THE REINVENTION OF TRADITION: THE NATIONALIST NETWORK AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN CITIZEN, 1920-1955

Kelly Lyons

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Kelly Lyons

Advisor: Marilynn Johnson, PhD

This dissertation examines how a coalition of nationalist organizations invented, revised, and popularized the performance of patriotic traditions in everyday life in the United States. Between 1920 and 1955, the Nationalist Network encouraged public schools, local governments, and sports and entertainment venues to incorporate patriotic symbols and rituals into Americans' daily lives. This "everyday nationalism" included traditions as simple as displaying the American flag in front of government buildings or as elaborate as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance or performing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The Network's strategy entailed popularizing patriotic traditions in American society before asking for the endorsement of the federal and state governments. Some of these traditions remain integral to American national identity in the twenty-first century, in large part because the Network normalized the idea that patriotism must be publicly performed.

The Nationalist Network comprised a variety of civic, hereditary, and veterans' organizations, most notably the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, which collaborated to advance their goal of spreading everyday nationalism. These organizations largely represented upper middle-class, white, Protestant, American-born citizens and the groups' leaders believed that immigrants, people of color, workers, and others different from themselves were inherently less patriotic and needed to regularly perform patriotic traditions to truly become American. The Network began popularizing patriotic traditions as part of everyday life in the 1890s but between 1920 and 1955, its work became politically

polarized. During these decades, right- and left-wing forces within the Network contested whether American national identity should be exclusive or inclusive. By examining the period between 1920 and 1955, we can see how different ideological factions of the Network used patriotic culture to appeal to Americans' sense of national pride and to advance their particular beliefs about what the United States can and should represent.

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Introduction

The tradition of playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" before professional American football games became a contentious issue in the 2010s when right-wing politicians and political commentators expressed outrage when Colin Kaepernick, a quarterback in the National Football League, decided to kneel instead of stand while the national anthem was played before a game in the 2016 season. Kaepernick understood that this tradition was so ingrained in American culture that even slightly deviating from the prescribed practice of standing during the anthem would garner attention, lending an opportunity to speak out against police violence against Black Americans. Public figures who condemned Kaepernick for this protest engaged in an ahistorical argument that he violated some fundamental longstanding American tradition. NFL players were first asked to stand on the field during the national anthem for primetime games in 2009, which some sports commentators believed was the result of a symbiotic relationship between the NFL and the Department of Defense.[1] The roots of this ritual were older but hardly ancient, as it was during World War I that attendees at public events came to expect that "Banner" would be played. Kaepernick, who was subsequently informally banned from the NFL, was not the first to politicize the national anthem. It was one of many patriotic traditions in the United States which were

[1] Sens. John McCain (R-AZ) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) released the "Tackling Paid Patriotism" report in 2015, which highlighted that the military paid at least $53 million to professional sports teams and leagues for advertising between 2012-2015. The report did not address the beginning of the anthem tradition in 2009 but in 2016 some commentators speculated that the financial relationship between the Department of Defense and sports leagues predated McCain and Flake's report. Patrick Sauer, "Stephen A. Smith Points Out NFL's Paid Patriotism Problem," *Vice*, https://www.vice.com/en/article/yp89dj/stephen-a-smith-points-out-nfls-paid-patriotism-problem; John McCain and Jeff Flake, "Tackling Paid Patriotism: A Joint Oversight Report," November 2015, accessed via Wayback Machine (December 21, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20181221015408/http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/12de6dcb-d8d8-4a58-8795-562297f948c1/tackling-paid-patriotism-oversight-report.pdf), accessed March 8, 2022.

invented and popularized in the early twentieth century by nationalists who wanted to control how Americans conceived of their national identity and their behavior.

Examining the proliferation and enforcement of patriotic traditions provides a unique insight into how nationalism and national identity change over time. Nationalism and patriotism are both distinct and intertwined; patriotism is an intense emotion while nationalism is an ideology which can be studied and measured using objective criteria.[2] Nationalist movements cannot capture the minds of a populace without appealing to their hearts through patriotism. The nation-state is a fundamentally fragile construct, an artificial and arbitrary method of organizing people, and as such, its continued existence must be reimagined from generation to generation and reinforced through language and social norms.[3] Although hot nationalism during times of war is the ideology's most overt manifestation, nationalism lingers during peacetime as well, hidden in the language, rituals, and symbols of daily life. This *everyday nationalism*, overlooked because of its perceived normalcy, provides a reservoir which the jingoism of wartime draws from.

Nationalism is a construct, and thus a project which is deliberately created and continually recreated by individuals and groups. In the early twentieth-century United States, a coalition of civic, hereditary, and veterans' groups collaborated to invent and popularize a series of patriotic traditions in order to advance its leaders' nationalist beliefs on what it meant to be American. This Nationalist Network, as I call it, defined modern American

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[2] Scholars of nationalism have observed that in the West, the use of these terms reveals an "us v. them" mentality; nationalism drives irrational actors in the Global South or extremists in the West while patriotism is the perfectly sensible manifestation of civic pride felt by those in liberal democracies. This dissertation rejects this binary and argues that there is a close interplay between nationalism and patriotism, which can be studied using universal criteria. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1995), 55–58; Craig Calhoun, "The Rhetoric of Nationalism," in Skey and Antonsich, *Everyday Nationhood: Everyday Nationhood: Theorising Culture, Identity and Belonging after Banal Nationalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 20–25.

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 17–19.

national identity by incorporating patriotic rituals and practices into daily life. Between 1920 and 1955, however, it grew increasingly divided along ideological lines, as different factions advocated for a more exclusive or inclusive conception of American identity. Through social coercion and state legislation, the Network popularized the most enduring patriotic traditions of the twentieth century, including reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and publicly performing "The Star-Spangled Banner," rituals that have continued into the twenty-first century. Through the efforts of the Network, these and other patriotic traditions serve as shibboleths of American national identity. As seen in the case of Colin Kaepernick, interrogating the meaning behind these rituals can be viewed by contemporary nationalists as not only a violation of social norms but an existential threat to the nationalist project itself.

The Nationalist Network was a coalition of civic, hereditary, and veterans' organizations which invented and popularized patriotic traditions that fostered a hegemonic national identity based on white, American-born, upper middle-class, Christian norms. It emerged out of the specific historical context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Veterans' groups after the Civil War, particularly the Grand Army of the Republic and its women's auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps, hosted grand celebrations and parades on patriotic holidays both to align patriotism with the victory of the US military over Confederate insurgents and to forge some semblance of national unity during the immense social and economic changes of the late nineteenth century.[4] In the 1890s, a new crop of nationalist organization emerged and expanded the scope of patriotic culture from holidays to daily life, or everyday nationalism. The privileged white leaders of the Nationalist Network were united by their belief that their power within American society was threatened by social

[4] Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50–58.

and political change, including the frequent economic instability of the era, increased labor organizing, and the demographic changes brought by immigration. By popularizing a unified set of patriotic traditions, the Network believed, it could subtly influence how Americans thought of themselves and who belonged to the nation, centering people of their class, race, and ethnicity in American identity. This unified set of rituals would also eliminate regional variations, advancing the "romance of reunion" which softened and sentimentalized the violent sectionalism of the Civil War. The early Network appealed to both liberals and conservatives but represented a vision of the United States crystallized in the 1890s, vociferously supporting American imperialism during and after the Spanish-American War and implicitly, sometimes explicitly, endorsing white supremacy and structural racism after the Supreme Court sanctioned racial segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

As forged by the Network, everyday nationalism served as an educational tool to advance its own beliefs about how Americans should think and act. While the Network's leaders believed people of their own background were more authentically American than immigrants, workers, and people of color, they also felt everyday nationalism could educate these unfortunate souls, who they believed did not instinctively understand American values because of their race, class, or circumstances of their birth.[5] According to this worldview, it was the duty of true Americans to mold these people in their own image, for their own good and for the unity of the country. It was no accident that some groups in the Network, particularly women's groups, also conducted formal Americanization classes for immigrants.

[5] Francesca Morgan rightfully acknowledges that Black women also participated in the creation of patriotic culture in the early twentieth century through organizations like the National Association of Colored Women. This dissertation does not include all-Black groups within the Nationalist Network because of the overt racism in the Network's ideology, as well as there being little collaboration between white leaders in the Network and organizations run by people of color. Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 8–10.

While the educational purpose of Americanization classes was clear, everyday nationalism provided a subtler method influencing what people thought it meant to be American. Although the early Network had a racist and elitist interpretation of what it meant to be American, it did attempt to expand the boundaries of American identity to a certain degree. Even people considered second-class citizens by the state or waiting for legal citizenship could, in theory, achieve social acceptance by performing an American identity. Whether or not this proved true in practice, it revealed that the Network's convoluted worldview was nearly as contradictory as the ideals it argued the United States stood for.

World War I marked a major success for the Network as the rituals it championed became socially obligatory and viewed as an important part of patriotic life on the home front. Even after the war, many schools, government offices, and public venues continued to fly flags and perform patriotic ceremonies on a regular basis, revealing how successfully the Network had embedded everyday nationalism in American culture. But the unity of the wartime era was short-lived; in the 1920s, the Network fractured along ideological lines.

The conflicts of the 1920s were driven by competing political ideologies as well as a fundamental disagreement about whether American national identity should be inclusive or exclusive. Buoyed by their wartime successes and no longer united by a desperate desire to normalize everyday nationalism, ideologues within the Network spotted an opportunity to use these traditions and their organizations' influence to advance a political agenda, most notably that of the radical right in the 1920s and 1940s. These nationalists advocated for an unambiguously exclusive interpretation of American identity, coopting patriotic traditions to support their extremist views on immigration restriction and anti-internationalism and classifying liberals and centrists, whom they equated with communists, as fundamentally un-

American.[6] While there was a brief resurgence of left-wing nationalism in the 1930s, the radical right ultimately captured control of the Network by the 1950s and definitively aligned with the political right, ending the Network as it had existed since the 1890s. Its patriotic traditions would continue as an integral part of American culture, but the self-appointed keepers of these traditions ensured that they retained an exclusionary, decidedly right-wing connotation.

The Network's use of everyday nationalism to advance certain ideological aims is worthy of study because it was largely successful in changing the way Americans conceived of and expressed their national identity. Americans had observed patriotic traditions since the country's founding in the 18th century, but the notion that such rituals and symbols should be performed as part of daily life was the invention of the Network at the end of the nineteenth century. The Network also envisioned that these prescribed behaviors would be enforced primarily through social coercion, although it often lobbied state legislatures and the federal government to validate the legitimacy of these traditions. The Network did not represent the majority of Americans as it was predominantly white, upper middle class, and concentrated in northeastern metropolitan areas. Many of its leaders were racist, classist, nativist, and for much of the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, either tolerated radical right-wing beliefs within their organizations or held such beliefs themselves. Although the Network never represented the majority of Americans, its members used their social, political, and media connections, from the local level to the highest echelons of government, to assert that it was a popular movement. Over time, this claim came true, more or less, as the traditions of everyday nationalism were normalized and transformed into shibboleths to

[6] This dissertation will use "left wing" to describe liberals and leftists collectively and their specific terms to describe them individually. However different their policy goals were, right-wing factions in the Nationalist Network made little distinction between the two, insistent that they were fundamentally un-American.

test an individual's patriotism, or more accurately, allegiance to the nationalist ideologies established by the Network.

This dissertation applies theoretical approaches of scholars of nationalism from multiple disciplines. Much of the historiography of American patriotic culture overlooks the work of political scientists and sociologists, as well as historians who have used a transnational approach to argue that nationalist movements in the United States used similar language, methods, and tactics of exclusion as nationalists in other countries.[7] The proliferation of imprecise terms like "patriotism" and "Americanism" to describe the historical and ongoing American nation-building project obfuscates the fact that this project has always been deliberate and that nationalism in the United States followed similar patterns as it did in other counties.[8] By not meaningfully engaging in the existing interdisciplinary scholarship of nationalism, some historians have perpetuated an American exceptionalist argument that the United States was somehow exempt from the same nationalist tendencies and movements evident in other countries.[9]

Aviel Roshwald calls on historians to reconsider how patriotism has influenced the political choices made by individuals and groups in a nation-state, while also questioning the reductive tendency to portray patriotism as simply "a hollow shell," an aesthetic adopted by bad actors to hide their anti-democratic and illiberal aims behind a broadly-appealing

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[7] Jasper M. Trautsch, "The Origins and Nature of American Nationalism," *National Identities* 18, no. 3 (2016): 302.

[8] Marc Ferris' concept of the "militant patriot" rightly identifies the conformist attitude toward patriotic traditions held by many nationalists but perpetuates the framing of nationalism as patriotism. O'Leary, *To Die For*; Jonathan M. Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism* (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 2003); Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America*; Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin, eds., *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Marc Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner: The Unlikely Story of America's National Anthem* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

[9] Jill Lepore, *This America: The Case for the Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2019), Chapter 2, Kindle.

façade.[10] While this is not an uncommon phenomenon in the United States and other liberal nation-states, and is further explored in Chapter 4 of this study, it eliminates the nuance of the historical reality that patriotism has been used to advance any number of ideologies in every nation on earth. This dissertation emphasizes that patriotism and nationalism are intertwined, the former as an emotion often used to advance the ideological goals of the latter. Patriotism may predate the invention of the nation-state, but in the modern era, they are inextricably tied together.[11]

Michael Goebel argues that historians of nationalism, inspired by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, tend to devote more attention to its origin than its "endurance and mutation."[12] While such studies have richly contributed to our understanding of nationalism, this dissertation aims to add to the smaller body of work examining nationalism in the early twentieth-century United States.[13] One of the most notable contributions to this literature is Gary Gerstle's *American Crucible*, which distinguishes racial and civic nationalism as conflicting ideologies. While he successfully complicates American national identity on a conceptual level, Gerstle argues that civic nationalism somehow existed independently of the near-constant efforts to deny racialized people the legal rights of citizenship and the cultural sense of belonging throughout US history, as well as implying that this tension between racial and civic nationalism uniquely afflicted the United States.[14] As an ever-changing ideology, nationalism can contain contradictory

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[10] Cemil Aydin et al., "Rethinking Nationalism," *American Historical Review* 127, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 321.
[11] Although Maurizio Viroli formally argues that patriotism and nationalism are unrelated, his well-considered examination of patriotism throughout Western history demonstrates that preexisting notions of patriotism shaped the development of nationalism in the early modern era. Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8–9.
[12] Aydin et al., "Rethinking Nationalism," 313.
[13] Benjamin E. Park, *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783–1833* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Trautsch, "The Origins and Nature of American Nationalism," 289–312.
[14] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8–13.

elements, and acknowledging such contradictions can give scholars more nuanced insight into state policies and social practices of exclusion.

This study recognizes that the interplay between nationalism and patriotism is particularly evident in efforts to integrate patriotic language, symbols, and rituals into daily life. Scholars have identified various iterations of the phenomenon in which governments and organizations, hoping to appeal to individuals' emotional desire to belong to the imagined community of the nation, prescribe certain behaviors and rituals to demonstrate that an individual or group belongs to the nation. This includes language, displaying patriotic symbols like flags, and performing patriotic traditions in schools and sports or entertainment venues. In his concept of "banal nationalism," Michael Billig identifies an element of coercion, often implicit but sometimes explicit, in the group patriotic rituals some nations have integrated into everyday life.[15] Scholars have subsequently pushed against "banal" as a descriptor in favor of "everyday nationhood," which more accurately captures its quotidian but powerful influence.[16] This dissertation argues in favor of adopting "everyday nationalism" as a term, particularly for historians. When studying change over time, it is imperative to reinforce that national identity itself changes over time and that, as a fragile construct, it must be continually recreated and reproduced throughout society. This study also draws on the concept of the invented tradition, a relatively new ritual or practice which hearkens back to a historical or semi-mythologized past, as a method of assessing how everyday nationalism changed over time and accessing the lived experience and attitudes of historical persons.[17] The Nationalist Network did not represent the majority of Americans,

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[15] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.
[16] Skey and Antonsich, *Everyday Nationhood*.
[17] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

but its attitude that patriotism must be performed became the apparent consensus, by both widespread assent and ambivalence.

The notion that citizenship is performative, to a certain degree, is foundational to the concept of everyday nationalism. Historians have examined how performing patriotic rituals created and deepened emotional attachments to the nation and how the meaning of these rituals was subject to change based on the context and the nature of how they were performed.[18] Immigrant groups have also made claims to legal citizenship and social belonging through military and civilian service during times of war. In order to advance what Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary calls "martial patriotism," the veneration of military service as the highest form of patriotism, veterans' groups in the Nationalist Network sometimes supported the naturalization of former servicemembers in addition to their devoted efforts to advance the public performance of patriotism, illustrating how legal and performative citizenship served complementary functions.[19] Philosophers have also explored how expanding the notion of citizenship beyond its legal and political meaning reveals a greater level of complexity in how we understand this category of belonging. Building on Paula Hildebrandt and Sibylle Peters' conception of performing citizenship as the ability "to act in accordance with the protocols and systems of citizenship, and thereby successfully constitute and produce pieces of civic reality," this dissertation uses everyday nationalism to explore this phenomenon within the historical context of the early twentieth-century United States,

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[18] Cynthia M. Koch, "Teaching Patriotism: Private Virtue for the Public Good in the Early Republic," in John Bodnar, ed., *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 19–21; David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition' c. 1820-1971," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 105–7.
[19] Christopher M. Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5–7; Lucy E. Salyer, "Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918–1935," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (December 2004): 848–851; O'Leary, *To Die For*, 29–30.

when the proliferation of patriotic traditions allowed groups and individuals to mold and remake American national identity.[20]

In the last twenty-five years, some Americanist historians have examined how independent organizations influenced government policy, state-building, and civic identity.[21] Christopher Capozzola considers this in his study of civic voluntarism during World War I, exploring how vaguely-defined ideas about the duties and obligations of citizenship were developed by civic organizations before being adopted and formalized by the state. This dissertation argues that everyday nationalism became one of these duties during World War I and continued through the 1950s, when private organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion formed committees dedicated to cultivating "Americanism" that successfully lobbied federal, state, and local governments to promote nationalism in everyday life. Francesca Morgan also identifies the foundational role that so-called "amateur" organizations played in creating patriotic culture, in which the federal government was reluctant to meddle until the interwar era.[22] Cecelia O'Leary offers another perspective on nationalist voluntary organizations by considering the development of patriotic culture in the United States from the Civil War to World War I, including the activities of the Grand Army of the Republic, Women's Relief Corps, and the early Daughters of the American Revolution.[23] This dissertation builds on this work by looking at patriotic culture from the 1920s to 1950s, the era when everyday nationalism was ascendant, and a time period that has not garnered as much attention as earlier eras. Most importantly,

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[20] Paula Hildebrandt and Sybille Peters, "Introduction," in Paula Hildebrandt et al., eds., *Performing Citizenship: Bodies, Agencies, Limitations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 4–7, https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-97502-3.
[21] Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jennifer Fronc, *New York Undercover: Private Surveillance in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
[22] Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America*, 7–8.
[23] O'Leary, *To Die For*.

it introduces the concept of the Nationalist Network, a collaboration between nationalist organizations in the early to mid-twentieth century that was critical in shaping everyday nationalism in times of war and peace alike.

The three largest and most influential groups in the Nationalist Network, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), have received individual attention from historians. This dissertation builds on this scholarship by locating these organizations within a broader Network to consider their activities within a larger ecosystem. Simon Wendt's overview of the DAR's social, political, and cultural influence argues that the society had a significant impact on the construction of historical memory in the United States.[24] This dissertation similarly argues that the DAR was a bastion of conservative nationalism but includes material from the society's own archives to show how their strategies to inculcate nationalist sentiment and practices further advanced its political goals. Christopher Courtney Nehls and Stephen R. Ortiz examine the interwar activities of the Legion and VFW, respectively, chronicling their lobbying efforts for bonuses and other policy measures. This dissertation emphasizes that alongside such measures, these groups also campaigned vigorously for the recognition of patriotic traditions.[25] Bryan William Nicholson explores formal citizenship training for young people and the intergenerational transmission of nationalist ideology in the mid-twentieth century, an important contribution to the study of American nationalism.[26] But as this study shows, children were also explicit targets of the Network's everyday nationalism, which was a more

[24] Simon Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020).
[25] Christopher Courtney Nehls, "'A Grand and Glorious Feeling': The American Legion and American Nationalism between the World Wars" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2007); Stephen R. Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill: How Veteran Politics Shaped the New Deal Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).
[26] Bryan William Nicholson, "Apprentices to Power: The Cultivation of American Youth Nationalism, 1935–1970" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012).

casual form of education than that which Nicholson considers. This dissertation also suggests that nationalists' efforts to informally "Americanize" both adult and child citizens formed another layer of this civic education project.

In order to understand the philosophical divisions which would come to fracture the Nationalist Network starting in the 1920s, we need to examine the earlier history of the Network and its strategy of using everyday nationalism to advance its ideas. The 1890s, which John Higham dubs the "Nationalist Nineties," marked a change in how nationalist activists organized themselves and how they conceived of their mission. Starting at the end of the Civil War, Cecilia O'Leary argues, the Grand Army of the Republic, a mass veterans' organization, and its auxiliary Women's Relief Corps dominated efforts to produce patriotic culture in the United States and advocated for a militaristic nationalism, venerating the service of soldiers as the highest form of patriotism.[27] Between 1865 and 1890, the United States underwent a period of substantial change, with an increasingly industrialized economy which concentrated wealth at the top and was prone to regular systemic crises. Those who benefitted from this economic instability feared that radicalism, broadly defined as "un-American" ideologies that challenged the dominant power structure, would infiltrate American society through the activities of organized labor and immigrant radicals from southern and eastern Europe. Many white Americans also feared that African Americans' civic participation and upward mobility could disrupt existing power hierarchies, which justified the laws and customs of white supremacy and systemic racism in their minds. This was the case not only in the Jim Crow South but through economic and social segregation in all regions, eventually codified nationwide by the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). White supremacy also animated much of the support for jingoism in the

[27] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 29–30.

1890s, justifying the Spanish-American War and subsequent US occupation of territories in Latin America and the Pacific Ocean. Gail Bederman argues that American imperialism of the era was also driven by middle-class concerns about urbanized masculinity, closely entwined with desires for white dominance over racialized peoples.[28] American nationalism of the 1890s both impacted and was impacted by all of these forces.

The Nationalist Network emerged in the 1890s as an effort by upper and upper middle-class white people to control the way Americans conceived of and expressed their national identity. The Network differed from post-Civil War patriotic societies in their close collaboration across a much wider array of organizations and because these organizations addressed new anxieties which would shape much of the US politics and culture in the twentieth century. While formally apolitical, the early Network comprised a coalition between liberals, moderates, and conservatives. The 1890s also solidified the role of daily traditions and rituals in spreading nationalist ideas. The Grand Army of the Republic and Women's Relief Corps spread their message though grand parades and other occasional events, but the new organizations which formed most of the Network felt that these periodic traditions were insufficient to truly inculcate patriotism in the populace.[29] The Network worked doggedly from the 1890s into the mid-twentieth century to popularize daily patriotic traditions in American society.

The Schoolhouse Flag Movement and the Pledge of Allegiance illustrates this new impulse to normalize everyday nationalism, emerging at the same time as the earliest groups in the Nationalist Network. In 1888, the Boston-based children's magazine the *Youth's Companion* began offering flags as prizes to its young readers who sold new subscriptions in

[28] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 189–90.
[29] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 30–43.

their communities. The magazine encouraged children to display flags in their homes and schools as an ever-present reminder of patriotic ideals. James B. Upham, the *Companion* employee who led the campaign, believed American society had declined since the Civil War and the flag could serve as an object lesson in patriotism, teaching children to resist the indulgence and materialism of modern life. In 1890, the *Youth's Companion* held a patriotic essay contest, with the winner in each state receiving a flag for their school, and formally began a campaign to enlist students to raise money to earn a flag for their school by October 1892, the four hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Caribbean.[30] The Christian socialist and former pastor Francis Bellamy joined the *Companion* in 1891 and played a pivotal role in enacting Upham's vision by planning nationwide public school celebrations for the anniversary and attaining the support of the organizers of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the GAR, Pres. Benjamin Harrison, and the US Congress. Bellamy not only gained the endorsement of national leaders but created a press strategy for schools and veterans' groups to publicize the celebrations on a local level.[31]

Upham and Bellamy devised a program for schools to observe on October 21, 1892, consisting of songs and speeches as well as a formal flag raising ceremony. In September 1892, the *Youth's Companion* printed the program, which included the text of a loyalty oath, subsequently known as the Pledge of Allegiance, along with a related salute, later called the Bellamy salute, which entailed starting the Pledge with a military-style salute at the brow

[30] US cultural, business, and political leaders interpreted the quadricentennial of Spanish imperialism in the Americas as the origin of all European imperialism in the hemisphere, planning nationwide celebrations including the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 6–9.

[31] Francis Bellamy, "How to Observe Columbus Day," *Youth's Companion*, September 8, 1892, 446. As we will see in Chapter 4, the salute bore an uncomfortable resemblance to the Nazi salute adopted under the Third Reich.

before extending one's hand toward the flag, supposedly an ancient Roman gesture.[32] The public school celebration of Columbus Day appeared to be a great success, with historian Richard J. Ellis estimating that thousands of public schools participated, based on newspaper accounts, as well as Catholic parochial schools.[33] Through the efforts of the Nationalist Network in the 1900s through 1930s, schools across the United States adopted the flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance as part of daily exercises, both voluntarily and as legislated by school boards and state governments. These laws and regulations were inconsistent, some requiring the salute but not the Pledge or only requiring weekly or holiday exercises, but during the 1920s and 1930s, enough school districts required the Pledge that there were many controversies when students refused to participate, especially for political or religious reasons. These controversies continued until 1943 when the Supreme Court ruled in *West Virginia v. Barnette* that students could not be forced to recite the Pledge.[34]

The Pledge of Allegiance was the first patriotic tradition successfully popularized by the Nationalist Network, becoming so culturally significant that multiple people claimed to be the Pledge's author. Different nationalist groups supported the various claimants. In the 1900s and 1910s, Lillian A. Hendricks, leader of the Women's Relief Corps in Kansas, led a successful campaign to secure a pension for her friend Frank E. Bellamy, a Kansas native and veteran disabled in the Spanish-American War, on the grounds that he wrote the words of the Pledge in 1898 for the WRC and Grand Army of the Republic.[35] After Hendricks died in 1914 and Frank Bellamy died in 1915, of a botched arm amputation to treat the bone

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[32] "National School Celebration of Columbus Day: The Official Programme," *Youth's Companion*, September 8, 1892, 446.
[33] The Genoa-born Columbus was symbolically important for Italian-Americans and American Catholics who were typically excluded from founding myths centered on Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Ellis, *To the Flag*, 19–23.
[34] Ellis, *To the Flag*, 77–79.
[35] "Written by Cherryvale Man," *Cherryvale (KS) Republican*, May 23, 1908, 1; "Frank Bellamy's Pledge," *Wichita (KS) Beacon*, May 21, 1912, 3.

tuberculosis he contracted as a soldier, a Kansas newspaper printed a conflicting account which argued that Frank wrote it for a school assignment in 1896.[36] After the *Youth's Companion* claimed the late James B. Upham was the author in 1918, the Kansas state Daughters of the American Revolution conducted an investigation and agreed with Upham's candidacy.[37] Some in Kansas continued to believe Frank's account, suggesting that he actually wrote it in 1890 for a *Companion* essay contest, although the magazine declared another student as the Kansas winner in that contest.[38] The Nationalist Network felt the matter was settled in Upham's favor until Francis Bellamy published a detailed account in 1928 asserting he, not Upham, was the actual author. Francis thoughtfully explained why and how he chose each word in the Pledge, completing it on a hot night in August 1892 in Boston.[39] When Francis died in 1931, his wife memorialized him as both the author of the Pledge and the primary driving force behind its popularity during the 1892 Columbus Day school celebrations.[40] Upham's supporters continued to argue in his favor until the Nationalist Network's United States Flag Association assembled a committee of academic

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[36] "Frank Bellamy Dead," *Cherryvale (KS) Republican*, April 1, 1915, 1; "Cherryvale Boy Wrote Flag Pledge," *Fredonia (KS) Daily Herald*, April 27, 1917, 4.

[37] "The Pledge to the Flag," *Youth's Companion*, December 20, 1917, 722; "James B. Upham Dead," *Boston Daily Globe*, November 27, 1905, 5; "Cherryvale Boy Not Author," *Coffeyville (KS) Weekly Journal*, June 5, 1919, 4; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 56–57.

[38] The only claim tying Frank Bellamy to the 1890 *Youth's Companion* contest was made by an acquaintance in 1957, who recounted that Frank said he won the contest, which was false, as well a $25 prize, which was not offered. "The Flag and the Public Schools," *Youth's Companion*, January 9, 1890, 31; "Stars and Stripes!" *Clay Center (KS) Dispatch*, May 22, 1890, 1; "Former Cherryvalian Author Of Flag Allegiance, Says His Old Friend," *Cherryvale (KS) Republican*, March 21, 1957 in Joyce Long, *Be The Jury! Be The Judge!- Who Wrote the Pledge of Allegiance* (n.p. :Long Publishing, 2012), 40.

[39] A version of Francis Bellamy's 1928 account was published in the University of Rochester Library Bulletin in 1953. Francis Bellamy, "The Story of The Pledge of Allegiance to The Flag," University of Rochester Library Bulletin (Winter 1953), https://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/3418; "The Flag Pledge in Common Use," *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1928, A18; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 25.

[40] "Tells How Mate Wrote Pledge of Allegiance," *Daily Boston Globe*, August 30, 1931, A2.

historians, which concluded in 1939 that Francis Bellamy was the author, a finding later affirmed by the Library of Congress in 1957.[41]

However, in 2022, the etymologist Barry Popik discovered a newspaper article which indicates that the text of the Pledge predated all three men's accounts.[42] In April 1892, four months before Upham and Francis Bellamy's accounts claimed the Pledge was written, public schools in Victoria, Kansas conducted flag exercises in which students recited a nearly exact version of the Pledge and saluted the flag in a similar fashion to the Bellamy salute published months later in the *Youth's Companion*.[43] This seriously discredited the claims made in support of Upham or Francis Bellamy that the Pledge was written in Boston in August 1892. While this new evidence strongly supports the claim that the Pledge was written in the state of Kansas, it seems unlikely that Frank Bellamy authored it because he lived nearly three hundred miles away from Victoria and none of the accounts written during his life suggested he wrote it before 1898.[44] Neither Upham nor Francis Bellamy had any apparent ties to Kansas, so it seems plausible that a Kansas student, perhaps Frank Bellamy, sent it to the *Companion* and the magazine used it without attribution, with Upham's family and later Francis concocting elaborate lies to claim authorship for themselves. Regardless of who actually drafted the text of the Pledge, its popularity and acceptance as a patriotic tradition was the collective effort of thousands of enthusiastic nationalists over several decades. The meaning of this and other rituals of everyday nationalism was deliberately socially

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[41] "Job's Daughters' Council Studies Upham Tribute," *Washington Post*, August 25, 1939, 15; "Pledge to U.S. Flag Credited to Bellamy," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 17, 1939, 5; Sam Roberts, "We Know the Pledge. Its Author, Maybe Not," *New York Times*, April 2, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/us/pledge-of-allegiance-francis-bellamy.html.

[42] Barry Popik, interview by author, April 6, 2022; Roberts, "We Know the Pledge."

[43] "Doings in Victoria," *Ellis County News Republican (*Hays, KS*)*, May 21, 1892, 4.

[44] Based on newspaper articles detailing his parents' locations in 1890 and 1892, Frank Bellamy lived in Girard and Cherryvale, Kansas respectively, both around 300 miles from Victoria, Kansas on modern interstate highways. "Missionary Convocation," *Pittsburg (KS) Daily Smelter*, May 14, 1890, 4; "Local News," *Western Herald* (Girard, KS), April 9, 1892, 3.

constructed over time. This meaning was not only contested by different parties as a proxy for contesting American national identity, but the origin of this tradition itself was contested.

The earliest groups in the Nationalist Network were hereditary organizations, which required prospective members to provide documentation proving that their ancestor had a connection to a particular historical event or era. These eras typically predated the abolition of slavery or mass immigration from Ireland and continental Europe, forming organizations comprised mainly of white Protestant Christians with British heritage and the generational wealth necessary to preserve such documentation, and excluding Americans whose ancestors were enslaved. After discovering that the Sons of the American Revolution, founded in 1889 for descendants of Continental Army soldiers and officers or members of the Continental Congress, would not permit women to join, several clubwomen in Washington, DC formed the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1890.[45] A similar but smaller group in the Network, the Daughters of 1812, formed in 1892 for female descendants of American soldiers in the War of 1812. This borderline aristocratic impulse to define American identity according to documented bloodlines not only excluded most Black women and descendants of 19th-century immigrants from membership in hereditary organizations but excluded them from truly belonging to their nation's history.

The DAR, comprised of hundreds of local chapters and state organizations beholden to the leadership of its national society, operated like other women's clubs of the era by conducting charity and education work. The national society formed dozens of committees to organize various initiatives, from historical preservation to preventing desecration of the

[45] The SAR was less active in the Nationalist Network than the DAR, in part because the upper middle-class women of the DAR did not have jobs and employed domestic workers to perform childcare and homemaking duties, leaving them with a significant amount of free time to devote to social and charitable clubs. Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 16–17.

American flag to publishing a monthly magazine. Many of these initiatives entailed using everyday nationalism to spread patriotic feeling, including donating flags to public schools and local government buildings.[46] Core to the DAR's mission was promoting its interpretation of US history through educational outreach to schools and Americanization programs for immigrants. Some women's groups, particularly southern organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy (founded in 1894), viewed history as a propaganda tool to reinforce white supremacy by spreading false ideas like Lost Cause ideology.[47] The DAR, which was also popular in the South, similarly manipulated historical memory to reinforce existing socioeconomic and racial hierarchies by centering the American Revolution rather than the Civil War as the most consequential event of US history. While the organization asserted that scholars typically overlooked the role of women in history, its efforts to elevate female heroes of the Revolution belied its regressive ideas about women's contemporary role in society, namely that women should primarily wield influence as wives and mothers.[48] Although the DAR aimed to spread its version of nationalism to all Americans, its leaders and members did not believe that all Americans were equally entitled to their national identity or to decide what it meant to be American.

Along with hereditary groups, veterans' organizations formed the backbone of the Nationalist Network. Although the Grand Army of the Republic continued its work promoting patriotic traditions into the first few decades of the twentieth century, the 1890s marked a new era for how Americans, veterans and non-veterans alike, conceived of the legacy of American servicemembers. Like the GAR, veterans' groups founded before the Spanish-American War typically represented soldiers of one particular war. The Veterans of

[46] "Annual Reports of State Regents," *America Monthly Magazine*, May 1899, 1043, 1057, 1102, 1147.
[47] Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 18–21.
[48] Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 6–7.

Foreign Wars was formed in 1899 by a group of American soldiers who fought in Cuba to lobby for aid and support to veterans, particularly the disabled, and then welcomed veterans of World War I in the 1910s and grew substantially.[49] It was during the interwar era of 1919-1939 that the VFW made the promotion of everyday nationalism part of its platform, picking up the mantle from other groups in the Nationalist Network to successfully lobby Congress to declare "The Star-Spangled Banner" the national anthem in 1931 (see Chapter 2). While the more working-class VFW faced a new rival in the American Legion, founded in 1919 by Theodore Roosevelt Jr. and other well-connected young officers, the two organizations differed primarily in the way they publicly presented themselves. Both groups, along with the Daughters of the American Revolution, became the most influential in the Network as smaller organizations disappeared and power became centralized in larger organizations. Although the VFW adopted a more antagonistic persona to publicly protest the federal government's veteran policies while the Legion worked more quietly in its lobbying efforts, both organizations were zealously anti-communist and skeptical of the New Deal.[50] The similarities continued in their efforts to promote everyday nationalism, both in collaborating with other groups in the Network and in championing a politically and socially conservative interpretation of American nationalism.

The Nationalist Network emerged at around the same times as the Progressive movement. Both movements were animated by the desire to mold human behavior according to middle-class norms, and while there was some overlap between members of each movement, Progressive organizations were more concerned with enacting substantive

[49] Cody Dodge Ewert, "Veterans of Foreign Wars," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of War: Social Science Perspectives* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2017), 1793–1795, https://sk.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-war-social-science-perspectives/i18904.xml.
[50] Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill*, 4–7.

policy changes while nationalist groups of the era generally shied away from controversial political issues. As Progressive women's clubs gave their members the opportunity to participate in civic life as social reformers, nationalist groups like the DAR also entered new arenas of patriotic work by the 1900s.[51] In an address to the Progressive-leaning General Federation of Women's Clubs, DAR leader Charlotte Emerson Main described civil service reform not only as a moral good but as "true patriotism" and part of the duty of clubwomen to use "their influence to place in our municipal offices, men of high ideals, and unquestioned integrity."[52] Progressive and nationalist organizations both sponsored Americanization programs for immigrants, driven by the conviction that teaching immigrants to speak, think, and behave like middle-class white Americans would alleviate the material obstacles they faced. The DAR was particularly engaged in Americanization work in this period, holding English and citizenship classes, publishing a citizenship manual, and donating flags to schools and public spaces in an effort to promote everyday nationalism.[53]

By the 1910s, the DAR expanded the scope of its Americanization programs to include not only immigrants but also American-born children of what the DAR called the Southern Mountaineers of the Appalachians. Because of their poverty and lack of access to education, the DAR's Patriotic Education Committee took a special interest in funding schools "to bring the light of Christian civilization" to Southern Mountain children, "these pure American citizens, many of whom are of excellent Revolutionary ancestry."[54] Despite acknowledged similarities in ethnicity, ancestry, and citizenship, the noble but uncivilized

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[51] Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87–88.
[52] Charlotte Emerson Main, "Patriotism in Civil Service Reform," 362, 1908, GFWC Official Reports 1904, 1906, 1908, Women's History Resource Center, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Washington, DC.
[53] Edith Darlington Ammon, "Report of the Committee on Patriotic Education," 105-109, 1910, Proceedings of the 19th Continental Congress N.S.D.A.R. 1910, NSDAR Archives.
[54] "Report of the National Committee on Patriotic Education," 1217-1219, Proceedings of the 23rd Continental Congress N.S.D.A.R. 1914, NSDAR Archives.

Southern Mountaineers needed patriotic education from the women of the DAR in order to fully become Americans.[55] Race, ethnicity, religion, and country of origin were not the only factors the DAR used to disqualify people from American national identity; class, particularly the rural poverty of the Southern Mountaineers so exotic to the upper middle-class women of the DAR, could selectively be applied as well. The Southern Mountain Schools were an extreme case of the DAR's efforts to Americanize Americans but reflected the society's commitment to imposing its elitist ideas of national identity.

