

## Conservatives on Madison Avenue: Political Advertising and Direct Marketing in the 1950s

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This article investigates how urban consumerism affected the rise of modern American conservatism by focusing on anticommunists' political advertising in New York City during the 1950s. The advertising industry developed the new tactic of direct marketing in the post-World War II period and, over the years, several political activists adopted this new marketing technique for political campaigns. Direct mail, a product of the new marketing, was a *personalized* medium that built up a database of personal information and sent suitable messages to individuals, instead of standardized information to the masses. The medium was especially significant for conservatives to disseminate their ideology to prospective supporters across the country in the 1950s when the conservative media establishment did not exist. This research explores the development of the American right in urban areas by analyzing the role of direct mail in the conservative movement.

The postwar era witnessed the rise of modern American conservatism as a political movement. Following World War II, anticommunism became widespread among Americans and the United States was confronted with communism abroad, whereas in domestic politics right-wing movements, such as McCarthyism, attacked liberalism. The New Deal had angered many Americans prior to the 1950s. Frustrated with government regulations since the 1930s, some businesspeople acclaimed the free enterprise system and individual liberties as the American ideal; several intellectuals and religious figures criticized the decline of traditional values in modern society; and white Southerners were adamant in preventing the federal government from interfering in the Jim Crow laws. Yet, these people were scattered in the heyday of liberalism before anticommunism bound them together. Indeed, individualists, traditionalists, racists, and anticommunists had different political aims, but they were loosely connected within the conservative movement because they all considered postwar liberalism

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their main enemy.<sup>1</sup>

The focus on media activists in New York considers the U.S. right wing in a new light. Many scholars have examined modern American conservatism chiefly in the suburbs. Historians such as Lisa McGirr, Joseph Crespino, and Matthew Lassiter have described the emergence of the conservative movement among middle-class suburbanites. These conservatives were generally white, professional, and wealthy homeowners who lived in the Sunbelt ranging from southern California, to the South, and to the Southeast. These studies have revealed that many right-wing organizations generated enthusiastic responses from “ordinary people” in suburban areas, helping to forge a conventional dichotomy between suburban conservatives and urban liberals. However, studies on suburban conservatives have obscured the role of urban political activists in mobilizing the grassroots.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, studies of the political media have attempted to depict modern conservatism from new angles. For instance, Nicole Hemmer examined conservative media activists in the postwar era such as Clarence Manion, who propagated nascent conservative ideas as the host of his radio talk show, and Henry Regnery, who founded Regnery Publishing to forge the conservative intellectual community. Hemmer pointed to the “elite-populism” of those right-wing messengers, demonstrating that the conservative activists had held positions within traditional political vehicles like the Republican Party. Scholars of political media have successfully explored the relationships between the political elites and the grassroots, but generally speaking, they have dismissed an innovative aspect of the conservative media by focusing solely on mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television.<sup>3</sup>

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1. For a survey of modern American conservatism, see for example George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: The American Far Right from Nativism to the Militia Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008); Donald T. Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the GOP Right Made Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

2. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

3. Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). See also Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Joseph N. Cappella, *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Direct mail politics developed at the intersection of the advertising industry and the conservative movement within urban areas. The postwar years saw a revolution from *mass* mail toward *personalized* mail as technological innovations made it easier for marketers to reach out to individuals according to personal tastes. Until the early 1950s, ad agents used letters mainly for mass advertisements: mail-order catalogues were dispatched to a cluster of customers for the purpose of transmitting the same message at one time. In this sense, mass mail functioned in the same manner as radio and television. On the other hand, direct mail appeared as a personalized medium targeting particular groups of individuals. Advertising agencies accumulated a huge body of information on each customer's preferences, then compiled mailing lists to select specific customers who were likely to purchase their products. The features of personalization and selectivity differentiated direct mail from other media forms as advertisers considered the new medium to be more flexible and efficient. As commercial advertisers started to pay attention to direct mail during the 1950s, so did conservative activists ardently search for their own channels of communication. In the middle of the century, conservatism was a peripheral force in American society. Modern American conservatism began to form as an organized movement when William F. Buckley Jr. established *National Review* in 1955 as a magazine for anti-liberal intellectuals. Such conservative groups were financially dependent on membership fees, big donations from philanthropists, and funds raised by conservative activists. Direct mail offered conservative fundraisers a new approach to collect small contributions from a great number of individuals in a period when liberal politics and the mainstream media had little room for conservatism.

Demonstrating both conflicts and interactions between liberals and conservatives in direct mail politics, three political media operatives were engaged with mail fundraising in New York City during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>4</sup> Among the first direct mail fundraisers, Harold L. Oram founded his own consulting firm and committed himself to liberal and anticommunist organizations after World War II. Working with Oram throughout the 1950s, Marvin Liebman learned how to raise funds via mail. Unlike Oram's dedication to liberal causes, Liebman involved himself with conservatism, including Buckley's *National Review* and Young Americans for Freedom, by financing the organizations. Finally, Richard A. Viguerie joined Liebman's advertising campaigns and cut his teeth as a

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4. Cooperation between advertising agencies and politics did not only take place in New York. California was another state where political advertising had flourished since the 1930s. For political public relations in California see, for example, Adam D. Sheingate, *Building a Business of Politics: The Rise of Political Consulting and the Transformation of American Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), chap. 5; Herbert M. Baus and William B. Ross, *Politics Battle Plan* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

conservative fundraiser in the early 1960s. The direct mail of Liebman and Viguerie had a great impact on conservative politics. Liebman's financial support was indispensable for the budding conservative movement of the 1950s. Furthermore, known as the "godfather of direct mail," Viguerie would grow into the central activist of the "New Right" that accelerated single-issue politics, assisted many conservative political action committees, and contributed to the Reagan Revolution in 1980. A commonality of the three activists indicates that the development of direct mail politics was characterized by the nuanced relationship between the left and the right. Over the course of the 1950s, political messengers attempted to use direct mail through bipartisan efforts to include both liberals and conservatives under the banner of anticommunism. However, direct mail politics became more partisan as the conservative movement gathered steam by the early 1960s.

