at some stage of its progress. The bare seizure and transportation of a man from such a distance, rendered the employment of many agents, a matter of absolute necessity, and it is now well known that many knew of it, who took no active part in the infraction of the laws. It was probably known to numbers of the lodge-going masons, in several of the western counties of New York, that some measures were contemplated to be taken for the suppression of Morgan's intended publication; and it has been judicially proven, that measures, which contemplated the use of violence, to effect this object, were matters of discussion among masons in the lodge room.

It would be naturally supposed, that a conspiracy, so wide spread, the execution and knowledge of which was confided to so many individuals, would not oppose formidable difficulties to a complete exposure by judicial investigation. In the history of crime, those which

employ the most accomplices, are usually the easiest of detection, particularly if the agency of some partake but slightly of guilt. But such was not the case in the investigation of this violation of the laws, and the difficulties which were encountered, will be hereafter noticed.

[ . . . ]

Having thus given a brief history of the abduction of William Morgan, and noticed the trials growing out of that transaction, it now becomes the duty of your committee, to furnish a statement of the conduct and measures of numbers of the masonic fraternity, to prevent the conviction of those implicated in these gross violations of the laws of the land. Appalling as is the conviction which is pressed upon us by the history of that abduction, that hundreds of respectable men, in the western counties of the state of New York, could be found, who would be willing to violate the laws of the state, and the sacredness of private property, personal liberty, and human life, to prevent the publication of the secrets of free masonry, yet, it would be infinitely more alarming, if it should be found, that great numbers of the members of that fraternity, had made use of every possible device to prevent the discovery of a high handed offence, and to obstruct the administration of justice, and the due execution of the laws. The first, however extensive the combination may have been, was but a single outrage, and like hundreds of other fearful crimes, might have been punished and forgotten, and the public have felt secure in the protection of the laws, in witnessing the unobstructed execution of their penalties. The latter, unhinging the whole administration of justice, would exhibit a state of facts deeply alarming to a community, who eminently repose upon the laws under which they live for protection, and rely undoubtingly upon their due and impartial administration. When rumours of these outrages first became public, the citizens of the community, in which they were perpetrated, felt themselves called upon to investigate how it was, that a peaceable citizen should be forcibly seized in a populous

village, and transported against his will, one hundred and fifty miles, through a thickly settled country. As worthy of a free government, they deemed themselves bound to ascertain why, and by whom, a fellow citizen, enjoying the same privileges, was abstracted from the protection of the laws, under circumstances which created well grounded suspicions of a horrible fate. The inquiries for information in relation to Morgan, were answered by taunts, reproaches, and ridicule. At first, the members of the fraternity were bold enough, openly to declare, "That if Morgan had been put to death, his fate was no more than he deserved; he had forfeited his life." These declarations were made by perhaps hundreds of freemasons, within two months after the abduction, and there is scarce an individual, who at that early period took any interest in the investigation, but can call to mind distinctly, many such declarations, made by respectable and influential men.

When intimations were thrown out that an appeal would be made to the laws, more than one freemason has been heard to say, that the judges were masons, the sheriffs were masons, and the jurymen would be masons, and set at defiance the requirements of justice.

There seems to have been a determination on the part of the fraternity, not only to suppress all information in relation to the outrages, but even to repress inquiries and questionings, which might tend to elucidate it. Individuals who ventured to make remarks which such an infraction of the laws were calculated to elicit, were made the subjects of unreasonable abuse, and vindictive hostility, by the lodge-going members of the fraternity. The public press, which has, in almost every other instance of alarming crime, been made in some measure the means of its investigation, or at least of making public its details, was, in this instance, with a single exception at first awed into most slavish silence, by the influence of freemasonry.

#### Source

Anti-Masonic Party. 1830. *Proceedings of the Anti-Masonic Convention*. Philadelphia: J. P. Trimble.

### **Nat Turner, *Confessions* (1831)**

*Before it was crushed by the state militia, Nat Turner's slave revolt of 1831 killed about fifty whites—and Turner had hoped that many more would have joined his conspiracy of slaves. In his published *Confessions*, Turner gives an account of an uprising that was to haunt the imagination of the slave-owning population.*

Since the commencement of 1830, I had been living with Mr. Joseph Travis, who was to me a kind master, and placed the greatest confidence in me: in fact, I had no cause to complain of his treatment of me. On Saturday evening, the 20th of August, it was agreed between Henry, Hark, and myself, to prepare a dinner the next day for the men we expected, and then to concert a plan, as we had not yet determined on any. Hark, on the following morning, brought a pig, and Henry brandy, and being joined by Sam, Nelson, Will and Jack, they prepared in the woods a dinner, where, about three o'clock, I joined them [ . . . ].

I saluted them on coming up, and asked Will how came he there, he answered, his life was worth no more than others, and his liberty as dear to him. I asked him if he thought to obtain it? He said he would, or lose his life. This was enough to put him in full confidence. Jack, I knew, was only a tool in the hands of Hark, it was quickly agreed we should commence at home (Mr. J. Travis') on that night, and until we had armed and equipped ourselves, and gathered sufficient force, neither age nor sex was to be spared (which was invariably adhered to). We remained at the feast, until about two hours in the night, when we went to the house and found Austin; they all went to the cider press and drank, except myself. On returning to the house Hark went to the door with an axe, for the purpose of breaking it open, as we knew we were strong enough to murder the family, if they were awakened by the noise; but reflecting that it might create an alarm in the neighborhood, we determined to enter the house secretly, and murder them whilst sleeping. Hark got a ladder and set it against the chimney, on which I ascended, and hoisting a window, entered and

came down stairs, unbarred the door, and removed the guns from their places. It was then observed that I must spill the first blood. On which, armed with a hatchet, and accompanied by Will, I entered my master's chamber, it being dark, I could not give a death blow, the hatchet glanced from his head, he sprang from the bed and called his wife, it was his last word, Will laid him dead, with a blow of his axe, and Mrs. Travis shared the same fate, as she lay in bed. The murder of this family, five in number, was the work of a moment, not one of them awoke; there was a little infant sleeping in a cradle, that was forgotten, until we had left the house and gone some distance, when Henry and Will returned and killed it; we got here, four guns that would shoot and several old muskets, with a pound or two of powder. We remained some time at the barn, where we paraded; I formed them in a line as soldiers, and [ . . . ] marched them off to Mr. Salthul Francis', about six hundred yards distant. Sam and Will went to the door and knocked. Mr. Francis asked who was there, Sam replied it was him, and he had a letter for him, on which he got up and came to the door; they immediately seized him, and dragging him out a little from the door, he was dispatched by repeated blows on the head; there was no other white person in the family. We started from there for Mrs. Reese's, maintaining the most perfect silence on our march, where finding the door unlocked, we entered, and murdered Mrs. Reese in her bed, while sleeping; her son awoke, but it was only to sleep the sleep of death, he had only time to say who is that, and he was no more. From Mrs. Reese's we went to Mrs. Turner's, a mile distant, which we reached about sunrise, on Monday morning. [ . . . ]

'Twas my object to carry terror and devastation wherever we went [ . . . ]. I sometimes got in sight in time to see the work of death completed, viewed the mangled bodies as they lay, in silent satisfaction, and immediately started in quest of other victims—Having murdered Mrs. Waller and ten children, we started for Mr. William Williams'—having killed him and two little boys that were there; while engaged in this, Mrs.

Williams fled and got some distance from the house, but she was pursued, overtaken, and compelled to get up behind one of the company, who brought her back, and after showing her the mangled body of her lifeless husband, she was told to get down and lay by his side, where she was shot dead [ . . . ].

Our number amounted now to fifty or sixty, all mounted and armed with guns, axes, swords, and clubs [ . . . ]. We were met by a party of white men, who had pursued our blood-stained track [ . . . ]. The white men, eighteen in number, approached us in about one hundred yards, when one of them fired [ . . . ]. I then ordered my men to fire and rush them; the few remaining stood their ground until we approached within fifty yards, when they fired and retreated [ . . . ]. As I saw them re-loading their guns, and more coming up than I saw at first, and several of my bravest men being wounded, the others became panick struck and squandered over the field; the white men pursued and fired on us several times [ . . . ].

**Source**

Turner, Nat. 1831. *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Va.* Baltimore: Thomas R. Gray. Available at <http://vi.uh.edu/pages/mintz/32.htm>.

**President Andrew Jackson, "Veto Message Regarding the Bank of the United States" (1832)**

*Andrew Jackson distrusted all banks—Nicholas Biddle's Second Bank of the United States in particular—because he believed they were controlled by the conspiring forces of the moneyed elite and were a private monopoly license to print money. When Biddle and his colleagues submitted a bill to recharter the bank, Jackson vetoed it.*

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1832.

To the Senate.

[ . . . ] A bank of the United States is in many respects convenient for the Government and useful to the people. Entertaining this opinion, and deeply impressed with the belief that some of

the powers and privileges possessed by the existing bank are unauthorized by the Constitution, subversive of the rights of the States, and dangerous to the liberties of the people, I felt it my duty at an early period of my Administration to call the attention of Congress to the practicability of organizing an institution combining all its advantages and obviating these objections. I sincerely regret that in the act before me I can perceive none of those modifications of the bank charter which are necessary, in my opinion, to make it compatible with justice, with sound policy, or with the Constitution of our country.

The present corporate body, denominated the president, directors, and company of the Bank of the United States, will have existed at the time this act is intended to take effect twenty years. It enjoys an exclusive privilege of banking under the authority of the General Government, a monopoly of its favor and support, and, as a necessary consequence, almost a monopoly of the foreign and domestic exchange. The powers, privileges, and favors bestowed upon it in the original charter, by increasing the value of the stock far above its par value, operated as a gratuity of many millions to the stockholders. [ . . . ]

Under such circumstances the bank comes forward and asks a renewal of its charter for a term of fifteen years upon conditions which not only operate as a gratuity to the stockholders of many millions of dollars, but will sanction any abuses and legalize any encroachments.

Suspensions are entertained and charges are made of gross abuse and violation of its charter. An investigation unwillingly conceded and so restricted in time as necessarily to make it incomplete and unsatisfactory discloses enough to excite suspicion and alarm. In the practices of the principal bank partially unveiled, in the absence of important witnesses, and in numerous charges confidently made and as yet wholly uninvestigated there was enough to induce a majority of the committee of investigation—a committee which was selected from the most able and honorable members of the House of Representatives—to recommend a suspension of further action upon the bill and a



prosecution of the inquiry. As the charter had yet four years to run, and as a renewal now was not necessary to the successful prosecution of its business, it was to have been expected that the bank itself, conscious of its purity and proud of its character, would have withdrawn its application for the present, and demanded the severest scrutiny into all its transactions. In their declining to do so there seems to be an additional reason why the functionaries of the Government should proceed with less haste and more caution in the renewal of their monopoly.

The bank is professedly established as an agent of the executive branch of the Government, and its constitutionality is maintained on that ground. Neither upon the propriety of present action nor upon the provisions of this act was the Executive consulted. It has had no opportunity to say that it neither needs nor wants an agent clothed with such powers and favored by such exemptions. There is nothing in its legitimate functions which makes it necessary or proper. Whatever interest or influence, whether public or private, has given birth to this act, it can not be found either in the wishes or necessities of the executive department, by which present action is deemed premature, and the powers conferred upon its agent not only unnecessary, but dangerous to the Government and country.

It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. [ . . . ] If we can not at once, in justice to interests vested under improvident legislation, make our Government what it ought to be, we can at least take a stand against all new grants of monopolies and exclusive privileges, against any prostitution of our Government to the advancement of the few at the expense of the many, and in favor of compromise and gradual reform in our code of laws and system of political economy.

**Source**

*A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents Prepared under the Direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, of the House and Senate Pursuant to an Act of the Fifty-Second*

*Congress of the United States*. 1897. New York: Bureau of National Literature. Available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/veto/ajveto01.htm>.

**William M. Gouge, *A Short History of Paper Money* (1833)**

*In 1833, as large numbers of new banks began to issue paper money in the United States, Jacksonian economic theorist William M. Gouge published his attack on notes and his defense of a specie standard.*

The Banks are scattered through nearly all the States and Territories which compose our Union; but they may all be embraced in one view, inasmuch as they all substitute paper for specie, and credit for cash, and are all endowed with privileges which individuals do not possess.

By their various operations, immediate and remote, they must affect, for good or for evil, every individual in the country. Banking is not a local, temporary, or occasional cause. It is general and permanent. Like the atmosphere, it presses every where. Its effects are felt alike in the palace and the hovel.

To the customs of trade which Banking introduces, all are obliged to conform. A man may, indeed, neither borrow money from the banks, nor deposit money in their vaults: but if he buys or sells it with the medium which they furnish, and in all his contracts he must have reference to the standard of value which they establish. There is no legal disability to carrying on commerce in the old fashioned safe way: but the customs of Banking have introduced a practical disability. It is no longer possible for the merchant to buy and sell for ready money only, or for real money. He must give and take credit, and give and take paper money, or give up business.

Bank paper is not a legal tender in the discharge of private debts: but it has become, in point of fact, the only actual tender, and then the sudden refusal of creditors to receive it would put it out of the power of debtors to comply with their engagements.

Credit, the greatest rival of cash, is completely controlled by the Banks, and distributed by them as suits their discretion [ . . . ]. These institutions may contribute little to the *production* of wealth; but they furnish the means to many for the *acquisition* of wealth; they appear to be the chief regulating cause of the present *distribution* of wealth, and as such are entitled to particular attention.

Not a few of those who have a personal interest in the continuance of the system, acknowledge and deplore the evil it produces. Indeed we have found no men more sensible of these evils, than some of the officers of Banks. They retain their offices on the same principle that they would, if they lived in England, retain offices under a Government they could not approve. To the established system of a country, whether political or commercial, men may deem it expedient, perhaps believe it necessary, to conform; but this need not prevent their discovery the necessity for reformation. . . .

Paper money is the foundation of the American Banking System. But, as, without a knowledge of what is genuine, it is impossible to have a clear conception of what is spurious, it will be necessary to give a statement of the qualities and functions of real money. . . .

Hence we find men, without scruple, incurring debts which they have no prospect of paying. [ . . . ] Hence we find them, when on the very verge of bankruptcy, embarrassing their friends by prevailing on them to indorse notes and sign custom-house bonds.

Instances not infrequently occur of men who have failed once or twice, afterwards accumulating great wealth. How few of these honorably discharge their old debts by paying twenty shillings in the pound!

How many evade the just demands of their creditors, by privately transferring their property. [ . . . ] It is impossible, in the present condition of society, to pass laws which will punish dishonest insolvents, and not oppress the honest and unfortunate. [ . . . ] The standard of commercial honesty can never be raised very high, while trade is conducted on present principles.

#### Source

Gouge, William M. [1833] 1968. *A Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States to Which Is Refixed an Inquiry into the Principles of the System*. Edited by Joseph Dorfman. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 2–9, 95.

#### **Samuel F. B. Morse, Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States (1835)**

*Like his father Jedidiah Morse, Samuel F. B. Morse was a man of letters and science who also felt compelled to warn his fellow Americans of what he perceived as a conspiracy against their liberties. Where his father had preached of the dangers of Masonic influences spreading out from the French Revolution, Samuel Morse claimed that the threat to the United States came from the conspiratorial designs of the Roman Catholic Church.*

And what now prevents the interference of Catholics as a sect directly in the political elections of the country? They are organized under their priests: Is there any thing in their religious principles to restrain them? [ . . . ] Did not the Pope interfere in Poland in the late revolution, and through the priests command submission to the tyranny of the Czar. At the moment I am writing, are not monks and priests leaders in the field of battle in Spain; in Portugal? Is not the Pope encouraging the troops of Don Miguel, and exciting priests and people to arms in a civil contest? Has Popery abandoned its ever busy meddling in the politics of the countries where it obtains foothold?

Will it be said, that however officious in the old countries, yet here, by some strange metamorphosis, Popery has changed its character, and is modified by our institutions; that here it is surely religious, seeking only religious welfare of the people, that it does not meddle with the state? It is not true that Popery meddles not with politics of the country. The cloven foot has already shown itself. Popery is organized at the elections! For example: In Michigan the Bishop Richard, a Jesuit (since deceased,) was several times chosen

delegate to Congress from the Territory, the majority of the people being Catholics. As Protestants became more numerous, the contest between the bishop and his Protestant rival was more and more close, until at length by the increase of Protestant immigration the latter triumphed. The bishop, in order to detect any delinquency in his flock at the polls, had his ticket printed on colored paper; whether any were so mutinous as not to vote according to orders, or what penance was inflicted for disobedience, I did not learn. The fact of such a truly Jesuitical mode of espionage I have from a gentleman resident at that time in Detroit. Is not a fact like this of some importance? Does it not show that Popery, with all its speciousness, is the same here as elsewhere; it manifests, when it has the opportunity, its genuine disposition to use spiritual power for the promotion of its temporal ambition. It uses its ecclesiastical weapons to control an election.

In Charleston, S. C., the Roman Catholic Bishop England is said to have boasted of the number of votes that he could control at an election. I have been informed, on authority which cannot be doubted that in New York, a priest, in a late election for city officers, stopped his congregation after mass on Sunday and urged the electors not to vote for a particular candidate on the ground of his being an anti-Catholic; the result was the election of the Catholic candidate.

It is unnecessary to multiply facts of this nature nor will it be objected that these instances are unworthy of notice, because of their local or circumscribed character. Surely American Protestants, freemen, have discernment enough to discover beneath them the cloven foot of this subtle foreign heresy, and will not wait for a more extensive, disastrous, and overwhelming political interference, ere they assume the attitude of watchfulness and defence. They will see that Popery is now, what it has ever been, a system of the darkest political intrigue and despotism, cloaking itself to avoid attack under the sacred name of religion. They will be deeply impressed with the truth, that Popery is a political as well as a religious system; that in this respect it differs

totally from all other sects, from all other forms of religion in the country!

**Source**

Morse, Samuel F. B. 1835. *Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States*. New York: Leavitt, Lord.

**Abraham Lincoln, "Spot Resolution" (1847)**

*The "Spot Resolution" was delivered in the U.S. Congress by Abraham Lincoln on 22 December 1847. Congressman Lincoln had recently left and felt it was his duty to go on record with his party, the Whigs, as being opposed to the War with Mexico. The Whigs saw the war as an effort by Democrats to extend slave-holding territory in the United States.*

Whereas the President of the United States, in his message of May 11, 1846, has declared that "the Mexican Government not only refused to receive him, [the envoy of the United States,] or listen to his propositions, but, after a long-continued series of menaces, has at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil:"

And again, in his message of December 8, 1846, that "we had ample cause of war against Mexico long before the breaking out of hostilities; but even then we forbore to take redress into our own hands until Mexico herself became the aggressor, by invading our soil in hostile array, and shedding the blood of our citizens:"

And yet again, in his message of December 7, 1847, that "the Mexican Government refused even to hear the terms of adjustment which he [our minister of peace] was authorized to propose, and finally, under wholly unjustifiable pretexts, involved the two countries in war, by invading the territory of the State of Texas, striking the first blow, and shedding the blood of our citizens on our own soil."

And whereas this House is desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed was or was not at that time our own soil: Therefore,

Resolved By the House of Representatives, That the President of the United States be respectfully requested to inform this House—

1st. Whether the spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed, as in his messages declared, was or was not within the territory of Spain, at least after the treaty of 1819, until the Mexican revolution.

2d. Whether that spot is or is not within the territory which was wrested from Spain by the revolutionary Government of Mexico.

3d. Whether that spot is or is not within a settlement of people, which settlement has existed ever since long before the Texas revolution, and until its inhabitants fled before the approach of the United States army.

4th. Whether that settlement is or is not isolated from any and all other settlements by the Gulf and the Rio Grande on the south and west, and by wide uninhabited regions on the north and east.

5th. Whether the people of that settlement, or a majority of them, or any of them, have ever submitted themselves to the government or laws of Texas or the United States, by consent or compulsion, either by accepting office, or voting at elections, or paying tax, or serving on juries, or having process served upon them, or in any other way.

6th. Whether the people of that settlement did or did not flee from the approach of the United States army, leaving unprotected their homes and their growing crops, before the blood was shed, as in the messages stated; and whether the first blood, so shed, was or was not shed within the enclosure of one of the people who had thus fled from it.

7th. Whether our citizens, whose blood was shed, as in his message declared, were or were not, at that time, armed officers and soldiers, sent into that settlement by the military order of the President, through the Secretary of War.

8th. Whether the military force of the United States was or was not sent into that settlement after General Taylor had more than once intimated to the War Department that, in his

opinion, no such movement was necessary to the defence or protection of Texas.

#### Sources

*Congressional Globe*. 1848. 30th Cong., 1st sess., p. 64.

Basler, Roy P., ed. 1953–1955. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. 9 vols. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1: 420–422.

#### “American Platform of Principles: Adopted at Philadelphia, 21 February 1856”

*The following two extracts emerge from the Know Nothing Party of the 1850s (also known as the American Party), an organization that turned conspiracy-minded nativism into a political movement.*

1. An humble acknowledgement to the Supreme Being, for his protecting care vouchsafed to our fathers in their successful Revolutionary struggle, and hitherto manifested to us, their descendants, in the preservation of the liberties, the independence and the union of these States.

2. The perpetuation of the Federal Union and Constitution, as the palladium of our civil and religious liberties, and the only sure bulwarks of American Independence.

3. Americans must rule America, and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all State, Federal, and municipal offices of government employment, in preference to all others. Nevertheless,

4. Persons born of American parents residing temporarily abroad, should be entitled to all the rights of native-born citizens.

5. No person should be selected for political station (whether of native or foreign birth), who recognizes any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or power, or who refuses to recognize the Federal and State Constitution (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, as rules of political action.

6. The unequalled recognition and maintenance of the reserved rights of the several States, and



the cultivation of harmony and fraternal good will between the citizens of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions appertaining solely to the individual States, and non-intervention by each State with the affairs of any other State.

7. The recognition of the right of native-born and naturalized citizens of the United States, permanently residing in any Territory thereof, to frame their constitution and laws, and to regulate their domestic and social affairs in their own mode, subject only to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the privilege of admission into the Union whenever they have the requisite population for one Representative in Congress: Provided, always, that none but those who are citizens of the United States, under the Constitution and laws thereof, and who have a fixed residence in any such territory, ought to participate in the formation of the Constitution, or in the enactment of laws for said Territory or State.

8. An enforcement of the principles that no State or Territory ought to admit others than citizens to the right of suffrage, or of holding political offices of the United States.

9. A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years, of all not heretofore provided for, an indispensable requisite for citizenship hereafter, and excluding all paupers, and persons convicted of crime, from landing upon our shores; but no interference with the vested rights of foreigners.

10. Opposition to any union between Church and State; no interference with religious faith or worship, and no test oaths for office.

11. Free and thorough investigation into any and all alleged abuses of public functionaries, and a strict economy in public expenditures.

12. The maintenance and enforcement of all laws constitutionally enacted until said laws shall be repealed, or shall be declared null and void by competent judicial authority.

13. Opposition to the reckless and unwise policy of the present Administration in the general management of our national affairs, and

more especially as shown in removing “Americans” (by designation) and Conservatives in principle, from office, and placing foreigners and Ultraists in their places; as shown in a truckling subserviency to the stronger, and an insolent and cowardly bravado towards the weaker powers; as shown in re-opening sectional agitation; by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; as shown in granting to unnaturalized foreigners the right of suffrage in Kansas and Nebraska question; as shown in the corruptions which pervade some of the Departments of the Government; as shown in disgracing meritorious naval officers through prejudice or caprice; and as shown in the blundering mismanagement of our foreign relations.

14. Therefore, to remedy existing evils, and prevent the disastrous consequences otherwise resulting therefrom, we would build up the “American Party” upon the principles hereinbefore stated.

15. That each State Council shall have authority to amend their several Constitutions, so as to abolish the several degrees and substitute a pledge of honor, instead of other obligations, for fellowship and admission into the party.

16. A free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our platform.

**Source**

Tisdale, ed. 1857. “American Platform of Principles.” In *The True American’s Almanac and Politician’s Manual for 1857*. New York. Available at <http://www.therblig.com/GLCSSRA/archive/974.htm>.

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**Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (1858)**

*Charles Chiniquy (1809–1899) was a Roman Catholic priest from 1833 to 1858, first in Quebec, then in Kankanee, Illinois. He renounced the Roman Catholic Church in 1858 and went on to publish widely circulated anti-Catholic tracts. In the following extract, he details a conversation he claims to have had with Abraham Lincoln during*

*the Civil War. In Chiniquy's detailed recollection of the supposed conversation, Lincoln voices concerns that a papal and Jesuit conspiracy plans to assassinate him, and that the same forces are in fact orchestrating the Confederate army in the war.*

### **Abraham Lincoln Regarding the Civil War**

“If I were fighting against a Protestant South, as a nation, there would be no danger of assassination. The nations who read the Bible fight bravely on the battlefields, but they do not assassinate their enemies. The pope and the Jesuits, with their infernal Inquisition, are the only organized powers in the world which have recourse to the dagger of the assassin to murder those whom they cannot convince with their arguments or conquer with the sword. Unfortunately, I feel more and more every day, that it is not against the Americans of the South, alone, I am fighting, it is more against the pope of Rome, his perfidious Jesuits and their blind and blood-thirsty slaves.

“As long as they hope to conquer the North, they will spare me; but the day we rout their armies, take their cities and force them to submit, then, it is my impression that the Jesuits, who are the principal rulers of the South will do what they have almost invariably done in the past. The dagger or the pistol will do what the strong hands of the warriors could not achieve.

“This civil war seems to be nothing but a political affair to those who do not see, as I do, the secret springs of that terrible drama. But it is more a religious than a civil war. It is Rome who wants to rule and degrade the North, as she has ruled and degraded the South, from the very day of its discovery.

“There are only very few of the Southern leaders who are not more or less under the influence of the Jesuits, through their wives, family relations and their friends. Several members of the family of Jeff Davis belong to the Church of Rome.

“Even the Protestant ministers are under the influence of the Jesuits without suspecting it. To keep her ascendancy in the North; as she does in

the South, Rome is doing here what she has done in Mexico, and in all the South American Republics; she is paralyzing, by civil war, the arms of the soldiers of liberty. She divides our nation in order to weaken, subdue and rule it.

“But it is very certain that if the American people could learn what I know of the fierce hatred of the priests of Rome against our institutions, our schools, our most sacred rights, and our dearly bought liberties, they would drive them away tomorrow from among us, or they would shoot them as traitors.

“The history of these last thousand years tells us that wherever the Church of Rome is not a dagger to pierce the bosom of a free nation, she is a stone to her neck to paralyze her, and prevent her advance in the ways of civilization, science, intelligence, happiness and liberty.

“This war would never have been possible without the sinister influence of the Jesuits. We owe it to popery that we now see our land reddened with the blood of her noblest sons. [ . . . ] I conceal what I know, on that subject, from the knowledge of the nation; for if the people knew the whole truth, this war would turn into a religious war, and it would at once, take a tenfold more savage and bloody character. It would become merciless as all religious wars are. It would become a war of extermination on both sides.

“The Protestants of both the North and the South would surely unite to exterminate the priests and the Jesuits, if they could hear what Professor Morse has said to me of the plots made in the very city of Rome to destroy this Republic, and if they could learn how the priests, the nuns, and the monks, which daily land on our shores, under the pretext of preaching their religion, instructing the people in their schools, taking care of the sick in the hospitals, are nothing else but the emissaries of the Pope, of Napoleon, and the other despots of Europe, to undermine our institutions, alienate the hearts of our people from our constitution, and our laws, destroy our schools, and prepare a reign of anarchy here as they have done in Ireland, in Mexico, in Spain,

and wherever there are any people who want to be free.”

**Source**

Chiniquy, Charles. 1886. *Fifty Years in the Church in Rome*. London: R. Banks & Son.

**John Smith Dye, *The Great Conspiracy to Overthrow Liberty in America* (1866)**

*As much as slave owners of the South in the nineteenth century feared the possibility of slave revolts, some writers in the North believed that the slave-holding states constituted a “slave-power” conspiracy that had long worked covertly to manipulate the direction of the nation toward its interests. Although these fears were exaggerated, President Lincoln was indeed assassinated by a conspiracy that originated in the South. The following piece was written soon after Lincoln’s death, and John Smith Dye’s book goes on to allege that Presidents Harrison and Taylor were also assassinated by the slave-power conspiracy.*

It is the object of the author to give, in a small compass, a complete history of the political crimes originating from African Slavery, and perpetuated by its friend, during the last century, in America.

We think it necessary, for the good of future generations, to show how these men resorted to the most atrocious means to defeat the nation’s will, and control the Government; and all these failing, how they rose to open rebellion, determined to destroy the power they could no longer control. We deem it useless to speak here of the assassinations of three of our most illustrious Presidents, all of whom were swept aside like cobwebs when they stood in the way of the conspirator’s unholy designs.

Thus all the chief magistrates elected, since the foundation of the Government, in opposition to the slave interests, in some form or other, became victims of assassination.

We have given the history of these foul deeds in detail; and the evidence furnished will enable the reader to judge understandingly, and correctly.

[ . . . ]

The slaves, by the *logic of events*, should now become as free as their masters. But as the latter sought to destroy the Federal Government when they ceased to control it, so they now seek by various devices to bring about a condition of things calculated to produce a war of races. They want the civilized world to justify them in their mischievous designs in defying the General Government behind their old fortification, *the rights of the States*, where they are now enacting unequal laws, determined to retain all the *substance*, while they acknowledge that the *form* of slavery has become extinct.

**Sources**

Dye, John Smith. 1866. *History of the Plots and Crimes of the Great Conspiracy to Overthrow Liberty in America*. New York: N.p.

Davis, David Brian, ed. 1971. *The Fear of Conspiracy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

**E. J. Farmer, *The Conspiracy against Silver in the United States, 1886***

*Much political discussion in the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century revolved around the question of what form America’s money should take. On one side, hard-money advocates insisted that gold was the true source of monetary value. On the other side, during the 1870s a varied group of antimonomopolists argued that only paper money would be sufficiently flexible to allow ordinary people to have some control over their financial future. Then in the 1880s and 1890s their position became more complicated as some began to argue that a currency based on both gold and silver would allow flexibility and prevent the vested interests of the Eastern “money power” from keeping a stranglehold on the money supply. In championing the democratic possibilities of silver, many Populist writers of the time repeated the allegation that Congress had conspired with the British (and Jewish bankers) in 1873 to demonetize silver—an act that became known as the “Crime of ’73.”*

No nation under the shining sun has a fairer future than these United States of America,

whose shores are bathed by two mighty oceans, whose climate has every varying change, from the tropics to the poles; whose mountains are teeming with gold and silver; whose rivers flow through fertile valleys [ . . . ]. Here is a land so fair that to its hospitable shores are coming in unnumbered thousands of the oppressed of other lands. Here, under the ample folds of the American banner of Liberty, shall flourish the most prosperous nation that the sun has ever shone upon its circuit of the globe. Free and independent—before us lie the grandest opportunities that ever came to any people in the history of time. We threw off the shackles of England in the war of the American Revolution. We have cleared our shores of the tyranny of Spain. We have by peaceful purchase absorbed an empire from our old friends and allies, the French. We have encroached upon ancient Mexico and conquered a kingdom from her. We have blotted out the conspiracy of a great rebellion, and though still in our youth, we are the richest nation upon the earth.

While these things are so we find old England envious and still grappling with us for our wealth. She has grown rich upon the \$1,300,000,000 of gold we sent her since 1849 from our goldmines. She has grown impudent toward us since we have opened our treasure vaults of silver, of which she has none. She has conspired with the Tory capitalists of our Eastern States to rob us of our possessions as surely as she conspired with Benedict Arnold to betray her to our armies in the days of the Revolution. This England has never yet given up the idea of victory over the material resources of America. She tampers with our Congress, in our finances and our tariffs. She reaches forth her golden arm to destroy the value of our silver, and she finds her dupes and co-conspirators amid the bankers of New York and Boston. Having lost the American market for her iron, for her coal, and largely for her manufactured goods, she seeks now, by destroying the value of our silver product, to filch from us that metal by enhancing the value of her gold. [ . . . ] While gold is the money of England,

silver is the money of her Indian Empire, and into India goes the silver that England obtains, not only from the European nations, but also fifteen million which she annually secures from the United States. This silver is necessary to England—she must have it. She has no silver mines of her own, and therefore delights to filch it from surrounding nations. Cut off America's supply of silver to England and instantly the price of silver will advance in the English market. One-half of all that goes from England to India comes from the United States. As long as we are fools enough to melt our silver into bullion, and sell it to England at any price she chooses to give us for it, so long will she depreciate the value of this precious metal. [ . . . ] England knows that she cannot get ones of these silver dollars for less than a gold dollar, and therefore she conspired with a certain class in America to stop the coinage of the silver, and, if possible, to demonetize it.

Through treachery silver was demonetized in the United States by the law of February 12, 1873; but so secretly was this done, that General Grant, who signed the law, did not know it; nor did he seem to be aware of its contents as late as January 14, 1875, for, at the date we find him recommending one or two new mints to be established at Chicago, Illinois or Omaha. [ . . . ] The parties who concocted that law understood its purpose, however, and no doubt received their reward, whether it was in 30 pieces of gold, or more. They as completely sold out the nation, as Judas sold out Christ, and yet we have apologists for that transaction all over the country to-day. When the people became aware of how their interests had been sacrificed to the "golden calf," they demanded the re-instatement of silver, and with great difficulty procured it, in an emasculated form, in the Bland Bill passed February 28, 1878. Then it was that the enemies of silver began to pour out the vials of their wrath, and to predict the direst evils that ever befell a nation. These conspirators have kept up their Cataline assemblages ever since, and, backed by



England, have their daggers ever ready to strike down the dollar.

**Sources**

Farmer, E. J. 1886. *The Conspiracy against Silver in the United States*. Cleveland: N.p.

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**“The Omaha Platform” (1892)**

*The Omaha Platform of 4 July 1892 set out the founding principles of the Populist Party. Written by Ignatius Donnelly, the Omaha Platform presents a picture of a vast conspiracy of the moneyed elite controlling the impoverished masses.*

Assembled upon the 116th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the People’s Party of America, in their first national convention, invoking upon their action the blessing of Almighty God, put forth in the name and on behalf of the people of this country, the following preamble and declaration of principles:

The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the

republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires.

The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; a vast public debt payable in legal tender currency has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people.

Silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor, and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurers, bankrupt enterprise, and enslave industry. A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forebodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering people. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them. Neither do they now promise us any substantial reform. They have agreed together to ignore, in the coming campaign, every issue but one. They propose to drown the outcries of a plundered people with the uproar of a sham battle over the tariff, so that capitalists, corporations, national banks, rings, trusts, watered stock, the demonetization of silver and the oppressions of the usurers may all be lost sight of. They propose to sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires. [ . . . ]

We believe that the power of government—in other words, of the people—should be expanded (as in the case of the postal service) as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people

and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land.

While our sympathies as a party of reform are naturally upon the side of every proposition which will tend to make men intelligent, virtuous, and temperate, we nevertheless regard these questions, important as they are, as secondary to the great issues now pressing for solution, and upon which not only our individual prosperity but the very existence of free institutions depend; and we ask all men to first help us to determine whether we are to have a republic to administer before we differ as to the conditions upon which it is to be administered, believing that the forces of reform this day organized will never cease to move forward until every wrong is remedied and equal rights and equal privileges securely established for all the men and women of this country.

#### PLATFORM

We declare, therefore—

First.—That the union of the labor forces of the United States this day consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter into all hearts for the salvation of the Republic and the uplifting of mankind.

Second.—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. “If any will not work, neither shall he eat.” The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third.—We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil-service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employes.

FINANCE.—We demand a national currency, safe, sound, and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts,

public and private, and that without the use of banking corporations, a just, equitable, and efficient means of distribution direct to the people, at a tax not to exceed 2 per cent per annum, to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers’ Alliance, or a better system; also by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

[ . . . ]

LAND.—The land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

#### Sources

*The World Almanac*, 1893. 1893. New York: N.p., 83–85.

Tindall, George Brown, ed. 1966. *A Populist Reader: Selections from the Works of American Populist Leaders*. New York: Harper & Row, 90–96.

### **Columbus Record, “Americans Beware” (1893)**

*This article presents a forged encyclical supposedly from Pope Leo XIII calling on Catholics to rescue the United States from Protestants. The encyclical was widely reprinted in anti-Catholic organs as proof that the Vatican was plotting against the United States. The Columbus Record was a paper published by the Columbus, Ohio, branch of the American Protective Association.*

Americans Beware

The “Lord God the Pope” says, “Thou Shall Surely Die.”

Will You Heed the Warning?

The Great Event to Take Place on or about September 5th, 1893

How Do You Like It?

