

Carthy, a prominent figure during the campaign, was widely touted for his political success. Re-elected by a comfortable margin, the Wisconsin senator also had the pleasure of watching four of his Democratic Senatorial foes trounced at the polls. Conceding defeat on election night, Stevenson told his disheartened followers that he was reminded of Abraham Lincoln's story of the little boy who had stubbed his toe: he was too old to cry, but it hurt too much to laugh. At GOP headquarters in New York City's Hotel Commodore, thousands in expensively tailored suits and modish gowns joined in singing "God Bless America." "Twenty years of treason" had ended.

But the Republican landslide of 1952 was underwritten by a double irony. Despite their justifiable glee at the election results, the Anti-Communist Crusaders contributed little to the Republican victory; indeed, they may well have limited its dimensions. Whatever mandate the Republicans received was an Eisenhower mandate; right-wingers and McCarthyites actually fared rather poorly. Everywhere Republican Congressional candidates trailed far behind Eisenhower, and the GOP took power in Congress by the thinnest of margins: eight seats in the House and one in the Senate. In each of the twelve non-Southern states in which McCarthy had campaigned to elect a Republican Senator, the Democratic Senatorial candidate ran well ahead of Stevenson. In his home state of Wisconsin, where McCarthy's victory margin was 139,042 votes, Eisenhower's was 357,269; McCarthy, in fact, trailed every Republican on the statewide ballot. If any individual was responsible for restoring the Republicans to power in the White House and on Capitol Hill, it was not the controversial McCarthy but the immensely popular Eisenhower.

Furthermore, insofar as issues counted at all in 1952, the major issue of the election as perceived by voters was the Korean War. Here Stevenson was saddled with the unpopular culmination of Truman's Cold War policies—policies which he strongly supported in the campaign and which cost him dearly in competition with Eisenhower's call for peace. As in 1948, New Deal-style concerns held together what elements remained of the Democratic coalition, but, under the stresses and strains of the Cold War, that coalition was by 1952 in an advanced state of disintegration. The long Democratic era, then, was brought to a close, not only because the Republicans nominated a war hero, but because voters could not abide the consequences of the major policy innovation provided by the Truman Democrats: the Cold War. Frustrated in their desire for peace, millions of Americans found no alternative but to abandon the Democratic Party and to turn the reins of government over to its conservative competitor.

The Rulers and the Ruled: American Society, 1945-60

What sphinx of cement and aluminum
bashed open their skulls and ate up
their brains and imagination?
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans
and unobtainable dollars! Children
screaming under stairways! Boys
sobbing in armies! Old men weeping
in the parks!
Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch!
Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch!
Moloch the heavy judger of men!

ALLEN GINSBERG, *Howl*, 1956

"AMERICA IS A MIDDLE-CLASS COUNTRY," sociologist David Riesman concluded from the vantage point of his Harvard University office. "Perhaps people will soon wake up to the fact that there is no longer . . . a 'we' who don't run things and a 'they' who do, but rather that all 'we's' are 'they's' and all 'they's' are 'we's'." Few ideas were more widely bruited about in the prosperous postwar years than the notion that substantial inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power in America had ceased to exist. Arthur F. Burns, Eisenhower's top economic adviser, remarked in 1951 that "the transformation in the distribution of our national income . . . may already be counted as one of the great social revolutions in history." When economist John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* appeared in 1958, it seemed merely to set the seal of approval on the prevailing consensus. The "old issues" of inequality, slums, and inadequate wages and medical care were dead, he contended; instead, the nation now faced the problems of abundance. All seemed to agree that the crusades against inequality that had marked previous decades in American history could safely be abandoned. "The fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved," sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset announced

in 1959, with the "triumph of the democratic social revolution in the West."

This optimistic assessment owed much to the postwar wave of prosperity. The gross national product jumped from \$212 billion to \$504 billion between 1945 and 1960. In the 1950s alone, per capita personal income rose 48 per cent. In 1953 an estimated 58 per cent of American families earned between \$3,000 and \$10,000 a year compared to 31 per cent with similar purchasing power in 1929. From 1929 to 1945 large sectors of American society had lived in an economy of scarcity, their purchasing power cut by the low incomes of the Depression and the rationing of the war years. In the postwar period, however, the craving for consumer goods at last found satisfaction. Americans bought 8 million automobiles—a record number—in 1955. By 1960, 75 per cent of American households owned at least one car, 87 per cent a television set, 86 per cent a refrigerator, and 75 per cent a washing machine. Spurred by the new prosperity, the birth rate in America increased sharply; between 1950 and 1960 the nation's population expanded by 28 million, with two-thirds of the growth occurring in the burgeoning suburbs. Although full employment did not carry beyond World War II and recessions struck the nation in 1949, 1954, and 1958, the rate of joblessness remained far below the level of the 1930s. Most Americans were enjoying a steadily rising standard of living.

But postwar prosperity obscured the more significant reality of economic inequality. Although the share of the national income received by the wealthiest 5 per cent of the American population dropped markedly in the Depression and war years, it stabilized in 1944 at 21 per cent and did not change significantly thereafter. The poorest 20 per cent of American families received 5 per cent of the national income in 1944, and this, too, remained virtually constant. Even more striking was the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the share of the nation's wealth held by the richest .5 per cent of the adult population steadily declined between 1929 and 1949 until it hit 19.3 per cent, but thereafter it increased, reaching 25 per cent in 1956. By 1962 the richest 1 per cent of the population held 33 per cent of the wealth, the richest 5 per cent held 53 per cent, and the richest 20 per cent held 77 per cent—more than 154 times the share of the nation's wealth (less than .5 per cent) held by the poorest 20 per cent.

Corporate wealth provided the basis for this inequitable structure. Despite the fanfare given "people's capitalism" by the National Advertising Council and the U.S. Information Agency, almost 95 per cent of the American people owned no corporate stock in 1956. Indeed, a study by Robert Lampman, later a top White House economic adviser,

revealed that the share of corporate stock held by 1 per cent of American adults increased from 61.7 per cent in 1945 to 76 per cent in 1953. In that same year, 1.6 per cent of the population owned 82.2 per cent of the corporate stock, 88.5 per cent of the corporate bonds, and virtually all of the state and local bonds. If the United States lacked dramatic class conflict from 1945 to 1960, it was nonetheless a class society, based on private ownership of a corporate economy.

Actively managing their businesses or merely reaping the profits, the corporate rich enjoyed a rewarding life in the postwar years. The board chairmen of six American oil companies drew annual salaries ranging from \$175,000 to \$250,000. Most corporation executives owned large blocks of company stock; indeed, stock and cash bonuses often outdistanced annual salaries. Thus, in 1952, the president of Du Pont received \$153,290 in salary and \$350,000 in bonuses; the president of Bethlehem Steel received \$150,000 in salary and \$306,652 in bonuses; and the president of General Motors received \$201,000 in salary and \$380,000 in bonuses—in addition to dividends. Corporation executives also received a variety of less visible emoluments, including expense accounts, country club privileges, business cars, lavish parties, company credit cards, paid vacations, medical treatment, and sizable pensions. The U.S. Treasury Department estimated in 1957 that expense accounts ran from \$5 billion to \$10 billion annually; most items charged to credit card companies in 1958 were billed to businesses. Direct income, then, represented only a small fraction of the bonanza enjoyed by the corporate elite, and even this fraction was frequently underestimated on federal tax returns. Nevertheless, the Internal Revenue Service announced in 1961 that 398 taxpayers had reported incomes of at least \$1 million that year—as opposed to 62 in 1944. In 1953 Robert Lampman had estimated that there were 27,000 millionaires in America; nine years later, the Federal Reserve System reported 80,000.

Despite their unprecedented prosperity, the corporate rich introduced few dramatic changes in the well-ordered routine of American upper-class life. Childhood dancing classes and attendance at prep schools like Exeter, Andover, Choate, Groton, and Hotchkiss continued to give a young man the proper social training and associates before entering an elite college or university, joining the "right" campus club or fraternity, and taking up his place in the appropriate men's club—the Links, the Knickerbocker, the Metropolitan, the Racquet, or the Brook. Fashionable summer resorts, debutante balls, cultural organizations, and recreational activities such as yachting, polo matches, and fox hunts gave him the opportunity to mingle comfortably with members of his class. A young lady might attend dancing classes as a child before "coming out" in society at the crucial debutante ball. The debut of eighteen-year-old

Charlotte Ford in 1959 took a year to plan, was attended by 1,200 guests, and cost \$250,000. The *New York Times* noted: "Two million magnolia leaves were flown in from Mississippi and were used to cover the walls of the corridors leading to the reception room in the Country Club of Detroit, which had been redecorated to look like an eighteenth-century French chateau." To be sure, the rich had their problems. Observing in 1952 that his holdings were probably worth several billion dollars, J. Paul Getty added morosely: "But remember, a billion dollars isn't what it used to be."