Few politicians melded Progressivism and nationalism as effectively as Theodore Roosevelt. In his New Nationalism speech in 1910, Roosevelt proposed a number of liberal reforms, from regulation of corporations to strengthening workers' rights, and framed them in nationalistic terms. Conservation was more than just the sensible preservation of resources, Roosevelt said, but also "the patriotic duty of insuring [sic] the safety and continuance of the nation."[56] Roosevelt also lauded the Grand Army of the Republic in the speech and sincerely believed in the work of the Network to promote patriotic traditions and symbols; as New York governor, he served as vice president of the American Flag Association, which lobbied for laws outlawing flag desecration.[57] When Roosevelt ran for president in 1912 as leader of the Progressive Party, he ran on much of the platform outlined in the New Nationalism speech but demonstrated his belief that certain Americans were not entitled to full rights of citizenship, the truest manifestation of their American identity, by supporting white segregationists' efforts to deny Black delegates entry to the party's convention.[58] Roosevelt also perpetuated the notion that immigrants inherently posed a

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[55] Edith Darlington Ammon, "Report of National Committee on Patriotic Education," 614-615, Proceedings of the 20th Continental Congress N.S.D.A.R. 1911, NSDAR Archives.
[56] Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism* (New York: Outlook Company, 1911), 22.
[57] "American Flag Association Meets," *New York Times*, June 15, 1899, 5; Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism*, 6–7.
[58] Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, 75–76.

threat to the United States unless they completely abandoned their language and culture. The day before Roosevelt died in 1919, he wrote a letter to the anti-communist American Defense Society calling for "the complete Americanization of our people" and insisting, "Any man who says he is American, but something else also, isn't an American at all."[59]

Roosevelt's sentiment echoed the prominent cultural belief, propagated by hereditary nationalist organizations for years but reified by the fervor of World War I, that the ethnic identities of non-Anglo immigrants and their descendants posed an existential threat to the United States.[60] Those with identifiable German ancestry bore the brunt of harassment from government officials and sometimes violence from vigilantes, but anyone perceived as having divided loyalties faced legal repercussions and social ostracization. This study examines how traditions created and popularized by the Nationalist Network functioned as de facto loyalty tests, as seen in the case of the Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Karl Muck, whose criticism of "The Star-Spangled Banner" likely contributed to his deportation. Because participating in public rituals of everyday nationalism came to be seen as contributing to the war effort, World War I validated and reinforced much of the Network's work of previous decades. Although many Americans would question the continued use of rituals and symbols after 1918, the war's validation of nationalism marked an important step in normalizing everyday nationalism.

World War I also saw the widespread proliferation and mobilization of voluntary associations to contribute to the war effort, both materially and psychologically. As Christopher Capozzola argues, the war marked the apex of civic voluntarism in the United States, with clubs, churches, schools, and labor unions asserting the authority to regulate

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[59] American Defense Society, "'America Day" Meeting," May 18, 1919, Box 12, Folder 11, American Defense Society Records, New-York Historical Society.
[60] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 237.

communities and public life while also collaborating with the state to develop institutions which would continue these functions after the war. Some organizations in the Nationalist Network participated in material wartime mobilization, with the DAR lauding its members who served as nurses and claiming its members made over one hundred million dollars in war investments, including thirty-seven million dollars buying or selling Liberty Loans.[61] Still, the Network's most influential contribution to civic voluntarism was likely its standards for everyday nationalism and the framework for policing the public performance of patriotism. Wartime voluntary organizations and even individuals adopted this practice of shaming and harassing those who declined to participate in the rituals of everyday nationalism.[62] These voluntary associations should be considered part of the Network because they contributed to the culture of compulsory, performative patriotism which extended beyond World War I.

The fear of foreign influence extended beyond the harassment and persecution of those with perceived foreign ties. The racist belief that African Americans were not naturally patriotic contributed to the conspiracy theory that civil rights advocacy during the war was part of a plot by Germany to sow disunity in the United States, which very likely contributed to the racist violence toward Black people during and after the war, most viciously during the Red Summer of 1919.[63] With the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks' ascent to power in Russia, many viewed leftist and even liberal ideologies as radical and un-American, their fears stoked by government and business leaders' concerted efforts to silence and

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[61] "Report of the War Work of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution during the Great World War from August 14, 1914-November 11, 1918," 7-13, 1919, Box 4, Folder 19, Printed Material Collection, 1895-2008, NSDAR Archives.
[62] "Pastor Ducked by Boys," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1918, 4; "The Flag," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 23, 1918, 3; "Fined for Not Removing Hat," *Chicago Defender*, September 21, 1918, 1.
[63] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 231–232.

stigmatize those who criticized economic inequality, both during the war and the First Red Scare.

Many groups in the Nationalist Network waged their own campaigns that lasted into the 1920s, blurring the lines between anti-communism, white supremacy, and nativism by labeling those who criticized those beliefs as un-American.[64] Chapter 1 of this dissertation examines how the Network proposed and enforced standardized ways of performing patriotism from 1923 to 1931. There remained a few smaller groups in the Network, but by the 1920s, most of its power was centralized in organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution and American Legion. The primarily right-wing leadership of these groups viewed the enforcement of everyday nationalism as an important front in the war against the omnipresent threat of un-American individuals and ideologies. As the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 significantly decreased immigration to the United States, the Network refocused much of the energy it had spent on Americanizing immigrants to Americanizing their fellow citizens who, for reasons of race, class, or political persuasion, they viewed as compromised in their patriotism. The chapter examines two efforts to regulate how people viewed the American flag, first with the Network's National Flag Conference, which devised a standard code of conduct governing how Americans interacted with the flag, then with the Living Flag Movement, which aimed to convince Americans to form a quasi-spiritual relationship with the flag. The NFC's Flag Code was widely embraced and eventually incorporated into US Code by Congress in 1942, and although the Living Flag Movement fizzled out in the 1930s, it revealed the Network's increased intensity and experimentation as it faced the perceived dangers of the 1920s.

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[64] Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 5–6, 152-53; O'Leary, *To Die For*, 242–45.

The next chapter focuses on the case study of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which rose from being one of several popular patriotic songs in the late nineteenth century to become the official national anthem in 1931 due to the efforts of the Nationalist Network. The song was hardly an obvious choice for a national anthem, receiving significant public criticism of its unsuitability based on its questionable origins and complicated lyrics. This chapter considers how the decidedly martial "Banner" represented the ideology the Network wished to advance and how groups outside of the Network both modernized the song and created new anthems which better represented their values, most notably "Lift Every Voice and Sing." "Banner" serves as perhaps the clearest case study of how the Network created patriotic traditions. Its journey to become the national anthem illustrates that it took decades of effort by a small but dedicated coalition to popularize a patriotic tradition and have those efforts validated by the state, and that even long-lasting traditions faced considerable resistance and were subject to revision and reinterpretation.

The ideology of the Nationalist Network swung back toward the center and left in the 1930s, due in part to the crisis of the Great Depression and efforts by moderates and liberals to wrest control from right-wingers. American nationalism was more hotly contested along openly ideological lines in the 1930s than it was previously or subsequently, with liberals and even some leftists boldly asserting that their values were American values. Chapter 3 explores how near economic collapse expanded opportunities for new voices, particularly from outside the typical demographics of the Network, to participate in the production of patriotic culture, most notably through the rise of left-wing nationalism shepherded by the New Deal's arts programs. This chapter focuses on the Federal Theatre Project because its impact was measurable and vast – forty million Americans attended FTP productions – and because its leaders explicitly argued that its anti-fascist, pro-labor, and

anti-racist values were fundamentally American. This marked the boldest assertion of left-wing nationalism since the creation of the Network. The FTP existed both as part of the Popular Front and Nationalist Network, often collaborating with otherwise conservative-leaning nationalist organizations to advance an unapologetically inclusive vision of American national identity. Still, some conservatives in the Network feared that the New Deal would lead to authoritarianism. The National Re-Dedication coalition, led by New Deal skeptics, emerged in the late 1930s and used the techniques of everyday nationalism to educate Americans about democratic government and the threat both fascism and communism posed to individual liberties. National Re-Dedication was relatively short-lived but represented the tension right-wing nationalists felt during the Roosevelt administration, their purported belief in US democracy challenged by the enduring popularity of a liberal president.

Finally, Chapter 4 confronts the reemergence of right-wing ideology in the guise of anti-communism within the Nationalist Network before and after the United States' participation in World War II. While some in the Network embraced radical right-wing beliefs in the 1920s, some frustrated anti-New Dealers collaborated with Nazi agents and sympathizers as members of isolationist organizations like the America First Committee and American Coalition of Patriotic Societies in order to undermine their democratically-elected president. Those efforts were interrupted when the United States joined the war but resumed in the mid-1940s as anti-internationalists, who continued even after FDR's death to portray any liberals or centrists in government as communist and thus un-American, dominated the intellectual output of the Network. Authorities within the government and Network not only failed to marginalize these extremists but tolerated or endorsed their paranoid, anti-democratic propaganda, with the US Navy collaborating with the ACPS and

the DAR in publishing radical right-wing conspiracy theories in its magazine. The early 1950s marked the permanent transformation of the Nationalist Network from its origins as a relatively broad ideological coalition with a somewhat inclusive vision of American national identity into a dedicated organ for right-wing interests seeking to exclude most Americans from truly belonging to the nation, using patriotic rituals, language, and symbols to camouflage their radical beliefs.

Chapter 1:

"We Have No Intent to Forcibly Make Patriots:"

Conformist Nationalism, 1923-1931

After the upheaval of World War I and the First Red Scare, the organizations of the Nationalist Network sought to ensure conformity in the ways Americans performed patriotism.[65] Their various campaigns between 1923 and 1931 reflected the contradictions of the era. Peacetime economic prosperity was only guaranteed to a few; workers lost bargaining power as big business argued that unions were un-American communist fronts. Black musicians and the immigrant songwriters of Tin Pan Alley created the popular music of the Jazz Age, yet the racist terrorism of the reborn Ku Klux Klan expanded beyond the South in the 1920s, and the U.S. Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 to restrict immigration from outside of northern Europe. This push for conformity according to wealthy, white, native-born standards drove much of American culture and politics in the 1920s, and nationalist leaders embraced it vigorously.

The Nationalist Network saw an opportunity to standardize the way that Americans performed patriotism in this age of conformity, yet these organizations feared that radical leftists were conspiring to create a crisis of loyalty during peacetime. For the Network, the First Red Scare never truly ended; communists lurked around every corner, hell-bent on undermining the American way by targeting citizens whose patriotism was apathetic. To counter this threat, the organizations of the Nationalist Network collaborated on a greater

[65] As explained in the Introduction, the Nationalist Network was a coalition of civic, patriotic, hereditary, and veterans' groups which invented and popularized nationalist traditions between 1890-1950. By incorporating nationalist ritual into daily life (everyday nationalism), the Network influenced how Americans performed and conceived of patriotism throughout the twentieth century. Its leaders were largely upper middle class, white, American-born, Protestant Christian, from the Northeast, and increasingly politically conservative.

scale than ever before to create patriotic rituals for Americans to practice in their daily lives. They popularized these new traditions of everyday nationalism through subtle coercion. Everyday nationalism had been developed earlier, as an extension of immigrant Americanization programs, to teach citizens how to correctly express patriotism in daily life. This impulse to Americanize Americans increased significantly in the 1920s, particularly as the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act decreased the need for the Americanization of immigrants.[66]

This period also marked a turning point in the balance of power within the Nationalist Network. The Network that had emerged in the 1890s was largely decentralized, where small, independent patriotic and civic groups could exercise the same influence in their community as the local chapters of national organizations, which largely operated autonomously. In the 1920s, the Nationalist Network achieved an unprecedented level of cultural influence, but power became concentrated in large groups like the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In turn, large organizations were more likely to request and obtain the endorsement of powerful politicians, which further legitimized the primacy of national organizations. As the Nationalist Network became centralized in the 1920s, fewer voices had a say in creating and spreading patriotic traditions; nationalist leaders then demanded increased conformity in the traditions and rituals Americans used to perform patriotism.[67]

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[66] For the racial nationalism of immigration restriction, see Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. For civil religion and grassroots organizing in the 1920s, see Michael Lienesch, "Contesting Civil Religion: Religious Responses to American Patriotic Nationalism, 1919-1929," *Religion and American Culture* 28, no. 1 (2018): 92–134.

[67] For the rise of the American Legion, see Nehls, "'A Grand and Glorious Feeling.'" For civic voluntarism post-WWI, see Theda Skocpol et al., "Patriotic Partnerships: Why Great Wars Nourished Civic Voluntarism," in *Shaped by War and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Martin Shefter (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002): 151-169. For women's groups and anti-communism, see Kirsten Marie Delegard, *Battling Miss Bolsheviki: The Origins of Female Conservatism in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

This chapter will examine how the Nationalist Network influenced and responded to changes in American society between 1923 and 1931. The proliferation of American flags during World War I continued into the 1920s, with cheaply-made flags hung haphazardly around city neighborhoods and flag imagery printed on packs of cards and cigarettes. Leaders of the American Legion and other nationalist groups feared that the flag would become a mundane and meaningless symbol so they organized the National Flag Conference of 1923 to devise a standard code of conduct for the flag, which would inculcate the ideals it symbolized into the American people. The peace movement, led by internationally-minded women's organizations, challenged the saber-rattling factions of the Nationalist Network. However, the United States Flag Association sought to reconcile the popular call for peace with its Living Flag Movement, which asked Americans to literally embody the flag and to spread the flag's ideals throughout the world. By the late 1920s, global economic depression and rising nationalist movements in Europe threatened to upend the tenuous post-World War I order.

National Flag Conference of 1923 and All-Americanism Conference of 1924

World War I sparked a patriotic fervor in American society that never fully faded away, but in the early 1920s many nationalist organizations feared that the average person no longer respected the American flag as a sacred symbol of national ideals. The image of the flag was everywhere, waved vigorously at parades and hung haphazardly in front of homes and businesses, but did Americans truly understand what it represented? In 1923, Col. Garland W. Powell of the American Legion's National Americanism Commission decided to convene an unprecedentedly large gathering of patriotic, civic, and veterans' groups to create

a set of rules and regulations to ensure that all Americans treated the flag with respect, the Flag Code.[68]

The Nationalist Network first became concerned about flag etiquette in the 1890s. Even before the Spanish-American War in 1898, communities across the country began celebrating June 14 as Flag Day. Local and state chapters of patriotic societies like the Grand Army of the Republic and Daughters of the American Revolution developed their own flag education curricula and lobbied boards of education to adopt them in public schools. Their work continued into the 1910s, aided by Progressive activists eager to inculcate the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism in the hearts of children. Other than the Pledge of Allegiance, the rules of flag rituals and etiquette varied across organizations, even between state and local chapters. Attempts to codify rules against flag desecration by state legislatures did not lead to a national standard. The jingoistic fervor of World War I led Americans to embrace the flag as a unifying symbol, but in the years after the war the Nationalist Network feared that this adoration would fade and leave the country vulnerable to radical foreign ideologies. Therefore, in the 1920s the Network concentrated on cultivating a conformist nationalism and developing rituals and traditions to reinforce it.[69]

Powell called a two-day National Flag Conference (NFC), starting on Flag Day (June 14, 1923) and invited the leaders of thirty patriotic, hereditary, and civic groups, including the Boy Scouts, United Daughters of the Confederacy, General Federation of Women's Clubs, and American Defense Society. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) agreed to host at its Memorial Continental Hall in Washington, DC, a few blocks away from

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[68] The American Legion is a veterans' organization that was part of the Nationalist Network founded after World War I. Its National Americanism Commission sponsored informal patriotic education programs, often explicitly anti-communist.

[69] For flag rituals, legislation, and Flag Day, see also O'Leary, *To Die For*; Ellis, *To the Flag*; Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*.

the White House.[70] The goal of the National Flag Conference was to create a uniform flag code that each of the participating organizations would popularize at the local level by printing literature and hosting flag education events, as well as to curry favor with political leaders who wanted to capitalize on this grassroots flag movement by endorsing and eventually legalizing the Flag Code. The US military already had official rules regulating its use of the flag, which would serve as the basis for the civilian Flag Code. This was the first real effort to create a nationalist tradition for civilians endorsed by the federal government, which not only changed how Americans performed patriotism but marked a shift in the power structure of the Nationalist Network itself.

Richard J. Ellis' *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* contains the authoritative account of the NFC, arguing that the chaos of World War I led nationalist societies, particularly the American Legion, to believe that flag etiquette had become so inconsistent that they needed to create and spread a unified flag code to preserve American values. This dissertation argues that the NFC also marked the beginning of a power shift within the Nationalist Network from a relatively decentralized movement to one in which influence became concentrated among a few large organizations. The American Legion and most of the other large organizations leaned right-wing politically, which aligned popular American nationalism closely with anti-pacifist and anti-communist movements and alienated left-wing groups from the Network. This marked the true beginning of right-wing dominance of American nationalism in the twentieth century. Additionally, this dissertation argues that the American Legion took full control as keepers of the Flag Code when it absorbed the NFC into the Legion's All-American Conference (AAC) in 1924, the following year. The AAC was a larger gathering of patriotic organizations with the explicit mission of

[70] "Conference to Fix Civilian Flag Code," *Washington Post*, June 11, 1923, 8.

developing an Americanization program for citizens who did not perform patriotism according to upper-class white norms. This distinction matters because it places the issue of flag etiquette directly under the control of the Legion and within its Americanization movement, particularly the desire to Americanize American citizens, which is lost in traditional interpretations of the NFC.[71]

Two weeks before the National Flag Conference, Washington, DC became embroiled in a local flag controversy which conference leaders used to underscore the urgency of adopting a civilian flag code. Across the District, businesses and government agencies decorated buildings and streets with grandiose displays of American flags and bunting for the Shrine Convention, which brought three hundred thousand Shriners to town.[72] NFC delegate Mrs. William Wolff Smith of the DAR's Correct Use of the Flag Committee and members of the Women's Army and Navy League, American Women's Legion, and Women's Relief Corps, as well as representatives from the War Department, sent a letter to local officials and the press outlining various offenses, such as the Treasury Department and the Post Office twisting the flag in knots and letting it fall to the ground. The nation's capital should set an example in demonstrating respect for the flag, Mrs. Smith argued. This "sin of ignorance rather than deliberate desecration," as Isabel Worrell Ball of the Women's Relief Corps put it, could be avoided in the future if all Americans were taught how to respect the flag. Local government officials and the Shriners publicly apologized and press coverage of the controversy agreed that such unpleasantness could be avoided with a uniform flag code.[73]

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[71] Ellis, *To the Flag*, 58–67.
[72] The Shriners are an international Masonic fraternal society, not part of the Nationalist Network.
[73] "Protest by Citizens on Misuse of Flag," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1923, 1; "Flag Plea Heeded by City Committee," *Washington Post*, June 2, 1923, 1; "Conference to Fix," 8.

On June 14, Powell convened the National Flag Conference, welcoming approximately one hundred fifty delegates representing thirty civic, hereditary, and veterans' organizations and introducing Pres. Warren G. Harding to deliver the first speech of the event.[74] "That is an Americanization task," said Harding of the goal to create a flag code, "that is a patriotic task; that is the task of good citizenship."[75] This notion of using the Flag Code as an Americanization tool was a common refrain throughout the NFC, that civic organizations could teach all citizens to show their love of country and perform patriotism in the same ways as the elites who gave themselves permission to write the rules of flag etiquette.

If Americans felt like they could wave a flag on holidays and then forget the values the flag stood for the rest of the year, "that is not worth a hill of beans," Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt Jr. said in his address. The spiritual and political health of the nation was doomed if citizens did not feel or express national pride in their daily lives. The purpose of the NFC was "to translate the ideals of the flag into the very life of humanity," said Roosevelt, into the flag's "ordinary every day relation with the community" through the creation and popularization of a universal flag code.[76] Roosevelt articulated the need for everyday nationalism and for NFC delegates to invent a standardized way for Americans to perform patriotism, at least when it came to the flag. As the son of a president who keenly mythologized his own love of country, Theodore Roosevelt Jr. understood how a group of influential individuals could build a broader political and cultural movement.

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[74] According to Powell, sixty-eight organization attended the NFC but only thirty are listed in the official transcript and roll call. Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930–1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 6–8. "Proceedings of the National Flag Conference," June 1923, 1, Folder 1, Box 1, National Flag Conference Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. This collection will be referenced as NFC Records.
[75] "Proceedings," 5, NFC Records.
[76] "Proceedings," 53, NFC Records.

Within the historical literature, Americanization has typically been associated with immigrants, but few NFC speakers mentioned Americanizing immigrants, besides American Federation of Labor president Samuel Gompers.[77] The conference was far more concerned with the civic education of American-born adults and children. For adult citizens, the NFC was concerned that they were vulnerable to radicalism, a fear that clearly had not ended with the First Red Scare three years earlier. In his address, Assistant Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis chided the lack of federal law regulating flag usage as leading to apathy among the populace, which left the door open to Bolshevism, anarchism, and all manner of foreign ideologies. Davis declared that the civic organizations at the NFC were "the sole agencies for conducting that intensive educational campaign essential for the correction of this deplorable attitude."[78] This was not merely about paradegoers neglecting to salute the flag at the Shrine Convention; the very nature of American democracy was at stake. The threat was less about the immigration of people than the spread of un-American ideologies, and in 1923 the NFC delegates had the power and privilege to define what was un-American.

American exceptionalism was a common theme at the NFC. Speakers argued that Americanism was nothing like the belligerent nationalisms of Europe that had caused a world war in which the United States was forced to intervene. The Germans had displayed an "egotistic, aggressive" nationalism under the Kaiser, US Commissioner of Education John J. Tigert said, which provoked war, as certain national ideologies were prone to do. American nationalism was different because it was based on ideals. "I do not believe that

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[77] See Russell A. Kazal, "Revisting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (1995): 437–71; Gary Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (1997): 524–558; Michael R. Olneck, "Assimilation and American National Identity," in *Assimilation and American National Identity: A Companion to American Immigration,* Ed. Reed Ueda. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 202–24.
[78] "Proceedings," 24, NFC Records

there is a single thing in our flag that does not stand for honor, justice and righteousness," said Tigert. The American flag embodied these lofty ideals, in contrast to Europeans flags founded on ethnic identity and dying monarchies. Quoting Gen. John Adams Dix's decree, during the Civil War, to shoot anyone who tried to take down the American flag "on the spot," Tigert said that growing criticism of the display of the American flag in public life would "prove detrimental" to the survival of these ideals.[79] Although Tigert's intent was likely hyperbolic, this revealed the contradictions and circular logic of American nationalism. The United States was a uniquely peaceful nation built on ideals of citizenship, unless you were a person of color trying to survive in the Jim Crow South or a colonized overseas territory. Citizenship and the ideals that the flag stood for, it went without saying, was for white Americans.

Tigert's insistence that criticism of the flag was on the rise in 1923 reflected the anxieties shared by many in the Nationalist Network more than reality. It was more common to see articles in major newspapers about individuals challenging the omnipresence of the American flag during the 1910s than the 1920s, especially documenting the backlash by nationalist groups or legal authorities during World War I. Tigert seemed to imply that there was a concerted effort by un-American forces to remove the flag from public life. In reality, the opposite was true, exemplified by the NFC itself. The only shadowy cabal conspiring to use the flag as a means to impose its ideology on the American people was the Network itself. In the rare instance when an individual received public attention for protesting the flag for communist or internationalist principles, the Network would use that incident to fundraise and justify its patriotic education campaigns.[80] The problem with nationalism in the

[79] "Proceedings," 91-92, NFC Records.
[80] The DAR, in particular, got a lot of traction from misrepresenting a 1927 incident in which a 13-year-old Russian immigrant girl refused to salute the American flag, saying, "My flag is the workingman's flag." When

1920s was not a coordinated conspiracy against it but the perception among leaders of the Network that there was.

R. M. Whitney, representing the American Defense Society, argued that loyal citizens should fight for the flag in all aspects of public life.[81] The year before he published his dubiously-sourced exposé *Reds in America*, Whitney spoke to the NFC of an incident at Boston's Symphony Hall in 1922 when a World War I veteran stormed the stage during a speech calling for the recognition of the Soviet Union by Sen. William E. Borah (R-Idaho). The veteran caused a riot when he asked why there was no flag on the stage; according to Whitney, "always on such occasions" that the American flag was absent, there was a communist sentiment "which must be disposed of by loyal American citizens."[82] Contemporary newspaper accounts suggest that the veteran actually failed to incite a riot and Borah handled the situation by remarking that "wherever I stand or speak the principles for which the American flag stands will be found."[83] Whitney represented the more radical wing at the NFC, for whom the physical absence of the flag indicated an imminent threat to the American way of life. Whitney's radical nationalist impulse, to interpret the flag as a literal shield against communism and its absence as an attack on America, was perhaps more ideologically extreme than most of the views shared at the NFC, but Whitney received applause nonetheless.

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the DAR's National Defense Committee included it in their own literature, they neglected to mention that the girl apologized after a lecture by the principal and then volunteered to carry the flag at the next school assembly. "Pupils Cheer as Russian Girl Carries Flag to Make Amends for Refusal to Salute It," *New York Times*, November 24, 1927, 25; Flora A. Walker, "Americanism Versus Internationalism," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, July 1928, 434.

[81] The American Defense Society was a militaristic and anti-communist group in the Nationalist Network.

[82] "Proceedings," 75-76, NFC Records.

[83] "Borah Sees War if We Don't Recognize Russia, " *New York Times*, December 3, 1922, 2; "Recognize Russia for Trade, Borah Urges," *Boston Daily Globe*, December 3, 1922, 1.

Although the NFC was held under the official auspices of the men of the American Legion, women played a prominent role in the crafting of the Flag Code. Thirty-one of the delegates were women, representing hereditary organizations like the DAR, Daughters of 1812, and United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as social service organizations, parent-teacher associations, and the women's auxiliaries of veterans' groups.[84] Several women were selected to serve on the committee that wrote the flag code itself, yet there was an underlying tension regarding gender and the flag.

The Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women's suffrage had only been ratified three years earlier (specifically white women's suffrage, as most women of color were effectively disenfranchised by racist voting laws). Nevertheless, the women delegates of the NFC still had to justify their own presence in the DAR's Memorial Continental Hall. The American flag was a symbol of the nation's largest male-dominated institutions, the government and military, but as Mrs. John W. Frizzell of the General Federation of Women's Clubs stated, the flag itself was created by Betsy Ross.[85] As mothers and teachers, women served a unique role in teaching patriotism to future generations. Yet, Mrs. Frizzell continued, earlier military flag codes only instructed male soldiers to salute the flag and male civilians to remove their hats, leaving women confused as to how they should show respect. The NFC ultimately included a provision in its Flag Code that women should stand when the flag was raised and lowered or when it passed by in a parade.[86] By insisting on their

[84] The official roll call of delegates lists fewer, but the conference transcript includes several women who were not included in the roll call, including Lora Haines Cook of the DAR who served as NFC chairman on Day Two in Powell's absence. "Proceedings," 10-13, 56, NFC Records. Hereditary organizations are nationalist organizations whose membership can trace their ancestry to notable historical events (e.g., the DAR's members are descended from soldiers in the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy are descended from Confederate soldiers, etc.).

[85] The General Federation of Women's Clubs is an umbrella organization of civic service clubs founded in the Progressive Era.

[86] "Proceedings," 37-39, NFC Records; "New Code Offered for Use of Flag," *New York Times*, June 17, 1923, 1.

inclusion in the Flag Code, the women of the NFC helped legitimize women's roles in the public performance of patriotism. Women were now negotiating a place for themselves within the Flag Code.

The delegates of the NFC placed a special emphasis on teaching the Flag Code to schoolchildren not only as part of civic education curriculum, but in the everyday routine of the school day. They saw public schools, which were funded by local taxpayers and run by elected school boards, as fertile sites for the cultivation of patriotism by civic-minded activists. Children were not only more impressionable than adults but they could influence their immigrant or leftist parents, as Ella Houck Holloway of the Daughters of 1812 noted in her address at the conference.[87] Flag ceremonies had been popularized by the Schoolhouse Flag Movement of the 1890s, but rituals often varied from school to school, so the NFC believed it necessary to include the Pledge of Allegiance in its flag code. The conference even voted to change the text of the pledge from "my flag" to "the flag of the United States" in the pamphlets and literature it printed as part of their educational initiative, to avoid any ambiguity for immigrant or first-generation American children about where their loyalty should lie. This change would become so widely adopted that when Congress passed the Flag Code into law in 1942, this wording was used. As was often the case with everyday nationalism in the early twentieth century, organizations that lacked official authority but had political or social power could alter or build upon existing traditions to suit their ideas about how patriotism should be performed.[88]

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[87] See Chapter 2 for Ella Houck Holloway's role in recognizing "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the National Anthem.

[88] "Proceedings," 78-79, NFC Records. In 1924, the NFC edited the phrase again to read "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America," which was the version adopted by Congress: *Joint Resolution To codify and emphasize existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America*, Public Law 77-623, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 56 (1942): 380.

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance was not enough; some representatives at NFC felt that schoolchildren must literally embody the American flag. Mrs. Charles B. Nelcamp, a member of the DAR and prominent flag code campaigner, spoke fondly of organizing thirteen hundred schoolchildren to form a human flag at the 13th Regiment Armory in Brooklyn, NY.[89] While such pageantry was clearly impractical to enact as part of children's everyday lives, the NFC valued even more extreme expressions of flag devotion by young Americans. It unanimously passed a resolution honoring a sixteen-year-old named Max Davis, who days earlier had lost three fingers on his right hand rescuing a flag from desecration. Davis' "conduct and sacrifice [had] brought him into American manhood before he…reached the age of American citizenship."[90] The NFC vowed to take measures to enact their flag code to prevent other children from having to make such sacrifices to protect the flag. Conference attendees believed so strongly in the sanctity of this piece of textile fabric that a young person's permanent disfigurement was not a horrific and unnecessary tragedy but the apotheosis of his journey to American manhood.

Why were NFC attendees so eager for schoolchildren to physically demonstrate their devotion to the American flag? The 1920s were a significant period in the development of civil religion in the United States, when religious leaders often collaborated with nationalist organizations to make patriotic rituals part of everyday life.[91] The Flag Code eventually adopted required no physical flag ritual beyond the salute during the Pledge of Allegiance, which was first enacted during the Schoolhouse Flag Movement of the 1890s, but discussions at the NFC marked a shift between the old and new ways of embodying the flag. It was now expected that Americans must uphold the values of the flag and to salute the

[89] "Proceedings," 44, NFC Records.
[90] "Proceedings," 105, NFC Records.
[91] Lienesch, "Contesting Civil Religion," 95-97.

object itself, but the valorization of physical sacrifice for the flag emerged in the 1920s. Later campaigns in the 1920s, like the United States Flag Association's Living Flag Movement, which will be discussed later in this chapter, would continue to emphasize the significance of the flag as a sacred object in itself rather than as a symbol of national values.

Before they could actually devise the Flag Code, the NFC discussed the problem of how to popularize proper flag etiquette. As a speaker named Mrs. Cunningham stated, "We have no intent [to] forcibly make patriots."[92] Many of the organizations at the NFC had long been active in promoting everyday nationalism and their representatives expressed the importance of creating a simple code of flag etiquette that Americans could easily and eagerly adopt as part of their daily lives. The NFC thus passed a resolution to lobby state legislatures to require the display of the American flag in public schools and government buildings, as well as over public parks and playgrounds. Most states already had such laws but the NFC explicitly stated that such flags should be furnished by public funds rather than the largesse of private citizens and nationalist organizations.[93] This marked a noteworthy change from the Schoolhouse Flag Movement of the 1890s, where fundraising was part of the process of cultivating patriotism in schoolchildren. By the 1920s, the leading nationalist societies at the NFC believed that state governments should provide flags for display not only in public schools, but in all public spaces funded by taxpayers. The Network was officially calling on the state to fund and enforce flag symbolism and rituals as part of everyday nationalism.

Race was never explicitly discussed at the NFC but racist organizations in the Nationalist Network often used the American flag to reinforce their agenda of white

[92] "Proceedings," 69, NFC Records
[93] "Proceedings," 106, NFC Records.

supremacy. Even as more states and local communities used public funds to pay for flags in public spaces, in the 1920s some nationalist groups insisted on "donating" flags to public schools to show their power and generate publicity. In 1926, the Daughters of America, a nativist anti-Catholic group that was part of the NFC, joined with the Junior Order of United American Mechanics and Ku Klux Klan to donate an American flag to a Maryland high school.[94] Five hundred members of the three organizations marched to the school but administrators refused to accept the flag; they tried to pull the flagpole rope out of reach but the marchers grabbed hold of it and raised the flag anyway.[95] Operating alone, in 1927 the KKK also tried to donate a flag and a Bible to a Black public school in Hall's Hill, Virginia, allegedly to win votes for Klan-backed candidates in a community founded as an enclave for freedmen. The school already flew an American flag on its flagpole. Community leaders wrote an open letter condemning the stunt and the audacity of the KKK, originally founded by Confederates, to appropriate the United States flag: "That is the flag that freed 4,000,000 slaves; snatched them from the slave pens and auction blocks and made them men and women. Your order seeks to undo what that flag has done."[96] For all the NFC's efforts to create a unified flag code acceptable to the state, the same flag fervor that inspired their conference also animated racist nationalist groups years later. White supremacy was not inconsistent with the NFC's nationalism; groups like the Daughters of America and United

[94] The Daughters of America was the women's auxiliary of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, an anti-immigrant, Protestant-only fraternal order. Both of these organizations openly collaborated with other groups in the Nationalist Network throughout the early twentieth century. However, this dissertation does not consider the Ku Klux Klan part of the Nationalist Network. While the KKK pursued an aggressive campaign of white supremacist nationalism in the 1920s, they did not significantly collaborate with other organizations in the Nationalist Network. The KKK was therefore a nationalist organization that largely operated outside of the Nationalist Network.

[95] "Klan Party of 500 Bearing Gift Flag, Meet with Rebuff," *Washington Post*, May 24, 1926, 1.

[96] "Virginians Send Klan Sensational Letter," *Chicago Defender*, October 29, 1927, A1.

Daughters of the Confederacy mingled in Memorial Continental Hall, the whites-only site of the conference.

NFC organizers were also keenly aware of how new technologies could advance their goals. Motion pictures were an ideal medium for showing proper flag etiquette to the public in a more compelling way than simply handing them a rulebook. Throughout the 1920s, however, the film industry came under fire from conservative Catholic leaders for depicting what they considered lewd content. In an act of self-preservation, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) would enact the Production Code in 1930 to censor the films produced by the major studios, forbidding scenes of same-sex or interracial romance as well as politically controversial content.[97]

Jason Joy, who would eventually be in charge of enforcing the Production Code, represented the MPPDA at the NFC in 1923. In his address to the conference, Joy agreed with its mission and pledged to use the MPPDA's influence to encourage film studios to produce patriotic motion pictures that depicted the American flag respectfully. Joy then stated that the film industry would "carry this message in a beautiful, dignified way" to "the 20,000,000 people in the United States who see motion pictures every day."[98] The MPPDA would include a provision banning disrespectful depictions of the flag in its 1930 Production Code; by the time the code was abandoned in the 1950s, patriotic themes and imagery had become an integral part of the language of American filmmaking. For much of the twentieth century, hundreds of millions of moviegoers, not only in the U.S. but around the world,

[97] Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood*, 6-8.
[98] "Proceedings," 82-83, NFC Records. Joy may have exaggerated the American filmgoing public; a more reliable figure is forty million attendees per week, see LeRoy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture Since 1830* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 186.

were exposed to Hollywood films that largely extolled traditional American values, expressed in shorthand by the image of the American flag.[99]

The NFC took a very different stance against the use of the American flag in commercial advertising. Since the 1890s, nationalist organizations had expressed concerns that businesses were exploiting and cheapening American patriotism by putting flag imagery on products like candy bars and playing cards. This fear reached a head in the consumerist 1920s. Earl Pearson, representing the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, proposed abolishing the use of the flag in advertising and on product packaging, which his organization could enforce among its thirty-thousand members. The government recognized that it was a crime to infringe on trademarks in advertising, Pearson said, but "it is a far greater crime to make use of the flag to promote the sale of a service or a commodity."[100] But Pearson stopped short of calling for federal legislation; existing laws in about thirty states had done little to curb this problem, so he suggested the nationalist organizations at the NFC collaborate with advertising clubs to informally police individual violators. Other speakers, like Herman H. B. Meyer of the Library of Congress, agreed with Pearson.[101] For all the talk of lobbying for state legislation penalizing the desecration of the flag by individuals, regulating the use of its image in commercial enterprises was something NFC attendees seemed to think should not be under government control. The power to decide what was and was not an improper use of flag imagery in the commercial sphere would remain in the hands of the Nationalist Network.

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[99] James J. Dowd argues that romantic war films traditionally depict the flag as symbolic of American virtue and sacrifice, notably in *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), *Patton* (1970), and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). James J. Dowd, "Patriotic Gore: War Movies and the American Flag" (Presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2017), 1, 8–10.
[100] "Proceedings," 30, NFC Records.
[101] "Proceedings," 63, NFC Records.

Late on the first day of the conference, the Committee on Code met to begin drafting a unified civilian flag code. Powell invited all delegates to submit suggestions to the committee based on what their own organizations had found successful in that past. Led by Gridley Adams of the Sons of Veterans, the fifteen members of the Committee on Code represented a cross section of the most powerful groups at the NFC. It included John L. Riley of the American Legion, Walter I. Joyce of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the presidents-general of both the DAR and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Lora Haines Cook and Leonora Rogers Schuyler, respectively, in addition to representatives from the US Army and Navy. Some of the committee members belonged to less overtly nationalist organizations, like the E. S. Martin of the Boy Scouts and Isabelle MacCartney Holland of the Parent-Teacher Association and National Congress of Mothers. Youth- and education-oriented organizations had been an important part of the Nationalist Network since the late nineteenth century and NFC organizers recognized their influence on patriotic education, which would be key to the long-term efficacy of any code.[102]

By the second and final day, the Committee on Code presented its report, which included ten sections covering the proper way to display, salute, and pledge allegiance to the flag (changing the text from "my flag" to "the flag"), as well as a section of "Do Nots."[103] The Flag Code itself was fairly simple and intuitive (never display the flag upside down or backward, let it drag on the floor, allow it to hang lower than any other country's flag, etc.). The committee included a long section on how to properly salute the flag in a parade, clearly in reference to the Shrine Convention, but it also included a section discouraging its image used on items of clothing, handkerchiefs, and paper napkins.[104] It was also forbidden to use

[102] "Proceedings," 47, NFC Records.
[103] "Proceedings," 117-118, NFC Records.
[104] "New Code Offered for Use of Flag," *New York Times*, June 17, 1923, 1.

the flag's image in advertising, but no other commercial uses were explicitly condemned. After all that earlier debate about consumerism cheapening the flag, the Committee on Code ultimately decided that this was not an issue the NFC should be overly zealous about.

After about an hour of discussion, the delegates of the NFC voted to approve the Flag Code, but the more contentious debate was to follow when the Committee on Resolutions raised questions about how enforcement of the code would work and who would fund it. Each organization represented at the NFC was expected to integrate the Flag Code into their regular patriotic education work, including it in printed literature and holding events to demonstrate the code in action. The national and state leaders of each organization were tasked with convincing local chapters to make flag education part of community celebrations on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. But NFC delegates knew that without an authoritative body, there was a chance that regional or organizational variations could arise over time, making all of their work for naught.[105]

The costs of funding a new permanent organization to oversee enforcement of the Flag Code led to a lengthy debate. Powell rejected a number of suggestions that the American Legion's National Americanism Commission could take on the expense of funding a separate organization in addition to funding its own education work, having already paid five hundred dollars for this conference.[106] Other delegates were reluctant to offer any funding from their own organizations but, as Harold Keats of the Playground and Recreation Association of America said, if the smaller organizations could "go out and work under the name of the National Flag Conference," their efforts to make Americans view the Flag Code as authoritative "would be much more effective, and have more weight."[107]

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[105] "Proceedings," 118, NFC Records.
[106] "Proceedings," 120, NFC Records.
[107] "Proceedings," 120, NFC Records.