“Encyclical Letter of His Holiness, Leo XIII, By Divine Providence, Pope [ . . . ]

This pontiff alone hath been constituted head over all nations and kingdoms, and invested with power to destroy, to separate, to scatter and subvert, to plant, build up, link together by mutual charity, in order to preserve the faithful in the spirit of unity and surrender them whole and entire to their saviour. [ . . . ]

The American republic, under Protestant rulers, is with the worst enemies of the church where security is offered; the republic having seized upon the lands discovered by Christopher Columbus, a Catholic, and usurped the jurisdiction and authority of the supreme head of the church, the United States is filled with obscure heretics. [ . . . ]

The United States has been filled with books containing the most flagrant heresies, of which the Protestant version of the Bible is chief. And not content with adopting its false and impious doctrines, proselyting [*sic*] has been resorted to to turn the Catholics from the one true church. The whole Roman Catholic hierarchy and priesthood have been deprived of their livings by the Protestant heretics of America. [ . . . ]

Naturalization oaths have been demanded in order that the subjects of the true church might be made to subscribe to the United States Constitution with its impious laws and nefarious teachings, to compel them to renounce the true authority of the Catholic pontiff. [ . . . ]

In virtue, thereof, of the divine authority by which we have been placed on the supreme throne of justice, an office so superior to our capability, we do, in all the plenitude of apostolic power, declare that all heretics and the encouragers of heresy, together with all adherents, have incurred the sentence of excommunication. [ . . . ]

Moreover, we proclaim the people of the United States to have forfeited all right to rule said republic, and also all dominion, dignity, and privileges appertaining to it. We likewise declare that all subjects of every rank and condition in the United States, and every individual who has taken any oath of loyalty to the United States in any way whatever, may be absolved from said oath, as also from all duty, fidelity, or obedience, on or about

the 5th of September, 1893, when the Roman Catholic Congress shall convene at Chicago, Illinois, as we shall exonerate them from all engagements: and on or about the feasts of Ignatius Loyola, in the year of our Lord 1893, it will be the duty of the faithful to exterminate all heretics found within the Jurisdiction of the United States.”

**Source**

*Columbus Record*, 20 April 1893, p. 3.

**William Harvey, *Coin's Financial School* (1895)**

*In 1895, William “Coin” Harvey published what was arguably the most comprehensive critique of the money and banking system since William Gouge’s Paper Money and Banking (1833). Harvey soon became a main source for conspiracy writings about the financial system, reflecting the concerns of the Populists, who favored bimetallism.*

Hard times are with us; the country is distracted; very few things are marketable at a price above the cost of production; tens of thousands are out of employment; the jails, penitentiaries, workhouses and insane asylums are full; the gold reserve at Washington is sinking; the government is running at a loss with deficit in every department; huge debt hangs like an appalling cloud over the country; taxes have assumed the importance of mortgage, and 50 per cent of the public revenues are likely to go delinquent; hungered and half-starved men are banding into armies and marching toward Washington; the cry of distress is heard on every hand; business is paralyzed; commerce is at a standstill; riots and strikes prevail throughout the land; schemes to remedy our ills when put into execution are smashed like box-cars in a railroad wreck, and Wall Street looks in vain for an excuse to account for the failure of prosperity to return since the repeal of the silver purchase act.

The silver dollar still remained the unit and continued so until 1873. . . . Both [silver and gold] were legal tender in the payment of all debts, and

the mints were open to the coinage of all that came. So that up to 1873, we were on what was known as a bimetallic basis, but what was in fact a silver basis, with gold as a companion metal enjoying the same privileges as silver, except that silver fixed the unit, and the value of gold was regulated by it. This was bimetallism.

Our forefathers showed much wisdom in selecting silver, of the two metals, out of which to make the unit. Much depended on this decision. For the one selected to represent the unit would therefore be unchangeable in value. That is, the metal in it could never be worth less than a dollar, for it would be the unit of value itself. The demand for silver in the arts or for money by other nations might make the quantity of silver in a silver dollar sell more than a dollar but it could never be worth less than a dollar. Less than itself.

In considering which of these two metals they would thus favor by making it the unit, they were led to adopt silver because it was the most reliable. It was the most favored as money by the people. It was scattered among all the people. Men having a design to injure business by making money scarce, could not so easily get hold of all the silver and hide it away, as they could gold. This was the princip[al] reason that led them to the conclusion to select silver, the more stable of the two metals, upon which to fix the unit. It was so much handled by the people and preferred by them, that it was called the people's money.

Gold was considered the money of the rich. It was owned principally by that class of people, and the poor people seldom handled it, and the very poor people seldom saw any of it.

**Source**

Harvey, William H. "Coin." 1963. *Coin's Financial School*. Edited by Richard H. Hofstadter. Cambridge: Belknap, 93–99.

**William Jennings Bryan,  
"Cross of Gold Speech" (1896)**

*In his famous speech to the Democratic Convention in 1896, William Jennings Bryan was sympathetic to the charge that the gold standard—as opposed to*

*a supposedly more flexible currency standard pegged to both gold and silver—amounted to a conspiracy against the interests of the ordinary people.*

Never before in the history of this country has there been witnessed such a contest as that through which we have just passed. Never before in the history of American politics has a great issue been fought out as this issue has been, by the voters of a great party. On the fourth of March, 1895, a few Democrats, most of them members of congress, issued an address to the Democrats of the nation, asserting the money question was the paramount issue of the hour; declaring that a majority of the Democratic party had the right to control the action of the party on this paramount issue; and concluding with the request that the believers in the free coinage of the Democratic party should organize, take care of, and control the policy of the Democratic party. Three months later, at Memphis, an organization was perfected, and the silver Democrats went forth openly and courageously proclaiming their belief, and declaring that, if successful, they would crystallize into a platform the declaration which they had made. Then began the conflict. With a zeal approaching the zeal which had inspired the crusaders who followed Peter the Hermit, our silver Democrats went forth from victory unto victory until they are now assembled, not to discuss, not to debate, but to enter up the judgment already rendered by the plain people of this country. In this contest brother has been arrayed against brother, father against son. The warmest ties of love, acquaintance and association have been disregarded; old leaders have been cast aside when they have refused to give expression to the sentiments of those whom they would lead, and new leaders have sprung up to give direction to this cause of truth. Thus has been the contest has been waged, and we have assembled here under as binding and solemn instructions as were ever imposed upon representatives of the people.

They tell us that this platform was made to catch votes. We reply to them that changing conditions make new issues; that the principles upon which



Democracy rests as everlasting as the hills, but that they must be applied to new conditions as they arise. Conditions have arisen, and we are here to meet those conditions. They tell us that the income tax ought not to be brought in here; that it is a new idea. They criticize us for our criticism of the Supreme Court of the United States. My friends, we have not criticized; we have simply called attention to what you already know. If you want criticisms, read the dissenting opinions of the court. There you will find criticisms. They say that we passed an unconstitutional law; we deny it. The income tax law was not unconstitutional when it was passed; it was not unconstitutional until one of the judges changed his mind, and we cannot be expected to know when a judge will change his mind. The income tax is just. It simply intends to put the burdens of government justly upon the backs of the people. I am in favor of an income tax. When I find a man who is not willing to bear his share of the burdens of the government which protects him, I find a man who is unworthy to enjoy the blessings of a government like ours.

Mr. McKinley was nominated at St. Louis upon a platform which declared for the maintenance of the gold standard until it can be changed into bimetallism by international agreement. Mr. McKinley was the most popular man among the Republicans, and three months ago everybody in the Republican Party prophesied his election. How is today? Why, the man who was once pleased to think that he looked like Napoleon—that man shudders today when he remembers that he was nominated on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. Not only that, but as he listens he can hear with ever-increasing distinctness the sound of the waves as they beat upon the lonely shores of St. Helena.

Why this change? Ah, my friends, is not the reason for the change evident to any one who will look at the matter? No private character, however pure, no personal popularity, however great, can protect from the avenging wrath of an indignant people a man who will declare that he is in favor of fastening the gold standard upon this country, or who is willing to surrender the right of self-

government and place the legislative control of our affairs in the hands of foreign potentates and powers.

You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.

My friends, we declare that this nation is able to legislate for its own people on every question, without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation on earth; and upon that issue we expect to carry every State in the Union. I shall not slander the inhabitants of the State of New York by saying that, when they are confronted with the proposition, they will declare that this nation is not able to attend its own business. It is the issue of 1776 over again. Our ancestors, when but three millions in number, had the courage to declare their political independence of every other nation; shall we, their descendants, when we have grown to seventy millions, declare that we are less independent than our forefathers? No, my friends, that will never be the verdict of our people. Therefore, we care not upon what lines the battle is fought. If they say bimetallism is good, but we cannot have it until other nations help us, we reply that, instead of having a gold standard because England has, we will restore bimetallism, and then let England have bimetallism because the United States has it. If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we will fight them to the uttermost. Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

**Source**

Bryan, William Jennings. 1896. *The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896*. Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 199–206.

### **Protocols of the Elders of Zion (c. 1900)**

*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion purport to document a meeting of a secret Jewish cabal bent on ruling the world. They were incontrovertibly proven to be a forgery in 1920, but that did not stop the text from becoming the cornerstone of twentieth-century antisemitic ideology. Henry Ford popularized them in The International Jew, and the Nazis employed them to chilling effect in their racist ideology. Today the Protocols are still distributed by antisemitic groups throughout the world. In "Protocol 6," the Elders describe some of their takeover technique. The fact that they attack the aristocracy in particular seems to reveal a pro-aristocratic prejudice on the part of the Protocols' creator.*

#### Take-Over Technique

Reservoirs of riches—Destruction of goy aristocracy—Vicious circle of rising prices

1. We shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies, reservoirs of colossal riches, upon which even, large fortunes of the goyim will depend to such an extent that they will go to the bottom together with the credit of the States on the day after the political smash [ . . . ] .

2. You gentlemen here present who are economists, just strike an estimate of the significance of this combination! [ . . . ]

3. In every possible way we must develop the significance of our Super-Government by representing it as the Protector and Benefactor of all those who voluntarily submit to us.

4. The aristocracy of the goyim as a political force, is dead—We need not take it into account; but as landed proprietors they can still be harmful to us from the fact that they are self-sufficing in the resources upon which they live. It is essential therefore for us at whatever cost to deprive them of their land. This object will be best attained by increasing the burdens upon landed property—in loading lands with debts. These measures will check land-holding and keep it in a state of humble and unconditional submission.

5. The aristocrats of the goyim, being hereditarily incapable of contenting themselves with little, will rapidly burn up and fizzle out.

6. At the same time we must intensively patronise trade and industry, but, first and foremost, speculation, the part played by which is to provide a counterpoise to industry: the absence of speculative industry will multiply capital in private hands and will serve to restore agriculture by freeing the land from indebtedness to the land banks. What we want is that industry should drain off from the land both labour and capital and by means of speculation transfer into our hands all the money of the world, and thereby throw all the goyim into the ranks of the proletariat. Then the goyim will bow down before us, if for no other reason but to get the right to exist.

7. To complete the ruin of the industry of the goyim we shall bring to the assistance of speculation the luxury which we have developed among the goyim, that greedy demand for luxury which is swallowing up everything. We shall raise the rate of wages which, however, will not bring any advantage to the workers, for, at the same time, we shall produce a rise in prices of the first necessities of life, alleging that it arises from the decline of agriculture and cattle-breeding: we shall further undermine artfully and deeply sources of production, by accustoming the workers to anarchy and to drunkenness and side by side therewith taking all measures to extirpate from the face of the earth all the educated forces of the goyim.

8. In order that the true meaning of things may not strike the goyim before the proper time we shall mask it under an alleged ardent desire to serve the working classes and the great principles of political economy about which our economic theories are carrying on an energetic propaganda.

#### **Source**

*The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion.* 1931. Translated by Victor E. Marsden. London: Britons Publishing Society.

### **Theodore Roosevelt, "The Hun within Our Gates" (1917)**

*In this appendix to Theodore Roosevelt's 1917 book The Foes of Our Own Household, Roosevelt issues*

*a warning against "disloyal" German Americans as the United States enters World War I. His nativist attack also latches onto subversive socialists and those "following out the vicious teachings of the Prussian philosophers."*

The Hun within our gates is the worst of the foes of our own household, whether he is the paid or the unpaid agent of Germany. Whether he is pro-German or poses as a pacifist, or a peace-at-any-price man, matters little. He is the enemy of the United States. Senators and Congressmen like Messrs. Stone, La Follette and Maclemore belong in Germany and it is a pity they cannot be sent there, as Vallandigham was sent to the hostile lines by Lincoln during the Civil War. Such men are among the worst of the foes of our own household; and so are the sham philanthropists and sinister agitators and the wealthy creatures without patriotism who support and abet them. Our Government has seemed afraid to grapple with these people. It is permitting thousands of allies of Berlin to sow the seeds of treason and sedition in this country. The I. W. W. boasts its defiance of all law, and many of its members exultingly proclaim that in their war against industry in the United States they are endeavoring to give the Government so much to do that it will have no troops to spare for Europe. Every district where the I. W. W. starts rioting should be placed under martial law, and cleaned up by military methods. The German-language papers carry on a consistent campaign in favor of Germany against England. They should be put out of existence for the period of this war. The Hearst papers, more ably edited than the German sheets, play the Kaiser's game in a similar way. When they keep within the law they should at least be made to feel the scorn felt for them by every honest American. Wherever any editor can be shown to be purveying any treason in violation of law he should be jailed until the conflict is over. Every disloyal German-born citizen should have his naturalization papers recalled and should be interned during the term of the war. Action of this kind is especially necessary in order to pick out the disloyal but vociferous

minority of citizens of German descent from the vast but silent majority of entirely loyal citizens of German descent who otherwise will suffer from a public anger that will condemn all alike. Every disloyal native-born American should be disenfranchised and interned. It is time to strike our enemies at home heavily and quickly. Every copperhead in this country is an enemy to the Government, to the people, to the army and to the flag, and should be treated as such.

This pro-German, anti-American propaganda has been carried on for years prior to the war, and its treasonable activities are performed systematically to-day. The great majority of men and women of German blood, are absolutely good Americans, and we owe it just as much to them as to the rest of our fellow countrymen with the utmost severity to suppress the tens of thousands of Germans and German-Americans who, having taken the oath of allegiance, yet intrigue and conspire against the United States and do their utmost to promote the success of Germany and to weaken the defense of this nation. These men support and direct pro-German societies. They incite disloyal activities among the Russian Jews. They finance the small groups of Irish-Americans whose hatred for England makes them traitors to the United States. They foment seditious operations among the German-American socialists and I.W.W's; they support the German-language periodicals. Their campaigns range from peace movements and anti-draft schemings to open efforts in favor of sedition and civil war. [ . . . ]

**Source**

Roosevelt, Theodore. 1917. *The Foes of Our Own Household*. New York: George Doran.

**Zimmermann Telegram (1917)**

*This telegram, from the German foreign minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico, was intercepted by the British and was one of the decisive elements that prompted the United States to enter World War I. A popular suspicion, however, is that it was deliberately forged to provoke just such a reaction.*

We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal or alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.

**Source**

National Archives and Records Administration  
website: <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/zimmermann/zimmerma.html>.

**“An Introduction to the ‘Jewish Protocols’” (1920)**

*Henry Ford's journal, The Dearborn Independent, published ninety-one antisemitic articles that were subsequently reprinted in four volumes as The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem. With chapter titles such as “The Scope of Jewish Dictatorship in the U.S.” and “Does Jewish Power Control the World Press?” The International Jew popularized the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy. In the following excerpt, entitled “An Introduction to the Jewish Protocols,” the Protocols of the Elders of Zion are introduced to an American audience for the first time.*

The criticisms which these Protocols pass upon the Gentiles for their stupidity are just. It is impossible to disagree with a single item in the Protocols' description of Gentile mentality and veniality. Even the most astute of the Gentile

thinkers have been fooled into receiving as the motions of progress what has only been insinuated into the common human mind by the most insidious systems of propaganda.

It is true that here and there a thinker has arisen to say that science so-called was not science at all. It is true that here and there a thinker has arisen to say that the so-called economic laws both of conservatives and radicals were not laws at all, but artificial inventions. It is true that occasionally a keen observer has asserted that the recent debauch of luxury and extravagance was not due to the natural impulses of the people at all, but was systematically stimulated, foisted upon them by design. It is true that a few have discerned that more than half of what passes for “public opinion” is mere hired applause and booing and had never impressed the public mind.

But even with these clues here and there, for the most part disregarded, there has never been enough continuity and collaboration between those who were awake, to follow all the clues to their source. The chief explanation of the hold which the Protocols have had on many of the leading statesmen of the world for several decades is that they explain whence all these false influences come and what their purpose is. They give a clue to the modern maze. It is now time for the people to know. And whether the Protocols are judged as proving anything concerning the Jews or not, they constitute an education in the way the masses are turned about like sheep by influences which they do not understand. It is almost certain that once the principles of the Protocols are known widely and understood by the people, the criticism which they now rightly make of the Gentile mind will no longer hold good.

It is the purpose of future articles in this series to study these documents and to answer out of their contents all the questions that may arise concerning them.

Before that work is begun, one question should be answered—“Is there likelihood of the program of the Protocols being carried through to success?” The program is successful already. In



## A. Mitchell Palmer, “The Case against the Reds”

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many of its most important phases it is already a reality. But this need not cause alarm, for the chief weapon to be used against such a program, both in its completed and uncompleted parts, is clear publicity. Let the people know. Arousing the people, alarming the people, appealing to the passions of the people is the method of the plan outlined in the Protocols. The antidote is merely enlightening the people.

That is the only purpose of these articles. Enlightenment dispels prejudice. It is as desirable to dispel the prejudice of the Jew as of the Gentile. Jewish writers too frequently assume that the prejudice is all on one side. The Protocols themselves ought to have the widest circulation among the Jewish people, in order that they may check those things which are bringing suspicion upon their name.

### Source

Ford, Henry. 1920. *The International Jew*. 4 vols. Dearborn, MI: Dearborn Publishing, 1: 109–116.

## A. Mitchell Palmer, “The Case against the Reds” (1920)

*In this excerpt Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer argues that America needs to be extremely watchful of the spread of communism in its cities.*

### Our Government in Jeopardy

It has always been plain to me that when American citizens unite upon any national issue, they are generally right, but it is sometimes difficult to make the issue clear to them. If the Department of Justice could succeed in attracting the attention of our optimistic citizens to the issue of internal revolution in this country, we felt sure there would be no revolution. The Government was in jeopardy. My private information of what was being done by the organization known as the Communist Party of America, with headquarters in Chicago, of what was being done by the Communist Internationale under their manifesto planned at Moscow last March by Trotzky, Lenin and others, addressed “To Proletariats of All Countries,” of what strides the Communist Labor

Party was making, removed all doubt. In this conclusion we did not ignore the definite standards of personal liberty, of free speech, which is the very temperament and heart of the people. The evidence was examined with the utmost care, with a personal leaning toward freedom of thought and word on all questions.

The whole mass of evidence, accumulated from all parts of the country, was scrupulously scanned, not merely for the written or spoken differences of viewpoint as to the Government of the United States, but, in spite of these things, to see if the hostile declarations might not be sincere in their announced motive to improve our social order. There was no hope of such a thing.

By stealing, murder and lies, Bolshevism has looted Russia not only of its material strength, but its moral force. A small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York has attempted this, with what success we all know. Because a disreputable alien—Leon Bronstein, the man who now calls himself Trotzky—can inaugurate a reign of terror from his throne room in the Kremlin; because the lowest of all types known to New York can sleep in the Czar’s bed, while hundreds of thousands in Russia are without food or shelter, should Americans be swayed by such doctrines?

Such a question, it would seem, should receive but one answer from America.

### Source

Palmer, A. Mitchell. 1920. “The Case against the Reds.” *Forum* 63: 174–175.

## Bishop Alma White, *Heroes of the Fiery Cross* (1928)

*In this excerpt from his Ku Klux Klan book Heroes of the Fiery Cross, Bishop Alma White sounds the alarm about imagined threats to Protestant Americans from Catholics and Jews. In particular he warns about the dangers for young women employed in the film industry that, in his eyes, is licentious and Jewish controlled.*

The sons of Jacob have been wanderers upon the face of the earth, driven by the winds of

adversity and hounded from pillar to post for the past two thousand years. Now, having found a refuge in the United States where the government has been builded upon the principles of the Christian religion, they take advantage of the favours that have been shown them and make conditions intolerable for Protestant Americans. With Rome, they would tear the Constitution into bits and throw it into the scrap-heap, take the New Testament out of every public school, and place the reins of government in the hands of the Roman hierarchy. This is what a Christian nation gets in return for good will and charity shown God's ancient people.

While in other countries with their old autocratic systems the Hebrews have suffered from intolerance, here in this great republic, where they have enjoyed liberty as in no other country on the globe, they have shown themselves to be cruel, intolerant, and unworthy of the kindness that has been shown to them. Have good will and forbearance ceased to be virtues? and is it not time for other measures to be taken to protect our homes, our institutions, and our country from the rapine and outlawry that has been practised before our eyes?

Our wealth and material resources are being controlled largely by the Jews, who have monopolized most of the large industries of the country, employing an army of Protestant American girls for their sweat-shops often for a mere pittance. These employees are in some places as truly the bond-slaves of their masters as if they were held in legalised slavery. You will find them on every occasion doing the will of their commercial bosses whose foreign accent betrays their race and birth. The public has never dreamed to what colossal proportions such servitude has attained in our large cities and business centers. Young women, often of our best American stock, have to eat, dress, and keep hours to suit their masters. Without proper and suitable clothing, their bodies are exposed to the extremes of heat and cold. Furs are worn in summer and gauze in winter, as it may suit the purpose of the commercial men who control the

fashions, in the disposal of their goods. Comfort is no longer taken into consideration, if any kind of fad or fashion will bring the "bosses" material gain.

It was not so twenty-five years ago, before the great influx of immigrants to our shores from lower Europe. There was a public conscience then, even in the matter of women's apparel; but now women's fashions are capitalized by the unscrupulous Hebrew.

As to moral standards, the modern Jew has no code to restrain him in his dealings with Gentile women. He was brought up under the Mosaic law and knows but little and perhaps cares less about the principles that govern society in a great republic where the government was founded on the principles of the Christian religion. These women, when in his employ and often under obligations to him, must, as a rule, be on the defensive in order to keep their virtue. Few are able to hold out against temptation and the pressure that is brought to bear upon them by men in whose characters animal passion and greed are the predominant forces.

Great numbers of young women are employed in foreign-controlled theaters and the motion picture industries, who are as completely under the domination of the Hebrew producers and white slavers as if owned by them body and soul. Many times in my travels on railroads and steamships I have met theatrical companies and heard young women discuss their work on the stage and also their "bosses." They were frequently heard to say, "My boss doesn't allow me to do this or that." One young woman was heard telling another what her "boss" required her to wear when she danced the "shimmy." I am not sufficiently familiar with the language of the vaudeville to know what she meant, but I understood enough to know that she was a slave of her Hebrew master, and in a position where it was impossible for her to break the chains, however much she might have desired to do so.

**Source**

White, Bishop Alma. 1928. *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*. Zarephath, NJ: The Good Citizen.

**Louis T. McFadden, *The Federal Reserve: A Corrupt System* (1934)**

*In 1934 Congressman Louis T. McFadden (R-Pennsylvania) made a lengthy address to the House, accusing the Federal Reserve Bank of conspiracy, fraud, and treason. There is a long-running strand of conspiracy-minded fear about the power of central banking in the United States (see, for example, the excerpt from Congressman Traficant later in this section).*

Mr. Chairman, we have in this Country one of the most corrupt institutions the world has ever known. I refer to the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve Banks, hereinafter called the Fed. The Fed has cheated the Government of these United States and the people of the United States out of enough money to pay the Nation's debt. The depredations and iniquities of the Fed has cost enough money to pay the National debt several times over.

This evil institution has impoverished and ruined the people of these United States, has bankrupted itself, and has practically bankrupted our Government. It has done this through the defects of the law under which it operates, through the maladministration of that law by the Fed and through the corrupt practices of the moneyed vultures who control it.

Some people think that the Federal Reserve Banks are United States Government institutions. They are private monopolies which prey upon the people of these United States for the benefit of themselves and their foreign customers; foreign and domestic speculators and swindlers; and rich and predatory money lenders. In that dark crew of financial pirates there are those who would cut a man's throat to get a dollar out of his pocket; there are those who send money into states to buy votes to control our legislatures; there are those who maintain international propaganda for the purpose of deceiving us into granting of new concessions which will permit them to cover up their past misdeeds and set again in motion their gigantic train of crime.

These twelve private credit monopolies were deceitfully and disloyally foisted upon this Country by the bankers who came here from Europe and repaid us our hospitality by undermining our American institutions. Those bankers took money out of this Country to finance Japan in a war against Russia. They created a reign of terror in Russia with our money in order to help that war along. They instigated the separate peace between Germany and Russia, and thus drove a wedge between the allies in the World War. They financed Trotsky's passage from New York to Russia so that he might assist in the destruction of the Russian Empire. They fomented and instigated the Russian Revolution, and placed a large fund of American dollars at Trotsky's disposal in one of their branch banks in Sweden so that through him Russian homes might be thoroughly broken up and Russian children flung far and wide from their natural protectors. They have since begun breaking up of American homes and the dispersal of American children. Mr. Chairman, there should be no partisanship in matters concerning banking and currency affairs in this Country, and I do not speak with any. [ . . . ]

The danger that the Country was warned against came upon us and is shown in the long train of horrors attendant upon the affairs of the traitorous and dishonest Fed. Look around you when you leave this Chamber and you will see evidences of it in all sides. This is an era of misery and for the conditions that caused that misery, the Fed are fully liable. This is an era of financed crime and in the financing of crime the Fed does not play the part of a disinterested spectator. [ . . . ]

Meanwhile and on account of it, we ourselves are in the midst of the greatest depression we have ever known. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, our Country has been ravaged and laid waste by the evil practices of the Fed and the interests which control them. At no time in our history, has the general welfare of the people been at a lower level or the minds of the people so full of despair.

Recently in one of our States, 60,000 dwelling houses and farms were brought under the hammer in a single day. 71,000 houses and farms in Oakland

County, Michigan, were sold and their erstwhile owners dispossessed. The people who have thus been driven out are the wastage of the Fed. They are the victims of the Fed. Their children are the new slaves of the auction blocks in the revival of the institution of human slavery. [ . . . ]

Mr. Chairman, there is nothing like the Fed pool of confiscated bank deposits in the world. It is a public trough of American wealth in which the foreigners claim rights, equal to or greater than Americans. The Fed are the agents of the foreign central banks. They use our bank depositors’ money for the benefit of their foreign principals. They barter the public credit of the United States Government and hire it out to foreigners at a profit to themselves.

All this is done at the expense of the United States Government, and at a sickening loss to the American people. Only our great wealth enabled us to stand the drain of it as long as we did.

We need to destroy the Fed wherein our national reserves are impounded for the benefit of the foreigners. We need to save America for Americans. [ . . . ]

**Source**

Available at [http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/Archive/Federal\\_Reserve\\_McFadden.html](http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/Archive/Federal_Reserve_McFadden.html).

**J. Edgar Hoover, “Testimony before HUAC” (1947)**

*The testimony given by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947 sounded the keynote of the McCarthy era, as well as represented a pivotal moment in the criminalization of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) and its followers, or “fellow travelers” (a term first coined by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky). Although Hoover was not generally noted for public appearances, his testimony was widely publicized in the American media, and his alarmist rhetoric—much of it drawn from a highly selective reading of Marxist-Leninist literature—would become part of the lexicon of the time, recycled in innumerable judicial hearings, news articles, and political speeches.*

The Communist movement in the United States began to manifest itself in 1919. Since then, it has changed its name and party line whenever expedient and tactical. But always it comes back to the fundamentals and bills itself as the party of Marxism-Leninism. As such, it stands for the destruction of American democracy; it stands for the destruction of free enterprise; and it stands for the creation of a “Soviet of the United States” and ultimate world revolution. [ . . . ]

What is important is the claim of the Communists themselves that for every party member there are 10 others ready, willing, and able to do the party’s work. Herein lies the greatest menace of communism. For these are the people who infiltrate and corrupt various spheres of American life. So rather than the size of the Communist Party, the way to weigh its true importance is by testing its influence, its ability to infiltrate.

The size of the party is relatively unimportant because of the enthusiasm and iron-clad discipline under which they operate. In this connection, it might be of interest that in 1917 when the Communists overthrew the Russian Government there was one Communist for every 2,277 persons in Russia. In the United States today there is one Communist for every 1,814 persons in the country.

One who accepts the aims, principles, and program of the party, who attends meetings, who reads the party press and literature, who pays dues, and who is active on behalf of the party “shall be considered a member.” The open, avowed Communist who carries a card and pays dues is no different from a security standpoint than the person who does the party’s work but pays no dues, carries no card, and is not on the party rolls. In fact, the latter is a greater menace because of his opportunity to work in stealth.

[When] identifying undercover Communists, “fellow travelers,” and sympathizers, the burden of proof is placed upon those who consistently follow the ever-changing, twisting party line. Fellow travelers and sympathizers can deny



membership but they can never escape the undeniable fact that they have played into the Communist hands thus furthering the Communist cause by playing the role of innocent, gullible, or willful allies. [ . . . ]

The deceptiveness of the Communist “double talk” fulfills the useful propaganda technique of confusion. In fact, Lenin referred to their peculiar brand of phraseology as “ [ . . . ] that cursed Aesopian language [ . . . ] which compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse, whenever they took up their pens to write a legal work.”

Lenin used it for the purpose of avoiding “censorship.” Communists today use it to mislead the public. [ . . . ]

The Communist Party of the United States is a “fifth column” if there ever was one. [ . . . ]

They are seeking to weaken America just as they did in their era of obstruction when they were aligned with the Nazis. Their goal is the overthrow of our Government.

There is no doubt where a real Communist’s loyalty rests. Their allegiance is to Russia, not the United States. [ . . . ]

The Communists have been, still are, and always will be a menace to freedom, to democratic ideals, to the worship of God, and to America’s way of life.

I feel that once public opinion is thoroughly aroused as it is today, the fight against communism is well on its way. Victory will be assured once Communists are identified and exposed, because the public will take the first step of quarantining them so they can do no harm. Communism, in reality, is not a political party. It is a way of life—an evil and malignant way of life. It reveals a condition akin to disease that spreads like an epidemic and like an epidemic a quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting the Nation.

#### Sources

Hoover, J. Edgar. 1947. Testimony. 26 March. House Committee on Un-American Activities. *Hearings on H.R. 1884 and H.R. 2122*. 80th Cong., 1st sess.

Schrecker, Ellen. 1994. *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: Bedford.

#### “NSC-68: The United States Objectives and Programs for National Security” (1950)

*Drafted by a joint committee of the State and Defense Departments, NSC-68 represented a concise statement of position from those in the Washington foreign policy establishment who advocated a more proactive anti-Communist policy at home and abroad during the formative years of the Cold War. Coming soon after the president’s Truman Doctrine, which effectively legitimized the development of such a policy, the powerful “hawkish” mandarins in the two key government departments offered NSC-68 as both an ethical justification for the cold war and as an effective blueprint for its prosecution. The justification proceeded from the alarmist conclusions of earlier documents like Kennan’s “Long Telegram” and painted the picture of a world irreconcilably divided along ideological lines. The inscrutable and sinister “design” of the Kremlin was set in stark opposition to the clarity and transparency of American “purpose” as defined in the Constitution.*

The Fundamental Purpose of the United States

The fundamental purpose of the United States is laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution: “[ . . . ] to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” In essence the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.

Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose: Our determination to maintain the essential elements of individual freedom, as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights; our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if

necessary to defend our way of life, for which as in the Declaration of Independence, “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

#### The Fundamental Design of the Kremlin

The fundamental design of those who control the Soviet Union and the international communist movement is to retain and solidify their absolute power, first in the Soviet Union and second in the areas now under their control. In the minds of the Soviet leaders, however, achievement of this design requires the dynamic extension of their authority and the ultimate elimination of any effective opposition to their authority.

The design, therefore, calls for the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world and their replacement by an apparatus and structure subservient to and controlled from the Kremlin. To that end Soviet efforts are now directed toward the domination of the Eurasian land mass. The United States, as the princip[al] center of power in the non-Soviet world and the bulwark of opposition to Soviet expansion, is the princip[al] enemy whose integrity and vitality must be subverted or destroyed by one means or another if the Kremlin is to achieve its fundamental design.

[ . . . ]

Thus unwillingly our free society finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet system. No other value system is so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society, no other so skilfully and powerfully evokes the elements of irrationality in human nature everywhere, and no other has the support of a great and growing military power.

[ . . . ]

In a shrinking world, which now faces the threat of atomic warfare, it is not an adequate objective to seek to check the Kremlin design, for the absence of order among nations is becoming

less and less tolerable. This fact imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership.

All [the] objectives of a free society are equally valid and necessary in peace and war. But every consideration of devotion to our fundamental values and to national security demands that we seek to achieve them by the strategy of the cold war [ . . . ].

[ . . . ]

The free society is limited in its choice of means to achieve its ends.

Compulsion is the negation of freedom, except when it is used to enforce the rights common to all. The resort to force, internally or externally, is therefore the last resort for a free society [ . . . ]. The free society cherishes and protects as fundamental the rights of the minority against the will of a majority, because these rights are the inalienable rights of each and every individual.

The resort to force, to compulsions, to the imposition of its will is therefore a difficult and dangerous act for a free society, which is warranted only in the face of even greater dangers [ . . . ].

The Kremlin is able to select whatever means are expedient in seeking to carry out its fundamental design. Thus it can make the best of several possible worlds, conducting the struggle on those levels where it consider it profitable and enjoying the benefits of a pseudo-peace on those levels where it is not ready for a contest. At the ideological or psychological level, in the struggle for men’s minds, the conflict is worldwide. At the political and economic level, within states and in the relations between states, the struggle for power is being intensified. And at the military level, the Kremlin has thus far been careful not to commit a technical breach of the peace, although using its vast forces to intimidate its neighbors, and to support an aggressive foreign policy, and not hesitating through its agents to resort to arms in favorable circumstances. The attempt to carry out its fundamental design is being pressed, therefore, with all means which are believed expedient in the present situation, and the

Kremlin has inexorably engaged us in the conflict between its design and our purpose.

[ . . . ]

With particular reference to the United States, the Kremlin’s strategic and tactical policy is affected by its estimate that we are not only the greatest immediate obstacle which stands between it and world domination, we are also the only which could release forces in the free and Soviet worlds which could destroy it. The Kremlin’s policy towards us is consequently animated by a peculiarly violent blend of hatred and fear. Its strategy has been one of attempting to undermine the complex of forces in this country and in the rest of the free world, on which our power is based. In this it has but adhered to doctrine and followed the sound principle of seeking maximum results with minimum risk and commitments. The present application of this strategy is a new form of expression for traditional Russian caution. However, there is no justification in Soviet theory or practice for believing that, should the Kremlin become convinced that it could cause our downfall by one conclusive blow, it would not seek that solution.

**Source**

U.S. Department of State. “NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (14 April 1950). A Report to the President Pursuant to the President’s Directive of 31 January 1950.” In *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State.

**Senator Joseph McCarthy, “Conspiracy of Infamy” Speech (14 June 1951)**

*In this famous address to Congress, Senator McCarthy made his accusation of a vast Communist-sympathizing “conspiracy of infamy” reaching to the highest levels and General George C. Marshall in particular.*

We believe that men high in this Government are concerting to deliver us to disaster. [ . . . ]

This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men [ . . . ]. We are convinced that Dean Acheson, who steadfastly serves the interests of nations other than his own, the friend of Alger Hiss, [ . . . ] must be high on the roster. The President? He is their captive. [ . . . ] Truman is a satisfactory front. He is only dimly aware of what is going on. I do not believe that Mr. Truman is a conscious party to the great conspiracy. [ . . . ] It is when we return to an examination of General Marshall’s record since the spring of 1942 that we approach an explanation. [ . . . ] It was Marshall, who [ . . . ] sought to compel the British to invade across the Channel in the fall of 1942. [ . . . ] It was Marshall who [ . . . ] fought the British desire [ . . . ] to advance from Italy into the eastern plains of Europe ahead of the Russians. It was a Marshall-sponsored memorandum, advising appeasement of Russia in Europe and the enticement of Russia into the far-eastern war, [ . . . ] which foreshadowed our whole course at Tehran, at Yalta, and until now in the Far East. [ . . . ]

It was Marshall who sent Deane to Moscow to collaborate with Harriman in drafting the terms of the wholly unnecessary bribe paid to Stalin at Yalta. It was Marshall, with Hiss at his elbow [ . . . ] who submitted intelligence reports which suppressed more truthful estimates in order to support his argument, and who finally induced Roosevelt to bring Russia into the Japanese war with a bribe that reinstated Russia in its pre-1904 imperialistic position in Manchuria—an act which, in effect, signed the death warrant of the Republic of China.

It was Marshall, with Acheson and Vincent eagerly assisting, who created the China policy which, destroying China, robbed us of a great and friendly ally, a buffer against the Soviet imperialism with which we are now at war [ . . . ].

It was Marshall who [ . . . ] besought the reinstatement of forty millions in lend-lease for Russia [ . . . ].

It is Marshall-Acheson strategy for Europe to build the defense of Europe solely around the Atlantic Pact nations, excluding the two great wells of anti-Communist manpower in Western Germany and Spain and spurning the organized armies of Greece and Turkey. [ . . . ]

What is the objective of the great conspiracy? I think it is clear from what has occurred and is now occurring: to diminish the United States in world affairs, to weaken us militarily, to confuse our spirit with talk of surrender in the Far East and to impair our will to resist evil. To what end? To the end that we shall be contained, frustrated and finally: fall victim to Soviet intrigue from within and Russian military might from without. [ . . . ]

It is the great crime of the Truman administration that it has refused to undertake the job of ferreting the enemy from its ranks. I once puzzled over that refusal. The President, I said, is a loyal American; why does he not lead in this enterprise? I think that I know why he does not. The President is not master in his own house. Those who are master there not only have a desire to protect the sappers and miners—they could not do otherwise. They themselves are not free. They belong to a larger conspiracy, the world-wide web of which has been spun from Moscow. [ . . . ] The time has come to halt this tepid, milk-and-water acquiescence which a discredited administration, ruled by disloyalty, sends down to us. [ . . . ] The time has come for us to realize that the people who sent us here expect more than time-serving from us. [ . . . ] The America that I know [ . . . ] deserves to be led not to humiliation or defeat, but to victory.