As always, the business élite took a keen interest in the policies of the American government. "Gulf and every other American corporation is in politics, up to its ears in politics," a senior vice-president remarked in 1958. The largest manufacturers and bankers, primarily white Anglo-Saxon Protestants from families that achieved prominence between the Civil War and the Depression, controlled the Republican Party. The Democratic Party, on the other hand, was controlled by very old and very new elements within the upper class, including Southern aristocrats, a few old Northern patricians, and the newer ethnic rich. In 1952 the top Republican and Democratic campaign committees received most of their income in contributions of \$1,000 or more. The known contributions to Eisenhower's 1956 campaign included \$100,000 from the Mellons, \$152,000 from the Rockefellers, \$216,000 from the Pews, and \$248,000 from the Du Ponts. Officers and directors of America's largest corporations contributed at least \$1.8 million to the GOP Presidential campaign that year.

"Business liberals," usually from the largest, most internationally oriented companies, found their voice in the Council on Foreign Relations and the Committee for Economic Development and their home in the "moderate" Eastern wing of the GOP or in the Democratic Party. The "old guard," more right-wing in viewpoint, mostly comprised nationally oriented businessmen who provided the bedrock strength of the National Association of Manufacturers and the conservative wing of the Republican Party. "Business liberals" were particularly enraptured by the Eisenhower Administration, but "old guard" elements, such as the new Texas oil millionaires, lavishly funded right-wing politicians and causes. Three former presidents of the NAM were among the first leaders of the John Birch Society.

The political power of the corporate rich is illustrated by the fact that, although they constituted less than 1 per cent of the population, they dominated the key policy-making posts within the federal government. Of the ninety-one individuals who served as Secretaries and Under Secretaries of State and Defense, the Secretaries of the three military services, the Chairmen of the AEC, and the Directors of the

CIA between 1940 and 1967, seventy came from the ranks of big business and finance. Members of the upper class seemed particularly welcome in the State, Defense, and Treasury departments. Of the six Secretaries of State between 1945 and 1960, five were listed in the *Social Register*. Three of the five were corporation lawyers, one was a wealthy general, and one was a Boston aristocrat; the sixth was a powerful Southern Democrat of conservative views. Between 1947, when it was created, and 1960 the Department of Defense was headed by six men, of whom five were listed in the *Social Register*; the exception was the president of General Motors.

During his term of office, President Truman relied heavily upon Wall Street financiers, many of whom were not even Democrats. Twenty-two key posts in the State Department, ten in the Defense Department, and five top positions in other agencies went to bankers who were either registered Republicans or politically unaffiliated. Eisenhower preferred to appoint directors of the nation's major manufacturing concerns. His first Secretary of Defense was a former president of the world's largest industrial corporation; his Secretary of the Treasury had formerly directed a complex of more than thirty corporations; his Secretary of State had been the senior partner of the nation's leading corporate law firm; and every other member of his Cabinet—with the exception of the Secretary of Labor—came from the ranks of the corporate rich. Of the thirty-two members of Eisenhower's subcabinet, only four were not directly associated with the corporate world. However competent these top-level officials might have been, few rejected the values of the corporate world. "You will gather that I am an advocate of business, and so I am," Secretary of Defense Forrestal wrote on August 26, 1947. "Calvin Coolidge was ridiculed for saying . . . 'The chief business of the United States is business' but that is a fact."

As the business élite moved assuredly through the world of political power, the leading corporations strengthened their grip on the nation's economy. Corporate profits, \$19 billion in 1945, hit \$50 billion but fifteen years later. In 1950 the share of the business assets held by the nation's 200 largest companies was 48.9 per cent; by 1962 it had reached 55 per cent. In the latter year, the hundred largest manufacturing corporations drew 57.6 per cent of the net profits, while the thousand largest manufacturing corporations accounted for 86.4 per cent. Adolph A. Berle, a leading analyst of business trends, reported in 1957 that American corporations had achieved "the highest concentration of economic power in recorded history."

A pacesetter in the business boom, the oil industry accounted for six of the ten largest industrial corporations in the United States. In 1959 the United States consumed 60 per cent of the world's production,

and oil was the largest single item of international trade. More than one-fourth of the land area of the United States was under lease for oil and gas exploration. With gross assets of \$60 billion in 1960, the oil and natural gas industries were the largest purchasers of capital goods in the United States. Standard Oil of New Jersey produced and refined about 15 per cent of the world's crude oil supply in 1957 and held assets of \$8.7 billion; by 1959 its assets had climbed to \$9.9 billion. Between 1946 and 1956 the Phillips Petroleum Company quadrupled its assets and income, while the Gulf Oil Company quadrupled its assets and quintupled its net income. In 1957 *Fortune's* list of millionaires was headed by J. Paul Getty, H. L. Hunt, Sid Richardson, and other oilmen, including numerous Rockefellers, Mellons, and Pews.

Government solicitude for the rich did much to make such gains possible. A variety of loopholes kept the effective rate of inheritance taxes under 10 per cent, while sales taxes, a form of government levy that hardly touched the wealthy, spread to cities and states throughout the nation. The progressive effects of the federal income tax, once the pride of liberals, were gutted in the postwar years by preferential treatment for capital gains, depletion allowances, depreciation allowances, and tax-free privileges for interest on state and municipal bonds. In 1961 seventeen persons with incomes of \$1 million or more and thirty-five others with incomes over \$500,000 paid no federal income taxes. Reporting on the cumulative impact of taxation on income in 1960, economist Leon Keyserling concluded that those who earned under \$2,000 paid out 38 per cent of their income in taxes, while those who earned above \$10,000 paid out only 31.6 per cent.

Similar government beneficence was extended to corporations. A study during the 1950s disclosed that, as a result of the 27½ per cent oil-depletion allowance, oil companies deducted nineteen times more for tax purposes than they could deduct under normal cost depletion. Senator Paul Douglas estimated that between 1945 and 1954 twenty-seven domestic oil companies with pretax incomes of \$3.25 billion paid federal corporate taxes of only \$562 million—an effective rate of 17 per cent as compared to the official corporate tax rate of 52 per cent. Other tax breaks, such as deductions for depreciation, development costs, and special losses, also favored the oil industry. Thus, Humble Oil, with a pretax income in 1957 of \$193 million, paid only \$17 million that year in corporate taxes. The Arabian-American Oil Company, with a net income of \$272 million in 1955, paid no corporate income taxes.

Even more significant benefits flowed to American corporations—and to the economy as a whole—from the high level of federal military expenditures. Between 1946 and 1960 the Defense Department alone

purchased \$501 billion worth of goods and services. "National security" expenditures generally accounted for about 70 per cent of the annual federal budget. In the half-century prior to 1930 federal military expenditures had averaged less than 1 per cent of the nation's annual GNP, and from 1931 to 1939 military outlays averaged only about 1.3 per cent. From 1946 to 1960, however, federal military spending averaged about 10 per cent of the nation's annual GNP, serving as a sharp stimulus to the economy. Indeed, the American economic structure might well have foundered in the aftermath of the postwar spending boom had the military not taken up the market slack after 1950. In 1939, the last year of the Great Depression, 18.6 per cent of the nation's work force was either employed as a consequence of the military budget or unemployed; in 1961 16.1 per cent of the nation was in a comparable situation. Yet the high level of "defense" spending not only spurred sales and employment but altered the very nature of the nation's economy. In the new "contract state," the Pentagon set demand, funding its purchases of corporate equipment with tax dollars. The price of such equipment was generally determined, not through free market competition, but through a "cost plus" arrangement, guaranteeing a corporation a minimum profit agreed upon in advance. Thus, the United States moved away from the "free enterprise" system preached by conservatives and the "mixed economy" proclaimed by liberals toward a government-subsidized private profit system. "We are living under a curious kind of military Keynesianism," wrote historian Richard Hofstadter, "in which Mars has rushed in to fill the gap left by the decline of the market economy."

Military Keynesianism proved a great boon to corporate sales. In 1958, for example, the military purchased 100 per cent of the nation's ordnance production, 94 per cent of its aircraft, 61 per cent of its ships and boats, 21 per cent of its electronic equipment, 13 per cent of its primary metals, and 10 per cent of its petroleum. Between 1950 and 1954 General Motors alone received defense contracts worth \$7.5 billion. In May, 1962, a government investigator told a Senate subcommittee that the annual profits of the Boeing Aircraft Corporation, when measured by net investment, had ranged in the preceding decade from 36 per cent to 108.6 per cent. In 1954 net profits as a percentage of net worth reached 139 per cent for General Dynamics, 93.3 per cent for Boeing, 81.1 per cent for Douglas, 80.7 per cent for North American, 76 per cent for Martin, and 72.3 per cent for Republic. While big business drew most of the defense bonanza, small business also felt its impact. A 1960 study of 1,165 small businesses, sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association, found that 48.9 per cent of their sales came from defense contracts.