Questions about whether to establish a permanent organization and how to fund it were the most contentious issue at the NFC. After several delegates offered five-dollar donations from their own pockets to fund a second flag conference the following year, Powell and other NFC leaders decided to regroup in 1924 to see if Flag Code education efforts really required a separate national body.[108]

The NFC never met again as an independent body. In 1924, its Committee on Code was allowed to present at the American Legion's All-Americanism Conference (AAC), run by Powell, that May in Washington, DC. The AAC was significantly larger than the NFC the year prior, with delegates from fifty-six patriotic organizations present.[109] Unlike the NFC, where several dignitaries including the president spoke, there were no speakers from outside the network of nationalist organizations; Will Hays, Jason Joy's boss at the MPPDA, sent a telegram confirming that he had convinced MPPDA members to show the flag in every film they produced.[110] The NFC Committee on Code, now rechristened as the Sub-Committee on the Flag Code, was overshadowed by the larger Committees on Subversive Radicalism and Citizenship. Some NFC attendees got important committee assignments, like Leonora Rogers Schuyler, but most of the new committee chairs were drawn more broadly from across the Nationalist Network, including Ralph M. Easley of the National Civic Federation. Most of the NFC Committee on Code members returned for the AAC flag sub-committee, including John L. Riley, E. S. Martin, Gridley Adams, and Lora Haines Cook.[111]

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[108] "Proceedings," 126-127, NFC Records.
[109] Like the NFC in 1923, AAC organizers in 1924 exaggerated the number of organizations attending in speeches; only fifty-six are listed in the roll call. "Summary of Proceedings of the All-Americanism Conference," May 1924, 10, 32-34, Folder 1, Box 1, NFC Records.
[110] "Summary," 14-15, NFC Records.
[111] "Summary," 1-2, NFC Records.

Other than a few changes to the wording of the Flag Code (including the suggestion that "of the United States of America" be added to the Pledge of Allegiance after "to the flag"), the Sub-Committee on the Flag Code had limited success to report.[112] Over the course of the previous year, the committee had only met once with all members present, with a few additional meetings where only two or three could attend. They were still able to convince a number of textbook publishers to print their Flag Code, although they relied on the American Legion to print pamphlets on their behalf, with new illustrations borrowed from the Legion and Boy Scouts flag literature.[113] It was apparent that without the resources and funding of a major organization, the remaining vestige of the National Flag Conference could not function. There would be no third meeting of the NFC in 1925, with the Legion inheriting authority over the Flag Code, which it would maintain until Congress formally passed it into law in 1942.[114]

The short-lived National Flag Conference reflected a broader transformation in the Nationalist Network during the 1920s. When Col. Garland W. Powell first called for such a conference in 1923, the spirit of collaboration and independence that had characterized nationalist organizing work since the 1890s seemed feasible. Even the largest patriotic, hereditary, and veterans' organizations were highly decentralized and local and regional chapters operated with relative autonomy. However, a uniform flag code enacted nationwide required a strong central authority with the resources to print and distribute massive amounts of literature and the clout to convince patriotic education programs in schools and

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[112] "Summary," 2, NFC Records.
[113] "Report of the Sub-Committee on the Flag Code," May 25, 1924, 3, Folder 1, Box 1, NFC Records.
[114] Gridley Adams continued to advocate publicly for the Flag Code for the next two decades under the banner of the National Flag Code Committee; as Adams was its only member, 1924 marked the effective end of an organized NFC. Ellis, *To the Flag*, 67. "Bans Cheap Flags Made by Japanese," *New York Times*, December 21, 1924, 16.

communities to adhere exactly to that code. It was not necessarily inevitable that the Legion would ultimately adopt the NFC Flag Code as its own, but the fact that it did reflected the increasing concentration of power to determine how Americans should perform patriotism in the hands of a few massive organizations from the 1920s onward. The NFC was a turning point after which many smaller independent groups gradually yielded influence to larger groups.

The All-Americanism Conference in 1924 may have marked the formal end of an independent National Flag Conference, but it contextualized the flag issue as a key element of a greater mission of Americanization. The Citizenship Committee at the AAC presented a very ambitious plan of "Co-operative Americanization," developed by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, to encourage civic and patriotic societies to work together to reform all aspects of American society. The Philadelphia Plan defined "Americanization" as "the business of making better American citizens" and the AAC Citizenship Committee called for the cooperation of nationalist organizations with local governments, chambers of commerce, public schools, settlement houses, and other social programs.[115] This unprecedented Americanization program explicitly targeted native-born citizens as well as immigrants and aimed to eliminate the social and economic problems caused by ignorance of or indifference to American values. [116] The Philadelphia Plan envisioned a world in which English-language and civics education for immigrants, anti-communist campaigns for industrial workers, and enforcement of existing flag laws were just the start. In order to "live Americanism in your personal daily life," a program of everyday nationalism, the plan called

[115] "Summary," 16, NFC Records.
[116] "Summary," 18, NFC Records.

for patriotic church sermons, "most manly boy and most womanly girl" contests, and training police officers to be "agents of Americanization."[117]

Illiteracy in the English language was one of the foremost concerns for the AAC, as it had long been for many nativist groups. The conference proposed that the English dictionary be venerated like the American flag, symbolizing the global power of English-speaking peoples and democratic values. Whereas more explicitly nativist groups targeted immigrants for making the United States a multilingual nation, the AAC also criticized some Americans for bastardizing the English language through slang and improper grammar. The conference cited the Better American Speech Movement as inspiration for its resolution to encourage organizations to give every public school student their own English dictionary.[118] The Better American Speech Movement arose among women's organizations during World War I, producing a pledge modeled after the Pledge of Allegiance in which children declared their love for the American flag and English language. Racism and nativism were at the heart of the pledge and the movement in general; part of the pledge stated "I will say a good American 'yes' and 'no' in place of an Indian grunt 'umhum' and 'nup-um' or a foreign 'ya' or 'yeh' and 'nope.'"[119] Civic organizations like the General Federation of Women's Clubs, represented at both the NFC and AAC, continued the Better American Speech Movement into the 1920s, further demonstrating continuity between earlier Americanization movements.[120] It was little wonder that the AAC incorporated the ideals of this movement into its mission; not only did the upper-class white men and women of the Nationalist

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[117] "Summary," 20, NFC Records.
[118] "Summary," 30, NFC Records.
[119] Douglas A. Kibbee, *Language and the Law: Linguistic Inequality in America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 140–141.
[120] "Better American Speech Week Pamphlet," Folder 22, Box 1, Program Records, Mary Belle King Sherman, 1924-1928, Women's History Resource Center, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Washington, DC.

Network believe that the most American language was the one which they themselves spoke, but they felt entitled to police how Americans of other social classes used it.

Nationalist organizations served a key purpose in the Philadelphia Plan. They served as a link between the various social welfare organizations and government agencies required for this ambitious Americanization plan. AAC delegates approved of the resolutions proposed by the Citizenship Committee, agreeing to work with their local American Legion posts to bring the Philadelphia Plan to the municipal governments and social welfare agencies of their cities and towns.[121] Whether or not every patriotic and civic organization at the AAC was able to fully enact this Americanization plan, the scope and scale of the Philadelphia Plan reflects the state of the Nationalist Network in 1924. Large organizations like the Legion exerted great influence over what it meant to be a "better citizen," even over smaller and older nationalist organizations. Chambers of commerce and other business interests had a seat at the table in the formal planning of Americanization activities, which were now commonly applied to formal and informal education of immigrants and American-born alike. Everyday nationalism had gradually developed as a useful tactic among nationalist organizations and with the AAC, it became a cornerstone of cooperative Americanization in the 1920s.

The NFC may not have survived as an independent organization but its constituent organizations successfully popularized its Flag Code throughout the 1920s. Many states passed new legislation or modified existing statutes according to the regulations of the code, requiring flag salutes in schools and the display of the flag in government buildings.[122] Punishment for disobeying these laws varied; in some states, teachers who refused the flag

[121] "Summary," 30, NFC Records.
[122] Ellis, *To the Flag*, 72,78-79.

salute lost their jobs, but generally Flag Code violations were ignored by law enforcement and only came to public attention through public outcry by nationalist groups. The American Legion and the DAR incorporated the Flag Code as a cornerstone of their massive Americanization and patriotic education campaigns, and by the late 1930s the Veterans of Foreign Wars joined with the Legion to petition Congress to incorporate the code into law. Congress finally passed the Flag Code into law in 1942, as wartime patriotism once again ignited in American society. Although there was no real enforcement mechanism, as with most of the earlier state laws, the official recognition by the federal government validated decades of work by nationalist societies, the Legion in particular.[123]

Living Flag Movement, 1925-1931

After the American Legion became the self-appointed keepers of the Flag Code, another organization emerged within the Nationalist Network which aimed to reimagine the meaning of the American flag. The United States Flag Association (USFA) was founded in 1924 to encourage respect for the flag in everyday life. From the start it was an influential organization, led by former Secretary of State Elihu Root as acting president, financier Otto H. Kahn as treasurer, and the sitting US president as its honorary president. Its national council included such varied notables as William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston; Samuel Gompers; and Alice Ames Winter, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.[124] After a relatively quiet first year in which the most press coverage the USFA

[123] The American Legion would claim a leading role in the creation of the Flag Code for decades and has sought to pass a constitutional amendment against flag desecration. "What part did the Legion play in codifying the proper treatment of the U.S. flag?," American Legion, accessed February 6, 2020, https://www.legion.org/moment-in-time/189878/what-part-did-legion-play-codifying-proper-treatment-us-flag.

[124] "Governor to Launch Flag Rally in State," *New York Times*, November 23, 1924, E9.

received was when its honorary president, Calvin Coolidge, was discovered to have violated the Flag Code at a baseball game, the organization's leaders appointed Col. James A. Moss as director general and yielded most of the control to him.[125] Moss, who had authored several books on military tactics and training while in the Army, quickly took steps to enact his ambitious plans for the USFA.[126]

In the summer of 1925, the USFA began a campaign for "peace-time patriotism," which served a dual purpose of encouraging Americans to choose "good government" and staving off the threat of communism and other foreign ideologies, which they argued threatened American society because patriotic feeling had fallen off after World War I.[127] An editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* trumpeted that "evil wears many disguises less spectacular and gaudy than the habiliments of warfare" and that the flag was a totem that could protect the nation from un-American ideas in times of peace as well.[128] The USFA's peace-time patriotism campaign aimed to enroll one million Americans in its membership drive, emphasizing that membership was open to American citizens of any age, race, or gender for a one-dollar fee. It organized local flag boards in several states, most successfully in New York where the USFA was headquartered, which sponsored parades, radio programs, short films, and mass meetings between its "Flag Week," the last week of May, and Flag Day in June.[129] The USFA never announced whether they reached their million-member goal but Moss remained undaunted.

Between the Schoolhouse Flag Movement of the 1890s and World War I, the American flag had transformed from an object lesson in patriotic education into the physical

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[125] "Flag Incident Causes Talk in Washington," *Boston Daily Globe*, May 5, 1925, 11.
[126] "Col. Moss Dies In Crash; Rites Tomorrow," *Washington Post*, April 25, 1941, 19.
[127] "Flag Association Seeks One Million Members," *New York Times*, June 7, 1925, X18.
[128] "Promoting Peace-Time Patriotism," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 22, 1925, 14.
[129] "Aim to Inculcate Respect for Flag," *New York Times*, April 20, 1925, 16; "Flag Association Seeks."

embodiment of national ideals. James A. Moss and the USFA sought to bring the American people even closer to the flag by creating the Living Flag Movement (LFM). Beginning in September 1925, the USFA called on all Americans to pay twenty-five dollars to become a "living flag." The money would go toward the USFA's efforts for patriotic education and donors got a certificate verifying that they themselves had become living flags, the physical embodiment of the American spirit.[130] "By imparting to American citizens consciousness of being human Flagstaffs, Blue Fields, Stripes, and Stars," the USFA explained in a pamphlet, "the idea of the LIVING FLAG is to endue with life conception of the principles, traditions, and institutions for which the Flag stands."[131] Each person would join with sixty-one other members to form the stripes and stars of a living flag that would be anchored by the flagstaff, the local USFA representative. These sixty-three members of a living flag would become a manifest symbol of American values.

Over the next two years, certain communities would elect to actually gather as a living flag at parades or in pageants, but typically the living flag was simply an abstract concept. During World War I, it became a somewhat common practice for schools and patriotic societies to form human flags on holidays, with individuals dressed in red, white, or blue physically arranged in the shape of a flag. The LFM was less concerned with cultivating spectacle because the USFA emphasized a person's individual sense of patriotism. The USFA itself likened the LFM to a religious revival, with living flags embodying American

130 "25,000 'Living Flags' Sought at $25 Each," *New York Times*, September 21, 1925, 40.
131 Pamphlet, United States Flag Association, 1929, Folder 15, Box 10, William Randolph Hearst Papers, BANC MSS 77/121 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA. This collection will be referenced as William Randolph Hearst Papers.

virtues and values in their everyday lives.[132] The LFM took the concept of civil religion quite literally, evoking the Christian concepts of the holy spirit and transubstantiation.[133]

Other organizations in the Nationalist Network embraced the LFM. At its 1926 national gathering, the Daughters of the American Revolution passed a resolution praising the USFA's work and encouraging all DAR chapters to form living flags.[134] The presidents of the most influential women's hereditary and volunteer service societies, including the DAR, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Women's Relief Corps, and American Legion Auxiliary, formed the Women's National Council of the USFA. Having a direct connection to powerful leaders within the Nationalist Network allowed Moss to concentrate on his vision of the USFA as a force for patriotic education. With his background as a writer, he envisioned the USFA producing literature and instructional programs for patriotic societies to distribute and enact, "thereby enabling the flag association to work through organizations whose membership totals a hundred million or more."[135] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Moss published dozens of books and pamphlets under the auspices of the USFA which were incorporated into the patriotic education departments of thousands of chapters of the leading nationalist organizations. The LFM thus followed a similar pattern as other nationalist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, inspiring an emotional connection to the nation reinforced by ideology and education.

There was one American who so potently embodied the USFA's ideals that he received the organization's first Cross of Honor: Charles A. Lindbergh. In June 1927, less than a month after he completed the first solo transatlantic flight, Lindbergh attended a

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[132] Harry Hites, "Observes 'Sesqui' of 'Old Glory,'" *Washington Post*, March 27, 1927, SM1.
[133] The USFA even issued certificates on behalf of a deceased loved one, similar to Catholic indulgences. "25,000 'Living Flags.'"
[134] "United States Flag Association," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 1, 1926, E4.
[135] Hites, "Observes 'Sesqui.'"

vesper flag service on the steps of the US Capitol cosponsored by the USFA and the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks.[136] Before a crowd of fifty thousand, USFA founding member and former and future Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes pinned the cross to Lindbergh. "You flew the 'Spirit of St. Louis,'" Hughes said in his address, "but in your flight you happily incarnated the spirit of America."[137] He continued, extolling Lindbergh's "character and enterprise" as well as his youthful spirit. Lindbergh spoke next to the crowd, giving the credit for his achievement to American industry and scientific innovation. Before he exited, a group of children arranged into two massive human flags on the upper steps began chanting "What's the matter with Lindbergh? He's all right!" and "Who's all right? Lindbergh!"[138] Lindbergh would later play a significant role in the Nationalist Network's isolationist movement of the 1940s, as a fascist apologist and opponent of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt (see Chapter 4). In 1927, however, Lindbergh was the perfect vessel of the USFA's patriotic ideals and a symbol of white, individualist masculinity.

The question of who could lay claim to being a true American and become part of a living flag was fraught for the USFA. The LFM of the 1920s was influenced by the biases of its leaders and its historical context; the 1920s were indelibly marred by widespread political oppression of and racist violence toward people of color. African Americans, the majority of whom were citizens by birth, were initially welcome to join the LFM. Dr. Robert R. Moton of the Tuskegee Institute was Black and a founding member of the USFA.[139] The 1925

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[136] The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks are a fraternal and service organization that was part of the Nationalist Network. In 1919, the group passed its Flag Day Resolution that forbade communist sympathizers from membership.
[137] "Years of Endeavor Won Aero Triumph, Famed Youth Says," *Washington Post*, June 13, 1927, 1.
[138] "Years of Endeavor," 2.
[139] "Governor to Launch."

peace-time patriotism campaign in New York State specifically reached out to African Americans, saying, "with exceptions too slight to be noticed," they were "passionate lovers of the Flag."[140] After 1925, however, the USFA rarely mentioned African Americans and the LFM effectively excluded Black people by collaborating mainly with white hereditary organizations in its educational campaign. Moss himself viewed the USFA's mission as uniting the North and South, as well as the West, under a single banner; even if he was not explicit in seeking to exclude African Americans, his organizing strategy effectively did.[141] Yet many Black citizens still resisted the USFA's efforts to diminish their loyalty as Americans.

There was an incident in 1929 which made the USFA's politics of racial exclusion clear. The USFA invited Rev. Walter H. Brooks, a Black Baptist pastor, to its vesper flag service at the US Capitol but then denied him a seat because of his race. Rev. Brooks' congregation wrote a letter of protest to the USFA which included the text of the invitation, touting that over one hundred members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Veterans of the Confederacy would be "sitting side by side, one wearing the blue and the other the gray – once foes, now friends."[142] Segregation in public spaces was legal in Washington, DC for much of the early twentieth century, but as the USFA's invited guest, Rev. Brooks logically assumed he would be treated with decency. The USFA never publicly responded to the letter and the *Chicago Defender* decried this as but one of innumerable instances in which Black citizens were mistreated by white, so-called patriotic Americans who embraced former Confederate soldiers who had personally raised arms against the U.S.

[140] "U. S. Flag Ass'n Welcomes Negroes," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 27, 1925, 7.
[141] "Thousands View Exercises at Capitol; Pupils Hold Rites in Schools," *Washington Post*, Jun 15, 1929, 20.
[142] "In Honor of the Flag," *Chicago Defender*, August 17, 1929, A2.

fewer than seventy years earlier. Under the USFA, the flag symbolized the reunion of North and South, but African Americans were excluded from that reunion.

This phase of the Living Flag Movement tapered off by the end of the 1920s. The USFA continued to be an influential organization, encouraging states and communities to hold Flag Day celebrations. The USFA's Women's National Council also did not lack for influence, as the wives of current and former Republican presidents and cabinet members joined alongside the members representing other women's organizations in the Nationalist Network.[143] The 1929 stock market crash, however, dramatically upended any sense of national stability. As the Great Depression worsened in 1930 and 1931, many nationalist leaders feared that economic disaster would put the United States at greater risk of communist infiltration and that the tenuous peace of World War I might crumble in another international conflict. The USFA shifted its mission from promoting peace-time patriotism at home to using patriotism to promote peace abroad.

In 1931, the USFA sponsored the Envoys of Friendship Goodwill Tour, the second phase of the Living Flag Movement. That summer, the USFA planned to send a group of American high school students to represent their country on a diplomatic trip to London and Paris. With the intention of cultivating "world friendship based on rational patriotism," the students would meet with representatives of the British and French governments and attend children's mass meetings in both countries.[144] Moss and the USFA were quick to note that their cause was not that of pacifism or internationalism; the tour was designed to

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[143] "Mobilizing of Womanhood Planned to Further Peace," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1931, M8. The USFA was officially non-partisan and its official honorary president was always the current U.S. president. However, in the 1930s, the anti-New Dealer James A. Moss would use the USFA's influence to try to undermine President Franklin D. Roosevelt's agenda (see Chapter 3).

[144] "Capital Youth Keen to Enter Essay Contest," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1931, 1; "Friendship Envoys Will Gather Here," *Washington Post*, June 9, 1931, 4.

promote American nationalism as a means of maintaining peace between the United States and democratic Europe.[145] The USFA announced that sixty-three children would be selected, enough to form a living flag. This living flag would represent the best and the brightest of the next generation of American leaders, Moss believed, who would take to heart the lessons of patriotism and diplomacy they learned from this trip.[146] The ideals of the American flag would leave its native shores and be spread across the Atlantic, embodied within the United States' most promising young people.

The USFA was likely influenced by the contentious debates between the peace movement and militant groups in the Nationalist Network throughout the 1920s. Since World War I, pacifist and internationalist groups like the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom had opposed proposals to increase American military spending and maintain a standing army. Many organizations in the Network, like the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, supported these measures as part of a program of military preparedness and openly accused pacifist leaders of being un-American and supporting communist interests. With the signing of the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1928, in which the United States joined with fourteen other nations to outlaw war as a means of settling international disputes, it looked as though military-minded nationalist groups were losing influence at home.[147] World War I still loomed large in the American psyche.

The USFA appeared to sense that the winds were shifting away from militarism and reconceived its version of patriotism to appear more diplomatic. In contrast to the American

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[145] "Capital Youth Keen," 2.
[146] "Knowledge of Flag Necessary to Win," *Washington Post*, April 2, 1931, 2.
[147] Kathryn Kish Sklar and Helen Baker, "Introduction," in *How Did Women Peace Activists Respond to "Red Scare" Attacks during the 1920s?* (Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1998); Anissa Harper LoCasto and Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Introduction," in *Pacifism vs. Patriotism in Women's Organizations in the 1920s: How Was the Debate Shaped by the Expansion of the American Military?* (Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1998).

Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution, which sought to change public opinion to support their ideas about nationalism, the USFA was willing to tailor its vision of nationalism to reflect the popular mood. It would never become a "professional Pacifist" organization like those internationalist agitators who allowed themselves to be duped by communist propaganda, according to Moss, but the USFA envisioned a version of international relations that was compatible with American nationalism.[148] Some of the women in the organization also supported a diplomatic, but not overtly pacifist, approach to foreign policy. The USFA's Women's National Council officially sponsored the Envoys of Friendship Tour, with Florence Jaffray Harriman, the former suffragist who had attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and 1920, leading fundraising efforts for the trip.[149] When the USFA announced Gen. John J. Pershing's endorsement of the tour, Moss emphasized that this was the Women's National Council's undertaking.[150] Putting women in charge of the Envoys of Friendship Tour saved male USFA leaders from compromising their masculinity by being directly involved in a campaign focused on peace and children.

As in earlier nationalist movements, women were considered the rightful overseers of children's patriotic education. "The logical guide for the childhood of America is the country's womanhood," a USFA official stated, "marshaled together always for that which is best."[151] This sentiment echoed both nineteenth-century beliefs about gender roles and twentieth-century arguments for women's suffrage. Mothers were responsible for the moral upbringing of their children, including early patriotic education in the home. Many suffragists in the early twentieth century also argued that women voters would help purify

[148] James A. Moss, *The Spirit of the American Flag* (Washington, D.C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1933), 79.
[149] "63 Pupils to Take 'Living Flag' Tour," *Washington Post*, March 27, 1931, 2.
[150] "Mobilizing of Womanhood Planned to Further Peace," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1931, M8.
[151] "63 Pupils to Take 'Living Flag Tour," 2.

government by voting against corruption in politics. The USFA understood that most Americans in the 1920s believed that women had a unique role to play in shaping the next generation of citizens, making their leadership of the Envoys of Friendship Tour a thoroughly savvy move.

How would the USFA choose its Envoys of Friendship? While some would be chosen from major youth organizations across the country, like the Boy and Girl Scouts, the USFA decided to select its two representatives by sponsoring a patriotic essay contest with the *Washington Post*.[152] Two winners, one boy and one girl, would be selected from among the high school students of Washington, DC by a jury led by the US Commissioner of Education based on a series of tests on patriotism, as well as their essays about the typical American boy or girl.[153] The winning boy and girl would then receive the USFA Cross of Honor, an award previously bestowed to only Charles A. Lindbergh and former Pres. Calvin Coolidge, and join the other children from organizations across the country on an all-expenses paid trip to England and France.[154]

James A. Moss published a series of articles in the *Washington Post* to help contestants study for the exam and write their essays, which revealed a great deal about the USFA's ideology. Moss defined patriotism as the love and loyalty toward one's country that came as naturally as the love of a family; true patriotism was constantly under attack by false patriotism.[155] False patriotism could come from politicians exploiting Americans' natural patriotic emotions ("a well-known – and a cheap – vote-getting device of flapdoodle variety"), but it also emerged when Americans engaged in patriotic rituals without

[152] "Friendship Envoys."
[153] "Knowledge of Flag," 2; "College Educations Good-will Judges," *Washington Post*, April 5, 1931, 1.
[154] "Flag Envoys are Chosen for Capital," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1931, 1.
[155] "First Patriotic Essay For Flag Contestants," *Washington Post*, April 1, 1931, 5.

authentically meaning the sentiment behind them.[156] In this way, Moss identified everyday nationalism as potentially dangerous, if it led to a populace that was easily swayed by jingoistic and xenophobic propaganda. The solution to the threat of false patriotism, then, was rational patriotism: respecting that people of all countries have a right to their own national pride, if it was based on freedom, justice, and humanity.[157] By teaching children rational patriotism, Moss believed that war could be largely avoided, if not eliminated, in future generations.[158] The Envoys of Friendship Goodwill Tour was therefore a test run for rational patriotism and a high-stakes experiment to strike a balance between nationalism and diplomacy.

Some logistical obstacles emerged in the months before the tour was scheduled to begin in June. Two DC public high school students, Dorothy D. Skirm and Thomas J. Hayes, won the *Washington Post* essay contest, but Moss' original dream of sending sixty-three children, a complete living flag, would not come to fruition. Likely due to insufficient fundraising, only nine other students were selected as Envoys of Friendship in addition the essay contest winners, representing the Junior American Red Cross, Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA, and Camp Fire Girls.[159] In April, the assistant postmaster general protested on behalf of US steamship companies that the USFA had booked passage for the goodwill tour on a foreign-flag steamship. Moss denied this and the scandal faded; the *Washington Post*

156 "Flag Worship Condemned As 'Glorified Idolatry,'" *Washington Post*, April 3, 1931, 4.
157 "Real American Patriotism Seen Sane and Rational," *Washington Post*, April 4, 1931, 5.
158 "Debunking of Patriotism Seen Means to End War," *Washington Post*, April 9, 1931, 3.
159 "Flag Envoys," 1; "Friendship Envoys."

ignored it and Hearst newspapers dropped the story.[160] The Envoys of Friendship ultimately set sail on June 17 on a French ocean liner.[161]

Otherwise, the Envoys of Friendship Goodwill Tour went smoothly, despite being a few dozen people short of a true living flag. In London, the American students met the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and attended a reception at the Guildhall with a large group of British children.[162] French newspapers published news of the Envoys of Friendship on their front pages, particularly charmed by the fluent French of DC native Catherine DuBois. Their timing in France was opportune, as the young Americans lunched with Pres. Paul Doumer and attended the International Colonial and Overseas Expedition just as France agreed to Pres. Hoover's war debt moratorium.[163] Although the Envoys of Friendship did not represent the US government, their soft diplomacy likely worked in Hoover's favor. There were many complicated factors that informed France's warm feelings toward the United States in the interwar period, but it seemed like rational patriotism could pave the way for groups in the Nationalist Network to wield some influence in promoting the United States' image abroad.

Although the trip was a success, the USFA did not sponsor another Envoys of Friendship Goodwill Tour the following year. Fundraising problems had already plagued the 1931 trip, and these problems were likely compounded as the Great Depression wore on. In the rest of the 1930s, the USFA shifted away from the Living Flag Movement and rational patriotism to wage an anti-crime campaign. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932

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160 "Takes Up Ship Row over Peace Voyage," *New York Times*, April 8, 1931, 48. William Randolph Hearst, a USFA donor, promised Moss he would take action about a negative editorial in Hearst's *Washington Herald*. Telegram from William Randolph Hearst to James A. Moss, March 26, 1931, William Randolph Hearst Papers; Telegram from James A. Moss to William Randolph Hearst, March 28, 1931, William Randolph Hearst Papers.
161 "Mrs. Woodrow Wilson Sailing for Poland," *New York Times*, June 17, 1931, 27.
162 "Col. Moss Is Enthusiastic Over Friendship Pilgrimage," *Washington Post*, July 28, 1931, 2; "London Welcomes Youthful 'Envoys,'" *Washington Post*, June 27, 1931, 5.
163 "'Good-will Envoys' Welcomed in Paris," *Washington Post*, July 8, 1931, 4.

also marked the end of the Republican-dominated USFA's friendly relationship with the Republican presidents of the 1920s; Roosevelt remained the USFA's honorary president but Moss and many of its other members opposed the New Deal.[164] For the USFA, the goal of using rational patriotism to advance American interests abroad gave way to domestic concerns.

Between the Schoolhouse Flag Movement of the 1890s and the Living Flag Movement of the 1920s, the symbolic meaning of the American flag had changed for many within the Nationalist Network. The flag was no longer merely part of an object lesson in patriotism, a textile fabric to which Americans simply pledged allegiance. It became something sacred, with both a physical presence in Americans' everyday lives and a metaphysical connection to the bodies of those who chose to become part of a living flag. The USFA was highly influential in popularizing this new meaning of the flag, founded by and affiliated with some of the most powerful political, religious, and social figures in the country. The blessing of these luminaries allowed its actual leadership, driven principally by James A. Moss, to assert authority in this interpretation of the flag. The LFM supposedly invited all Americans to become part of a living flag, but in practice it mirrored most American institutions of the time by largely excluding African Americans and non-citizens.

Conclusion

Between 1923 and 1931, the Nationalist Network worked to create conformity in the ways that Americans performed patriotism, largely driven by their fear that subversive influences would create a crisis of loyalty during peacetime. Using some of the same tactics as earlier Americanization campaigns targeting immigrants, nationalist leaders in the 1920s

[164] "Capital Smiles over Pamphlet on Constitution," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1935, 7.

believed that they could "Americanize" adult and child citizens by subtly coercing all Americans to adhere to standardized rituals and traditions. However, the standard of what it meant to act "American" was decided by the upper middle-class, white, American-born, Christian, and politically conservative leaders of the Network and reflected their biases. Nationalist traditions were not intended to be inclusive but to reinforce the existing power structure in American society.

By devising a set of rules governing how Americans should act toward the flag, the Flag Code devised by the National Flag Conference aimed to cultivate respect for the values the flag represented. The USFA's Living Flag Movement attempted to create a deep, almost religious bond between Americans and the flag. The LFM also transformed the flag into a banner of "rational patriotism" when it sent children abroad on its Envoys of Friendship tour, finding a middle way between militaristic nationalism and the internationalist peace movement.

The Nationalist Network reached the height of its influence in the 1920s but its authority to create nationalist traditions would be contested by the federal government in the 1930s. What had been a truly grassroots movement in the 1890s increasingly sought the state's endorsement of its activities by the 1920s, inadvertently reinforcing that it was ultimately the state that held the authority over national ideology. Beginning in 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal not only transformed how the federal government served its citizens, but some of the New Deal's arts and historical preservation projects were explicitly tasked with creating and preserving national mythology. This was the federal government's first major attempt to actively produce nationalist culture, which would put it in conflict with the Nationalist Network.

Chapter 2:

Making a National Anthem, 1892-1945

The performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" is the patriotic tradition most deeply entrenched in American culture and its long-gestating ascent to cultural prominence serves as a unique case study of how the Nationalist Network capitalized on an existing ritual and infused it with a particular ideological meaning. From the mid-1910s to 1931, the Network took a song with limited but intense grassroots appeal, prescribed a set of behavioral codes surrounding it, enforced those codes through the social coercion of everyday nationalism, and validated this tradition by gaining the federal government's endorsement.[165] All enduring patriotic traditions followed at least some of these steps but "Banner" best illustrated this process. While the rise of "Banner" overlapped with the right-leaning Network's other efforts to enforce unified patriotic traditions in the 1920s, including the creation of the flag code, its endorsement by the government in 1931 anticipated the rise of state-sponsored nationalist cultural production during the New Deal.

From 1776 to 1931, the United States did not have an official national anthem recognized by the federal government. It was common for both European nations, swept up in the Romantic idealization of folk culture, to adopt anthems in the nineteenth century, as well as for post-colonial states in Latin America as a means of asserting an independent national identity.[166] Americans certainly embraced patriotic music as part of a broader affinity for patriotic culture and traditions but until the emergence of the Nationalist Network in the

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[165] The musicologist Mark Clague also argues that the "Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem through custom before it was officially adopted by the federal government and that patriotic traditions are dynamic and ever-evolving. Mark Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?: A Cultural Biography of "The Star-Spangled Banner"* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2022), xiv, 248.
[166] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 80.

1890s, there were few organized efforts to define official traditions. Through the Network's efforts, the federal government recognized one patriotic song, "The Star-Spangled Banner," as the official national anthem in 1931. Prior to that, it was just one of several patriotic songs which could be performed at sports events, concert halls, and movie theaters. Unlike many other western nations, the US national anthem emerged from the bottom up before being recognized by the government. As a case study, it illustrates how everyday nationalism served as a cultural force to elevate, contest, and validate patriotic traditions independently of the state, although the Network coveted and ultimately gained the state's approval.

Scholars have examined the history of "The Star-Spangled Banner," particularly its origins as a set of lyrics written by the lawyer Francis Scott Key about the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812. Key's lyrics were set to the tune "The Anacreontic Song," a melody often remembered as a drinking song but which was originally written by a member of London's Anacreon Club, where well-to-do music-lovers would gather to hear performances and socialize. The song became a popular showcase for a talented soloist to demonstrate their vocal range and stamina, not a group anthem, as "Banner" became in the twentieth-century United States.[167] This chapter considers the evolving cultural significance of "Banner" in the early twentieth century, as the Nationalist Network used everyday nationalism to create patriotic traditions from the grassroots before lobbying the state to validate them.

"The Star-Spangled Banner" first distinguished itself among several of the most popular patriotic songs in the 1890s, due in large part to the impulse for patriotic traditions which emerged in that decade, an impulse which also led to the formation of the Nationalist Network. The song was gradually integrated into parts of American culture in the early

[167] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*; Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?*

twentieth century, most acutely during World War I when anxieties about a lack of patriotism became widespread. Between 1923 and 1931, power within the Network became concentrated within a few large organizations, which enforced conformity in the practice of patriotic rituals, also illustrated in the example of the flag code in Chapter 1. Some nationalists vehemently opposed efforts to make the song more appealing to contemporary tastes while many Americans protested that the song did not represent their values. In an effort to contrive a sense of national unity, in 1931 the federal government finally adopted "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the US national anthem after the Network's Veterans of Foreign Wars assembled a major lobbying campaign. Even after its adoption as the official national anthem, Americans continued to contest the song's suitability and relevance, demonstrating that "The Star-Spangled Banner" has long been a valid site on which to debate American national identity.

Out of Many, One: The Rise of "The Star-Spangled Banner," 1892-1918

The United States emerged from the nineteenth century without a national anthem. Most of the major states of Europe, animated by nationalistic fervor and the Romantic veneration of folk culture, adopted national anthems during the 1800s, as did revolutionary and postcolonial nations in Latin America.[168] Americans of the nineteenth century certainly embraced patriotic music, including "Hail Columbia," "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and the 1895 composition "America the Beautiful," but neither the populace nor the federal government elevated any one of these songs as a national anthem. As Marc Ferris argues, regionalism both animated the popularity of Civil War-era songs like "Battle Hymn of the

[168] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 80–81.

Republic" and "Dixie" and ultimately made them unsuitable candidates.[169] Another key reason that Americans were relatively late to select a national anthem becomes clear when examining the way that most patriotic traditions emerged in the United States, through grassroots organizing by the Nationalist Network. The Network gradually built influence in American society from the 1890s to the 1910s and employed the strategy of popularizing their preferred rituals before seeking their formal recognition by the government. The national anthem is a clear-cut example of how American nationalism often varied from European or Latin American nationalisms in that it was nationalism from the bottom up.

Before the Nationalist Network decided on "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the best anthem candidate, the song distinguished itself during the 1890s as sufficiently martial and masculine to suit the decade. The ultimate popularity of "The Star-Spangled Banner" resulted partly from its popularity with military bands in the 1890s. Military marches became popular in the late nineteenth-century United States due in large part to the compositions of John Philip Sousa, who also served as conductor of the US Marine Band in the 1880s and 1890s. Sousa played both "Hail Columbia" and "The Star-Spangled Banner" at official military events.[170] Both songs evoked nostalgia for the early republic, with the former composed for George Washington's inauguration and the latter commemorating a battle during the War of 1812, although Sousa personally preferred "Hail Columbia" as a more authentically American tune because "The Star-Spangled Banner" borrowed the melody of an English club song.[171] Other military branches followed suit, playing both songs in a march style at many events.

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169 Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 108.
170 Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 87; Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?*, 104.
171 "Music of All Nations," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1890, 7.

Although both songs were part of American life for nearly a century, "The Star-Spangled Banner" was slightly more suited to the popular culture of the 1890s than "Hail Columbia," which had a subdued melody compared to "Banner's" peppy tune. "The Star-Spangled Banner" also had narrative lyrics which vividly described the chaos of war, which certainly would have appealed to many Americans who hoped for war with Spain over its policy toward Cuban independence movements and its impact on American business interests. "Banner" also invited singers to empathize with its author whereas "Hail Columbia" took a less literary approach, directly exhorting Americans to "Firm, united let us be" in the pursuit of "peace and safety," laudable goals but less viscerally compelling.[172] The National League chose to open the first game of professional baseball's 1897 season with "The Star-Spangled Banner" and continued that tradition in subsequent years, which very likely contributed to popular affection for the song.[173] While "America the Beautiful" was also very popular in this decade, it lacked that martial stylistic element which Sousa had popularized. Thematically, both "America the Beautiful" and "The Star-Spangled Banner" advanced the narrative of American exceptionalism, although the former erased the role of war in westward expansion while the latter framed war as a necessary evil. However, "America the Beautiful" was structured as a hymn and did not translate easily to a Sousa-style marching band, emulated by the National League. "The Star-Spangled Banner" did not emerge from the 1890s as the only popular patriotic song but it was uniquely well-suited to the aesthetics and culture of the era.

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[172] J. Hopkinson, *Hail Columbia, The Favorite New Federal Song*, notated music, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010486/ (accessed March 2, 2022).
[173] "Baseball Season Opened," *New York Times*, April 23, 1897, 5; "On the Baseball Field," *New York Times*, April 16, 1898, 10; "Brooklyn Nine Defeated," *New York Times*, April 16, 1899, 8.

There were significant changes to the way that "The Star-Spanged Banner" was performed in the early twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, vocal performances usually entailed one soloist singing the entire song, including all four verses, while audience members would only join in on the chorus, which repeated several times. Americans were therefore not expected to memorize most of the song's complex lyrics. Mark Clague identifies a shift in 1905 when the military stopped repeating the chorus and civilian performances of the song followed by including only the first verse. Audience members were now expected to have the entire first verse and chorus memorized, leading to the common trope that Americans were either unable or unwilling to learn the song. This became a cause of much consternation for the song's proponents, who interpreted this as a moral failure and evidence of a broader lapse in patriotism.[174] This shift in performance customs reflects how changes to patriotic traditions could be arbitrary and impractical, as well as how nationalist activists were often quicker to question the patriotism of ordinary Americans than to reflect on whether traditions served their needs.

In the 1900s, "The Star-Spangled Banner" served as an important part of rituals on patriotic holidays, but as one of the top two or three national songs rather than as the consensus pick for a singular anthem.[175] Some Americans argued that the song was too difficult to sing, with high notes well beyond the ordinary person's vocal range and overly complex lyrics.[176] These criticisms elicited fierce backlash from some proponents of the song, including a descendant of its composer, who co-founded the Francis Scott Key

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[174] "Topics of the Times," *New York Times*, July 20, 1903, 6; "The Star Spangled Banner," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 20, 1914, B2.
[175] "To Salute Old Glory," *Washington Post*, June 14, 1906, 2; "Evacuation Day Speakers Retreat," *New York Times*, November 26, 1907, 3.
[176] "Topics of the Times." *New York Times*, July 20, 1903, 6; "Efforts to "Improve" the "Star Spangled Banner,"" *New York Times*, April 2, 1905, X6; "The National Anthem," *Washington Post*, December 25, 1908, 7.