### I: From Mass Mail to Direct Mail

A few commercial advertisers knew of direct mail in the mid-twentieth century, but at first they never regarded it as profitable. "In the 1940's and 1950's direct mail had little intelligence," said Lester Wunderman, a prominent advertiser known as the "father of direct marketing." He was one of the first to devote attention to direct mail advertising immediately after World War II. However, back in the 1940s, direct mail worked poorly with mailing lists that recorded little information about customers except their names.<sup>5</sup> Other advertisers similarly pointed to the inferior status of mailing in the advertising community, saying "it is not at all usual for a representative of a national advertising agency to be concerned with Direct Mail—except, perhaps, reluctantly."<sup>6</sup> Direct mail might have been sufficient as a local medium when small letter shops employed it in towns and cities, but advertisers failed to handle the medium on a national scale. Another reason why mail advertising did not work was that agencies used it in the same way as the mass media. Advertising agencies dispatched direct mailings—or mass mailings—with uniform information to a mass of customers, but they had a smaller impact on the market than radio and television advertisements.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Lester Wunderman, "1995 Nov. 1, The World of Direct Mail: Past, Present and Future, Postal Conference, Toronto," 5, box 20, Lester Wunderman Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University. Wunderman was considered the father of direct marketing since he named the new marketing strategy "direct marketing" in 1961 and detailed the idea in 1967. See *ibid.*, 1.

6. John R. McAlpine, *Direct Mail: Two Mediums Not One* (1951), 1, box DG11, J. Walter Thompson Company. Publications Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

7. Norman H. Strouse, "Advertising Agency Answers the Challenge of Direct Mail," September 30, 1953, box 45, folder "1952. Speech. Advertising Agency Answers the Challenge

Wunderman mentioned the lack of success, saying that in the 1940s and early 1950s, “[in] an age of mass production, mass media, mass marketing and mass consumption, mail for a time was wrongfully positioned as a mass medium.”<sup>8</sup>

However, several innovators gradually discovered ways to use direct mail more skillfully during the 1950s. If direct mail “is properly understood and appropriately used,” an advertising agency opined in 1953, it could be “a national advertising medium possessing special characteristics of selectivity and personalization.”<sup>9</sup> In the shadow of the mass media, direct mailing did not work well if advertising firms sent out standardized letters to their customers. Instead, as an association of direct mail advertisers observed, messengers set out to deploy direct mail as a “vehicle for transmitting an advertiser’s message [. . .] by controlled distribution direct to selected individuals.”<sup>10</sup> Some agencies realized that they needed to “fragment” the market to identify specific groups of persons who shared common characteristics. In doing so, direct mail appealed to prospects with words that were “phrased in very explicit, very meaningful, very personal terms.”<sup>11</sup> Wunderman clearly contrasted direct mail with mass media, arguing, “Radio and television are truly mass media. They blindly reach out for everyone—without selection and discrimination. [. . .] Direct mail must increasingly use its power to address specific individuals of known demography and characteristics, if it is to come to full flower.”<sup>12</sup> As such, by pinpointing selected individuals suitable for specific products without wasting effort on the people who would never buy the products, advertisers expected they could get “higher readership than any other form of advertising.”<sup>13</sup>

Intimacy, which is closely associated with the functions of personalization and

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of Direct Mail,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Writings and Speeches, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

8. Wunderman, “1995 Nov. 1, The World of Direct Mail,” 6.

9. *Ibid.*, 15.

10. The Education Committee of the Direct Mail Advertising Association, “A Digest of Direct Mail Advertising,” January 1963, box 61, folder “Advertising—Media—Direct Mail,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Advertising Vertical Files, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

11. Charles E. Garvin, “Direct Mail’s Big Challenge: To Meet Changing Market Requirements,” *Reporter of Direct Mail Advertising*, May 1958, 57–58, box 11, folder “1958. Article. Direct Mail’s Big Challenge: To Meet Changing Market Requirements,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Writings and Speeches. See also Derry F. Daly, Roger Franklin, and J. Ronald Hess, “Some Important Things I Believe a Young Account Representative Should Know about Direct Mail Advertising,” October 1968, box 8, folder “1968. Other Writing. Direct Mail Advertising,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Writings and Speeches; McAlpine, *Direct Mail*, 3–4.

12. Lester Wunderman, “1967 Mar. 3, Mail Order: The Coming Revolution in Marketing, Advertising Club of New York,” 14–15, box 19, Wunderman Papers.

13. McAlpine, *Direct Mail*, 3–4.

selectivity, also characterized direct mail advertising. Direct mail pioneer Wunderman intriguingly put the medium in a tradition of personal correspondence such as essays, poetry, and love letters, which “made letter writing more than just a way of giving news, keeping in touch or building relationships.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, one advertising agent highlighted the effect of direct mail to intensify readers’ emotions. Quoting Charles W. Eliot’s poems “Carrier of news and knowledge” and “Messengers of sympathy and love” that are inscribed at the corner of the main post office in Washington, D.C., the advertisers pointed to mail’s dual roles of communication and intimacy, and anticipated the growth of direct mail advertisements.<sup>15</sup> By the end of the 1950s, as advertisers meticulously analyzed, classified, and identified groups of consumers, they used direct mail advertising quite distinctively from the mass media: direct mail advertisers approached people through selectivity and intimacy instead of standardization.

Wunderman maintained that the changed nature of direct mail shifting from mass toward personal marketing was not isolated from the transformation of America from a mass society into a post-industrial society. Wunderman contended that the mass media dominated communication in an age characterized by mass production, mass consumption, and mass marketing. Newspaper, radio, and television advertising flourished throughout the 1950s, and back then they were much less expensive than in the following decades. Drawing upon Daniel Bell’s study, Wunderman asserted that the 1960s witnessed the post-industrial revolution that shook “the foundations of direct mail, other business and all of our lives.” As the baby boom generation grew up in the postwar years, they sought alternatives to mass culture and influenced consumption patterns. “The era of mass everything” did not fit what the baby boomers desired, Wunderman believed.<sup>16</sup>

Wunderman predicted that the revolution of communication technologies would result in an age of individualization. “[We] are living in an age of repersonalization and individuation,” he said. “Automation, which we feared as being anti-people, has become pro-person. [ . . . ] Our automated, computerized, electronic, information society has created opportunities for personalized, individualized selling, which will surely replace mass marketing.” Wunderman particularly stressed that computers caused a seismic change in marketing and advertising. When computers recorded detailed information on hundreds of millions of consumers, the advertising theorist forecasted that new forms of marketing would evolve into direct marketing “where the advertising and buying

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14. Wunderman, “1995 Nov. 1, The World of Direct Mail,” 6.

15. John Crichton, speech, “How to Dispel the Mystery and keep the Magic,” October 15, 1964, 2, box 61, folder “Advertising—Media—Direct Mail,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Advertising Vertical Files.