Convinced, in the words of the pro-business *U.S. News and World Report*, that the "Cold War is almost a guarantee against a bad depression," American corporations tied their fortunes to the ascending military star. Corporations lobbied furiously for bigger Pentagon contracts. "The aircraft industry," said Senator Barry Goldwater, "has probably done more to promote the Air Force than the Air Force has done itself." Cementing their links to the Pentagon, corporations staffed their hierarchies with unprecedented numbers of retired military officers. A House subcommittee revealed in 1960 that 1,400 retired officers above the rank of major, including 261 generals and admirals, were employed by the hundred leading defense-contract corporations. General Dynamics, ranking first among defense contractors from 1957 to 1960, maintained 186 retired officers on its payroll, while retaining a former Secretary of the Army as chairman of its board of directors. With sales and profits soaring under the reign of Pentagon capitalism, American business showed little enthusiasm for peacetime reconversion. In 1960, when the projected international summit conference collapsed and talk of disarmament faded, the stock market rose dramatically. The *New York Times* explained: "Traders decided that the 'cold war' was due to heat up considerably . . . and that this would mean a step-up in the nation's defense program." Pentagon-business collaboration became so blatant that, in January, 1961, President Eisenhower used his farewell address to urge Americans to "guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex."

American business also gained significantly from its expanding overseas operations, promoted and protected by U.S. foreign policy. Between 1946 and 1960 the value of direct (or controlling) American private investment abroad increased from \$7 billion to \$32 billion. Total U.S. private investment abroad increased between 1950 and 1960 from \$19 billion to \$49 billion. During the 1950s the direct investment outflow was \$13.7 billion and the returned income \$23.2 billion—a handsome profit. About 75 per cent of Standard Oil of New Jersey's profits in the late 1950s were derived from its foreign investments, while Gulf derived two-thirds of its income from its overseas operations. Reporting on a study in 1955, a U.N. commission revealed that the net profit on a barrel of Saudi Arabian oil selling for \$1.75 was \$1.40. U.S. corporate earnings on petroleum investments in Latin America, after local taxes, averaged 25.6 per cent annually from 1951 to 1955, and 20.5 per cent for the period from 1956 through 1958. Such lucrative profits encouraged a rise in the value of direct U.S. private investment in Latin America from \$4.6 billion to \$9 billion between 1950 and 1959. The dominant position of American corporations, particularly in the Third World, is illustrated by the fact that in 1959 seven oil corpora-

tions, five of them American, held two-thirds of the world's recognized reserves, controlled the bulk of the world's crude-oil production and refining, owned the major pipeline systems, and controlled the tanker fleets. The five American companies had overseas investments of \$9 billion, with contracts covering 64 per cent of the Middle East's oil reserves.

A growing volume of world trade proved equally crucial to American corporations. Before World War II, the net U.S. mineral imports amounted to less than 1 per cent of domestic consumption, but in the postwar years this pattern shifted significantly. Between 1956 and 1960 the United States imported over half its total metal consumption as well as more than half its supply of fifty-four minerals and crude commodities. A 1954 staff report of the President's Commission on Foreign Economic Policy noted that the "transition of the United States from a position of self-sufficiency to one of increasing dependence upon foreign supply is one of the striking economic changes of our time." In return for their vast imports of raw materials, U.S. corporations inundated the markets of the "free world" with the latest manufactured products. From 1950 to 1960 the value of American exports doubled to \$20.6 billion, while American imports climbed by almost two-thirds to \$14.7 billion. Moreover, these figures reflect only a declining fraction of total U.S. overseas commerce, for America's rapidly growing multinational corporations increasingly produced and sold goods within foreign nations themselves. Little wonder that the corporate élite took a keen interest in American foreign policy. The United States "must set the pace and assume the responsibility of the majority stockholder in this corporation known as the world," declared the treasurer (later chairman) of Standard Oil of New Jersey in 1946. "American private enterprise . . . may strike out and save its own position all over the world, or sit by and witness its own funeral."

Committed to expanding their overseas operations, American businessmen remained equally determined to develop their private markets at home. Widening the base of personal consumption in the United States would have necessitated a redistribution of income; corporate chieftains sought instead to induce those who could already purchase what they wanted to buy still more and, if possible, to waste what they had already bought. Not the fulfillment of need but the creation of desire was the function of advertising, whose annual volume rose in the fifteen years after 1945 from less than \$3 billion to almost \$12 billion—about three times the nation's annual expenditures on higher education. Consumerism became the true American religion, the "American way of life." Dr. Raymond Saulnier, chairman of the Eisenhower Council of Economic Advisers, proclaimed that the "ultimate purpose" of the

American economy was "to produce more consumer goods. This is the goal. This is the object of everything we are working at." Caught up in the mammoth sales campaigns and barraged by the mass media, Americans became increasingly convinced that happiness meant ceaseless acquisition. A young German writer observed: "Now people no longer have any opinions; they have refrigerators. Instead of illusions we have television, instead of tradition, the Volkswagen. The only way to catch the spirit of the times is to write a handbook on home appliances."

The mass media served as the principal disseminators of the ideology of individual acquisition. As one critic noted: "It could almost be argued that the articles in magazines and programs on television are simply a device to keep the advertisements and commercials from bumping loudly together. The message of the media is the commercial." Between 1946 and 1960 the number of families in the United States with television sets rose from 8,000 to 46 million, giving the electronic medium the ability to reach into 90 per cent of American homes. With families spending an estimated five hours a day watching television, corporations worked ceaselessly to exploit this market for their products. One of the three giant broadcasting networks would screen program material to lure an audience, which would then be surveyed in terms of numbers, income level, age, and sex, and "sold" to a corporate sponsor. Having "bought" the audience, the corporation would then saturate it with ads in an effort to increase its consumption. The primary function of television, then, was commerce, which explains why commercials, filling 20 per cent of air time, cost far more to produce and were far more skillfully done than the programs they framed. The commercial "isn't art, but it's artful," *Newsweek* later observed, "which is more than can be said for many of the tasteless, saccharine, and irritating programs supported by the sponsors."

During the 1950s intellectuals criticized television for appealing to "the lowest common denominator," but this charge merely reflected their élitism. Television programming represented not what audiences wanted but what they received from cynical or indifferent broadcasters and sponsors, devoted to the commercial aspects of the medium. Avoiding "upsetting" programs, corporations fed the public a bland filler of game shows, audience participation programs, formula comedies, mystery stories, Westerns, and cartoons between the commercials. Chiding broadcasters in 1961 for the wretched quality of their programming, Federal Communications Commission chairman Newton R. Minow urged them to try sitting and watching their television output for an entire day. "I can assure you," he said, "that you will observe a vast wasteland."

Yet television and the mass media also played a crucial political role.

As the Defense Department's director of research told a Senate committee in 1961: "We cannot consider our communications systems solely as civil activities . . . but we must consider them as essential instruments of national policy." On news programs events were reported anecdotally, individually, amusingly. Institutional problems were ignored, controversial opinions left unspoken, and the day's events viewed as a hopeless jumble, interesting but purposeless, by a cheery, fatherly commentator; implicitly, the viewer was assured that the nation was in good hands. More subtly, the mass media evaded America's public and private issues and thus, as sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton observed, "fail to raise essential questions about the structure of society." Television and the movies were filled with escapist tales of violence and exploitative sex. Mass culture did not encourage thought, creativity, or personal expression but, rather, passivity. It channeled the interests of the weary viewer into an unreal world where he could act out fantasies of personal power and freedom. Not religion but television served as the opiate of the masses.

Television's potentialities for public enlightenment were displayed only rarely. In 1953-54, for example, news analysts Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly stunned the television industry by raising questions about the Anti-Communist Crusade on their program, *See It Now*. When they asked CBS for money to advertise the three key broadcasts, the network refused, and they funded the advertising themselves. The first and most dramatic of the programs told the story of a twenty-six-year-old student who had been forced to resign his commission in the Air Force Reserve because his sister and father had been accused by unidentified persons of having radical leanings. As television had never before dared to challenge the Anti-Communist Crusade, the program was aired in a state of high tension. Murrow finished up, Friendly recalled, "bathed in sweat and smoke," as staff members and engineers crowded about him to shake his hand. In 1955 *See It Now's* sponsor, the Aluminum Company of America, dropped the program. Its time slot was sold to a tobacco company for a quiz show.