**Source**

*Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the Eighty-Second Congress, First Session.* 1951. Vol. 97, pt. 5. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 6601–6603.

**Emanuel Josephson, *Rockefeller “Internationalist”* (1952)**

*Emanuel Josephson’s 1952 book constituted one of the first attempts to paint John D. Rockefeller and his family as part of an international conspiracy to destroy national sovereignties through the use of philanthropies and control of “big business.”*

U.S Betrayed: “Whodunit?”

For the fourth time within half a century, the people of the United States have found themselves drawn into and forced to fight a war that was not their concern and in which it was not their desire or will to participate. On each occasion the nation was tricked into war by the same clique. The more observant and intelligent sections of the public have sensed that there is a power behind and above the government that controls it and dictates its actions without the regard of the will of the people. That power has thus far been immune to exposure.

So insolently confident has this power become that in the last two wars precipitated by them, World War II and the Korean War, they have not even made a pretense of complying with the form prescribed by the Constitution, declaration of war by Congress. In violation of the Constitution, the United States has been thrown into wars by “royal” edict issued by the power behind the government, though ostensibly at the instance of the Presidents who have been their puppets, after incidents obviously incited by them through their pawns in our own and foreign governments.

There can be no question, at this late date, that our Government in Washington, for several decades past, has been and now is, very largely composed of subversives, Communists and their fellow travelers and traitors. Only a few of them have as yet openly confessed their betrayal of our land to Communist Russia and to other foreign agencies. A large number have been exposed as involved in the treason. A very small fraction of the number involved have been caught in the act of treason or perjury in connection with treason, and convicted. The trials and convictions of Alger



Hiss, Judy Coplon and William Remington, and the confession of Lee Pressman, among others, have given the nation at the expense of millions of dollars, legal proof of what has been obvious for decades to the intelligent citizenry—that the nation has been betrayed persistently by treason of a wide array of public servants who range from the top policy-makers, such as the “father” of the United Nations, former Assistant Secretary of State, Alger Hiss, to the lowliest clerks. . . .

Nevertheless the conspirators in our midst seek to gain our submission to the Communists by creating craven terror of our own bombs in our midst. One begins to wonder if they actually conceive of using our bombs against us, or holding them until the Communist conspirators take over and use them against us. In many respects the situation resembles that of children trembling before a bugaboo that they have created with their own hands. Infinitely sad and damaging is the spectacle of craven cowardice and hysterical terror which they seek to have us present to the world. They are aiding and abetting our enemies by undermining our morale at home and our prestige abroad. . . .

The authors and directors of our destiny and the masters of our national fate, stepped out on the scene and into the open to claim credit and acclaim for putting us on the international merry-go-round. In the December 30, 1950, and subsequent issues of the *Saturday Evening Post* there appeared a series of articles, the first of which was entitled *The Rockefellers: The Story of Five Young Millionaires*. In these articles the Rockefellers, with characteristic “modesty,” take the bow as Messrs. “Internationalism.” The author states that they allege that their “philanthropies” transcend all bounds of national interest or patriotism. Like the rest of the “internationalist” breed, it appears that they scorn patriotism as reprehensible and undesirable because it interferes with their schemes. The sole ultimate criterion of desirability is stated in the articles to be profit to themselves. On that basis, the “internationalist” activities have been highly desirable to them, because, undeniably, they have

been highly profitable for them, however disastrous they are for us, the “peasantry,” individually, and for our country. For it is we who have had to foot the bills for the expansion of the “internationalist” interests of the Rockefeller Empire, with our fortunes, our liberties and in many cases, our lives.

**Source**

Josephson, Emanuel M. 1952. *Rockefeller “Internationalist”: The Man Who Misrules the World*. New York: Chedney, 8–9, 14, 15. © Emanuel Josephson. All rights reserved.

**Reece Committee Report (1954)**

*The Congressional Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations (known as the Reece Committee) concluded that although the major philanthropic organizations did seem to be pushing forward a globalist agenda that had intellectual links with communism, they were not part of a deliberate, conscious conspiracy. What to call something that appears to be a conspiracy has bedeviled many a political commentator on both ends of the political spectrum.*

It is the conclusion of this committee that such a combine does exist and that its impact upon our society is that of an intellectual cartel. The statement filed with the Committee by the American Council of Learned Societies is typical of the generality of the foundations in emphatically denying the existence of a “conspiracy” among the operating organizations and foundations. This Committee does not see any evidence that the concentration of power arose as the result of a “conspiracy.” It has not been created as the result of a plot by a single group of identifiable individuals. It has not been “created” at all, in the sense of a conscious plan having been worked out in advance to construct and implement its essentials. It has, however, happened.

**Source**

U.S. Congress. 1954. *Reece Committee Report*. 83d Cong., 2d sess., p. 39.

**Doolittle Committee, "Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency" (1954)**

*In 1954 President Dwight Eisenhower commissioned General James Doolittle to investigate the CIA's operations. In the resulting report, Doolittle offered shocking advice. He recommended covert action that was more aggressive, unique, and even more ruthless than that of the Soviets. He also suggested that the United States might have to reconsider treasured beliefs such as "fair play," revealing the philosophy that lay behind some of the CIA's more extreme and infamous activities.*

The acquisition and proper evaluation of adequate and reliable intelligence on the capabilities and intentions of Soviet Russia is today's most important military and political requirement. Several agencies of Government and many thousands of capable and dedicated people are engaged in the accomplishments of this task. Because the United States is relatively new at the game, and because we are opposed by a police state enemy whose social discipline and whose security measures have been built up and maintained at a high level for many years, the usable information we are obtaining is still far short of our needs.

As long as it remains national policy, another important requirement is a more aggressive covert psychological, political and paramilitary organization than that employed by the enemy. No one should be permitted to stand in the way of the prompt, efficient and secure accomplishment of this mission.

In the carrying out of this policy and in order to reach minimal standards for national safety under present world conditions, two things must be done. First, the agencies charged by law with the collection, evaluation and distribution of intelligence must be strengthened and coordinated to the greatest practical degree. This is a primary concern of the National Security Council and must be accomplished at the national security policy level. Those developments of the problem that fall within the scope of our directive are dealt with in

the report which follows. The second consideration is less tangible but equally important. It is now clear that we are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination by whatever means and at whatever cost. There are no rules in such a game. Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply. If the United States is to survive, long-standing American concepts of "fair play" must be reconsidered. We must develop effective espionage and counterespionage services and must learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated and more effective methods than those used against us. It may become necessary that the American people be made acquainted with, and understand and support this fundamentally repugnant philosophy.

Because of the tight security controls that have been established by the U.S.S.R. and its satellites, the problem of infiltration by human agents is extremely difficult. Most borders are made physically secure by elaborate systems of fencing, lights, mines, etc., backed by constant surveillance. Once across borders—by parachute or other means—escape from detection is extremely difficult because of constant checks on personnel activities and personal documentation. The information we have obtained by this method of acquisition has been negligible and the cost in effort, dollars and human lives prohibitive.

This leads to the conviction that much more effort should be expended in exploring every possible scientific and technical avenue of approach to the intelligence problem. The study group has been extensively briefed by C.I.A. personnel and by the Armed Services in the methods and equipment that are presently in use and under development in this area. We have also had the benefit of advice from certain civilian consultants who are working on such special projects. We are impressed by what has been done, but feel that there is an immense potential yet to be explored. We believe that every known technique should be intensively applied and new ones should be developed to increase our intelligence acquisition by [DELETED].

## II. Conclusions and Recommendations

With respect to the Central Intelligence Agency in general we conclude: (a) that its placement in the overall organization of the Government is proper; (b) that the laws under which it operates are adequate; (c) that the established provisions for its financial support are sufficiently flexible to meet its current operational needs; (d) that in spite of the limitations imposed by its relatively short life and rapid expansion it is doing a creditable job; (e) that it is gradually improving its capabilities; and (f) that it is exercising care to ensure the loyalty of its personnel. [ . . . ]

### Source

"Report of the Special Study Group [Doolittle Committee] on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency." 30 September 1954. Washington, DC: Modern Military Headquarters Branch, National Archives.

## A. H. Belmont, "CPUSA—Counterintelligence Program" (1956)

*In August 1956, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered the creation of extralegal "action programs" designed to "cripple or destroy" the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). Seeking to make a substantial, if clandestine, contribution to McCarthyism, Hoover believed it was the Bureau's task to undermine the CPUSA's "ability to create controversy." Following Hoover's secret directives, the following memo, the first such COINTELPRO document publicly available, was sent from A. Belmont, head of the FBI's Internal Security Section, to L. V. Boardman, the chief of counterintelligence. In this document, the two section chiefs discuss how they might combine their forces to "foster factionalism" and "cause confusion and dissatisfaction" within the CPUSA. Echoing Hoover, Belmont recommends that the FBI turn their energies away from previous projects of "harassment" and into a deliberate campaign of "disruption."*

To: Mr. L. V. Boardman  
From: Mr. A. H. Belmont  
Date: August 28, 1956

Subject: CP, USA—  
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM  
INTERNAL SECURITY – C

During its investigation of the Communist Party, USA, the Bureau has sought to capitalize on incidents involving the Party and its leaders in order to foster factionalism, bring the Communist Party (CP) and its leaders into disrepute before the American public and cause confusion and dissatisfaction among rank-and-file members of the CP.

Generally, the above action has constituted harrassment rather than disruption, since, for the most part, the Bureau has set up particular incidents, and the attack has been from the outside. At the present time, however, there is existing within the CP a situation resulting from the developments at the 20th Congress of the CP of the Soviet Union and the Government's attack on the party principally through prosecutions under the Smith Act of 1940 and the Internal Security Act of 1950 which is made to order for an all-out disruptive attack against the CP from within. In other words, the Bureau is in a position to initiate, on a broader scale than heretofore attempted, a counterintelligence program against the CP, not by harrassment from the outside, which might only serve to bring the various factions together, but by feeding and fostering from within the internal fight currently raging.

### Source

Churchill, Ward, and Jim Vander Wall. 1990. *The Cointelpro Papers*. Boston: South End, 40.

## Lee Harvey Oswald, "Historic Diary" (c. 1960)

*Taken from Oswald's controversial, evocative diary, the following selections are part of his account of life behind the Iron Curtain. President Kennedy's presumed assassin's narrative provides a detailed—though probably unreliable—account of his negotiations with Soviet and American authorities in Moscow regarding his contested citizenship status. It is in these details, the specific circumstances of the defection itself, and his later return to the United States, that many authors have dis-*

*cerned evidence of Oswald's implication—whether wittingly or not—in various conspiracies involving the intelligence apparatus of either (or both) of the cold war superpowers.*

Oct. 16. Arrive from Helsinki by train; am met by Intourest Repre. and in car to Hotel "Berlin." Reges. as "studet" 5 day Lux. tourist. Ticket.) Meet my Intorist guied Rimma Sherikova I explain to her I wish to appli. for Rus. citizenship. She is flabbergassed, but agrees to help [ . . . ].

[ . . . ]

Sun Oct. 18. My 20th birthday, we visit exhib. in the morning and in the after noon The Lenin-Stalin tomb. She [i.e., Rimma] gives me a present Book "Ideot" by Dostoevski.

[ . . . ]

Oct. 20. Rimmer in the afternoon says Intourist was notified by the pass & visa dept. that they want to see me I am excited greatly by this news.

Oct. 21. (mor) Meeting with single offial. Balding stout, black suit fairly good English, asks what do I want?, I say Sovite citizenship, he asks why I give vague answers about "Great Soviet Union" He tells me "USSR only great in Literature wants me to go back home" I am stunned I reiterate, he says he shall check and let me know weather my visa will be (extended it expiers today) Eve. 6.00 Recive word from police official. I must leave country tonight at. 8.00 P.M. as visa expirs. I am shocked!! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have \$100. left. I have waited 2 year to be accepted. My fondes dreams are shattered because of a petty offial; because of bad planning I planned to much! 7.00 P.M. I decide to end it. Soak rist in cold water to numb the pain. Than slash my leftwrist. Than plang wrist into bathtub of hot water. I think when Rimma comes at 8. to find me dead it will be a great shock. somewhere, a violin plays, as I wacth my life whirl away. I think to myself: "how easy to die" and "a sweet death, (to violins) about 8.00 Rimma finds my unconscious (bathtub water a rich red color) she screams (I remember that) and runs for help. Amulance comes, am taken to hospital where five stiches are put in my wrist. Poor Rimmea stays by

my side as interrpator (my Russian is still very bad) far into the night, I tell her "go home" (my mood is bad) but she stays, she is "my friend" She has a strong will only at this moment I notice she is preety [ . . . ].

[ . . . ]

Jan 4. I am called to passport office and finilly given a Soviet document not the soviet citizenship as I so wanted, only a Residence document, not even for foringners but a paper called "for those *without* citizenship." Still I am happy. The offial says they are sending me to the city of "Minsk" I ask "is that in Siberia?" He only laughs. he also tells me that they have arranged for me to recive some money though the Red Cross to pay my hotel bills and expensis. I thank the gentlemen and leave later in the afternoon I see Rimma "she asks are you happy" "yes"

Jan.5. I go to Red Cross in Moscow for money with Interrupter (a new one) I recive 5000. rubles a huge sum!! Later in Mink I am to earn 70 rubles a month at the [Radio and Television] factory.

Jan.7. [1960] I leave Moscow by train for Minsk, Belorussia. My hotel bill 2200 rubles and the train ticket to Minsk 150. rubles so I have alot of money & hope. I wrote my brother and mother letters in which I said "I do not wish to ever contact you again." I am begnining anew life and I don't want *any part* of the old."

[ . . . ]

Aug-Sept. As my Russian improves I become increasingly conscious of just what sort of a sociaty I live in. mass gymnastics, compulsory after work meeting, usually political information meeting. Complusary attendance at lectures and the sending of the entire shop collective (except me) to pick potatoes on a Sunday, at a State collective farm. A "patroict duty" to bring in the harvest. The opions of the wokers (unvoiced) are that it is a great pain in the neck. They don't seem to be esspicialy enthusiastic about any of the "collective" duties a natural feeling.

[ . . . ]

Jan 4-31 [1961] I am stating to reconsider my disire about staying. The work is drab the money I get has nowhere to be spent. No nightclubs or



bowling allys no places of recreation accept trade union dances I have had enough.

Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>. Make my first request to American Embassy, Moscow, for reconsidering my position, I stated "I would like to go back to U.S."

[ . . . ]

March 17. I and Erich went to trade union dance. Boring but at the last hour I am introduced to a girl with a French hair-do and red-dress with white slipper I dance with her. than ask to show her home I do, along with 5 other admirares Her name is Marina. We like each right away [ . . . ].

**Source**

Oswald, Lee Harvey. 1964. "Historic Diary." In President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, Warren Commission Exhibit #24, *Hearings and Exhibits*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Press, 16: 94–95, 98, 100, 102.

**Warren Commission Report (1964)**

*The Warren Commission, the official government inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and hence, there was no conspiracy. The following selection from the final report includes the summary of the main findings, as well as the Commission's consideration of rumors about various conspiracies.*

THE ASSASSINATION of John Fitzgerald Kennedy on November 22, 1963, was a cruel and shocking act of violence directed against a man, a family, a nation, and against all mankind. A young and vigorous leader whose years of public and private life stretched before him was the victim of the fourth Presidential assassination in the history of a country dedicated to the concepts of reasoned argument and peaceful political change. This Commission was created on November 29, 1963, in recognition of the right of people everywhere to full and truthful knowledge concerning these events. This report endeavors to fulfill that right and to appraise this tragedy by the

light of reason and the standard of fairness. It has been prepared with a deep awareness of the Commission's responsibility to present to the American people an objective report of the facts relating to the assassination. [ . . . ]

This Commission was created to ascertain the facts relating to the preceding summary of events and to consider the important questions which they raised. The Commission has addressed itself to this task and has reached certain conclusions based on all the available evidence. No limitations have been placed on the Commission's inquiry; it has conducted its own investigation, and all Government agencies have fully discharged their responsibility to cooperate with the Commission in its investigation. These conclusions represent the reasoned judgment of all members of the Commission and are presented after an investigation which has satisfied the Commission that it: has ascertained the truth concerning the assassination of President Kennedy to the extent that a prolonged and thorough search makes this possible.

1. The shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired from the sixth floor window at the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository. This determination is based upon the following:

\* (a) Witnesses at the scene of the assassination saw a rifle being fired from the sixth floor window of the Depository Building, and some witnesses saw a rifle in the window immediately after the shots were fired.

\* (b) The nearly whole bullet found on Governor Connally's stretcher at Parkland Memorial Hospital and the two bullet fragments found in the front seat of the Presidential limousine were fired from the 6.5-millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found on the sixth floor of the Depository Building to the exclusion of all other weapons.

\* (c) The three used cartridge cases found near the window on the sixth floor at the southeast corner of the building were fired from the same rifle which fired the above-described bullet and fragments, to the exclusion of all other weapons.

\*(d) The windshield in the Presidential limousine was struck by a bullet fragment on the inside surface of the glass, but was not penetrated.

\*(e) The nature of the bullet wounds suffered by President Kennedy and Governor Connally and the location of the car at the time of the shots establish that the bullets were fired from above and behind the Presidential limousine, striking the President and the Governor as follows:

1. President Kennedy was first struck by a bullet which entered at the back of his neck and exited through the lower front portion of his neck, causing a wound which would not necessarily have been lethal. The President was struck a second time by a bullet which entered the right-rear portion of his head, causing a massive and fatal wound.

2. Governor Connally was struck by a bullet which entered on the right side of his back and traveled downward through the right side of his chest, exiting below his right nipple. This bullet then passed through his right wrist and entered his left thigh where it caused a superficial wound.  
[ . . . ]

\*(f) There is no credible evidence that the shots were fired from the Triple Underpass, ahead of the motorcade, or from any other location.

[ . . . ]

4. The weight of the evidence indicates that there were three shots fired.

5. Although it is not necessary to any essential findings of the Commission to determine just which shot hit Governor Connally, there is very persuasive evidence from the experts to indicate that the same bullet which pierced the President's throat also caused Governor Connally's wounds. However, Governor Connally's testimony and certain other factors have given rise to some difference of opinion as to this probability but there is no question in the mind of any member of the Commission that all the shots which caused the President's and Governor Connally's wounds were fired from the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository.

6. The shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired by

Lee Harvey Oswald. This conclusion is based upon the following:

\*(a) The Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5-millimeter Italian rifle from which the shots were fired was owned by and in the possession of Oswald.

\*(b) Oswald carried this rifle into the Depository Building on the morning of November 22, 1963.

\*(c) Oswald, at the time of the assassination, was present at the window from which the shots were fired.

\*(d) Shortly after the assassination, the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle belonging to Oswald was found partially hidden between some cartons on the sixth floor and the improvised paper bag in which Oswald brought the rifle to the Depository was found close by the window from which the shots were fired.

\*(e) Based on testimony of the experts and their analysis of films of the assassination, the Commission has concluded that a rifleman of Lee Harvey Oswald's capabilities could have fired the shots from the rifle used in the assassination within the elapsed time of the shooting. The Commission has concluded further that Oswald possessed the capability with a rifle which enabled him to commit the assassination.

\*(f) Oswald lied to the police after his arrest concerning important substantive matters.

\*(g) Oswald had attempted to kill Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker (Retired, U.S. Army) on April 10, 1963, thereby demonstrating his disposition to take human life.

[ . . . ]

9. The Commission has found no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy. The reasons for this conclusion are:

\*(a) The Commission has found no evidence that anyone assisted Oswald in planning or carrying out the assassination. In this connection it has thoroughly investigated, among other factors, the circumstances surrounding the planning of the motorcade route through Dallas, the hiring of Oswald by the Texas School Book

Depository Co. on October 15, 1963, the method by which the rifle was brought into the building, the placing of cartons of books at the window, Oswald's escape from the building, and the testimony of eyewitnesses to the shooting.

\*(b) The Commission has found no evidence that Oswald was involved with any person or group in a conspiracy to assassinate the President, although it has thoroughly investigated, in addition to other possible leads, all facets of Oswald's associations, finances, and personal habits, particularly during the period following his return from the Soviet Union in June 1962.

\*(c) The Commission has found no evidence to show that Oswald was employed, persuaded, or encouraged by any foreign government to assassinate President Kennedy or that he was an agent of any foreign government, although the Commission has reviewed the circumstances surrounding Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union, his life there from October of 1959 to June of 1962 so far as it can be reconstructed, his known contacts with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and his visits to the Cuban and Soviet Embassies in Mexico City during his trip to Mexico from September 26 to October 3, 1963, and his known contacts with the Soviet Embassy in the United States.

\*(d) The Commission has explored all attempts of Oswald to identify himself with various political groups, including the Communist Party, U.S.A., the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and the Socialist Workers Party, and has been unable to find any evidence that the contacts which he initiated were related to Oswald's subsequent assassination of the President.

\*(e) All of the evidence before the Commission established that there was nothing to support the speculation that Oswald was an agent, employee, or informant of the FBI, the CIA, or any other governmental agency. It has thoroughly investigated Oswald's relationships prior to the assassination with all agencies of the U.S. Government. All contacts with Oswald by any of these agencies were made in the regular exercise of their different responsibilities.

\*(f) No direct or indirect relationship between Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby has been discovered by the Commission, nor has it been able to find any credible evidence that either knew the other, although a thorough investigation was made of the many rumors and speculations of such a relationship.

\*(g) The Commission has found no evidence that Jack Ruby acted with any other person in the killing of Lee Harvey Oswald.

\*(h) After careful investigation the Commission has found no credible evidence either that Ruby and Officer Tippit, who was killed by Oswald, knew each other or that Oswald and Tippit knew each other.

Because of the difficulty of proving negatives to a certainty the possibility of others being involved with either Oswald or Ruby cannot be established categorically, but if there is any such evidence it has been beyond the reach of all the investigative agencies and resources of the United States and has not come to the attention of this Commission.  
[ . . . ]

6. In its entire investigation the Commission has found no evidence of conspiracy, subversion, or disloyalty to the U.S. Government by any Federal, State, or local official.

7. On the basis of the evidence before the Commission it concludes that Oswald acted alone. Therefore, to determine the motives for the assassination of President Kennedy, one must look to the assassin himself. Clues to Oswald's motives can be found in his family history, his education or lack of it, his acts, his writings, and the recollections of those who had close contacts with him throughout his life. The Commission has presented with this report all of the background information bearing on motivation which it could discover. Thus, others may study Lee Oswald's life and arrive at their own conclusions as to his possible motives.

The Commission could not make any definitive determination of Oswald's motives. It has endeavored to isolate factors which contributed to his character and which might have influenced his decision to assassinate President Kennedy. These factors were:

\*(a) His deep-rooted resentment of all authority which was expressed in a hostility toward every society in which he lived;

\*(b) His inability to enter into meaningful relationships with people, and a continuous pattern of rejecting his environment in favor of new surroundings;

\*(c) His urge to try to find a place in history and despair at times over failures in his various undertakings;

\*(d) His capacity for violence as evidenced by his attempt to kill General Walker;

\*(e) His avowed commitment to Marxism and communism, as he understood the terms and developed his own interpretation of them; this was expressed by his antagonism toward the United States, by his defection to the Soviet Union, by his failure to be reconciled with life in the United States even after his disenchantment with the Soviet Union, and by his efforts, though frustrated, to go to Cuba.

Each of these contributed to his capacity to risk all in cruel and irresponsible actions.

[ . . . ]

#### CONSPIRATORIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Rumors concerning accomplices and plots linked Oswald and Ruby with each other, or with others, including Patrolman J. D. Tippit, Gen. Edwin A. Walker, and Bernard Weissman of the nonexistent American Fact-finding Committee, in a conspiratorial relationship. The Commission made intensive inquiry into the backgrounds and relationships of Oswald and Ruby to determine whether they knew each other or were involved in a plot of any kind with each other or others. It was unable to find any credible evidence to support the rumors linking Oswald and Ruby directly or through others. The Commission concluded that they were not involved in a conspiratorial relationship with each other or with any third parties.

[ . . . ]

*Speculation.*—Since Oswald did not have the money to repay the \$435.61 he had received from the Department of State to cover part of the expenses of his return from Russia, he must have

received help from some other source. Ruby lent Oswald money to pay back the loan and lent him small amounts of money thereafter.

*Commission finding.*—The Commission has no credible evidence that Oswald received any money from Ruby or anyone else to repay his State Department loan, nor that he received small amounts of money from Ruby at any time. An exhaustive analysis of Oswald's income and expenditures, made for the Commission by an Internal Revenue Service expert, reveals that Oswald had sufficient funds to make the State Department repayments from his earnings.

*Speculation.*—Just before Oswald was shot by Ruby, he looked directly at Ruby in apparent recognition of him.

*Commission finding.*—The Commission has been unable to establish as a fact any kind of relationship between Ruby and Oswald other than that Oswald was Ruby's victim. The Commission has examined television tapes and motion picture films of the shooting and has been unable to discern any facial expression that could be interpreted to signify recognition of Ruby or anyone else in the basement of the building.

*Speculation.*—The Dallas police suspected Oswald and Ruby of being involved in an attack on General Walker and planned to arrest the two when the FBI intervened, at the request of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and asked the police not to do so for reasons of state.

*Commission finding.*—This allegation appeared in the November 29, 1963, issue (actually printed on November 25 or 26) of a German weekly newspaper, *Deutsche National Zeitung und Soldaten Zeitung*, published in Munich. The allegation later appeared in the *National Enquirer* of May 17, 1964. The Commission has been reliably informed that the statement was fabricated by an editor of the newspaper. No evidence in support of this statement has ever been advanced or uncovered. In their investigation of the attack on General Walker, the Dallas police uncovered no suspects and planned no arrests. The FBI had no knowledge that Oswald was responsible for the attack until



Marina Oswald revealed the information on December 3, 1963.

*Speculation.*—Ruby and Oswald were seen together at the Carousel Club.

*Commission finding.*—All assertions that Oswald was seen in the company of Ruby or of anyone else at the Carousel Club have been investigated. None of them merits any credence.

*Speculation.*—Oswald and General Walker were probably acquainted with each other since Oswald's notebook contained Walker's name and telephone number.

*Commission finding.*—Although Oswald's notebook contained Walker's name and telephone number there was no evidence that the two knew each other. It is probable that this information was inserted at the time that Oswald was planning his attack on Walker. General Walker stated that he did not know of Oswald before the assassination.

[ . . . ]

*Speculation.*—Jack Ruby was one of the most notorious of Dallas gangsters.

*Commission finding.*—There is no credible evidence that Jack Ruby was active in the criminal underworld. Investigation disclosed no one in either Chicago or Dallas who had any knowledge that Ruby was associated with organized criminal activity.

#### Source

*Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.* 1964. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available at [http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/jfk/warren\\_commission/warren\\_commission\\_report.html](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/jfk/warren_commission/warren_commission_report.html).

#### Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope* (1966)

*Tragedy and Hope*, a 1966 book by Georgetown University professor Carroll Quigley, is often cited as the “smoking gun” by conspiracy theorists who believe that there is a vast cabal plotting to take over American sovereignty in the name of a New World Order. The significance of Quigley's text is heightened, in the eyes of these observers, by the fact that Quigley was President Clinton's college mentor. The second para-

graph of the following passage is most often quoted as proof, but it must be noted that Quigley emphasizes how far removed from the “radical Right fairy tale” his analysis of globalist politics is.

The radical Right version of these events [ . . . ] was even more remote from the truth [ . . . ], although it had a tremendous impact on American opinion and American relations with other countries in the years 1947–1955. This radical Right fairy tale, which is now an accepted folk myth in many groups in America, pictured the recent history of the United States, in regard to domestic reform and in foreign affairs, as a well-organized plot by extreme Left-wing elements, operating from the White House itself and controlling all the chief avenues of publicity in the United States, to destroy the American way of life, based on private enterprise, laissez faire, and isolationism, in behalf of alien ideologies of Russian Socialism and British cosmopolitanism (or internationalism). [ . . . ]

This myth, like all fables, does in fact have a modicum of truth. There does exist, and has existed for a generation, an international anglophile network which operates, to some extent, in the way the radical Right believes the communists act. In fact, this network, which we may identify as the Round Table Groups, has no aversion to cooperating with the Communists, or any other groups and frequently does so. I know of the operations of this network because I have studied it for twenty years and was permitted for two years, in the early 1960's, to examine its papers and secret records. I have no aversion to it or to most of its aims and have, for much of my life, been close to it and to many of its instruments. I have objected, both in the past and recently, to a few of its policies [ . . . ] but in general my chief difference of opinion is that it wishes to remain unknown, and I believe its role in history is significant enough to be known.

#### Source

Quigley, Carroll. 1966. *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time.* New York: Macmillan, 949–950.

**Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (1965)**

*In this extract from his 1965 book Message to the Blackman in America, Elijah Muhammad puts forward his view on "The Plan to Destroy Our Race."*

The American so-called Negroes are gravely deceived by the slave-masters' teaching of God and the true religion of God. They do not know they are deceived and earnestly believe they are right regardless of how vile the white race may be.

My poor people are mentally blind, deaf and dumb and full of fear. Blind because they do not see the light of truth after being shown it for over thirty years. Deaf because they will not hear the truth, Islam that has come to them from Allah through the Messenger (myself).

They are dumb because they will not see or open their ears and hearts after the light has shown clear for many years. You are full of the fear that was instilled in you when you were babies, so Allah told. This fear was put in you by the white slave-masters through tortures, lynchings, burnings, rapings and killings and has caused you to be blind, deaf and dumb.

This fear of the white slave-master has caused you to love them in a crazy kind of way. You, my dear people, are like a woman desperately in love with a man who does not love her. Therefore, this love is blind. This man can beat, torture, ravage, humiliate, shame and mock, but she will yet love him. And even when someone tries to tell her that his man is no good for her and certainly does not love her, she will yet love him, and will become angered and defend such a man. This is a very sad thing, but a very true picture of the so-called Negroes. They love their tormentors.

Beware, they do not love you, they are like dogs with a bone. They do not want you to be taken by Allah's messenger to your salvation. They want to carry you with them to their doom. The wicked white devils are by no means asleep to the knowledge of the time. They are really on the job trying to keep all of those who are blind, deaf and dumb to what is going on in this day and time mentally dead. They watch every step of the

righteous Muslims, seeking to do them harm in their endeavor to spread the truth (Islam).

The people of Allah (so-called Negroes) are dumb to the time as the people were in the days when Moses was sent to the Pharaoh to bring his people out of bondage into a land wherein they could enjoy independence. Instead of the Israelites being joyful to hear that Allah was ready to deliver them from Pharaoh and give them land of their own, they set out to contend with Moses and to help Pharaoh not God (Jehovah).

The government of Pharaoh had no love for Israel, just as America has no love for the so-called Negroes. Pharaoh became afraid of the truth that Moses was teaching his people in the midst of his country.

So Pharaoh began to plan the death of Moses and the future of Israel by killing off the babies. Pharaoh wanted Moses put to death because he was teaching his people the truth of Pharaoh and his government of wickedness. Today, America is afraid of the power our great number presents. She fears that if we ever unite we would overnight become independent.

America desires to keep us a subjected people. So she, therefore, wants to stop our birth (as Pharaoh did). The Birth Control Law or Act of today is directed directly at the so-called Negroes and not at the American whites. The story of Moses and the Pharaoh is a warning to you today. They are seeking to destroy our race by the birth control law, just as Pharaoh sought to stop Moses' race by killing off all the male babies at birth. They are seeking to destroy our race through our women. DO NOT LET THEM TRICK YOU.

**Source**

Elijah Muhammad. 1965. *Message to the Blackman in America*. Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2.  
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**Robert H. W. Welch, "The Truth in Time" (1966)**

*Robert Welch, the founder of the John Birch Society, briefly explains in this piece what he believed to be the connection between the contemporary*

*threat of communism and the longer history of the master conspiracy dating back to the Illuminati.*

To make the history of the great conspiracy both clear and convincing, we need a hundred volumes of a thousand pages each. And we hope that those scholarly volumes will all be written in due course, as a guide and a warning to future generations. But at present we have a more immediate and more urgent task. We want to give you simply an outline of the progress of this organized evil force, from its beginning up to the present time.

The aim of the conspirators always has been, and still is, to impose the brutal tyranny of their rule over the whole human race. Today they are at last within striking distance of that ultimate goal. And we agree with the Hon. J. Edgar Hoover, who stated in the April 1961 *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, that "the way to fight it [Communism] is to study it, understand it, and discover what can be done about it." We think that the only way to stop the Communists is to create sufficient understanding, soon enough, among enough people, as to what is really taking place all around us. So let's do our best, within the limits that are practicable for this occasion, to review the whole fantastic story step by step.

#### The Early Background

1. We must hunt the first steps largely in the shadows rather than in the substance of history. For the conspiracy is deeprooted. Two hundred years ago, or during the last half of the Eighteenth Century, there were in Europe many secret societies with grandiose dreams of overthrowing all existing human institutions, and of rising out of the resulting chaos as the all-powerful rulers of a "new order" of civilization. Of these groups the Illuminati, founded in Bavaria by Adam Weishaupt on May 1, 1776, was undoubtedly the most important.

2. By 1789 the Illuminati were already strong enough to have had a great deal to do with planning and precipitating the holocaust known as the French Revolution. In that upheaval we find many elements of Communist strategy and purpose with which we are familiar today. One

was the ruthless undermining of rulers and governments in order to destroy them. Another was the destruction of all religion by substituting the worship of "reason" in its place. You will remember that the revolutionaries erected in Paris a statue to the "goddess of reason" as a symbol of this change. A third element was the fomenting by a few professional agitators of mob action made to appear as a spontaneous uprising of the people. A fourth was the massive use of terror to silence all opposition. A fifth was the use of manufactured smear to destroy the enemies of the revolution or of its temporary leaders. And all of these objectives and methods, which sound like rehearsals for what is happening throughout the world today, had either been specifically set forth by Weishaupt for his order of Illuminati, or were practical applications of his program.

3. By 1795 the French Revolution had run its horrible course, and there was a gradual return even in France to traditional beliefs, values, and institutions. Although it led to the Napoleonic wars which, for the next twenty years devastated so much of Europe, this revolutionary fire in France had failed to set off a continent-wide social conflagration, as the Illuminati and similar groups had hoped and planned. And henceforth the Illuminati observed even more closely than before the original Weishaupt instruction that the very existence of the order should be denied and kept secret at all costs. But the fact that the Illuminati *were* active, at the end of the Eighteenth Century, with growing reach and influence in many countries, is clearly proved in the detailed histories of Robinson and the Abbé Barruel. And the short-lived Babeuf conspiracy reveals that other groups, though possibly allied or subsidiary to the Illuminati, were working for the same totally destructive purposes.

During the Nineteenth Century some of these secret societies and subversive groups appear to have grown and coalesced into the Communist conspiracy as we know it today. However hidden the controlling nerve centers may have been, by 1848 some of the activities and even organizational structures of the conspiracy were becoming visible.

The first important declaration of purposes, using the name of Communism, as we understand the word today, was issued by Karl Marx in 1848. Communist plotting was at work, to some extent, in the numerous uprisings of that year, 1848, as it has been in almost all insurrections and wars involving European nations since that time.

But the Communist movement is only a tool of the total conspiracy. As secret as the Communist activities and organizations generally appear, they are part of an open book compared to the secrecy enveloping some higher degree of this diabolic force. The extrinsic evidence is strong and convincing that by the beginning of the Twentieth Century there had evolved an inner core of conspiratorial power, able to direct and control subversive activities which were worldwide in their reach, incredibly cunning and ruthless in their nature, and brilliantly farsighted and patient in their strategy. Whether or not this increasingly all-powerful hidden command was due to an unbroken continuation of Weishaupt's Illuminati, or was a distillation from the leadership of this and other groups, we do not know. Some of them may never have been Communists, while others were. To avoid as much dispute as possible, therefore, let's call this ruling clique simply the INSIDERS. But we do need some such term for both clarity and convenience. And it should be recognized that always pushing and promoting each other into higher positions, on every road to power and wealth and fame, has been a vital part of the strategy of this "fraternity" from the beginning—and of the motivation of its members at any given time. The goal for each generation of conspirators, the tie that bound them together, lay in what this self-perpetuating body was to become; but the contemporary reward and satisfaction was in becoming.

6. For more than a hundred years now the conspiracy had pushed on steadily, along many avenues, all leading to the one goal of world rule. During the last half of the Nineteenth Century the INSIDERS were using the Communists, the anarchists, the socialists of various hues and kinds, and dozens of other groups, to promote their

purposes. Many of these groups were largely unconscious of how they were being spurred on and guided by a few clever INSIDERS. While under the guise of humanitarianism, and in the pretended promotion of freedom and equality and brotherhood, these INSIDERS, and the gullible idealists who served as their dupes, were busily undermining the very beliefs and institutions which made the Nineteenth Century a highwater mark of such civilization as man has laboriously achieved.

**Source**

Welch, Robert H. W., Jr. 1966. "The Truth in Time." *American Opinion* 9 (November): 1-4.  
Reproduced with permission from the John Birch Society.