16. Wunderman, “1995 Nov. 1, The World of Direct Mail,” 10–12.

become a single action.”<sup>17</sup> Another advertiser made a similar case that direct mail metamorphosed consumers from a mass to individuals, claiming, “there just aren’t any masses any more. People today are individuals. [. . .] Difficult, suspicious, slow with a dollar, hard-headed, and even ornery individuals—as a lot of politicians found out just the day before yesterday.”<sup>18</sup>

Whereas visionary advertising agencies were creating new strategies in the postwar period, the federal government played a role in paving the way for the new marketing. The zip code was another element that altered the nature of direct mail, becoming part of the growing information industry. When the Post Office Department introduced the zip code in the early 1960s, the Advertising Council appointed Wunderman’s company as the volunteer agency for the department. Although marketers and advertisers would benefit from the zip code later, the community of direct mail advertisers initially resisted the new idea. But the post office’s extraordinary efforts to persuade the public and the generous media budget of the Advertising Council overcame the resistance. Following its adoption in 1963, the advertising community reorganized their database of customers based on the zip code, and then it turned out the new technique facilitated the distribution of mail and information. Combining census data and polling information, marketing companies shortly utilized zip codes for targeting individual consumers according to their preferences and lifestyles.<sup>19</sup>

Also known as “microtargeting,” direct marketing would develop into diverse advertising technologies including telephone marketing, outreach based on precinct data, and cable television advertising, among others. But, as political scientist R. Kenneth Godwin pointed out, direct mail was the most profitable and efficient of these.<sup>20</sup> Some political activists turned their attention to the new commercial tool. For instance, Billy James Hargis, an ultraconservative evangelist in Oklahoma, actively employed direct mail for his anticommunist activities in the early Cold War period.<sup>21</sup> However, it was on Madison Avenue, the center of the American advertising industry, that direct mail politics flourished during the 1950s and 1960s.

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17. Wunderman, “1967 Mar. 3, Mail Order,” 7–9.

18. Dan Seymour, speech, “Agency Looks at Direct Mail,” November 7, 1968, box 44, folder “1968. Speech. Agency Looks at Direct Mail,” J. Walter Thompson Company. Writings and Speeches.

19. Wunderman, “1995 Nov. 1, The World of Direct Mail,” 12. See also Marshall Ganz, “Voters in the Crosshairs: How Technology and the Market Are Destroying Politics,” *American Prospect* 16 (Winter 1994): 100–109.

20. R. Kenneth Godwin, *One Billion Dollars of Influence: The Direct Marketing of Politics* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1988), 2; Sasha Issenberg, *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (New York: Broadway Books, 2013), 9, 47–48; Richard A. Viguerie, *The New Right: We’re Ready to Lead* (Falls Church, VA: Viguerie Co., 1980), 21.

21. Hendershot, *What’s Fair on the Air?*, 182.

## II: Harold L. Oram and Liberal Anticommunism

The change of mail advertising throughout the 1950s and 1960s gradually influenced the political media. Whereas radio and television were the mainstream of advertising in these decades, several consultants in New York City began to bring mail advertising into the political arena.<sup>22</sup> Oram's career as a political activist commenced in 1936 when dictatorship and warfare loomed large in Europe. As the Spanish Civil War erupted, he joined the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy in favor of the Loyalists. Oram also joined the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign, in which as the director of publicity and fundraising he made efforts to raise aid for Spanish refugees who left Spain after Francisco Franco rose to power.<sup>23</sup> In September 1939, Oram founded his own fundraising company called Consultants in Fund Raising, which was soon renamed Harold L. Oram, Inc. Before he enlisted in the army in 1942, he was responsible for funding projects to aid refugees and to fight fascism in Europe. For instance, the Emergency Rescue Committee was engaged in assisting anti-Nazi intellectuals and activists. Oram's clients before World War II included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

After he came back from military service in 1946, Oram continued to involve himself with refugee relief and liberal activism. As the Cold War intensified from the late 1940s, Oram's attention shifted from anti-fascism to anticommunism, with his interests extending to East Asia. Among the most notable examples of his philanthropic activities in the postwar era were the fundraising campaigns for Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI), American Friends of Vietnam, and Committee of One Million, all of which were programs to aid anticommunists in East Asia. Simultaneously, Oram remained involved with activities for European refugees, collaborating with the Citizen's Committee for Displaced Persons, which was aimed at securing "emergency legislation permitting the United States to admit its fair share of Europe's displaced persons." Oram also dedicated efforts to endorsing the United Nations by fundraising for the American Association for the United Nations (AAUN). His stance as a liberal anticommunist was evident since letters on behalf of these organizations had the signatures of prominent

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22. For Harold Oram's early life, see the Trustees of Indiana University, "Oram Group, Inc. Records, 1937-1992," Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana, <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/collections/philanthropy/mss057>.

23. Memo, n.d., box 24, folder 16, "Spanish Refugee Relief Committee, 1937-1940," Harold L. Oram Papers and Records of the Oram Group, Inc., 1939-1991, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana.

Democratic figures such as James A. Farley and Eleanor Roosevelt.<sup>24</sup>

Oram rose to prominence as a guru of mail fundraising in postwar politics, drawing on ideas and methodologies from commercial mail advertisers. In his letter to a client in May 1947, Oram indicated that he had raised approximately \$775,000 after returning from the army in January 1946. Breaking down this total, he revealed that most of the money came from mail solicitation: \$475,000 was raised through mailings, \$175,000 through dinner and luncheon meetings, \$60,000 by one telegraphic appeal, \$50,000 through personal solicitation, and \$15,000 via advertisements. In this letter, Oram strongly recommended fundraising via “the mass media appeals,” which were solicitation by telegraph, mailing, and advertising, adding that “[s]uch a mass media campaign which is the only one I can recommend as having any possibility of success in the brief time, involves a considerable expense in comparison to an organized appeal by personal approach to a carefully selected list of large donors.”<sup>25</sup> Although Oram regarded mail fundraising as a mass media approach, his solicitation methods relied on selectivity that direct marketers emphasized in the 1950s.