American newspapers, often considered more "serious" about politics and society than the network media, were in fact subject to many of the same pressures and biases. By the early 1960s, the press was increasingly dependent upon business advertising, and newspaper ownership had become a monopoly in 95 per cent of American communities. A few newspapers, like the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *New York Post*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Madison (Wisc.) Capital Times*, continued their muckraking activities, but most others evaded or distorted the news about power and privilege in America. Often they ran government press handouts as news stories or seemed unwilling to chal-

lenge government lies. "The news of the CIA and its operatives all over the world," James Reston testified before a Congressional committee in 1955, confronts the reporter with "the dilemma as to whether he is going to tell the truth or whether he is going to mislead the American people by putting out something put out by the Government which he knows not to be true." Although Washington made no attempt to muzzle the press during the Korean War, newspapers and press syndicates took care to police themselves. "We are operating just as we would under censorship," the editor-in-chief of the International News Service wrote to General MacArthur. In April, 1951, the Director of U.S. Defense Mobilization thanked newspapers for "millions of words laying down the premise . . . that the free world is in mortal danger. . . . If the people were not convinced of that it would be impossible for Congress to vote the vast sums. . . . With the support of public opinion as marshaled by the press, we are off to a good start."

Staunchly committed to an aggressive American role in the world, the media engaged in fantasies of thermonuclear war—which, of course, the United States always won. After devoting four and a half columns to America's capacity to destroy Russia "in several ways and several times over," the March 25, 1959, issue of the *Wall Street Journal* reassured its readers that, "even granting that Russia would have the advantage of surprise, U.S. officials reason that a first blow by the Soviets . . . would not cripple Western power to retaliate." In late 1951, "alarmed . . . over the creeping pessimism of the free world," the editors of *Collier's* devoted an entire issue to a depiction of World War III, as fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, to "demonstrate" that, in the event of war, "we will win." During the postwar occupation of the devastated Soviet Union, remarked the editors, "private enterprise would probably evolve in a form that would be modified by background, environment, and the character of the people themselves." *Collier's* showed Moscow audiences at the Bolshoi Theatre enthralled by an "excellent production of *Guys and Dolls*," noted that newsstands featured *Time*, *Life*, and the *Reader's Digest*, and observed that "Hollywood columns are very popular."

The blackout of critical opinion during the postwar years received still further impetus from the loyalty crusade. Learned men assessed the patriotic merits of movie and television scripts. Performers and newscasters were dropped as "security risks." Charlie Chaplin, once America's best-loved clown and social satirist, surrendered his re-entry permit in 1953, choosing exile from a nation he could no longer endure. "What is the new loyalty?" asked historian Henry Steele Commager. "It is, above all, conformity. It is the uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of America as it is."

In the era of the booster, religion took on a patriotic significance. "Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first, the most basic expression of Americanism," President Eisenhower declared in 1955. Congress added the words "under God" to the nation's "pledge of allegiance" and "In God We Trust" to coins. In Lincoln's day only about one out of five Americans had belonged to a church, but by 1958 church membership had climbed to a record 110 million citizens. Polls found that 95 per cent of the respondents considered themselves Protestants, Catholics, or Jews, and that 97 per cent believed in God. The Reverend Billy Graham held enormous religious revivals, while fundamentalist sects grew rapidly. Religious books became best-sellers, spreading a message of joyous acceptance. "Don't doubt," pleaded the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale; "doubt closes the power flow." The very source of Communism, claimed Whittaker Chambers, an ardent religious mystic, was the scientific method, with its "rigorous exclusion of all supernatural factors in solving problems." Believing America to be locked in a struggle with "atheistic Communism," American churches faithfully mirrored the Cold War line in the years before 1960. Roman Catholic clergy spearheaded the Anti-Communist Crusade and discussed preventive war against Russia, while fundamentalist Protestant sects portrayed the Cold War in apocalyptic terms, identifying Stalin with the Anti-Christ and discovering descriptions of atomic warfare in the Book of Revelation.

Blessed by the guardians of religion, America's "patriotic" crusade also drew at least the tacit support of most American educators. "The single most important educational frontier," reported the U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1947, was the need to "strengthen national security through education." Responding to pressures for conformity, the National Education Association proclaimed in 1949 that Communist teachers should be dismissed from their posts. Three years later the American Federation of Teachers adopted a similar position, which also became the general outlook of college and university presidents. Only the American Association of University Professors and the American Civil Liberties Union took the stand that competence alone should determine employment. A minority of American educational institutions—exemplified by Harvard University and the University of Chicago—stood firm against the loyalty zealots. Most colleges, however, showed an eager willingness to cooperate with special investigations. Indeed, a group of educators even proposed that the colleges set up their own investigatory procedures to weed out alleged "subversives."

Although the dimensions of the campus heresy hunt have been obscured by the genteel propriety which traditionally cloaks academic employment, it left few institutions unscarred. In a 1958 study by

sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens, Jr., 102 of the 165 colleges and universities surveyed reported political firings. The case of Professor Barrows Dunham is instructive. A full professor with tenure, head of the Temple University Philosophy Department, and author of several books, Dunham was summarily dismissed by the university's president, Dr. Robert L. Johnson, for refusal to testify before HUAC. Although Dunham later won a court fight against a Congressional contempt citation, he remained unemployed—unlike Johnson, who became head of the Voice of America. Another well-known sociological study of ten major American universities in the mid-1950s concluded: "The net outcome of the prolonged crisis of academic freedom from 1946 to 1956 is a marked restriction of the freedom of professors to engage in politics. . . . Political activity of any kind by any faculty member is viewed unfavorably and is likely to bar or delay his advancement." Most American academicians retired to their books, their records, their middle-class circle of well-being. On the university campus, sometimes located near a slum or racial ghetto, they concerned themselves with the education of the "gifted" or with turning out the "well-rounded student."

But the American university was a valuable institution, and the corporate elite merely wanted it tamed, not destroyed. Thus, despite the demoralization of the professoriat, its ranks actually swelled from 196,000 to 250,000 between 1948 and 1957 as part of a vast building and expansion program in higher education. A study by the Council for Financial Aid to Education found that in 1956 "corporate investments in education" by 275 firms totaled almost \$29 million. University presidents lent a sympathetic ear to the needs of business, promoted the establishment or expansion of engineering and business schools, frequented the conference room of wealthy private foundations and the Pentagon, and managed their growing "plant" like administrators of the great industrial and financial corporations, on whose boards of directors they often sat. Grayson Kirk, president of Columbia University after Eisenhower, served on the boards of Consolidated Edison, IBM, the Socony-Mobil Oil Company, and the Nation-Wide Securities Company, and would soon be one of the directors of the Institute for Defense Analysis. By the mid-1950s, the Pentagon was supplying approximately \$300 million annually for university research, and two major universities—MIT and Johns Hopkins—placed on the list of the nation's top 100 defense contractors. According to a 1961 Harvard University report, "science and defense have brought Government and the educational community together to such an extent that 20% of the total expenditures in higher education in the United States now comes from Federal sources."

Surveys of college students during the 1950s invariably found them conservative, careerist, and conformist. Journalist William H. Whyte contended that younger men "do not wish to protest, they wish to collaborate." Students worked harder, professors agreed, but seemed less "interesting." College girls told pollsters that they preferred having babies to careers, while bright young men asked corporate interviewers about their pension plans. "When a liberal or speculative voice is heard in the classroom, it is more likely than not to be the professor's," noted a faculty member at Queens College. Students, he observed, "matriculate cautious, wanting above all . . . to buy security for themselves in the full knowledge that the price is conformity." From the University of Nebraska, the poet Karl Shapiro reported: "Passivity is the last word we expect to use in connection with a generation of students, but that's the only word that applies."

Loyalty investigators and corporate recruiters did much to encourage this "silent generation." "Personal views can cause a lot of trouble," confided an oil company "guidance" pamphlet widely used in college placement offices. "Remember to keep them always conservative. The 'isms' are out. Business . . . naturally looks with disfavor on the wild-eyed radical or even the moderate pink." But a more immediate stimulus to Cold War orthodoxy developed after 1950, when the CIA began covertly funding the National Student Association, the nation's largest and most influential student organization, providing it in some years with up to 80 per cent of its income. By 1966, when the CIA venture was at last exposed by an NSA officer, NSA leaders had accepted \$4 million in return for providing information on foreign student leaders and for operating a properly anti-Communist student organization.