**J. Edgar Hoover, "Counterintelligence Program, Black Nationalist-Hate Groups" (1967)**

*During the summer of 1967, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover issued this document to all field offices under the suggestive heading "Counterintelligence Program, Black Nationalist-Hate Groups." This document ordered all field offices of the FBI to immediately begin campaigns to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" every branch of the civil rights movement. An unapologetic white supremacist and avowed enemy of Martin Luther King, Jr., Hoover believed that the civil rights movement was communist inspired and posed a threat to national security. With this document, Hoover unleashed the FBI against all African American and civil rights organizations, ranging from direct action groups like SNCC to Christian nonviolent organizations like King's SCLC, as well as advocates of armed resistance like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown.*

SAC, Albany August 25, 1967  
PERSONAL ATTENTION TO ALL  
OFFICES  
[From] Director, FBI  
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM  
BLACK NATIONALIST—HATE GROUPS  
INTERNAL SECURITY



[ . . . ] The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder. The activities of all such groups of intelligence interest to the Bureau must be followed on a continuous basis so we will be in a position to promptly take advantage of all opportunities for counterintelligence and inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant. The pernicious background of such groups, their duplicity, and devious maneuvers must be exposed to public scrutiny where such publicity will have a neutralizing effect. Efforts of the various groups to consolidate their forces or to recruit new or youthful adherents must be frustrated. No opportunity should be missed to exploit through counterintelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leaderships of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing black nationalist organizations. When an opportunity is apparent to disrupt or neutralize black nationalist, hate-type organizations through the cooperation of established local news media contacts or through such contact with sources available to the Seat of Government [Hoover's office], in every instance careful attention must be given to the proposal to insure the targetted group is disrupted, ridiculed, or discredited through the publicity and not merely publicized. [ . . . ]

You are also cautioned that the nature of this new endeavor is such that under no circumstances should the existence of the program be made known outside the Bureau and appropriate within-office security should be afforded to sensitive operations and techniques considered under the program.

No counterintelligence action under this program may be initiated by the field without specific prior Bureau authorization.

#### Source

Churchill, Ward, and Jim Vander Wall. 1990. *The Cointelpro Papers*. Boston: South End, 92–93.

#### Donald M. MacArthur, "Testimony before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations" (1 July 1969)

*For many who believe that HIV and AIDS was man-made in a laboratory (either by accident or as part of a covert biowarfare program), the following congressional testimony of Dr. Donald MacArthur, director of the Advanced Research Project Agency of the Department of Defense, is the "smoking gun" that proves the conspiracy.*

DR. MACARTHUR: There are two things about the biological agent field I would like to mention. One is the possibility of technology surprise. Molecular biology is a field that is advancing very rapidly and eminent biologists believe that within a period of five to 10 years it would be possible to produce a synthetic biological agent, an agent that does not naturally exist and for which no natural immunity could have been acquired.

REP. SIKES: Are we doing any work in that field?

DR. MACARTHUR: We are not.

REP. SIKES: Why not? Lack of money or lack of interest?

DR. MACARTHUR: Certainly not lack of interest.

REP. SIKES: Would you provide for our records information on what would be required, what the advantages of such a program would be? The time and the cost involved?

DR. MACARTHUR: We will be very happy to. The information follows:

The dramatic progress being made in the field of molecular biology led us to investigate the relevance of this field of science to biological warfare. A small group of experts considered this matter and provided the following observations.

1. All biological agents up to the present time are representatives of naturally occurring disease, and are thus known to scientists throughout the world. They are easily available to qualified scientists for research, either for offensive or defensive purposes.

2. Within the next five to 10 years, it would probably be possible to make a new infective microorganism which could differ in certain important aspects from any known disease-causing organisms. Most important of these is that it might be refractory to the immunological and therapeutic processes upon which we depend to maintain our relative freedom from infectious disease.

3. A research program to explore the feasibility of this could be completed in approximately five years at a total cost of \$10 million.

4. It would be very difficult to establish such a program. Molecular biology is a relatively new science. There are not many highly competent scientists in the field, almost all are in university laboratories, and they are generally adequately supported from sources other than the DOD. However, it was considered possible to initiate an adequate program through the National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council (NAS-NRC), and tentative plans were made to initiate the program. However, decreasing funds in CB, growing criticism of the CB program, and our reluctance to involve the NAS-NRC in such a controversial endeavor have led us to postpone it for the past two years.

It is a highly controversial issue and there are many who believe such research should not be undertaken lest it lead to yet another method of massive killing of large populations. On the other hand, without the sure scientific knowledge that such a weapon is possible, and an understanding of the ways it could be done, there is little that can be done to devise defensive measures. Should an enemy develop it there is little doubt that there is an important area of potential military technology inferiority in which there is no adequate research program.

#### Source

House of Representatives. Department of Defense Appropriations for 1970. 91st Cong., 1st sess.

#### “Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities” (1970)

*This internal CIA document outlines the agency’s actions in Chile in 1973. The CIA was involved in the coup that overthrew the country’s democratically elected socialist government and resulted in the death of the leader, Salvador Allende.*

##### 1. General

a. On 15 September 1970, CIA was directed to try to prevent Marxist Salvador Allende’s ascent to the Chilean Presidency on 3 November. This effort was to be independent of concurrent endeavours being undertaken through, or with the knowledge of, the 40 committee, Department of State, and Ambassador Korry.

b. Briefly, the situation at the time was the following:

—Allende had attained a plurality of only some 40,000 in the Chilean popular vote for president. Jorge Alessandri, a conservative and the runner-up, would face Allende in a congressional run-off on 24 October. The run-off winner would be invested as president on 3 November.

—Allende’s designation as president by Congress was very probable given all known factors in the Chilean political equation.

—Given the dismal prospects of a political formula being worked out to prevent Allende’s designation as president by Congress, remaining alternatives centered around overcoming the apolitical, constitutional-oriented inertia of the Chilean military.

—U.S. government intentions were highly suspect particularly in Allende and certain government sectors. Suspicions extended to all Americans in Chile for whatever declared purpose. In addition the Chilean military were being monitored quite closely by the Allende

forces for warning signals of any interventionist proclivities.

2. Special Organisation

a. A Chilean Task Force was assembled and functioning three days after CIA was assigned the mission. It was headed by ——— and highly-qualified CIA ——— recalled from their ———.

**Source**

“Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 15 September to 3 November 1970.” George Washington University National Security Archive. Available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm>.

**“The Torbitt Document” (1970s)**

*The “Torbitt Document,” a photocopied typescript setting out an alternative history of the last half century, began circulating in conspiracy research circles in the 1970s. Torbitt was a pseudonym of a still-unidentified writer. The lengthy document links many of the political events of the second half of the twentieth century into a conspiratorial account of the Kennedy assassination involving a vast array of government intelligence agencies.*

When Jim Garrison, the New Orleans District Attorney, began to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy, he took the position that regardless of who was behind the assassination, the American people could take the truth, should have the facts, and that the right of the American people to know superseded any damage that might be done to the image of the United States by the revelation of respected government leaders’ involvement in the crime.

Chief Justice Warren and other members of the Commission charged to investigate the assassination took another position: that is, to reveal the assassination scheme would do great harm and damage to the image of the United States in the eyes of the world, and therefore, it would be to the best interests of the Nation that their findings be as were reported by them.

Enough evidence has now been uncovered by the Warren Commission, other investigative

agencies here and in Europe, and Jim Garrison to reveal an almost total working knowledge of how the assassination was carried out and by whom.

The killing of President Kennedy was planned and supervised by Division Five of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a relatively small department within the FBI whose usual duties are espionage and counter-espionage activities.

Actually, Division Five acted dually with the Defense Intelligence Agency which was acting on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. Directly under the two-pronged leadership of Division Five and the DIA was the Control Group, their highly secret policy agency—the Defense Industrial Security Command.

The Defense Industrial Security Command has always been kept secret because it acts, in addition to its two official control organizations, on behalf of NASA, the Atomic Energy Commission, the U.S. Information Agency, and the arms, equipment, ammunition, munitions and related miscellaneous supply manufacturing corporations contracting with NASA, the AEC, USIA, and the Pentagon. One can readily observe that DISC is not compatible with an open Democracy and the U.S. Constitution.

Consequently, the top secret arms manufacturers’ police agency has been kept from the knowledge of even most U.S. officials and Congressmen.

The Defense Industrial Security Command had its beginnings when J. Edgar Hoover in the early 1930s organized the police force of the fledgling Tennessee Valley Authority at the request of David Lillienthal. The police force covered the entire TVA from Knoxville, Tennessee through Huntsville and Florence, Alabama into Kentucky and back through the eastern portion of Tennessee into southern Kentucky. This was one of the first federal agencies with a separate police force. This force grew and Lillienthal took it forward to cover the Atomic Energy Commission, thus tying it into the Army Intelligence Service.

L.M. Bloomfield, a Montreal, CANADA lawyer bearing the reputation as a sex deviate, the direct supervisor of all contractual agents with J. Edgar Hoover’s Division Five, was the top co-ordinator for

the network planning the execution. A Swiss corporation, Permindex, was used to head five front organizations responsible for furnishing personnel and supervisors to carry out assigned duties.

The five groups under Permindex and their supervisors were:

1. The Czarist Russian, Eastern European and Middle East exile organization called SOLIDARISTS, headed by Ferenc Nagy, ex-Hungarian Premier, and John DeMenil, Russian exile from Houston, Texas, a close friend and supporter of Lyndon Johnson for over thirty years.

2. A section of the AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES headed by H.L. Hunt of Dallas, Texas.

3. A Cuban exile group called FREE CUBA COMMITTEE headed by Carlos Prio Socarras, ex-Cuban President.

4. An organization of United States, Caribbean, and Havana, Cuba gamblers called the Syndicate headed by Clifford Jones, ex-Lieutenant Governor of Nevada and Democratic National Committeeman, and Bobby Baker of Washington, D.C. This group worked closely with a Mafia family headed by Joe Bonnano.

5. The SECURITY DIVISION of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) headed by Wernher Von Braun, head of the German Nazi rocket program from 1932 through 1945. Headquarters for this group was the DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL SECURITY COMMAND at Muscle Shoals Redstone Arsenal in Alabama and on East Broad Street in Columbus, Ohio.

The Defense Industrial Security Command is the police and espionage agency for the U.S. munitions makers. DISC was organized by J. Edgar Hoover; William Sullivan, his chief assistant, is in direct command. We shall later examine the involvement of a large number of the DISC agents including Clay Shaw, Guy Bannister, David Ferrie, Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby and others with Permindex's Louis Mortimer Bloomfield of Montreal, Canada in charge.

As it must be, all of the preceding facts are established and documented by overwhelming

evidence beyond a reasonable doubt on the following pages. Gordon Novel obtained the aid of the Columbus office in 1967 when Jim Garrison was attempting to get him back to Louisiana from Ohio. Personnel of the Defense Intelligence Agency were subject to assignment with the Defense Industrial Security Command.

#### Source

Torbitt, William. 1997. *NASA, Nazis and JFK: The Torbitt Document*. Edited by Kenn Thomas. Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited. Available at <http://www.newsmakingnews.com/torbitt.htm>.

#### Pentagon Papers (1971)

*In the following exchanges recorded on his secret tape recorder in the Oval Office, President Nixon and his advisors discuss what to do about the leak of the "Pentagon Papers," a classified account of the development of the Vietnam War supplied to the New York Times by Daniel Ellsberg. Nixon considered that the leak was part of a conspiracy against his administration, and in order to stop such leaks, he initiated a group of agents called the "Plumbers." As well as breaking and entering the office of Ellsberg's psychoanalyst, the Plumbers later went on to carry out the Watergate burglary.*

June 15, 1971: Nixon and Kissinger, Oval Office  
Nixon: Henry, there's a conspiracy. You understand?

Kissinger: I believe it now. I didn't believe it formerly, but I believe it now.

Nixon: There is. Whether it's Gellb or the Rand Corporation guy, he's in a conspiracy.

June 17, 1971: Nixon, Haldeman, and Ronald Ziegler, 2:42-3:33 P.M., Oval Office

Nixon: We can kill these people with this. "Knowingly publishing stolen goods." That's what the *Times* is doing. "Knowingly publishing stolen goods." "Giving aid and comfort to the enemy." That's the way you have to play it. "Giving aid and comfort to the enemy." That's the way you have to play it. "No cause justifies breaking the law."

Haldeman: Rogers is concerned that [ . . . ] it's interfering with the judicial process.



Nixon: Oh, for Christsakes. [ . . . ] A statement by Rogers is not going to affect the judicial process. [ . . . ] Don't try to get this past Ehrlichman and the lawyers—the one on “stolen goods.” [ . . . ] Everything we do around here is done in such a mamby-pamby jackass way, we aren't getting anything across.

[ . . . ]

Nixon: [ . . . ] an opportunity here now, a real opportunity. [unclear] They did this for the purpose of hurting the nat—hurting us of course and hurting the nation. Now they're [the *New York Times*] going to pay. As far as I'm concerned, I will make them personally pay as long as I am in this office.

[ . . . ]

Nixon: [ . . . ] put some—the fear of God into other people in this government.

[ . . . ]

Nixon: I hope to God—he's not Jewish is he?

Ziegler: [Laughing] I'm sure he is—Ellsberg?

Nixon: I hope not, I hope not.

Haldeman: [unclear] is Jewish. Why the hell wouldn't he be?

Nixon: Oh yeah, I know, I know, I know, but it's, it's, it's, it's a bad thing for us. It's a bad thing for us. It's a bad thing. Maybe we'll be lucky for once. Many Jews in the Communist conspiracy. [ . . . ] Chambers and Hiss were the only non-Jews. [ . . . ] Many thought that Hiss was. He could have been a half. [ . . . ] Every other one was a Jew—and it raised hell for us. But in this case, I hope to God he's not a Jew.

Haldeman: [Laughing] Well, I suspect he is.

Nixon: You can't tell by the name.

Haldeman: Or Halperin. [ . . . ] Gelb is—

Nixon: Gelb's a Jew.

June 29, 1971: Nixon and Mitchell, 8:05 A.M., Cabinet Room

Nixon: I noticed that Mr. Ellsberg, when he was picked up, said that he's not guilty. He thought, “I did this for patriotic reasons. I did it for the interests of the country.” Alger Hiss said the same thing. The Rosenbergs said the same thing. Victor Perlo . . . same thing. I know about Ellsberg . . . like Perlo, he could be a fascist, he could be a

communist, he could be for the war, he could be against the war. [ . . . ] Some of our people said, “Don't make him a martyr.” And after all, he is for all intentions—after all, everyone is against the war. Sure they are. What are you going to do? Are you going to just let everyone in the government just go to hell—because of that? So we're going to go forward on that [prosecution], John.

#### Sources

Nixon Tapes. College Park: Nixon Library Materials at NARA.

Transcriptions by National Security Archive, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/%7EEnsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB48/transcript.pdf> and Daniel Ellsberg, available at [http://www.ellsberg.net/writing/Nixon\\_Tapes.htm](http://www.ellsberg.net/writing/Nixon_Tapes.htm).

#### Richard Nixon, “Whole Bay of Pigs Thing” (1972)

*This section from President Nixon's Oval Office tapes has been regarded as part of the “smoking gun” of the Watergate scandal. However, conspiracy researchers investigating the Kennedy assassination have also long been intrigued by a comment made by Nixon to H. R. Haldeman. Conspiracy theorists believe that when Nixon talks about the “whole Bay of Pigs thing,” he's revealing his supposed involvement in the Kennedy assassination.*

Transcript of the recording of a meeting between President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman in the Oval Office on June 23, 1972 from 10.04 A.M. to 11.39 A.M.

Haldeman: okay—that's fine. Now, on the investigation, you know, the Democratic break-in thing, we're back to the—in the, the problem area because the FBI is not under control, because Gray doesn't exactly know how to control them, and they have, their investigation is now leading into some productive areas, because they've been able to trace the money, not through the money itself, but through the bank, you know, sources—the banker himself. And, and it goes in some directions we don't want it to go. Ah, also there have been some things, like an informant came in

off the street to the FBI in Miami, who was a photographer or has a friend who is a photographer who developed some films through this guy, Barker, and the films had pictures of Democratic National Committee letter head documents and things. So I guess, so it's things like that that are gonna, that are filtering in. Mitchell came up with yesterday, and John Dean analyzed very carefully last night and concludes, concurs now with Mitchell's recommendation that the only way to solve this, and we're set up beautifully to do it, ah, in that and that . . . the only network that paid any attention to it last night was NBC . . . they did a massive story on the Cuban [ . . . ]

Nixon: Of course, this is a, this is a Hunt, you will—that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab there's a hell of a lot of things and that we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go any further. This involves these Cubans, Hunt, and a lot of hanky-panky that we have nothing to do with ourselves. Well what the hell, did Mitchell know about this thing to any much of a degree?

Haldeman: I think so. I don't think he knew the details, but I think he knew.

Nixon: He didn't know how it was going to be handled though, with Dahlberg and the Texans and so forth? Well who was the asshole that did? [Unintelligible] Is it Liddy? Is that the fellow? He must be a little nuts.

Haldeman: He is.

Nixon: I mean he just isn't well screwed on is he? Isn't that the problem?

Haldeman: No, but he was under pressure, apparently, to get more information, and as he got more pressure, he pushed the people harder to move harder on . . .

Nixon: Pressure from Mitchell?

Haldeman: Apparently.

Nixon: Oh, Mitchell, Mitchell was at the point that you made on this, that exactly what I need from you is on the—

Haldeman: Gemstone, yeah.

Nixon: All right, fine, I understand it all. We won't second-guess Mitchell and the rest. Thank God it wasn't Colson.

Haldeman: The FBI interviewed Colson yesterday. They determined that would be a good thing to do.

Nixon: Um hum.

Haldeman: Ah, to have him take a . . .

Nixon: Um hum.

Haldeman: An interrogation, which he did, and that, the FBI guys working the case had concluded that there were one or two possibilities, one, that this was a White House, they don't think that there is anything at the Election Committee, they think it was either a White House operation and they had some obscure reasons for it, non political, . . .

Nixon: Uh huh.

Haldeman: Or it was a . . .

Nixon: Cuban thing—

Haldeman: Cubans and the CIA. And after their interrogation of, of . . .

Nixon: Colson.

Haldeman: Colson, yesterday, they concluded it was not the White House, but are now convinced it is a CIA thing, so the CIA turn off would [ . . . ]

Nixon: When you get in these people when you . . . get these people in, say: "Look, the problem is that this will open the whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing, and the President just feels that" ah, without going into the details . . . don't, don't lie to them to the extent to say there is no involvement, but just say this is sort of a comedy of errors, bizarre, without getting into it, "the President believes that it is going to open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again. And, ah because these people are plugging for, for keeps and that they should call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don't go any further into this case," period!

Haldeman: OK.

Nixon: That's the way to put it, do it straight. [Unintelligible]

Haldeman: Get more done for our cause by the opposition than by us at this point.

Nixon: You think so?

Haldeman: I think so, yeah.

**Source**

Available at [http://www.watergate.info/tapes/72-06-23\\_smoking-gun.shtml](http://www.watergate.info/tapes/72-06-23_smoking-gun.shtml).

**Richard E. Sprague, *The Taking of America, 1-2-3* (1976)**

*Richard Sprague, a computer expert who became increasingly involved in investigating the Kennedy assassination, provided photographic analysis for Jim Garrison's case against Clay Shaw before going on to found the Committee to Investigate Assassinations in 1968. He worked to persuade Congress to conduct an inquiry into the murders of JFK, RFK, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the attempted assassination of presidential candidate George Wallace, and subsequently served as a consultant to the appointed House Select Committee on Assassinations. This selection is from his 1976 book *The Taking of America*.*

The taking of America has been both a simple and a very complex process. It has not been the result of a coup d'état, although some aspects of the process resemble a coup. It has not been a process similar to the dictatorship takeovers in Germany, Italy and other fascist regimes. It has not been a process like the Communist "uprisings" in Russia, Hungary and other Eastern European countries.

The taking of America has been a process unique in the history of the world. The one feature that makes it unique is that what was once the greatest democracy in the world has been taken over by a power control group without the knowledge of most of the American people, their congressional representatives, or the rest of the world.

The group has taken America in this fashion because manipulation of the American presidency and the presidential electoral procedure is enough to control America. Two fiendishly clever stratagems were used to keep the fact that control had been seized from being obvious to the people. The first of these was control of the established media in the dissemination of both true (blocking) and false (flooding) information. The second was the use of clandestine and secret weapons and techniques developed during World War Two and perfected during the Korean and Viet Nam wars. These techniques are so new and

unusual as to be unbelievable to most citizens. Thus, the incredibility of such weapons as hypnosis, brainwashing and "programming" of patsies as assassins became a psychological tool in the bag of techniques of the power control group. The average American has shrugged off the possibility of the takeover with the belief that, "That's not possible here."

The use of such weapons, coupled with a tremendous campaign through the controlled media that both whitewashes any signs of conspiracies and spreads disinformation throughout the country, has successfully blocked any serious or official attempts to get at the truth. Unofficial investigators, private researchers, and even Congressional representatives have been ridiculed and completely blocked by both the power control group and their media allies.

To take over a real democracy without letting the people know it has been taken over is a fantastic achievement. A list of the accomplishments of the power control group illustrates the point. Since 1963, they have:

1. Assassinated John F. Kennedy;
2. Controlled Lyndon B. Johnson as president;
3. Forced LBJ out of the presidency;
4. Assassinated Robert F. Kennedy, assuring Nixon's election in 1968;
5. Assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King;
6. Eliminated Ted Kennedy as a contender in the 1972 elections by framing him at Chappaquiddick and threatening his children;
7. Stopped George Wallace's campaign, assuring Nixon's election in 1972;
8. Knocked Edmund Muskie out of the 1972 election campaign by using dirty tricks;
9. Covered up all of the above;
10. Controlled the 15 major news media organizations;
11. Made Gerald Ford vice president and then president;
12. Insured continuity of the cover-ups by forcing Ford to pardon Nixon;
13. Murdered about 100 witnesses and participants in the three assassinations and one attempted assassination;

14. Blocked efforts by private citizens and organizations to reveal the take-over; discredited, ruined or infiltrated these individuals or groups; murdered or were accomplices to the murders of the operating assassins;

15. Blocked efforts by members of the Senate and House to initiate investigations of the assassinations and attempted to whitewash, ridicule or eliminate these efforts (their influence and infiltration has been particularly effective in the Church Committee and in the House Rules Committee);

16. Controlled the presidential election procedure since 1964 by eliminating the candidates who might expose the truth and insuring the election or appointment of candidates already committed to covering up the truth about the take-over.

The question for 1976 was: Could the power control group continue the take-over during that year's elections? Would they be successful in blocking efforts to expose the take-over by congress? Would they be able to fool the American public again, control the media, and eliminate the contenders for the presidency in 1976 who might have threatened their secure position? The answer to these questions was "Yes."

The candidates on the scene during the 1976 primaries fell into three categories according to the control group's point of view. Category 1 included candidates that would continue the cover-up of the take-over. Gerald Ford led this group with Ronald Reagan not far behind him. Henry Jackson was a probable ally because of his backing of the CIA, an important organization in the cover-ups and the takeover. Category 2 included those candidates who would probably try to expose the take-over and the power control group if elected. Morris Udall, Fred Harris and George Wallace fell into this category. The third category included candidates whose intentions were not clear, or unknown at the time. Jimmy Carter, Franck Church and Hubert Humphrey remained in this group, and Sergeant Shriver and Birch Bayh were also in this category before they dropped out of the race.

Efforts would have been made to eliminate Udall, Harris or Wallace if any one of them was nominated at the Democratic convention. Carter must certainly have been put to some kind of loyalty test before being permitted to continue as the Democratic nominee. Reagan and Ford were, no doubt, already "safe" candidates for the control group because of their demonstrated cover-up performances.

Ford had cooperated fully in at least four ways. He was on the Warren Commission and played a leading role in the cover-up. He wrote the cover-up book *Portrait of the Assassin*. He pardoned Nixon and protected the Nixon tapes. And he formed the Rockefeller Commission, appointing David Belin as head of the staff to continue the cover-up of the JFK conspiracy.

Reagan had cooperated in at least three ways. He protected important witnesses from extradition from California between 1967 and 1969 for testimony before the grand jury in New Orleans and at the trial of Clay Shaw. He assisted Evelle Younger, then district attorney in Los Angeles and later California state attorney general, in covering up the assassination conspiracy in the Robert Kennedy case. And he has consistently supported the foreign and domestic clandestine activities of the CIA, FBI and other intelligence agencies both nationally and in California.

A later chapter will describe just how the Democratic candidate may be eliminated and when. Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez from San Antonio, Texas, who introduced House Resolution 204 to reopen the two Kennedy assassination cases, the Dr. King case and the George Wallace shooting, took a public position on the possibility that the 1976 election was controlled. Gonzalez said "If we find the answers—the truth—to the questions I have raised (about the assassinations of JFK, RFK, MLK and the Wallace attempt), as well as those many others have raised, will the truth make us free? Yes, it will, for the truth will make us free to pursue democracy—our system of government—through the ballot box, and we will not be subject to government by bullets. The truth



will enable us to prevent such a series of events from happening again. Some of the supporters of the investigation have written to me recently of their hope that the investigation will get underway right away (March 1976) because they are concerned that there is great danger in store for the Democratic nominee for the President, whoever he turns out to be. I hope very much that these fears do not turn out to have a basis in fact.”

**Source**

Sprague, Richard E. [1976] 1985. *The Taking of America, 1-2-3*. Published by author. Available at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/ToA/ToAChp1.html>.

**Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Hearing on MKULTRA (1977)**

*Part of the congressional investigations of the 1970s into the activities of the intelligence agencies looked at MKULTRA, a program to develop mind control techniques that had included the use of nonvoluntary LSD testing. In this exchange, Admiral Turner, then director of the CIA, is quizzed about the LSD-related death of Frank Olson, and also about the agency's running a safe house seemingly as a brothel.*

Testimony of Admiral Stansfield Turner,  
Director of Central Intelligence

Accompanied by Frank Laubinger, Office of Technical Services; Al Brody, Office of Inspector General; Ernest Mayerfield, Office of General Counsel; and George L. Cary, Legislative Counsel

SENATOR KENNEDY: Admiral Turner, this is an enormously distressing report that you give to the American Congress and to the American people today. Granted, it happened many years ago, but what we are basically talking about is an activity which took place in the country that involved the perversion and corruption of many of our outstanding research centers in this country, with CIA funds, where some of our top researchers were unwittingly involved in research

sponsored by the Agency in which they had no knowledge of the background or the support for.

Much of it was done with American citizens who were completely unknowing in terms of taking various drugs, and there are perhaps any number of Americans who are walking around today on the east coast or west coast who were given drugs, with all the kinds of physical and psychological damage that can be caused. We have gone over that in very careful detail, and it is significant and severe indeed.

I do not know what could be done in a less democratic country that would be more alien to our own traditions than was really done in this narrow area, and as you give this report to the Committee, I would like to get some sense of your own concern about this type of activity, and how you react, having assumed this important responsibility with the confidence of President Carter and the overwhelming support, obviously, of the Congress, under this set of circumstances.

I did not get much of a feeling in reviewing your statement here this morning of the kind of abhorrence to this type of past activity which I think the American people would certainly deplore and which I believe that you do, but could you comment upon that question, and also perhaps give us what ideas you have to ensure that it cannot happen again?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Senator Kennedy, it is totally abhorrent for me to think of using a human being as a guinea pig and in any way jeopardizing his life and his health, no matter how great the cause. I am not here to pass judgment on my predecessors, but I can assure you that this is totally beyond the pale of my contemplation of activities that the CIA or any other of our intelligence agencies should undertake.

[ . . . ]

SENATOR SCHWEIKER: Admiral Turner, I read in *The New York Times* that part of this series of MKULTRA experiments involved an arrangement with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics to test LSD surreptitiously on unwitting patrons in bars in New York and San Francisco.

Some of the subjects became violently ill and were hospitalized. I wonder if you would just briefly describe what we were doing there and how it was carried out? I assume it was through a safe house operation. I don't believe your statement went into much detail.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I did mention the safe house operation in my statement, sir, and that is how these were carried out. What we have learned from the new documentation is the location and the dates at which the safe houses were run by the CIA and the identification of three individuals who were associated with running those safe houses. We know something about the construction work that was done in them because there were contracts for this. Beyond that, we are pretty much drawing inferences as to the things that went on as to what you are saying here.

SENATOR SCHWEIKER: Well, the subjects were unwitting. You can infer that much, right?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Right.

SENATOR SCHWEIKER: If you happened to be at the wrong bar at the wrong place and time, you got it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: We are trying to be very precise with you, sir, and not draw an inference here. There are six cases of these one hundred and forty-nine where we have enough evidence in this new documentation to substantiate that there was unwitting testing and some of that involves these safe houses. There are other cases where it is ambiguous as to whether the testing was unwitting or voluntary. There are others where it was clearly voluntary.

SENATOR SCHWEIKER: Of course, after a few drinks, it is questionable whether informed consent means anything to a person in a bar anyway.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, we don't have any indication that all these cases where it is ambiguous involved drinking of any kind. There are cases in penal institutions where it is not clear whether the prisoner was given a choice or not. I don't know that he wasn't given a choice, but I

don't positively know that he was, and I classify that as an ambiguous incident.

[ . . . ]

SENATOR INOUYE: Admiral Turner, MKULTRA Subproject 3 was a project involving the surreptitious administration of LSD on unwitting persons, was it not?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, sir.

SENATOR INOUYE: In February, 1954, and this was in the very early stages of MKULTRA, the Director of Central Intelligence wrote to the technical services staff officials criticizing their judgment because they had participated in an experiment involving the administration of LSD on an unwitting basis to Dr. Frank Olson, who later committed suicide. Now, the individuals criticized were the same individuals who were responsible for Subproject 3, involving exactly the same practices. Even though these individuals were clearly aware of the dangers of surreptitious administration and had been criticized by the Director of Central Intelligence, Subproject 3 was not terminated immediately after Dr. Olson's death. In fact, according to the documents, it continued for a number of years. Can you provide this committee with any explanation of how such testing could have continued under these circumstances?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, sir, I really can't.

[ . . . ]

SENATOR KENNEDY: With regards to the activities that took place in these safe houses, as I understand from the records, two-way mirrors were used. Is that your understanding?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, sir. We have records that construction was done to put in two-way mirrors.

SENATOR KENNEDY: And they were placed in the bedroom, as I understand.

(pause)

SENATOR KENNEDY: Well, we have documents—

ADMIRAL TURNER: I believe that was in the [Church Senate Committee] record, but I don't have the details.

SENATOR KENNEDY: And rather elaborate decorations were added, as I understand, at least to the one in San Francisco, in the bedroom, which are French can-can dancers, floral pictures, drapery, including installation of bedroom mirrors, three-framed Toulouse Lautrec posters with black silk mats, and a number of other—red bedroom curtains and recording equipment, and then a series of documents which were provided to the committee which indicate a wide proliferation of different cash for \$100, generally in the \$100 range over a period of time on the particular checks. Even the names are blocked out, as to the person who is receiving it. Cash for undercover agents, operating expenses, drinks, entertainment while administering, and then it is dashed out, and then the other documents, that would suggest, at least with the signature of your principal agent out there, that called the operation “Midnight Climax.”

What can you tell us what it might suggest to you about what techniques were being used by the Agency in terms of reaching that sort of broad-based group of Americans that were being evidently enticed for testing in terms of drugs and others? Do you draw any kind of conclusion about what might have been going on out there, in these safe houses?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, sir.  
(general laughter)

**Source**

U.S. Senate. 1977. *Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Hearing on MKULTRA*. 3 August.

**Report of the Select Committee on Assassinations (1979)**

*Although it concurred with most of the findings of the Warren Commission, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded in its report in 1979 that there was “a high probability” (based on acoustic evidence that has since been challenged) that there was more than one gunman involved in the shooting of President Kennedy, and hence some form of a conspiracy.*

A. Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots at President John F. Kennedy. The second and third shots he fired struck the President. The third shot he fired killed the President.

1. President Kennedy was struck by two rifle shots fired from behind him.

2. The shots that struck President Kennedy from behind him were fired from the sixth floor window of the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository building.

3. Lee Harvey Oswald owned the rifle that was used to fire the shots from the sixth floor window of the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository building.

4. Lee Harvey Oswald, shortly before the assassination, had access to and was present on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository building.

5. Lee Harvey Oswald’s other actions tend to support the conclusion that he assassinated President Kennedy.

B. Scientific acoustical evidence establishes a high probability that two gunmen fired at President John F. Kennedy. Other scientific evidence does not preclude the possibility of two gunmen firing at the President. Scientific evidence negates some specific conspiracy allegations.

C. The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that President John F. Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy. The committee is unable to identify the other gunman or the extent of the conspiracy.

1. The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that the Soviet Government was not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

2. The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that the Cuban Government was not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

3. The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that anti-Castro Cuban groups, as groups, were not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, but that the available evidence does not preclude the

possibility that individual members may have been involved.

4. The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that the national syndicate of organized crime, as a group, was not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, but that the available evidence does not preclude the possibility that individual members may have been involved.

5. The Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency were not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

D. Agencies and departments of the U.S. Government performed with varying degrees of competency in the fulfillment of their duties. President John F. Kennedy did not receive adequate protection. A thorough and reliable investigation into the responsibility of Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was conducted. The investigation into the possibility of conspiracy in the assassination was inadequate. The conclusions of the investigations were arrived at in good faith, but presented in a fashion that was too definitive.

1. The Secret Service was deficient in the performance of its duties.

a. The Secret Service possessed information that was not properly analyzed, investigated or used by the Secret Service in connection with the President's trip to Dallas; in addition, Secret Service agents in the motorcade were inadequately prepared to protect the President from a sniper.

b. The responsibility of the Secret Service to investigate the assassination was terminated when the Federal Bureau of Investigation assumed primary investigative responsibility.

2. The Department of Justice failed to exercise initiative in supervising and directing the investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the assassination.

3. The Federal Bureau of Investigation performed with varying degrees of competency in the fulfillment of its duties.

a. The Federal Bureau of Investigation adequately investigated Lee Harvey Oswald prior to the assassination and properly evaluated the evidence it possessed to assess his potential to endanger the public safety in a national emergency.

b. The Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted a thorough and professional investigation into the responsibility of Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination.

c. The Federal Bureau of Investigation failed to investigate adequately the possibility of a conspiracy to assassinate the President.

d. The Federal Bureau of Investigation was deficient in its sharing of information with other agencies and departments.

4. The Central Intelligence Agency was deficient in its collection and sharing of information both prior to and subsequent to the assassination.

5. The Warren Commission performed with varying degrees of competency in the fulfillment of its duties.

a. The Warren Commission conducted a thorough and professional investigation into the responsibility of Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination.

b. The Warren Commission failed to investigate adequately the possibility of a conspiracy to assassinate the President. This deficiency was attributable in part to the failure of the Commission to receive all the relevant information that was in the possession of other agencies and departments of the Government.

c. The Warren Commission arrived at its conclusions, based on the evidence available to it, in good faith.

d. The Warren Commission presented the conclusions in its report in a fashion that was too definitive.

**Source**

*Report of the Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives.* 1979. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office. Available at <http://www.archives>.



gov/research\_room/jfk/house\_select\_committee/committee\_report.html.

**Pat Robertson, "Are Credit Cards Associated with the Mark of the Beast?" (1985)**

*In this section from his 1985 book Inspirational Writings of Pat Robertson: The Secret Kingdom & Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions, the evangelist and writer Pat Robertson echoes other right-wing commentators who voice concerns that the apocalyptic prophecy that people will be branded with the Satanic "mark of the beast" is taking shape in the form of credit card data.*

In the book of Revelation, there is a discussion of an individual who will become a world dictator, ruler of a domain that looks very similar to the old Roman Empire. This individual is called the "living creature," or the "beast." The Bible tells us he has a number: 666 (see Revelation 13:11–8).

Six is the biblical number of humanity. It is one less than perfection. The man whose number is 666 will lead humanity's revolt against God. There are some who feel that Nero could have been that man whose number is 666, and various other names have also been put forward as that person. But Revelation says that, when he comes onto the scene, he will have such dominance that no one can buy or sell without taking his mark, either on the forehead—which indicates will—or on the hand—which indicates action. So, how will that mark come to be accepted? There are a couple of possibilities. Today we have developed devices called smart cards. These are tiny credit cards that have a microchip implanted in them. They can be put through a card reader at a store that will reveal a person's entire credit history, including the amount of his bank account. The person's transaction in the store can be sent back to a central bank and one master account can then be kept in a computer.

Now there is also the SWIFT system, which means Society of World-wide Interfunds Transfers, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. It ties together about seven hundred major banking

systems around the world. Every day, hundreds of billions of dollars in bank transactions are processed by this vast world-wide computer network. Clearly, mankind now has the technology to link up virtually all the credit in the entire civilized world from the local retail outlet right through to the international banking center.

So, it would not be too difficult, technologically, to move from the smart card to a microchip implanted in the hand. This could be read by a laser-type device that would in turn be connected to a master computer. This could lead to a time when there would be no need for cash or checks: Everything would be done by computer. With these developments, it becomes easy to see how the world may be controlled.

Banks are moving in the direction of ever more efficiency with the advent of so-called "transaction cards." These are not charge cards, but they debit an account immediately. As a charge is made, they immediately subtract the money from the bank account. This entire electronic funds transfer system is gaining momentum in the drive toward a checkless, cashless society. This society will not necessarily occur, but it certainly is technologically possible, and could easily fulfill what Revelation says: That people could not buy or sell without the mark of the Beast. [ . . . ]

**Source**

Pat Robertson. 1985. *Inspirational Writings of Pat Robertson: The Secret Kingdom & Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. Available online at: <http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=12#103>. © Pat Robertson. All rights reserved.