Oram’s techniques of mail fundraising also built on the intimate approach of direct marketing. The sense of urgency was characterized by fundraising letters sent by Harold L. Oram, Inc. Appeals usually began with the following words: “Every American is faced by the challenge of impending war, for many of us the possibility of the third great war in our lifetime.”<sup>26</sup> Another appeal similarly urged letter receivers to take action by stating, “We believe that the rate of change in the modern world has produced a new predicament for man. Greater changes are coming in the future than any we have experienced. This Age of Change may be marked by violence and chaos, or it may be an Age of Reason.”<sup>27</sup> While emphasizing the menace of the Cold War and the rapid transformations of the modern age, Oram’s mailings impelled readers to take action, claiming that their choices were crucial for the world. One of his fundraising letters said, “Today we are making a historic choice which, in the end, will determine the fate of all mankind. By our words and our actions, we are deciding irreparably for war or for peace.” The appeal also stressed, “We are today entering a most dangerous period. Recent events are already threatening to divide the world into two hostile

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24. Appeal from Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons, January 6, 1950, box 8, folder 23 “Appeals, 1947–1950,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

25. Memo from Fund Raising Campaign for the Citizen’s Committee for Displaced Persons, May 21, 1947, box 8, folder 29 “Correspondence, 1947–1950,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

26. Appeal from American Association for the United Nations, September 7, 1948, box 4, folder 19 “Appeals, 1947,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

27. The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, October 25, 1962, box 7, folder 19, “Appeals, 1963–1964,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

camps.”<sup>28</sup> As political scientist Larry J. Sabato has pointed out, threatening language is important for direct mail because it effectively urges readers to take immediate action. Emotion, researchers have argued, is a key element. “The message has to be extreme, has to be overblown; it really has to be kind of rough.”<sup>29</sup>

Whereas gloomy anticommunism dominated Oram’s solicitation letters, nonpartisanship characterized Oram’s fundraising campaigns. As President Harry Truman announced that he would attempt to contain Soviet threats to Greece and Turkey in May 1947, ideological tensions increasingly grew between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Oram’s appeal of September 2, 1947, on behalf of the AAUN, called for the cooperation of America with Russia. “We are today entering a most dangerous period,” said the letter, but it added that the success of the United Nations hinged on Soviet-American coordination. The only way to prevent warfare, Oram’s letter stressed, was to convince Russian leaders that “cooperation, rather than antagonism, between the West and the East, is in their own interest.”<sup>30</sup> Likewise, an appeal on behalf of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions highlighted nonpartisanship as it stated that anybody was entitled to join programs for democracy. “We have ignored the labels of ‘right-wing’ and ‘left-wing.’ We have secured the participation of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, secularists, men who call themselves ‘radicals’ and others who regard themselves as ‘conservatives.’”<sup>31</sup> Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, Oram was working together with diverse agencies. Oram sent out his solicitation letters to government, business, foundations, and many individuals as potential donors for anticommunist causes. His clients were not only anticommunists such as Walter H. Judd, a conservative congressman who supported the Chinese nationalist government, but also liberal activists and politicians including the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., William Fulbright, and George McGovern, to name only the most notable.<sup>32</sup>

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28. Appeal from the United Nations Fund of the American Association for the United Nations, Inc., n.d., box 4, folder 18, “American Association for the United Nations, Appeals, 1946,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

29. Larry J. Sabato, *The Rise of Political Consultants: New Ways of Winning Elections* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 241. See also Daniel M. Shea and Michael John Burton, *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*, 3rd ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), chap. 9.

30. Appeal from American Association for the United Nations, September 2, 1947, box 4, folder 19 “Appeals, 1947,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

31. Appeal from the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, October 25, 1962, box 7, folder 19, “Appeals, 1963–1964,” Oram Group, Inc. Records.

32. Memo from Harold L. Oram to Walter H. Judd et al., box 4, folder 7, “Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Board Correspondence, 1952–1955,” Oram Group, Inc. Records; Appeals of November 1968, April 1969, and December 26, 1969, box 11, folder 8 “Appeals,

In the course of his philanthropic activities, Oram developed manifold fundraising techniques. He was responsible for direct mail appeals and also credited as the first to employ full-page advertisements in newspapers such as the *New York Times*. Moreover, he assembled and compiled lists of donors by using *Who's Who* as a mailing list. Using cutting-edge information technology, Oram accumulated the required data to seek potential contributors and made political mailing more efficient than ever before. Oram remained involved with liberal politics throughout his career of political entrepreneurship, yet his fundraising laid the groundwork for direct mail politics, including both liberals and conservatives.

### III: Marvin Liebman and Conservative Anticommunism

In the early 1950s, Marvin Liebman took a step into direct mail politics on Madison Avenue. Born in 1923 in Brooklyn, New York, the young Jewish American was a communist in his youth. "I was good at politics," Liebman later said, "and the Communists were putting on the best political show. I fell in them."<sup>33</sup> However, after his communist fervor faded away in the late 1940s, Liebman visited Harold L. Oram, Inc. Oram decided to employ the young ex-communist, saying, "I just may be able to turn you from an agitator into a fundraiser."<sup>34</sup>

In his autobiography, Liebman recalled that he had learned all he knew about fundraising when he was working with Oram. The walls of Oram's office were lined with metal shelves and drawers holding thousands of three-by-five cards, and each one was hand-typed with a name, address, and other pertinent information. Even though almost everything was done by hand and time consuming, this approach was relatively successful. Liebman not only learned Oram's solicitation methods but also improved them. Understanding that personalization was the key to successful direct mailing, Liebman came up with two ideas to make envelopes look more personal. He had volunteers at the office handwrite the addresses so that recipients would pay special attention to the appeals, and also affixed a first-class stamp instead of a Pitney-Bowes postage imprint. Working with Liebman during the 1950s, Oram regarded the young fundraiser's adroitness so highly that he promoted Liebman to vice president of

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1967–1969, 1973–1974," *ibid.*

33. Neal Blackwell Freeman, "The Marvin Liebman Story," *New Guard* (May 1966): 12. For the early years of Marvin Liebman's political activism, see Marvin Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative: An Autobiography* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992), 19–80; Liebman (Marvin) Interview, Transcript, July 18, 1992, box 27, folder 36, Oram Group, Inc. Records; "Marvin Liebman—Professional and Bibliographical Notes," box 139, folder "Liebman, Marvin—Biographical Sketch," Marvin Liebman Papers, Hoover Institution Archives (HIA).

34. Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 82.