American intellectuals of the era seemed no less accommodating. Government disdain for critical thought, far from sparking a revolt of the intellectuals, drove them instead toward self-pity and elitism. Depressed and dispirited, they talked gloomily of Eisenhower's fondness for Westerns, of Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield's boast of Republican "progress in rooting out the eggheads," and of the alleged lack of public esteem for scholars, artists, and men of letters. Many bewailed the absence of an intellectual elite in America and looked nostalgically toward the class distinctions of Europe. In a book "conceived in response to the political and intellectual conditions of the 1950s," Richard Hofstadter concluded that "anti-intellectualism" was "founded in the democratic institutions and egalitarian sentiments of this country." Criticizing intellectuals for their past participation in movements for social justice, he argued that the "intellectual class . . . is of necessity an elite in its manner of thinking and functioning." Hofstadter, Seymour Martin Lipset, Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, David Riesman, Nathan

Cold War America

Glazer, Oscar Handlin, Daniel Bell, and Peter Viereck popularized the notion that McCarthyism was the heir to the radical Populist agitation of the past, a profoundly democratic, popular phenomenon that could be countered only by a renewed respect for compromise, stability, and élites. Mass movements, with their grass-roots participation, and commitment, and emotional enthusiasm, they argued, were the true danger to intellectual freedom in America. Intellectuals of the 1930s had romanticized The People as a noble force, striving for a New World. Now, increasingly, intellectuals viewed The People as The Enemy.

Intellectual life in America had taken a profoundly conservative turn. A new generation of historians smoothed over the radical convulsions of the past, writing fondly of an American "consensus" beyond which only fools and neurotics dared to tread. Political scientists talked much of "pluralism"—the alleged equality of power among competing groups in America. Accepting the structure of power among competing groups technical experts to solve any problems that might crop up. Sociologists ignoring class structure and the existence of poverty, focused upon the problems of individual identity in a mass society. In philosophy speculative belief that most—if not all—philosophical difficulties practices, in the misuse of language; social distinctions that enforced linguistic usage were not themselves examined or criticized. Increasingly, economists and social scientists argued that big business was both democratic and beneficent. America, they claimed, had a "mixed" economy in which While most intellectuals never drifted to the right of the moderate establishment, a few preached a New Conservatism, drawing their arguments consciously from Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Edmund Burke, George Santayana, Irving Babbitt, and T. S. Eliot. "For the radical intellectual who had articulated the revolutionary impulses of the past century and a half," wrote Daniel Bell, there has been "an end to chibiastic hopes, to millenarianism, to apocalyptic thinking—and to ideology."

Not surprisingly, American intellectuals developed considerable affection for a U.S. foreign policy based upon *Realpolitik*. Many, like Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Lippmann, both former idealists and socialists, criticized what they considered a bankrupt utopianism and urged renewed attention to human greed, ignorance, and depravity. Power, they argued, was what counted in world affairs. In *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (1951), George F. Kennan helped set the tone for political scientists and other scholarly appraisers of foreign policy

The Rulers and the Ruled, 1945-60

by sharply assailing "the assumption that state behavior is a fit subject for moral judgment." Together with Hans J. Morgenthau—whose *In Defense of the National Interest* (1951) found justice, morality, and "world opinion" irrelevant—Kennan launched an attack upon "idealism," which frequently had the effect of stimulating cynicism and Machiavellianism among intellectuals and policy-makers. In these years the "defense of the national interest" invariably coincided with a defense of America's role in the Cold War.

Prized by Washington for their skills as sophisticated weaponeers, American scientists and engineers quickly swirled into the Cold War vortex. President Eisenhower revealed that in 1960 approximately a third of American scientists and engineers were engaged in military work and that half the nation's research and development funds went to military projects. "This symbiosis between science and the military," wrote physicist I. I. Rabi, was "the most important . . . social and political development of this century." By contrast, those scientists with doubts about the arms race encountered a most unsympathetic reception from government loyalty investigators. The scientific community was "demoralized," reported Dr. Vannevar Bush, former head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, in 1954. Later that year, Albert Einstein declared in a public letter that, if he were young again, he "would not try to become a scientist or scholar or teacher. I would rather choose to be a plumber or a peddler in the hope to find that modest degree of independence still available under present circumstances."

The rise of the paramilitary intellectual reached its apogee with the emergence of the new "civilian strategists." Employed by private "research institutes," which then contracted them out to the Pentagon, the young experts with advanced degrees often surpassed their political and military mentors in the grandeur of their plans. Perhaps the best-known member of the military brain trust, the Rand Corporation's Herman Kahn, achieved considerable recognition in 1960 with the publication of *On Thermonuclear War*. Although fascinated by the destructive possibilities of "doomsday machines" and "galaxy-destroying machines" for his projected World Wars III through VIII, Kahn settled in the end for thermonuclear war as the only "acceptable" model; in his view, acceptability could encompass but not exceed the death of half the population of the United States. "Objective studies," he noted reassuringly, indicated that "even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of survivors and their descendants." Implicit in Kahn's analysis were two significant assump-

tions: that military deterrence did not work and that a thermonuclear war could be "won." Both led to his logical conclusion that massive preparations for the great day should begin at once.

In these years only a tiny group of intellectuals—most notably Erich Fromm, Irving Howe, Paul Goodman, and C. Wright Mills—offered a radical critique of American life. Mills, the most daring, argued that power in America was located centrally, in the hands of an interlocking directorate of warlords, corporation titans, and executive politicians. Congress, the middle classes, labor unions, and pressure groups had little influence, and the "power élite" ruled without serious challenge in an increasingly helpless, atomized mass society. Scorning "those who have abandoned criticism for the new American celebration," Mills lashed out at his fellow academics and intellectuals. "They live and work in a benumbing society," he wrote, "without living and working in protest and tension with its moral and cultural insensibilities. They use the liberal rhetoric to cover the conservative default."

The retreat of intellectuals from social criticism reflected a variety of factors. For some, the failure of American capitalism to collapse and of the Soviet Union to provide a decent alternative lay at the root of their disillusionment with "ideology." Others seemed eager to erase the stigma of a radical past by "confessing" before loyalty investigators or simply by becoming "apolitical." Most significantly, well-paid employment in book publishing, radio, and television, and with universities, foundations, magazines, newspapers, and the federal government took the edge off intellectual alienation. Soothed by comfortable salaries and flattered by the attention of men of power, many intellectuals concluded that their own upper-middle-class problems of affluence, leisure, and suburban existence were the major ones facing American society.

Nevertheless, the CIA was careful to ride herd on American intellectuals, for the Cold War seemed to necessitate competition with Communism in the literary and cultural realm. Accordingly, the CIA infiltrated and financed intellectual groups, subsidized publishing houses and periodicals, moved agents into universities, and placed articles in scholarly journals such as *Foreign Affairs*. Its most daring venture was its sixteen-year subsidy of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an organization actually headed by a CIA agent, which published the British journal *Encounter* and rallied leading artists, writers, and social scientists in the 1950s to America's Cold War standard. In June, 1950, at the founding meeting of the Congress, in Berlin, philosopher Sidney Hook told the assemblage that he looked forward to the time "when references to 'right,' 'left,' and 'center' will vanish from common usage as meaningless." Stressing "one basic point, delegates . . . admonished listeners," said the *New York Times*, "that the time is at hand for a

decision between East and West." In 1951 Hook, James Burnham, James T. Farrell, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and other well-known intellectuals founded a U.S. branch of the organization, the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Under its auspices, conservatives like Burnham, Farrell, Ralph De Toledano, John Chamberlain, John Dos Passos, and Whittaker Chambers consorted with Schlesinger, Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, and other Cold War liberals. The committee distributed in pamphlet form an article written by Hook which sought to develop an anti-Communist position different from either that of the Right or that of "ritualistic liberalism." Dissent, said Hook, was legitimate, but Communists were conspirators, not entitled to the same liberties as other Americans. And even non-Communists who criticized U.S. government policy received a public chiding from the committee. Like their counterparts in the Soviet Union, members of the American Committee seemed to define cultural freedom as loyalty to the state.

Some writers and artists, less directly useful to men of power and more sensitive to the sham of the American Celebration, remained alienated. What interaction did take place between the world of the creative artist and the world of power showed the limits of the American consensus. In 1952 President Truman explained that, in art, he had no use for "the lazy, nutty moderns. It is like comparing Christ with Lenin." When a reporter asked President Eisenhower's Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, whether he had read Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the Cabinet official voiced the typical sentiments of the ruling business circles: "Why should anybody be interested in some old man who was a failure and never amounted to anything anyway?" "The artist," William Faulkner told the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1958, "has no more actual place in the American culture of today than he has in the American economy . . . no place at all in the warp and woof, the thews and sinews, the mosaic of the American dream."