**Edward J. Markey, "American Nuclear Guinea Pigs" (1986)**

*In this letter to the secretary of energy, the chair of the House Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power summarizes a report on human radiation experiments. Revelations about this program of testing have become one of the central planks in the countercultural distrust of government.*

October 24, 1986

Dear Secretary Herrington:

As you know, the Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power has been conducting an investigation into radiation experimentation for human subjects. I am forwarding to you the results of that investigation, a Subcommittee staff report titled, "American Nuclear Guinea Pigs: Three Decades of Radiation Experiments on U.S. Citizens."

This report reviewed Department of Energy documents, which revealed the frequent and systematic use of human subjects as guinea pigs for radiation experiments sponsored by the Department's predecessor agencies. Some of these experiments were conducted in the 1940s and 1950s, and others were performed during the supposedly more enlightened 1960s and 1970s. The report describes in detail 31 experiments during which about 695 persons were exposed.

In many of these experiments, individuals were exposed to radiation which provided little or no medical benefit to the subjects. The purpose of several of these experiments was actually to cause injury to the participants. Many others sought simply to measure the effects of radiation on humans. American citizens thus became nuclear calibration devices for experimenters run amok.

In a number of experiments, subjects received doses that exceeded presently recognized limits for occupational radiation exposure. Doses were as much as 98 times the body burden recognized at the time the experiments were conducted.

Too many of these experiments used human subjects that were captive audiences or populations that some experimenters perhaps might have considered "expendable": the elderly, prisoners, hospital patients suffering from terminal diseases or who might not have retained their full faculties for informed consent.

Some of the more repugnant or bizarre of these experiments include the following:

—From 1945 to 1947, as part of the Manhattan Project, 18 patients believed to have limited life spans were injected with plutonium.

—From 1961 to 1965, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 20 elderly subjects were injected or fed radium or thorium.

—During 1946 and 1947, at the University of Rochester, six patients with good kidney function were injected with uranium salts to determine the concentration which could produce renal injury.

—From 1953 to 1957, at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, approximately 12 terminal brain tumor patients were injected with uranium to determine the dose at which kidney damage began to occur.

—From 1963 to 1971, 67 inmates at Oregon State Prison and 64 inmates at Washington State Prison received x-rays to their testes to determine the effects of radiation on human fertility and testicular function.

—From 1963 to 1965, at the Atomic Energy Commission's National Reactor Testing Station in Idaho, radioactive iodine was purposely released on seven separate occasions. In one experiment, seven human subjects drank milk from cows which had grazed on iodine-contaminated land.

—From 1961 to 1963, at the University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory, 102 human subjects were fed real fallout from the Nevada Test Site; simulated fallout particles containing radioactive material; or solutions of radioactive cesium and strontium.

—During the late 1960s, at Columbia University and Montefiore Hospital, the Bronx, 12 terminal cancer patients were injected with radioactive calcium and strontium.

These experiments, and others described in the Subcommittee staff report, shock the conscience and represent a black mark on the history of nuclear medical research. They raise one major horrifying question: did the intense desire to know the consequences of radioactive exposure after the dawn of the atomic age lead American scientists to mimic the kind of demented human experiments conducted by the Nazis? Did the Department or its predecessor agencies fund or sponsor programs which crossed the line that no scientific research can ever be permitted to traverse?

While it is clear that present public and scientific officials are generally not responsible for these experiments, these circumstances nonetheless represent a historical, institutional failure. To compound the evil, in too many experiments, no long term follow up was conducted of subjects. While these experiments cannot be undone, though they must never be repeated, there are potential remedial steps that can be taken to help the victims who served as human nuclear guinea pigs.

I therefore urge the Department of Energy to make every practicable effort to identify the persons who served as experimental subjects, to examine the long term histories of subjects for an increased incidence of radiation-associated diseases, and to compensate these unfortunate victims for suspected damages. A Defense Department program provides a model for such follow up. The Nuclear Test Personnel Review, administered by the Defense Nuclear Agency, is a registry for military personnel exposed to fallout from atmospheric nuclear tests. The primary objectives of the Review are to identify the approximately 200,000 Defense Department personnel involved in such tests, to determine their exposures, to identify incidences of death or illness, and to assist veterans in claims for compensation.

If such an effort can be carried out for military personnel acting in the line of duty, surely a similar effort should be possible for the far smaller number of peaceful atomic soldiers used as unwitting human subjects in radiation experiments. If you feel that new legislation would be necessary, the Subcommittee will be pleased to work with the Department to develop it. [ . . . ]

Sincerely,  
Edward J. Markey  
Chairman

**Source**

Available at <http://www.GrandConspiracy.com/transcript-radiation.html>. Original document can be found at <http://hrex.dis.anl.gov>.

**Webster G. Tarpley and Anton Chaitkin,  
George Bush: The Unauthorized Biography  
(1990)**

*Lyndon Larouche and his followers have been opponents of George Bush Sr. since the 1980 election when they and other far-right groups branded him an establishment insider. In George Bush: The Unauthorized Biography, two members of the Larouche group offer a lengthy account of the former president's supposed misdeeds. In the following chapter, the strange circumstances surrounding the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan are outlined, including the fascinating connection between the Bush and Hinckley families.*

The Attempted Coup D'Etat of March 30, 1981

In the midst of the Bush-Baker cabal's relentless drive to seize control over the Reagan administration, John Warnock Hinckley Jr. carried out his attempt to assassinate President Reagan on the afternoon of March 30, 1981. George Bush was visiting Texas that day. Bush was flying from Fort Worth to Austin in his Air Force Two Boeing 707. In Fort Worth, Bush had unveiled a plaque at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, the old Hotel Texas, designating it as a national historic site. This was the hotel, coincidentally, in which John F. Kennedy had spent the last night of his life, before going on to Dallas the next day, November 22, 1963. Here was a sinister symbolism! [ . . . ]

Bush says that his flight from Carswell to Andrews Air Force Base near Washington took about two and one half hours, and that he arrived at Andrews at about 6:40 PM. Bush says he was told by Ed Meese that the operation to remove the bullet that had struck Reagan was a success, and that the president was likely to survive. Bush's customary procedure was to land at Andrews and then take a helicopter to the vice presidential residence, the Naval Observatory on Massachusetts Avenue. His aides Ed Pollard and John Matheny suggested that he would save time by going by helicopter directly to the White House south lawn, where he could arrive in time to be shown on the 7 PM Eastern time evening news broadcasts. Bush

makes much of the fact that he refused to do this, allegedly on the symbolic grounds that “Only the President lands on the south lawn.”

Back at the White House, the principal cabinet officers had assembled in the situation room and had been running a crisis management committee during the afternoon. Haig says he was at first adamant that a conspiracy, if discovered, should be ruthlessly exposed: “It was essential that we get the facts and publish them quickly. Rumor must not be allowed to breed on this tragedy.”

Remembering the aftermath of the Kennedy assassination, I said to Woody Goldberg, “No matter what the truth is about this shooting, the American people must know it.” But the truth has never been established.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger’s memoir of that afternoon reminds us of two highly relevant facts. The first is that a “NORAD [North American Air Defense Command] exercise with a simulated incoming missile attack had been planned for the next day.” Weinberger agreed with General David Jones, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that this exercise should be cancelled.

Weinberger also recalls that the group in the Situation Room was informed by James Baker that “there had been a FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Administration] exercise scheduled for the next day on presidential succession, with the general title ‘Nine Lives.’ By an immediate consensus, it was agreed that exercise should also be cancelled.”

As Weinberger further recalls, “at almost exactly 7:00, the Vice President came to the Situation Room and very calmly assumed the chair at the head of the table.” According to Weinberger, the first item discussed was the need for someone to sign the Dairy Price Support Bill the next day so as to reassure the public. Bush asked Weinberger for a report on the status of US forces, which Weinberger furnished. [ . . . ]

As Weinberger recounts: “[Attorney General Bill French Smith] then reported that all FBI reports concurred with the information I had

received; that the shooting was a completely isolated incident and that the assassin, John Hinckley, with a previous record in Nashville, seemed to be a ‘Bremmer’ type, a reference to the attempted assassin of George Wallace.”

Those who were not watching carefully here may have missed the fact that just a few minutes after George Bush had walked into the room, he had presided over the sweeping under the rug of the decisive question regarding Hinckley and his actions: was Hinckley a part of a conspiracy, domestic or international? Not more than five hours after the attempt to kill Reagan, on the basis of the most fragmentary early reports, before Hinckley had been properly questioned, and before a full investigation had been carried out, a group of cabinet officers chaired by George Bush had ruled out a priori any conspiracy. Haig, whose memoirs talk most about the possibility of a conspiracy, does not seem to have objected to this incredible decision.

From that moment on, “no conspiracy” became the official doctrine of the US regime, for the moment a Bush regime, and the most massive efforts were undertaken to stifle any suggestion to the contrary. The iron curtain came down on the truth about Hinckley.

What was the truth of the matter? The Roman common sense of Lucius Annaeus Seneca [ . . . ] would have dictated that the person who would have profited most from Reagan’s death be scrutinized as the prime suspect. That was obviously Bush, since Bush would have assumed the presidency if Reagan had succumbed to his wounds. The same idea was summed up by an eighth grade student at the Alice Deal Junior High School in Washington DC who told teachers on March 31: “It is a plot by Vice President Bush to get into power. If Bush becomes President, the CIA would be in charge of the country.” The pupils at this school had been asked for their views of the Hinckley assassination attempt of the previous day.

Curiously enough, press accounts emerging over the next few days provided a compelling



prima facie case that there had been a conspiracy around the Hinckley attentat, and that the conspiracy had included members of Bush's immediate family. Most of the overt facts were not disputed, but were actually confirmed by Bush and his son Neil.

**Source**

Tarpley, Webster G., and Anton Chaitkin. 1990. *George Bush: The Unauthorized Biography*. Ch. 17. Available at <http://www.tarpley.net/bush17.htm>.

**“J.F.K. Assassination, 11/22/63: Coincidence or Conspiracy?” (1990s)**

*This article by an unnamed writer lists 100 unanswered questions about the Kennedy assassination that conspiracy researchers have focused on over the last four decades.*

1) Why were over 58 eye-witnesses to the assassination ignored by the Warren Commission when they said they felt shots had NOT come from the Book Depository?

2) Why did most persons in Dealey Plaza run up the Grassy Knoll after the shots while the authorities ran to the Book Depository?

3) Why were MULTIPLE rifles found at the Book Depository and then all but one made to ‘disappear’?

4) Why were ongoing de-escalation plans for Vietnam reversed within 48 hrs of the assassination?

5) Why were the ten persons taken into custody in Dealey Plaza all released, some without so much as their names taken? What is the evidence (officially ignored) that some of them were directly involved?

6) How was ‘Watergate’ and the ensuing Watergate scandal DIRECTLY connected to the JFK assassination?

7) What MULTIPLE lines of evidence connect the JFK, RFK and MLK assassinations?

8) What are the known (often frightening and bizarre) details of the over 200 persons who were murdered or died VERY suspiciously (and

conveniently) after 11/22/63 because they had seen the ‘wrong’ things, tried to speak up, etc.? Why did they die in “clusters” when investigations were ongoing—sometimes just hours before they were to be questioned?

9) Why was Nixon one of the few Americans who could not correctly remember where he was when the assassination occurred? Why may he have ‘forgotten’ he was on a plane out of Dallas?

10) Why could J.E. Hoover also not ‘remember’ he was in Dallas for a meeting just days before the assassination? Why did he show NO surprise at the announcement of JFK's death?

11) What is the evidence that FBI informants (perhaps even Lee Harvey Oswald himself) had warned the FBI of an impending assassination attempt on JFK which the FBI ignored and later denied even getting?

12) What multiple lines of evidence show Ruby and Oswald's FBI and CIA connections?

13) What documents are still being withheld from public scrutiny in the National Archives and WHY? Why ‘hide’ any when the government ‘believes’ the act was committed by a ‘lone nut’!?

14) Why did so MANY government documents involving Lee Harvey Oswald and others ‘disappear’ or were said to have been ‘destroyed’—including Lee Harvey Oswald's Army Intelligence files, Lee Harvey Oswald's letter to his FBI contact Hosty and MUCH MORE?

15) Why when Lee Harvey Oswald returned to the USA from the USSR was he NOT officially met by any representatives of the CIA, FBI, State Dept. etc., but WAS met by Spas T Raiken, a former Nazi collaborator with intelligence community connections who the Warren Commission claimed was with ‘Traveller's Aid’.

16) Why was Marina Oswald sequestered in a hotel, surrounded with intelligence community connected persons, coached as to what to say and what she had experienced, and threatened with deportation if she did not cooperate?

17) What evidence connects EVERY president since the assassination (with the lone exception of Carter) directly with the assassination or its cover-up!? What are George H.W. Bush's connections to

the events of 11/22/63? Why was his name and address in Lee Harvey Oswald's Dallas friend's address book?

18) Why did Jack Ruby repeatedly implore of the Warren Commissioners to take him out of Dallas and to Washington where he felt he could speak the truth? Why did they NOT take him up on his offer and pleas?

19) What did Jack Ruby mean when he said that he was “no more involved in a conspiracy than you gentlemen” when he spoke to the Warren Commission?

20) Why did Ruby suddenly contract cancer and die just before his new trial was to begin?

21) Why did Dorothy Kilgallen, the only reporter to interview Ruby in prison, die mysteriously days after she said she would “break the case wide open” and her best friend die some days thereafter?

22) How do the events of 11/22/63 and its immediate aftermath STILL affect our everyday political and even personal lives?

23) What Government agencies and other groups were involved in the planning and execution of the President and then cover it up?

24) Why was the single-bullet or “Magic Bullet” theory of the Warren Commission a physical and medical IMPOSSIBILITY?

25) Why do those who played prominently in the assassination and its ‘investigation’ continually show up in contemporary political life? Are they being ‘rewarded’ for a ‘job well done’?

26) Why did the U.S. Government deliberately LIE to the American People and World about what they knew of the events of the assassination? Why do they CONTINUE to do so?

27) Who felt threatened by JFK? And who gained by his murder? Who had the means to kill him and cover it up to look like the work of a lone-nut?

28) How was the Media sometimes cleverly controlled and, at times, complicit in the coverage of events, facts and fiction?

29) Which Mafia bosses and employees, many of whom worked for and with the CIA, were involved in the assassination?

30) What did LBJ mean when he said the U.S. Government had been running a ‘Murder Incorporated’ down in the Caribbean in the ‘60’s?

31) Why did LBJ insist on being sworn in on Air Force One when he was quite legally President AUTOMATICALLY upon the death of JFK?

32) Why were some of the very same persons who were in Dallas on 11/22/63 also just by ‘coincidence’ near the RFK murder and Memphis for the MLK assassination?

33) Why did so MANY fear for their lives in the wake of an assassination by a (then dead) lone-nut? Why did so many die suddenly, mysteriously and ‘conveniently’?

34) Why did the FBI not react to an informant's report that Joseph Milteer knew in detail how JFK was going to be assassinated weeks before the event? Why did the public never hear that Milteer traveled hundreds of miles to witness the execution with his own eyes? Why was he never questioned by the Warren Commission, House Select Committee or anyone else?

35) Why were the few who attempted to tell the truth of the events harassed, punished, fired from their jobs, discredited, intimidated, marginalized, threatened and often killed?

36) Why did all those who met in Ruby's apartment the evening Ruby killed Oswald die mysteriously thereafter?

37) Why did so many bullets and so much of the physical evidence ‘disappear’?

38) Who were the multitude of PHONY ‘CIA’ and ‘Secret Service’ persons (complete with official looking ID) on the Grassy Knoll and around Dealey Plaza on 11/22/63? Why were they stopping persons from moving into certain locations?

39) Why did the driver of the Presidential limousine slow the car during the fusillade rather than accelerate?

40) Why did Secret Service men jump over the body of LBJ and not JFK?

41) Why were several of the Secret Service agents out drinking very late the night before at a club owned by a friend of Ruby's?

42) What did Jack Ruby know when he said “I’m Jack Ruby. You don’t know me, but you soon will” just BEFORE the assassination?

43) What evidence is there that Ruby, Oswald and Tippit (as well as others possibly involved) all knew and had been seen meeting each other?

44) Why was so much evidence and testimony suppressed and at times altered?

45) Why to THIS DAY do many live in fear to speak the truth of what they saw or know of the events of Dallas 11/22/63?

46) Why are powerful forces trying to discredit the new JFK movie? Why have ‘critics’ of the official version of events long been subject to harassment, surveillance and more?

47) Why were so MANY of the movies and photos taken in Dealey Plaza that day CONFISCATED by persons representing themselves as government officials and NEVER returned nor shown to the public?

48) Why do governmental and extra-governmental forces STILL spin dis-information stories related to 11/22/63 and its aftermath?

49) Why were several witnesses offered bribes and/or threatened by the FBI and others to NOT disclose the truth of what they saw?

50) Why were witnesses coached and badgered to get the testimony the Warren Commission ‘wanted’ to hear? Why were those who saw a different scenario ignored or worse?

51) Why did Warren suggest the Report NOT be published to save printing costs?

52) Why and how did police have a full description of Oswald before those on the investigation scene could have assembled any information to lead to such a conclusion?

53) Why did some newspapers get information only the FBI and CIA had on Oswald to print in their stories within hours of the event? Who leaked this information or had it on hand prior?

54) Why do so few know of the photos that show clear evidence of a conspiracy and even show images of the other conspirators and gunmen?

55) What is known of the multiplicity of mysterious activities of many in Dallas and Dealey Plaza that day?

56) Why did the FBI and CIA at the HIGHEST levels suppress information and work to foil a real investigation into aspects of the assassination?

57) What were the many Nazi and Fascist connections to the assassination?

58) What evidence is there of MULTIPLE gunmen in the School Book Depository and other buildings, as well as the Grassy Knoll?

59) Why was ‘Lee Harvey Oswald’ repeatedly seen at several places SIMULTANEOUSLY in the weeks before the assassination and who were those impersonating him and why?

60) What evidence shows that the person murdered by Ruby is NOT the person exhumed from that grave?

61) Why were so many of the medical evidences tampered with or made to ‘disappear’? Why were so many others seemingly altered?

62) Why did someone construct forged composite photos to frame Lee Harvey Oswald prior to the assassination?

63) Why did the JFK autopsy doctor who burned his notes and first draft of the autopsy report get a promotion shortly after this obstruction of justice and/or alteration of fact?

64) Why do the locations of wounds as seen by a team doctors in Dallas and that evening by another team of doctors in Bethesda Naval Hospital NOT match in number or location!?

65) Why did the CIA and other government entities try to discredit and obstruct Garrison’s investigation and frame him on false charges? Why were they so afraid of his investigation?

66) Who was the Army Intelligence man in and around the Texas School Book Depository?

67) Why were Jack Ruby and several of the Dallas Police and others seen repeatedly at multiple assassination-related locations in Dallas that day? How did they seem to ‘know’ where the ‘action’ was—or was to be?

68) Why do different documents and identifications of Lee Harvey Oswald show different height and even different faces—not to mention names? What was Lee Harvey Oswald’s REAL ‘mission’ in the USSR and in New Orleans

and Dallas after his return? Who did he work for? CIA? FBI? ONI?

69) Who were the several different men seen fleeing from the Plaza seconds after the shots rang out?

70) Why did the eye-witness reports of persons seeing men with rifles in Dealey Plaza before and during the shooting receive so little ‘official’ attention and even suppression?

71) Why was JFK’s body ILLEGALLY removed from Dallas and Texas jurisdiction? Why did the FBI remove all of the other physical evidence to Washington? Why was a Grand Jury never convened?

72) Why did the Warren Commission and FBI seem to repeatedly and consistently mis-spell the names of those who’s involvement might shed light on a possible conspiracy? Was this ‘conspiratorial dyslexia’ on the government’s part?

73) Were one or more bullets and bullet fragments removed secretly from JFK’s brain as much evidence indicates?

74) Why was his brain never sectioned and studied? Why and to where did it disappear along with other essential medical evidence?

75) Why do the descriptions of the size, color and other details of the coffin JFK’s body was placed into in Dallas NOT match those his body was in when it arrived for autopsy in Washington? Was there a ‘switch’ and tampering with the body during the flight?

76) Why were the autopsy doctors ORDERED to NOT follow certain STANDARD medical procedures and investigate certain wounds etc.?

77) What was the Government’s role in obstruction of justice after the fact . . . if not before?

78) Why were the seven particular persons on the Warren Commission selected? Why did several have intelligence community connections? Why were some enemies of JFK?

79) Has our Government been ‘illegitimate’ since 11/22/63? Are we still living with the legacy of a coup d’etat in America? Are the ‘coup’ leaders still firmly in control?

80) Is: ‘ignorance bliss’? Does: ‘knowledge imply responsibility’? Does: ‘silence equal complicity’?

81) What can be done to understand and finally undo this entire (long overdue) situation? Is Knowledge and Truth the first step to talking back our country? What ARE the facts? Why are they obscured from the average American?

82) Is the assassination of JFK the PIVOTAL event of American History since the Second World War? Is an understanding of the events a NECESSARY precursor to understanding EVERY MAJOR political event that has happened since—right up to TODAY!?

83) Why did Jack Ruby suddenly have a dramatic improvement in his financial situation just prior to the assassination?

84) Why did several persons not ‘officially’ thought to have been involved suddenly flee Dallas immediately after the Event?

85) Why did the Washington D.C. phone system fail for several minutes immediately during and after the assassination?

86) Why were most of the Cabinet conveniently and coincidentally out of the country at the time?

87) Why was the Navy man with the launch codes for the atomic weapons separated from JFK and LBJ? What foreknowledge did the Military have? What possible participation?

88) Can the deaths and destruction at home and abroad in Vietnam and ALL the subsequent wars be understood by an analysis of the JFK assassination?

89) Was Lee Harvey Oswald a CIA agent, as much evidence seems to indicate?

90) Need the American People question if our government and institutions of government have had ANY legitimacy since 11/22/63?

91) What Right-Wing groups and Businessmen were involved in the plot? Why?

92) Why were NO notes kept by ANYONE who interrogated Lee Harvey Oswald over a 48 hr period?

93) Why did Lee Harvey Oswald say “I am just a patsy”? Was he 100% correct?



94) Why does much evidence show that Lee Harvey Oswald did not even hold a rifle that day—and perhaps NOT even OWN one?

95) Why did then Governor Reagan refuse to extradite several persons suspected of direct involvement in the assassination for trial and then get suggested as a Presidential candidate?

96) Why did Lee Harvey Oswald have to be executed within 48 hrs of his alleged crime? Was he ‘supposed’ to have been killed prior?

97) How did Ruby gain entry into the Police station? Were the police waiting for Ruby to enter before moving Oswald?

98) Why did forces high in the FBI order the DESTRUCTION of a note Oswald had given to FBI agent Hosty in Dallas days before the assassination?

99) Why do CIA and other documents show a coordinated effort to ‘destroy’ the critics of the Warren Commission and the Government’s BIG LIE of the events of 11/22/63?

100) Did America DIE along with JFK that day in Dallas 11/22/63? Can we revive it and take back OUR country from the assassins and their heirs? Are we as a People more satisfied with the ‘COMFORTABLE LIE’ or the ‘UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH’?!?

#### Source

Originally at <http://www.bigfoot.com/conspiracies>.  
Now available at <http://www.conspiracy-net.com/archives/articles/conspiracy/assassinations/CNCka034.txt>.

### “Adam Weishaupt, 1776, The Green Back, and All That” (1990s)

*This article by an unnamed author sets out a popular analysis of the symbolic elements of the dollar bill as evidence of an Illuminati-led conspiracy that has dominated U.S. politics and finance since the founding of the republic.*

The quest for world domination can be traced back to the creation of the “illuminati,” a secret society, in 1776. Their leader, Adam Weishaupt, wrote out the master plan to bring about the

subjection of the whole human race to an oligarchy of financiers. The word “illuminati” is derived from Lucifer and means “holders of the light.”

As surprising as it may seem, the insignia of the order of the illuminati appears on the reverse side of U.S. one-dollar bills. The first time it appeared was in 1933, by order of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, at the beginning of the new deal.

One can read at the base of the 13 story pyramid, the year 1776 (MDCCLXVI). Most people think that it represents the date of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence, but it actually memorializes the foundation of the order of the illuminati, which was May 1, 1776.

The pyramid represents the conspiracy for the destruction of the Catholic church (and all existing religions), and the establishment of a one-world government, or a United Nations dictatorship. The eye radiating in all directions, is the all-spying eye that symbolizes the terroristic, gestapo-like espionage agency that Weishaupt set up to guard the “secret of the order and to terrorize the populace into the acceptance of its rule.” The latin words “ANNUIT COEPTIS” mean “our enterprise (conspiracy) has been crowned with success.” Below, “NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM” explains the nature of the enterprise: a “new social order” or a “new world order.”

This insignia was adopted by the U.S. Congress as the reverse of the seal of the United States on September 15, 1789. The appearance of this insignia of the illuminati on U.S. one dollar bills in 1933 meant that the followers of Weishaupt regarded their efforts as beginning to “be crowned with success,” and that they totally controlled the U.S. Government.

The financiers, who control the U.S. government, think that they are smarter than god himself, and that they are the only ones who can lead mankind properly. The members of the illuminati are people of every race and creed, but who all lust for money and power.

The people must take practical steps to counteract this diabolical plan by insisting that the issue of money, and the control thereof, be placed

back in the hands of the Government where it rightfully belongs as stated in the Constitution.

In the words of Jesus Christ “The truth will set you free.”

**Source**

Available at <http://www.conspiracy-net.com/archives/articles/conspiracy/banking/CNCh0010.txt>.

**“Alien/CIA Connection” (early 1990s)**

*This uncredited Internet posting summarizes the increasingly popular view that aliens have not only landed, but that the U.S. government has been instigating a cover-up since the 1950s. The complete text weaves together a variety of theories, ranging from revelations about government collusion with aliens to predictions of nuclear holocaust in 1999.*

In 1954, a race of large-nosed aliens known as the “Greys” which had been orbiting the Earth, landed at Holloman Air Force Base. A basic agreement was reached. This race identified themselves as originating from a planet around a red star in the Constellation of Orion which we called Betelgeuse. They stated that their planet was dying and that at some unknown future time they would no longer be able to survive there. This led to a second landing at Edward Air Force Base. The historical event had been planned in advance and details of the treaty had been agreed upon. President Eisenhower arranged to be in Palm Springs on vacation. On the appointed day the President was spirited away to the base and the excuse was given to the press that he was visiting a dentist.

President Eisenhower met with the aliens and a formal treaty between the Alien Nation and the United States of America was signed. We then received our first Alien Ambassador from outer space. His name and title was His “Omnipotent Highness Krill” pronounced Krill. You should know that the Alien flag is known as the “Trilateral Insignia.” It is displayed on their craft and worn on their uniforms. Both of these landings and the second meeting were filmed. The films exist today.

The treaty stated: The aliens would not interfere in our affairs and we would not interfere in theirs. We would keep their presence on earth a secret. They would furnish us with advanced technology and would help us in our technological development. They would not make any treaty with any other earth nation. They could abduct humans on a limited and periodic basis for the purpose of medical examination and monitoring of our development with the stipulation that the humans would not be harmed, would be returned to their point of abduction, that the humans would have no memory of the event, and that the Alien nation would furnish MJ-12 with a list of all human contacts and abductees on a regularly scheduled basis. [ . . . ]

It was also agreed that bases would be constructed underground for the use of the Alien nation and that two bases would be constructed for the joint use of the Alien nation and the United States Government. Exchange of technology would take place in the jointly occupied bases. These Alien bases would be constructed under Indian reservations in the four corners of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and one would be constructed in Nevada in the area known as S-4, located approximately seven miles south of the western border of Area 51, known as Dreamland. All alien areas are under complete control of the Naval Department and all personnel who work in these complexes receive their checks from the Navy. Construction of the bases began immediately, but progress was slow until large amounts of money were made available in 1957. Work continued on the “Yellow Book.” [ . . . ]

The events at Fatima in the early part of the century were scrutinized [by a “secret government study”]. On suspicion that it was alien manipulation, an intelligence operation was put into motion to penetrate the secrecy surrounding the event. The United States utilized its Vatican moles that had been recruited and nurtured during World War II, and soon obtained the entire Vatican study which included the prophecy. This prophecy stated that if man did not turn

from evil and place himself at the feet of Christ, the planet would self destruct and the events described in the book of Revelations would indeed come to pass. It stated that a child would be born who would unite the world with a plan for world peace and a false religion beginning in 1992. By 1995 the people would discern that he was evil and was indeed the Anti-Christ. World War III would begin in the Middle East in 1995 with an invasion of Israel by a United Arab nation using conventional weapons, which would culminate in a nuclear holocaust in the year 1999. Between 1999 and 2003 most of the life on this planet would suffer horribly and die as a result. The return of Christ would occur in the year 2011. [ . . . ]

At some point President Kennedy discovered portions of the truth concerning the drugs and the aliens. He issued an ultimatum in 1963 to MJ-12. President Kennedy assured them that if they did not clean up the drug problem, he would. He informed MJ-12 that he intended to reveal the presence of aliens to the American people within the following year and ordered a plan developed to implement his decision. President Kennedy was not a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and knew nothing of “Alternative Two” or “Alternative Three.” Internationally, the Operations were supervised by an Executive Committee known as the “Policy Committee.” In the United States they were supervised by MJ-12 and in the Soviet Union by its sister organization. President Kennedy’s decision struck fear into hearts of those in charge. His assassination was ordered by the Policy Committee and the order was carried out by agents of MJ-12 in Dallas.

**Source**

Originally posted at <http://www.bigfoot.com/conspiracies>. Now located at <http://www.darkconspiracy.com/articles.htm>.

**Police against the New World Order, “Operation Vampire Killer 2000” (1992)**

*This document was written in 1992 by a group called Police against the New World Order. It sets*

*forth an apocalyptic analysis of the New World Order as a plan to enslave American citizens in the lead-up to the millennium, and combines this conspiratorial rhetoric with the language of white supremacy and end-times theology in a call to arms. Although it touches most of the far-right conspiracy bases, it insists that alien/UFO stories are a deliberate disinformation campaign designed to prepare the masses for a necessary one-world government to combat the imagined alien threat.*

**THE NEW AGE/NEW WORLD GOVERNMENT PLAN**

Many of our nation’s INTERNAL PROTECTORS know of the well-laid plan which will culminate before the year 2000, to usher the United States, along with the rest of the nations of the world, into a “utopian” global community allegedly under the control of a “philanthropic” United Nations. A great many of our fellow Officers and National Guardsmen are taking a stand against this plan because they realize that their fellow Americans were never allowed to know of this plan nor given the opportunity to vote on such a change in their government. In addition, the officers are concerned patriots and realize that this plan of world domination is injurious in the extreme, and a total fraud perpetrated against the people of the world!

This publication outlines the plan of these American Internal Protectors which they believe will stop this diabolical agenda.

**THE NEW ORDER**

Allegedly this new order is being set up to save THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD from a whole variety of “imminent” life and world-threatening disasters. Of those sworn protectors of the people that are aware of this global scheme, few realize that the actual behind-the-scenes plan is for an oligarchy of the world’s richest families to place 1/2 the masses of the earth in servitude under their complete control, administered from behind the false front of the United Nations. To facilitate management capabilities, the plan calls for the elimination of the other 2.5 billion people through war, disease, abortion and famine by the year

2000. As we can plainly see, their plan for "Population Control" (reduction) is well established and under way.

Our OPERATION VAMPIRE KILLER 2000 plan involves the awakening (education) of our fellow officers to the extreme need for them to take an immediate and active roll in assisting their fellow Americans in stopping this plan for world dominion, using every lawful means available.

[ . . . ]

It is felt that this name reflects the actual program in which officers are involved, designed to stop or "kill off" the ongoing, elitist, covert operation which has been installed in the American system with great stealth and cunning. They, the Globalists, have stated that the date of termination of the American way of life is the year 2000. Therefore it is fitting that our date to terminate, at the very least, their plan, is also the year 2000.

LET IT BE WELL UNDERSTOOD, WE PROTECTORS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE NOT ASKED FOR THIS BATTLE. IT IS OUR NATION'S ENEMIES WHO HAVE BROUGHT THIS FIGHT TO THE VERY DOOR OF EVERY GOOD AMERICAN.

BE IT RESOLVED:

Our prayer and promise is to do all within our power, as faithful countrymen, to overthrow this evil, treasonous plan in a completely non-violent, lawful manner.

-Our sworn duty is to protect the people of this nation and its constitutional, republican form of government from any enemy that would come against it.

-Our pledge is that WE WILL, BY EVERY MEANS GIVEN UNTO US, UPHOLD OUR OATHS AND FULFIL OUR SWORN DUTY TO OUR COUNTRYMEN.

PUTTING THE STAKE THROUGH DRACULA'S HEART

WHAT CAN WE DO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO? The Globalists' agenda is a diabolical program which, through patient gradualism, is slowly draining the moral, economic and political life blood from the United States and the hard working American people.

We in America, Officers and private citizens alike, are fortunate that at this moment in our history we can still LAWFULLY EXTERMINATE these parasitic Global Blood Suckers by placing numerous "STAKES" made of words, paper, pen, and hard work through their hardened hearts.

TRAITORS' GRAND FINALES (Martial Law the Goal)

PLAN A

RACE WARS: We will see the fanning of the flames of their planned RACE WAR program in the months ahead as government, through some of their covert national organizations, promotes "whites hating people of color" and vice-versa. Aided by their controlled media, and NWO government-paid agitators/"leaders" on both sides, the goal is to frighten Americans, of all colors, into accepting Martial Law.

These elitists actually have no love for "minorities" or "commoners" of any race. Those who have studied these Imperialists will notice that there is continual intermarriage among these super-rich Internationalists' families. NEVER do they participate in the mixing of blood other than BLUE BLOOD.

The race-mixing program was created for their "subjects"—i.e., the world's common people of all races. Some of these Internationalists have stated over the years, ". . . when all other humans are of one color, (brown), then they will be more easily managed."

KEEP THE RACES FROM JOINING TOGETHER!

Racial strife is one of their most important NWO tools and they mean to keep it going. It has worked well for promoting the globalist cause in the recent past. HATE must be kept flowing to prevent the various races in America from finding out the truth. If they find out who is destroying their freedoms and economic future, they might find some way to work together to overthrow their COMMON ENEMY.

WHO ARE THE AGENT-PROVOCATEURS?

Our problem is in identifying these NWO lackeys (agent/provocateurs). Incoming



intelligence over the years has informed us that these provocateurs are of all racial mixes. Yes, whites, blacks, hispanic etc. are involved in promoting planned racial hate incidents and tensions to assist in causing the masses to accept Martial Law and serve the NWO gang. Although these employee/provocateurs have been promised a position of power in this "utopian" Socialist society, it is a shame that they are not smart enough to know that they are to be "eliminated" when their usefulness has run out. (As has been the practice of every Marxist/Socialist conquering army after taking power.)

There is sound logic in this "execution of your agent/provocateurs," after you're in power. The logic is: If these agents will spy and turn against their own people then there is no way you can trust them to not turn on you." VERY TRUE! The other shame is that no tears will be shed for these traitors to their own people.

#### PLAN B

The globalists, along with their controlled media, are well along in the promotion of their PLAN B program. Here it is: With the threat of nuclear war supposedly subsiding, the American people "must have" a new Boogie Man!

ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE: This phase involves the fraud of the "imminent ecological collapse of the world." This phase is being promoted by those who were not able to completely destroy America with Marxism. These NWO Marxists have therefore started, or taken over, the various GREEN (environmentalist) parties.

Many of these environmentalists are rightfully labeled the "WATERMELONS of the world." That is to say, green on the outside, but RED (Marxist) on the inside. Many wonderful, good, well-intentioned Americans are being duped into assisting with this fraud. Sadly, some are our families and friends.

#### PLAN C

VISITORS FROM AFAR: This phase makes certain that few Americans escape the NWO program. How? By creating TOTAL PANIC. This is accomplished with 3 choices being offered to

the gullible. The Globalists have "suddenly" brought to light their long planned and well established "UFO-Little-Devils-from-Outer-Space" CON, to strike utter fear in the hearts of all the people of the earth.

-The first choice: The subtle message to us, "the masses" is that, if we don't go willingly and gently into global government, we will be "eaten," "raped," or become the experimental guinea pigs of some far-out evil "SPACE CADETS." And of course, you can't ask for assistance and protection from your own country's government because as we all have been told, "no individual nation could possibly stand a chance in defense against this obviously " 'Superior' Race from space." AH, but isn't it wonderful that "salvation" is only a one-world government away?!?

-A second twist to this planned scenario is: These "cute little space things" are our BOSOM BUDDIES; they bring tidings of good will, and come "conveniently" to SAVE our world from the brink of total destruction! "Isn't that precious?!"

In other words, this particular plan is to convince gullible Americans that anyone or anything (but that Jesus Christ "guy"), WILL SAVE OUR WORLD!

Quite "coincidentally," these same "funny little fellows" are also here to set up a UTOPIAN GLOBAL SOCIETY! Surprised? [ . . . ]

(Some of the above information has come from those on the "inside" and some from "outside" of our government. It's nice to have our own agents inside their anti-American, anti-God cliques. What is that French word—TOUCHÉ"?)