Harold L. Oram, Inc.<sup>35</sup>

Bipartisanship defined Liebman's direct mail fundraising in the early 1950s. In the first years at Oram's fundraising firm, Liebman had many occasions to work with liberals, partly due to Oram's liberal policy and probably also because of Liebman's own experience of converting from communism. The first project Oram gave him was raising funds for the Liberal Party, the political arm of two major New York labor unions, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the Amalgamated Hatters Union. Liebman sent out approximately seventeen thousand letters to raise funds. He had no hesitation in working with liberals to build a large network of anticommunists. He said, "[W]henever I organized a 'conservative' or 'anticommunist' group, I followed Oram's example and tried to include as many 'liberals' as I could on the letterhead to create the broadest possible base of support." The signature of an anticommunist organization with which Oram and Liebman were involved clearly demonstrated diverse supporters. It included poets Conrad Aiken and Siegfried Sassoon, cellist Pablo Casals, novelist John Dos Passos, psychologist Carl Jung, architect Walter Gropius, physicist Robert Oppenheimer, philosopher Bertrand Russell, historian Arthur Schlesinger, and the American Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas, among others.<sup>36</sup>

But Liebman's activities at Oram, Inc. were linked primarily to anticommunism. Among the anticommunist organizations for which Liebman raised funds was the ARCI. Founded in 1952, the chief aims of the ARCI included resettlement, reemployment, and rehabilitation for Chinese intellectuals who had left the People's Republic of China. In 1952, Liebman founded offices in Madison Avenue, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, then initiated the operations to help refugees. With financial support from the CIA, the ARCI helped over fifteen thousand Chinese intellectuals leave the mainland for Hong Kong, fourteen thousand college graduates and their families relocate to Taiwan, and two thousand five hundred refugees relocate in the United States and a thousand in other countries. Unlike the previous solicitation drives for the Liberal Party, Liebman not only raised funds but also organized the project. He prepared an outline of the necessary steps and created the format based largely on his knowledge of how the left was organized. The establishment of the ARCI also provided Liebman with an opportunity to enlarge his network with other anticommunists as he allied with such figures as anticommunist congressman Walter Judd, and Christopher Emmet, who was Oram's friend and a staunch anticommunist.<sup>37</sup>

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35. *Ibid.*, 84, 95, 102.

36. *Ibid.*, 83–85, 94.

37. Memo from Harold L. Oram to Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Inc., February 14, 1952, box 166, folder 1 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1951–1952 April," Walter Judd Papers, HIA; Memo from Ernest K. Moy, September 16, 1951,

Solicitation for the ARCI indicated the nature of Harold L. Oram, Inc., demonstrating how diverse individuals and institutions were involved in its fundraising networks. To arouse sympathy among American intellectuals, the ARCI sent appeals to university presidents around the nation. Meanwhile, the organization also called on many citizens, politicians, and philanthropists to donate money for Chinese refugees. Many recipients sent back small checks such as \$1, \$3, or \$5, while others donated a larger amount of money such as \$750. The Lilly Endowment, a philanthropic institution that sent \$25,000 to the ARCI, was one of the big contributors on Oram's mailing list.<sup>38</sup> Liebman also mailed out appeals to foundations including the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation, among others. The federal government, too, was one of the most important sponsors as the Department of State poured \$250,000 into the ARCI. Sending out solicitation letters to sundry individuals and institutions, direct mail fundraising by Oram, Inc. was dependent on both small and large contributions.<sup>39</sup>

The respondents sent back not only checks but also letters to express their own voices. Several contributors opined in their letters that financial aid was not enough to fight communism. A recipient of the ARCI's appeal claimed that the organization could give Chinese refugees "a chance to protect their own form of government," saying, "Instead of starving in Hong Kong they might welcome the chance to be given uniforms and equipment and be transferred to the Korean front to defend their ideals and pull a lot of our boys out of there."<sup>40</sup> Another person made a similar case in his letter by arguing, "There is no question in my mind but that we should have used all these anti-Communists in Formosa, Hong Kong or

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box 167, folder 4 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/Internal, 1951 Sept.–1952 April," *ibid*; Memo from Walter H. Judd to Alexander Grantham, n.d., box 166, folder 2 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1952 May–Dec.," *ibid*; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 92–104.

38. Letter from Walter H. Judd to university presidents, n.d., box 166, folder 1 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1951–1952 April," Judd Papers; Memo from Walter H. Judd to John F. Schwering, January 9, 1953, box 166, folder 1 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1951–1952 April," *ibid*; Memo from Walter H. Judd to E. C. Congdon, January 23, 1953, box 166, folder 3 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1953 Jan–June," *ibid*; Letter from Walter H. Judd to Eli Lilly, February 25, 1952, box 166, folder 1 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1951–1952 April," *ibid*.

39. Memo from Harold L. Oram to ARCI Executive Committee, October 29, 1952, box 168, folder 1 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/Internal, 1952 Sept.–Dec.," Judd Papers; Memo from Harold L. Oram to Walter H. Judd, March 28, 1952, box 168, folder 2 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/Internal, 1953," *ibid*.

40. Letter from Arthur H. Riss to Walter H. Judd, February 3, 1952, box 166, folder 3 "Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1953 Jan–June," Judd Papers.

elsewhere—long ago in the fight in Korea, as they wanted to be used.”<sup>41</sup> These responses revealed that several supporters wanted more action rather than philanthropic assistance in order to win the Cold War in East Asia.

Within the ARCI, the same controversies revolved over what it ought to do for anticommunist activities. As the organization grew in size, tensions grew between the “philanthropist” sponsors and the “activist” anticommunists. The philanthropists, including Oram and most of the directors, were the mainstream of the ARCI. Yet Liebman and other activists were frustrated by the philanthropic majority, believing that the ARCI as a political organization could overthrow Communist China by assisting armed forces from Taiwan under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. Liebman attempted to persuade other directors to change the group’s aim, sending a memorandum to the ARCI executive committee. In the memo, Liebman stressed that the emergency or “newness” of the problem was essential for successful fundraising. He claimed that initial efforts to resettle Chinese refugees had been once urgent for many Americans, but “it has lost its novelty for the people who are our potential supporters.” Therefore, he suggested the ARCI required an approach to help the Chinese refugees “in every way possible to reconstruct a free society.”<sup>42</sup> However, Oram and many members did not change their humanitarian approach. They restated the ARCI’s aims and objectives to reconfirm that all of the organization’s projects “shall be concerned with resettlement or be directly contributory to facilitating as rapidly as possible the primary aim of resettlement.”<sup>43</sup>

While Oram was engaged in fundraising for liberal causes, Liebman gradually leaned toward more activist and conservative anticommunism throughout the 1950s. In 1953, Liebman started to organize a new anticommunist conservative group while he continued to work at Oram, Inc. Following the armistice of the Korean War in July, Liebman set up a small meeting at New York’s University Club in September. Along with several members of the ARCI, Liebman, Emmet, Judd, and Charles Edison, the inventor Thomas Edison’s son and former New Jersey governor, discussed new problems after the war. The members of the meeting tried to stem the wave of communism in Asia by denying Communist China’s admission to the United Nations. Liebman and other participants decided that the goal of the organization was to influence public opinion through their own newsletter, radio spots, and newspaper ads, while planning lobbying activities.

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41. Letter from Walter H. Judd to Arthur H. Riss, February 25, box 166, folder 3 “Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/General, 1953 Jan–June,” Judd Papers.