Yet literary rebellion was virtually nonexistent. Popular fiction stressed the themes of individual acquisition, business success, conformity, and anti-Communism. Mickey Spillane's *One Lonely Night* (1951), which sold more than 3 million copies, contained a soliloquy by detective Mike Hammer which should have cheered the most fanatical of Red-hunters: "I killed more people tonight than I have fingers on my hands. I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it. . . . They were Commies. . . . They were red sons-of-bitches who should have died long ago." Novelists Sloan Wilson and Cameron Hawley gave sympathetic portrayals of the lives and travails of businessmen, while the immensely popular novels of Herman Wouk touched a conservative nerve in middle-brow America. In *The Caine Mutiny* (1951) Wouk

defended absolute loyalty to the professional officer corps, and in *Marjorie Morningstar* (1955) he applauded the heroine's decision to repudiate the world of intellectuals and bohemians for comfortable marriage to a businessman.

Even "serious" fiction skirted America's social problems. Mary McCarthy, Bernard Malamud, and Saul Bellow devoted their talents to novels of manners and personal life, offering individual, often improbable solutions to the quest for personal identity and freedom. In his immensely popular *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), J. D. Salinger posed no alternative to the adult world of hypocrisy and corruption except withdrawal into the innocence of childhood or the consolation of Zen. Ironically, the "Beat" writers of San Francisco, so different in their approach to life and literature, shared similar preoccupations. Cutting loose from bourgeois society to wander restlessly in search of spiritual enlightenment through the greasy-spoon diners of the world, they turned ever more frenetically to drugs and mysticism. "If you shun consciousness as if it were a plague," Irving Howe wrote of them, "then a predicament may ravage you, but you cannot cope with it."

One of the few writers who seemed capable of giving definition to the problems of contemporary America and perhaps projecting solutions was Norman Mailer. *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), his first novel, established him immediately as a serious writer and social commentator. Mailer's *Barbary Shore* (1951) reflected in more surrealistic fashion on the failures of the Old Left, and *The Deer Park* (1955) provided an ambivalent picture of Hollywood. At this point, however, Mailer seemed to lose his way, and his writing drifted off into strange and exotic realms of supersexuality, self-analysis, and demonology. By 1959 literary critic Alfred Kazin could report that Mailer, who "once seemed another Dos Passos," now appeared "bent on becoming the American Marquis de Sade." Of all the novels published between 1945 and 1960, perhaps only Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* (1952) could be called a significant work of social criticism. Here the protagonist confronts and finally understands the real world; then, rejecting it in horror, he retreats underground, brooding and waiting.

Once the very symbol of life in the lower depths, American labor seemed to thrive in the postwar years. Incomes rose, unemployment remained mild by Depression standards, and union membership increased from 14.3 million to 18.1 million between 1945 and 1960. In 1955 the feud between the CIO and the AFL came to an end when a convention in New York merged the two labor federations. The political-action arms of both groups joined to form the Committee on Political Education, and a staff of 265 organizers and millions of dollars in union

pledges were set aside to "organize the unorganized." New labor contracts provided for cost-of-living increases as well as productivity increases, and unions also made breakthroughs on "fringe benefits": holidays and vacations, health and welfare plans, and pension and unemployment benefits. Throughout the 1950s most strikes grew less rancorous than in previous decades. Picketing was sometimes unnecessary, and at other times management would supply pickets with hot coffee and portable washrooms. Taking office in 1955, AFL-CIO president George Meany announced: "American labor has never had it so good."

In fact, however, the labor movement was in serious trouble. It encountered little difficulty in retaining the allegiance of those blue-collar workers it had already organized, but their numbers were steadily dwindling with the over-all decline of blue-collar employment. After 1951 more than a third of American unions suffered membership losses. Nor did the AFL-CIO succeed in reaching many of the unorganized, particularly in service trades, white-collar fields, and agricultural employment. By 1960 unions had organized only 12,000 of the 600,000 engineers, draftsmen, and technicians; 184,000 of the 5 million public employees; 200,000 of the 8.5 million office workers; and 4,000 of the 2 million agricultural workers. Pledges to the AFL-CIO's organizing fund were never met, the size of the organizing staff was cut in half, and the attempt to unionize the South—the nation's antiunion bastion—proved virtually a complete failure. Nonunion companies and areas fought fiercely to smash organizing efforts. "Do you want to work under a Negro foreman?" Southern employers would ask their workers. "Do you want your dues money to go to the NAACP?" In 1953, when 2,000 wretchedly paid and miserably housed sugar cane workers walked off their jobs on plantations near New Orleans in an attempt to secure recognition of their AFL union, the local press was filled with comments about "agitators," "brainwashing," and "made in Moscow." In this sort of atmosphere unions made little headway: between 1945 and 1960 the unionized segment of the nation's nonagricultural labor force actually shrank, from 35.8 to 31.4 per cent.

Moreover, even organized workers achieved only minimal gains. In part, this reflected the fact that a giant corporation, having agreed to a wage settlement, would simply raise its prices, thus passing along the cost of the settlement to all workers as consumers. Of all labor leaders, only Walter Reuther championed raising wages while freezing prices, and the auto companies refused to consider this prospect. During the 1950s blue-collar workers fell farther behind other groups in terms of income. Laborers and service workers made income gains of 39 per cent, while professional and managerial workers made income gains of 68 per cent. In addition, by concentrating upon wages and fringe bene-

fits, unions failed to secure many changes in job conditions. Safety features in American coal mines remained abysmal; mine explosions and other lethal disasters were frequent. Every year approximately 100,000 American workers were killed or suffered permanent impairment in industrial accidents. Factory labor remained exceptionally alienating: the work was often physically exhausting; the hours were long and the rest periods few; the assembly line was fast and inexorable; the work was monotonous and unfulfilling; the shop noisy and ugly; the air filled with smoke, dust, or chemicals; and the production goals set by a distant corporate bureaucracy. Interviews with workers revealed considerable resentment and frustration. Typical remarks included: "Sometimes you feel like jamming things up in the machine"; "the only reason a man works is to make a living"; and "whenever the line jerks, everybody is wishing, 'break down, baby.'" A survey of automobile workers in the late 1940s and early 1950s found that the overwhelming majority wanted to leave the factory for other work—not to get rich, but to escape from dissatisfaction on the job.

One of the most striking developments of the postwar years was the growing centralization of power in the union leadership and the concomitant decline in rank-and-file participation. Lacking left-wing rivals to contest their authority, many labor leaders grew increasingly autocratic and arbitrary, if not actually corrupt. This trend was reinforced by the merger of the AFL and CIO, which ended competition for locals and members and thus precluded escape from domination by the national union's political machine. In the United Mine Workers, one-man control by John L. Lewis and secret bargaining sessions after 1950 between the union and the bituminous coal industry left the membership inactive and uninvolved, learning of contract negotiations only after a settlement had been reached. After 1950 no major strike occurred in the soft coal industry—a far cry from the annual strikes and grass-roots militancy of the past. In the once lively United Auto Workers, Walter Reuther consolidated his strength, encouraging organizational solidarity and stability. At the 1957 UAW convention the national leadership had such control of the union that there was insufficient opposition to obtain a single roll-call vote. While the Reuther leadership remained capable and progressive, internal democracy and insurgency decayed. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, a formerly Socialist-oriented union and a pioneer in collective bargaining, ceased to engage in nationwide strikes or militant agitation in the postwar years. Its solidly entrenched leadership kept down rank-and-file demands for wage increases and cooperated closely with manufacturers to improve shop efficiency and production. The story was the same throughout most of the American labor movement. Between 1946 and 1963 the number of striking

workers dropped from 4.5 million to 941,000. Union leadership was so stable that by 1958 the average age of the men on the AFL-CIO executive council was in the middle sixties.

Perhaps the major contributor to the decay of American unions was the rising status of the labor leadership. In 1957 a dozen union presidents received salaries ranging from \$33,000 to \$60,000. Some union leaders charged large sums to their expense accounts for lavish hotel and restaurant bills. Many spent considerable time on investments, including personal stock and property holdings, while their families engaged in upper-middle-class pastimes. As the lifestyle of such union leaders came to resemble that of corporation executives, they lost their link to the men they represented on the grimy shop floor. "Many union leaders have become money-hungry, taking on the grossest features of business society," wrote Daniel Bell in 1958. "One finds . . . an appalling ignorance and high-handedness in their relation to the rank-and-file."

George Meany, the new president of the AFL-CIO, embodied many of these traits. A former Bronx plumber's assistant who had held union office jobs since 1933 and had become AFL president in 1952, Meany was a sullen, heavyset figure who looked like a veteran of the picket lines. In fact, this was hardly the case. In 1956 he boasted to the National Association of Manufacturers: "I never went on a strike in my life, never ordered anyone else to run a strike in my life, never had anything to do with a picket line." Shortly before assuming the presidency of the AFL-CIO, Meany was earning \$35,000 a year and living in Bethesda, Maryland, a Washington suburb. "In most particulars," a friendly journalist noted, "Meany leads the placid suburban life typical of the businessman he has long dealt with. He belongs to a country club, golfs with some diligence, and enjoys an occasional duck-shoot or coon-hunt." Sporting colorful vests and chomping on a fat cigar, the leader of the American labor movement was driven to work every morning in the AFL's limousine.