#### ENEMY'S WORST NIGHTMARE

Pushing hard for their vision of a collectivist, "utopian" New World Order, the behind-the-scenes controllers of Clinton, Bush and Perot undoubtedly have as their worst nightmare the prospect that you, their ENFORCERS, might awaken and return to the side of the People. Their plan cannot succeed unless you will act without thinking, not understanding how they will manipulate and use you to implement their plan for world conquest. Think about it: Whatever would they do if you, because of your strong

patriotism, decide to do nothing more than uphold your oath of service and protection to the People of America and JUST SAY "NO"? What could they do?

#### GREAT POWER IN YOUR HANDS

Have you ever desired great power? Dear Officer, Guardsman, Soldier, you already have GREAT POWER!! The secret enemies now in control of America know of your great power, even if you don't. That is why they will do anything to stop you from learning about your power. They cannot allow you to be awakened, because they know that if you, our nation's INTERNAL PROTECTORS, turn from being Enforcers of the SYSTEM, and return to being PROTECTORS of the PEOPLE, there is no way they can pull off their coup. [ . . . ]

As stated earlier, these treacherous Internationalists absolutely cannot accomplish their goals without the nation's Enforcers aiding & abetting their treasonous, unconstitutional mandates. But, they know also that for the most part if they can label certain patriotic Americans as "criminals," most of our fellow Police Officers will respond accordingly and treat them as such. This is presently occurring in many areas. IRS Director, Donald Alexander, admitted to Congress 20 years ago, "We now have so many regulations that everyone is guilty of some violation." Imagine what it's like today.

Another such attempt, is not only to label as "criminals" those who refuse to relinquish or register weapons of personal defense, but also all those Americans who wish to exercise their Constitutionally-guaranteed right to dissent or speak out. Such as we officers have done in this publication and we do regularly through the AID & ABET Police Newsletter. [ . . . ]

For those of our brothers and sisters who have children, this very evening quietly steal in and look down into the small faces of your posterity and ask yourselves this question: Can there be a greater work than to save our nation for these little ones? Working together with our fellow countrymen, we can place the final stake through the heart of this Parasitic Beast that has gripped

our once vibrant nation by the throat. In so doing, we will secure for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, a grand and marvelous future.

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Police against the New World Order. "Operation Vampire Killer 2000." Available at <http://www.police-against-now.com>. © 1992 Police against the New World Order. All rights reserved.

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#### House Judiciary Committee, "The Inslaw Affair" (1992)

*In 1982 Inslaw, a small computer software maker under contract with the U.S. Department of Justice, delivered its Prosecutor's Management Information System (PROMIS) software to the Justice Department. The software was designed to help prosecutors track complex investigations. Once PROMIS was delivered to the U.S. Attorney General's office, the Justice Department refused to pay Inslaw the \$10 million owed, forcing the company into bankruptcy, after which the Justice Department seized the software. Since then, the PROMIS software has become central to a number of highly intricate conspiracy scenarios involving super-surveillance technology and government misdealings (see entry on The Octopus). The following extract is from the House Judiciary Committee investigation into the "Inslaw Affair."*

REP. BROOKS: The last item on our agenda today is the consideration of the investigative report "The Inslaw Affair," which without objection will be considered as read.

This report describes the Committee's investigation into serious allegations that high-level Department of Justice officials were involved in a criminal conspiracy to force Inslaw, a small computer company, out of business and steal its primary asset—a software system called PROMIS.

Based on the Committee's investigation and two separate Federal court rulings, the draft

report concludes that high-level Department of Justice officials deliberately ignored Inslaw’s proprietary rights in the enhanced version of PROMIS and misappropriated this software for use at locations not covered under contract with the company. Justice then proceeded to challenge Inslaw’s claims in court even though it knew that these claims were valid and that the Department would most likely lose in court on this issue. After almost seven years of litigation and \$1 million in cost, the Department is still denying its culpability in this matter.

Unfortunately, instead of conducting an investigation into Inslaw’s claims that criminal wrongdoing by high-level government officials had occurred, Attorneys General Meese and Thornburgh blocked or restricted Congressional inquiries into the matter, ignored the findings of two Federal courts and refused to seek the appointment of an independent counsel. These actions were taken in the face of a growing body of evidence that serious wrongdoing had occurred which reached the highest levels of the Department. The evidence received by the Committee during its investigation clearly raises serious concerns about the possibility that a high-level conspiracy against Inslaw did exist and that great efforts have been expended by the Department to block any outside investigation into the matter.

Based on the evidence presented in this report, it is clear that extraordinary steps are required to resolve the Inslaw issue; the report recommends that the Attorney General take immediate steps to renumerate Inslaw for the harm the Department has egregiously caused the company. It also recommends that an independent counsel be appointed with broad powers to investigate all matters related to the allegations of wrongdoing in the Inslaw matter.

In my view, Congress and the executive branch must take immediate and forceful steps to restore the public confidence and faith in our system of justice which has been severely eroded by this painful and unfortunate affair. I therefore urge all members to support the adoption of this report.

#### Source

Statement of Representative Jack Brooks (D-Texas), Chairman. 11 August 1992. House Judiciary Committee, U.S. House of Representatives.

#### James Traficant, Jr., “The U.S. Is Bankrupt” (1993)

*In this 1993 speech, maverick Congressman James Traficant (D-Ohio) addressed a near-empty House and made the startling accusation that the United States was technically bankrupt, and had in fact been so since the Emergency Banking Act of 1933. In making this attack, Traficant was drawing on a long tradition of fears about the power of central banking and the dangers of a paper money system not supported by gold. Traficant was himself convicted in a federal court in 2002 of ten charges of bribery, racketeering, and fraud, and was consequently dismissed from office. More than a few of his supporters have suggested that there is a suspicious link between his outspoken comments and the move to convict him.*

Mr. Speaker, we are here now in chapter 11. Members of Congress are official trustees presiding over the greatest reorganization of any Bankrupt entity in world history, the U.S. Government. We are setting forth hopefully, a blueprint for our future. There are some who say it is a coroner’s report that will lead to our demise.

It is an established fact that the United States Federal Government has been dissolved by the Emergency Banking Act, March 9, 1933, 48 Stat. 1, Public Law 89-719; Declared by President Roosevelt, being bankrupt and insolvent. H. J. R. 192, 73rd. Congress in session June 5, 1933—Joint Resolution to Suspend the Gold Standard and Abrogate the Gold Clause dissolved the Sovereign Authority of the United States and the official capacities of all United States Government Offices, Officers and Departments and is further evidence that the United States Federal Government exists today in name only.

The receivers of the United States Bankruptcy are the International Bankers, via the United

Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. All United States Offices, Officials, and Departments are now operating within a de facto status in name only under Emergency War Powers. With the Constitutional Republican form of Government now dissolved, the receivers of the Bankruptcy have adopted a new form of government for the United States. This new form of government is known as a Democracy, being an established Socialist/Communist order under a new governor for America. [ . . . ]

Gold and silver were such a powerful money during the founding of the United States of America, that the founding fathers declared that only gold and silver coins can be “money” in America. Since gold and silver coinage were heavy and inconvenient for a lot of transactions, they were stored in banks and a claim check was issued as a money substitute. People traded their coupons as money, or “currency.” Currency is not money, but a money substitute. Redeemable currency must promise to pay a dollar equivalent in gold or silver money. Federal Reserve Notes (FRN’s) made no such promises, and are not “money.” A Federal Reserve Note is a debt obligation of the federal United States government, not “money.” The federal United States government and the U.S. Congress were not and have never been authorized by the Constitution for the United States of America to issue currency of any kind, but only lawful money,—gold and silver coin. [ . . . ]

Federal Reserve Notes (FRN’s) are unsigned checks written on a closed account. FRN’s are an inflatable paper system designed to create debt through inflation (devaluation of currency). Whenever there is an increase of the supply of a money substitute in the economy without a corresponding increase in the gold and silver backing, inflation occurs. [ . . . ]

Their lust is for power and control. Since the inception of central banking, they have controlled the fates of nations. [ . . . ]

In 1933, the federal United States hypothecated all of the present and future properties, assets and labor of their “subjects,” the

14th Amendment U.S. citizens, to the Federal Reserve System. In return, the Federal Reserve System agreed to extend the federal United States corporation all the credit “money substitute” it needed. Like any other debtor, the federal United States government had to assign collateral and security to their creditors as condition of the loan. Since the federal United States didn’t have any assets, they assigned the private property of their “economic slaves,” the U.S. citizens, as collateral against the unpayable federal debt. They also pledge the unincorporated federal territories, national parks forest, birth certificates, and nonprofit organizations, as collateral against the federal debt. All has already been transferred as payment to the international bankers.

Unwittingly, America has returned to its pre-American Revolution, Feudal roots whereby all land is held by a sovereign and the common people had no rights to hold allodial title to property. Once again, We the People are the tenants and sharecroppers renting our own property from a Sovereign in the guise of the Federal Reserve Bank. We the People have exchanged one master for another.

This has been going on for over eighty years without the “informed” knowledge: Of the American people, without a voice protesting loud enough. Now it’s easy to grasp why America is fundamentally bankrupt. [ . . . ]

America has become completely bankrupt in world leadership, financial credit and its reputation for courage, vision and human rights. This is an undeclared economic war. Bankruptcy, and economic slavery of the most corrupt order! Wake up America! Take back your country.

**Source**

*The Congressional Record*. 1993. Vol. 134, no. 33 (March 17). Available at <http://autarchic.tripod.com/files/bankrupt.html>.

***Freedom Networker, “Trained as Traitors, Liars and Slavemasters!” (1994)***

*Like many documents from the conspiracy-minded right wing, this article from the militia publication*



Freedom Networker *puts the blame for the attack on American liberties on a vast and long-running conspiracy involving familiar suspects such as the Illuminati, the Bilderbergers, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Skull and Bones Society, among others.*

Did you know there are more than a million among us who are trained as traitors to the American constitutional way of life? Who are slated to be our slavemasters under the New World Order? Who are trained to treat us as cattle unfit for self-determination and self-rule? Who are trained to believe in their inherent superiority. Who fancy themselves as destined to rule and enslave us? Who are already in almost all positions of power in this country?

Who are these million plus would be New World Order slavemasters? Let's not beat around the bush. They are members of secret societies called Skull and Bones, Freemasons (only the highest degree of Freemasonry also called Illuminized Freemasons are privy to the plot) and their many spinoffs and controllers like the Knights Templar, the Knights of Malta, Order of the Eastern Star (female counterparts), the Council of Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers (who are mostly British and American and really run the show with prominent Jews as fronts in many areas, especially banking) and yet numerous other tightly controlled groups, foundations, institutes and closed organizations.

The subject for this discussion are the Freemasons, the single largest block and who touch our lives rather closely though we may be unaware of it. They're trained, mind you, to fabricate lies with a sense of self-righteousness and a straight face! They are modern Benedict Arnolds for, just as Benedict Arnold sold out his American compatriots to his British masters, these modern traitors have been trained by their mostly British and American super rich masters to abrogate every virtue with which humans are naturally endowed.

While many of our country's founders were Freemasons, they were not quite the breed as are modern Freemasons. They were pre-Illuminati Freemasons. From the beginning of Illuminism, Freemasons were indoctrinated with notions of superiority and a one world government, a tyranny that would be presided over by the Freemasons in alliance with the super rich who are even more secretive yet. . . .

One of the symbols that tells us just how much the New World Order and the Freemasons already run the show is their Great Seal on the dollar bill showing the tip of a pyramid having an eye overlooking all. Its inscription is “Novus Ordo Seclorum” meaning the New World Order. This might be said to be subliminal advertising to implant their Great Seal for conditioning us for things to come. Remember, they had to be in control of the U.S. Treasury and Mint to have the dollar bill redesigned and printed with this on it!

The Freemasons and other secret orders are already in control in America! They pretty much hold all the political positions of significance from the county level up through state and federal government. They are not only widespread in government at all levels, but in law enforcement, banking, the legal fraternity, all courts in the land, and touches our lives in yet other control positions.

Freemasons put up most of the candidates for both the Republican and Democratic parties. In short they and the New World Order win no matter which “faction” wins or loses.

How do you uproot this unholy arrangement operating under the guise of a democratically elected government? (As one reader always says: “Don't just tell me about it. Get me out of the misery. What is the solution? How do we get ourselves out of this mess?”)

You and your neighbors can begin your campaigns NOW to expose the Freemasons and their wicked schemes to enslave us all. They hate nothing more than exposure! Secret societies want to stay secret!

The new issues are: “Are you a Freemason?” Don't expect an honest yes answer for they have

been trained to lie. Freemasons are usually well known to be that by neighbors. They often boast about it. Discreet inquiries usually reveal this vital data about those who put themselves up or who are put up for local positions at the township, city and county levels.

The township, city and county levels is where we must take control! The big fish die when taken out of the ocean and subjected to a lot of little ponds. We must do this and soon! Remember, there is little time. The year 2000 is supposed to see the New World Order in place.

Again, the big issues in all elections are: Are any of the candidate Freemasons? Freemasons must be automatically exposed. Their membership in a secret society alone is grounds for voting for a nonFreemason. They take an oath of office which they intend to violate at every turn. They keep ONLY their secret oaths to the brotherhood of Freemasons.

Freemasonry is a gigantic conspiracy against all of us! Of its nearly four million members, more than one million are "illuminized" and in on the conspiracy to do what is outlined herein.

Freemasons are often ingratiating, gladhanders. But some have been notable scoundrels. Notable among them was Jacques De Molay who was burned at the stake for his efforts to undermine the French government and the Catholic Church. He was a notorious homosexual and had a marked taste for young boys. This is worth mentioning because Jacques is today a martyr among Freemasons and there is an order of Jacques De Molay! The most honored person in this order in America is President Bill Clinton! He is a Freemason and belongs to several secret societies.

Another scoundrel of the first order was J. Edgar Hoover. He was a 33rd degree Freemason. He was a noted homosexual and a transvestite. He refused to go after organized crime with the FBI inasmuch as Mayer Lansky and other Mafia participants had the goods on him. He did not want to be exposed.

J. Edgar Hoover loaded the FBI with Freemasons and Mormons who were founded

along Masonic lines. Educate, educate, educate! You're due to be a slave! Get your neighbors and friends together for entertaining and informative discussions and video viewings about the ways to recapture America for ourselves.

Goethe has aptly said: "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." Of course, it bears observing that anyone who would enslave another is also a slave!

#### Sources

*Freedom Networker*. 1994. Vol. 1, no. 5 (November).

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#### Committee on Veterans' Affairs, "Is Military Research Hazardous to Veterans' Health?" (1994)

*The following is an extract from one of the numerous official inquiries into the Gulf War Syndrome, looking at suspicions that the illness may have been caused by service personnel having been submitted unwittingly to drug or nerve agent testing.*

During the last 50 years, hundreds of thousands of military personnel have been involved in human experimentation and other intentional exposures conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD), often without a servicemember's knowledge or consent. In some cases, soldiers who consented to serve as human subjects found themselves participating in experiments quite different from those described at the time they volunteered. For example, thousands of World War II veterans who originally volunteered to "test summer clothing" in exchange for extra leave time, found themselves in gas chambers testing the effects of mustard gas and lewisite. Additionally, soldiers were sometimes ordered by commanding officers to "volunteer" to participate in research or face dire consequences. For example, several Persian Gulf War veterans interviewed by Committee staff reported that they

were ordered to take experimental vaccines during Operation Desert Shield or face prison.

The goals of many of the military experiments and exposures were very appropriate. For example, some experiments were intended to provide important information about how to protect U.S. troops from nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons or other dangerous substances during wartime. In the Persian Gulf War, U.S. troops were intentionally exposed to an investigational vaccine that was intended to protect them against biological warfare, and they were given pyridostigmine bromide pills in an experimental protocol intended to protect them against chemical warfare.

However, some of the studies that have been conducted had more questionable motives. For example, the Department of Defense (DOD) conducted numerous “man-break” tests, exposing soldiers to chemical weapons in order to determine the exposure level that would cause a casualty, i.e., “break a man.” Similarly, hundreds of soldiers were subjected to hallucinogens in experimental programs conducted by the DOD in participation with, or sponsored by, the CIA. These servicemembers often unwittingly participated as human subjects in tests for drugs intended for mind-control or behavior modification, often without their knowledge or consent. Although the ultimate goal of those experiments was to provide information that would help U.S. military and intelligence efforts, most Americans would agree that the use of soldiers as unwitting guinea pigs in experiments that were designed to harm them, at least temporarily, is not ethical.

Whether the goals of these experiments and exposures were worthy or not, these experiences put hundred of thousands of U.S. servicemembers at risk, and may have caused lasting harm to many individuals.

Every year, thousands of experiments utilizing human subjects are still being conducted by, or on behalf of, the DOD. Many of these ongoing experiments have very appropriate goals, such as obtaining information for preventing, diagnosing,

and treating various diseases and disabilities acquired during military service. Although military personnel are the logical choice as human subjects for such research, it is questionable whether the military hierarchy allows for individuals in subordinate positions of power to refuse to participate in military experiments. It is also questionable whether those who participated as human subjects in military research were given adequate information to fully understand the potential benefits and risks of the experiments. Moreover, the evidence suggests that they have not been adequately monitored for adverse health effects after the experimental protocols end.

Veterans who become ill or disabled due to military service are eligible to receive priority access to medical care at VA medical facilities and to receive monthly compensation checks. In order to qualify, they must demonstrate that their illness or disability was associated with their military service. Veterans who did not know that they were exposed to dangerous substances while they were in the military, therefore, would not apply for or receive the medical care or compensation that they are entitled to. Moreover, even if they know about the exposure, it would be difficult or impossible to prove if the military has not kept adequate records. It is therefore crucial that the VA learn as much as possible about the potential exposures, and that the DOD assume responsibility for providing such information to veterans and to the VA.

John D. Rockefeller, West Virginia, Chairman.

**Source**

U.S. Senate. 1994. Committee on Veterans' Affairs. *Is Military Research Hazardous to Veterans' Health? Lessons Spanning Half a Century*. 103d Cong., 2d sess. S. Prt. 8 December. Committee Print, 103-197.

**Lawrence E. Walsh, *Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters* (1994)**

*The report of the Independent Counsel into the Iran/Contra affair was highly critical of Reagan's*

*administration and Congress, charging them with evasions, lies, conspiracies, and acts of obstruction.*

The underlying facts of Iran/contra are that, regardless of criminality, President Reagan, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the director of central intelligence and their necessary assistants committed themselves, however reluctantly, to two programs contrary to congressional policy and contrary to national policy. They skirted the law, some of them broke the law, and almost all of them tried to cover up the President's willful activities.

What protection do the people of the United States have against such a concerted action by such powerful officers? The Constitution provides for congressional oversight and congressional control of appropriations, but if false information is given to Congress, these checks and balances are of lessened value. Further, in the give and take of the political community, congressional oversight is often overtaken and subordinated by the need to keep Government functioning, by the need to anticipate the future, and by the ever-present requirement of maintaining consensus among the elected officials who are the Government.

The disrespect for Congress by a popular and powerful President and his appointees was obscured when Congress accepted the tendered concept of a runaway conspiracy of subordinate officers and avoided the unpleasant confrontation with a powerful President and his Cabinet. In haste to display and conclude its investigation of this unwelcome issue, Congress destroyed the most effective lines of inquiry by giving immunity to Oliver L. North and John M. Poindexter so that they could exculpate and eliminate the need for the testimony of President Reagan and Vice President Bush. [ . . . ]

Despite extraordinary difficulties imposed by the destruction and withholding of records, the need to protect classified information, and the congressional grants of immunity to some of the principals involved, Independent Counsel was able to bring criminal charges against nine

government officers and five private citizens involved in illegal activities growing out of the Iran/contra affair.

More importantly, the investigation and the prosecutions arising out of it have provided a much more accurate picture of how two secret Administration policies—keeping the contras alive “body and soul” during the Boland cut-off period and seeking the release of Americans held hostage by selling arms to Iran—veered off into criminality.

Evidence obtained by Independent Counsel establishes that the Iran/contra affair was not an aberrational scheme carried out by a “cabal of zealots” on the National Security Council staff, as the congressional Select Committees concluded in their majority report. Instead, it was the product of two foreign policy directives by President Reagan which skirted the law and which were executed by the NSC staff with the knowledge and support of high officials in the CIA, State and Defense departments, and to a lesser extent, officials in other agencies. [ . . . ]

Independent Counsel found no evidence of dissent among his Cabinet officers from the President's determination to support the contras after federal law banned the use of appropriated funds for that purpose in the Boland Amendment in October 1984. Even the two Cabinet officers who opposed the sale of arms to Iran on the grounds that it was illegal and bad policy—Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and Secretary of State George P. Shultz—either cooperated with the decision once made, as in the case of Weinberger, or stood aloof from it while being kept informed of its progress, as was the case of Shultz.

In its report section titled “Who Was Responsible,” the Select Committees named CIA Director William Casey, National Security Advisers Robert C. McFarlane and John M. Poindexter, along with NSC staff member Oliver L. North, and private sector operatives Richard V. Secord and Albert Hakim. With the exception of Casey who died before he could be questioned by the OIC, Independent Counsel charged and



obtained criminal convictions of each of the men named by Congress. There is little doubt that, operationally, these men were central players.

But the investigation and prosecutions have shown that these six were not out-of-control mavericks who acted alone without the knowledge or assistance of others. The evidence establishes that the central NSC operatives kept their superiors—including Reagan, Bush, Shultz, Weinberger and other high officials—informed of their efforts generally, if not in detail, and their superiors either condoned or turned a blind eye to them. When it was required, the NSC principals and their private sector operatives received the assistance of high-ranking officers in the CIA, the Defense Department, and the Department of State. [ . . . ]

Fundamentally, the Iran/contra affair was the first known criminal assault on the post-Watergate rules governing the activities of national security officials. Reagan Administration officials rendered these rules ineffective by creating private operations, supported with privately generated funds that successfully evaded executive and legislative oversight and control. Congress was defrauded. Its appropriations restrictions having been circumvented, Congress was led to believe that the Administration was following the law. Numerous congressional inquiries were thwarted through false testimony and the destruction and concealment of government records.

The destruction and concealment of records and information, beginning at the twilight of Iran/contra and continuing throughout subsequent investigations, should be of particular concern. Oliver North's destruction of records in October and November 1986 caused an irretrievable loss of information to the executive agencies responsible for regulating clandestine activities, to Congress, and to Independent Counsel. John Poindexter's efforts to destroy NSC electronic mail nearly resulted in comparable damage. CIA Costa Rican Station Chief Joseph F. Fernandez attempted to hide phone records that would have revealed his contacts with Enterprise activities.

This sort of obstruction continued even after Independent Counsel's appointment. In the course of his work, Independent Counsel located large caches of handwritten notes and other documents maintained by high officials that were never relinquished to investigators. Major aspects of Iran/contra would never have been uncovered had all of the officials who attempted to destroy or withhold their records of the affair succeeded. Had these contemporaneous records been produced to investigators when they were initially requested, many of the troublesome conflicts between key witnesses would have been resolved, and timely legal steps taken toward those who feigned memory lapses or lied outright.

All of this conduct—the evasions of the Executive branch and the Congress, the lies, the conspiracies, the acts of obstruction—had to be addressed by the criminal justice system.

The path Independent Counsel embarked upon in late 1986 has been a long and arduous one. When he hired 10 attorneys in early 1987, Independent Counsel's conception of the operational conspiracy—with its array of Government officials and private contractors, its web of secret foreign accounts, and its world-wide breadth—was extremely hazy. Outlining an investigation of a runaway conspiracy disavowed by the President was quite different from the ultimate investigation of the President and three major agencies, each with the power to frustrate an investigation by persisting in the classification of non-secret but embarrassing information. Completing the factual mosaic required examining pieces spread worldwide in activities that occurred over a three-year period by officials from the largest agencies of government and a host of private operatives who, by necessity, design and training, worked secretly and deceptively.

#### Source

United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. 1994. *Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters*. Part 4: Concluding Observations. 4 August. Available at [http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/walsh/part\\_xi.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/walsh/part_xi.htm).

**Montana Freeman, “Mandamus Judicial Notice” (1994)**

*The following document is an example of legal filings written by the Montana Freeman to charge government officials with wrongdoing. The Freeman filed the document after the Garfield County attorney, Nickolas Murnion, charged the thirteen Freeman with impersonating public servants in March 1994. It accuses state and local officials of depriving rights to two Freeman, Karen and Clay Taylor, in a conspiracy. Although incomplete, the document conveys the Freeman’s use of their legal system. The selection ends abruptly because Garfield County destroyed their copies of the document, but this fragment survived in an archive.*

IN OUR ONE SUPREME COURT IN  
 JUSTUS TOWNSHIP  
 IN AND FOR DE JURE GARFIELD  
 COUNTY  
 MONTANA STATE DE JURE, UNITED  
 STATES OF AMERICA  
 JUSTUS TOWNSHIP)  
 GARFIELD COUNTY)  
 MONTANA STATE) SS.SUPREME COURT  
 PROCLAMATION  
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)LAWFUL  
 PRECEPT AND EDICT

By Common Law Affidavit of the Justices’  
 “MANDAMUS JUDICAL NOTICE”

Our original and exclusive jurisdiction supreme court Justices’ hereby serve our one supreme court Proclamation of Lawful Precept by our Edict through our extra-ordinary mandamus against the *county of Garfield of the state of Montana* a “person” acting ultra vires through its double agents Nickolas C. Murnion, Charles Phipps, and the impostor non-certificated Gregory Mohr a/k/a top gun who has been acting without the scope of his/their authority in relation to the freemen characters in de jure Garfield county, injuring said freemen characters by his/their criminal conspiracy commission of criminal unlawful detainer, criminal forcible detainer, criminal libel, criminal slander and generally committing criminal acts unbecoming a

public servant, meaning by these express words an employee of the federal government (a/k/a freely associated federal compact party states) upholding the declared national and international bankruptcy.

Our writ of mandamus of Judicial Notice is served upon your receiving officer Mike Cooney, secretary of state as well as your bonded receiver in equity, the office of the treasurer in Helena, Montana state, and bonding agent a/k/a insurance commissioner Mike O’Keefe, our co-plaintiff in our United States of America.

You are hereby commanded by this writ of mandamus to immediately take appellate Judicial Notice of your own opinions as duly stated in the school board closed meetings in Belgrade, Montana state, U.S.A., some three or four years past (maybe more) when some of you over-zealous non-controllable lackeys did violate the spirit and intent of the legislature by holding secret meetings unbecoming an alien a/k/a corporation a/k/a your cestui que trust a/k/a the *county of Garfield of the state of Montana*, who by your top gun did enter into the fiasco concerning Karen Taylor and Clay Taylor in open de novo court in Jordan, Montana state, U.S.A., before your top gun who did openly admit your damning secret meeting on video tape containing pictures of faces and possible signatures of your feigned posse members who were immorally seduced into your criminal conspiracy in your willful, knowing and felonious criminal cover-up for your bankers buddies who cannot continue in their collateral scheme of emitting bills of credit against the collateral which your banker buddies have named the common herd.

The necessarily causes for our one supreme court by this letter rogatory for all good men to come to the aid of their country-men, further driving the sinking inland vice-admiralty ship of immoral commerce to the bottom of the sea of despair as in the Harlot of Babylon wherein the whore-mongers are wailing and lamenting Babylon is falling, Babylon is falling. Judicial Notice is hereby taken by our one supreme court of original and exclusive jurisdiction in our common law

venue, and by writ of mandamus fully acknowledged by your separate appellate jurisdiction upon your sinful silence. Maxim of jurisprudence he who sleeps upon his rights has none. "You have a right to remain silent. You have a right to an attorney. You have a right to a licensed attorney if you can find one. Anything which you say or which you do not say can and has been used against you in our one supreme court of common law venue of our original and exclusive jurisdiction. If you cannot afford a licensed attorney, none will be furnished for you by our one supreme court in common law venue original and exclusive jurisdiction. You have until midnight of this banking day to default. Upon your dishonor in our foreign jurisdiction, and upon our due protest, your ship will have been duly considered to have been successfully sunk. And commensurate billing will immediately occur as against your bond via your insurance commissioner who has been given this Notice to Appear courtesy presentment, duly bonded by our accommodation/surety/guarantor signature by your own rules a/k/a U.C.C. § 3-415. Praise Almighty God you individual joint and several liability by your jettison of your most unworthy cargo. [ . . . ]

**Source**

Montana Freemen Collection at the Montana Human Rights Network in Helena, Montana.

**Norman Mailer, *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery* (1995)**

*Norman Mailer was one of many countercultural voices who questioned the official "lone gunman" version of the Kennedy assassination in 1960s, and at the time he called for an alternative commission to reopen the case. By the time he came to write his 1995 nonfiction novel, Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery, however, he had reluctantly changed his mind and concluded that it was more likely that Oswald had actually killed the president after all. But he argued that in order to make this theory more plausible he had to understand Oswald's character.*

For if Oswald remains intact as an important if dark protagonist, one has served a purpose: The burden of a prodigious American obsession has been lessened, and the air cleared of an historic scourge—absurdity. So long as Oswald is a petty figure, a lone twisted pathetic killer who happened to be in a position to kill a potentially great President, then, as has been argued earlier in this work, America is cursed with an absurdity. There was no logic to the event and no sense of balance in the universe. Historical absurdity (like the war in Vietnam) breeds social disease.

We have, of course, an alternative posed by the movie *JFK*. There, our President was killed by the architects of a vast plot embracing the most powerful officers of our armed forces, our intelligence, and our Mafia, a massive array of establishment evil that is thrilling to our need to live imaginatively with great stakes in great wars, but such a thesis also leaves us with horror: We are small, and the forces of evil are huge.

Of course, the odds that a huge conspiracy can succeed and remain hidden are also small. And Oswald would have been the last man that a leader of such a vast conspiracy would have selected to be in on the action. While *JFK* satisfies our growing and gloomy sense that nine tenths of our freedom has been pre-empted by forces vastly larger than ourselves (and Stone's hypothesis gives great power to the film), it does not come near to solving the immediate question: Did Lee Harvey Oswald kill JFK, and if he did, was he a lone gunman or a participant in a conspiracy?

Given the yeast-like propensities of conspiracy to expand and expand as one looks to buttress each explanation, it can hardly be difficult for the reader to understand why it is more agreeable to keep to one's developing concept of Oswald as a protagonist, a man to whom, grudgingly, we must give a bit of stature when we take into account the modesty of his origins. That, to repeat, can provide us with a sense of the tragic rather than of the absurd. If a figure as large as Kennedy is cheated abruptly of his life, we feel better, inexplicably better, if his killer is also not without

size. Then, to some degree, we can also mourn the loss of possibility in the man who did the deed. Tragedy is vastly preferable to absurdity. Such is the vested interest that adheres to perceiving Oswald as a tragic and infuriating hero (or, if you will, anti-hero) rather than as a snarling little wife-abuser or a patsy.

**Source**

Mailer, Norman. 1995. *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery*. New York: Random House, 606–607. © Norman Mailer. All rights reserved.

**James Traficant, "The Federal Reserve" (1995)**

*This brief extract features former U.S. Representative James Traficant (D-Ohio) voicing conspiratorial fears about the power of the Federal Reserve and its chairman, Alan Greenspan, in particular.*

Mr. Speaker, in America the sun shines in from the PTA to the Halls of Congress. The American people have a front row seat.

But when it comes to the Federal Reserve Board, the American people cannot buy a seat in the peanut gallery. Unbelievable. At this very moment the Fed behind closed doors is deciding whether or not to raise our interest rates. And the Fed says, "Look, our business is too important for the American people to understand and what the American people don't know won't hurt them."

Unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, while Congress cannot go to the bathroom without a camera team, the Federal Reserve Board conducts their own business and Congress waits for Alan Greenspan to come out of some closed door with either thumbs up or thumbs down.

Mr. Speaker, I say it is very simple: Alan Greenspan is giving America the finger and Congress does not even know why.

**Source**

*The Congressional Record*, 1 February 1995.

**William F. Jasper, "Conspiracy: Where's the Proof?" (1996)**

*In this 1996 article from the New American, the John Birch Society magazine, William F. Jasper examines what's at stake in calling a view a conspiracy. One of the features of recent conspiracy culture is an acute awareness by the proponents of conspiracy theories of the accusations of paranoia that are made against them. Jasper argues that the opening up of Soviet archives at the end of the cold war has shown that allegations of Communist infiltration were true after all, and that we should not be so hasty to dismiss conspiracy theorists as crackpots.*

"What is the milieu in which criminal groups of 'freemen' and Oklahoma City bombers grow?" asked Ira Straus in a May 13, 1996 op-ed for the *Christian Science Monitor*. His answer: "It is the underworld of conspiracy theory, a subculture in which people share fantasies of fighting heroically against a huge Conspiracy that is taking over the world." The Straus essay, "When Conspiracy Theory Replaces Thought," is subtitled, "The U.S. is threatened by Americans who believe Washington is part of a plot to enslave us in a 'New World Order,'" and it is but one of the latest and most blatant volleys in an ongoing campaign by the establishment media to paint in blackest terms anyone who uses the dread "C" word.

**Crackpots and False Patriots**

In his *Monitor* piece, Straus defines the "problem" further: "For decades, the John Birch Society has spread word of the Conspiracy: The international bankers who pull all the strings. The ones who really control both the Communist conspiracy and the United States government. The Trilateral Commission. The Federal Reserve, which is ruining our money. The Council on Foreign Relations—psst, they're out to destroy the Constitution, take away our guns, and enslave us in a United Nations One-World Communist government. Their code words: 'New World Order.'" According to Straus, who is U.S.



coordinator of the Committee on Eastern Europe and Russia in NATO, "Once a mind is trapped in the circular logic of conspiracy theory, it rarely finds a way out on its own." And this is a *very* "dangerous" thing indeed, he assures us, because "crackpots" infected with such "Birchist fantasy" are "capable of blowing up federal buildings."

Similar rantings spill out of *False Patriots: The Threat of Anti-Government Extremists*, a slick, 72-page smear by the Southern Poverty Law Center/Klanwatch, which is widely quoted in the media as an authoritative source on "right-wing" fanatics. "The Patriot movement," claims the SPLC diatribe, "is a potpourri of the American right, from members of the Christian Coalition to the Ku Klux Klan—people united by their hatred of the federal government."

After thus employing the most rancid of tactics to unfairly associate everyone to the right of Bill and Hillary with violent KKK racists, the SPLC tract darkly warns: "If America is to be saved, Patriots believe, our government must be destroyed." Like Straus' screeching monitory, the SPLC tirade warns that "Conspiracy theories fuel the [Patriot] movement": theories of a "New World Order," a "United Nations-dominated global government," and "an end to American sovereignty."

In like manner comes John J. Nutter, PhD, an instant media-anointed "expert on extremism," whose utterances are uncritically accepted and reverently repeated as gospel. In a syllabus he provided to members of the law enforcement community who attended his seminar in Oklahoma on "Criminal Justice and Right-wing Extremism in America," Dr. Nutter listed "Potential Warning Signs" which may indicate that "an individual is active in an extremist group, or planning violent or criminal activity." Among the "warning signs" according to Nutter: "Do they mention: The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Trilateral Commission (Trilateralists), David Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, Bilderbergers, the Illuminati"? Or do they show "excessive concern" over the "United Nations, loss of U.S. sovereignty to the UN . . . U.S.

participation in UN peacekeeping"? In Nutter's syllabus section entitled "Extremist Literature," we find THE NEW AMERICAN magazine and books by its publisher, John F. McManus; its senior editor, William Norman Grigg; and a contributing author, G. Edward Griffin.

By now it is a tiresomely familiar theme redundantly shrieked by the usual cacophonous chorus: Bill Clinton, Janet Reno, Louis Freeh, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Time* magazine, Anthony Lewis, Molly Ivins, Frank Rich, Morris Dees, the Anti-Defamation League, the ACLU, etc. According to the frantic refrains of this querulous choir, those who mention "conspiracy" or oppose the "new world order" and the United Nations share culpability with those terrorists who bombed the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. They are, shrills the choir, "dangerous," "irrational," and "paranoid." Those who take a principled, courageous stand for limited, constitutional government, who seek change through legitimate, honorable means, and who speak out against the abuses and usurpations of big government, are denounced as "anti-government."

Drawing the most practiced tactic from their slimy smear arsenal, the "liberals" attempt to silence all opposition and debate by falsely and cowardly tagging their adversaries with "fascist," "racist," "anti-Semite," "Neo-Nazi," "KKK" labels. It is a performance worthy of Lenin, who wrote: "We can and must write in a language which sows among the masses hate, revulsion, scorn, and the like, toward those who disagree with us." And the most intense hate, revulsion, and scorn seems always reserved for anti-communists who see conspiracy.

### **Attacks from "Conservatives"**

The liberal-left, to be sure, holds no monopoly on hysterical antagonism to "conspiracy theory." Many conservatives likewise erupt in paroxysms of pique at the mention of anything that may sound even remotely related to conspiracy. Or they roll their eyes and smirk in ostentatious displays of smug superiority to the poor unsophisticated fools

who "fall for grossly simplistic answers to complex problems."

Radio maestro Rush Limbaugh epitomizes this type of pseudo-sophisticate. The grand poohbah of broadcast blather and bombast reserves his most vitriolic ridicule for those who express belief in power politics, ruling elites, and the drive for world government, calling them "conspiracy wackos." Engaging in the kind of *reductio ad absurdum* for which "liberals" are infamous, Limbaugh offers his listeners a "pop quiz": "If Trilateralist A is driving West at 60 miles per hour and Trilateralist B is driving East at 75 miles per hour, how long will it take to control the country?" Or, even more typical of the liberal-left he claims to hate, he fabricates a straw man, falsely attributing positions to those he wishes to discredit, as in his repeated false claim that the John Birch Society has called "[William F.] Buckley a communist."