42. Memo from Marvin Liebman to ARCI and ABMAC Executive Committees, n.d., box 168, folder 3 “Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Correspondence/Internal, 1954,” Judd Papers; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 97.

43. Minutes of Meeting, April 9, 1953, box 170, folder 1 “Aid to Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, Meeting Minutes & Agenda, 1952–1953,” Judd Papers; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 102–3.

Setting up a headquarters on West 40th Street in New York, Liebman named the new organization the Committee of One Million.<sup>44</sup>

Starting in 1953, the Committee of One Million dispatched direct mail campaigns to call for support among Americans. The solicitation letters suggested that bipartisanship still characterized Liebman's fundraising after he shifted toward activist anticommunism. An appeal contended, "The Democrat and the Republican parties [. . .] have a unique opportunity to take the issue of the admission of Communist China to the United Nations out of American partisan politics." Adding that such bipartisan action would prove the solidity of American sentiments on the issue, Liebman tried to take inclusive approaches to anticommunism.<sup>45</sup> Another direct mailing of the committee stressed that the policy against the People's Republic of China was "so widely supported as our policy" in the United States that "every major American organization" adopted expressions against Communist China and "all the American people" refuted the appeasement of communism in East Asia.<sup>46</sup> Over two hundred recipients responded to the first appeal and signed its statement: 49 members of Congress, including 23 Democrats, coupled with 12 governors, 33 business magnates, 20 retired generals and admirals, 14 religious leaders, and 22 scientists and educators. Many other individuals followed suit.<sup>47</sup>

Liebman's activist anticommunism went along with the transformation of modern conservatism's foreign policy from isolationism to fervent anticommunism overseas. In the mid-1940s, conservative Republicans, particularly Senator Robert Taft, had challenged the strategy of interventionism by voting against American participation in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Conservative Republicans in both houses also attempted to repudiate the Bretton Woods arrangements, a \$3.75 billion loan for the recovery of Britain, and the Marshall Plan, all of which looked to the conservatives like the expansion of the federal

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44. Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 105–11. The name of the organization was initially the Committee for One Million. However, Liebman disbanded the group in January 1955 and changed its name to the Committee of One Million when he reorganized it in March 1955. See Memo, Marvin Liebman, April 1, 1960, box 38, folder "Committee of One Million, 1958/1959," Alfred Kohlberg Papers, HIA.

45. Appeal, August 1956, box 87, folder "Committee of One Million (Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations) General Information," Group Research, Inc. Records, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

46. Appeal from Marvin Liebman, April 6, 1960, box 87, folder "Committee of One Million (Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations) Letters from Headquarters," Group Research, Inc. Records.

47. John O'Kearney, "Lobby of a Million Ghosts," *Nation*, January 23, 1960, 76; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 107.

government on a global scale. However, with the armistice of the Korean War and the death of Senator Taft in July 1953, conservative politicians began to highlight engaged nationalism. Senator William Knowland of California took a leading role in making conservatives fervent Cold War warriors, and conservatives became more hawkish than ever in American foreign policy.<sup>48</sup>

Liebman's political fundraising converged on the formation of intellectual conservatism advanced by William F. Buckley. Buckley figured in American conservatism when he published his book *God and Man at Yale* in 1953 while he was still a student at Yale University. *Time* magazine writer Willi Schlamm, who conceived the idea of a new conservative journal, approached Buckley and asked him to become the journal's editor in chief. They began to organize an intellectual forum for American conservatives by recruiting anticommunists, libertarians opposing big government in favor of individual liberties and the free enterprise system, and conservatives embracing religious and traditional values.<sup>49</sup>

Buckley and Schlamm made efforts to collect funds for the undertaking. According to Liebman, in 1955 Oram received Buckley's solicitation letter for his new magazine project, and Oram asked Liebman to meet with the young conservative. Although Buckley's vigor and intelligence impressed Liebman, the fundraiser thought that the idea of publishing a new conservative journal would be unsuccessful due to the scarcity of a conservative audience in the mid-1950s.<sup>50</sup> Since Buckley founded *National Review* (initially called *National Weekly*) in late 1955, the enterprise was financially shaky all the time. Upon launching *National Review*, Buckley borrowed \$100,000 from his father and received donations from Massachusetts candy manufacturer Robert Welch, Southern California's oil magnate Henry Salvatori, Eastern Airlines CEO Eddie Rickenbacker, and other conservative businesspeople. Nevertheless, Buckley's magazine was continually short of cash and he attempted to cover the deficits by soliciting tax-exempt donations for nonprofit groups which he then turned over to *National Review*.<sup>51</sup>

Still, *National Review* slowly established itself as a force in conservatism as it gradually gave shape to ideas alternative to liberalism. At first, the average

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48. Michael Bowen, *The Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 35–55, 193, 199; Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 140–41, 146–47, 203–4.

49. For an overview of *National Review*, see John Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988); Jeffrey Peter Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind: National Review and Its Times* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2005); David B. Frisk, *If Not Us, Who? William Rusher*; National Review, and the Conservative Movement (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2011); George H. Nash, *Reappraising the Right: The Past and Future of American Conservatism* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2009), 202–24.

50. Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 109–10.

51. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 210.

circulation of the magazine was relatively small with the readership reaching 30,000 in 1960, while Billy Graham's *Christianity Today* had a paid circulation of 150,000 by the early 1960s. Yet *National Review* emerged as a forum of opinion and disputation, contributing to the fusion of eclectic conservative philosophies, such as anticommunism, traditionalism, and libertarianism, which had common goals but sometimes conflicted with each other. Contributors to Buckley's magazine included ex-Marxist anticommunists, such as Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, and Frank Meyer, as well as traditionalists like Russell Kirk. Many *National Review* editors and writers were Catholics, including Buckley himself and L. Brent Bozell, while Jewish Americans appeared on the original masthead of the journal. As *National Review* provided channels of communication and opportunities to discuss conservatism from different strands of ideas, the magazine formed a conservative intellectual establishment, serving as the backbone of the conservative movement.<sup>52</sup>

Liebman became Buckley's close friend shortly after they met. In 1957, he founded his own public relations firm, Marvin Liebman Associates, Inc. in New York. Known as the "wizard of direct mail fundraising," Liebman assisted Buckley as the publicity arm of *National Review*, actively raising money for anticommunism and the nascent conservative movement in general. Buckley and Liebman collaborated in organizing several conservative groups during the 1960s.<sup>53</sup>

Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) was the most prominent organization Buckley and Liebman founded.<sup>54</sup> Buckley realized that conservatives needed to develop their ideology from an intellectual circle toward a social movement by organizing conservative students across the country. He issued a call for a meeting to form a new organization for the youth at his estate in Sharon,

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52. On the importance of *National Review*, see Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement*, 230; Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 216. George Nash pointed to the role played by several Jewish Americans in founding *National Review*. See Nash, *Reappraising the Right*, 202–24.

53. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 235; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 106, 96, 131–42.

54. For an overview of Young Americans for Freedom, see John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Gregory Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Some conservatives also narrated their own activities in YAF. See for example William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right* (New York: William Morrow, 1984); Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement That Remade America* (New York: Free Press, 1999); Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*.

Connecticut. From September 9 to 11, 1960, approximately one hundred young conservatives gathered at the Sharon conference. M. Stanton Evans, editor of the *Indianapolis News*, drafted the “Sharon Statement” which fused the three ideologies. The Sharon Statement declared the establishment of YAF and marked the emergence of a student activist movement in conservatism, such as the Port Huron Statement in 1962 for the formation of Students for a Democratic Society on the left.<sup>55</sup> Liebman was intimately associated with YAF from its foundation. He provided his office facilities when the Sharon conference was organized. After YAF was established, Liebman not only offered his office on lower Madison Avenue for the national board, but also gave financial support for the organization. When YAF set out to publish its magazine, the *New Guard*, in March 1961, Liebman assisted the publication so generously that the *National Review* publisher William A. Rusher was concerned Liebman spoiled YAF members like “a rich and adoring uncle.”<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, despite Liebman’s support, some YAF activists were frustrated with the elder mentor, claiming that Liebman embezzled YAF’s funds for his other fundraising enterprises. After an internal conflict occurred within the youth organization, Liebman resigned in January 1962.<sup>57</sup>

As a political messenger, Liebman continued to be engaged in conservatism by raising funds and organizing other groups. Although the Committee of One Million, *National Review*, and YAF faced financial crises over the years, these groups promoted the rise of the conservative movement in American politics. YAF grew to a national vehicle for young conservatives discontented with liberal politics, opening the way for a new generation of right-wing activists to enter the political arena. One of the new conservatives was a Texan who would be a central figure of conservatism as the preeminent direct mail fundraiser by the 1970s.

#### IV: Richard A. Viguerie and Conservatism in the Early 1960s

While Liebman had learned fundraising for the anticommunist cause by working with the liberal Oram, Richard Viguerie carried out his direct mail solicitation solely for conservative politics.<sup>58</sup> Viguerie’s autobiography indicates

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55. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 53–74; Klatch, *A Generation Divided*, 97–133; Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 31–38.

56. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*, 114; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 150–53.

57. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 47, 50–52.

58. A problem revolving around the study of Richard Viguerie’s direct mail fundraising is the shortage of primary sources. To be sure, many researchers of conservatism have touched upon Viguerie’s activism, but the books and articles rely primarily on interviews with him and his autobiographies, such as Viguerie, *The New Right*, and Richard A. Viguerie and David Franke, *America’s Right Turn: How Conservatives Used New and Alternative Media to Take Over America* (Chicago: Bonus Books, 2004). Alf Tomas Tønnessen monographed an exceptional work focusing on Viguerie as a key political fundraiser in the conservative

that he shared a similar background with many other young conservatives of the 1960s. Viguerie was born to a Catholic family outside Houston, Texas, in 1933. His parents were of Louisiana French descent and his mother retained a little of her Cajun accent. The Viguerie family had earned its living in real estate in South Louisiana, but they had lost almost everything in the financial panic of the early 1920s. Viguerie's parents moved to Texas in 1929 immediately before the Great Depression.<sup>59</sup>

Anticommunism was kindled in Viguerie's mind during the 1950s through the influence of political figures such as Douglas MacArthur and Joseph McCarthy. He worked for the Eisenhower campaign in 1952 and 1956 as chairman of the Harris County Young Republicans. An anecdote showed that the conservative cause was more important than party politics for Viguerie. One day he invited Jack Cox, a solid conservative Democrat in Texas, to speak at a Young Republicans barbecue. While several people criticized Viguerie because Cox was not a Republican, Viguerie did not understand why they accused him. He involved himself in conservative politics again in 1960, when he was named Harris County campaign chairman for Republican John Tower, who challenged Lyndon Johnson for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Viguerie helped to write one-page fundraising letters for the Republican candidate. Tower ended up losing the election, receiving 41 percent of the vote, but he won the special election for Johnson's old seat in early 1961.<sup>60</sup>

In 1961, Viguerie responded to a classified advertisement in *National Review* and moved from Texas to New York. At first, Viguerie met with the *National Review* publisher William Rusher. Rusher interviewed Viguerie for the position as executive secretary of YAF and introduced Viguerie to Liebman, who offered his

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movement. Alf Tomas Tønnessen, *How Two Political Entrepreneurs Helped Create the American Conservative Movement, 1973–1981: The Ideas of Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009). For works on Viguerie's direct mail, see Gregory L. Schneider, *The Conservative Century: From Reaction to Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 143–44; Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 6, 42–44; Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy*, 128–31; Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 219–20; Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 160; Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right Face: Organizing the American Conservative Movement, 1945–65* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 178–81; Adam Clymer, *Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 53–54, 59, 67, 69; William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 145–46, 194; Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 165–66, 168–69, 171, 175.

59. Viguerie, *The New Right*, 28–30.

60. *Ibid.*, 29–30.

office to YAF and would become Viguerie's mentor for fundraising. As Viguerie was learning how to effectively collect money and gain support during the early 1960s, the young political fundraiser became known as "the 'new' Liebman" in conservative circles.<sup>61</sup>

Viguerie's ideological, religious, and social backgrounds—anticommunism, Catholicism, and the South—were common among many other conservatives in the 1960s.<sup>62</sup> But a unique feature of Viguerie's activity was notable over the years. Viguerie was surprised to find that YAF, not one year old, was \$20,000 in debt with only 2,000 paid-up members, although YAF claimed a membership of 25,000, and just a couple of weeks' operating money remained on hand. And he got involved in making the student group financially successful.<sup>63</sup> In his words, "plenty of young conservatives were boning up on conservative philosophy, and many others were studying the technique of political organization. Nobody [. . .] was studying how to *sell* conservatism to the American people." Viguerie acknowledged that he was not able to be a prominent political intellectual. He was instead determined to "stick to your brand" and to be the best "marketer" in conservative politics. Therefore, he perused many books on marketing and psychology rather than politics or political philosophy. He even confessed that he barely read *National Review* or *Human Events*.<sup>64</sup>

With his unique orientation toward political advertising within the conservative movement in the early 1960s, it was not accidental that Viguerie shortly noticed the potential of direct mail. His direct mailings for YAF showed his inclination for political business as well as the conservative movement. From 1961 to 1963, as administrative secretary of YAF, Viguerie dispatched letters several times.<sup>65</sup> A mailing in November 1961, for example, recommended that YAF members subscribe to *National Review* and purchase *Revolt on the Campus* written by M. Stanton Evans, who had drafted the Sharon Statement when YAF was founded in 1961. Advertising the political magazine and monograph as the best conservative publications, Viguerie's letter stressed the significance of distributing conservative philosophies to individuals, noting, "In the past, conservatives have not been as

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61. Letter from Marvin Liebman to William A. Rusher, September 9, 1977, box 52, folder 10 "General Correspondence, Liebman, Marvin, 1972-1980," William A. Rusher Papers, Library of Congress; Liebman, *Coming Out Conservative*, 153; Viguerie, *The New Right*, 30-31.