Throughout the postwar years labor grew increasingly dependent upon military spending. By 1960 the jobs of 7.5 million Americans—about one-tenth of the nation's work force—depended directly upon the annual military appropriation. Moreover, the location of defense industries made certain areas of the country extremely dependent upon military largesse. In 1959 aircraft and missile production provided 82 per cent of all manufacturing employment in San Diego, 72 per cent in Wichita, and 55 per cent in Seattle. Between 20 and 30 per cent of manufacturing employment in the states of California, Connecticut, Kansas, New Mexico, and Washington was defense-related. Aware that their members would be left stranded in economically depressed areas

if local defense plants closed down, unions joined management in vigorously lobbying against cuts in the military budget. "One of the most serious things about this defense business," observed Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson in 1957, "is that so many Americans are getting a vested interest in it: properties, business, jobs, employment, votes, opportunities for promotion and advancement" and "bigger salaries."

Not surprisingly, organized labor grew more conservative. To be sure, the AFL-CIO served as a major pressure group in behalf of social-welfare programs. Nevertheless, class-conscious politics and anticapitalist fervor had become historical relics. Once a leading American Socialist, David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, concluded in the postwar years that "trade unionism needs capitalism like a fish needs water." In foreign affairs, few could match organized labor's devotion to the Cold War. Both the AFL and the CIO served as conduits for CIA funds to Washington's favorite overseas unions. Meany headed the American Institute for Free Labor Development, which disbursed an estimated \$120 million a year in CIA money to tame labor movements abroad. The AFL-CIO's foreign policy program—written for the most part by Jay Lovestone, the embittered former secretary of the American Communist Party—supported U.S. government actions at every turn.

Had the AFL-CIO's leadership been less concerned with aping business mores and values, it might have shown greater interest in the plight of the nation's poor. By 1960 between 40 and 50 million Americans—20 to 25 per cent of the population—lived in conditions of poverty. Tucked away in urban ghettos, on tiny farms, and in rural shantytowns, the poor endured invisible lives of misery and despair, victims of malnutrition, disease, imprisonment, crime, and squalor. While the wealthy fretted over the problems of overeating, surveys in the mid-1950s reported that a majority of the rural poor lacked one or more of the basic nutrients in their diets. Such malnutrition produced severe skin infections and ulcers, bacterial and parasitic diseases, heart weakness, bone diseases, and the symptoms of anemia—poor muscle tone, weakness, and lassitude. As the fashionable suburbs expanded around the nation's central cities, the poor were consigned to crowded, wretched dwellings in the decaying urban core; in New York City alone, an estimated 2,500 human beings—mostly infants—were bitten by rats every year. The 1960 Census reported that 27 per cent of the nation's occupied dwelling units were substandard—a figure that did not take account of "sound" housing that was overcrowded.

One of the nation's leading housing experts, Charles Abrams, described a 1950 visit to New York's slums:

The writer saw a six-story 25-foot-wide tenement . . . into which 170 Puerto Ricans had been herded. . . . The apartments had to be shared and there were twelve people living in a single three-room apartment. Every hall window was broken. Splintered stair treads sank perilously with each step. Almost every toilet was out of order. Loosened plaster hung from the hall ceilings; great heaps of garbage rotted on the floor under the stairways; a dead rat lay on a landing. Gaping holes in the toilet walls served as passageways for the rats. . . .

In another ancient tenement on the same street there were 15 people in a four-room apartment; in another, 18 people occupied a three-room unit. [On a nearby street] 30 people lived in a building sharing a single broken toilet without a seat. Here too there were rat holes in the walls.

Nor were these the worst dwellings examined by Abrams. Nearby, he found "25 human beings living in a dark and airless coal cellar ten feet below the street level." In this cellar, "these people ate, slept, washed, and reproduced. No animal could live there long, yet here were 17 children, the youngest having been born here two weeks before. Almost all the 17 children had been sick during the preceding weeks."

Although the wealthy dismissed the poor as lazy idlers, a large number of the impoverished were either too old or too young to work, while perhaps a third held full-time jobs for which they received wages below the subsistence level. A 1960 Senate subcommittee report declared that "at least one-half of the aged—approximately eight million people—cannot afford today decent housing, proper nutrition, adequate medical care . . . or necessary recreation." Census figures for 1958 revealed that nearly 60 per cent of the American population over sixty-five years of age had incomes under \$1,000 a year. Despite claims that Americans lived lives of affluence in a "welfare state," in 1959 Social Security payments averaged only a little better than \$70 a month, while 54 per cent of the aged lacked hospital insurance and 63 per cent lacked surgical insurance. Large sectors of the nation's active labor force, often excluded from coverage under the minimum wage and Social Security laws, received incomes totally inadequate to sustain a decent standard of living. Thirty per cent of the men employed by American industry in 1958 earned less than \$3,000 the previous year. In the late 1950s the average income for white male farm workers was just over \$1,000 a year.

The nation's 2 million migrant workers lived brutal existences reminiscent of those described by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* two decades earlier. Excluded from minimum wage and maximum hour legislation, they worked long, exhausting days for a pittance on the giant

farms of the wealthiest growers, 10 per cent of whom cultivated half the nation's farmland. Computing the average wages of Mexican "bracero" labor—a good index to the wages of all migrant laborers—the U.S. Secretary of Labor gave an estimate of 50 cents an hour in 1959. In Texas, though, growers paid their workers 16 cents an hour for a 60-hour week. Although farming had the third highest fatality rate of all industries in the nation, agricultural workers were not covered by workmen's compensation laws. In 1956 the number of people killed in agriculture exceeded that in any other industry. As many children often worked in the fields alongside their parents—a practice encouraged by the growers, who occasionally shortened the school year to accommodate their seasonal labor needs—more than a thousand children under sixteen years of age sustained serious farm injuries in California alone between 1950 and 1957.

The wretched lives of these hard-working people provide a striking backdrop to claims that the United States had become an affluent, middle-class society. In its 1951 report, the President's Commission on Migratory Labor revealed that in California's rich Imperial Valley the infant death rate from diarrhea, enteritis, and dysentery was more than seven times as high as the statewide average. In Hidalgo County, of eighty-three children between the ages of six and twelve, twenty-one needed immediate medical treatment; for twenty-seven others "medical care was . . . indicated but less urgent." In one Texas camp 96 per cent of the children had consumed no milk in the previous six months, and eight out of ten adults had not eaten any meat. Writing in 1955, Charles Abrams reported that, while the fortunate migrant laborer managed to obtain "a ramshackle shed, tent, or cabin," others could find no better place to sleep than "on the ground, in a cave, under a tree, or in a chicken house." During those months they could not obtain employment, many migrant workers would repair to "Ragtown," a shantytown community of stray boards, scrap metal, burlap sacks, and pieces of cardboard.

America's racial minorities, while never a majority of the nation's poor, remained firmly locked in the camp of the impoverished. Victimized by race and, by poverty, most lived in a dismal world of job discrimination, urban and rural slums, and occasional mob violence. Although black income increased in the postwar years, it never approached that of whites. In 1947 the nonwhite worker's wage averaged 54 per cent of the white worker's; by 1958 it had climbed to 58 per cent, but by 1962 it had fallen back to 55 per cent. Median family income for whites stood at \$5,643 in 1959, for nonwhites \$2,917. The status of black farm families in the South was far worse; a 1954 study by the Department of Agriculture found that their median income was

only \$742 a year. In 1950 one out of two white males in the South was employed in a white-collar or skilled nonagricultural job, compared with one out of eight black men. Most blacks employed in that region labored as farmers; truck, bus, or taxi drivers; as workers in lumber mills, mines, laundries, food-processing plants, parking lots and garages, chemical factories, metal refineries, foundries, and plants; and as janitors, porters, domestics, or unskilled laborers. According to the Department of Labor in 1960, 25.9 per cent of white employees in the United States were in professional, technical, managerial, official, or proprietary roles, compared to 6.7 per cent of the blacks. By the late 1950s, noted the Commission on Civil Rights, nonwhite unemployment rates were more than twice those for whites.