Memorial Association along with Admiral George Dewey.[177] In 1906, the Key Memorial Association claimed that Pres. Theodore Roosevelt issued an order formally declaring the song to be the national anthem but it appeared to only apply to the military.[178] Roosevelt's order apparently forbade military bands from playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" in the ragtime style, a popular genre created by African Americans and characterized by syncopated rhythm.[179] The original version of "The Star-Spangled Banner," dating to 1815, actually contained some syncopated rhythms and was performed in a 6/4 time signature; however, Sousa's definitive version shifted to 3/4 time and eliminated syncopation, to better resemble a 4/4 military march.[180] "The Star-Spangled Banner" had been changed once to suit popular tastes but many of the song's advocates would fiercely oppose subsequent alterations, particularly to genres associated with Black culture, like ragtime and eventually jazz.[181] Advocates of "The Star-Spangled Banner," purporting to preserve the traditional version of the song, actually made their efforts to popularize it more difficult by refusing to adapt to contemporary musical tastes, animated both by implicit white supremacy and nostalgia for a misremembered past.

World War I illustrated that a significant cultural shift in favor of "The Star-Spangled Banner" had occurred, in part due to wartime anxieties but also due to decades of work by the song's advocates to integrate it into daily life. During the war, in 1918, professional baseball teams began the tradition of playing the song before World Series games, further

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[177] F. S. Key Smith, "Our National Anthem," *Washington Post*, June 16, 1907, ES14.
[178] "Plan to Save Key Mansion," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1906, 10.
[179] "Salute National Anthem," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1907, 10.
[180] In the 1815 version, Measure 8 ("twilight's…") and Measure 12 ("gallantly…") contain syncopated rhythms. John Stafford Smith and Francis Scott Key, *Star Spangled Banner*, A. Bacon and Co., Philadelphia, PA, 1815, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100000006/ (accessed March 2, 2022); Smith, John Stafford, and John Philip Sousa, *Star Spangled Banner*, 1892, notated music, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100000017/ (accessed March 2, 2022).
[181] "Baltimore's Star-Spangled Banner Ordinance Unpopular," *New York Times*, September 3, 1916, X3.

cementing its association with the sport.[182] The tradition of playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" became one of the many sites through which many Americans demonstrated animosity toward those they believed advanced foreign, un-American ideologies and was most acutely directed at Germans and those with ancestral ties to Germany.[183] When the United States formally entered the conflict in April 1917, and even in the tense months beforehand, newspapers publicized incidents in which leftists and non-citizens who declined to stand when the song was played in public spaces faced expulsion from college and jury duty, or sometimes threats of violent confrontation.[184]

One of the most infamous instances of this phenomenon was the case of Karl Muck, the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra who held Swiss citizenship.[185] While some other orchestras elected to perform "The Star-Spangled Banner" at concerts during the war, Muck did not include it in the program at an October 1917 concert in Rhode Island, which elicited outcry from wartime voluntary organizations and newspapers nationwide.[186] Muck was reportedly perplexed that audiences expected a non-citizen like himself to play American patriotic music, but perhaps more offensive was that

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[182] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 130; Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?*, 120–126.

[183] Melissa D. Burrage, *The Karl Muck Scandal: Classical Music and Xenophobia in World War I America* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2019), 3, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/karl-muck-scandal/49108BD5169FB3B62AB04558207B4351.

[184] "Baltimore Boys Ordered To Honor Flag and Recite "Star-Spangled Banner,"" *Atlanta Constitution*, March 17, 1917, 4; "Girls Called Unpatriotic," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 24, 1917, 2; "Sits During U.S. Anthem; Mobbed," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 7, 1917, 1; "Three Ejected from Court," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 3, 1917, 4.

[185] Melissa D. Burrage also argues that there were broader cultural forces which contributed to Muck's downfall, including the rise of a American classical music identity distinct from European tradition. Burrage, *The Karl Muck Scandal*, 3.

[186] The controversy was not initially driven by the leadership of the Nationalist Network but rather by a coalition of women representing regional and state organizations, including music clubs, social welfare organizations, and voluntary associations like the Rhode Island Council of Defense and the state's Liberty Loan Committee. Later, the national leader of the Daughters of the American Revolution and chapters of the Daughters of 1812, both in the Nationalist Network, joined in on publicly condemning Muck. "Symphony Does Not Play U. S. Anthem *Boston Daily Globe*, October 31, 1917, 8; "Threat to Disband Boston Symphony," *New York Times*, November 1, 1917, 10; "Mrs Story, Ex-Head of D. A. R., Arrested," *Boston Daily Globe*, June 27, 1918, 1, 3; "Pittsburgh May Bar Muck," *New York Times*, November 7, 1917, 11; Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 184.

Muck and BSO founder Henry Lee Higginson stated that "The Star-Spangled Banner" did not have sufficient musical value for the orchestra to play in concert and that art should exist outside of national identity.[187] This last point fundamentally contradicted the belief held by the Nationalist Network and wartime propagandists that nationalist culture could have a profound effect on the spread of ideas. The Muck Affair likely hastened the federal government's investigation of Muck's relationship to the German government and he was eventually interned in a camp in Georgia before being deported. Although Muck later adopted anti-democratic beliefs and became a friend of Adolf Hitler, his internment and deportation during World War I were not due to any substantive anti-American activities. Muck failed to understand the shifting standards surrounding the public performance of patriotism in the United States, as well as the venerated status "The Star-Spangled Banner" reached during the war.

Formalizing a National Anthem: "The Star-Spangled Banner," 1923-1931

The question of publicly performing "The Star-Spangled Banner" during peacetime came to the fore in the 1920s. By that time, many Americans had grown accustomed to hearing "The Star-Spangled Banner" played at theaters, cinemas, and at concerts as a useful tool to promote everyday nationalism. Because the song had gained patriotic meaning during World War I, there was often a backlash when people chose not to play it at public events. In an episode reminiscent of the Muck Affair, the New York City Park Board canceled its summer community sing series when Harry Barnhart, conductor of the New York Community Chorus, refused to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" at one of the concerts in

[187] Richard Aldrich, "The Case of Doctor Muck, Major Higginson, and "The Star-Spangled Banner,"" *New York Times*, Nov 4, 1917, X5.

Central Park in August 1923. Barnhart objected to a "forced demand" by the Park Board, allegedly pressured by Irish-Americans in the police department, to perform what he considered a belligerent and anti-British song.[188] Barnhart insisted that he was no pacifist but wanted to avoid politicizing the community sing concerts in light of the Irish Civil War, especially when "The Star-Spangled Banner" was not the U.S.'s official national anthem. In response, Park Commissioner Francis D. Gallatin defended his decision to cancel the community sings and publicly castigated Barnhart as a rabble-rouser, voicing his concern for Barnhart's "psychological frame of mind."[189] Gallatin also received many letters of commendation from nationalist societies including the American Legion, which celebrated the "patriotic stand" he took.[190] Still, Barnhart continued his career as a conductor in New York. At another concert shortly after the incident, Barnhart recounted a conversation he had, before this controversy, with the mother of a fallen soldier who told him about the trauma she felt every time she heard "The Star-Spangled Banner."[191] The remnants of World War I jingoism animated the activities of the American Legion and others in the Nationalist Network in the 1920s, but the scars of the war also fueled some of the resistance to everyday nationalism.

Throughout the 1920s, leaders in the Nationalist Network advocated for Congress to officially recognize "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem. The Francis Scott Key Memorial Association had joined the Network in the 1900s and successfully influenced others within the Network to embrace "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the best candidate for

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188 "Stop Band Concert When Leader Balks at Playing Anthem," *New York Times*, August 24, 1923, 1. Among the subscribers who funded the concert series were Otto H. Kahn and Natalie Harris Hammond, founding member and fundraiser for the United States Flag Association, respectively.
189 "Gallatin Denies Barnhart Charge," *New York Times*, August 26, 1923, 19.
190 "Gallatin Denies Barnhart," 19.
191 "Engage New Band for Anthem in Park," *New York Times*, August 25, 1923, 4.

a national anthem. Ella Houck Holloway of the Daughters of 1812 encouraged Representative John Charles Linthicum (D-MD) to introduce several bills to recognize the song as the anthem, none of which passed.[192] As Marylanders, it was very much in their interest to ensure that a song about Baltimore's role in the War of 1812 became the official national anthem. Their continued, high-profile efforts to keep "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the forefront of discussions about a national anthem ensured that it was seen as the consensus pick over polarizing regional favorites like "Yankee Doodle" and "Dixie."[193]

However, many Americans objected to the content of "The Star-Spangled Banner," perhaps none as loudly as Augusta E. Stetson. A leader in the Church of Christ, Scientist until her excommunication for insubordination, Stetson spent $16,000 in newspaper advertising in 1924 to convince Americans that the song glamorized violence and was based on an immoral British drinking song.[194] The lyrics, particularly the third verse describing that the British military's "blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution," were words of "hatred, malice and braggadocio," Stetson testified when the City of New York investigated her for allegedly working as a British propagandist.[195] Investigators never proved that Stetson acted for any cause other than a personal, moral one; she continued to publish lengthy advertisements that called for a more Christian and less bellicose national anthem.[196]

The question of whether "The Star-Spangled Banner" was pro-British, with a tune based on a British song, or anti-British, with lyrics glorifying the War of 1812, divided some in the Nationalist Network. Nationalist leaders often identified as ethnically English, leading

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[192] "Star Spangled Banner Enemies Are Denounced," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1924, 2. The National Society United States Daughters of 1812 is a hereditary organization for women descended from U.S. military veterans who served between 1784 and 1815. It was one of the smaller hereditary women's organizations in the Nationalist Network.
[193] "Daughters of 1812 to Sponsor Anthem of U.S. in Congress," *Washington Post*, April 26, 1927, 20.
[194] "No Propagandist, Says Mrs. Stetson," *New York Times*, March 6, 1924, 9.
[195] "Mrs. A. E. Stetson Spent $16,000 to Kill Lines in National Anthem," *Boston Daily Globe*, March 6, 1924, 6.
[196] "Display Ad 18," *New York Times*, August 5, 1925, 18.

some to have trouble reconciling their ethnic heritage with their American identity. At a fundraiser to benefit seamen in the merchant marine in 1926, the leader of the New York Port Society's women's auxiliary, Mrs. Charles R. Scarborough, tried to prevent the band from playing the third verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner" because the lyrics were "unfair" to England, drawing a fierce rebuke from the National Security League within the Network.[197] When the soloist skipped the third verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner," a man dressed in the uniform of the Grand Army of the Republic stood up and badgered the soloist into singing the missing verse. The man, Thomas P. Tuite, received a round of applause. Having drastically misread the room, Mrs. Scarborough apologized and explained that she objected to Francis Scott Key's lyrics, which were "written in a spirit of hatred."[198] Tuite leapt to his feet again and declared, "This is no place for an American and I will be going" before adding, "I am not drunk," and left the hall with about half the attendees following him.[199] The evening concluded with more songs and a plea for friendly relations with the UK.

This highly dramatic incident reflected existing fissures in the Nationalist Network. The leaders of these groups generally agreed in the superiority of people of English ancestry and often viewed American identity as rooted in not only whiteness, but the supremacy of English-speaking peoples. Ireland, particularly during the early twentieth century, occupied a unique liminal space as a predominantly English-speaking nation while actively contesting British rule. Irish-Americans like Thomas P. Tuite, himself the secretary of the Star-Spangled Banner Association, were increasingly accepted within the Network and challenged the de

[197] The line Mrs. Scarborough objected to in the third verse was "Their blood has washed out their foul footstep's pollution." "National Anthem Sung Despite Ban," *New York Times*, July 2, 1926, 5; "Refuses to Speak if Anthem Is Barred," *New York Times*, July 1, 1926, 25.
[198] "National Anthem Sung," 5.
[199] "National Anthem Sung," 5.

facto Englishness of the movement; as Barnhart had alleged, some Irish-Americans used "The Star-Spangled Banner" as a way to bolster their American bona fides and undermine British influence in the United States.[200] As the country attained new levels of global power after World War I, American nationalists of British descent had to contend with the reality that their ethnic and national allegiances were not always compatible, a shock for those so rooted in their own racial and economic privilege.

Americans also argued about the musical quality of the song itself. The journalist Poultney Bigelow ignited a firestorm when he argued against adopting "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem, writing, "No one with a normal esophagus can sing [it] without screaming, nor any one read its lines without marveling at those who call them poetry."[201] In 1927, the National Federation of Music Clubs held a contest to find an alternative potential anthem, to be set to the poem "America the Beautiful."[202] Nationwide, contestants submitted nine hundred entries, which a panel of top music critics all found inadequate to match the language of the famous poem; none of the entries had the capacity to "sweep people off their feet."[203] "The Star-Spangled Banner" may have been musically unsophisticated with overly verbose lyrics, but it was memorable and sufficiently embedded in American culture by the 1920s to hold off potential competitors.

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[200] Tuite gained notoriety in the 1920s for frequently provoking public fights, sometimes physical, with critics of "The Star-Spangled Banner." After joining the Union army in the Civil War at age 14, he traveled to Ireland to fight for its independence from Britain. The Star-Spangled Banner Association was founded by a member of the Sons of the American Revolution in the 1910s and most of its original membership were Baltimoreans; by the 1920s, Tuite was one of the few active members. "Punches Punctuate Hearing on History," *New York Times*, February 28, 1922, 4; "Thomas P. Tuite," *New York Times*, January 24, 1933, 22; Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 143.

[201] Poultney Bigelow, "National Anthems," *New York Times*, July 22, 1926, 18; Marie Collins Rooney, "It's of Our Soil," *New York Times*, August 1, 1926, X8; George D. Vail Jr., "Poultney Bigelow's Attack on 'The Star-Spangled Banner' Stirs a Storm of Comment, Mostly for the Song," *New York Times*, August 1, 1926.

[202] In 1927, "America the Beautiful" was often set to different melodies than the definitive hymn setting by Samuel A. Ward, which is the version that became definitive later in the twentieth century.

[203] "900 Composition Rejected in Great Anthem Contest," *Boston Daily Globe*, April 22, 1927, 28.

African Americans in the 1920s were well aware of the lyrical weaknesses of "The Star-Spangled Banner," particularly how it celebrated "the land of the free" while describing a battle that occurred five decades before slavery ended. In the era of the transnational Negro Renaissance, African Americans challenged nationalist traditions which were created by and for white Americans, including "The Star-Spangled Banner." At a concert in Paris in 1923, a group of white Americans began singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" when the French orchestra concluded. They tried to hector African Americans in the audience to join them, but after quickly discussing it among themselves, the African Americans began singing "La Marseillaise," the official French national anthem. The orchestra and French audience members quickly joined them, in what the *New York Amsterdam News* recounted as a spirited rejection of the "activities of white Americans in spreading their vicious propaganda against Negroes and attempting to institute the 'color line' in Paris."[204] Although racism was a significant issue in France due to its extensive exploitation of colonized peoples, expatriate African Americans could hardly have participated in this type of spontaneous protest in the United States, where most theaters were racially segregated and where even white dissenters were harassed for not singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

For many African Americans, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was a song that better reflected their identities as Black and as Americans. Written by brothers James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson in the early 1900s, in 1919 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) adopted it as the Black national anthem. As a modern hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was both classic and versatile, particularly in comparison to the cumbersome "Star-Spangled Banner." Its lyrics ("Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, / Sing a song full of the hope that the present has

[204] "Black Americans Respond with the 'Marseillaise,'" *New York Amsterdam News*, July 25, 1923, 5.

brought us") expressed the Black experience in universal terms.[205] "It is our 'Star-Spangled Banner,'" the bandleader and music critic Dave Peyton wrote in 1926, suggesting that churches and schools incorporate the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" into everyday life, as NAACP members now sang it at their meetings.[206] As with the Nationalist Network advocating for "The Star-Spangled Banner," African-American leaders understood the power of incorporating an anthem like "Lift Every Voice and Sing" into people's daily lives. Both songs became popular before they were officially adopted as anthems. Despite the barriers preventing African Americans from exercising the full rights of citizenship, the Black national anthem was a fundamentally American song; it acknowledged that the United States was "the place for which our fathers sighed" but incontrovertibly "our native land."[207]

With memories of the First Red Scare still fresh, most American leftists viewed "The Star-Spangled Banner" as symbolic of the state-sponsored political oppression they had so recently survived. Some conservative labor unions, like the American Federation of Labor, supported efforts to make "The Star-Spangled Banner" part of everyday life; Samuel Gompers, leader of the AFL, was himself a leader within the Nationalist Network, attending the National Flag Conference of 1923 (see Chapter 1). Left-wing unions, however, more commonly embraced "The Internationale" as their anthem, reflecting their transnational identity as workers; the song was originally adopted by French leftists before becoming the first national anthem of the Soviet Union. American socialists and communists had to negotiate their personal allegiances with the increasingly nationalistic demands of American society.

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[205] "NAACP History: Lift Every Voice and Sing," NAACP, accessed April 6, 2020, https://www.naacp.org/naacp-history-lift-evry-voice-and-sing/.
[206] Dave Peyton, "The Musical Bunch: Our National Anthem," *Chicago Defender*, July 12, 1926, 6.
[207] "NAACP History."

At a May Day event at New York's Metropolitan Opera House in 1925, organizers in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union got into an argument with Nahan Franko, the celebrated conductor whose orchestra had been hired to play the event. Franko, who had not realized that this would be a political meeting, refused to begin the program without playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" first. "I am a native-born American," he told union organizers, refusing to play anything in the program, including "The Internationale" and selections from Rachmaninoff and Strauss, until playing "The Star-Spangled Banner."[208] Organizers capitulated and allowed Franko's orchestra to play. According to newspaper accounts, everyone in the audience and children's chorus stood at the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" but no one sang along. After Franko concluded, the May Day meeting organizer declared that after getting that "patriotic" song over with, they could now sing "our own song."[209] The attendees and chorus sang "The Internationale" along with Franko's orchestra. This incident reflects the tenuous position of American leftists who resisted everyday nationalism. Even if the state was not actively cracking down on socialists and communists as it had during the First Red Scare, the ritual of singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" had so effectively permeated American society that it was increasingly difficult to opt out.

By 1928, Rep. John Charles Linthicum (D-Maryland) and his collaborator, Ella Houck Holloway of the Daughters of 1812, had made almost no progress in their mission to convince Congress to recognize "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the official national anthem. Linthicum had introduced several bills that never passed the House of Representatives; it would take both houses of Congress and the president's signature to officially make it the

[208] "Red Songs Resound at May Day Rally in the Metropolitan," *New York Times*, May 2, 1925, 1.
[209] "Red Songs Resound."

national anthem. One of the obstacles facing Linthicum and Holloway was their obvious self-interest in "The Star-Spangled Banner" as Marylanders. In order to make this a national issue, Holloway enlisted James A. Moss of the United States Flag Association to write opinion pieces urging all Americans to demand a national anthem.[210] In one article, Moss condemned contests like the National Federation of Music Clubs' to designate a national anthem by committee: "National anthems are the inspirational, spontaneous outcome of national perils, struggles, and triumphs. They are born of occasions and of long popular historic use. They are bound up with patriotic tradition."[211] In other words, everyday nationalism revealed what the true national anthem should be: "The Star-Spangled Banner." However, Holloway's campaign hardly made a splash. The Daughters of 1812 lacked the membership to truly start a movement.

However, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), a military advocacy organization founded after the Spanish-American War and now dominated by World War I veterans, had sufficient influence nationwide to launch a campaign that could successfully make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the national anthem. In 1928, Capt. Walter I. Joyce, leader of the VFW's National Americanization Committee, enlisted the nationwide reach of the VFW's 125,000 members to mail 50,000 petitions to patriotic and civic organizations across the United States, with the hope of getting three million signatures supporting the adoption of an official national anthem. "We intend to gather enough signatures to make a petition a mile long," said Joyce, which "should bring opposition out into the open, where we can meet and defeat it."[212] Several other organizations in the Nationalist Network participated as well, including the VFW's Ladies Auxiliary (50,000 total members) and Daughters of the

[210] "Daughters of 1812 to Sponsor Anthem of U.S. in Congress," *Washington Post*, April 26, 1927, 20.
[211] James A. Moss, "Why a New National Anthem?" *Washington Post*, September 16, 1928, SM5.
[212] "Official National Anthem Is Sought by Veterans' Group," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 2, 1928, 3.

American Revolution (190,000).[213] The VFW formed a 62-member special committee to coordinate work across these organizations.[214] This campaign demonstrated the VFW's potential for political influence and anticipated its foray into what Stephen R. Ortiz calls "veteran politics," with the 1932 Bonus March and intense lobbying for veterans' benefits throughout the New Deal.[215]

Joyce had long been a campaigner for patriotic education of both immigrants and American citizens. He helped write the Flag Code on the Code Committee at the National Flag Conference in 1923, and after Garland W. Powell retired from the American Legion, Joyce and the VFW became the preeminent advocates for the Americanization of American citizens.[216] Joyce may have been motivated to campaign for "The Star-Spangled Banner" in 1928 because of the recent passage of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, whose signatories agreed to avoid war to settle disputes, as well as efforts by pacifists and organizations like the National Federation of Music Clubs to elevate "America the Beautiful" to equal or higher status than "The Star-Spangled Banner" in American society.

Through the grassroots work of VFW members and dozens of other nationalist organizations, Joyce announced in 1930 that they would present Congress with five million signatures on a petition fifty miles long.[217] Twenty-five state governors signed, as well as thousands of members of groups as varied as the Boy and Girl Scouts, masonic orders, the American Federation of Labor, General Federation of Women's Clubs, and Sons of Confederate Veterans.[218] Holloway was shocked, apparently unaware of the VFW campaign,

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[213] US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the National Anthem: Hearings Before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 71st Congress, 2nd Session on H. R. 14* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 12.
[214] US Congress, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the National Anthem*," 5.
[215] Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill*, 4–9.
[216] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 160–161.
[217] "An 'Official' National Anthem," *Ithaca Journal-News*, January 31, 1930, 4.
[218] US Congress, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the National Anthem*," 5, 12-15.

and wrote a letter to Joyce accusing him of usurping a campaign begun by the Daughters of 1812. Joyce wrote back defending the VFW's work while saying that the results of the Daughters of 1812 campaign, five unsuccessful bills, spoke for themselves.[219] Joyce then collaborated with the Daughters of the American Revolution to hold a meeting at the DAR's Memorial Continental Hall with representatives of forty patriotic and veterans' groups.[220] The DAR was a much larger and more prestigious hereditary women's organization than the Daughters of 1812, and their headquarters had been the site of the 1923 National Flag Conference. Joyce understood that large organizations in the Nationalist Network had the power to affect change, but they needed smaller organizations to fall in line.

On January 31, 1930, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing to discuss Representative Linthicum's sixth bill to recognize "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the US national anthem. Linthicum was quick to ally with Joyce. They invited sopranos Elsie Jorss-Reilley of the VFW Auxiliary and Grace Evelyn Boudlin of Baltimore to sing for the committee and counter claims that the high notes were out of the range of women's voices. Holloway did not attend the hearing but sent her deputy from the Maryland chapter of the Daughters of 1812 to read Holloway's statement blessing the campaign. Linthicum and Joyce also explicitly credited Holloway's work.[221] At the hearing, representatives from the VFW, Sons of the American Revolution, and several women's nationalist organizations, all dressed in patriotic colors, cheered when Linthicum presented the VFW petition to the Judiciary Committee, contained in several crates holding hundreds of reams of paper.[222]

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[219] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 168.
[220] "5,000,000 Plea For U.S. Anthem," *Washington Post*, January 31, 1930, 2.
[221] US Congress, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the National Anthem*, 3-4, 9. By all accounts, Holloway only missed the hearing because she was legitimately ill, not merely chagrined. *Legislation*, 18.
[222] "Committee Hears Star-Spangled Banner Sung; Studies Bill to Make It the National Anthem," *New York Times*, February 1, 1930, 1.

"These 5,000,000 are but a fraction of the citizens who want this official recognition granted this grand old song," Joyce declared, explaining that Congress had long underestimated Americans' affection for "The Star-Spangled Banner."[223] Representatives from dozens of other nationalist groups also testified, including the DAR, the Women's Relief Corps, and the secretary-general of the Sons of the American Revolution.[224] After that first hearing, it seemed like the tide had finally turned for "Star-Spangled Banner" advocates in the Nationalist Network.

Still, not all Americans were convinced of the suitability of "The Star-Spangled Banner" or even the need for a national anthem. At a House Judiciary Committee hearing the following day, the composer Kitty Cheatham testified against the song. Like Augusta E. Stetson, Cheatham was a Christian Scientist who opposed the rumored origins of its melody as a British drinking song. Cheatham specialized in composing children's music and argued that the lyrics celebrating rockets and bombs were too violent to teach children, making the song "warlike and unsingable."[225] Cheatham was the only opponent of the song allowed to testify by Judiciary Committee Chairman Leonidas C. Dyer (R-Missouri); two days later, the committee submitted a favorable report on Linthicum's bill, which sent it to be voted on by the rest of the House.[226] Still, over the next several weeks, major newspapers printed letters to the editor questioning whether the federal government should legislate patriotism in this way.[227] The journalist William Pickens suggested that if Congress wanted a singable anthem with universally-appealing lyrics, they should look no further than "Lift Every Voice and

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[223] US Congress, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner,"* 5.
[224] US Congress, *Legislation to Make "The Star-Spangled Banner,"* ii.
[225] "Subcommittee Hears More about 'Star-Spangled Banner,'" *Daily Boston Globe*, February 2, 1930, A19.
[226] "'Star-Spangled Banner' Favored as Anthem in Report to House," *New York Times*, February 5, 1930, 3.
[227] Albert S. Bard, "The National Anthem," *New York Times*, February 5, 1930, 18; Frank B. Rowell, "'The Star-Spangled Banner' Not Favored by Everybody," *New York Times*, February 9, 1930, E5.

Sing."[228] Kitty Cheatham was not the only musician to oppose "The Star-Spangled Banner;" the Music Supervisors National Congress passed a resolution "vigorously" opposing its adoption as the national anthem because of its violent lyrics and challenging melody.[229]

Still, after a letter-writing campaign by the DAR, the Linthicum bill unanimously passed the House on April 21, 1930, marking an unprecedented victory for "Star-Spangled Banner" campaigners.[230] The Senate, however, tabled the bill for nearly a year while it dealt with emergency legislation related to the Great Depression. 1930 and 1931 were chaotic years in both chambers of Congress as the economic crisis careened out of control. Pres. Herbert Hoover's business-minded administration was reluctant to enact substantive reform and legislators squabbled over what the government's role should be in aiding the American people. After years of work by the Nationalist Network, it looked like unprecedented economic calamity might have ended its dreams for "The Star-Spangled Banner."

What changed between April 1930 and March 1931, when the Senate finally passed its national anthem bill and Hoover signed it into law?[231] Historians have typically interpreted this shift through the lens of domestic politics, where anxiety about the worsening economic disaster likely motivated political leaders to embrace the national anthem issue to cheaply manufacture national unity; Hoover himself was mindful of veterans calling for the government to pay World War I bonuses.[232] However, to better understand domestic political motivations, it is imperative to place the U.S. in an international context.

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[228] William Pickens, "Pickens Says: Suggesting a "National Anthem," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 2, 1930, 20.
[229] "'Star-Spangled Banner' Opposed as Anthem; Music Supervisors Vote Protest to Congress," *New York Times*, March 30, 1930, 3.
[230] "D.A.R. Renews Effort for Anthem Bill," *Daily Boston Globe*, April 20, 1930, A11.
[231] "'Star Spangled Banner' Is Voted National Anthem by Congress," *New York Times*, March 4, 1931, 1.
[232] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 170.

In 1931, nationalism was on the rise not only in the United States but internationally. Whether it was due to economic woes, political upheaval, or some combination of the two, nations across Europe reconsidered their own national anthems during that year. The British Parliament debated the undiplomatic allusion to France's "knavish tricks" in "God Save the King" in February, and Italians rioted when Arturo Toscanini, the Parma-born conductor of the New York Philharmonic, refused to play Mussolini's "Giovinezza" at a concert in Rome.[233] The newly formed Second Spanish Republic tried to find a replacement for the monarchist "Marcha Real" and in March, the Soviet Union sponsored a contest for new military marches to replace the traditional tsarist marches it still used to drill soldiers.[234] Around the world, both new and established governments sought to cultivate national pride and loyalty by adopting new or revised national music. Whether or not Hoover was aware of these particular examples is unclear, but the fact remains that Americans were debating and contesting nationalist traditions like citizens in many other countries. In this period, nationalist movements did not exist in a vacuum; the same political and economic undercurrents that led five million Americans to demand a national anthem affected other nations as well.

The Nationalist Network regarded the official adoption of a national anthem to be a tremendous achievement. Walter I. Joyce and the VFW invited five hundred leaders of nationalist groups and military officers to a celebratory dinner in Manhattan.[235] The Daughters of 1812 held a ceremony dedicating a bronze tablet honoring "Star-Spangled

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[233] "British Anthem to Stand as Is; Snowden Says Only Tune Counts," *New York Times*, February 26, 1931, 1; David Darrah, "Slap Toscanini; Refuses to Play Fascist Anthem," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 16, 1931, 3.
[234] T. R. Ybarra, "National Anthems Born in Time of Revolution," *New York Times*, April 26, 1931, XX12; Raymond Hall, "Spanish Difficulties with New National Anthem," *New York Times*, October 4, 1931, 115; "Soviets Seek National March," *New York Times*, March 15, 1931, 118. The Soviet Union retained the transnational "Internationale" as its anthem until it adopted the nationalistic "Hymn of the Soviet Union" in 1944.
[235] "To Mark Anthem Adoption," *New York Times*, April 19, 1931, 38.

Banner" author Francis Scott Key in the Washington National Cathedral, which also served to memorialize their organization's role in making the song the national anthem.[236] Observers also noted what a feat of grassroots political lobbying the VFW's campaign had been; a *Washington Post* editorial marveled at their savvy move of bringing two sopranos to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" before the House Judiciary Committee.[237] The VFW campaign was not only an achievement in its scale, but in its showmanship.

Not all Americans were thrilled. In many letters to the editor and newspaper columns over the next few months, people worried that Congress was now in the business of regulating patriotic traditions. Others suggested this was a cynical, hollow gesture, because many Americans already assumed that "The Star-Spangled Banner" had always been the national anthem.[238] One letter writer to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* despaired of the recent violence against Toscanini in Italy and the persecution of Karl Muck during World War I, questioning the increasing fanaticism aroused by national anthems.[239] An anonymous "Patriot" wrote to the *New York Times* recounting his trip to the movies on the Fourth of July, when he saw that most of the American audience did not know to stand when "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played before the film began. A reader responded to "Patriot," fondly reminiscing that such people were "mobbed" during World War I.[240] A third letter writer, Henry H. Layburn, then entered the fray, condemning their callousness. "True patriotism consists in far deeper rooted impulses than the custom of standing when the National Anthem is played," he wrote. "Cleaner politics, real courts of justice, less of the

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[236] "Memorial Honors Francis Scott Key," *New York Times*, April 27, 1931, 43.
[237] "Making Things Happen," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1931, 6.
[238] Hopeful Waiting, "'"The Star-Spangled Banner" Discussed as the National Anthem," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1931, S9; H. I. Phillips, "Dumm and Dummer: On the National Anthem," *Washington Post*, April 5, 1931, MF16.
[239] Raymond Dale, "For a New Anthem," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1931, 14.
[240] Patriot, "Letters to the Editor: Disrespect to Our Anthem," *New York Times*, July 10, 1931, 18; Lee Shaul, "Letters to the Editor: Respect for National Anthem," *New York Times*, July 15, 1931, 18.

desire to get rich quick and more of the brotherhood of man is what we sorely need."[241] After two years of economic depression, Americans like Layburn questioned the pomp and circumstance of nationalist traditions which glossed over the deeper problems the country now faced.

Contesting the National Anthem, 1935-1945

Even before Congress officially made "The Star-Spangled Banner" the National Anthem in 1931, the National Anthem was not uniformly embraced; there was no requirement in the federal legislation that "The Star-Spangled Banner" must be played in public settings, so it was at the discretion of sports leagues, theater owners, and school boards. In 1939, George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion found that only 68 percent of Americans knew it was the National Anthem and 50 percent admitted to knowing only "some" of the lyrics.[242] After years of campaigning by the Daughters of 1812 and Veterans of Foreign Wars to recognize "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the National Anthem, it appeared that the greater obstacle was convincing Depression-era Americans to learn the song.

In 1938, the bandleader Vincent Lopez arranged a new version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" which lowered the high notes to make it more easily sung, a response to the decades-long argument that the song was too difficult for the average person to sing.[243] Sousa's version was in a key better suited to brass instruments than the human voice and had

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241 Henry H. Layburn, "Patriotism," *New York Times*, July 26, 1931, E2.
242 "Asks Flag Display Today," *New York Times*, September 17, 1934, 7; "D.A.R. Favors Steps to Keep Isms Out of All the Americas," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 21, 1939, 6; American Institute of Public Opinion, "'The Star-Spangled Banner' Is Song Very Few Know," *Washington Post*, March 5, 1939, B2.
243 "Dispute Starts on Lowering of Note By Lopez in 'Star Spangled Banner'," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 14, 1938, 1.

a tempo which quickly became old-fashioned and unappealing as jazz and swing came to dominate American popular music. By the 1930s, it was so common to deviate from this "definitive" arrangement that the DAR had to reprimand some of its members for altering it.[244]

Many in the classical music community and Nationalist Network loudly objected to Lopez's arrangement.[245] Walter Damrosch, a National Re-Dedication committee member (see Chapter 3) and rival of Karl Muck, joined eight other composers and bandleaders in writing a letter to Pres. Roosevelt to condemn Lopez. "Let's prevent them from converting the national anthem into a swing tune for crackpots and jitter-bugs," the composers wrote, but FDR ultimately stayed out of the fray.[246] Although Lopez deliberately did not alter the rhythm, his arrangement sparked a long-simmering backlash against swing and jazz versions of "The Star-Spangled Banner," with some radio stations banning them.[247] Because the jazz and swing genres were created by and associated with Black artists, these protests had implicitly racist undertones. Vincent Lopez was white and his career recovered quickly, but the message was clear that the National Anthem was not to be influenced by Black music. "Star-Spangled Banner" traditionalists clung to the Sousa version, itself a tradition only two decades old, instead of modernizing the song in a popular style that might encourage Americans to actually learn the anthem.

The argument that "The Star-Spangled Anthem" was too militaristic continued even after it was officially adopted as the National Anthem in 1931. In 1935, John L. Tildsley,

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244 "D.A.R. Members Sing National Anthem Like a Dirge, Oregon Delegate Says," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1935, 16.
245 "Dispute Starts."
246 "Beg Roosevelt to Bar Swing from Anthem," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 13, 1938, 1.
247 "Oh, Say, Can You Sing!" *New York Times*, June 26, 1938, 127; "National Anthem Revision Barred by Radio Station," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 23, 1938, 7; "Group to Fight 'Jazzing' Of the National Anthem," *New York Times*, December 21, 1938, 21.

assistant superintendent of schools in New York City, stated that he disagreed with a rule requiring high school students to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" every week. "I don't think there is any lofty sentiment involved in the anthem, nor is its air good music," Tildsley said. "It appears to be quite an accident that it became the national anthem."[248] In the weeks after Tildsley's remarks, newspapers printed columns and letters to the editor reminding Americans of the VFW's and Daughters of 1812's campaigns and comparing "The Star-Spangled Banner" favorably to the violent fascist anthems of Italy and Germany.[249] New York City schools continued to require high school students to sing the National Anthem. The ambivalence many Americans felt about "The Star-Spangled Banner" continued in 1938 when Kate Smith recorded a new version of Irving Berlin's World War I-era song "God Bless America" which reached such popularity that it made the *Billboard* magazine charts for fifteen weeks. The poetic, prayer-like "God Bless America" became so ubiquitous in the late-1930s United States that a fed-up Woody Guthrie wrote a response song called "God Blessed America," which he later recorded in 1944 as "This Land Is Your Land."[250] The hit patriotic songs of the late 1930s, "God Bless America" and the Federal Theatre Project's "Ballad for Americans" (see Chapter 3), better addressed Americans' anxieties than "The Star-Spangled Banner," appealing to national ideals and American exceptionalism as dictatorships threatened to overrun Europe and Asia.

No "Star-Spangled Banner" critic went to such great lengths as Frederick Jagel, who petitioned a federal court in 1939 to challenge the 1931 law on the grounds that Congress had acted illegally by declaring a national anthem at the height of the Great Depression. Jagel

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[248] "Tildsley Assails National Anthem," *New York Times*, October 20, 1935, 18.
[249] Franklin Clarkin, "National Anthem under Fire," *New York Times*, December 1, 1935, SM15; Fanny S. H. Hall, "Anthem Defended," *New York Times*, December 22, 1935, E9.
[250] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 179.

argued that Congress had pushed through this legislation to appease Maryland-based nationalist groups like the Daughters of 1812 while most Americans were too devastated by unemployment and hunger to contest it.[251] Jagel also objected to "The Star-Spangled Banner" on musical grounds, calling it "an unmemorizable, fifth-rate poem" with an "unsingable melody" that even he, a tenor with New York's Metropolitan Opera, could not sing.[252] Leaders of the Nationalist Network, including the Maryland-based president-general of the DAR, lambasted Jagel in the press and the petition elicited angry letters to the editor and newspaper articles across the country, including an editorial which stated that Jagel "appears to consider that act a clear violation of the Bill of Rights, since it constitutes a cruel and unusual punishment upon singers."[253] The district court rejected the petition and Jagel continued to advocate for a new national anthem, although it appeared that he finally managed to learn "The Star-Spangled Banner" when he performed it at an anti-communist rally held by the American Legion and Sons of the American Revolution a few months later.[254] Jagel's lawsuit may have rested on dubious legal grounds, but it explicitly questioned the state's authority to validate nationalist traditions during an economic crisis.

World War II solidified the cultural and social prominence of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Orchestras and movie theaters played the song before performances and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, infamous for the Muck Affair, began playing it before regular

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[251] "Metropolitan Tenor Attacks Legality of National Anthem," *Washington Post*, July 19, 1939, 1; "National Anthem Fight Renewed," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1939, 11.
[252] "'War Jitters' Felt in South American *New York Times*, October 4, 1939, 11; "Metropolitan Tenor Attacks," 9.
[253] "Metropolitan Tenor Attacks," 1, 9; "Timid Tenor," *Washington Post*, July 22, 1939, 6; Osmand Shreve Molarsky, ""Lap Me In Soft Lydian Airs,"" *Washington Post*, July 27, 1939, 8; Harry Cedar, "Star-Spangled Banner," *Washington Post*, July 28, 1939, 8; H. B., "The National Anthem," *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1939, A4; Natalie Gordon, "Oh, Say, Can You Sing?" *Christian Science Monitor*, September 9, 1939, WM4.
[254] "'War Jitters' Felt;" "Dies at Rally Here Warns U.S. To Stop Its 'Aping' of Europe," *New York Times*, November 30, 1939, 1.

concerts weeks before the United States entered the war, for the first time since 1917.[255] Foreign-born musicians received unfair levels of scrutiny, as they had during World War I. Unaware that Massachusetts had passed a state statute forbidding the rearrangement of "The Star-Spangled Banner" with the intent of preventing arrangements into popular dance styles, the Russian-born modernist composer Igor Stravinsky performed his new arrangement, with the BSO in 1944.[256] Stravinsky originally wrote this version in 1941 before the United States entered World War II, and his serene, hymn-like interpretation slowed the tempo, altered some of the rhythms, and changed some chords.[257] While Stravinsky's version did not mark a significant change from tradition, audiences in 1944 responded negatively to his deviation from a militaristic style. Although Stravinsky violated neither the letter nor spirit of the statute, newspapers still published sensationalist articles validating police efforts to intimidate him and stoking xenophobia among their readers.[258] One *Daily Boston Globe* reader, who admitted he had not heard Stravinsky's arrangement, wrote, "Is nothing in America sacred to these iconoclastic foreign minds?"[259] The *Globe* itself had published an article earlier in the war favorably describing the wide variety of arrangements performed by orchestras throughout the northeast.[260] Stravinsky's case differed from Muck's; the former embraced "The Star-Spangled Banner" so strongly he created a new arrangement, facing public outcry but no serious consequences, and continued to work in the United States. Still, both

[255] Cecil Smith, "The Stage," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 2, 1942, 22; Nora Holt, "Music: "O'er The Land of The Free"—ee," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 8, 1945, 9A; "National Anthem Heard at Regular Symphony Concert," *Daily Boston Globe*, November 15, 1941, 13.
[256] Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 264, Section 9, https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter264/Section9 (accessed March 9, 2022); "No Official Version Exists of 'The Star Spangled Banner,'" *Daily Boston Globe*, January 23, 1944, C38.
[257] Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?*, 231–234.
[258] "State Law Prohibits Playing New Version Star Spangled Banner," *Daily Boston Globe*, January 16, 1944, 1, 19.
[259] Leonard M. Libbey, "Yankee Blood Boils at Stravinsky's Act," *Daily Boston Globe*, January 23, 1944, C17.
[260] "On Differences in Playing "The Star Spangled Banner," *Daily Boston Globe*, April 12, 1942, C6.

conductors were portrayed by the press as foreign interlopers corrupting American music and patriotic culture with their indulgent European sensibilities.