A similar but more highbrow approach is found among conservative intellectuals such as Robert James Bidinotto, a longtime contributor to *The Freeman* and a lecturer for the respected Foundation for Economic Education (FEE). In a *Freeman* piece entitled "Conspiracy or Consensus?" Bidinotto takes issue with those who see "deliberate direction" in "a kind of powerful force dragging modern society down," or who "deduce that the world is in the grip of a powerful, malevolently directed conspiracy." "Conspiracy theory" is wrong, Bidinotto explains, because it is based on "false logic," "naïveté," and "explanatory elasticity." "Yes—there is a powerful force dragging society down," he writes. "But that undertow is not an international conspiracy; it's an *intellectual consensus*. What conspiratorialists fail to appreciate is the *power of ideas*."

Being a "conspiratorialist" who was once (long ago) an unwitting dupe of collectivist ideology and false "intellectual consensus," this writer fully appreciates the "power of ideas." However, what Bidinotto and his fellow "intellectual consensusists" fail to appreciate is the *idea of power*, and the *will to power* of evil men—men who combine and *conspire* to further their evil

purposes, often using and promoting a fallacious "intellectual consensus."

Yes, there are certifiably "wacko" conspiratorialists out there today promoting a dizzying array of theories about invasions by extraterrestrial creatures, UFO abductions, CIA assassination schemes, papal plots for world domination, Hitler clones in the Brazilian rain forest, etc. But are these any more "wacko" than this offering from Mr. Bidinotto:

In the 1950s, the puppeteers of world events were supposedly the "international Communist conspiracy." The conspiracy was centrally directed from Moscow, from which it extended globally like the arms of an octopus. Iron discipline held the conspirators together; highly publicized feuds among various communist nations were merely clever propaganda, meant to lull the West into complacency.

### Recent Revelations

Amazing! Absolutely amazing! Mr. Bidinotto's mocking jab at the supposed anti-communist paranoia and hysteria of the 1950s is an incredibly oddly timed capitulation to the lies, innuendos, and treacherous deceits of the liberal-left— incredibly oddly timed because even many of the arch-avatars of the liberal-left pantheon are today acknowledging as true precisely what anti-communists were saying for decades and what Bidinotto now ridicules. Recently released documents from the Soviet archives and from the files of the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) prove (as if more proof were necessary) far more than these charges. [ . . . ]

As we have said, even many liberals have been forced to acknowledge these truths. [ . . . ]

However, today—as in decades past—American high school and college students are still subjected to the rabidly pro-Marxist, anti-anti-communist propaganda of subversive textbooks. When it comes to reading about communism, the Cold War, and related topics, their resources are still likely to be *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, by Columbia University Professor Richard Hofstadter; *The Politics of Unreason*:

*Right-wing Extremism in America, 1790–1970*, by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab; *The Fear of Conspiracy*, by Professor David Brion Davis; *Danger on the Right*, by Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster of the Anti-Defamation League; *The Great Fear*, by David Caute; and other left-wing fare that has misguided the "intellectual consensus" of the past two generations.

### Communist Phenomenon

Yes, Mr. Bidinotto, there was a communist conspiracy. And there *is* a communist conspiracy. Communism has been, and remains, the single most dramatically significant phenomenon of our century. It has enslaved billions of souls across our globe and has murdered between 100 million and 300 million. Even if one accepts the notion that "the Soviet Empire disintegrated" (and we do not [. . .]), Communist China, Cuba, North Korea, and other militant "Peoples Republics" continue as before. And why should we now accept the received "wisdom" of Sovietologists, Sinologists, and other so-called "experts" who were terribly, dangerously, obstinately wrong for so many decades? [. . .]

#### Source

Jasper, William F. 1996. "Conspiracy: Where's the Proof?" *New American* 12, no. 19 (16 September). All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the *New American*. Available at [http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna/1996/vo12no19/vo12no19\\_proof.htm](http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna/1996/vo12no19/vo12no19_proof.htm).

### Michael Rivero, "Fake Terror: The Road to Dictatorship" (c. 1997)

*In this article from his What Really Happened website, Michael Rivero accuses American Presidents Bush (the senior and younger) and Clinton of deliberately creating scares about foreign enemies in order to justify their secret power objectives. Like many other commentators on terrorist attacks, such as the Oklahoma City bombing, Rivero makes a comparison with the burning of the Reichstag in Nazi Germany, arguing that the specter of domes-*

*tic terrorism in the United States has been deliberately and cynically conjured up in order to legitimate the suppression of liberty.*

It's the oldest trick in the book, dating back to Roman times; creating the enemies you need. [. . .] President George Bush wanted a war in Iraq. Like Crassus, George Bush is motivated by money. Specifically oil money. But with the OPEC alliance failing to keep limits on oil production in the Mideast, the market was being glutted with oil pumped from underneath Iraq, which sat over roughly 1/3 of the oil reserves of the entire region.

George wanted a war to stop that flow of oil, to keep prices (and profits) from falling any further than they already had. But like Roosevelt, he needed the "other side" to make the first move.

Iraq had long been trying to acquire greater access to the Persian Gulf, and felt confined to a narrow strip of land along Kuwait's northern border, which placed Iraqi interests in close proximity with hostile Iran. George Bush, who had been covertly arming Iraq during its war with Iran, sent word via April Glaspie that the United States would not intervene if Saddam Hussein grabbed a larger part of Kuwait. Saddam fell for the bait and invaded.

Of course, Americans were not about to send their sons and daughters to risk their lives for petroleum products. So George Bush arranged a hoax, using a public relations firm which has grown rich on taxpayer money by being most industrious and creative liars! The PR firm concocted a monumental fraud in which the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States, went on TV pretending to be a nurse, and related a horror story in which Iraqi troops looted the incubators from a Kuwaiti hospital, leaving the premature babies on the cold floor to die. The media, part of the swindle from the start, never bothered asking why the "nurse" didn't just pick the babies up and wrap them in blankets or something.

Enraged by the incubator story, Americans supported operation Desert Storm, which never

removed Saddam Hussein from power but which did take Kuwait's oil off of the market for almost 2 years and limited Iraq's oil exports to this very day. That our sons and daughters came home with serious and lingering medical illnesses was apparently not too great a price to pay for increased oil profits. [ . . . ]

While several American Presidents have willingly started wars for personal purposes, perhaps no President has ever carried it to the extreme that Bill Clinton has. [ . . . ] Coincident with the expected public statement of Monica Lewinsky following her testimony, Bill Clinton ordered a cruise missile attack on Sudan and Afghanistan, claiming to have had irrefutable proof that bogeyman extraordinaire (and former Afghani ally) Osama Bin Ladin was creating terrorist chemical weapons there.

Examination of the photos of the debris revealed none of the expected structures one would find in a laboratory that handled lethal weapons-grade materials. Assurances from the CIA that they had a positive soil test for biological weapons fell on their face when it was revealed that there had been no open soil anywhere near the pre-bombed facility. Sudan requested that international observers come test the remains of the factory for any signs of the nerve gas Clinton had insisted was there. None was found. The Sudanese plant was a harmless aspirin factory, and the owner has sued for damages. [ . . . ]

Like Germany under Chancellor Hitler, there have been events in our nation which strike fear into the hearts of the citizens, such as the New York World Trade Tower bombing [in 1993], the OK City Federal Building, and the Olympic Park bomb (nicely timed to divert the media from witnesses to the TWA 800 shoot down). The media has been very quick to blame such events on "radicals," "subversives," "vast right wing conspiracies," and other "enemies in our midst," no different than the lies used by Cicero and Hitler.

But on closer examination, such "domestic terrorist" events do not appear to be what they are made out to be. The FBI had an informant

inside the World Trade Tower bombers, Emad Salam, who offered to sabotage the bomb. The FBI told him "no." The so-called "hot bed" of white separatism at Elohim City, occasional home to Tim McVeigh in the weeks prior to the OK City bombing, was founded and is being run by an FBI informant! And nobody has ever really explained what this second Ryder truck was doing in a secret camp half way from Elohim City to Oklahoma City two weeks before the bombing.

So, here we are today. Like the Romans of Crassus' and Cicero's time, or the Germans under a newly elected Hitler, we are being warned that a dangerous enemy threatens us, implacable, invisible, omnipresent, and invulnerable as long as our government is hamstrung by that silly old Bill of Rights. Already there have appeared articles debating whether or not "extraordinary measures" (i.e., torture) are not fully justified under certain circumstances such as those we are purported to face.

As was the case in Rome and Germany, the government continues to plead with the public for an expansion of its power and authority, to "deal with the crisis." However, as Casio watch timers are paraded before the cameras, to the stentorian tones of the talking heads' constant dire warnings, it is legitimate to question just how real the crisis is, and how much is the result of political machinations by our own leaders. Are the terrorists really a threat, or just hired actors with bombs and Casio watches, paid for by Cicero and given brown shirts to wear by Hitler?

Is terrorism inside the United States really from outside, or is it a stage managed production, designed to cause Americans to believe they have no choice but to surrender the Republic and accept the totalitarian rule of a new emperor, or a new Fuhrer? Once lost, the Romans never got their Republic back. Once lost, the Germans never got their Republic back. In both cases, the nation had to totally collapse before freedom was restored to the people.

Remember that when Crassus tells you that Sparticus approaches. Remember that when thugs in the streets act in a manner clearly designed to



provoke the public fear. Remember that when the Reichstag burns down.

**Source**

Available at <http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/ARTICLE5/>. © Michael Rivero. All rights reserved.

**David Allen Rivera, *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order* (1997)**

*David Allen Rivera is the author of the 400-page alternative history, Final Warning: A History of the New World Order. In the conclusion he brings the story up-to-date, revisiting the older John Birch Society prophecies of a New World Order in terms of the recent moves toward globalization of the world's economy. A fascinating aspect of such items is that they offered a robust, conspiratorial critique of globalist tendencies such as NAFTA (North American Free-Trade Agreement) and the WTO (World Trade Organization) long before the recent anticapitalist movement latched on to these targets.*

Even though the Illuminati ceased to exist as an organization in the 1790's, the organization's leaders kept the conspiracy alive, and continued working towards their goal of a one world socialist government. Since then, as you have read, various organizations have been established to perpetuate these goals, but the term "Illuminati" continues to be used as the name for the engineers of this Master Conspiracy, since it is more recognizable than the various secret, and little known organizations that are carrying out this Satanic plot. It is believed, that at the pinnacle of the Illuminati, is a group of nine men, who, for the most part are the descendants of the original Illuminati conspirators. It has been reported that they met on June 12, 1952 in France, at the Castle of Arginy (which is where Hugues de Paynes founded the Knights Templar in 1118), under the name "Order of the Temple," to set their final plans in motion for the establishment of a one-world government; also on March 21, 1981, in Switzerland, in a mansion once owned by the Order of the Knights of Malta; then again in

France, 1984, as the "International Order of Chivalry, Solar Tradition."

In October, 1977, the John Birch Society printed a secret report retrieved from the office of C. (Clarence) Douglas Dillon (CFR member, head of Dillon, Read and Company, former Chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, and former Secretary of the Treasury under Kennedy and Johnson) that indicated that the Illuminati had hoped to establish a new World Order by 1976, but by 1970, the date appeared to be impractical, and a new agenda was drawn up, which had required about 15 years for completion. However, 1985 came without their goals being realized.

The sweeping social reforms of the past, brought us the Social Security and Welfare system, and now the move is on for a National Health Care program. On April 18, 1994, the Associated Press reported that Sen. Jay Rockefeller (WV) said: "We're going to push through health care reform regardless of the views of the American people." This is all part of the Master Plan, because it is the ultimate goal of the Illuminati, for the American citizen to eventually be totally dependent upon the government for their security, food, electricity, heat, clothing, and other necessities. Once that potential exists, One-World Government is right around the corner.

Slowly our country is being globalized, to fit into the world marketplace. [ . . . ] The economy of the United States, which has been allowed to erode for years, is now experiencing what may be the final assault. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is a two-volume document, nearly 1,100 pages in length, which incorporates most of the provisions of the 1988 Canadian Free Trade Agreement, and makes the United States, Canada, and Mexico unequal partners in trade. On December 31, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed Executive Order # 12662 which said, that regardless of the constitutionality of decisions made by the bi-national committees of the CFTA, the United States had to accept it. When NAFTA was approved by Congress, more of our national

sovereignty was given up to Mexico. Since Mexican workers do not have minimum wage protection and do not have the right to bargain collectively, the agreement has made Mexico fertile territory for American companies to relocate, thus creating the probability of a huge loss of American jobs, and the exploitation of the Mexican workforce. That is only part of the inequities that are contained in this agreement.

Since the inception of NAFTA, some of the early results, were that net exports to Mexico had fallen by nearly \$500 million, our trade surplus with Mexico had been cut in half, more than 230 companies had moved to Mexico, and there had been a tremendous increase in America's investment in Mexico. While the Clinton Administration reported that 127,000 jobs were created by NAFTA, what they didn't reveal, was that a report by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress indicated that the nation had lost 137,000 jobs. During the first nine months of 1994, our trade surplus with Mexico shrunk by 27 percent. This report further said that this was "only the tip of the job displacement iceberg." According to Rep. Marcy Kaptur (Democrat from Ohio), NAFTA promoters said that 60,000 American manufactured cars would be exported to Mexico in 1994, but only 28,000 were. Not only that, we ended up importing 278,000 cars from Mexico. The highly skilled, well-paying positions have gone to Mexico, while low-paying, low-skilled jobs have been created in the United States. This stems from the fact that the raw materials and parts are exported to Mexico, assembled, then imported back into the country at a far greater value. Rep. Peter DeFazio (Democrat from Oregon) said: "There's also a conspiracy of silence on the part of the Republican leadership in Congress who provided the votes needed to pass this turkey." At the 1994 Summit of the Americas in Miami (FL), Clinton spoke about bringing South America into NAFTA, and Chile became the first nation to join. Mattel, the toy manufacturing giant, said that NAFTA would create more American jobs, yet the Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch reported that they

laid off 520 workers at their Medina, New York facility. The report further stated that "As of mid-August 1995, the Department of Labor had certified 38,148 workers as having lost their jobs to NAFTA."

In 1848, Karl Marx said: "Free trade breaks up old nationalities . . . in a word, the free trade system hastens social revolution." Henry Kissinger said that NAFTA represented "the most creative step toward a New World Order."

The move to establish the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland, was initiated during the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, an instrument of the United Nations). It is a descendant of the International Trade Organization (ITO), and the Organization for Trade Cooperation (OTC), which had been proposed during the 1940's and 1950's. At that time, the country and the Congress was not ready to have their economic authority transferred to international control. In 1958, Sen. George Malone of Nevada said: "The global theory of free trade is siphoning off America's wealth and bringing her economy to the level of others. The theory is displacing American workers who otherwise would be employed." Now, the International Bankers believe they can do it. GATT is a document consisting of 22,000 pages of information, tariff schedules, rules and regulations; and 650 pages of enabling legislation. Based on its size, how many of our legislators do you think read every word of this trade agreement. And based on its complexity, if it was read—was it understood? GATT is the only international agreement which sets rules for world trade, and provides for the mediation of disputes, which is argued by many to be the best way to open up foreign markets to U.S. exports, because protectionist countries, as well as the U.S. (producing a loss in revenue) would have to lower their tariffs, to create an even playing field. However, critics familiar with its contents say that it will succeed in seriously damaging our national sovereignty and independence. Proponents disagree, saying that any country can withdraw

from membership after giving a six month notice. As one of the 123 member nations, the United States would only have one vote, yet it would have to pay nearly 25% of the cost. GATT would have the power to force Congress to change laws by declaring them to be "protectionist" (WTO Charter, Article 16, Section 4), and if we don't comply, we would be subject to trade sanctions. [ . . . ]

Right now, the world is a volatile place—hostilities in foreign countries are threatening, the world economy is teetering, and democracy hangs in the balance, as a handful of men patiently wait for a few more pieces of the puzzle to fall into place, so they can spring their trap.

**Source**

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**Bill Clinton, "Remarks by the President in Apology for Study Done in Tuskegee" (1997)**

*Between 1932 and 1972, more than 400 black men with syphilis were told they had "bad blood" at Alabama's Tuskegee Institute but were not given treatment even after a cure became available. Instead, they were studied by the U.S. Public Health Service and later by the Centers for Disease Control to observe the long-term effects of syphilis. Some Americans, making comparisons with the AIDS epidemic, have suggested that this case proves that it is not inconceivable that the U.S. government has carried out covert policies of genocide against African Americans. The following extract is taken from President Clinton's public apology for the Tuskegee experiment.*

THE PRESIDENT : Ladies and gentlemen, on Sunday, Mr. Shaw will celebrate his ninety-fifth birthday.

(applause)

I would like to recognize the other survivors who are here today and their families: Mr. Charlie Pollard is here.

(applause)

Mr. Carter Howard.

(applause)

Mr. Fred Simmons.

(applause)

Mr. Simmons just took his first airplane ride, and he reckons he's about a hundred and ten years old, so I think it's time for him to take a chance or two.

(laughter)

I'm glad he did. And Mr. Frederick Moss, thank you, sir. . . .

(applause)

The eight men who are survivors of the syphilis study at Tuskegee are a living link to a time not so very long ago that many Americans would prefer not to remember, but we dare not forget. It was a time when our nation failed to live up to its ideals, when our nation broke the trust with our people that is the very foundation of our democracy. It is not only in remembering that shameful past that we can make amends and repair our nation, but it is in remembering that past that we can build a better present and a better future. And without remembering it, we cannot make amends and we cannot go forward.

So America does remember the hundreds of men used in research without their knowledge and consent. We remember them and their family members. Men who were poor and African-American, without resources and with few alternatives, they believed they had found hope when they were offered free medical care by the United States Public Health Service. They were betrayed.

Medical people are supposed to help when we need care, but even once a cure was discovered, they were denied help, and they were lied to by our government. Our government is supposed to protect the rights of its citizens; their rights were trampled on. Forty years, hundreds of men betrayed, along with their wives and children, along with the community in Macon County, Alabama, the City of Tuskegee, the fine university there, and the larger African-American community.

The United States government did something that was wrong—deeply, profoundly, morally

wrong. It was an outrage to our commitment to integrity and equality for all our citizens.

To the survivors, to the wives and family members, the children and the grandchildren, I say what you know: No power on Earth can give you back the lives lost, the pain suffered, the years of internal torment and anguish. What was done cannot be undone. But we can end the silence. We can stop turning our heads away. We can look at you in the eye and finally say on behalf of the American people, what the United States government did was shameful, and I am sorry.

(applause)

The American people are sorry—for the loss, for the years of hurt. You did nothing wrong, but you were grievously wronged. I apologize and I am sorry that this apology has been so long in coming. . . .

(applause)

. . . We face a challenge in our time. Science and technology are rapidly changing our lives with the promise of making us much healthier, much more productive and more prosperous. But with these changes we must work harder to see that as we advance we don't leave behind our conscience. No ground is gained and, indeed, much is lost if we lose our moral bearings in the name of progress.

The people who ran the study at Tuskegee diminished the stature of man by abandoning the most basic ethical precepts. They forgot their pledge to heal and repair. They had the power to heal the survivors and all the others and they did not. Today, all we can do is apologize. But you have the power, for only you—Mr. Shaw, the others who are here, the family members who are with us in Tuskegee—only you have the power to forgive. Your presence here shows us that you have chosen a better path than your government did so long ago. You have not withheld the power to forgive. I hope today and tomorrow every American will remember your lesson and live by it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

**Source**

This selection available at <http://www.GrandConspiracy.com/transcript-tuskegee.html>.

Full text of Clinton's speech available at <http://clinton4.nara.gov/textonly/New/Remarks/Fri/19970516-898.html>.

**Agent Orange, “Operation Paperclip Casefile” (1997)**

*Compiled by someone who called himself Agent Orange and posted to various Internet newsgroups, this casefile weaves together some of the known facts about Operation PAPERCLIP with many of the most popular postwar conspiracy theories. Operation PAPERCLIP was the American government's program at the end of World War II to bring to the United States a number of German intelligence officers and scientists, particularly those connected with the Nazis' rocket development program.*

After WWII ended in 1945, victorious Russian and American intelligence teams began a treasure hunt throughout occupied Germany for military and scientific booty. They were looking for things like new rocket and aircraft designs, medicines, and electronics. But they were also hunting down the most precious “spoils” of all: the scientists whose work had nearly won the war for Germany. The engineers and intelligence officers of the Nazi War Machine.

The U.S. Military rounded up Nazi scientists and brought them to America. It had originally intended merely to debrief them and send them back to Germany. But when it realized the extent of the scientists knowledge and expertise, the War Department decided it would be a waste to send the scientists home. Following the discovery of flying discs (foo fighters), particle/laser beam weaponry in German military bases, the War Department decided that NASA and the CIA must control this technology, and the Nazi engineers that had worked on this technology.

There was only one problem: it was illegal. U.S. law explicitly prohibited Nazi officials from immigrating to America—and as many as three-quarters of the scientists in question had been committed Nazis. [ . . . ]



Military Intelligence “cleansed” the files of Nazi references. By 1955, more than 760 German scientists had been granted citizenship in the U.S. and given prominent positions in the American scientific community. Many had been longtime members of the Nazi party and the Gestapo, had conducted experiments on humans at concentration camps, had used slave labor, and had committed other war crimes. [ . . . ]

**HEINRICH RUPP**

Some of Rupp’s best work was done for the CIA, after he was imported in Operation Paperclip. Rupp has been convicted of bank fraud. He was an operative for the CIA and is deeply involved in the Savings and Loan scandals. A federal jury has indicated they believe testimony that Rupp, the late CIA Director William Casey—then Reagan’s campaign manager, and Donald Gregg, now U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, flew with George Bush to Paris in 1980, during the election in which Bush was on the ticket with Ronald Reagan. The testimony states that three meetings were held on October 19 and 20 at the Hotel Florida and Hotel Crillion. The subject? According to the court testimony, the meetings were to sabotage President Jimmy Carter’s reelection campaign by delaying the release of American hostages in Iran. The hostages were released on January 20, 1981, right after Reagan and Bush were sworn into office. Iran was promised return of its frozen assets in the United States and the foundation for the Iran-Contra deal was set into motion.

**LICIO GELLI**

Head of a 2400 member secret Masonic Lodge, P2, a neo-fascist organization, in Italy that catered to only the elite, Gelli had high connections in the Vatican, even though he was not a Catholic. P2’s membership is totally secret and not even available to its Mother Lodge in England. Gelli was responsible for providing Argentina with the Exocet missile. He was a double agent for the CIA and the KGB. He assisted many former Nazi high officials in their escape from Europe to

Central America. He had close ties with the Italian Mafia. Gelli was a close associate of Benito Mussolini. He was also closely affiliated with Roberto Calvi, head of the scandal-ridden Vatican Bank. Calvi was murdered. Gelli’s secret lodge consisted of extremely important people, including armed forces commanders, secret service chiefs, head of Italy’s financial police, 30 generals, eight admirals, newspaper editors, television and top business executives and key bankers—including Calvi. Licio Gelli and others in P2 were behind the assassination of Pope John Paul I.

The central figure in Europe and South America that linked the CIA, Masonic Lodge, Vatican, ex-Nazis and several South American governments, the Italian government and several international banks was Licio Gelli. He, with Klaus Barbie and Heinrich Rupp, met with Ronald R. Rewald in Uruguay to arrange for the Argentine purchase of the French-made Exocet missile, used in the Falkland Island attack to kill British soldiers. [ . . . ]

Gelli and his P-2 lodge had staggering connections to banking, intelligence and diplomatic passports. The CIA poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Italy in the form of secret subsidies for political parties, labor unions and communications businesses. At the same time the Agency continued its relationship with far-right and violent elements as a back-up should a coup be needed to oust a possible Communist government. This covert financing was exposed by the Prime Minister of Italy in a speech to Parliament. He indicates that more than 600 people in Italy still remain on the payroll of the CIA. Licio Gelli was an ardent Nazi and a perfect asset of the CIA. As part of Reinhard Gehlen’s intelligence team, he had excellent contacts. Licio was the go between for the CIA and the Vatican through his P2 Lodge.

Project Paperclip was stopped in 1957, when West Germany protested to the U.S. that these efforts had stripped it of “scientific skills.” There was no comment about supporting Nazis.

Paperclip may have ended in 1957, but as you can see from Licio Gelli and his international dealings with the CIA in Italy/P2, and Heinrich Rupp with his involvement in October Surprise, the ramifications of Paperclip are world-wide. The Nazis became employed CIA agents, engaging in clandestine work with the likes of George Bush, the CIA, Henry Kissinger, and the Masonic P2 lodge. This is but one of the results of Operation Paperclip. Another umbrella project that was spawned from Paperclip was MK-ULTRA. [ . . . ]

Project Paperclip brought us MK-ULTRA. Paperclip ultimately brought in key players involved in the Assassination of Pope 1, October Surprise (sabotage of Carter's peace talks), and a great many other things still classified to this day. The results of Project Paperclip were devastating, and very far reaching. I guess that is what you would expect from collaborating with Nazis.

This research shows that the OSS/CIA that was formed in the National Security Act, the same agency that employed hundreds of Nazis, has been in alliance with the Vatican through various Agency connections such as Licio Gelli. The CIA/Vatican alliance that assassinated Pope John Paul 1, JFK, and hundreds of dictators of 3rd world countries is the Illuminati.

The Bavarian Illuminati has been around for centuries in one way or another. It's presence in the 20th century is the direct result of the Nazis. The Nazi connections to the occult and the Bavarian Thule Society were parallel to the American members of 33rd degree Freemasonry. When the Operation Paperclip was successfully executed, the Nazi element of the Bavarian Thule society was fused with the American members of Freemasonry to create the Illuminati.

Operation Paperclip, MK-ULTRA, October Surprise, and George Bush are all facets of the Illuminati, a group whose ideals are rooted in the occult, and dedicated to world domination.

**Source**

Available at <http://www.mt.net/~watcher/nwonazi.html>.

**Lawrence Teeter, "Statement on the 30th Anniversary of Robert Kennedy's Assassination" (1998)**

*The following statement was issued by Sirhan Sirhan's lawyer, Lawrence Teeter, on the thirtieth anniversary of the assassination of Robert Kennedy. Although Sirhan was tried and convicted, in 1998 Teeter put forward the case that his client was not guilty of the murder, and should be retried.*

The assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy shortly after midnight on June 5, 1968, changed the course of world history. Senator Kennedy had promised to end the war in Vietnam if elected as President, as seemed likely to happen following his victory in the June 4 California Democratic Presidential primary election.

At first glance, the RFK case seems open and shut. After all, Sirhan Sirhan was arrested with a gun in hand at the scene. There the simplicity ends, however. There is an abundance of evidence which refutes the official version of this crime.

1. Sirhan was out of position and out of range and therefore could not have shot Robert Kennedy. The Senator was shot from behind, but all witnesses place Sirhan in front of him in a face-to-face position. All witnesses placed Sirhan's gun at between 1.5 and 5 feet from Senator Kennedy, but the autopsy findings clearly establish that the Senator was shot from a weapon held somewhere between less than 1 inch and no more than three inches away. All witnesses describe Sirhan's gun as having been held horizontally in a normal standing position, but the autopsy report describes all bullet tracks in Senator Kennedy's body as angled sharply upward, as though fired from below.

2. An armed security guard with strong anti-Kennedy views admitted that he was standing directly in contact with the Senator to the rear, that he dropped down when the shooting began and that he then pulled his gun. One witness ignored by police claimed he saw the guard fire. The guard's weapon was never checked. Meanwhile, the one person who photographed

the assassination, Jamie Scott Enyart, was tackled and arrested at gun point. His camera was seized by police, and his photographs have never been recovered. Los Angeles Police secretly burned 2,410 assassination-related photographs in a county hospital incinerator long before Sirhan's trial. A Los Angeles jury later awarded Enyart a substantial verdict for the loss of his photographs.

3. The official autopsy report devastates the prosecution theory that Sirhan shot Robert Kennedy. However, prosecutors illegally withheld this critical document from defense counsel for four months until after the defense had unnecessarily conceded Sirhan's identity as the killer during opening statements to the jury.

4. Bullet holes in a door frame at the crime scene which are documented in FBI photographs show that more bullets were fired than could have come from "Sirhan's" gun. The police never disclosed these bullets, even though their removal by LAPD criminalists was observed by other police personnel. The door frame in question was then destroyed under cover of a court order issued immediately after Sirhan's trial without notice to the defense.

5. Police switched bullets in order to fabricate evidence lending apparent support to their theory of the case. As has been noted by Sirhan case researcher Lynn Mangan, Los Angeles police manufactured a comparison photomicrograph using substitute victim bullets and then falsely presented this photograph as evidencing a match between the bullet removed from Senator Kennedy's neck and a test bullet fired from "Sirhan's" gun. The use of substitute bullets in this exhibit (Special Exhibit 10) is clear from the fact that identifying markings on the bases of the involved bullets differ from those recorded by physicians when the bullets were recovered.

6. Police behaved as though two guns were recovered at the crime scene, because they fired two revolvers and obtained test bullets from both weapons. The second gun had been in LAPD custody before the assassination. Despite police denials, official records confirm that this gun was destroyed by the LAPD long before Sirhan's trial.

7. Dr. Herbert Spiegel, a New York psychiatrist who teaches at Columbia University and who is widely regarded as among the country's leading experts on hypnosis, has concluded that Sirhan was probably acting out hypnotic commands when he fired a gun in Senator Kennedy's presence that fateful day. Sirhan himself was so disoriented following his arrest that he did not even know he had yet to be arraigned. During pre-trial psychiatric examinations in his cell, Sirhan proved to be the ideal hypnotic subject, climbing the bars without knowing that he was carrying out post-hypnotic commands. Expert trial testimony established that notebook passages containing repetitions of the phrase "RFK Must Die" were written in a hypnotic trance, and Sirhan spontaneously reproduced this phrase under hypnosis when asked in his cell for a description of the Senator. Sirhan's amnesia about the crime was unshaken by hypnosis and has consistently remained intact.

These and other issues of constitutional dimension are currently before the California Supreme Court, which is considering a habeas corpus petition seeking an evidentiary hearing and a new trial for Sirhan. Meanwhile, this historic crime remains unsolved. Its true perpetrators have never been brought to justice. One victim was killed, and five others were wounded. The seventh victim of this dastardly plot, Sirhan Sirhan, has been confined to thirty years for a crime he did not commit.

**Source**

Available at <http://www.webcom.com/~lpeace/collections/assassinations/teeter.htm>.

**Rosenberg Sons' Statement on the Forty-Fifth Anniversary of Their Parents' Execution (1998)**

*Michael and Robert Meeropol, the two sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, who were six and ten at the time of their parents' executions, continue to maintain the innocence of their parents, arguing that the recently released VENONA files of intercepted Soviet signals do not necessarily prove their guilt. Instead, they insist the Rosenbergs were the victims of a government frame-up.*

We have been convinced for decades that our parents did not conspire to steal the secret of the Atomic Bomb. Over the past several years, newly released government documents and statements by government agents prove we were correct. Now, on the 45th anniversary of our parents' death, we call for the US Government to acknowledge that our parents' execution was not justified, and admit that our parents were executed for a crime the Government knew they did not commit.

How did the Government justify our parents' execution 45 years ago?

After our parents' arrest, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said they committed "the crime of the century."

The Government's prosecutor at trial said our parents helped steal the secret of the Atomic Bomb, "the most important scientific secret ever known to mankind."

The Judge justified the death sentence by asserting that "putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused . . . the Communist aggression in Korea, with resulting casualties exceeding fifty thousand."

President Eisenhower denied clemency because their actions might have condemned millions to death in a future nuclear war and wrote that he would not halt our mother's execution because "she is obviously the leader in everything they did in the spy ring."

But as the following ten points will demonstrate, all of this is false. Though we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the following documents, *the Government does*:

1. The Government endorses the veracity of the National Security Agency's (NSA) VENONA transcriptions which state that Ethel Rosenberg was not an espionage agent.

2. The NSA states that the FBI had this information in its hands before Ethel Rosenberg was arrested.

3. FBI documents indicated that Ethel Rosenberg was arrested to use "as a lever" to force cooperation from our father.

4. When Eisenhower was briefed on the case after being inaugurated in 1953, the FBI recommended against clemency for our mother, not because of any activities on her part, but because she was "cognizant of her husband's activity" and was "uncooperative."

5. Just weeks before our parents' execution [and after the briefing of Eisenhower described above], the FBI drafted questions to ask our father should he agree to cooperate in exchange for his life. The sixth question read, "Was your wife cognizant of your espionage activities?"

6. Meredith Gardner, the man credited with breaking the Soviet code that created the VENONA transcriptions, recently stated that he was shaken by our mother's execution because he knew from the material he worked with that she was not a spy.

7. General Leslie Groves, military chief of the atomic bomb project, admitted to the Atomic Energy Commission: "I think the data that went out in the case of the Rosenbergs was of minor value."

8. Justice Department attorneys would not contest the accuracy of the top atomic scientists' sworn affidavits. The scientists swore that the material prosecution witnesses at our parents' trial testified they conspired to steal "was too incomplete, ambiguous and even incorrect to be of any service or value to the Russians in shortening the time required to develop their nuclear bombs." (Dr. Henry Linschitz)

9. In the FBI briefing materials for President Eisenhower they recommended against clemency for Julius Rosenberg not because he stole atomic secrets, but because they claimed he was extensively involved in industrial espionage.

10. The VENONA transcriptions show the spy the government claims was our father knew little about the Atomic Bomb project and was, instead, involved in industrial espionage.

Do not misread us. The NSA and FBI have not proven that Julius Rosenberg was involved in industrial espionage, any more than General Groves' statement proved that *anything* "went out in the case of the Rosenbergs." We are presenting



US Government material, not endorsing it. But this material amounts to the Government's admission that FBI officials and agents, government prosecutors, and others, knowingly, willfully, and with malice aforethought manipulated the judicial process to execute two people for a crime they did not commit. The Government stands behind the accuracy of documents that lead inexorably to this conclusion. It is past time for it to take responsibility for its misdeeds.

Michael and Robert Meeropol  
Springfield, MA USA

**Source**

Available at <http://www.webcom.com/~lpeace/collections/disputes/rosen-sons-press98.htm>.

**Mark E. Willey, "Pearl Harbor: Mother of All Conspiracies" (2000)**

*This extract, taken from Mark Willey's book on Pearl Harbor, argues that Roosevelt knew in advance about the Japanese attack and subsequently engaged in a massive cover-up.*

The US was warned by, at least, the governments of Britain, Netherlands, Australia, Peru, Korea and the Soviet Union that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was coming. Most, if not all, Japanese codes were broken. FDR and Marshall and others knew the attack was coming, allowed it and covered up their knowledge. It's significant that both the chief of OP-20—G Safford and Friedman of Army SIS, the two people in the world that knew what we decoded, said that FDR knew Pearl Harbor was going to be attacked.

Pearl Harbor was not about war with Japan—It was about war with GERMANY. Hitler would not declare war if U.S. unbeatable. 1. Objective: War with Germany. How do you bait Hitler to declare war on you? You don't get it by looking unbeatable! 2. Direct provocation in Atlantic had failed—Hitler didn't bite. 3. FDR knew from magic that if Japan attacked, Germany would declare war. 4. Therefore: the problem was how

to maneuver Japan into firing the first shot or make the first overt act. 5. Japan must succeed or Hitler would renege.

War with Japan was a given because they had to attack the Philippines. If Japan's fleet were destroyed, it would defeat the purpose. It would have been obvious suicide for Hitler to declare war if Japan were crippled—it would allow the US to attack him without even the possibility of a two-front war. That was what he had just been avoiding for months. The plan could only work if Japan's attack succeeded. The lure of a weakened US in a two-front war focused on Japan seemed to make a German war declaration cost-free. But it was all a trap—FDR was always going to ignore Japan and go after Hitler, for his ultimate goal was to save his beloved Soviet Communism.

In November FDR ordered the Red Cross Disaster Relief director to secretly prepare for massive casualties at Pearl Harbor because he was going to let it be attacked. When he protested to the President, President Roosevelt told him that "the American people would never agree to enter the war in Europe unless they were attack [sic] within their own borders." [ . . . ]

J. Edgar Hoover told his friends in early 1942 that FDR had known about the Pearl Harbor plan since the early fall. It was totally in character for FDR to concoct such a plan. Not only had the US Senate already censured FDR for utterly lacking moral perspective, but as Walter Lippmann wrote: "his purposes are not simple and his methods are not direct." To get into the war, FDR used the Atlantic Fleet as bait to be shot up; Pearl Harbor was the same thing in the Pacific. US Admiral Bloch testified "The Japanese only destroyed a lot of old hardware. In a sense they did us a favor." This was obviously FDR's view as well, because on 7 December at 2:15, minutes after hearing of the attack and before any damage reports were in, FDR called Lord Halifax at the British Embassy and told him "Most of the fleet was at sea . . . none of their newer ships were in harbour."

COVERUP BY SECRECY.