Such disparities in income and employment reflected the racist practices of business, government, and labor in postwar America. Corporations were careful to keep managerial, office, and white-collar positions lily-white and cheerfully encouraged or acquiesced to racism at the blue-collar level. In early 1958 the *Wall Street Journal* quoted the manager of a General Motors plant near Atlanta as saying: "When we moved into the South, we agreed . . . not to hire Negroes for production work. This is no time for social reforming in that area, and we're not about to try it." The Civil Rights Commission reported in 1961 that "the Federal Government continues . . . to give indirect support to discriminatory practices . . . in training programs, in employment agencies and opportunities," and "in public facilities." Within the labor movement, the commission noted, "civil rights goals are celebrated at the higher levels but fundamental internal barriers tend to preserve discrimination at the workingman's level." Although some unions moved vigorously against racial discrimination in the postwar years—notably the United Packinghouse Workers, the United Auto Workers, and the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers—many others, particularly in the building trades, excluded blacks or segregated them in Jim Crow locals. Two of the railway brotherhoods actually barred the entry of blacks by constitutional provision, but most other unions merely followed policies of tacit discrimination.

Against such racial barriers, advances in education were of only minimal value. As early as 1950 black college enrollment had reached 132,000—up 2,500 per cent from a decade before. Nevertheless, both in the North and in the South black college graduates in 1949 earned less than whites who had attended, but not graduated from, high school. The Civil Rights Commission observed that in 1959 the median income of a white family headed by a college-educated male was \$7,373, while that of a comparable black family was \$5,654; sizable income differentials appeared at other educational levels as well. In 1950, indeed, al-

most one-fourth of nonwhite college graduates worked in laboring or service jobs, compared to only 1.4 per cent of similarly educated whites.

By 1960 most blacks in America lived in overwhelmingly segregated ghettos—usually slums in the nation's cities—and suffered from inadequate housing, nutrition, and health conditions. The Civil Rights Commission reported the same year that 57 per cent of all nonwhite housing units were substandard. As late as 1950 almost half of all nonwhite homes had outdoor privies, while nearly 42 per cent of nonwhite homes in urban areas lacked a private flush toilet. In 1960 nonwhite life expectancy was seven years less than white, the nonwhite infant mortality rate was almost twice that for whites, and the nonwhite maternal mortality rate was almost four times that for whites. While nonwhite infant and maternal mortality rates did decline after 1940, they grew worse relative to those for whites.

In 1960 New York's Harlem housed 232,792 people within its 3.5 square miles—a population density which, if applied to all the inhabitants of the United States, would have enabled them to fit within three of New York City's five boroughs. About half of Harlem's residential buildings were erected before 1900, and, according to the 1960 Census, 44 per cent of its buildings were dilapidated or deteriorating. In 1959 infant mortality was about three times as high in Central Harlem as in one of the city's wealthier white districts. Black psychologist Kenneth Clark observed: "Where flies and maggots breed, where the plumbing is stopped up and not repaired, where rats bite helpless infants, the conditions of life are brutal and inhuman." Not surprisingly, between 1955 and 1961 the rate of narcotics use in Harlem was consistently ten times that of New York City.

Nonwhites lived in such areas not only because they were poor but because of racial discrimination. Banks, realtors, and property owners kept much of the nation's better housing out of the hands of nonwhites through a deliberate policy of exclusion. Until 1950 the code of ethics of the National Association of Real Estate Boards contained the canon: "A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood . . . members of any race or nationality . . . whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values." Although this statement was slightly modified thereafter, its meaning remained clear. Furthermore, much American housing was subject to racially restrictive covenants. During the 1952 Presidential campaign both Vice-Presidential candidates lived in such houses. Slumlords actually encouraged the existence of racial ghettos, for they were enabled thereby to overcrowd and to overcharge for deteriorating housing. Even when a prominent black made an occasional breakthrough into the land of the lily-white, it could provide but a bitter satisfaction. "Thank the people of

San Francisco for letting you buy this house," the star Giant outfielder Willie Mays was told in the late 1950s, after resistance to his purchase of a home in a wealthy white neighborhood had been overcome. "What do I have to thank anybody for?" Mays retorted. "For letting me spend \$40,000?"

Conditions for black Americans reached their nadir in the South. Here white supremacy was buttressed by the police power of state and local governments and enforced, if necessary, by terror. In 1960 Southern lunch counters, motels, theaters, toilets, and drinking fountains were segregated; in more than forty Southern counties not a single black was registered to vote; only one-sixth of one per cent of Southern black students attended desegregated schools; the Ku Klux Klan acted openly in many communities; and the White Citizens Councils, founded in 1954, increasingly dominated local governments. Bombings and other assaults upon blacks were common. In December, 1950, when dynamiters destroyed the home of a black woman who had led a court fight against a Birmingham zoning law, it was the fifth bombing of a black house in that city since the spring of 1949. In Dallas alone, thirteen dynamitings of black homes occurred during a seventeen-month period. The brutal lynching of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till provided only the best-known example of "Southern Justice" in the 1950s. In 1961 the Commission on Civil Rights found 100 Southern counties where blacks were "prevented—by outright discrimination or by fear of physical violence or economic reprisal—from exercising the right to vote," and "many counties" where "a substantial Negro population not only has no voice in government, but suffers extensive deprivation—legal, economic, educational, and social."

Nor was the North immune to racist violence. Between 1945 and 1954 there were nine race riots in Chicago alone, and from 1949 to 1951 more than 100 lesser racial incidents occurred in that city, including fires, bombings, and organized assaults upon black families. During 1953 racial violence, arson, or bomb-throwing by whites erupted in Kansas City, Madison, East Saint Louis, Cleveland, Chicago, Indianapolis, Long Island, and Los Angeles county. One of the more dramatic incidents occurred in Cicero, Illinois, where Harvey E. Clark, Jr., a black war veteran and graduate of Fisk University, sought in the summer of 1951 to move his family's furniture into a \$60-a-month apartment he had leased. The moving van was halted by police. According to an affidavit by Clark, the chief of police "hit me about eight times while he was pushing me ahead of him. . . . When we reached my car . . . the chief shoved me inside and said, 'Get out of Cicero and don't come back . . . or you'll get a bullet through your head.'"

otherwise harassing Clark," he did, in fact, begin to move in on July 10. Crowds of jeering whites started to gather and smash windows. By the following day a mob of 4,000 had collected. Undeterred by policemen, who joked with them, or by the mayor and chief of police, who were "out of town," the mob began three days of savage rioting, during which it tore up trees by the roots to build fires; hurled bricks, flares, and burning torches into the apartment house; ripped out radiators and walls; and threw furniture from the windows. On July 12 Governor Stevenson declared martial law in Cicero and sent in the state militia, which pushed back the mob at bayonet point; four militiamen were felled in the process. In a bizarre aftermath, a grand jury indicted the NAACP attorney, the apartment owner, her lawyer, and her rental agent for conspiracy to injure property by causing "depreciation in the market selling price."

"I am an invisible man," declared the black protagonist of Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel. "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me." Few, indeed, would face up to the reality of social injustice in the postwar United States, for the American celebration had become functional to a society seduced by prosperity and patrolled by the state. And so starvation went unrecognized in the midst of unprecedented abundance, political purges in the bastions of intellectual freedom, worker alienation in a time of business expansion, and racial lynchings amid hosannahs for "free world" democracy. Fostered by the wealthy and powerful, it was a situation much to their advantage. If Fortune smiled on the postwar United States, she reserved her keenest delights for the forces of privilege.

"Waging Peace," 1953-60

We were brought to the verge of war. . . . We walked to the brink and we looked it in the face.

JOHN FOSTER DULLES, 1956

AS A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, Eisenhower had sharply criticized the Truman Administration's conduct of foreign affairs, but once in office he initiated few major changes in the nation's foreign policy bureaucracy. To be sure, his new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, did purge the last of the "old China hands" from the State Department and did bring in a confederate of Senator McCarthy, Scott McLeod, to enforce political orthodoxy in the nation's foreign service. Yet Dulles himself typified the American foreign policy establishment. Grandson of one former Secretary of State and nephew of another, senior partner in an immensely influential Wall Street law firm specializing in the international interests of corporations, and a leading diplomat in the Truman Administration, he brought with him the heritage and assumptions of America's governing élite. During the 1930s Dulles had been a consistent apologist for fascist expansion. He told readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1935 that Germany, Italy, and Japan "want peace but . . . desire to keep open avenues of change." In the postwar years, however, he promoted a very different assessment of the Soviet Union. "This is an irreconcilable conflict," he explained at Senate hearings on his nomination. Like so many of the nation's foreign policy-makers, he viewed the Cold War in starkly ideological terms, arguing that Russia was obsessed by a desire for world revolution. "Soviet leaders are to a very large extent the prisoners of their own doctrine," he told European diplomats, "which is extensively held by their followers, who are fanatics."

Eisenhower, who considered Dulles the greatest Secretary of State he "knew anything about," was inclined to leave most foreign policy matters in his trusted hands. "With my understanding of the intricate