During World War II, professional baseball and football teams began playing the National Anthem before every game, explicitly to aid the war effort and implicitly to avoid criticism of athletes for avoiding service.[261] As one World War I veteran-turned-sportswriter commented, "It reminds us that we're in a war. We need to be reminded at every opportunity," before noting that teams invited service members to attend games as special guests for the same reason.[262] This set the precedent in which professional sports teams used the national anthem to convince fans that they and the military pursued complementary goals and promoted similar ideals of American masculinity and patriotism. But the association between the national anthem and professional sports persisted well beyond the war years. By playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at games for the rest of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, sports teams subtly perpetuated this martial association, ingraining its nationalist message in generations of Americans.

While some Americans criticized the music and lyrics of "The Star-Spangled Banner" during World War II, it effectively marked the end of serious efforts to find a replacement national anthem.[263] Beyond its official recognition by Congress, millions of Americans imbued the song with cultural meaning by participating in the ritual of its public performance. This meaning was also highly dependent on historical context; although "The Star-Spangled Banner" significantly predated the world wars of the twentieth century, its martial themes suited that era, which in turn defined much of American national identity and

[261] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 184.
[262] John Kieran, "Sports of the Times: Every Day Is Flag Day at the Ball Parks," *New York Times*, May 16, 1942, 17.
[263] Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough: National Anthem," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 3, 1943, 6.

the United States' place in the world during the twentieth century. Still, there remains the question of why a song almost universally considered difficult to sing attained such cultural significance. A 1945 column in the *New York Times* suggested that the imperfection of "The Star-Spangled Banner" was a key feature of its appeal: "…if democracy is so hard a thing to operate perhaps it is right and proper and in some ways fitting that the national anthem of a democracy should be hard to sing."[264] This was certainly an idealistic interpretation, but nationalism reflects a broader social and political struggle to advance certain ideals. While the historical context of the adoption of "The Star-Spangled Banner" contributed significantly to its longevity, perhaps this metatextual meaning also contributed to its appeal.

Conclusion

The recognition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the United States' National Anthem, both by Congress and by the populace, was never written in the stars; it was the result of concerted efforts by nationalist activists to popularize the song, imbue it with cultural meaning, and affirm this meaning by attaining the imprimatur of the federal government. It is difficult to measure how much of its popular appeal was the result of coercion or free will, a fundamental question for traditions of everyday nationalism. Still, "The Star-Spangled Banner" never would have distinguished itself among patriotic songs without popular support, which emerged out of a particular historical context of World War I. Later, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' national anthem campaign succeeded where earlier ones had failed, partly due to its success in mobilizing the Nationalist Network but also because of the domestic political and international context of the early Great Depression. However, the Network's status as an independent authority on patriotic traditions would be

[264] "Topics of The Times," *New York Times*, June 3, 1945, E8.

challenged later in the 1930s, as New Deal cultural programs like the Federal Theatre Project asserted a more inclusive and left-wing nationalism than the Network of the 1920s. By seeking the state's approval, conservative-leaning nationalist leaders yielded some of the power to create nationalist culture to a federal government which would not always share their vision of American national identity.

Chapter 3:
"Ballad for Americans:"
Nationalist Responses to the Great Depression, 1932-1939

During the 1930s, there were widespread fears that capitalism and democracy, two cornerstones on which American national identity rested, would not survive. From the First Red Scare through the 1920s, the Nationalist Network defined what it meant to be American in opposition to communism, leading to a symbiotic relationship between nationalist groups and pro-business politicians, particularly the Republican presidents of the 1920s. The Network used everyday nationalism to reinforce a right-wing, exclusive interpretation of American national identity consistent with the policies and politics of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. But the stock market crash of 1929 revealed the weaknesses of unregulated capitalism and a government aligned so closely with its interests. In 1932, out of fear of economic collapse, Americans voted for Franklin D. Roosevelt for president and Democratic majorities in Congress. FDR's New Deal introduced sweeping reforms of the banking system, agriculture, and industry and also enacted large-scale unemployment relief programs, asserting that the federal government could play a larger role in the economy while still upholding American values.[265]

For much of the 1930s, the Nationalist Network and the production of nationalist culture became a site where people across the political spectrum debated whether the New Deal was un-American. Conservative nationalists and their allies in the business community worried that the Second New Deal of 1935-1936, which strengthened organized labor and the welfare state, revealed FDR's secret communist sympathies. In the eyes of anti-New

[265] See Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016); Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013); Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century.*

Dealers, the president's unsuccessful attempt to increase the number of Supreme Court justices in 1937 further called into question his commitment to the constitutional separation of powers. New nationalist organizations like the American Liberty League and the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government emerged in the mid-1930s to criticize FDR's policies as radical, communist, and un-American.[266] For the most part, however, the major organizations in the Nationalist Network did not openly oppose FDR, despite the conservative-leaning leadership of groups like the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion. Some New Deal arts programs collaborated with established organizations in the Network in their production of nationalist culture, making them a short-lived but important part of the Network. Conservative nationalist leaders were torn between their skepticism of the New Deal and their desire for proximity to political influence. When the United States Flag Association issued a booklet criticizing the New Deal as unconstitutional, the group earned scorn in the press because it listed FDR as its honorary president on the title page.[267]

After liberals were purged from the nationalist movement during the First Red Scare, left-wing nationalism, which included both liberals and leftists, experienced a renaissance in the 1930s as Americans feared fascism could covertly infiltrate and corrupt their democratic government as it had in parts of Europe. The Popular Front was a coalition of leftists and New Dealers allied against fascism and for progressive economic and social change. The communists and socialists in this coalition generally eschewed revolutionary change and

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[266] The American Liberty League has been examined in depth in Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009); Patrick C. Patton, "Standing at Thermopylae: A History of the American Liberty League" (PhD diss., Temple University, 2015), 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1687757109/abstract/DCED15C49BD242F4PQ/1. The National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Democracy was exclusively a congressional lobbying organization and was unconcerned with creating or spreading nationalist traditions, making it outside the scope of this dissertation.

[267] "Capital Smiles over Pamphlet on Constitution," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1935, 7.

found common cause with liberals to pressure New Deal leaders to make progressive reforms to American capitalism and industry. Although the Popular Front was a transnational movement, in the United States it deliberately used patriotic language and symbolism to venerate democracy as a bulwark against fascism and assert that workers' solidarity and anti-racism were American values. The Popular Front thus made an argument that was at once radical and traditional, a reclamation of the left's role in American nationalism before the 1920s. Popular Front ideals influenced much of the popular literature, art, and music of the 1930s, demonstrating that a significant number of Americans were open to leftist ideas when they were presented in the familiar language of nationalism. As the nation struggled through the Great Depression and watched as fascism spread across Europe, the Popular Front used nationalist language and culture to champion left-wing ideals like anti-fascism, workers' solidarity, and anti-racism.[268]

While the Popular Front and conservative nationalists disagreed about how to solve the problems with capitalism which led to the Great Depression, both used patriotic language and cultural production to combat ideologies they viewed as a threat to American democracy. Two organizations in the Nationalist Network, the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) and National Re-Dedication, found common cause in defending democracy despite their significant political differences. While both used nationalist language and symbolism to bring patriotic education to all Americans, the two organizations envisioned the role of the federal government differently. The FTP, as a left-leaning New Deal program, saw the government's potential to create a more inclusive and egalitarian society while National Re-Dedication, an independent coalition of FDR skeptics, feared its power to curtail individual

[268] See Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1998); Leslie Elaine Frost, *Dreaming America: Popular Front Ideals and Aesthetics in Children's Plays of the Federal Theatre Project* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013).

freedom. Examining the FTP and National Re-Dedication as case studies reveals how nationalist language and traditions were used by those across the political spectrum for different ends in response to the economic and political exigencies of the 1930s.

Federal Theatre Project 1935-1939

The Federal Theatre Project was a Works Progress Administration relief program that employed theatre professionals during the New Deal. Founded in 1935, the FTP was the first of the WPA's Federal Project Number One arts programs to be eliminated under allegations of communism levied during congressional investigations by opponents of the New Deal. Over four years, the FTP employed over thirty thousand actors, writers, directors, stagehands, electricians, carpenters, and other workers in dozens of cities and touring companies across the United States. The program revived classical plays and created new works about American history and contemporary issues, as well as African-American and foreign-language plays. Its influence was vast; forty million Americans saw FTP shows, which were not only performed on professional stages but in schools, public parks, and even Civilian Conservation Corps camps. The FTP shaped the future of American film and theatre by launching the careers of some of the most influential playwrights and film directors of the twentieth century, including Arthur Miller, Elia Kazan, and Orson Welles.[269] It was also an affordable source of entertainment during the Great Depression; 65% of FTP productions were free and most other productions charged between $0.50 to $1.65 per ticket compared to $3.30 to $5.50 in the commercial theatre.[270] Although the FTP was first and

[269] Frost, *Dreaming America*, 2–3.
[270] Elmer Rice, "Tickets Going Down," *New York Times*, September 24, 1939, 129; Hallie Flanagan, "What Was Federal Theatre?" December 1936, 3, Folder 3.1.76, Box 566, Federal Theatre Project Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. This collection will be referenced as FTP Collection, LOC.

foremost a jobs program, its director Hallie Flanagan also maintained that it must be "national in scope, regional in emphasis, and American in idea."[271] As a federally-funded program with a mandate to create distinctly American art which was affordable and accessible to much of the public, the FTP was a fundamentally nationalist project.

The FTP became a site where the left and right contested American nationalism. Many of the FTP's original works envisioned the left-wing ideals of the Popular Front as American ideals, which New Deal opponents in Congress decried as communist and un-American. Surprisingly, the Nationalist Network, which had purged leftists and liberals from its movement in the First Red Scare and 1920s, had little to do with the crusade against the FTP. Several groups in the Network, including the stridently anti-communist American Legion, actually collaborated with the FTP on patriotic plays and radio programs. However, the members of Congress who defunded the FTP in 1939 used language developed by anti-communists in the Network in the 1910s and 1920s to delegitimize a left-leaning interpretation of American nationalism. The congressional coalition of pro-business Republicans and southern segregationist Democrats argued that plays which challenged their interests by showing working-class solidarity or merely employed Black people were "communist" and therefore "un-American." By repeating such absolutist terms for more than a year of congressional hearings and in press coverage, they eventually convinced other lawmakers that the American national theatre was un-American and must be shut down. Still, the forty million Americans who attended FTP plays during its four years of existence implicitly disagreed. By examining left-wing nationalism in the FTP's plays and the program's defunding by Congress, this dissertation will consider how the federal government

[271] Hallie Flanagan, "A Theatre for the People," *American Magazine of Art*, August 1936, 9, Folder 3.1.75, Box 566, FTP Collection, LOC.

created a space for leftists to perform ideologically nationalist art embraced by the public and why conservative politicians defunded it.

There is a robust body of scholarship on the FTP among cultural historians and literary scholars.[272] Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front* considers the FTP as one branch of the cultural production of the Popular Front of the 1930s, a movement that centered labor and leftist politics in American popular culture.[273] In *Dreaming America*, Leslie Elaine Frost builds on Denning's argument that Americans embraced the cultural Popular Front in the late 1930s because they were interested in left-wing political issues like anti-fascism and anti-racism. Frost, however, views the cultural Popular Front in the United States as part of the effort to define "Americanism" and national identity which consumed much of the early twentieth century. Although the Popular Front began as an attempt by the Communist Party USA to build a coalition with liberals and socialists, Frost astutely notes that the visual, literary, and theatrical works created in the Popular Front were frequently concerned with defining what it meant to be American rather than internationalist themes.[274] This dissertation will go further and argue that the FTP was fundamentally nationalist. As part of the New Deal's Federal Project Number One, which also included the Federal Writers' Project and Federal Music Project, the FTP represented the federal government's first substantive attempt to create nationalist mythology through cultural production. The FTP was the most notorious of these state-sponsored nationalist art projects, constantly attacked for its anti-fascist, pro-labor, and anti-racist content before its high-profile defunding in

[272] For an examination of Black theatre in the FTP, see Kate Dossett, *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2020). For analysis of the FTP at the regional level, see Elizabeth A. Osborne, *Staging the People: Community and Identity in the Federal Theatre Project* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Barry Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[273] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 45.
[274] Frost, *Dreaming America*, 8–10.

1939. This was a major victory for New Deal opponents and further alienated leftists from their sense of belonging to the American nationalist project.

This dissertation will use the term "Popular Front nationalism" to describe the left-wing nationalism of the FTP. Traditional interpretations of the Popular Front view it as internationalist, but much of the cultural production of the Popular Front was concerned with American national identity. While artists of the Popular Front often criticized American society, they also created a nationalist ideology grounded in left-wing ideals like anti-fascism, workers' solidarity, and anti-racism. I will argue that the Federal Project Number One arts programs were fundamentally nationalist and that the FTP was unique among these programs because its open commitment to Popular Front nationalism made it a high-profile target of pro-business Republicans and segregationist Democrats in Congress. Although the Popular Front itself faded from American life shortly after World War II, the FTP represented a unique moment where government-subsidized, socially-conscious theatre was embraced by millions of Americans.

Educational and History Plays

The FTP wanted to bring Popular Front nationalism to all Americans, not just as audience members but as active participants as well. In addition to producing new American plays, the FTP helped schools, churches, and community organizations put on amateur productions of educational and socially-conscious dramas.[275] By 1937, its National Service Bureau compiled a play list of 1,314 new and existing works on American history, civics, and contemporary social issues and advised eight thousand organizations and schools on which of these plays would best serve their educational goals. The bureau aided amateur groups in obtaining the rights from publishers of non-FTP plays and devising a publicity campaign for

[275] Hallie Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre* (New York: Arno Press, 1940), 446.

their productions. "These plays," said an FTP administrator, "are not designed merely for entertainment. They have a purpose. They teach."[276] By staging amateur productions of educational plays, children in public schools or adult members of community organizations not only learned about the content of the play, be it health, housing, or patriotic holidays, but they began to think critically about these issues. The National Service Bureau advised a wide variety of groups, including some affiliated with the Nationalist Network such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Roosevelt Memorial Association. The National Service Bureau was the least controversial division of the FTP, but its influence was significant; between 1935 and 1939, tens of thousands of Americans participated in amateur plays hand-picked by the bureau to encourage critical thinking about American history and contemporary social issues.

"There is a decided interest in American historical material," Hallie Flanagan wrote, and the FTP created dozens of professional productions of new plays to meet the public's interest.[277] Three about the mid-nineteenth century particularly demonstrate how the FTP experimented with balancing Popular Front nationalism with the regressive nationalist mythology already established by the Nationalist Network. In February 1936, the FTP opened its first original drama on Broadway, *Jefferson Davis*.[278] It was received poorly by New York critics, both for its dull pace and veneration of the Confederate leader, but *Davis*' New York premiere was simply a rehearsal for a 146-stop tour across the South.[279] The FTP had commissioned the play at the behest of the Nationalist Network's United Daughters of the

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[276] "WPA Theatre Aids in Teaching Field," *New York Times*, November 14, 1937, 49.
[277] Flanagan, "A Theatre for the People," 8, Folder 3.1.75, Box 566, FTP Collection, LOC.
[278] "Six Federal Shows Preparing to Open," *New York Times*, February 11, 1936, 19; "WPA Play Opening Tonight Uncertain," *New York Times*, February 18, 1936, 26; Bosley Crowther, "Once over the WPA," *New York Times*, March 15, 1936, X1.
[279] "WPA Picks Group to Tour in Drama," *New York Times*, January 14, 1936, 24; "The Play," *New York Times*, February 22, 1936, 13; "Uncle Sam Is Producer Now," *Atlantic City (NJ) Press*, May 15, 1936, Folder 4.1.19, Box 960, FTP Collection, LOC.

Confederacy, which had long understood the power of equating Lost Cause mythology with American nationalism in public monuments and textbooks.[280] The UDC was happy to lobby the FTP to send federal troupes to the South on the taxpayers' dime, but Hallie Flanagan regretted what she viewed as a betrayal of the anti-racist tenet of Popular Front nationalism.[281]

The FTP rectified this with *Battle Hymn*, a biographical play about John Brown which opened in New York in May 1936. With a cast of sixty actors, elaborate sets, and a planned long-term engagement at a Broadway theatre, the FTP invested substantial resources in a play that better reflected the anti-racist values of Popular Front nationalism.[282] Hallie Flanagan later wrote, "Now at last [if the] Federal Theatre had convictions, it was for abolition."[283] *Battle Hymn* was a more nuanced interpretation of its subject's life than *Jefferson Davis*, condemning the violence of Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry but celebrating his abolitionist beliefs as American values.[284] This was a corrective to *Jefferson Davis* and New York critics and audiences embraced it during its two-month run, with civic and youth groups frequently buying out the theatre on many nights.[285] *Battle Hymn* later opened in several other cities in the North and on the West Coast.[286]

In 1938, the FTP produced what it hoped would be its definitive mid-nineteenth century history play, *Prologue to Glory*, about Abraham Lincoln as a young man, discovering his passion for politics while beginning his lifelong struggle with melancholy. Playwright E.

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[280] See Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).
[281] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 69.
[282] "News of the Stage," *New York Times*, May 21, 1936, 19.
[283] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 76–77.
[284] L.N., "The Play: John Brown," *New York Times*, May 23, 1936, 12.
[285] "News of the Stage," *New York Times*, June 26, 1936, 17; "Would Shift Mummer Parade," *New York Times*, July 23, 1936, 24.
[286] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 184.

P. Conkle declined a traditional biographical narrative and instead mythologized Lincoln as a nineteenth-century romantic hero, showing how the heartbreak and disappointments of his youth molded him into a principled leader.[287] *Prologue*'s March 1938 Broadway premiere was well-reviewed by critics; Burns Mantle of the *New York Daily News* raved the play was the best the FTP ever created and that "no citizen of these United States, native or in the making, should be permitted to miss seeing 'Prologue to Glory.'"[288] One month into its New York run, the FTP still received fifteen hundred ticket requests per day; a dozen cities across the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast staged their own productions and a tour through rural areas was planned for the fall.[289] The FTP's great triumph of American historical drama soured when Rep. J. Parnell Thomas (R-New Jersey), a member of Martin Dies' Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities, attacked *Prologue* as communist propaganda because it "portrays [Lincoln] battling with the politicians" and implied "that all politicians are crooked."[290] In reality, *Prologue* was unquestionably American nationalist propaganda, a work of state-sponsored theatre which lionized one of the nation's most consequential presidents. While regional productions of *Prologue* continued to run and the play was even presented at the 1939 World's Fair, *Prologue* was the last grand history play the FTP produced before the Dies Committee defunded it.[291]

"It Can't Happen Here" (1936)

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[287] Former FTP official Elmer Rice directed his own Lincoln play, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, later in 1938. Rice's play was more traditional biography than sentimental character study. It won the Pulitzer Prize for drama and was adapted into a film. Elmer Rice, "Tickets Going Down," *New York Times*, September 24, 1939, 129.
[288] Brooks Atkinson, "The Play: E. P. Conkle's 'Prologue to Glory,' a Fable of Lincoln's Early Years in New Salem," *New York Times*, March 18, 1938, 22; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 320.
[289] "WPA Report Shows Big Increase," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 9, 1938, 20; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 289.
[290] "Theatre Project Faces an Inquiry," *New York Times*, July 27, 1938, 19; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 173.
[291] The Dies Committee's investigation of the FTP will be examined in detail later in this chapter. Amateur productions of *Prologue to Glory* were also produced for National Re-Dedication, which will be analyzed later in this chapter. Press Release, June 13, 1938, Folder 1.1.59, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC.

Anti-fascism was a key plank of Popular Front nationalism, and the FTP's 1936 adaptation of Sinclair Lewis' novel *It Can't Happen Here* was an ambitious work of anti-fascist art. FTP national director Hallie Flanagan described their objective to "present on a national scale a play with a definitive American theme by an American author" in adapting the best-selling novel.[292] It was a controversial work; the film industry's self-regulatory MPPDA Production Code Administration essentially banned studios from adapting it because it might anger fascist regimes abroad.[293] Telling the story of the resistance to an American fascist demagogue, Lewis and J. C. Moffitt adapted the novel into a play which premiered simultaneously in fifteen cities across the country, with multiple productions in many cities, on October 27, 1936. There were twenty-eight productions of the play in total and each tailored the story and setting to the local community, including Negro productions which emphasized fascist racism; a Spanish-language production in Tampa, Florida; and Yiddish language productions which included a concentration camp scene omitted in other productions.[294] *It Can't Happen Here* was a nationwide undertaking, unprecedented in the American theatre, that still allowed for diversity in the way the story was told. Although Flanagan later bemoaned the extraordinary logistical challenge of mounting twenty-eight productions simultaneously, she also believed that *It Can't Happen Here* was a vital defense of American democracy in the face of rising fascism worldwide.[295]

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[292] Press Release, September 14, 1936, Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – Promotion Material; Records Relating to Productions of "It Can't Happen Here," 1936-1937, Box 119, Records of the Federal Theatre Project, Records of the Work Projects Administration, Record Group 69, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. This collection will be referenced as FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
[293] Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 117–119.
[294] Press Release, September 14, 1936; Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – Promotion Material; Box 119; FTP Records, RG 69, NACP. Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 121–124.
[295] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 116-120.

As soon as it was announced, the FTP's production of *It Can't Happen Here* incited concerns that it was political propaganda. Its October 27, 1936 premiere date was intended to christen the second year of the FTP, but it was also one week before the presidential election.[296] Both the novel and the play center on the liberal resistance to Buzz Windrip, a populist blowhard who is elected president and quickly consolidates power by overtaking Congress and the judiciary, curtailing civil rights, and directing his paramilitary forces to enforce his authoritarian rule through violence. Lewis insisted that the play was non-partisan. "It is propaganda for an American system of Democracy," he told reporters. "Very definitely propaganda for that."[297] While the Windrip of the novel ascends to power after defeating Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1936 election, Lewis and Moffitt set the FTP adaptation "in the near future – or never."[298] Before the play even premiered, the FTP received criticism from journalists and the general public that *It Can't Happen Here* was propaganda both for and against the Roosevelt administration.[299] It seemed inevitable that the play would reinforce audiences' existing political beliefs, that FDR was either a bulwark against an American Mussolini or that the president was himself the power-hungry tyrant.

Senior FTP officials had to tread lightly as they developed and publicized *It Can't Happen Here*, aware that they must offend neither their benefactors in the administration nor FDR's opponents, eager to criticize anything about the New Deal. Hallie Flanagan always insisted that the Roosevelt administration never censored the FTP, but five days before the nationwide premiere, E. E. McCleish, the FTP's director of promotion, ordered all

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296 "Lewis Says Play Is Non-Political," *New York Times*, September 15, 1936, 37.
297 "'It Can't Happen Here' Set for October 27," October 1936; Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – Promotion Material, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
298 Lewis originally fashioned the novel's Windrip on Huey Long, who was assassinated the year before the FTP adaptation. "Lewis Says Play."
299 William P. Farnsworth to John J. Honigmann, August 27, 1936, Folder 4, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP; S. J. Woolf, "It Won't Happen Here, Lewis Believes," *New York Times*, October 4, 1936, SM3.

productions to cut several scenes, including one at the White House, as well as a line referencing the "billygoats of [the] Supreme Court."[300] William Stahl, assistant FTP director for the East, quickly overruled McCleish after consulting with "political advisers" and said such cuts were "discretionary" for each production's director.[301] Most of the productions complied nevertheless, as the play's runtime was already excessive, but the Yiddish language productions retained the concentration camp scene.[302] Whether those "political advisers" did or did not represent the Roosevelt administration, FTP officials were keenly aware that even the implication of political meddling in the content of the play would diminish its message.

It Can't Happen Here presented a unique opportunity to bring anti-fascist art to thousands of Americans in the immediate, visceral medium of theatre. State and regional FTP directors felt a sense of mission in bringing this play to their communities. After the state director of North Carolina witnessed a quasi-fascist rally of five thousand farmers in Raleigh, she lobbied for both a professional production in the city as the rights to stage amateur productions around the state.[303] In order to influence Americans against fascism, *It Can't Happen Here* also had to be accessible. FTP tickets were significantly more affordable than commercial productions, making a night at the theatre a possibility for many, even in the midst of the Great Depression. The New York City division of the FTP added another production for its "Suitcase Unit," a mobile theatre company that performed dramas in

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[300] The Supreme Court had already overruled some of Roosevelt's New Deal legislation and he had made his frustration known, even before his 1937 court-packing plan. E. E. McCleish to Vernon Haldene, October 22, 1936, Folder 2, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
[301] William Stahl to E. E. McCleish, October 23, 1936, Folder 3, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
[302] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 124.
[303] Mary Dirnberger to Francis Bosworth, September 4, 1936, Folder 4, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.

schools, churches, and community centers around the city.[304] The Suitcase Unit therefore brought Popular Front nationalism to hundreds of New Yorkers in their everyday lives. Each city also waged its own publicity campaign; the Chicago and Cleveland campaigns collaborated with local bookstores, newspapers, labor unions, and college student groups and were so extensive that the New York regional director complained that they were ruining the artistic integrity of the Broadway production by association.[305] New Yorkers may have found the provincials to be frightfully gauche, but the enthusiasm and sense of purpose all FTP officials felt in bringing an anti-fascist play to as many Americans as possible illustrated their common belief in Popular Front nationalism.

It Can't Happen Here premiered on October 27, 1936 in 15 cities nationwide and was a box office smash, with 15,460 Americans seeing it opening night.[306] Most productions were scheduled to run for a few weeks but many were extended for six months; several productions, including the Spanish-language Tampa production, toured regionally over the next year.[307] Critics generally agreed that it was a melodramatic if well-intentioned mediocrity; the *Indianapolis Times* wrote that it "underestimates American intelligence" while the *Hollywood News* sneered it "will be clasped to the bosom of Los Angeles intelligentsia."[308] Brooks Atkinson, a New York theatre critic, opened his *Times* column by calling the Broadway production "careless" and "slipshod" like most FTP productions, yet for most of

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304 Press Release, October 15, 1936, Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
305 Cleveland Exploitation Campaign and Prospectus, September 1936; Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP; "'Soft Pedal' Asked for Lewis Drama," *New York Times*, September 29, 1936, 25; Ann Kutchins to Francis Bosworth, October 3, 1936, Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – Misc. Correspondence, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
306 "15,460 See 'It Can't Happen Here' Opening," November 1936, Folder 1, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – Promotion Material, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
307 Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 128.
308 "The Critics' Score Board: 'It Can't Happen Here' Productions," 1936, Folder 3, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion, Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.

the piece he debated whether fascism really could happen in the United States. "Many of our bullying jingoes are Fascist when they believe that they are defending the faith of the Founding Fathers," Atkinson wrote. "The American who hates foreigners and screams 'Red' whenever he encounters a difference of opinion could join in a Fascist dictatorship under the pious impression that he were saving American democracy."[309] Most of the negative reviews were like Atkinson's, declaring the play to be lacking yet inspiring critics to devote considerable space in their newspapers to criticizing fascism.[310] E. E. McCleish calculated that newspapers had written 108,000 lines about *It Can't Happen Here*, unheard of for a theatrical drama and equivalent to $162,000 in free advertising.[311] Regardless of its artistic merits, the play initiated public debates about the value of American democracy and became a financial success for the FTP.

The popularity of *It Can't Happen Here* not only justified the federal government's foray into theatre, it illustrated that there was an appetite for art exploring Popular Front nationalist themes like anti-fascism. "The play says that when dictatorship comes to threaten such a democracy [as the United States]," a 1937 FTP report stated, "it comes in an apparently harmless guise, with parades and promises; but that, when such dictatorship arrives, the promises are not kept and the parade grounds become encampments."[312] As European dictators used the symbols and rituals of everyday nationalism to crush democracy, the American government financed a play that asked audiences to think critically about how everyday nationalism was used in the United States. *It Can't Happen Here* became a cultural phenomenon that championed democracy as essential to American national identity.

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309 Brooks Atkinson, "It Can't Happen," *New York Times*, November 8, 1936, X1.
310 Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 125.
311 E. E. McCleish to Sinclair Lewis, Dec 7, 1936, Folder 3, Entry #29: "It Can't Happen Here" – E. E. McCleish, Director of Promotion Box 119, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
312 "Educational Aspects of the Federal Theatre Project," 48, September 1937, Box 6, FTP Collection, LOC.

Not only was the play a triumph of Popular Front nationalist art, the productions were nationwide in scope but allowed for regional variation. *It Can't Happen Here* demonstrated that the FTP could create popular art that reinforced liberal American values while respecting local differences, and that there was a large audience for that.

Living Newspaper Unit (1936-1939)

The FTP's Living Newspaper Unit created dramatic interpretations of current events and social issues which were both artistically innovative for the American theatre and reimagined how Americans consumed and analyzed the news.[313] The FTP employed journalists and dramatists to collaborate on the Living Newspapers, which were similar to newsreels in both technique (narration, projected images, sound design) and form, dramatizing a single issue in the news, like tenant housing and labor unions, rather than specific current events.[314] Unlike newsreels produced by private media companies, the Living Newspaper Unit had to strike a balance between serving the administration which sponsored it and serving the public by criticizing the powerful. This would prove to be an almost impossible needle to thread, and when Congress proposed defunding the FTP, they criticized many of the Living Newspapers as un-American. While Hallie Flanagan and other FTP officials adapted the format from Soviet living newspapers, Jordana Cox makes the important distinction between Soviet and American living newspapers: the former were developed to spread political messages to isolated, illiterate communities, the latter were written for audiences that already read newspapers and thus required a higher degree of

[313] Benedict Anderson argues that print media and newspapers were foundational to the rise of modern nationalism. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
[314] Jordana Cox, "'Propaganda for Democracy:' Dialogue and Dissemination in the Federal Theatre Project's Living Newspapers, 1936-1939" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2015), 21, http://search.proquest.com/docview/1720843577/?pq-origsite=primo.

media literacy and political knowledge.[315] This differentiates Soviet living newspapers as straightforward government propaganda in contrast to the FTP Living Newspaper Unit as political theatre, which became subversive when it criticized the government which funded it. This dissertation builds on this distinction to argue that the FTP's Living Newspapers, with allegiance to Popular Front nationalist ideals above the state, were a distinctly American art form that promoted left-wing nationalism.

The Living Newspaper Unit produced two pro-labor plays, *Triple-A Plowed Under* (1936) and *Injunction Granted* (1936), as well as the more generally working-class-themed *One-Third of a Nation* (1938). *Triple-A Plowed Under* called on farmers and industrial workers to organize in solidarity and criticized the Supreme Court for striking down the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 two months before the play premiered. *Triple-A* also included the plight of sharecroppers in its critique and cast Black actors in these roles.[316] At the play's New York opening in March 1936, forty members of the Federal Theatre Veterans' League (FTVL) staged a protest in front of the theatre because the play portrayed Earl Browder, general secretary of Communist Party USA, in a very minor role. The FTVL had been founded weeks earlier by three veterans who believed that there were communists working among them in the WPA; their demands included censorship of FTP plays and requiring workers to pledge loyalty oaths and the American flag to be flown on all federal buildings.[317] "Politicians won't do anything about the matter," said Phelps Phelps, a New York politician, at an early meeting, leaving the FTVL no choice but to fight communists with "force."[318]

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[315] This dissertation will use the capitalized "Living Newspapers" to refer to FTP productions and "living newspapers" to refer to the general format. Paul Nadler, "Liberty Censored: Black Living Newspapers of the Federal Theatre Project," *African American Review* 29, no. 4 (1995): 615; Cox, "'Propaganda for Democracy," 18.
[316] "Negroes Included in 'Living Newspaper,'" *New York Amsterdam News*, March 21, 1936, 8.
[317] "Veterans to Fight WPA Theatre Reds," *New York Times*, February 23, 1936, 9.
[318] Phelps, an immigrant himself, also called on the FTVL "to fight the foreign mongrels who invade our homeland." "Reds in Federal Jobs Warned by Veterans," *New York Times*, March 1, 1936, 12.

During the premiere of *Triple-A*, two hecklers infiltrated the audience, singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and booing the Browder character.[319] Thirty police officers were assigned to protect playgoers from the FTVL protest but some officers, believing that they had actually been sent to stop the show, tried to turn away ticketholders.[320] The FTVL had also issued statements containing disinformation, including that roles depicting Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln were cut to give more stage time to the Browder character.[321] The hecklers were suspended from their FTP jobs and the local American Legion post openly condemned the FTVL's calls for censoring the play.[322] *Triple-A* succeeded despite the controversy, extending its run until May.[323] It demonstrated both that there was an appetite for pro-labor Living Newspapers and that extreme anti-communist groups, whose zealotry went even farther than the American Legion's, had their eye on the FTP.

With a theatrical run from July to October 1936, *Injunction Granted* was a financially successful Living Newspaper as well as the most unapologetically pro-labor one. Originally entitled *Crime,* the play attempted to cover two hundred years of the American labor movement and its struggles through the courts.[324] *Injunction Granted* seemed designed to antagonize FTP critics, baldly lampooning business leaders such as William Randolph Hearst, whose newspaper empire drove much of the anti-communist frenzy surrounding the Federal One arts projects. The play was critically panned when it premiered, with frequent FTP antagonist Brooks Atkinson faintly praising the subject matter but horrified by "the

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[319] "Play by WPA On Red Leader Brings Protests," *Washington Post*, March 15, 1936, 8; "WPA's Next Drama Already Held 'Red,'" *New York Times*, March 17, 1936, 23.
[320] "30 Police on Guard as WPA Show Opens," *New York Times*, March 15, 1936, 27.
[321] "The Week," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 22, 1936, Folder 4.1.18, Box 960, FTP Collection, LOC.
[322] "Country Legion Demands Free Speech for All," *New York Herald-Tribune*, March 25, 1936, Folder 4.1.18, Box 960, FTP Collection, LOC.
[323] "WPA Theatre Packs 'Em," *Box Office* (Kansas City, MO), April 18, 1936, Folder 4.1.18, Box 960, FTP Collection, LOC; Untitled article, *New York Telegraph*, April 23, 1936, Folder 4.1.19, Box 960, FTP Collection, LOC.
[324] "News of the Stage," *New York Times*, June 23, 1936, 27.

hundred actors who skip and scream" through the show, including a clown who made obscene hand gestures at the villainous capitalists and judges. Atkinson also criticized its bad set design and "sound accompaniment [which] makes the night idealogically [sic] hideous."[325] Even Hallie Flanagan winced when she saw *Injunction Granted*, realizing that the director had so much autonomy during rehearsals that the play failed to clearly explain current issues affecting labor in a nuanced and informative way.[326] The FTP's mission was not only to create American art with Popular Front nationalist themes but to create great American theatre. While *Injunction Granted* did not inspire protests like *Triple-A Plowed Under* (the FTVL had dissolved months earlier in April) and continued to attract audiences, particularly labor unions and leftist groups, it was not an artistic success.[327]

A 1938 Living Newspaper, *One-Third of a Nation*, addressed tenement housing and economic inequality in New York City, not specifically pro-labor issues but still urgent problems for the Depression-era working class. *One-Third* became the most critically and commercially successful Living Newspaper, running for nearly a year and drawing audiences that included First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, whose husband's second inaugural address the play's title referenced.[328] The play's creators understood that they could bring the working-class ideals of Popular Front nationalism to greater numbers of Americans by embracing their association with the New Deal. *One-Third* so effectively connected Popular Front nationalism to the spirit and language of the New Deal that the anti-communist Rep. J.

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[325] Brooks Atkinson, "The Play: WPA Journalism," *New York Times*, July 25, 1936, 16.
[326] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 72–73.
[327] "News of the Stage," *New York Times*, July 30, 1936, 22.
[328] "News of the Stage," *New York Times*, January 17, 1938, 10; Brooks Atkinson, "The Play: Living Newspaper of the Federal Theatre Reports the Housing Situation," *New York Times*, January 18, 1938, 27; Stirling Bowen, "The Theatre: A Drama of Housing," *Wall Street Journal*, January 19, 1938, 11; "'... One-third of a Nation'... Looks Into Harlem's Housing Situation," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 26, 1938, 17; Stirling Bowen, "The Theatre: Mrs. F.D.R. at the Theatre," *Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 1938, 11.

Parnell Thomas (R-New Jersey) called the play "New Deal propaganda."[329] For many audience members, this was a selling point. Civic groups in several cities across the country adapted *One-Third* in their own productions addressing housing issues specific to their communities, making it even more relevant to audiences.[330]

The Living Newspaper Unit did not produce works about the two other main themes of Popular Front nationalism, anti-fascism and anti-racism, due to government censorship. The first Living Newspaper that the FTP developed, *Ethiopia*, was intended to be an account of the ongoing Second Italo-Ethiopian War and criticized fascist Italy's imperialist aggression. Although never seen by the public, *Ethiopia* developed the structural format and technical production that other Living Newspapers followed.[331] Elmer Rice, the FTP administrator for New York, developed the work with American journalists and an Ethiopian opera company, stranded in the United States due to the war. *Ethiopia* would have had not only a racially integrated cast, a rarity on the New York stage, but it would have employed Ethiopian actors and singers to portray Ethiopian characters.[332] As with later Living Newspapers, the script for *Ethiopia* included portrayals of political leaders and text from their actual speeches, in this case Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In January 1936, Assistant WPA Administrator Jacob Baker sent Hallie Flanagan an order forbidding the FTP from portraying any foreign government leader without State Department approval, which Baker implied would be purposefully delayed until the subject matter was no longer timely. Administrators were also likely concerned that *Ethiopia* would

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329 "Theatre Project Faces an Inquiry," *New York Times*, July 27, 1938, 19.
330 Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 216.
331 Dossett, *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal*, 106; Cox, ""Propaganda for Democracy," 65.
332 WPA projects could employ non-citizens until the passage of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1938. Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 65–67.

inflame tensions between two constituencies of the New Deal coalition, Italian Americans and African Americans, which largely disagreed on Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.[333] With the future of the Living Newspaper Unit at stake, WPA officials shelved *Ethiopia* and Rice quit the FTP soon after. "The final decision to censor the Living Newspaper," Rice told the press, "did not come until after I had outlined to Mr. Baker some of the other productions which were being planned" about lynching, sharecroppers, and the Jim Crow South.[334] The fact that the Living Newspaper Unit finished those three scripts about issues facing African Americans over four years and produced none of them lends credibility to Rice's allegations.[335]

Negro Theatre Unit (NTU)

Unlike other FTP units, the Negro Theatre Unit did not shy away from integrating anti-racist themes into its Popular Front nationalist productions. With seventeen division in cities across the U.S., the NTU employed thousands of Black actors, playwrights, and theatrical technicians from 1936 to 1939 who created some of the most popular and critically acclaimed FTP productions.[336] The NTU produced both original plays and revivals of classic works, including a Haitian-set version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1936) as well as *The Swing Mikado* (1938), a modern musical adaptation of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. While many New Deal programs established discriminatory policies to disqualify African Americans from relief work, the FTP employed a significant number of Black workers and fired local and regional officials who discriminated against African Americans.[337] Yet, the

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[333] Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.
[334] Hilda Scott, "Political Censor Forces Resignation of Theatre Head," *Vassar Miscellany News* (Poughkeepsie, NY), February 12, 1936, Box 1, Entry #987: Scrapbooks, Jan. 1936 - Jan. 1939, FTP Records, RG 69, NACP.
[335] Nadler, "Liberty Censored," 615.
[336] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 63.
[337] Dossett, *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal*, 3; Ronald Ross, "The Role of Blacks in the Federal Theatre, 1935-1939," *Journal of Negro History* 59, no. 1 (1974): 42.

systemic racism embedded in the commercial theatre still affected the NTU. The unit's creator, the Black Broadway star Rose McClendon, initially encouraged the hiring of white directors because they had experience in the commercial theatre, which excluded most Black directors.[338] As a result, the NTU launched the careers of white creatives like *Macbeth* director Orson Welles and *Haiti* playwright William DuBois more than Black artists, although the unit employed Black directors and playwrights as well.[339] While the NTU reproduced racial hierarchies to a certain extent, Kate Dossett argues, to dismiss it entirely is to ignore the fact that it ensured employment for Black workers in the New Deal and created a space for Black playwrights to create Black art.[340] This dissertation argues that the NTU was also significant because its existence was both nationalistic and radical. By funding Black art, the government-backed NTU both insisted that African Americans were part of the American nation and viewed Blackness in the context of a transnational diaspora.