62. Klatch, *A Generation Divided*, 38-40; Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right Face*, 165-66.

63. Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 162-63; Viguerie, *The New Right*, 31.

64. Viguerie and Franke, *America's Right Turn*, 94-96.

65. "YAF Fundraising Packages (1960-Present)," box 46, folder 1 "Financial Records, 1970-1973," Young Americans for Freedom Records, HIA. This material shows the overview of the YAF's direct mail campaigns from Fall 1961 to April 1972, documenting each appeal, the names of senders, and the issues over the years.

effective as they might have been, because they failed to *sell themselves* and their point of view on a personal basis to all segments of the population.”<sup>66</sup>

Another mailing of March 22, 1962, asserted that what the United States needed was “dynamic young conservative leadership capable of *selling conservative ideas* to the American voter,” as it reported that more than 180,000 conservatives gathered in Madison Square Garden on March 2, 1962, for the “Rally for World Liberation from Communism” sponsored by YAF.<sup>67</sup> The New York City rally had major addresses delivered by well-known conservatives such as senators Barry Goldwater, Strom Thurmond, and John Tower, and delegations represented a young generation of American conservatives from many universities. Viguerie’s other direct mailings informed YAF members of the organization’s activities, including producing anticommunist films, establishing local chapters around the country, and demonstrations in several states. His appeals at the same time called for donations to sustain these undertakings. “YAF’s treasury is now empty and the entire future of Young Americans for Freedom is endangered. If additional contributions are not forthcoming immediately from our past supporters, our work may have to cease.”<sup>68</sup>

Viguerie’s political fundraising was more partisan than those of Oram and Liebman. As YAF aimed at promoting conservatism on campuses, Viguerie’s solicitation highlighted conservatives’ struggles with the dominance of liberalism in American universities. One of the main targets of YAF was the National Student Association (NSA), a national confederation of college student governments dominated by liberals.<sup>69</sup> A direct mailing to YAF members raised the question, “Are American students really moving to the left? ” “But the NSA is in real trouble,” the letter claimed, and mentioned that YAF had launched a nationwide campaign to drive the NSA off of campuses, crafting a report on the NSA and urging schools to withdraw from “the far left-wing” organization.<sup>70</sup> Saying that “Young Americans for Freedom is engaged in a critical battle with the left-wing professors in our nation’s colleges and universities for the minds of our youth,” another solicitation appeal emphasized the necessity of organizing young conservatives to resist the influence of “the left-wingers.”<sup>71</sup> Even though YAF

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66. Appeal from Richard Viguerie, November 1961, box 41, folder 6 “1960–1969,” YAF Records (emphasis added).

67. Appeal from Richard Viguerie, March 22, 1962, box 41, folder 6 “1960–1969,” YAF Records (emphasis added).

68. Appeal from Richard Viguerie, December 5, 1962, box 41, folder 6 “1960–1969,” YAF Records.

69. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*, 80; Schneider, *The Conservative Century*, 96; Bjerre-Poulsen, *Right Face*, 172–78.

70. Appeal from Richard Viguerie, n.d., box 41, folder 6 “1960–1969,” YAF Records.

71. Appeal from Richard Viguerie, December 5, 1962, box 41, folder 6 “1960–1969,” YAF Records.

claimed that it was a nonpartisan organization without commitment to the Republican Party, partisan rhetoric characterized its activities and direct mail politics that stressed ideological battles between liberalism and conservatism in American politics.

### Conclusion

Direct mail politics in New York City during the 1950s and early 1960s casts new light on the development of the American right, highlighting the role played by urban consumerism in the conservative movement. As many scholars have pointed out, many middle-class suburbanites in the Sunbelt endorsed the conservative movement from the post-World War II years. However, when right-wing groups organized the grassroots in the suburbs, media activists in urban areas constructed networks of conservative Americans through political public relations. Anticommunist advertisers such as Oram, Liebman, and Viguierie employed their expertise in political media, carving out niches by launching direct mail as a personalized medium. These operatives accumulated individual information and compiled mailing lists of contributors to their political causes. Such political public relations were established in New York City because the advertising industry on Madison Avenue provided political activists with new marketing approaches, including direct marketing, in the postwar era.

The study of direct mail is significant to better understand the political media today because direct mail was liable to accelerate partisanship in American politics. As a personalized medium, direct mail was designed to reach out to customers and voters with emotional intimacy. Political advertisers realized that they could collect funds effectively by stirring up voters' emotions, particularly a sense of urgency.<sup>72</sup> Anticommunist messengers in the early 1950s emphasized bipartisanship, as solicitation letters that we have seen indicated. However, with the conservative movement taking shape throughout the 1950s, conservative media activists gradually used partisanship between the left and the right. We can find recent examples in contemporary America. Since the 2016 election, the national media have covered stories concerning Donald Trump's campaign. Among the news is a scandal involving Cambridge Analytica, the British political consulting firm that reportedly acquired personal data from Facebook and influenced the behavior of American voters during the presidential race.<sup>73</sup> It seems that we are facing a new era when information technologies affect politics,

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72. For more on the emotion that advertising agencies used in political campaigns during the 1950s, see Moriyama Takahito, "The 1952 Presidential Election and the Rise of Political Consultants," *The American Review* 52 (2018): 111–33.

73. Matthew Rosenberg, Nicholas Confessore, and Carole Cadwalladr, "Firm that Assisted Trump Exploited Data of Millions," *New York Times*, March 18, 2018, A1, A13.

providing the political elite with tools for manipulating people's minds and activities. However, individualized politics, in which information operatives gather personal information and send specific messages to individuals, was not a phenomenon that appeared for the first time in the twenty-first century. It did not start with the internet, either. This type of politics dates back to the mid-twentieth century when political advertisers systematically began to create databases of political contributors and promoted emotional as well as ideological conflicts in American politics.