Why does the government refuse to release all the messages to the attack fleet, or any JN-25

messages decoded before Dec 7? There is absolutely nothing about national security to hide in JN-25. It is a trivial and worthless 19th century code. The techniques for cracking it had been published world-wide in 1931. The US government has proudly showed how they used JN-25 decrypts after December 8 to win the Battle of Midway which occurred 7 months after Pearl Harbor. Therefore, there is nothing intrinsic about the code itself, the means of cracking it, or the fact that we cracked it, that has any national security implications of any nature. What is the difference between decrypts from the Purple machine and decrypts from JN-25? The answer is simply that the JN-25 messages contained the final operational details of the Pearl Harbor attack, whereas the Purple did not.

#### WHAT ARE THEY HIDING?

Why won't they let the truth out? Such secrecy breeds mistrust in government. The only thing that is left to hide are JN-25 decrypts and worksheets showing that the US and Britain monitored the Japanese attack fleet all the way to Pearl Harbor. That is the scandal. That is the big secret. It raises the issue of whether the NSA is accessory after the fact to treason. However, the secrecy and misdirection by the NSA about our capabilities with JN-25B and pre-war messages proves there is something very wrong. The NSA has systematically lied about the size of the JN25 books by a factor of 4 and about how many codebreakers worked on the code in 1941 by a factor of 22. The NSA is an evil Gestapo that is committed neither to truth nor open government nor the rule of law. We live an Orwellian history in which treason is honored, in which FDR's murder of thousands of young innocent men is good. In a word, we are no different from the tyranny we decry. A self-governing people must have truth to make proper decisions. By subverting the truth, the National Security Agency is subverting our Democracy.

[ . . . ]

FDR was a traitor for maneuvering Japan into war with US—and that is known and admitted—FDR was a traitor for sacrificing American lives,

for putting America in danger, for usurping the Constitutional power of Congress to make war. Day of infamy, indeed; he chose his words precisely with a hidden double-meaning. Four days before the attack, FDR could have sent telegrams of condolence to the families of the sailors he was going to allow to be killed. Even today there is a coverup, based on a transparently bogus excuse of national security, that shows that our government cannot face the truth about what happened a half-century ago. Truth we owe the men of Pearl Harbor. Until we tell the full truth, we dishonor them and every soldier and sailor who gave their life for their country. Should their lives have been sacrificed for treason and no one know, they had died in vain. If their honor cover treason—we are not a nation of law. The Air Corps in the Philippines and the Navy at Pearl were FDR's bait, the oil embargo was his stick, the end of negotiations was the tripwire in FDR's game of shame—a game of death for so many. Roosevelt aided and abetted the murder of thousands of Americans.

#### Source

Willey, Mark Emerson. 2000. *Pearl Harbor: Mother of All Conspiracies*. Philadelphia: Xlibris. Available at [http://www.geocities.com/mark\\_willey/pearl.html](http://www.geocities.com/mark_willey/pearl.html). © Mark Willey. All rights reserved.

#### Michael C. Ruppert, "Statement at unansweredquestions.org Press Conference" (10 June 2002)

*Michael Ruppert, former Los Angeles Police Department detective and investigator of the alleged CIA involvement in spreading crack cocaine in inner cities, is one of the most outspoken proponents of a conspiratorial view of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In particular he has received much publicity for his detailed "timeline" of events leading up to the attacks. In this press statement, Ruppert outlines his case that the Bush administration knew in advance of the attacks, and offers a list of unanswered questions.*

Just a few short years ago the world was accustomed to not learning the real historical truth about an event for many decades and perhaps centuries. But since Sept. 11th the Internet, and an increasingly skeptical world population, have dramatically shortened history's learning curve.

Rather than relying on unsupported theory, it is possible to expose and focus attention on major discrepancies in the Bush administration's characterization and handling of events by using the internet as a vehicle to widely disseminate and analyze reports from respected mainstream media from all over the world and to then compare and contrast those reports with official government statements, official records and other unquestionable documents and undisputed conduct.

In this manner it is possible, for example, to establish that statements by President Bush, Ari Fleischer and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice claiming they had absolutely no idea that aircraft would be used as weapons, are absolutely false.

[ . . . ] It becomes clear that foreign intelligence services—not random callers or anonymous tipsters—were making direct and urgent pleadings to U.S. intelligence agencies that, when compared side-by-side, clearly establish that Al Qaeda had trained as many as 25 suicide pilots who were planning to crash hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center in the week of September 9th.

Is that specific enough?

Are we to assume that a direct warning from Russian President Putin to the highest levels of the U.S. government somehow fell through the cracks?

The U.S. government has not denied a single one of these press reports. Neither have any of the intelligence services mentioned. In light of what the world has now seen was done with reports of possible hijackings from the FBI in Arizona and Minnesota, and the utterly disingenuous and unpersuasive profferings of the administration and its managers, we are now

being asked to believe in some kind of grand and colossally contagious incompetence that any sentient being is not capable of.

[ . . . ]

The Bush Administration must be forced to admit that they knew hijacked planes were going to be used as weapons. Why else would terrorists take flight training lessons? You can't crop dust with a 757 that you don't know how to land or take-off.

Why else would the G-8 conference in Genoa less than a year earlier have had extensive preparations to prevent hijacked aircraft from being used as weapons. President Bush was there, surrounded by anti-aircraft weapons. Was he not briefed on it?

Just a few of the questions that MUST be answered are going to be discussed today and we have been asking them at From The Wilderness since September 12th. Now many more are asking:

- Why did U.S. State Department officials Karl Inderfurth, Tom Simmons and Lee Coldren travel to Berlin in July 2001 to tell the Taliban that the U.S. government was going to "bury them in a carpet of bombs" in October 2001?

- Why were no fighters scrambled for 50 minutes after the first two planes had hit the World Trade Center towers?

- Why did Andrews Air Force Base alter its web site on 9-13 to hide the fact that it had scramble-ready fighters?

- Why were massive numbers of U.S., British and NATO forces pre-positioned off the Pakistani coast, in Oman and Egypt before the 9-11 attacks?

- Why has no one forcefully demanded an explanation from the administration as to why the head of the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI, wired \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta before the attacks and then was happily in Washington, D.C. meeting with the heads of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees on September 11th?

- Why has the *Wall Street Journal* or any other major paper not investigated the fact that the aide to the head of the ISI who wired the money to

Atta, Ahamad Umar Sheik, is also the lead suspect in the murder of reporter Daniel Pearl?

- Why did the National Security Council convene a Dabhol working group in the summer of 2001 to help a beleaguered Enron try to find a way to salvage a \$3 billion investment in a power generating plant that could only operate if there was a natural gas pipeline across Afghanistan?

[ . . . ]

- Why has the government not disclosed the results of massive insider trading in the financial markets before September 11th that was so widely and urgently commented on by the likes of 60 Minutes, ABC, Bloomberg, and a multitude of respected media outlets?

- Why has no one told the American people about the results of massive numbers of put options on United Airlines that were placed through a firm that was headed until 1998 by a man, A. B. Krongard, who is today in the number-three position at the CIA?

[ . . . ]

The public is rightfully skeptical about a White House that has lied to them about the events of September 11th. And I for one am proud to be a part of the vanguard of courageous independent journalists and researchers who are continuing to bring these shocking—yet utterly verifiable—facts to light.

**Source**

[http://Fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/062102\\_mcr\\_statement.html](http://Fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/062102_mcr_statement.html). © Michael Ruppert 2002. All rights reserved.

**Ether Zone, "Clinton Body Count" (2000)**

*The "Clinton Body Count" lists all the deaths of people allegedly connected to the Clintons. Various versions of the document have been circulating on the Internet since Linda Thompson posted her original list of thirty-four suspicious deaths in 1994. This 2000 version lists sixty-three individuals.*

Here is the latest body count that we have. All of these people have been connected with the Clintons in some form or another. We have not

included any deaths that could not be verified or connected to the Clinton scandals. All deaths are listed chronologically by date. This list is current and accurate to the best of our knowledge as of August 1, 2000.

Susan Coleman: Rumors were circulating in Arkansas of an affair with Bill Clinton. She was found dead with a gunshot wound to the head at 7 1/2 months pregnant. Death was an apparent suicide.

Larry Guerrin: Was killed in February 1987 while investigating the INSLAW case.

Kevin Ives & Don Henry: Initial cause of death was reported to be the result of falling asleep on a railroad track in Arkansas on August 23, 1987. This ruling was reported by the State medical examiner Fahmy Malak. Later it was determined that Kevin died from a crushed skull prior to being placed on the tracks. Don had been stabbed in the back. Rumors indicate that they might have stumbled upon a Mena drug operation.

Keith Coney: Keith had information on the Ives/Henry deaths. Died in a motorcycle accident in July 1988 with unconfirmed reports of a high speed car chase.

Keith McKaskle: McKaskle had information on the Ives/Henry deaths. He was stabbed to death in November 1988.

Gregory Collins: Greg had information on the Ives/Henry deaths. He died from a gunshot wound to the face in January 1989.

Jeff Rhodes: He had information on the deaths of Ives, Henry & McKaskle. His burned body was found in a trash dump in April 1989. He died of a gunshot wound to the head and there was some body mutilation, leading to the speculation that he was probably tortured prior to being killed.

James Milam: Milam had information on the Ives & Henry deaths. He was decapitated. The state Medical examiner, Fahmy Malak, initially ruled death due to natural causes.

Richard Winters: Winters was a suspect in the deaths of Ives & Henry. He was killed in a "robbery" in July 1989 which was subsequently proven to be a setup.



Jordan Kettleon: Kettleon had information on the Ives & Henry deaths. He was found shot to death in the front seat of his pickup in June 1990.

Alan Standorf: An employee of the National Security Agency in electronic intelligence. Standorf was a source of information for Danny Casalaro who was investigating INSLAW, BCCI, etc. Standorf's body was found in the backseat of a car at Washington National Airport on Jan 31, 1991.

Dennis Eisman: An attorney with information on INSLAW. Eisman was found shot to death on April 5, 1991.

Danny Casalaro: Danny was a free-lance reporter and writer who was investigating the “October Surprise,” INSLAW and BCCI. Danny was found dead in a bathtub in a Sheraton Hotel room in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Danny was staying at the hotel while keeping appointments in the DC area pertinent to his investigation. He was found with his wrists slashed. At least one, and possibly both of his wrists were cut 10 times. All of his research materials were missing and have never been recovered.

Victor Raiser: The National Finance Co-Chair for “Clinton for President.” He died in a airplane crash on July 30, 1992.

R. Montgomery Raiser: Also involved in the Clinton presidential campaign. He died in the same plane crash as Victor.

[ . . . ]

Ian Spiro: Spiro had supporting documentation for grand jury proceedings on the INSLAW case. His wife and 3 children were found murdered on November 1, 1992 in their home. They all died of gunshot wounds to the head. Ian's body was found several days later in a parked car in the Borego Desert. Cause of death? The ingestion of cyanide. FBI report indicated that Ian had murdered his family and then committed suicide.

Paula Gober: A Clinton speech writer. She died in a car accident on December 9, 1992 with no known witnesses.

Jim Wilhite: Wilhite was an associate of Mack McClarty's former firm. Wilhite died in a skiing accident on December 21, 1992. He also had

extensive ties to Clinton with whom he visited by telephone just hours before his death.

Steve Willis, Robert Williams, Todd McKeahan & Conway LeBleu: Died February 28, 1993 by gunfire at Waco. All four were examined by a pathologist and died from identical wounds to the left temple. All four had been body guards for Bill Clinton, three while campaigning for President and when he was Governor of Arkansas. They also were the ONLY 4 BATF agents killed at Waco.

[ . . . ]

John Crawford: An attorney with information on INSLAW. He died from a heart attack in Tacoma in April of 1993.

John Wilson: Found dead from an apparent hanging suicide on May 18, 1993. He was a former Washington DC council member and claimed to have info on Whitewater.

Paul Wilcher: A lawyer who was investigating drug running out of Mena, Arkansas and who also sought to expose the “October Surprise,” BCCI and INSLAW. He was found in his Washington DC apartment dead of unknown causes on June 22, 1993.

Vincent Foster: A White House deputy counsel and long-time personal friend of Bill and Hillary's. Found on July 20, 1993, dead of a gunshot wound to the mouth—a death ruled suicide. [ . . . ]

Stanley Heard & Steven Dickson: They were members of the Clinton health care advisory committee. They died in a plane crash on September 10, 1993.

Jerry Luther Parks: Parks was the Chief of Security for Clinton's national campaign headquarters in Little Rock. Gunned down in his car on September 26, 1993 near the intersection of Chenal Parkway and Highway 10 west of Little Rock. [ . . . ] Parks had been compiling a dossier on Clinton's illicit activities. The dossier was stolen.

[ . . . ]

Herschell Friday: A member of the presidential campaign finance committee. He died in an airplane explosion on March 1, 1994.

[ . . . ]

Kathy Ferguson: A 38 year old hospital worker whose ex-husband is a co-defendant in the Paula

Jones sexual harassment law suit. She had information supporting Paula Jone's allegations. She died of an apparent suicide on May 11, 1994 from a gunshot wound to the head.

[ . . . ]

Ron Brown: The Commerce Secretary died on April 3, 1996, in an Air Force jet carrying Brown and 34 others, including 14 business executives on a trade mission to Croatia, crashed into a mountainside.

**Source**

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**Jason Jeffrey, "Brain Zapping" (2002)**

*In a long, two-part article for the Australian New Age web magazine New Dawn, Jason Jeffrey examines the competing explanations for alien abductions—in particular the reports of enforced sexual/medical experiments—and comes to the conclusion that aliens represent a paranormal dark force that might operate through advanced technologies of mind control. In the following section, he argues that alien abductions need to be seen as forms of modern demons rather than benevolent space ambassadors or cover stories for military conspiracies against the people—a controlling force more mysterious and powerful than most conspiracy theorists accept. The article concludes that this evil force can be resisted by turning to a form of counter-cultural New Age rejection of the controlling messages of the elite. Jeffrey's article demonstrates that many contemporary conspiracy theories—especially those involving alien abductions and UFOs—are hard to place on the spectrum of political beliefs.*

Over the years, research into mind control has been carried out by (among others) the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the US Defence Department, and various multinational corporations. The ultimate aim of their secretive research being the manipulation of the human mind in such a way that the victim is unaware of such hidden influence.

But mind control operations may go much further than the use of advanced psycho-technologies. Over recent decades thousands of people have reported being abducted by 'aliens'. These countless stories cannot simply be dismissed as the result of 'psychiatric disorder' as the vast majority of the individuals do not have a background of mental illness. However, they all share in common the experience of being subject to the UFO/alien phenomenon on TV, at the movies, or in books. [ . . . ] As discussed in the first part of this article [*New Dawn*, no. 59], the technology to beam words and thoughts into people's minds already exists. There is also no doubt that secret research into the creation of false memories is well advanced. One school of thought on alien abductions proposes the phenomenon is directly linked to mind control operations carried out by the US military.

**MILAB (Military Abductions)**

The MILAB school of thought suggests abduction reports are psyops (psychological operations) disinformation, carried out through the use of unethical hypnosis and other mind control technology, by covert human agencies, for political control purposes. Other schools of thought on alien abduction argue the aliens are real (and are genetically taking over mankind), or that the aliens are friendly and are helping mankind 'progress'. Alien mind control is seen either as a negative (hastening our destruction), or a positive (a necessity for our advancement).

There are many alien abductee reports of military/intelligence personnel appearing after helicopters come into sight. For instance, Debby Jordan reports in a side note of her book *Abducted!* that she was stunned by an alleged friend and brought to a kind of hospital to be examined by a medical doctor, who removed an implant from her ear. The abduction experiences of Leah Haley and Katharina Wilson are full of MILAB encounters. Some of Katharina Wilson's experiences are comparable with mind control experiments. She experienced a flashback from her childhood where she remembers being in a

hospital and forced into a Skinner Box-like container possibly used for behaviour modification experiments. [ . . . ] Many researchers feel such evidence proves the existence of a secret US military mind control project. Aliens are false memories implanted by military doctors and psychiatrists. How this is accomplished may be explained by an advanced virtual reality technology. Dr. Karla Turner called these experiences Virtual Reality Scenarios (VRS).

Many alleged mind control victims claim to have had pictures implanted in their brain. If a person was implanted with an intracerebral device, then the implant operators may be able to electronically implant pictures and memories into the brain of the abductee. As reported in first part of this article, *New World Vistas* was a major undertaking for the USAF Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). This military publication, published in 1996, forecasts possible military developments over the next 50 years. In the publication, military scientists suggest that the development of electromagnetic energy sources—the output of which can be pulsed, shaped, and focused—could be coupled with the human body in a fashion that will allow one to prevent voluntary muscular movements, control emotions and actions, produce sleep, transmit suggestions, interfere with both short-term and long-term memory, produce an experience set and delete an experience set. If such technology was developed in secret and exists today, the unexplainable vividness of some abduction accounts may be explained by the implantation of an experience set into the brain of an abductee.

### **Behind the Abduction Facade**

The general consensus among researchers, who believe alien abductions are mind control operations, is that the reported little grey alien kidnappers are just cover stories implanted by military and/or intelligence agency psychiatrists. Another widely held view is that real aliens abduct people and implant, with different levels of success, a variety of cover stories. Yet another theory is that both the military and aliens are

kidnapping people! [ . . . ] Any valid theory on so-called alien abductions must stand up to scrutiny, explain all the cases and not just a percentage, and offer some logical perspective on the mystery. Most people are conditioned to view strange phenomena through the eyes of a modern scientist, only looking for physical evidence. The majority of modern day UFO researchers are caught up in this mind set—intent on gathering photographs, ‘implants’ and interviews—but failing to see the deeper implications and the not-so-obvious. Abductees may describe ‘grey aliens’ as the kidnappers, but it does not necessarily follow that real ‘grey aliens’ are responsible. As we have seen, psycho-technologies and manipulation of the mind can be used to create cover stories.

Humanity has only begun to rediscover the great mysteries and powers of the brain. Astral travel, Out-of-Body Experiences, channelling of extraterrestrial entities, and encounters with Yetis are all examples of other unusual phenomena experienced by millions of people. To these people, those experiences are as ‘real’ as an alien abduction. It seems we are dealing with phenomena outside the bounds of normal scientific inquiry. Powerful forces and entities existing on a different plane of existence to that of humanity, or cohabiting the Earth in another dimension. [ . . . ]

Could these beings enter our realities through some portal in the human mind? If they have the ability to enter our brains on some other plane, what do they want? And consider this: If they can control energy and matter and change form, what lies behind the alien masks? [ . . . ]

### **Demons and Aliens**

We can see from the available evidence that the so-called alien abduction phenomenon is of a paranormal nature. History is replete with stories of similar encounters with strange beings. Of particular note are reports, mainly from the so-called medieval period, of women claiming to be attacked at night by demons. Taking the outward form of demons, these ‘incubus’ (male demons)

and 'succubi' (female demons) would paralyse their victims and engage in sexual intercourse.

Are these demons still at work today? It has been suggested in our time these same beings take on the form of aliens, stealing cover images from the depths of humanity's collective unconsciousness. [ . . . ]

### **Men in Black**

The parallels between demonic possession and alien abductions should now be plainly obvious. These same forces take on a shape and form recognisable to a particular generation. They wrap themselves in the cultural and popular notions of the day, tricking people into believing their cover story. Alien abduction encounters are the modern day equivalents of medieval demonic possession—only now the victims experience the phenomenon in the light of modern day terminology and imagery. On their operating tables the 'aliens' extract sperm and ova (the most pure and highly energised substance of the human body) from the 'abductee'. The whole scene looks like a medical operation, only that the victim is forced and the perpetrators wear masks. They sometimes come in their flying saucers, an image solidly implanted into the minds of the public via fifty years of UFO movies, TV shows, magazines and books.

Another historical phenomenon connected with UFOs is the mysterious appearance of strange dark figures known as 'Men in Black', or MIB. They are usually somewhat 'demonic' in appearance, slant-eyed, very tall and radiating strong auras of total menace. MIB encounters often were connected to: temperature effects, pains, a pungent sulphurous odour, moving and flashing lights, astral projection, discarnate voices seemingly combined with telepathy, poltergeist effects in the radio being turned on, hypnotic effects, time distortion, a special object, a visionary trip and beautiful alien women—all hallmarks of paranormal/psychic activity. [ . . . ]

### **The Controllers**

[ . . . ] Identifying these dark forces and their real purpose is extremely difficult and it would seem,

highly dangerous. Have they been controlling humanity for thousands of years? Did some group or secret society call them up into our plane of reality? [ . . . ] If the whole thing is a cosmic conspiracy of sorts, then all humanity have been pawns in the game of these 'dark gods' for millennia. It only follows that these same forces have directed human history. [ . . . ]

### **How to Resist**

The way out of this all-pervading control syndrome is to launch creative revolts against it. But first the individual must educat[e] him or herself to understand their own nature. Get in touch with one's own inner space and eject all elements of 'control'. Use creativity as a weapon. Resistance to any form of mind control is simple. On a basic level, any individual can concentrate towards being fully aware and awake at all times. For example, TV advertisements are designed to implant subliminal messages into our brains. Be aware of that fact and consciously and subconsciously resist it. Think for yourself and don't accept anything at face value. Anyone reading magazines like *New Dawn* will realise they have been fed lies and disinformation by the elitists through the mainstream media. [ . . . ] Being kept in ignorance by the ruling elite, people are left wide open to control. The ultimate goal of today's elites is summed up in the mantra: consume, breed, die. Your purpose is nothing more than to live as an ignorant robot, serving the elites of this world, and being psychic 'food' for dark metaphysical forces. This analysis might sound very negative and imply the situation is hopeless. But that's how it's always been for humanity. Nevertheless, there's always been a path open for us to go beyond the human condition and reach for the stars. Break free from ignorance and smash the bonds of control.

### **Source**

Jeffrey, Jason. 2002. "Brain Zapping." *New Dawn Magazine* 60. Available at <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com/Articles/Brain%20Zapping2.html>.



**Robert Helmer, “Shell Extension City: The True Story” (c. 2002)**

*In this article from his Shell Extension City website, Bob Helmer tells a version of the story about an alien spacecraft crash-landing in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. In Helmer’s account, the U.S. government was able to rescue an encoded disk from the site. This “circular object,” according to Helmer, was the subject of intensive secret scientific analysis, which took place at a secret air force base in the desert known as Shell Extension City. In this piece, the author claims to have firsthand knowledge of the base.*

On July 8, 1947, at the so called “Foster Ranch” in the desert outside Roswell, New Mexico, a certain incident occurred. While the details of the incident are vague at best, and no certain conclusions can be drawn from the many contradictory stories surrounding it, one thing is clear: a small disk, made of apparently magnetic materials embedded and sheathed in celluloid or flexible bakelite, was recovered by RAAF investigators from a Major Jesse Marcel, a RAAF officer who was one of the first to explore the site of the “incident.”

The item was immediately taken to the Foreign Technology Division of Air Materiel Command at Wright Patterson Air Force Base for analysis. While the exact results of that analysis have never been released, it is known that the intelligence and engineering branches at Wright Patterson created a “top secret” memorandum for the Chief, Air Intelligence Division, dated October 11, 1948, signed by a Colonel Brooke Allen, Chief of the Air Estimates Branch at Wright Patterson. The stated subject of the memorandum is “Analysis of Circular Object.”

The thrust of the memorandum was that while the disk’s secrets remained mostly unrevealed, it was known that it contained what the authors described as “code,” the deciphering of which could be of tremendous value to the military. Specifically, the memorandum stated that the analysis had revealed what the authors described

as “windows” into theretofore unknown technologies.

Little progress was made in replicating the object, and in fact, the CIA-sponsored Robertson Panel, so named after its chairman Dr. Harold P. Robertson, director of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group for the Secretary of Defense, reported that attempts to “reverse engineer” it were nil.

Nevertheless, research continued, and a panel convened in Washington, DC, in mid January of 1953 (consisting of some of the best scientific minds of the day, including a future Nobel Prize laureate in physics, Luis Alvarez, formerly of Berkeley; physicist Samuel Goudsmit of the Brookhaven National Laboratories; astronomer Thornton Page of Johns Hopkins University, later with NASA, and other luminaries who would later win kudos for their work on the staffs at Xerox Parc, Apple Computer Company, and other top projects).

The panel’s report was outlined in a document later retrieved in 1997 under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). While the proprietary systems embedded in the object could not be replicated, the Panel wrote, an heuristic could be devised so that the unknown internal mechanisms of the disk (code named, “Kernel”) could yet be manipulated by linking to its surface (code named, “Shell”)—hopefully allowing access to and expansion upon its inner workings, and thus, through such “shell extensions,” providing a boon to the military-scientific community, which had great hopes that the technology embedded in the disk could be used for the expansion of scientific knowledge and the pursuit of peace.

The Report concluded with the suggestion that a recommendation be made to the President and the NSC that they mobilize all the scientific resources of this country and create for study of the device a think tank, the scope of which would rival the Manhattan Project. Originally known as MJ-90, or Majestic, the project was created in 1956 at a secret air force base in the desert outside Las Vegas; researchers associated with the

Majestic project quickly dubbed the air force base, “Shell Extension City.”

Though secrecy was great, for many years the existence of Shell Extension City was rumored, particularly among the technological cognescenti in Las Vegas, but neither the military nor the intelligence community would confirm its existence. [ . . . ] Then came the fateful day in 1997, when an ex-military contractor, who claimed to have worked at Shell Extension City, came forward (possibly at great risk to himself) and gave extensive interviews to members of several amateur groups who had been studying other “Shell-Kernel” phenomena on their own (and who had been labeled “fringe” groups by the scientific community).

This individual, though he prefers to remain unnamed, actually drove the author of this article into the Nevada desert on State Highway 375, and, under cover of night, took him to a small plateau, from which could be seen, on the desert floor below, the hustle and bustle of a small military base, complete with lighted airplane runways, and numerous hangars and personnel. All this in a place which is but a blank spot on the map of that state. [ . . . ]

With its secret breached, the government would no longer maintain the secret air base in Nevada, and in fact, on a recent return visit to that plateau, the author was able to confirm that what once had been a very active military installation had since become a veritable ghost town, the inhabitants apparently having packed every portable object, abandoning only the few airplane hangars and guardhouses, which have quickly fallen victim to the desert elements.

As for the magnetic disk itself, no one knows with precision its current whereabouts, although rumor has it that yet another secret installation exists, in the American northwest, under close guard of the most secret agencies of the Department of Defense.

**Source**

Available at <http://shellcity.net/true.htm>. © Robert Helmer. All rights reserved.

**Robert Gaylon Ross Sr.,  
“Globalization and Secret  
Societies Exposed” (2003)**

*Robert Gaylon Ross produces a website of news commentary under the company name RIE (Ross International Enterprises). In its full version this piece combines a host of familiar conspiracy ideas about globalist institutions and interprets contemporary events such as the Iraq war in the light of these speculations.*

The Elite have covertly redefined the term conspiracy to imply that anyone who believes in conspiracies must be a kook, so they must disregard anything that these kooks say, because they are mentally deranged. This is not a conspiracy theory site. This site contains only conspiracy facts. [ . . . ]

**Globalization**

The conspiracy facts are that Elite inner circle members of the Bilderbergs (BB), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and Trilateral Commission (TC) are conspiring to politically and economically dominate the entire world under their New World Order, more recently called Globalization, or Global Union, Global Economy, Global Order, Global Environment, and like terms. When President G.H.W. Bush used the term New World Order in several of his speeches, it aroused suspicion and concern among the public. So, the Elite selected a generic term “Globalization” to use, and now Americans are no longer alarmed, because the business world uses this term daily, so it must not be so frightening. But, you cannot change a tiger’s stripes. We’re still talking about the New World Order. If you don’t know about the BB, CFR, and TC, or who are the members of these secret organizations, then you must have a copy of *Who’s Who of the Elite*.

“In politics, nothing happens by accident. If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way” (Franklin Delanor Roosevelt).

### **American Union**

The Elite plan to create the American Union by January, 2005. This will include all of the nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands, and will function just like the present European Union. There will be only one monetary system, one central bank, one (unelected) governing body, one military force, one judicial system, no borders, and no Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Elite have invented a new term for expanded NAFTA, which they now call FTAA, or Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Council of the Americas, at the Quebec City conference in March, 2001, stated very clearly that they plan to complete the FTAA by the year 2005. [ . . . ]

It is obvious that they are really talking about the American Union which they plan to complete by January, 2005. That’s less than two years away, my friends. Just when are you planning to get concerned? The American Union follows the first step, the European Union, in the Elite’s plan to control the entire world. Next will be the Asian Union, the African Union, and the Soviet Union, all to be completed between the years 2010 and 2015. This is not my speculation, it’s their stated plans, as detailed in a UN document titled “Our Global Neighborhood.” All nations of the world will be included in the Global Union, except those nations dominated by Islam. Perhaps that is why the Elite are planning wars against the Islamic nations. [ . . . ]

### **Spying on U.S. Citizens**

There is now a proposal to open all snail-mail sent to Congress, digitize it, and make it available to the recipient by E-mail. The stated purpose of doing this is to protect members of Congress from anthrax, and to save their staff time in opening the mail. The REAL reason is to snoop the correspondence to see what is inside. All electronic means of correspondence are now being monitored by NSA’s operation ECHELON. Once they have digitized the snail-mail, there will be no secrets between members of Congress and their constituents. They now snoop every

electronic transmission (fax, E-mail, telephone, Telex, radio, etc.) by the N.S.A.’s Operation ECHELON. [ . . . ] The Pentagon now has an operation called Total Information Awareness (TIA), which is made up of a bank of very powerful computers containing unbelievable amounts of information on US citizens. These computers track each person’s credit card, airline ticket, and rental car transactions, passports, driver’s licenses, and on and on. [ . . . ]

### **Nanobots**

Now, you are going to say that I’ve really gone crazy! But, what if the Elite invented a very small robot, or nanobot, and injected it into your bloodstream when you get your next injection, and when the time is right, they send a signal to your body activating these little devils to do their programmed duty? This duty could be either beneficial or detrimental—who knows? There are frequent scares about anthrax and other biological agents threatening our lives. Could this be an opportunity to inject these nanobots into your bloodstream?

#### **Source**

Available at <http://www.4rie.com/mainindex.html>.

### **Anti-Defamation League (ADL), “Minister Farrakhan: In His Own Words” (2003)**

*The Anti-Defamation League is a long-running organization dedicated to monitoring and opposing hate crimes and anti-Semitism in particular. In this report, the league highlights the tendency of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to draw on conspiratorial and antisemitic rhetoric in his speeches and interviews.*

Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, has long expressed anti-Semitic and anti-white rhetoric which has marked him as a notable figure on the extremist scene. In recent years, this demagogue has been a frequent speaker on college campuses and at rallies, where he has been received enthusiastically by thousands of people. Indeed, his February 23, 2003 Saviour’s

day speech, (excerpts below) is testimony to the unchanging nature of his views. [ . . . ]

On the US Government:

“I hasten to tell you that the precious lives that were lost in the World Trade Center was a cover, a cover for a war that had been planned to bring a pipeline through Afghanistan to bring oil from that region, oil owned by Unical of which Dick Cheney is a stock holder.”

*Saviours’ Day Speech*, Chicago, 2/23/03  
[ . . . ]

On Jewish Conspiracies:

“The warmongers in his [Bush’s] administration, the poor Israeli Zionists, have literally gotten America’s foreign policy to protect Israel. Now many of you won’t say these things, but that’s on you. Daniel Perle or Richard Perle, Wolfowitz, Kristol—all of these are architects of policy and they are pro-Israel. One American congressman said listen, the cornerstone of America’s foreign policy is the protection of Israel.”

*Saviours’ Day Speech*, Chicago, 2/23/03

Farrakhan: “Is the Federal Reserve owned by the government?”

*Audience*: “No.”

Farrakhan: “Who owns the federal reserve?”

*Audience*: “Jews.”

Farrakhan: “The same year they set up the IRS, they set up the FBI. And the same year they set up the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith . . . It could be a coincidence . . . [I want] to see black intellectuals free . . . I want to see them not controlled by members of the Jewish community.”

*Dallas Observer on-line*, 8/10/00

[ . . . ]

“I believe that for the small numbers of Jewish people in the United States, they exercise a tremendous amount of influence on the affairs of government. . . . Yes, they exercise extraordinary control, and Black people will never be free in this country until they are free of that kind of control. . . .”

*Meet the Press interview*, 4/14/97

“To continue to point out the truth of that control and how that control never will allow us to be full and completely men, free, justified, and equal. Why should we be controlled by the power, influence, and money of others? We should not be under that kind of control . . . going to Jewish philanthropists, begging them for money to support our causes, and through that money, there is control, and that kind of control limits the freedom of our people to speak freely, write freely, think freely, and act as free men . . .”

*Meet the Press interview*, 4/14/97

“And you do with me as is written, but remember that I have warned you that Allah will punish you. You are wicked deceivers of the American people. You have sucked their blood. You are not real Jews, those of you that are not real Jews. You are the synagogue of Satan, and you have wrapped your tentacles around the U.S. government, and you are deceiving and sending this nation to hell. But I warn you in the name of Allah, you would be wise to leave me alone. But if you choose to crucify me, know that Allah will crucify you.”

[ . . . ]

“We are not giving them [Jews] power by getting into the debate, they already have power. They control Black intellectuals, they control Black politicians, Black preachers, Black artists—they control Black life. I’m not against Jews, I’m against control by any group, of us. . . . I don’t know how you can talk about Black liberation without confronting that and not talk about those who stifle Black thought, freedom of Black liberation.”

*Daily Challenge*, 10/12/00

[ . . . ]

“How did we get into World War II? You say Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Yes, they did, but what were the forces that created in Japan the desire or the need to force them to attack America? You don’t know that. But when America went to war after the attack on Pearl Harbor, she



had to borrow money. There were the international bankers again. They financed all sides. And how many millions of Americans lost their lives? Suppose Hitler was trying to destroy the international bankers controlling Europe, but he went about it by attacking a whole people. All Jews are not responsible for the evil of the few who do evil. . . . But certain Jews have used Judaism as a shield.”

*Saviours' Day Speech*, Chicago, 2/26/95

**Source**

Anti-Defamation League website: [http://www.adl.org/special\\_reports/farrakhan\\_own\\_words/farrakhan\\_own\\_words.asp](http://www.adl.org/special_reports/farrakhan_own_words/farrakhan_own_words.asp). Reprinted with permission of the Anti-Defamation League.

**Lawton et al. v. Republic of Iraq (2003)**

*This lawsuit, prepared for a group of survivors and victims' families, charges the Republic of Iraq with abetting the terrorist attack on the Murrah Building in Oklahoma in 1995.*

[ . . . ] 5. The parties hereto are all Oklahoma citizens or former Oklahoma citizens who are either survivors of the Murrah Building bombing of April 19, 1995, or who lost loved ones in that terrorist attack. All Plaintiffs are citizens of the United States.

6. Defendant, The Republic of Iraq, is a foreign sovereign whose activities were outside the scope of immunity as provided by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. As noted, Defendant has been declared a state sponsoring terrorism since September 1990.

7. The parties hereto, based on their collective knowledge and on the knowledge of other victims of the bombing of April 19, 1995, believe that the attack was not as simple as has been portrayed by the United States government during the criminal trials of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. Specifically, upon information and belief, Plaintiffs assert that other individuals were involved in preparation for and execution of the attack. Plaintiffs assert that the entire plot was, in whole or in part, orchestrated, assisted technically

and/or financially, and directly aided by agents of The Republic of Iraq. Plaintiffs further assert that this attack was an illegal continuation of the Persian Gulf War. Plaintiffs herein assert that they or their loved ones are, in effect, civilian casualties of said Gulf War in a manner contrary to the Geneva Convention and other applicable international treaties. Plaintiffs assert that the involvement and complicity of Iraq can be proven by both direct and circumstantial evidence in classic application, i.e., means, opportunity and motive, to wit:

**Iraq Had the “Means” to Commit Terrorist Acts in the United States.**

Prior to the Gulf War, Iraq had developed a covert network in the United States to acquire materials for weapons of mass destruction. After the Gulf War, Iraq converted that network into organized terrorist cells. Those covert Iraqi procurement and terrorist activities directly involved Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[ . . . ]

(B) “Opportunity” to Commit the Murrah Building Bombing.

27. In summary, Iraq had the “opportunity” through its agent, Ramzi Youssef, and through other individuals to assist in both the technical planning, and in the execution of the Oklahoma City Murrah Building bombing. Having expended considerable resources in developing covert procurement and terrorist cells in the United States, Iraq did not forego the opportunity to provide training and support to domestic extremists, like Nichols and McVeigh, who were already pre-disposed to terrorism and to “acts of revenge” against the U.S. government.

(C) Iraq Had “Motive” to Attack the United States in April 1995.

28. When it became clear that Iraq was losing the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq repeatedly threatened revenge. Specifically, the Iraqi people will “avenge the pure blood that has been shed no matter how long it takes” as spoken by then First Deputy Prime Minister of Baghdad Domestic Service, Taha Yasin Ramadan on February 15, 1991. In

November 1992, Saddam Hussein, himself, announced in Ramadi, Iraq that “the mother of battles . . . has continued and will continue.”

[ . . . ]

In summary, Iraq had sufficient “motive,” and Saddam Hussein had previously demonstrated sufficient propensity, to execute a major terrorist attack against the United States in the spring of 1995, and certainly after the events of April 10, 1995.

[ . . . ]

32. Plaintiffs assert that the entire plot to blow up the Murrah Building on April 19, 1995 was, in whole or in part, orchestrated, assisted technically and/or financially, and directly aided by agents of The Republic of Iraq.

[ . . . ]

**Source**

Available at <http://www.okcbombing.org/News%20Articles/lawsuit.htm>.



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