Black workers and artists in the NTU claimed that Black art was American art and asserted their agency in shaping how the American experience was portrayed on the stage. The cultural production of the NTU was so important to the Black community that when officials proposed shutting down its acclaimed Harlem unit in 1938, dozens of community leaders came together to demand that the program be saved from budget cuts. "One of the objectives that the Negro in America must always keep before him," the Negro Labor Committee's Frank Crosswaith said at a meeting of civic leaders, "is to compel the rest of America to appreciate his cultural expression."[341]

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338 Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 63.
339 Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 395–396.
340 Dossett, *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal*, 6.
341 "Fighting Moving of Lafayette," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 25, 1938, 11.

The NTU produced works that were not only anti-racist but centered Black people in American and world history. *Haiti* (1938), an epic about the Haitian Revolution, ran for nearly a year in New York and another NTU history play about Harriet Tubman, *Go Down Moses*, would have likely found similar success if the FTP had not been shut down shortly before its premiere.[342] Perhaps the greatest triumph of the NTU was its Chicago production of Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog* (1938), a now canonical drama in the Black theatre which explored a Black family divided by faith in the American dream and the Black nationalism of Garveyism. It was ultimately not their differing ideological views but the structural obstacles they faced as a middle-class Black family impoverished by the Depression that ultimately leads to tragedy.[343] The purpose of the FTP was to create theatre that made people think critically about what it meant to be American and from its inception, the NTU suggested that the Black experience should be included.[344]

Defunding the FTP (1938-1939)

Because the FTP was the subject of investigations by Rep. Martin Dies Jr.'s (D-Texas) House Special Committee on Un-American Activities and Rep. Clifton A. Woodrum's (D-Virginia) Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee in 1938 and 1939, the historical consensus has long been that the motivation to defund and dissolve the FTP was driven by anti-communist fervor.[345] If the FTP was widely considered to be un-American, it stands to reason that the leading groups of the Nationalist Network would have lead the charge to eliminate the FTP. However, the largest nationalist organizations with

[342] "Fighting Moving of Lafayette," 1; Dossett, *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal*, 203–205.
[343] Charles Collins, "Drama Depicts Family Life of Chicago Negro," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 8, 1938, 16; Ishmael P. Flory, "Great White Fog," *Chicago Defender*, April 30, 1938, 16.
[344] "Professor Flanagan of Vassar," *Chicago Defender*, November 9, 1935, 16; Hallie Flanagan, "Congress Takes the Stage," *New York Times*, August 20, 1939, 2.
[345] Katznelson, *Fear Itself*, 330.

explicitly anti-communist agendas, like the American Legion, were not part of the backlash. They had often collaborated with the FTP on patriotic theatre projects and wrote letters of support during congressional investigations.[346] The Legion's Women's Auxiliary sponsored the *Epic of America* essay contest for the FTP Radio Division in 1938 and at the height of congressional hearings in May 1939, the Grand Army of the Republic in New Hampshire worked with the FTP to stage a *Pageant of Patriotism* that drew an audience of 12,000.[347] Anti-communist nationalism was only part of the motivation for Congress to defund the FTP; racism, particularly the belief that African Americans should not benefit from the New Deal, was also a significant factor.

In the late 1930s, many southern Democrats switched from supporting Roosevelt's New Deal to ardently opposing it. These conservative Democrats, including Dies, were startled by how the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (or Wagner Act) strengthened workers' rights as well as by the proposed Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill of 1935. After Dies inherited the Special Committee on Un-American Activities from Reps. John McCormack (D-Massachusetts) and Samuel Dickstein (D-New York) in 1938, he shifted the committee's work away from investigating the fascist German-American Bund and toward investigating communist infiltration of the US government.[348] Dies was a white supremacist and nativist who viewed anti-racism, one of the core tenets of Popular Front nationalism, as communist and un-American.[349] The Texas Democrat organized an investigation of communist and Nazi infiltration of the federal government, from FDR's cabinet to the

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[346] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 334.
[347] "Epic of America" Essay Contest, 1938, Folder 1.1.70, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC; Ed Maulsby, Statement for Congressional Record, July 1939, Folder 1.1.118, Box 6, FTP Collection, LOC; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 237.
[348] Katznelson, *Fear Itself*, 329–330.
[349] Tobie S. Stein, *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Performing Arts Workforce* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 41.

WPA's Federal Writers' Project and FTP, in August 1938. Dies and the committee's vice chairman, Rep. Joe Starnes (D-Alabama), joined with pro-business committee member Rep. J. Parnell Thomas (R-New Jersey) to form a southern Democratic and northern/midwestern Republican coalition to weaken the New Deal and to discredit Popular Front nationalism as an American ideology.[350] The Dies Committee considered the tenets of Popular Front nationalism, especially anti-racism, to be communist and un-American.

During the hearings, the Dies Committee used the term "communist" with such imprecision and frequency that it appeared to be less concerned with actually identifying communists than discrediting the FTP as a New Deal program. As Thomas stated, the FTP "favors giving jobs to radicals and…fosters New Deal propaganda."[351] There was no way for the Dies Committee or FTP officials to know if relief workers were communists. As Works Progress Administration administrators, FTP officials were forbidden from asking relief workers about their political affiliation.[352] There almost certainly were some communists in the FTP but no one could be certain, especially the anti-communist activists who sought to discredit the program in the press since its inception.[353]

Neither the Dies Committee nor the FTP witnesses they called could support their arguments with proof and the congressmen took full advantage of this ambiguity. Over several months, the committee called a number of former FTP employees to make unsubstantiated allegations that reinforced their conviction that the project was communist, like that it was funneling money to republicans in the Spanish Civil War and that workers circulated communist newspapers. The committee's witnesses also misrepresented facts,

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350 "Theatre Project Faces an Inquiry," *New York Times*, July 27, 1938, 19.
351 "Federal Theatre Held as Un-American," *New York Times*, September 13, 1938, 28.
352 "Federal Theatre Head Denies Red Influence," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 10, 1938, B6; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 349.
353 "Professor Flanagan of Vassar," *Chicago Defender*, November 9, 1935, 16.

testifying that barely more than half of FTP relief workers had previously acted professionally but omitting that 55% of FTP workers were not employed as performers.[354] When Ellen S. Woodward, Assistant WPA Administrator, questioned whether the Dies Committee itself was un-American by calling so many witnesses "disqualified by their [lack of] background to testify on the subject matter under investigation," Dies had to stop the other committee members from throwing her out of the hearing.[355] When Hallie Flanagan was finally allowed to testify in December, committee members heckled her and cut off her answers.[356] "I am an American and I believe in American democracy," she stated. "I believe the Federal Theatre…is honestly trying in every possible way to interpret the best interests of the people of this democracy."[357] Flanagan emphasized that the FTP stayed true to its mission of producing works that explored American themes and history.[358] Committee members admitted they had not read or seen any FTP plays and Starnes cited sixteenth-century English playwright Christopher Marlowe as a communist propagandist.[359] Facts and logic were inconsequential to the Dies Committee. As Ira Katznelson argues, Dies prioritized altering public opinion and cultivating his own celebrity rather than conducting substantive investigations.[360]

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354 "Inquiry Demanded on 'Red Recruiting' for War in Spain," *New York Times*, August 20, 1938, 6; "Playwright Attacks WPA Union," *Associated Press*, August 20, 1938; "Educational Aspects of the Federal Theatre Project," 7, September 1937, Box 6, FTP Collection, LOC.

355 U. Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States. Hearings before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Third Session-Seventy-Eighth Congress, Second Session* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), 2765–2777, http://archive.org/details/investigationofu193804unit.

356 "WPA Writers' Head Hits Communists," *New York Times*, December 7, 1938, 2.

357 US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 2867.

358 US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 2870.

359 US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 2857.

360 Katznelson, *Fear Itself*, 332–333.

Members of the Dies Committee attacked not only the FTP's anti-racist plays, especially the NTU's Haitian Revolution drama *Haiti* (1938), but the prospect of racial integration on- and off-stage as well.[361] *Sing for Your Supper*, a musical revue which was still in rehearsal at the time of the Dies Committee investigation, had an ensemble of over one hundred Black and white performers and would become the first truly integrated Broadway musical, unlike the racially-segregated choruses of *The Southerners* (1904) and *Show Boat* (1927).[362] It featured topical songs and comedy sketches ("Papa's Got a Job") and a rousing anthem to American diversity, "Ballad for Uncle Sam."[363] Dies and Starnes questioned Sallie Saunders, a white, Austrian-born former cast member of *Sing for Your Supper* who testified that a Black WPA photographer had asked her on a date. When Saunders reported it to one of her supervisors, he allegedly told her, "Sallie, I am surprised at you. He has just as much right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as you have."[364] Saunders said she voluntarily transferred to another show because *Sing for Your Supper* supervisors encouraged "social equality and race merging," which she believed were communist.[365] Saunders did not frame the incident as inappropriate workplace behavior but an issue of her own "racial

[361] "Theatre Project Faces;" "Play Tour by WPA Faces Fight Here," *New York Times*, August 26, 1938, 19.
[362] Contemporary Black newspapers identified *Sing for Your Supper* as the first truly integrated Broadway musical but it has been overlooked by theatre historians, who instead credit *On the Town* (1944) or *Finian's Rainbow* (1947); see "Fifty Colored Performers in Cast Of WPA's "Sing for Your Supper,"" *New York Amsterdam News*, April 22, 1939, 21; "'Sing For Your Supper' Setting A Precedent," *Chicago Defender*, May 20, 1939, 21; "WPA Revusical Called Tribute," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 20, 1939, 20; Katherine Baber, "'Manhattan Women': Jazz, Blues, and Gender in On the Town and Wonderful Town," *American Music* 31, no. 1 (2013): 73–105; Chase Bringardner, "'A Rainbow in Ev'Ry Pot': Southern Excess, Racial Liberalism, and Living Large in Harburg and Lane's Finian's Rainbow," *Studies in Musical Theatre* 10, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 117–132.
[363] Arthur Pollock, "'Sing for Your Supper,' WPA's Debut in Revue," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 28, 1939, 10.
[364] US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 859.
[365] US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 860.

hatred" toward Black people.[366] Other witnesses testified to the Dies Committee that they saw Black men dancing with white women at social events hosted by FTP workers.[367]

Dies and Starnes, as southern segregationist Democrats, weaponized racist tropes about Black men socializing with white women to discredit the FTP as a jobs program. Dies did not acknowledge or publish the FTP's internal investigation of Sallie Saunders' allegations, in which Saunders stated her beliefs that Black people were cursed by God to be "inferior" and "savage" and that "Lincoln was a fool" for fighting the Civil War. She also said that if African Americans were given equal rights she would give up her American citizenship and go back to Austria, which had recently been annexed by Nazi Germany.[368] It is unclear whether Dies ignored this evidence of Saunders' extreme racism in order to portray her as more sympathetic or due to his incompetence as an investigator. In either case, it benefitted the Dies Committee to publicly portray Saunders as a white woman menaced by a Black man under the auspices of depraved communist thespians rather than as a possible Nazi sympathizer employed by the US government.

The Dies Committee concluded hearings by the end of 1938 and issued a report in January 1939 which alleged that communist groups had infiltrated much of the federal government and that three cabinet members had tolerated, if not abetted, these subversive forces. The report classified dozens of labor and anti-racist organizations as communist fronts which allegedly sought to incite a civil war against the weakened American government, including a "race war" by African Americans.[369] While the committee

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366 US Congress, House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*, 858.
367 Adam Lapin, "Reports of Interracial Parties Shock Probers of Un-American Activities," *Chicago Defender*, September 3, 1938, 4.
368 Ed Maulsby, "Statement for Congressional Record," July 1939, 65-66, Folder 1.1.118, Box 6, FTP Collection, LOC.
369 "Dies Report Attacks Alien Isms; Ickes, Perkins, Murphy Assailed," *New York Times*, January 4, 1939, 10.

acknowledged the substantial evidence that the fascist German-American Bund worked closely with Nazi Germany, the report focused much more on the threat of communism. The report produced little specific proof of communists in the WPA Federal One arts projects, simply that "a rather large number" of FTP workers were at least communist sympathizers.[370] After a six-month taxpayer-funded investigation (which cost $25,000 in its entirety, a sum the committee complained was paltry), the Dies Committee uncovered no hard evidence of un-American activities in the FTP beyond its pro-labor and anti-racist ideals.[371] These Popular Front nationalist ideals were un-American according to the segregationist and pro-business members of the Dies Committee but not to the millions of Americans who attended and participated in FTP shows.

In March 1939, the subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee led by Rep. Clifton A. Woodrum (D-Virginia) began an investigation into mismanagement at the WPA Federal One arts programs, including the FTP. Where the Dies Committee premised its investigation on the belief that anti-racism and other Popular Front nationalist ideals were un-American, Woodrum wished to delegitimize New Deal jobs programs in favor of defense spending.[372] The Woodrum Committee hired professional investigators to construct a narrative of bureaucratic incompetence that appealed to the press and identify witnesses who would support that narrative. For its attack on the FTP, the committee hired H. Ralph Burton, a professional anti-communist activist who had earned a reputation for anti-Semitism and anti-Black racism while working for Father Charles Coughlin.[373] Burton had

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370 "Dies Report Attacks."
371 Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 347.
372 James E. Sargent, "Woodrum's Economy Bloc: The Attack on Roosevelt's WPA, 1937-1939," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 93, no. 2 (1985): 185.
373 US Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 79th Congress* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946), 970.

also served as legal counsel for the Daughters of the American Revolution ten years earlier. While the DAR and most of the Nationalist Network implicitly or explicitly supported the FTP, Burton represented a faction of anti-New Deal nationalists who paradoxically defined their nationalism in opposition to the sitting president (see America First Committee in Chapter 4).[374]

For the Woodrum Committee, H. Ralph Burton constructed the narrative that the FTP was wasteful and its administration was incompetent. Vague communist fearmongering was less well received than by the Dies Committee. When one witness used an instance where an audience booed an actor playing a police officer as evidence of communism, Rep. Clarence Cannon (D-Missouri) called him "ridiculous."[375] Burton instead portrayed the FTP as a financial failure compared to the commercial theatre. While this was an absurd comparison, considering that the FTP was a relief program that charged nothing for tickets for 65% of its shows, Burton went further and outright lied about the box office success of Popular Front nationalist shows like *Prologue to Glory* and Black plays like *Haiti* and *Androcles and the Lion*.[376]

The Woodrum Committee was also interested in the racially-integrated revue *Sing for Your Supper*, which had finally premiered in April 1939 after a tortured two-year rehearsal process, as an improper use of federal funding.[377] According to Burton, the FTP spent so much on lighting for *Sing for Your Supper* that the actors were sunburned.[378] These

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[374] The DAR even encouraged its members to volunteer with the New Deal's Historical Records Survey. Jean Stephenson to Luther H. Evans, Daughters of American Revolution, Material Pertaining to Miscellaneous Projects, 1936-1942, Box 1, Records of the Historical Records Survey, Records of the Work Projects Administration, Record Group 69, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[375] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 350.
[376] Flanagan, "Congress Takes," 2; Henry N. Dorris, "House Group Told of Red Domination over WPA Writers," *New York Times*, May 2, 1939, 6.
[377] "'Sing For Your Supper' Opens On Broadway," *Chicago Defender*, April 29, 1939, 20.
[378] "Costly Spotlights Sunburn WPA Actors, Inquiry Told," *Washington Post*, June 6, 1939, 1.

expenditures would have been sufficient cause for concern, but like Dies and Starnes, Burton and Woodrum were fixated on *Sing for Your Supper* as the first racially-integrated Broadway musical. Cannon pushed back on their implication that the show's interracial dancing was deviant. "Shirley Temple dances with the Negroes," Cannon told Burton. "So it is nothing extraordinary, and there is no reason why special evidence should have been laid on that fact, is there?" Burton could only reply that integrated plays were "not customary" on the New York stage, which was correct.[379] Perhaps that was what appealed to the 32,000 people who saw *Sing for Your Supper* in its first month, selling out the theatre almost every night, a feat that Burton described to the committee as "a flop."[380] The Woodrum Committee's treatment of *Sing for Your Supper* reflected its problems in evaluating the FTP in general. While there might be a substantive case made for inefficiency in the FTP, Woodrum and Burton's crusade against the New Deal was based on false evidence and motivated in no small part by racism.

On the Woodrum Committee's recommendation, the House of Representatives passed a 1940 relief bill that defunded and reorganized much of the WPA, explicitly forbidding the use of federal funds for theatrical relief programs. With 7,900 federal jobs at stake, theatre critics and Hollywood actors came together for their last shot to save the FTP.[381] The legendary actor Lionel Barrymore said defunding the FTP would be "almost like taking one of the stripes out of the American flag," and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt defended it in her newspaper column, writing, "I wonder if Communists occupied in

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[379] US Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, *Investigation and Study of the Works Progress Administration* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), 203, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015011720920.
[380] Brooks Atkinson, "F.D.R.'s WPA FTP," *New York Times*, May 28, 1939, X1; US Congress, House of Representatives, *Investigation and Study*, 191.
[381] "3 WPA Shows Close amid Hot Protests," *New York Times*, July 1, 1939, 2.

producing plays are not safer than Communists starving to death."[382] The Senate still had to debate the bill, and the notoriously racist Sen. Robert Rice Reynolds (D-North Carolina) spoke most vehemently against the FTP.[383] Reynolds claimed that the FTP produced "play after play" with racially integrated casts, "a practice never followed in the legitimate theater for reasons we can all understand."[384] The Senate ultimately voted in favor of the House's 1940 relief bill in June 1939.

Because the FTP's defunding was only a small part of the 1940 relief bill, Roosevelt had little choice but to sign the bill on June 30 to preserve the vast majority of WPA jobs. FTP workers and audiences found out about the program's end during evening shows. The producer of *Sing for Your Supper* took to the stage after the "Papa's Got a Job" number, saying, "Yes, Papa had a job – but they're taking it away from him at 12 o'clock tonight!" FTP workers and supporters staged protests in cities across the country that evening, with a 600-person "funeral march" through midtown Manhattan.[385] While newspapers that had breathlessly reprinted the Dies and Woodrum Committees' communist fearmongering now lamented the loss of the FTP, the Black press identified that racism was at the heart of the southern Democrats' campaign.[386] The Dies and Woodrum Committees were motivated both by the belief that Popular Front nationalism, with its anti-fascist, pro-labor, and anti-racist themes, was un-American and that the New Deal should not employ African Americans alongside white workers.

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[382] "Senators Pressed to Save WPA Theaters," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 21, 1939, 7; Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 359.
[383] Flanagan, *Arena: The History of the Federal Theatre*, 359.
[384] US Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 76th Congress, First Session, Volume 84 - Part 8* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), 8094.
[385] "3 WPA Shows."
[386] "Uncle Sam in the Show Business Had Hits, Flops and Always Rows," *New York Times*, July 1, 1939, 2; "Federal Theatre Project," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 8, 1939, 6; "WPA Stage End Blamed on the Race Question," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 29, 1939, 16.

The Second Life of "Ballad for Americans" (1939-1940)

One of the FTP's most impactful contributions to American culture came five months after Congress defunded it, when Paul Robeson made "Ballad for Americans," the finale from *Sing for Your Supper* formerly known as "Ballad for Uncle Sam," into a cultural phenomenon. Robeson, already a world-famous Black baritone and anti-imperialist and anti-fascist activist, worked with songwriters Earl Robinson and John Latouche to revise the ten-minute ode to American diversity for broadcast on CBS's radio program *The Pursuit of Happiness*.[387] When it aired on November 5, 1939, listeners heard Robeson proclaim the miracle of American democracy throughout history, from the founding to the Gettysburg Address to the Great Depression. Robeson's narrator insists that to be American was to have faith in democracy, contrasting how "nobody who was anybody believed it" with the "nobodies" who had such faith like George Washington, Chaim Solomon, and Crispus Attucks. [388] The chorus continually asks Robeson who he is and he responds across class lines ("I'm an engineer, musician, street cleaner, carpenter, teacher…") and ethnic and racial lines ("I'm just an Irish, Negro, Jewish…").[389] The final section builds from "Out of the cheating / Out of the shouting / Out of the murders and lynchings / Out of the windbags / The patriotic spouting / Out of uncertainty and doubting" to assert that those "nobodies who are anybody" with faith in democracy and equality are the true Americans.[390] Unapologetically sincere, "Ballad for Americans" argued that America could continue to be exceptional if it adhered to Popular Front nationalist ideals.

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[387] Bill Chase, "All Ears," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 11, 1939, 21; Lisa Barg, "Paul Robeson's Ballad for Americans: Race and the Cultural Politics of 'People's Music,'" *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2, no. 1 (February 2008): 30.
[388] "Ballad for Americans," University of Chicago, accessed July 17, 2020, http://www.cpsr.cs.uchicago.edu/robeson/links/NYlabor.ballad.lyrics.html.
[389] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 128.
[390] Barg, "Paul Robeson's Ballad for Americans," 51.

"Ballad for Americans" became a sensation. Thousands of listeners called and wrote enthusiastic letters to their local CBS stations after the broadcast on November 5 and Robeson reprised his performance in a New Year's Eve radio special.[391] Robeson recorded a studio version with Victor Records which sold forty-thousand copies in 1940, inspiring imitators like Bing Crosby to release their own versions, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer licensed the score for its 1942 film *Born to Sing*.[392] Robeson launched a 1940 national tour after the record's success.[393] Many public schools purchased the record to use in lessons; one high school teacher in California was pleasantly surprised when the song inspired his students to discuss historical and contemporary racial injustice and income inequality.[394] Apparently unaware of its New Deal origins, the Republican National Committee used "Ballad for Americans" as the opening song of its 1940 convention, and the composer Earl Robinson later insisted that Communist Party USA had also played it at its convention the week prior.[395]

This ten-minute folk cantata, popularized by a Black leftist, might seem to be an unlikely candidate for a hit American song. In 1940, however, Americans were inundated with news about the violence that authoritarian regimes waged across Europe and Asia. Radio producers, including at those at *The Pursuit of Happiness*, correctly believed that audiences hungered for programming that was not just patriotic but affirmed their faith in

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391 "Paul Robeson Scores," *Chicago Defender*, November 18, 1939, 20; "Robeson Is Lauded for Broadcast," *Chicago Defender*, December 2, 1939, 4; "Microphone Presents," *New York Times*, December 31, 1939, 94.
392 "Popular Recordings," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1940, E5; Philip K. Scheuer, "Town Called Hollywood," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1940, C3; Mae Tinee, "'Born to Sing' Made by Bunch of Teen Agers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 30, 1942, 16.
393 "Robeson's Bowl Concert to Offer Patriotic Cantata," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1940, C5.
394 Francis Hutchinson, "A Tussle with Americanism," *English Journal* 29, no. 9 (November 1940): 757.
395 "WPA Song at Convention," *New York Times*, June 23, 1940, 3; James Morgan, "'Cease Firing' in France," *Daily Boston Globe*, June 25, 1940, 8. There appears to be no contemporaneous evidence that "Ballad for Americans" was played at the Communist Party Convention in 1940 but since Robinson published his autobiography in 1998, scholars have taken him at his word. Earl Robinson and Eric A. Gordon, *Ballad of an American: The Autobiography of Earl Robinson* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 98, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015040150529; Barg, "Paul Robeson's Ballad for Americans," 59.

American civic ideals and the nation's democratic future.[396] "Ballad for Americans" criticized empty jingoism and acknowledged that dark forces had always undermined the nation's democratic potential (to the point of "murders and lynchings") but insisted, "Our country's strong, our country's young / And her greatest songs are still unsung."[397] Although "Ballad for Americans" fell into obscurity in the years after World War II, as southern musical styles dominated midcentury American popular music, it truly spoke to its time and to a nation losing faith in its democratic ideals.[398] "Ballad for Americans" was one of the FTP's most significant contributions to American nationalist culture, a paean to civic faith and multiculturalism that outlived the federal program which created it.

In sum, the FTP was more than a jobs program; it asserted that left-wing tenets of Popular Front nationalism, like anti-fascism, labor advocacy, and anti-racism, were a valid part of American nationalist ideology. Through the New Deal's Federal Project Number One art programs, the federal government actively sponsored the creation of nationalist mythology and culture for the first time. The FTP specifically brought left-wing nationalist art to millions of Americans in their schools, community centers, and local theatres. Left-wing ideals were not entirely new to the American nationalist movement, since leftists and liberals participated in the Nationalist Network until the First Red Scare. The FTP's Popular Front nationalism was therefore less of an ideological revolution than a structural one, with the federal government joining the independent groups of the Network in the creation of nationalist culture. The backlash to this structural revolution came not from the Network

396 Albert D. Hughes, "Nation Kept in Balance by Radio Comedians," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 5, 1940, 3.
397 University of Chicago, "Ballad for Americans."
398 As country, rhythm and blues, and eventually rock and roll took over popular music, the left embraced this aesthetic as well, most notably in Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" (1940). Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 35–37.

but from New Deal opponents within Congress. Those opponents set their sights on the FTP not only because it created popular art that might push American national identity in a more inclusive and democratic – or as those opponents would call it, "communist" – direction but also because it expanded the New Deal government's role in underwriting that culture.

National Re-Dedication (1938-1941)

Conservative members of the Nationalist Network sought to strengthen American democracy against fascism and communism by emphasizing individual liberty, rather than the New Deal state, as the protector of freedom. In 1938, a coalition of fourteen civic, religious, and labor organizations formed National Re-Dedication, a non-partisan campaign to educate Americans about government. Founded by Hermann Hagedorn, biographer and friend of Theodore Roosevelt, National Re-Dedication used the tactics of everyday nationalism developed earlier by the Network to counteract the potential spread of authoritarian ideologies in the United States. Throughout the fall of 1938, National Re-Dedication member organizations collaborated with schools, churches, and local communities to rekindle Americans' faith in democracy, culminating in the anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights on December 15. This spirit of rededication to core American values, also popularized through Hagedorn's keen use of radio and the press, became a topic of national conversation as Americans worried about the rise of fascism in Europe.[399] This language of "rededication" remained so influential that Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt adopted it in his 1941 inaugural address. As a nationalist movement, National Re-

[399] This dissertation will use the spelling "National Re-Dedication" to refer to the organization and "national rededication" to refer to the general concept.

Dedication reflected the fear in the late 1930s that foreign ideologies like fascism and communism could infiltrate American society and undermine democratic government.

National Re-Dedication occupied an important intersection between the Nationalist Network and anti-New Dealers, yet it has been almost entirely overlooked by historians.[400] While National Re-Dedication, like most organizations in the Network, was officially non-partisan and included a few FDR supporters on its National Committee, its most prominent leaders were powerful Republicans like Herbert Hoover.[401] Hagedorn, National Re-Dedication's director, was part of the cohort of Theodore Roosevelt loyalists who viewed FDR as a socialist.[402] To a certain extent, National Re-Dedication was initially driven by anti-New Dealers' fears that FDR would be the conduit through which authoritarianism overtook the United States. For this reason, National Re-Dedication can be understood as one of many organizations founded as a response to FDR and the New Deal, including the pro-business American Liberty League and the congressional lobbying group the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Democracy.[403] There was significant overlap across the membership of these organizations and some of the most extremist anti-New Dealers would form the isolationist America First Committee in 1940 (see Chapter 5). National Re-Dedication was an attempt to solve a political problem, conservative nationalists' antipathy

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400 National Re-Dedication is briefly mentioned in Phyllis Keller, *States of Belonging: German-American Intellectuals and the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 250.
401 "Leaders Organize to Guard Liberty," *New York Times*, June 8, 1938, 3.
402 Keller, *States of Belonging*, 250.
403 For more on the American Liberty League, see Patton, "Standing at Thermopylae"; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*. There has been little scholarly attention paid to the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Democracy since the 1960s outside of libertarian think tanks: Richard Polenberg, "The National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, 1937-1941," *Journal of American History* 52, no. 3 (1965): 582–598; Richard S. Kirkendall, "The New Deal As Watershed: The Recent Literature," *Journal of American History* 54, no. 4 (1968): 839–852; David T. Beito and Marcus M. Witcher, "'New Deal Witch Hunt' The Buchanan Committee Investigation of the Committee for Constitutional Government," *Independent Review* 21, no. 1 (2016): 47–71. As a congressional lobbying organization unconcerned with nationalist traditions, it falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

toward FDR, with a non-political solution, a patriotic education campaign establishing new nationalist traditions.

Hermann Hagedorn was the intellectual driving force behind National Re-Dedication. A successful biographer and poet, Hagedorn was a liberal Republican who had served as executive director of the Roosevelt Memorial Association (RMA) since its founding in 1919. The RMA was dedicated to maintaining the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, whom Hagedorn had befriended in 1916, in public memory by building a research library at TR's birthplace in Manhattan and holding annual pilgrimages to his home in Oyster Bay, Long Island.[404] With his political philosophy of New Nationalism, TR largely defined progressive nationalism in the 1910s, a legacy that the RMA mythologized alongside his Rough Rider image.

Like TR, Hagedorn was elitist and feared subversive radicalism in American society. In the 1930s, when the new President Roosevelt enacted his New Deal, which marked a greater expansion of the federal government than TR's Square Deal or New Nationalism, Hagedorn privately worried that FDR veered too closely toward socialism.[405] Still, as director of the RMA, Hagedorn maintained close relationships with TR's family, including his niece Eleanor.[406] Hagedorn corresponded with Eleanor while her husband Franklin was president and she invited Hagedorn to dinner at the White House at least once.[407] Even as he socialized with Eleanor, Hagedorn and other liberal Republicans criticized FDR and

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[404] "Hermann Hagedorn, Biographer of Theodore Roosevelt, Is Dead," *New York Times*, July 28, 1964, 29.
[405] Keller, *States of Belonging*, 249–250; Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, 133.
[406] Hermann Hermann to Kermit Roosevelt, December 16, 1930, Folder Kermit Roosevelt, Box 12, Hagedorn Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; Theodore Roosevelt Jr. to Hermann Hagedorn, January 25, 1935, Folder Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Box 12, Hagedorn Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. This collection will be referenced as Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[407] Eleanor Roosevelt to Hermann Hagedorn, March 25, 1936, Folder Eleanor Roosevelt, Box 12, Hagedorn Papers, Yale.

wondered if his sometimes heavy-handed tactics to push through New Deal legislation might lead the United States down the road of European authoritarianism. He first proposed a campaign to educate Americans about the Bill of Rights to the newspaper editor William Allen White, another friend of TR's, in April 1936.[408] White encouraged the idea but warned Hagedorn to avoid making the organization too overtly anti-New Deal like a "reborn Liberty League." According to White, this new organization must condemn the "fascist" American Liberty League's efforts to dismantle the labor movement. Although White had little sympathy for the "communists" he believed ran organized labor, their rights to free speech and assembly were protected by the Bill of Rights.[409] White's advice seemed prescient when FDR won reelection in a landslide in November 1936 and the American Liberty League, soon after revealed to be closely tied to the Republican Party, faded from relevance.[410]

Hagedorn did not use the language of "national rededication" to describe his ideas until after 1937, when the phrase was prominently used to describe a high-profile ritual of British nationalism, the monarch's coronation.[411] In 1937, the leaders of the independent Free Churches cooperated with the state Church of England to celebrate "a day of national rededication" the Sunday before the coronation of George VI.[412] Observers commented that this particular coronation, held after the abdication of Edward VIII and amidst increasing aggression from fascist Germany and Italy, defined British nationalism through the lens of national rededication to a society governed by a constitutional monarchy and guided by non-

[408] William Allen White's Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies also campaigned to counter the isolationist America First Committee (see Chapter 4).
[409] William Allen White to Hermann Hagedorn, April 22, 1936, Folder William Allen White, Box 15, Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[410] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 21–22.
[411] The coronation of the monarch has long been a fundamental tradition of British nationalism. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 231.
[412] "Free Churches and Recall to Religion," *Manchester (UK) Guardian*, February 25, 1937, 7.

denominational Christian values.[413] Coronation mania crossed the Atlantic; American radio stations broadcast the ceremony and Anglophiles held parties and balls, including future members of National Re-Dedication's National Committee.[414] Although Hagedorn did not explicitly cite British national rededication as an inspiration for his movement, the 1937 coronation made a significant cultural impact on the United States. It is essential to understand American nationalist movements in an international context, especially in the case of National Re-Dedication, which appeared to borrow language from British nationalism.

In April 1938, the leaders of seven national civic groups met at RMA headquarters to discuss forming a National Re-Dedication organization to coordinate a campaign to educate Americans about the Bill of Rights.[415] Participants in the Nationalist Network, including the American Federation of Labor, Boy Scouts, and National Grange, joined the Workers Education Bureau and religious groups like the National Council of Jews and Christians and the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America to devise a public education campaign leading up to December 15, the anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. Beyond popularizing the Bill of Rights, the aims of National Re-Dedication included "rekindl[ing] the public mind to the splendor of America's free institutions" and reigniting "faith in liberty, faith in man, faith in America and faith in God."[416] To attain these goals, Hagedorn, the newly-appointed director of National Re-Dedication, would work with its member organizations to devise rituals for national holidays from July 4 to December 15; develop

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413 "The Year in the Church," *Irish Times*, December 29, 1937, 5.
414 "Radio Gives U. S. a Front Seat at the Coronation," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 11, 1937, 1. John W. Davis, future National Re-Dedication member, toasted the King and Queen at a dinner in New York: "Coronation to Be Observed Here with Services and Fetes," *New York Times*, May 12, 1937, 17.
415 Hermann Hagedorn, "Report of the Director," 1939, Folder 2 National Rededication, Box 22, Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
416 "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.

educational literature for schools, camps, and civic groups as well as a publicity campaign for radio and newspapers; and to organize pageants, parades, and celebrations at the culmination of the campaign on December 15.[417] Shortly after publicly announcing the organization in June, nine other groups joined National Re-Dedication, including the Nationalist Network's United States Flag Association, youth organizations like the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls, and Quaker and Catholic religious organizations.[418]

Hagedorn and National Re-Dedication's Acting Chairman James R. Garfield, RMA president and former Secretary of the Interior under TR, appointed about four dozen politicians, religious leaders, social reformers, academics, and journalists to the National Committee. While the most famous committee members were Republican politicians opposed to the New Deal, former Pres. Herbert Hoover and 1936 presidential nominee Alfred M. Landon, Hagedorn also appointed the former WPA New York City administrator Victor F. Ridder as treasurer.[419] Ridder had quit the WPA in 1936 and later told the Dies Committee that communists had infiltrated the program.[420] Initially, the National Committee was entirely white and included Lotus Coffman, the segregationist president of the University of Minnesota, but by July the Black former president of the Tuskegee Institute, Robert Russa Moton, agreed to join.[421] Powerful white women, like *New York Times* heiress Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger, First Lady of New York State Edith Altschul Lehman, and RMA Women's Auxiliary president Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, comprised about a quarter of the committee. Like many groups in the Nationalist Network, National Re-Dedication presumed

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417 Boy Scouts of America, "National Re-Dedication," 10, *Scouting*, Volume 26, Number 7, July 1938.
418 "Leaders Organize to Guard Liberty," *New York Times*, June 8, 1938, 3; "More Leaders Back Rededication Drive," *New York Times*, July 5, 1938, 3; "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
419 "Leaders Organize."
420 "Ridder Will Quit WPA Post on June 30," *New York Times*, February 5, 1936, 3; "Officers of WPA Union Are Reds, Quiz Group Told," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 18, 1938, 15.
421 See Chapter 1 for Robert Russa Moton's involvement with the US Flag Association. "Leaders Organize;" "More Leaders Back."

that white elites were the most appropriate arbiters of defining what it meant to be American.

Above all, members of the National Committee had close ties to the Nationalist Network, particularly anti-FDR groups. John W. Davis, the unsuccessful 1924 Democratic presidential nominee, had co-founded the American Liberty League and Louis J. Taber ran the starkly anti-New Deal agricultural group the National Grange. Four committee members would join the America First Committee, the isolationist group founded in 1940 which aimed to undermine FDR's foreign policy, including Hoover, Landon, and 1936 Socialist Party presidential nominee Norman Thomas.[422] Hagedorn, who never publicly expressed isolationist views, wrote an unpublished essay declaring that National Re-Dedication would "fight with all its power any propaganda which may develop to draw America into another military adventure in behalf of democracy" because he believed FDR would seize authoritarian control if the United States joined World War II.[423] The presence of many FDR opponents and isolationists within National Re-Dedication demonstrated that it was now acceptable for nationalists to openly undermine the sitting president, unlike in the 1920s when the Network aligned itself closely with presidents.

When Hagedorn announced the formation of National Re-Dedication in June 1938, it received positive coverage in the press. While the organization stated that it was non-partisan, journalists and editors assumed that it had been formed as a reaction to FDR's 1937 court-packing plan.[424] One letter writer to the *New York Times*, listing "communism, fascism, nazism and, finally, New Dealism" as recent assaults on liberty, lauded National Re-

[422] See Chapter 4 for more on the America First Committee. "Leaders Organize."
[423] "National Re Dedication: A Proposal to Relate its Aims and its Program to the World Crisis," 1938, Folder National Re-Dedication, Box 22, Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[424] "'Rededicating' America," *New York Times*, June 9, 1938, 22; "Simple but All-Important," *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 1938, 4; Thomas F. Woodlock, "Thinking It Over," *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 1938, 3.

Dedication as a "truly American" movement to restore liberty which was lost when FDR was first elected in 1932.[425] Part of the reason why National Re-Dedication was so warmly received by New Deal opponents was that by 1938, two of the most high-profile anti-New Deal organizations were floundering. The American Liberty League, through which millionaire industrialists attempted to manufacture a grassroots movement, faded from prominence after the 1936 election and the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, an unregistered congressional lobbying organization, was under investigation by the Senate for illegal lobbying activities.[426] National Re-Dedication responded to Americans' general anxieties about the future of democracy at home and around the world by calling for a return to the founding principle of liberty, which appealed to those who supported the New Deal but especially to New Deal opponents searching for a new organization.

National Re-Dedication used the tactics of everyday nationalism in its plans to educate and inspire the American people. They planned parades, festivals, and mass meetings on holidays leading up to the anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights on December 15, to be coordinated by groups in the Nationalist Network and those representing people of color, immigrants, and workers. National Re-Dedication envisioned establishing a new tradition, celebrating December 15 as a holiday venerating the Bill of Rights like the Fourth of July venerated the Declaration of Independence. The Bill of Rights, with its emphasis on individual liberties, naturally appealed to Hagedorn and other nationalists, who were privileged and predominantly white. Their goal was not to advocate for equality or civil rights. Moton, the only prominent African American in National Re-

[425] Jack Drasner, "An Oasis of Sanity," *New York Times*, June 30, 1938, 22.
[426] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 21–22; Polenberg, "The National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, 1937-1941," 594–595.

Dedication, was an accommodationist in the vein of Booker T. Washington.[427] Their ideal of nationalism did not challenge contemporary hierarchies of race and class and hearkened back to the mythology of the nation's founding.

In the weeks leading up to December 15, Hagedorn envisioned a publicity campaign across all media, from posters and pamphlets to newspaper and magazine articles by the United States' leading writers and radio speeches by civic leaders.[428] Hagedorn enlisted a wide variety of notable friends to participate. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Frederic William Wile, and other writer friends contributed to his "What's Right With America" series of articles, and prominent women jurists like New York City Magistrate Anna M. Kross and Municipal Court Justice Dorothy Kenyon broadcast a radio series called "The Charter Nobody Knows."[429] Dramatic scripts reenacting the struggle for liberty in US history were mailed to 750 radio stations nationwide and copies of the Bill of Rights, "printed in attractive form, appropriate for framing" were sent to two thousand newspapers to be reprinted on the Fourth of July.[430] One National Re-Dedication pamphlet compared appreciation for American liberty to a flame which must be constantly rekindled: "It must be lighted in the heart of the child, breathed upon in the soul of the boy and girl, enshrined in the mind of the man and woman within a structure of knowledge and responsibility."[431] The purpose of the National Re-Dedication campaign was to reinforce these lessons by using the tactics of everyday nationalism.

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[427] Brian Kelly, "Sentinels for New South Industry: Booker T. Washington, Industrial Accommodation and Black Workers in the Jim Crow South," *Labor History* 44, no. 3 (August 1, 2003): 350.
[428] "National Re-Dedication General Plan and Special Observances," 1938, Folder 1.1.59, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC.
[429] Hermann Hagedorn, "What's Right with America?" *New Brunswick (NJ) Daily Home News*, December 19, 1938, 4; "What's Right with America," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 1939, 20; "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[430] "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[431] "The need for National Re-Dedication," 1938, Folder 2 National Rededication, Box 22, Hagedorn Papers, Yale.

Of all National Re-Dedication's member organizations, the Boy Scouts most enthusiastically embraced its call. Reaching out to children was central to National Re-Dedication's agenda (Hagedorn called on three thousand summer camps to hold special patriotic ceremonies), and the Boy Scouts, with over one million members in 1938, had long incorporated civic education and patriotic rituals into its activities.[432] Chief Scout Executive James E. West, National Committee member for National Re-Dedication, enlisted the Boy Scouts' director of public relations to take over publicity for the new organization.[433] *Scouting* magazine, the official publication for adult Boy Scout leaders, published several articles between July and December 1938 outlining the importance of National Re-Dedication. "We must stand four-square with those who are in sympathy with these principles [in the Bill of Rights], for the promotion of *Americanism*, *liberty* and *democracy*, as enjoyed in America," one article stated. "It is the opportunity, if not the responsibility, of every man in Scouting to help vitalize this Re-dedication Program locally."[434] Throughout the second half of 1938, *Scouting* magazine offered suggestions for troop ceremonies to pledge themselves to rededication on holidays like Columbus Day, Armistice Day, and the anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights on December 15, as well as featuring troops which had devised their own ceremonies.[435]

Boy Scouts across the country distributed thousands of pieces of National Re-Dedication literature in the months before the December 15 anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights. Scouts in Arizona collected eighty thousand signatures from adults

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[432] Hermann Hagedorn, "Ceremonial of Re-Dedication," 1938, Folder 2 National Rededication, Box 22, Hagedorn Papers, Yale; "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale; Boy Scouts of America, "The Scout Field," 26, *Scouting*, July 1938.
[433] "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[434] Boy Scouts of America, "A Challenge to All Scouters," 7, *Scouting*, July 1938.
[435] Boy Scouts of America, "Planning for the Future," 3, *Scouting*, October 1938; "November Troop Program Suggestions," 13, *Scouting*, October 1938; "Honoring the Spirit of a Great American," 15, *Scouting*, December 1938.

pledging to rededicate themselves to American ideals. Hagedorn acknowledged that the Boy Scouts were the most effective group in National Re-Dedication, which was likely due to their massive membership (over one million in 1938) and hierarchical organizational structure.[436] The Boy Scouts also mirrored National Re-Dedication in that they were not an overtly political organization but their ideals of what it meant to be American clearly leaned in a conservative direction. The Boy Scouts continued their national rededication campaign into 1939, suggesting that troop leaders plan community service activities on May Day to discourage scouts from participating in leftist demonstrations.[437]

One organization that played an unofficial role in National Re-Dedication was the Federal Theatre Project. Shortly before announcing National Re-Dedication in June 1938, Hagedorn met with FTP officials to discuss how the New Deal theatre program might prioritize producing plays celebrating democracy and American history in the fall and winter of 1938.[438] Although Hagedorn was not an FDR supporter, he was an artist who believed in the educational power of theatre (he authored several skits in his suggestions for rededication ceremonies) and under his leadership, the RMA had co-sponsored a contest for educational and socially relevant dramas with the FTP in 1937.[439] As with his friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, Hagedorn was not so militantly anti-New Deal that he could not take advantage of its nationwide reach. The FTP agreed to structure their fall and winter production schedule so that certain plays would be open on rededication holidays, like "Created Equal," a Living Newspaper about the US Constitution, on July 4 and George Savage Jr.'s labor play "See How They Run" on Labor Day. Hagedorn himself agreed to co-

[436] "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale; Boy Scouts of America, "The Scout Field," 26, *Scouting*, July 1938.
[437] Boy Scouts of America, "Suggestions for May," 10, Scouting, April 1939.
[438] "Meeting Notes," June 1, 1938, Folder 1.1.59, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC.
[439] "WPA Theatre Aids in Teaching Field," *New York Times*, November 14, 1937, 49.

write a Living Newspaper on political freedom called "For Us the Living."[440] The FTP would bring the ideals of National Re-Dedication to thousands of Americans and a formal association with these nationalist organizations might improve the FTP's image in the face of attacks in the press by anti-New Deal congressmen like Martin Dies Jr. (D-Texas) and J. Parnell Thomas (R-New Jersey) in the summer before the Dies Committee investigation.[441]

There was little follow-through, however, after the initial announcement of the collaboration between National Re-Dedication and the FTP. Although the FTP featured civic-minded plays in the summer and fall, National Re-Dedication never publicly endorsed the FTP after its initial press release.[442] Hagedorn did not mention the FTP in his 1939 report as National Re-Dedication director. It was unclear why the collaboration between the FTP and National Re-Dedication disintegrated but the beginning of the Dies Committee investigation in August 1938 likely played a role. With daily newspaper headlines suggesting that the FTP was an un-American hotbed of communists, New Deal opponents like those among the leadership of National Re-Dedication likely felt that their suspicions were vindicated. Hagedorn never finished his Living Newspaper for the FTP, which was the clearest indication that his opinion of the FTP had changed since their meeting in June. The collaboration between National Re-Dedication and the FTP had the potential to forge a new way forward for the Nationalist Network and the federal government to work together to bring nationalism to everyday life, but circumstances changed when the FTP was discredited in the court of public opinion.

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[440] "WPA Theatre Starts Rededication Program," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 16, 1938, A9.
[441] "Meeting Notes," June 1, 1938, Folder 1.1.59, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC.
[442] Press Release, June 13, 1938, Folder 1.1.59, Box 4, FTP Collection, LOC; "WPA Theatre Starts Rededication Program," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 16, 1938, A9.

National Re-Dedication found a new ally in the film industry. In Hollywood during the 1930s, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, the industry's self-regulating agency, banned most anti-fascist film scripts from being produced out of the fear of offending Nazi officials in the German market, including *It Can't Happen Here*.[443] Meanwhile, many prominent actors, directors, screenwriters, and even the leaders of the Warner Bros. studio joined the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL), a Popular Front organization which protested the MPPDA's weak stance on fascism.[444] After Kristallnacht, the massive pogrom against Jews in Nazi Germany in November 1938, many Americans finally realized that brutality and violence were central to fascist regimes. MPPDA chairman Will H. Hays now feared that the political instability of fascist violence would negatively affect American studio profits.[445] Hays, the conservative former chairman of the Republican National Committee, feared the HANL was a communist front organization, so he invited Hermann Hagedorn to Los Angeles to harness existing anti-fascist attitudes in Hollywood for the purpose of National Re-Dedication. This alliance could help Hays steer the Hollywood anti-fascist movement in a more moderate direction and for National Re-Dedication, enlisting the most powerful man in the film industry was a major coup.

Hagedorn helped write and produce a radio program extolling the virtues of American democracy called *America Calling*, presented by some of the film industry's biggest stars and broadcast by NBC stations nationwide on December 14, the eve of the anniversary

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[443] See Chapter 1 for the MPPDA's participation in the National Flag Conference and the FTP section earlier in this chapter for more about *It Can't Happen Here*. Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor*, 117–119.
[444] Garrett Eisler, "'This Theatre Is a Battlefield': Political Performance and Jewish-American Identity, 1933–1948" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2012), 40–41, http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/1267129110/abstract/E70191E16C1F4667PQ/1; Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933-1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 311.
[445] Steven Alan Carr, "On Doherty's Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939," *Jewish Film & New Media: An International Journal* 3, no. 2 (2015): 246.

of the Bill of Rights.[446] The program began with speeches from Dr. Robert A. Millikan, president of the California Institute of Technology, and Los Angeles civic leader Joseph Scott warning Americans that the nation faced external threats from communist and fascist regimes as well as internal threats from ignorance of the Bill of Rights. In keeping with Hagedorn's belief in the power of art to educate, the director Frank Capra directed a skit explaining the Bill of Rights featuring actors from the popular Andy Hardy movies, including Mickey Rooney and Lionel Barrymore, and a dozen other celebrity actors. Among them, Edward G. Robinson was a vocal anti-fascist and one-time member of the HANL, while Barrymore and James Cagney were briefly affiliated with that organization. Just one week earlier, Robinson brought dozens of famous actors, directors, and studio heads together to form the Committee of 56 to publicly boycott German goods, which attracted a great deal of press coverage.[447] Compared to the communist-tinged HANL, the Committee of 56 was much more in line with the type of anti-fascist activism that Hollywood conservatives like Hays had in mind. The actor Paul Muni, another member of the Committee of 56, hosted the *America Calling* program along with Robert Taylor, an outspoken anti-communist.[448] Judy Garland, taking a break from shooting *The Wizard of Oz*, later joined the Meredith Willson Orchestra to sing patriotic songs before the program closed with a benediction by the Archbishop of Los Angeles.[449] The *America Calling* broadcast was a gesture at anti-fascism by Will H. Hays in response to leftist activism in Hollywood; the MPPDA still banned most anti-Nazi films. Still, National Re-Dedication was inundated with letters and telegrams in the

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[446] "Air Attractions," *Daily Boston Globe*, December 14, 1938, 26; "Today on the Radio," *New York Times*, December 14, 1938, 32; "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[447] Steven J. Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right: How Movie Stars Shaped American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 101–102.
[448] In 1947, Robert Taylor testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and accused three individuals of being communists, who were later blacklisted from the industry. Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right*, 108.
[449] "Fight Urged for Freedom," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1938, 1-2.

days that followed the successful broadcast.[450] The radio program brought the message of National Re-Dedication into the homes of thousands of Americans, educating them about the Bill of Rights through the appeal of popular culture.

Hagedorn's National Re-Dedication work culminated on December 15, the anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. William Randolph Hearst's newspaper empire publicized local events and published articles by Hagedorn and his writer friends in the weeks before. On December 15, there were mass meetings in churches, schools, and public spaces in two dozen cities across the country, according to Hagedorn's report, but most of the activity appeared to be centered in northeastern cities. This could be explained by the Nationalist Network's deep roots in the Northeast but it is also likely that National Re-Dedication targeted cities there out of the fear that urban immigrants and workers were more susceptible to radical propaganda. Public schools in New York City and Philadelphia held assemblies for all students, with every Philadelphia high school student and principal receiving a copy of the Bill of Rights. Hunter College in Manhattan held three mass meetings alone.[451] Boy Scout troops across the United States held special rededication meetings, at which scouts performed plays about the Bill of Rights and recited the Pledge of Re-Dedication written by Hagedorn, which put the "supreme responsibility" of protecting free institutions on individual citizens, whose "first duty is to live according to this understanding" and whose "second is to help others see the obligations of free citizenship."[452] Beyond the December 15 activities in the northeast and among the Boy

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450 "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
451 "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
452 Boy Scouts of America, "November Troop Program Suggestions," 13, *Scouting*, October 1938; Boy Scouts of America, "A Ceremony of Re-Dedication," 6-7, *Scouting*, November 1938; Boy Scouts of America, "December Troop Program Suggestions," 14-15, *Scouting*, November 1938; "Ceremonial of Re-Dedication," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.

Scouts, National Re-Dedication was only a moderate success. Despite its high-profile Hollywood radio program and support from the Hearst newspaper group, the organization quietly disbanded sometime in 1939. Its plans for an annual, truly nationwide rededication program never came to fruition.

National Re-Dedication fell short of its potential to become a major movement due in large part, Hagedorn believed, to the failure of most of its constituent organizations to mobilize their members and to fundraise effectively. Other than the Boy Scouts, which truly rose to the occasion, only the Federal Council of Churches, Jewish Welfare Board, Camp Fire Girls, National Council of Women, Roosevelt Memorial Association, and the National Conference of Jews and Christians participated in National Re-Dedication at all and only to a limited extent, publishing an article in their newsletter or getting some local chapters involved.[453] Even the Federal Council of Churches only promised to join National Re-Dedication if it did not have to make a financial contribution.[454] Other National Re-Dedication organizations which were in the Nationalist Network like the American Federation of Labor, National Grange, and United States Flag Association appeared to have done nothing to incorporate rededication into their work. National Re-Dedication's fundraising plans under treasurer Victor F. Ridder, a Boy Scout leader and former head of the WPA in New York, were underwhelming. Ridder's plan to target wealthy members of the Nationalist Network for donations failed to meet the organization's initial $6,000

[453] "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[454] Federal Council of Churches of Christ of America, "Minutes of the Executive Committee," June 3, 1938, 10-11, Folder 10, Box 1, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America Records, 1894-1952, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

fundraising goal, far short of the $100,000 annual operating budget Hagedorn had envisioned.[455]

Without extensive and active support across the Nationalist Network, National Re-Dedication had little chance of achieving its potential to invent and popularize new and lasting patriotic traditions. Earlier traditions, like the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1890s and the Flag Code in the 1920s, only became widespread through the collaboration of many groups in the Network.[456] National Re-Dedication's lukewarm reception was likely due to its timing. During the 1920s, most groups in the Network became relatively conservative, if nonpartisan in name, and maintained cordial relationships with Republican presidents. With the election of FDR and the implementation of the New Deal, conservative nationalists felt little allegiance to the office of the president and some formed new groups in opposition to him, like the American Liberty League and the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government. Although National Re-Dedication was run by Republicans and included many FDR opponents on its National Committee, its commitment to nonpartisanship and civil liberties would not have been appealing to many conservative nationalists in 1938. National Re-Dedication was, perhaps, too idealistic for its time. The word "rededication," Hagedorn wrote, "has been set ringing in the ears of millions, a word signifying a fresh recognition of certain basic values in America life and a fresh commitment to their perpetuation."[457] Even if National Re-Dedication did not survive as an organization, Hagedorn still believed that its message would live on.

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[455] Circular letter, Jul 13, 1938, National Re-dedication, Records of Anti-Nazi Organizations Seized from the German American Bund, 1944-1947, Box 1, Records of the Office of Alien Property, Record Group 131, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.
[456] See Introduction for the Pledge of Allegiance and Chapter 1 for the Flag Code.
[457] "Report of the Director," Hagedorn Papers, Yale.

After FDR won a third term in November 1940, his inaugural committee announced that Americans should celebrate January 20, 1941 as a day of national rededication. As the committee's vice chairman stated, all Americans should observe this "day of national rededication to the principles of American liberty, under freedom and democracy as a way to show the entire world the unity and devotion of all our people to the cause of human freedom."[458] FDR's inaugural committee called on schools, clubs, labor unions, and other organizations to hold patriotic services and rituals before or after listening to the broadcast of FDR's inaugural address.[459] In his address, FDR used very similar language to National Re-Dedication, calling on Americans to protect the United States from external threats to democracy and to "muster the spirit of America, and the faith of America."[460] In his invocation at the inauguration, Rev. Ze Barney T. Phillips called on God to revive faith in America, one of National Re-Dedication's four principles, and the press frequently referred to the ceremony as a "rededication."[461] Although FDR's "Four Freedoms" address, given two weeks earlier, eventually became emblematic of FDR's third term in the historical memory, in 1941 his "rededication" inaugural address was far more popular and well-received at the time.[462]

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458 John Barry, "Million Who'll See Third Term Ceremony Will Set New Record," *Daily Boston Globe*, January 19, 1941, 26.
459 "National 'Rededication' Jan. 20," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 18, 1940, 1; "Urges Schools to Plan Inaugural Day Program," *New York Times*, December 27, 1940, 17.
460 Yale Law School, "Third Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt," accessed Aug 20, 2020, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/froos3.asp.
461 "Prayers for Peace Mark Ceremony," *New York Times*, January 21, 1941, 2; "The Inaugural Address," *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1941, 4; John Barry, "Scenes from the First Third Term in American History," *Daily Boston Globe*, February 2, 1941, A4.
462 James J. Kimble argues that the "Four Freedoms" speech was a rhetorical failure until Norman Rockwell debuted his painting of the same name in 1943. James J. Kimble, "The Illustrated Four Freedoms: FDR, Rockwell, and the Margins of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2015): 47–48. John Barry, "F. D. Challenges Defeatists," *New York Times*, January 21, 1941, 1, 9; "The Inaugural Address," *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1941, 4.

This is not to say that FDR or his advisors were directly inspired by National Re-Dedication; the organization had dissolved over a year earlier. Gov. Herbert H. Lehman of New York, whose wife Edith Altschul Lehman had served on National Re-Dedication, frequently used the phrase in public speeches in 1940, which possibly influenced other politicians to adopt this language.[463] Although its exact influence is unclear, the ideals of National Re-Dedication and the language that Hagedorn had so carefully crafted to describe the movement undoubtedly reflected widespread anxieties Americans had about the future of democracy at home and abroad at this time. If National Re-Dedication did not begin a long-term movement to educate Americans about their rights and obligations as citizens, it demonstrated that there were serious concerns about what it meant to be American among leaders of the Nationalist Network. Although its leaders were largely opposed to FDR and the New Deal, National Re-Dedication was so fundamentally idealistic that it invoked a seemingly universal desire to reconnect with core national values and foreshadowed the theme of FDR's third inauguration. Unlike the American Liberty League, National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, or eventually the America First Committee (see Chapter 4), National Re-Dedication defined itself according to ideals and less in opposition to FDR, making it less appealing to conservatives in the Network at that time.

Conclusion

The survival of American capitalism and democracy was not guaranteed in the 1930s; Americans did not have to look far to find nations which fell to economic collapse and

[463] "Defense Stressed at Tammany Fete," *New York Times*, June 28, 1940, 20; "Governor Warns of Complacency," *New York Times*, December 21, 1940, 10.

authoritarianism. These systems were essential to American national identity, and the Nationalist Network was shaken when their weaknesses were revealed by the Great Depression and the expansion of fascist and communist regimes abroad. The FTP addressed these fears by asserting that left-wing ideals were American ideals, suggesting that the way forward was for the government to ensure a more inclusive democracy. However, by advocating for marginalized people, particularly African Americans, to have a greater say in society, the FTP threatened existing racial and economic hierarchies and was ultimately defunded for being "un-American." At the same time, conservatives in the National Re-Dedication responded to the crises of the 1930s by attempting to create a new tradition using everyday nationalism, a familiar tactic of the Network in the patriotic education of Americans. Although officially non-partisan, National Re-Dedication's emphasis on individual liberty was consistent with its leaders' latent conservatism. In an era where nationalist discourse was dominated by the Popular Front on the left and anti-New Deal organizations on the right, National Re-Dedication was too centrist to survive. Yet, the 1930s demonstrated that American nationalist ideology was adaptable across the political spectrum. American exceptionalism was sufficiently broad and imprecise to appeal to many on the left and right, even to the politely non-partisan. Nationalists could faithfully argue that the rights of citizenship must be protected by the federal government but also that individual liberties must be protected *from* the government. Like the Great Depression and the threat of authoritarianism, these debates would continue into the next decade.

Chapter 4:

World War II Isolationism, Far-Right Sedition, and Postwar Anti-Internationalism in the Nationalist Network, 1937-1955

World War II illustrated the culmination of everyday nationalism in the United States, with an extraordinary number of Americans eager to support the war in both material and symbolic ways. Those who could not fight in the war against fascism believed they could contribute to the cause by growing victory gardens and buying war bonds as well as by flying the American flag and singing the National Anthem. This occurred in large part due to decades of work by the Nationalist Network to convince Americans that patriotism must be performed, and performed through a series of rituals and traditions prescribed by the Network itself. World War II was, in this sense, a triumph for the Network but it also marked its end. The intertwined group of civic, hereditary, and veterans' organizations which had characterized its work as educational and apolitical essentially disappeared after the war. In its place emerged a smaller network of large nationwide organizations which used their educational campaigns to equate American national identity with radical right-wing ideologies like militant anti-communism and white supremacy. Nationalism is an inherently political ideology and the Network always had political aims, but the 1940s and 1950s marked a new era from which there was no return.

The resurgence of right-wing anti-communism in the Nationalist Network of the 1940s stemmed in part from the 1920s but also reflected a fundamental change in the structure and ideology of the Network. In the 1920s, the Network waged its own red scare against immigrants and leftists on the grounds that they were inherently un-American based on country of origin, religion, and ethnicity for the former and ideology for the latter. Moderates in the larger nationalist organizations wrested control from the anti-communist

faction shortly before the onset of the Great Depression, at which point most of the Network forged an uneasy peace with Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Even if the mostly Republican leaders of the Network were uncomfortable with the new Democratic president and his liberal New Deal, they recognized how much of their authority rested on their proximity to political power. Anti-communist nationalism reemerged in some quarters by 1940 but this iteration warned not only of external threats to the United States but of one particular internal threat, represented by Roosevelt. Aligned with anti-New Dealers, these new anti-communist nationalists spread conspiracy theories about FDR, accusing his administration of bringing Soviet sympathizers into the federal government and suspecting he harbored dictatorial ambitions which would destroy American democracy. This notion that FDR and subsequent presidents who pursued similar liberal and internationalist policies were fundamentally un-American became widespread throughout the remnants of the Network in the postwar era.

Characterizing this transition as merely the reemergence of anti-communism would replicate the Nationalist Network's own rhetorical trick of equating liberalism with communism. Instead, this chapter will examine two political ideologies as manifestations of the anti-communist impulse within the Network: World War II isolationism and postwar anti-internationalism. In the two years before the United States entered the war, a new type of isolationist movement emerged, which differed from previous iterations led by pacifists. World War II isolationists did not generally oppose war in principle but opposed the prospect of Roosevelt using the war to aid the Soviet Union and consolidate his own political power. The largest, most established nationalist organizations rejected isolationism, leaving the isolationists in their ranks to turn to more overtly political groups like the America First Committee and American Coalition of Patriotic Societies. The isolationist

movement ended with the United States' entry into World War II but the isolationist impulse reemerged within the Network after the war in the form of anti-internationalism. This chapter defines postwar anti-internationalism as opposition to policies of liberal internationalism adopted by liberals and some centrists in the Democratic and Republican parties.[464] Anti-internationalism not only rejected internationalist diplomacy but rejected liberal and moderate domestic policies, on the basis that they would lead to communism. It reflected a worldview not based on reality or good faith but on paranoia and intellectual dishonesty. After the war, the Network's educational campaigns no longer taught that the United States represented the ideals of liberal democracy and civil liberties but that those who preached those ideals posed an existential threat to the nation.

"Denazifying" the Pledge of Allegiance, 1937-1942

The rise of fascist governments in Europe, particularly the Nazi party's mastery of inventing and popularizing patriotic traditions and rituals, compelled many Americans to reconsider the role of similar traditions in the United States. Although there were some dissenters within the Nationalist Network, the leaders of the largest nationalist organizations generally denied any similarities between the ways in which legal and social pressure was used to popularize patriotic rituals in the United States and Germany. Since the *Youth's Companion* popularized the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1890s, many public schools in the United States incorporated flag ceremonies as a regular part of the school day, requiring schoolchildren to salute the flag and recite the Pledge either by state law or school policy (see Introduction). Historians have studied the many cases in which Jehovah's Witnesses

[464] This dissertation will refer to World War II non-interventionism as "isolationism" and opposition to postwar internationalism as "anti-internationalism," although a broader definition of isolationism would include anti-internationalism.

sued school districts for forcing their children to salute the American flag in the 1930s, which they considered idolatry and thus a violation of their religious freedom. In 1943, the Supreme Court overruled an earlier 1940 decision and declared that coerced flag salutes were a violation of the First Amendment.[465] Contemporary observers noted the similarity to Nazi Germany, where Jehovah's Witnesses were imprisoned for refusing to say "Heil Hitler" or perform the Nazi salute.[466]

With the rise of Nazi Germany, some Americans identified the flag salute itself as problematic. This dissertation refers to the salute popularized by the *Youth's Companion*, in which children began the Pledge with their right hand over their heart before extending their hand upward toward the flag, palm up, at the phrase "to my flag," as the Bellamy salute to be consistent with earlier historiography, although recent research suggests it predated Francis Bellamy, its namesake.[467] The Nazi salute differed from the Bellamy salute only in that the arm began outstretched and the palm faced down. The Bellamy salute was most likely based on the mythologized "Roman salute," which also inspired Italian and German fascist salutes in the twentieth century.[468] Although the Bellamy salute predated the Nazi salute and was incorporated into the Flag Code in 1923, Americans in the 1930s and early 1940s were forced to consider whether the traditional rituals of the Pledge of Allegiance should change as a hyper-nationalistic foreign regime seemed intent on overthrowing the democratic governments of the world.[469]

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[465] See Ellis, *To the Flag*, 91–113.
[466] "Attack Forced Salute of Flag," *Daily Boston Globe*, October 7, 1935, 1, 13; "Flag Salute Laid to School 'Hitlers,'" *New York Times*, October 31, 1938, 17; "Required Flag Salute Likened to Nazism," *New York Times*, April 13, 1940, 6.
[467] Sam Roberts, "We Know the Pledge. Its Author, Maybe Not," *New York Times*, April 2, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/us/pledge-of-allegiance-francis-bellamy.html.
[468] See also Martin M. Winkler, *The Roman Salute: Cinema, History, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 59–61, https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/36506.
[469] "Report of the Sub-Committee on the Flag Code," May 25, 1924, 10-11, Folder 1, Box 1, NFC Records.

The authorship of the Pledge was a point of contention within the Nationalist Network closely tied to the salute. As explored in the Introduction, the Pledge and Bellamy salute were popularized by the Boston-based *Youth's Companion* in September 1892 but were performed in Victoria, KS several months earlier. In the 1900s, the Kansas Women's Relief Corps claimed that a soldier named Frank E. Bellamy authored the Pledge on behalf of the WRC and Grand Army of the Republic during the Spanish-American War. The *Youth's Companion* attributed it to late employee James B. Upham after Frank's death in the 1910s, and Upham's *Companion* colleague Francis Bellamy staked his own claim with an essay elaborately describing his creation of the Pledge and salute in the 1920s. The Network was divided on the authorship dispute. The similarity between Frank and Francis' names caused considerable confusion and although there was some regional affinity for Frank among midwesterners and Upham or Francis for northeasterners, this was inconsistent. For example, the Kansas DAR rejected Frank's claim in favor of Upham's in 1919 while the organization's national society supported Frank into the 1930s.[470] Because Frank's life ended tragically, dying at age 38 of a disability from his time in military service, some nationalist groups mistakenly believed he was buried in an unmarked grave when in reality, his socially prominent family buried him in their family plot.[471] Francis died in 1931, and in 1939 the United States Flag Association assembled a committee of academic historians to determine whether Francis or Upham was the author, apparently ignoring Frank's claim. After

[470] "Job's Daughters' Council Studies Upham Tribute," *Washington Post*, August 25, 1938, 15; "Cherryvale Boy Not Author," *Coffeyville (KS) Weekly Journal*, June 5, 1919, 4; Vivian Lewis Sigmon, "Report of Correct Use of the Flag Committee," 1938, 6, Committees (General) Collection, 1891-2008, Box 6, Folder 7, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Archives (this will be referenced as NSDAR Archives).
[471] "Frank Bellamy Dead," *Cherryvale (KS) Republican*, April 1, 1915, 1; "Cherryvale Boy Wrote Flag Pledge," *Fredonia (KS) Daily Herald*, April 27, 1917, 4; Mrs. Alice G. McDermott, "Society News," *Fort Scott (KS) Daily Tribune*, April 12, 1919, 4; "American Gold Star Mothers," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.)*, February 21, 1937, D-7; Crete Cage, "N.D.G.W. Rededicate Allegiance to America," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1938, A6; "Frank Elmer Bellamy," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25789862/frank-elmer-bellamy, accessed April 20, 2022.

examining evidence submitted by Upham and Francis' families, the committee decided Francis was the author.[472] Going forward, most of the Network accepted Francis as the creator of both the Pledge and salute, most importantly the DAR, the most influential organization in terms of patriotic education.[473] Because of decades of division over the origins of the Pledge and Bellamy salute, the Network was defensive in the late 1930s when outsiders criticized the salute's similarity to the Nazi salute.

In 1937, teachers and administrators in New York City public schools were concerned when the State Commissioner of Education issued an order requiring students to use the Bellamy salute during the Pledge of Allegiance, fearing that young children, especially those of German and Italian heritage, would confuse it with the palm-down Nazi salute. Although the Bellamy salute was officially endorsed by the Nationalist Network and incorporated in the 1923 Flag Code, it was not universally adopted; New York schools had instructed students to use a military salute, with the hand at the brow, since 1917.[474] The Network invented rituals but was limited in its ability to enforce their uniformity. The state education commissioner of New York explained that he issued the order on the recommendation of the National Flag Association, a small New York-based flag advocacy organization with some ties to the Network but which had appeared to cease operations in the 1920s.[475] It was unclear whether the education commissioner confused the USFA with the National Flag Association or if a third party used the name of the National Flag

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[472] "Tells How Mate Wrote Pledge of Allegiance," *Daily Boston Globe*, August 30, 1931, A2; "Job's Daughters Council."
[473] Mrs. Alonzo Newton Benn, "Golden Anniversary of the Pledge to the Flag," 1942, Committees (General) Collection, 1891-2008, Box 5, Folder 25, NSDAR Archives; Mrs. J. B. Bellamy, "Origin of the Pledge to the Flag," *DAR Magazine*, October 1949, 20-21.
[474] "Schools Here Try," 25; "City Schools to Keep Old Salute to Flag," *New York Times*, March 10, 1937, 25.
[475] "No Nonsense About the Flag," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1925, 6; "Flag Association Meets," *New York Times*, June 15, 1927, 16; Norman Hapgood, ed., *Professional Patriots* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1927), 173, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951d00963174g.

Association to lobby for the salute change. Regardless, New York City school administrators and teachers publicly denounced the effort to make students perform an "un-American," "new-fangled" salute and the education commissioner, bemoaning the controversy as "much ado about nothing," retracted his order."[476] Over the next few years, as fascist regimes began a war in Europe, civic organizations like the Kiwanis Club and school districts across the country followed New York City's lead and changed the Bellamy salute, either replacing it with a military salute or keeping the right hand on the heart.[477] In doing so, they proposed that traditions and rituals created by the Network could be changed by those outside the Network while retaining the spirit of respect for the flag.

Organizations in the Nationalist Network viewed this as an attack on their hard-fought authority. During the 1920s, they worked to have their Pledge of Allegiance flag salute passed into law by state legislatures. When school districts and state departments of education tried to alter that tradition in the 1930s and early 1940s, American nationalists decried their efforts. Laurens M. Hamilton, president of the New York Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, condemned "further government encroachment into what used to be the business of private, patriotic citizens."[478] The Sons of the American Revolution had long lobbied Congress to adopt the National Flag Conference's Flag Code into federal law, and Hamilton's New York Chapter supported state legislation forcing teachers to take a loyalty oath.[479] When the Washington, DC Board of Education replaced the Bellamy salute

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476 "Schools Here Try;" "City Schools."

477 "Kiwanis Club Adopts Salute Unlike Nazis'," *Daily Boston Globe*, June 22, 1939, 8; "Flag Salute Like Nazis' Revised by Jersey School," *New York Times*, September 20, 1939, 3; "Boston School Children May Have New Method of Saluting Flag," *Daily Boston Globe*, September 8, 1940, A4; "Manchester, N.H., Schools Drop 'Hitler' Salute," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 10, 1940, 9; Henry W. Harris, "Military Salute May Give Boston Councilors Trouble," *Daily Boston Globe*, September 15, 1940, C2; "New Flag Salute Ruled," *New York Times*, October 16, 1940, 10.

478 "Warns on Patriotism," *New York Times*, February 19, 1939, 35.

479 "Flag Code Bill Is Backed by Patriotic Groups in a Hearing Before House Committee," *New York Times*, January 26, 1928, 4; "D.A.R Head Issues Call to Patriots," *New York Times*, October 8, 1935, 25.

with a military salute for Pledge exercises in October 1941, representatives of the USFA and local American Legion post protested at a public school board meeting.[480] "It is to be regretted that propaganda as to alien foes can make us change our own accepted ways for fear of misinterpretation," a national DAR leader said in a public statement. "Rather should we stick to our own with more and more tenacity."[481] Invented in the 1890s and popularized in the succeeding decades by the Network, school Pledge rituals were so widespread by the 1930s and early 1940s that few would do away with them altogether. The Nazi salute controversy revealed that the Network had succeeded in making Americans believe that children should be taught patriotism through daily rituals as well as that the Network viewed itself as the only legitimate arbiter of nationalist traditions.

The flag salute debates would likely have continued if the United States had not entered World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Seized by a renewed sense of purpose, many leaders of the Nationalist Network not only saw an opportunity to get the Flag Code formally recognized by the federal government, they viewed it as imperative to the war effort. As Richard J. Ellis has written, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars convinced Congress to formally adopt the Flag Code into US Code in June 1942, which included most of the National Flag Conference code from the 1920s, including the Bellamy salute during the Pledge of Allegiance.[482] Congress quietly amended the Flag Code in December 1942 to change the Pledge salute to the hand-over-the-heart salute, omitting the controversial part of the Bellamy salute. Ellis attributes the impetus to change the salute to Gridley Adams, who helped write the NFC's Flag Code in 1923, but Adams' claims that the original Flag Code never used the Bellamy salute were

480 "Public School Group Debates Salute Issue," *Washington Post*, October 18, 1941, 17.
481 "D.A.R. Backs Hand Salute," *New York Times*, October 18, 1941, 21.
482 Ellis, *To the Flag*, 116–120.

false.[483] Adams claimed sole credit for the Flag Code and was largely estranged from the Network after the 1920s due to his unwillingness to work collectively. According to Rep. Charles F. McLaughlin (D-Nebraska), who introduced the salute amendment, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans suggested the change to him.[484] There was also a faction of the DAR which broke from the organization's national leadership to advocate for formally altering the salute, an unusual example of dissent in a strictly hierarchical group.[485] This amendment stemmed from a much broader coalition across the Network than Gridley Adams later claimed. James A. Moss, the other driving force supporting the Bellamy salute, died in 1941, leaving the USFA without its leader of two decades to aid the DAR.[486] In December 1942, despite the last-minute pleas of the DAR and USFA, both houses of Congress passed the amendment removing the Bellamy salute and although no members of Congress articulated the reason for changing the salute, its similarity to the Nazi salute was the most likely possibility.[487] Now that the modified hand-over-the-heart salute was officially part of US Code, even the USFA and the DAR changed their policies to conform to the revised Flag Code.[488]

The debate over whether to change the Pledge salute demonstrated how stubbornly some organizations in the Nationalist Network clung to the traditions they invented. By 1942, even the American Legion, which sponsored the NFC that codified the Bellamy salute,

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483 Gridley Adams, "Flag Salute," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1941, 10; "Report of the Sub-Committee on the Flag Code," May 25, 1924, 10-11. Folder 1, Box 1, NFC Records.
484 US Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 76th Congress, Second Session, Volume 88 - Part 7* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 9116.
485 "Pledge to Flag Rite Starts Rift in D.A.R. Ranks," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1942, 31.
486 "Pledge to U.S. Flag Credited to Bellamy," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 17, 1939, 5; "Col. J.A. Moss Killed in Auto Crash Here," *New York Times*, April 24, 1941, 23.
487 Letter from Elizabeth Malott Barnes to Frederick Van Nuys, December 5, 1942, Committees (General) Collection, 1891-2008, Box 5, Folder 12, NSDAR Archives; US Congress, *Congressional Record*, 1213.
488 "D.A.R. Changes Flag Pledge," *New York Times*, January 27, 1943, 16; "Hal C. White Wins Award on Flag Essay," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 20, 1943, 3.

considered the changing of the Pledge salute to be a meaningful symbol in the war against Nazi Germany. Organizations like the USFA, Sons of the American Revolution, and DAR resented that external forces outside the Network could change nationalist traditions and only relented when Congress passed the amendment to the Flag Code. The similarity of the Bellamy and Nazi salutes could make Americans question the other similarities between the two nations, including white supremacy, institutional racism, and intolerance of minority religious groups. By amending the Pledge salute, the federal government and the pro-reform nationalist groups reinvented a patriotic ritual which symbolically differentiated American nationalism and democracy from Nazi totalitarianism.

Far-Right Isolationism and the America First Committee in New York City, 1940-1941

As illustrated in the flag salute controversy, large groups in the Nationalist Network like the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars resisted change. The old guard of the Network considered their organizations to be apolitical but this had never really been true; nationalism as an ideology is fundamentally political and using everyday nationalism to influence Americans' behavior and sense of identity was a political act. Large nationalist organizations, which leaned right-wing, weathered the Great Depression due to their size and maintained a policy of tolerance toward Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Smaller organizations faded during the economic crisis or, as in the case of the USFA, with the loss of their old leaders. Despite the political backlash to the New Deal, FDR won a third presidential term in 1940, promising to keep the United States out of World War II.

For some in the Nationalist Network, supporting isolationism provided a means of undermining FDR by criticizing his foreign policy rather than his domestic policies. Efforts to discredit the New Deal as communist had succeeded in defunding some programs like the Federal Theatre Project but voters still elected Roosevelt for a third term. Many isolationists viewed a strong Nazi Germany as a beneficial check on the Soviet Union and the spread of communism, both before but especially after their Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact ended in June 1941.[489] Believing the Nazis were the lesser of two evils, anti-communist isolationists viewed US aid to any nation fighting Germany as tantamount to aiding communism.[490] While the largest organizations in the Network never formally supported isolationism in this period, some prominent leaders of the DAR, American Legion, and VFW used their platforms within those groups to conflate FDR's policies with communism, arguing that he personally posed a direct threat to American democracy. In March 1941, honorary DAR president-general Grace L. H. Brosseau told the society's Connecticut state convention that FDR's proposal to formally aid Britain would usher in "a totalitarian form of government" and that "the real threat to America is not physical invasion but our inability to recognize an enemy when we see him."[491] Although national leaders of the American Legion and VFW took some proactive steps to quiet isolationist leaders at the state level, dissenters remained and threatened each group's unified façade.[492] Isolationist ideology simmered just below the surface of the Nationalist Network.

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[489] Statement by R. E. Wood, June 23, 1941, Box 62, Amos Pinchot Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. This collection will be referenced as Pinchot Papers.
[490] Amos Pinchot to Peter Jessup, October 31, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[491] "Dictator Days at Hand, D. A. R. Conclave Told," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 14, 1941, 10.
[492] "'Isolationists" Ranks Split On 'Pinkish' Chicago Meeting, *Christian Science Monitor*, August 30, 1940, 3; "Move to Censure Isolationist Groups Tabled by V.F.W." *Christian Science Monitor*, August 28, 1941, 6; "V.F.W. Denies Seat to Earl Southard," *New York Times*, August 29, 1941, 36; Ralph W. Cessna, "War Policies Loom Large as Legion Delegates Gather," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 13, 1941, 9; "Realistic Legion," *Washington Post*, September 19, 1941, 12.

The World War II isolationist movement was, on its surface, a broadly-drawn political movement uniting conservative Republicans, anti-New Deal Democrats and socialists, and far-right Nazi sympathizers. No single political movement could fully represent all of these constituencies and some isolationist organizations, such as the America First Committee, emulated the Nationalist Network by characterizing themselves as patriotic rather than political. The AFC used symbols, language, and tactics similar to those developed by the educational campaigns of the Network to convince Americans that intervention in World War II was not simply foolish but un-American. The AFC aimed to turn a political debate about intervention into a nationalist one. It should be considered part of the Nationalist Network not only because members of the AFC's national committee included leaders and members of the American Legion and DAR, as well as USFA Cross of Honor recipient Charles Lindbergh, but because it framed the intervention issue in nationalist terms.[493]

Some political partisans spied an opportunity to use the AFC's nationalist isolationism to further their own political aims. Anti-New Dealers rose to positions of power in the national committee and many local chapters, most notably in New York City. AFC NYC leaders borrowed liberally from the educational strategies pioneered by the Nationalist Network in their mission to undermine Roosevelt's domestic and foreign policies.[494] These isolationist nationalists took a radical political stance that others in the Network shared but rarely articulated: New Deal liberalism was un-American. This chapter examines AFC NYC

[493] AFC national committee members included Hanford MacNider, former national commander of the American Legion, and prominent Missouri DAR member Miriam Marsh Clark. "House Quiz Will Hear Leaders of America First Committee," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1941, 8; "Dance Planned for Delegates," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1937, 18. See Chapter 1 for Lindbergh and the USFA.

[494] This dissertation will use the acronym AFC to refer to the national committee, headquartered in Chicago and led by Robert E. Wood and R. Douglas Stuart Jr., and to the collective activities of the national committee and chapters nationwide. AFC NYC refers specifically to the New York City chapter, which was one of the most influential and dogmatically right-wing chapters.

as the case study which best illustrated this phenomenon and was representative of others in the isolationist movement.[495] It bridged the gap between the Nationalist Network of the 1930s, characterized by a more implicit and moderate political conservatism, and the postwar Network which openly defied the liberal and internationalist status quo.

Everyday nationalism, as developed by the Nationalist Network, had always been implicitly political in that it prescribed that certain behaviors and racial, class, and political identities were more authentically American than others, but the AFC made this political connotation more overt. With thousands of chapters nationwide and strong support in midwestern and northeastern cities, the AFC brought the intervention debate to Americans' daily lives. AFC chapters across the United States created and distributed isolationist literature to schools, churches, and community groups using patriotic language and symbols to criticize Roosevelt and the Allies. Chapter leaders wrote articles and opinion pieces in both major and local newspapers and produced radio programs, countering what they perceived as media bias in favor of interventionism. The AFC also became famous for its rallies and mass meetings, the type of event pioneered by political parties and leftist organizations. The AFC used rallies as a recruiting tool, inviting celebrities and isolationist politicians to give sensationalist speeches to thousands of rallygoers and radio listeners. These rally broadcasts, in addition to the significant newspaper coverage of protests outside the venues, projected the image that the AFC was massively popular. At the same time, many speakers insisted that the organization was in danger of being silenced by some

[495] AFC leaders directly collaborated with or served as leaders of isolationist organizations including the Keep America Out of War Congress; Women United; and We, the Mothers, Mobilize for America; as well as anti-New Deal groups like the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government. Isolationist organizations competed with a network of interventionist groups like the Friends of Democracy, Fight for Freedom Committee, and Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Keep America Out of War Congress, Circular letter, April 12, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Women United, Circular letter, April 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Henry E. Mooberry to Amos Pinchot, June 23, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; "Lindbergh Is Accused of Inciting Race Hate," *New York Times*, September 14, 1941, 25.

nebulous force, sometimes explicitly referring to Jewish Americans. The AFC almost always defended anti-Semitic and extremist speech at its rallies.

AFC NYC brought the intervention debate to the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans, using nationalist language and symbolism to escalate a political issue into an existential crisis for the United States. The chapter reported eighty thousand members across the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut in June 1941 and innovated the Street Speakers Bureau, where volunteers would give speeches and distribute literature on street corners during lunchtime and the evenings.[496] AFC NYC also organized massive rallies in Madison Square Garden and its leaders appeared on the country's top radio programs, making it one of the AFC's most popular and far-reaching chapters.

The New York City chapter provided the clearest example of the uneasy coalition between far-right businessmen and anti-New Deal liberals within the isolationist movement. Its chairman, John T. Flynn, was a well-known liberal magazine columnist who John E. Moser argues viewed the New Deal and interventionism as a step toward fascism. Flynn struggled to keep the ultraconservative businessmen who shared leadership of the NYC chapter from overtly expressing their anti-Semitic beliefs.[497] The ideological divide within AFC NYC acutely reflected the broader fissures within the isolationist movement.

Amos R. E. Pinchot personally represented this divide and played a central role in creating much of the intellectual basis for AFC NYC, but historians have not examined his contributions in depth. Pinchot was a prominent Progressive Party member as well as a friend to Theodore Roosevelt, booster of Robert M. La Follette's 1924 presidential

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[496] America First Committee, "Chapter Chatter Number 3," June 24, 1941, Box 71, Pinchot Papers.
[497] John E. Moser, *Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 113–120.

campaign, and brother of former Pennsylvania governor Gifford Pinchot. While protesting war profiteers during World War I, Amos Pinchot helped found the predecessor to American Civil Liberties Union and continued to support the organization into the 1930s.[498] A lawyer and political consultant, Pinchot cherished his elite social status in the tri-state area and embraced more conservative politics around the time that his acquaintance Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented the New Deal. His often combative personality seemed to worsen after his daughter Rosamond Pinchot Gaston, a celebrated Broadway actress, died by suicide in 1938.[499] As a leader of the anti-New Deal lobbying group the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, Pinchot viewed seemingly all of FDR's liberal domestic reforms as communist and the prospect of intervention as a bid for dictatorial power.[500] Whether or not Pinchot and Flynn personally identified as liberals, which they did inconsistently as AFC NYC leaders, they shared a conspiratorial view of American politics in which New Deal liberals were the most imminent threat to American democracy and could only be defeated by allying with conservatives and the far right.

In January 1941, Pinchot became AFC NYC's unofficial director of political messaging, using his social and professional connections to spread isolationist ideas in the media. Pinchot and Flynn agreed that their strategy should be to criticize FDR's pro-Allied policies, like the Lend-Lease Act, as a violation of his 1940 non-intervention campaign promise and a prologue to totalitarianism in the United States, although they disagreed about whether that would emerge as communism (Pinchot) or fascism (Flynn).[501] Pinchot wrote

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[498] "Lists Americans as Pacifists," *New York Times*, January 25, 1919, 1; "Lawyers to Start for Coal Fields," *Daily Boston Globe*, April 6, 1932, 5; Nancy Pittman Pinchot, "Amos Pinchot: Rebel Prince," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 66, no. 2 (1999): 192–193.
[499] Frances Fink, "Social Bright Lights Flicker in Filmland," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1935, FE5; Pinchot, *Amos Pinchot*, 196.
[500] Amos Pinchot to John T. Flynn, August 8, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers.
[501] Pinchot to Flynn, August 8, 1941; John T. Flynn to Amos Pinchot, September 8, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

press releases and a series of highly-publicized open letters to FDR which explicitly accused the president of attempting a coup like Adolf Hitler and were published in newspapers, broadcast on the radio, and mailed to thousands of supporters.[502] These letters outlined many of the AFC's arguments against intervention: the Axis military threat was too geographically distant to pose a threat, the "Lilliputian" US military was "woefully unprepared," FDR's third term was illegitimate, and there was a conspiracy to infringe on isolationists' freedom of speech.[503] Yet Pinchot's message spread. His friend from the anti-New Deal NCUCG, Frank E. Gannett, published the letters in dozens of his newspapers; Sen. Henrik Shipstead (R-Minnesota) and Rep. Hamilton Fish III (R-New York) mailed copies to their supporters; and Flora A. Walker of the DAR and American Coalition of Patriotic Societies requested copies.[504] The purpose of these letters, and many of the AFC's activities, seemed deliberately inflammatory. "The country might well turn rather violently against the President at any moment," Pinchot wrote to Miriam Marsh Clark, the chairman of the AFC's Washington, DC chapter, in a letter addressed to the Capitol Hill office of her husband, Sen. Bennett Champ Clark (D-Missouri).[505]

In early 1941, AFC chapters nationwide began a letter-writing and educational campaign against the Lend-Lease bill, which FDR supported as a measure to aid the Allies

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[502] Amos Pinchot, Letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 9, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Fice Mork to Amos Pinchot, February 8, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; "Policy of Deception Is Charged to Roosevelt," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 2, 1941, 14; Amos Pinchot to Nathan Alexander, February 24, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers.

[503] "Amos Pinchot Asks Check on President," *New York Times*, February 10, 1941, 10; Amos Pinchot, Letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 29, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot, Letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 6, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot, Letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 20, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.

[504] See later in this chapter for more on the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies. Frank E. Gannett to Amos Pinchot, March 5, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Henrik Shipstead to Amos Pinchot, February 12, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to Hamilton Fish III, February 7, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Flora A. Walker to Amos Pinchot, October 29, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

[505] Miriam Marsh Clark to Amos Pinchot, February 13, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to Miriam Marsh Clark, February 7, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers.

while maintaining neutrality. This attracted anti-New Dealers like Pinchot to the organization, particularly the New York chapter. As part of this campaign, AFC NYC held a mass meeting on February 20, 1941 in Manhattan's Mecca Temple, which held thirty-five hundred seats, co-hosted by the left-wing isolationist group the Keep America Out of War Congress.[506] The principal speakers that evening were the Senate's most prominent isolationists, Sens. Burton K. Wheeler (D-Montana) and Gerald P. Nye (R-North Dakota), whose speeches were broadcast on the radio. Wheeler exalted the "real Americans" in the crowd, which booed every mention of FDR but conspicuously not Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin, as noted by the *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*.[507] AFC member Norman Thomas and John T. Flynn also spoke, the latter heckled by a protester, and one of Pinchot's letters was read aloud. Joe McWilliams, leader of the fascist and anti-Semitic American Destiny Party, attended with his followers to recruit for their cause.[508] While Flynn formally denounced McWilliams and AFC NYC failed to stop the passage of the Lend-Lease bill, the chapter established a publicity strategy which exploited its tangential relationship to the far right by holding rallies which courted press attention by attracting controversial speakers and attendees.

The famed aviator Charles Lindbergh agreed to join the AFC's national committee in April 1941, bringing the organization to greater prominence.[509] Lindbergh, a charismatic symbol of traditional American masculinity and courage, had long used his celebrity to bring attention to nationalist organizations, like the United States Flag Association in the 1920s, and had lately positioned himself as an expert on the Axis powers' aviation technology,

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[506] Edwin S. Webster Jr. to Amos Pinchot, February 13, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers.
[507] "Wheeler and Nye Carry Fight Here," *New York Times*, February 21, 1941, 1, 7; "'U.S. First' Crowd Cheers Lease Foes: Another Mandate Use of American Ports," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 21, 1941, 7.
[508] Moser, *Right Turn*, 124–125.
[509] R. Douglas Stuart Jr. to Amos Pinchot, April 21, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.

insisting that the United States was safely ensconced from aerial attack by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. His reputation had suffered in some corners when he accepted a Nazi medal from Hermann Göring on one of his fact-finding missions to Germany, but apparently not amongst the AFC's leaders.

AFC NYC secured Lindbergh as the marquee speaker at its April and May rallies in Manhattan, which would raise the chapter's public profile.[510] With Lindbergh's celebrity, AFC NYC was able to increase attendance from 7,000 in April to 22,000 in May, with to an overflow crowd of over 8,000 in the streets, and speeches were also broadcast on the radio, bringing AFC NYC's message to thousands more.[511] The atmosphere at the May rally, held in Madison Square Garden, was frenetic as supporters stood shoulder to shoulder under several enormous American flags hanging from the ceiling, many waving smaller flags distributed by AFC NYC. The evening opened with patriotic songs and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Lindbergh, Sen. Burton K. Wheeler, and other speakers actually saluted the flag with the palm-down Nazi salute at the rally, a fact that only the *Atlanta Constitution* reported.[512] It was plausible, if unlikely, that a man who spent as much time among Nazis as Lindbergh might make a sincere mistake in using the Nazi salute, but there still remained an implicit approval of the far right throughout the rest of the rally. Sen. Wheeler used anti-Semitic stereotypes in criticizing interventionists as "jingoistic journalists and saber rattling bankers in New York" and accused Roosevelt of wanting to join the war in order to seize dictatorial power.[513] Eight hundred police officers kept anti-fascist protesters away from the

[510] John T. Flynn, Circular letter, April 16, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; William Fulton, "Crowds in N.Y. Cheer Lindy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 24, 1941, 1, 6.
[511] "Lindbergh Joins in Wheeler Plea to U.S. to Shun War," *New York Times*, May 24, 1941, 6.
[512] "Lindbergh Says People Denied Voice on War," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1941, 6; "Not an American Salute," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 27, 1941, 6.
[513] "Lindbergh Joins in," 6.

arena and although Flynn explicitly denounced Bundists and Nazi sympathizers, newspapers noted that Joe McWilliams was allowed to stay, but a person heckling him was escorted out by police.[514] The May rally illustrated how important Lindbergh's celebrity and credibility were to the AFC's growth and that AFC NYC remained committed to tolerating far-right supporters in deed if not in word.

During the summer and early fall of 1941, AFC NYC targeted what it perceived as interventionist propaganda in the media. Flynn and other leaders developed a two-pronged approach: Use their connections in government and the media itself to try to silence interventionists while promoting isolationism and coordinating a grassroots letter-writing campaign to influence public opinion. Moser details how Flynn collaborated with Sens. Nye, Clark, and Wheeler during their investigation of motion picture industry during the summer and fall, but Flynn and Pinchot were concerned about propaganda in other forms of media as well.[515] Pinchot was convinced that there was a conspiracy to keep isolationist viewpoints out of newspapers, yet he used his personal friendships with publishers like Arthur Hays Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, NCUCG co-founder Frank E. Gannett, and Roy W. Howard of Scripps-Howard to gain favorable coverage of the AFC.[516] Pinchot also carefully monitored radio coverage and served as a commentator on different radio programs, gaining a reputation as such a confrontational debater that one AFC member asked him to stop this "'smart Alek' business!"[517] 1941 also marked the first year of commercial broadcast television

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[514] "Lindbergh Joins in," 6; "Lindbergh, Wheeler Call for Leadership," *Washington Post*, May 24, 1941, 3.
[515] Moser, *Right Turn*, 134–137. Flynn secretly spent over $1,400 of AFC NYC's funds on aiding the Senate investigation of the film industry. John T. Flynn, Confidential Memorandum for Members of Executive Committee, September 16, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[516] Amos Pinchot to John T. Flynn, August 8, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Arthur Hays Sulzberger to Amos Pinchot, April 28, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Frank E. Gannett to Amos Pinchot, March 5, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to Roy W. Howard, August 8, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[517] Robert L. Bliss to Amos Pinchot, July 30, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Leon Levine to Amos Pinchot, February 11, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; K. Smith Davidson to Amos Pinchot, September 22, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

in the United States and Pinchot appeared on the medium's first roundtable talk show to discuss military defense.[518] The perspective of AFC NYC was in no way underrepresented in the media, not with Flynn and Pinchot using their connections to counter the threat of interventionist propaganda.

The second part of AFC NYC's approach during the summer of 1941 entailed coordinating a grassroots campaign to spread isolationist ideology. In July, the chapter mythologized its own origins in the pamphlet "America First: The Story of An Amazing Crusade and What It Did for America." Before AFC NYC was founded, the pamphlet said, isolationists were subject to a "veritable reign of terror" and "the world was told that 'everybody' in New York was for 'all-out' aid for Britain and Greece and China."[519] Flynn and the Wall Street lawyer Edwin S. Webster Jr. heroically founded AFC NYC to represent the silent majority of New Yorkers. The pamphlet also detailed the grassroots organizing done by hundreds of volunteers, planning rallies, and raising funds.[520] Flynn and Pinchot likely authored this pamphlet. It was during this period that Pinchot's writing particularly became essential to AFC NYC's organizational literature, lauded by Flynn, the professional journalist, and compared to Alexander Hamilton's Federalist Papers by another member.[521] Pinchot contributed significantly to the intellectual basis of AFC NYC's isolationist ideology and propaganda, consistently emphasizing the victimization of isolationists and the sinister machinations of FDR.

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[518] Gilbert Seldes to Amos Pinchot, July 14, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Susan L. Brinson, "Developing a Television Genre: Table Talk with Helen Sioussat," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 51, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 410.
[519] AFC NYC, "America First: The Story of An Amazing Crusade and What It Did for America," July 1941, 1, 4, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[520] "America First: The Story," 2-4.
[521] John T. Flynn to Amos Pinchot, September 8, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Walter Springer, Memo, July 14, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

Having defined AFC NYC's ideology, its grassroots campaign began in earnest, using many tactics of everyday nationalism developed by earlier groups in the Nationalist Network. Teams of young men and women from AFC NYC's Street Speakers Bureau, "equipped with a step ladder, American flag, literature and a police permit," canvassed a half dozen cities in the tri-state area, engaging with the general public to convince them of the strength of the isolationist cause.[522] In Manhattan, the "Battle of Fifth Avenue" between AFC street speakers and interventionists from groups like Fight for Freedom began in the spring of 1941 but escalated from September to December. Leftists and labor activists had long used downtown public spaces to deliver soapbox addresses but AFC NYC brought this practice to midtown, reaching new demographics of white-collar workers and middle-class window shoppers. AFC street speakers were generally young men and women who worked in teams, with one team member speaking from a stepladder, holding an American flag or adorned with a patriotic sash, who delivered a bombastic speech sticking to a few consistent talking points about "'Pal Joey' Stalin" or the impossibility of an Axis attack on the United States, while the other team member distributed literature and buttons to hundreds of onlookers.[523] Isolationist and interventionist speakers usually gave each other a respectful distance, with police officers maintaining the peace; the real battle for speakers was to make their voices carry above the din of rush hour traffic.[524] Street speakers typically ignored hecklers and stuck to their talking points; interventionists condemned Lindbergh and his ties to fascist regimes while isolationists decried the New Deal, communism, and aid to Britain. The *Christian Science Monitor* described one speaker who, as his audience lost interest and

[522] "America First: The Story," 3.
[523] Edwin L. James, "Help for Red Russia Brings Big Problems," *New York Times*, September 7, 1941, 73.
[524] Meyer Berger, "Pro and Anti War Groups Harangue Strollers in Battle of Fifth Avenue," *New York Times*, September 11, 1941, 25.

began to disperse, "raised his arm dramatically, and with a voice hoarse but triumphant intoned, 'Gawd bless Americker!'"[525] The stakes of the war debate were higher than mere politics; this was a contest for what the American nation, and American nationalism, should stand for.

For members already dedicated to the AFC, volunteer work could become an all-encompassing part of their lives. Three hundred volunteers reportedly worked at the chapter daily and AFC NYC encouraged its tens of thousands of members to write letters to Congress and Roosevelt as part of the AFC's Mail Brigade program.[526] The Mail Brigade, which provided customized AFC stamps, was a highly organized nationwide effort to inundate the federal government with anti-intervention letters, with talking points provided by AFC allies in Congress emphasizing FDR's alleged dictatorial aspirations.[527] "I write letters all day long," AFC member Florence Selby wrote in a letter to Pinchot. "I am more afraid of Roosevelt than I am of Hitler, because Roosevelt already has the power over us."[528] The AFC consistently stoked its members' fears about FDR and those members mailed reported "truck loads" of letters to the White House and Capitol Hill in the late spring and summer of 1941.[529]

Unlike the peace movement of the 1920s, women played a subordinate role in much of the isolationist movement, particularly within AFC NYC. Although women volunteers likely performed much of the chapter's secretarial work and wrote letters for the Mail Brigade, men like Flynn, Pinchot, and Edwin Webster formulated the organization's strategy.

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525 "Battle of Fifth Avenue," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 6, 1941, WM12.
526 "America First: The Story," 2.
527 Robert E. Wood, Circular letter, May 16, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; R. Douglas Stuart Jr. to Amos Pinchot, May 28, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Page Hufty, "Mail Brigade Manual," September 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Page Hufty, Circular letter, September 26, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
528 Florence Selby to Amos Pinchot, May 24, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.
529 Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round: Letter Deluge Helped Postpone FD's Speech," *New York Herald-American*, May 17, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.

AFC NYC's Women's Division auxiliary needed AFC NYC's approval to raise funds and was required to reimburse the chapter for literature and other essential expenses.[530] Pinchot also advised other women's isolationist organizations, including the far-right We, the Mothers, Mobilize for America as well as the New York-based Women United, which organized "pilgrimages" to Washington, DC to protest intervention.[531] Pinchot served as a ghostwriter for Women United, drafting letters from the organization to Pope Pius XI and President Roosevelt. In an editorial published in the *Washington Times-Herald*, which was read into the Congressional Record by Pinchot's friend Rep. George Holden Tinkham (R-Massachusetts), Pinchot ghostwrote, "We women of America will not forgive [congressmen or senators] or the administration if our sons are slid into war by deception."[532] Pinchot understood the value of women's voices and labor within the isolationist movement as long as women were guided by and subordinate to the leadership of men.

AFC NYC's activism during the summer of 1941 did little to convince its skeptics that it wholly rejected fascism or anti-Semitism. The previous spring, Friends of Democracy, an interventionist organization of religious leaders and intellectuals, published a lengthy pamphlet entitled "The America First Committee: The Nazi Transmission Belt" which highlighted the connections between the AFC and the overtly pro-Nazi far right. The pamphlet called the AFC "more effective than any Nazi agent or organization" in spreading

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530 Amos Pinchot to R. Douglas Stuart Jr., October 28, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; AFC NYC Women's Division, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Women's Division of America First," July 29, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Doris Fielding Reid, Circular letter, October 2, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

531 We, the Mothers, Mobilize for America was named in the 1942 sedition indictment but none of its leaders were personally indicted; see American Coalition of Patriotic Societies section later in this chapter. "28 Organizations Linked to Fascist Plot," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1942, 4; Unsigned to Pearl B. Phinney, November 17, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Thelma Herrick, Circular letter, August 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

532 Women United to Pope Pius XI, May 22, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Women United to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 30, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Women United, "Women of America, Are Our Boys Going to a 'Corbie Butcher Shop'?" November 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to George Holden Tinkham, November 28, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; US Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 77th Congress, First Session, Volume 87 - Part 14* (US Government Printing Office, 1941), 5076.

fascist propaganda because of how effectively it used American patriotic language and symbolism to advocate the foreign policy interests of the Axis.[533] Both the national AFC and AFC NYC attempted to discredit "The Nazi Transmission Belt" by falsely stating that several members of Friends of Democracy condemned the pamphlet. In the process, Pinchot seemed to alienate his friend, *New York Times* publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger, when he repeatedly asked a reluctant Sulzberger to print mistruths about Friends of Democracy.[534] AFC NYC's defensive posture, despite its self-described growing popularity, is essential to understanding its response to the AFC's crises during the fall of 1941.

On September 11, 1941, public opinion of the AFC reached a turning point when Charles Lindbergh made a speech at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa which legitimized much of the allegations of anti-Semitism within the organization. Lindbergh asserted that the British, Jews, and the Roosevelt administration were duplicitous "war agitators" and that Jewish Americans' "greatest dangers to this country lie in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government." In response, the celebrity face of the AFC faced boos from the crowd of seventy-five hundred and was nearly hit by a package of America First cards thrown from the balcony.[535] Lindbergh's use of blatantly anti-Semitic tropes drew widespread condemnation from the White House, religious organizations, and those segments of the press not controlled by isolationist publishers, particularly the Black press. Others noted that Lindbergh's argument implied that the interventionist movement was strongest in areas with high Jewish populations, like northern

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[533] Friends of Democracy, "The America First Committee: The Nazi Transmission Belt," 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Moser, *Right Turn*, 130–133.
[534] Unsigned, Report to Mr. Joseph, April 24, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Arthur Hays Sulzberger to Amos Pinchot, April 28, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, April 30, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.
[535] "Lindbergh Hits Jewish, British 'War Agitators,'" *Daily Boston Globe*, September 12, 1941, 13; "F.D.R. Creating War Incidents, Lindbergh Says," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 12, 1941, 10.

cities, which was untrue.[536] Although a few AFC national committee members denounced Lindbergh, Wood and Stuart denied the speech was anti-Semitic and resolved to forge an "intensified campaign" for the fall with Lindbergh at its center.[537] AFC headquarters in Chicago insisted that 80 percent of Americans opposed intervention while a survey by George Gallup suggested only 16 percent would vote for an isolationist third party in the next congressional election, indicating that the AFC greatly exaggerated its support.[538]

Lindbergh's Des Moines speech exacerbated the long-simmering rift among AFC NYC's leadership about how to address the far right within its ranks. Flynn, the chapter's chairman, had half-heartedly condemned the Bundists who attended New York rallies and now unsuccessfully urged the AFC's national committee to distance itself from Lindbergh's speech. Flynn also stepped back from aiding Sens. Nye, Clark, and Wheeler's investigation into the film industry, the most ambitious of his plans for AFC NYC that fall, as the senators grew bolder in their use of anti-Semitic language.[539] Within AFC NYC, the coalition of Webster, Wall Street financier H. Dudley Swim, and Pinchot covertly undermined Flynn, recruiting anti-Semites to the Street Speakers Bureau and writing letters doubting Flynn's

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[536] Interventionism was strongest in the South; after the Des Moines speech, the Texas House of Representatives passed a resolution banning Lindbergh from a speaking tour in the state. "Texas Solons Flay Lindbergh In Resolution," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 19, 1941, 8; "Assail Lindbergh for Iowa Speech," *New York Times*, September 13, 1941, 1, 3; "Lindbergh Is Accused of Inciting Race Hate," *New York Times*, September 14, 1941, 25; Roy Wilkins, "Watchtower," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 16; Sarah Churchwell, *Behold, America: The Entangled History of "America First" and "the American Dream"* (New York: Basic Books, 2018); Debra Lynn Gossett, "The America First Committee and the South: Houston, Texas: A Case Study" (M.S. thesis, Texas A&M University, 2003), 27, https://www.proquest.com/docview/250344168/abstract/9BADFC9F22F44C18PQ/1.

[537] "Thomas Assails Speech," *New York Times*, September 13, 1941, 2; Hugh S. Johnson, "Extremists Now Rule America First And Aid to Britain Committees," Folder 8, Box 34, Rosenwald Papers; R. Douglas Stuart Jr., Circular letter, September 23, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; John P. Lewis to Amos Pinchot, September 25, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; "America First Tells Plan to Intensify Drive," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 19, 1941, 6; "America First Denies Lindbergh Is Anti-Semitic," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 25, 1941, 2.

[538] George Gallup, "Isolationists Weak, Poll Finds," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 21, 1941, 2B.

[539] "Chaplin Called To Testify in Movie Hearing," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 14, 1941, 11A; Louis Bromfield, "Behind The "Investigation" Of The Movies," September 16, 1941, *Washington Post*, 8; Moser, *Right Turn*, 141.

leadership to Wood and chapter members.[540] After Lindbergh's speech, Pinchot told Stuart, AFC NYC members expressed "tremendous enthusiasm" for impeaching Roosevelt, and Lindbergh continued to appeal to the anti-FDR faction of the AFC in subsequent speeches.[541] Delegitimizing the most effective liberal president in US history was key to political goals of the right-wing forces within the AFC. As one AFC critic wrote to the *Christian Science Monitor*, "the pattern of Naziism in Norway, France, Belgium, and [Romania] was not formed by men who loved Hitler" but "by men who simply disliked their own leaders more than they disliked Hitler."[542]

That fall, Pinchot began to express anti-Semitic beliefs more openly. His old friend from the Progressive Party, the lawyer S. Stanwood Menken, debated Lindbergh's speech with Pinchot in a series of letters, arguing that by omitting ethnic groups other than Jewish Americans from his speech, Lindbergh "distorted the picture and in doing so, served the Nazi purpose" of "carry[ing] a concealed threat to the Jews to silence their convictions – or else."[543] Pinchot decided to release edited versions of some of their correspondence to the press in which he told Menken he was "thoroughly opposed to anti-Semitism" but questioned why singling out Jews as an ethnic group could lead to accusations of "trying to incite prejudice."[544] Pinchot was sufficiently pleased with his argument that he mailed copies of the correspondence to isolationist allies in Congress – Sen. Nye entered it into to the

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[540] Moser, *Right Turn*, 140-144.
[541] Amos Pinchot to R. Douglas Stuart Jr., September 26, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Charles A. Lindbergh, "A Heritage at Stake," October 3, 1941, Box 71, Pinchot Papers.
[542] Justin Wroe Nixon, "Our Readers Say: "The Pattern of Naziism,"" *Christian Science Monitor*, September 23, 1941, 22.
[543] S. Stanwood Menken to Amos Pinchot, September 12, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to S. Stanwood Menken, October 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; S. Stanwood Menken to Amos Pinchot, October 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; S. Stanwood Menken to Amos Pinchot, October 10, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[544] Menken to Pinchot, September 12, 1941; Amos Pinchot, "Letter to S. Stanwood Menken," October 4, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.

Congressional Record – while several of Pinchot's friends tried in vain to explain why his statements perpetuated anti-Semitic stereotypes.[545]

With Flynn's influence within AFC NYC waning and Lindbergh's next New York rally scheduled for October 30, 1941, Pinchot waged a campaign accusing radio broadcasters of interventionist bias and censorship of isolationists. In his Des Moines speech, Lindbergh included radio as part of the Jewish-controlled media conspiracy despite the fact that AFC speeches, including Lindbergh's, were regularly broadcast live regionally or nationally. Pinchot often appeared as a radio commentator himself.[546] When radio stations declined to change to give unlimited primetime coverage of Lindbergh's October 30 rally, his second in a month, Pinchot and AFC NYC publicly accused them of censorship, running an advertisement for the rally boasting "network time has been refused these speakers."[547] AFC NYC filled Madison Square Garden on October 30 with standing room only and Lindbergh warned that "our only danger lies from within."[548] Pinchot's publicity campaign demonstrated how AFC NYC manipulated the media and relied on anti-Semitic dog whistles. It may have appealed to the already converted but did not appeal to the undecided. Gallup's public opinion polling showed that support for isolationism hovered around 20

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[545] Henrik Shipstead to Amos Pinchot, October 8, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Warren Marks to Amos Pinchot, October 6, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Philip C. Jessup to Amos Pinchot, October 10, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Dorothy Pratt to Amos Pinchot, November 6, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; US Congress, *Congressional Record*, 7748.

[546] "War Opponents of 3 States to Hear Lindbergh," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 4, 1941, 8; "Fort Wayne Speech By 'Lindy' Tonight," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 3, 1941, 8; America First Committee, "Are We on the Road to War?" 1940, Folder 8, Box 34, Rosenwald Papers; Henrik Shipstead, "Address of United States Senator Henrick Shipstead," July 4, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers.

[547] "Radio 'Gag' Hit as Attack on Free Speech," *Baltimore American*, October 26, 1941, Box 71, Pinchot Papers; "CBS Is Firm in Row with America First," *New York Times*, October 26, 1941, 16; "'Inadequate' Radio Time Is Protested by America First," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1941, 2; "Display Ad 32 -- No Title," *New York Times*, October 30, 1941, 26.

[548] "Only U.S. Peril Within, Says Lindbergh," *Washington Post*, October 31, 1941, 1, 3; "Lindbergh Sees Trickery on War," *New York Times*, October 31, 1941, 4; "F. D. R. Fooling U. S. Public, Says Aviator," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 31, 1941, 32.

percent yet the national AFC and NYC chapter held fast to their 80 percent figure, while Lindbergh and isolationists in the Senate called for an investigation into Gallup polls.[549]

During October and November 1941, the Department of Justice investigated Nazi propaganda in the United States, which revealed an uncomfortably close relationship between foreign agents and the isolationist movement. A staff member for Rep. Hamilton Fish III (R-New York), George Hill, was indicted for perjury by a federal grand jury for apparently accepting $12,000 from a German agent to mail isolationist literature in the United States under congressional frank, at taxpayers' expense.[550] Fish often spoke at AFC NYC events and was an anti-New Dealer and old friend of Amos Pinchot.[551] Fish told the Department of Justice that, unbeknownst to him, Hill sent a House mail truck to pick up five hundred copies of a speech by Fish from Prescott Dennett, an associate of Nazi propagandist George Silvester Viereck. The truck instead picked up twenty mail bags of isolationist and anti-FDR literature, printed using funds Viereck obtained from the Nazi government and addressed in franked envelopes, and delivered twelve bags to the AFC DC chapter office. Prosecutors believed the other eight bags to be missing until they were found in Fish's Capitol Hill storage room; the five hundred copies of Fish's speech that Fish told the Justice Department about were never found.[552] Hill was convicted of two counts of corrupt perjury in January 1942 and later testified that Fish first introduced him to Dennett

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549 "American Opinion," *New York Times*, October 1, 1941, C20; Hadley Cantril, "How Good Is Our Morale?" *New York Times*, November 16, 1941, 21; Charlotte E. Cassel, "The Gallup Poll," *Washington Post*, October 22, 1941, 10.

550 Dillard Stokes, "8 Bags of Evidence in Nazi Probe 'Turn Up' At Rep. Fish's Bin in House Storeroom," *Washington Post*, September 28, 1941, 1; Dillard Stokes, "Grand Jury Digs for Source of Hill's Cash," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1941, 1.

551 R. Douglas Stuart Jr., to Amos Pinchot, May 9, 1941, Box 62, Pinchot Papers; "Nye Backs Lindbergh On Pro-War Factors," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 1941, 9; Amos Pinchot to Hamilton Fish III, February 7, 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to Hamilton Fish III, July 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Leonard S. Horner to Amos Pinchot, November 5, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.

552 "8 Bags of Evidence," 1, 12; "Grand Jury Digs," 1, 2.

and Viereck in his congressional office and instructed him to mail the speeches under congressional frank. Dennett was later indicted for sedition and Viereck was convicted as an unregistered foreign agent, yet Fish escaped unscathed.[553] The Hill indictment revealed how easily Nazi agents infiltrated the isolationist movement while those in positions of power, like Fish and AFC leaders, were not held accountable for their apparent complicity. The AFC's argument that isolationist speech was suppressed by the government was particularly absurd considering this evidence showing that Nazi agents used the franking system to mail fascist propaganda at American taxpayers' expense.

The AFC national committee decided to formally enter politics after Congress revoked part of the Neutrality Act in October 1941. Instead of forming a third party, the national committee devised a plan to form a pressure group, similar to the Anti-Saloon League's work in the prohibition movement, which would fund isolationist Democratic and Republican candidates for Congress in the 1942 midterm elections.[554] This would mark a significant change in how the AFC, a non-political non-profit, operated. In order to reincorporate as a lobbying or political organization, the AFC national committee and individuals chapters would have to disclose their fundraising and financial records.[555] Critics of the AFC, like Friends of Democracy, had long speculated that the organization relied significantly on donations from foreign regimes or fascist sympathizers in the United States,

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[553] See ACPS section later in this chapter. Fish lost re-election in 1944, mainly because of an anti-Semitic statement but the franking scandal was a minor issue in the campaign. "Hamilton Fish Aide Convicted In Perjury Trial," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1942, 26; Dillard Stokes, "Hill Testifies Fish Ordered Him to Mail Out Nazi Propaganda," February 20, 1942, 1; "Named in Sedition Indictment," *New York Times*, July 24, 1941, 8; "Legionnaires Say Fish Misused His Frank," *New York Times*, April 17, 1944, 13; "Fish's Farewell Speech Blames Defeat on Dewey," *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1944, 12.

[554] R. Douglas Stuart Jr. to Amos Pinchot, November 18, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; America First Committee, "Meeting of the Members of the National Committee," November 28, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.

[555] "America First Put on Political Basis," *New York Times*, December 3, 1941, 7; Louther S. Horne, "Anti-War Group Turns to Polls," *New York Times*, December 7, 1941, E8.

and the ongoing Hill indictment seemed to do little to quell these suspicions.[556] Some in the press wondered whether this meant that Charles Lindbergh would run for office, as his AFC speeches became increasingly political.[557] With a charismatic, controversial celebrity as its public face and strongholds in the Midwest, New York, and New England, the AFC had the potential to significantly impact American elections and government.[558]

After the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States formally declared war, which sent the AFC into a crisis. The AFC had typically depicted Japan as a distant force that posed no threat to the United States or as the unbeatable, natural hegemon of East Asia. Pinchot had previously proposed that the AFC's political campaign should criticize FDR's policy toward Japan as trying to bring the United States into the war.[559] But the attack on Pearl Harbor ended the AFC's political aspirations before they began and forced the national committee to decide whether the organization could continue at all with the United States actively at war. Flynn joined with Wood, Stuart, and the majority of the national committee to vote to dissolve the AFC completely. Pinchot, Webster, and Swim of AFC NYC, along with the leaders of most chapters nationwide, had hoped instead to "adjourn" the committee temporarily, but were outvoted.[560]

Flynn then had to dismantle AFC NYC but faced significant resistance. Some of the chapter's financial records and donor lists went missing and in January 1942, Webster, Pinchot, and Swim apparently began planning a "discreet campaign" to use the chapter's

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[556] Friends of Democracy, "The America First Committee: The Nazi Transmission Belt," 1941, Box 61, Pinchot Papers.
[557] "America First Put;" "What! Elections in 1942?" *Christian Science Monitor*, December 5, 1941, 24.
[558] "Anti-War Group Turns."
[559] Bard Priddy to Eddie Rickenbacker, October 21, 1940, Box 108, Rickenbacker Papers; "Lindbergh Joins in," 6; Amos Pinchot to Randolph Walker, August 4, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to R. Douglas Stuart Jr., December 3, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.
[560] R. Douglas Stuart Jr. to Amos Pinchot, December 17, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Moser, *Right Turn*, 147–148.

resources to undermine FDR's wartime leadership, although little seemed to come of it.[561] Webster, Swim, and Pinchot continued to antagonize Flynn, holding back accounts records and questioning his mental health even as Flynn feared he would be called for questioning by the Dies Committee and Federal Bureau of Investigation.[562] Flynn ultimately escaped such scrutiny and finally managed to legally dissolve AFC NYC in July 1942.[563] After the war, Flynn became a controversial anti-internationalist radio commentator and Swim remained in the Nationalist Network, becoming National Vice-Commander of the American Legion in 1946.[564]

AFC NYC marked the end of Pinchot and Webster's civic lives. In the weeks after Pearl Harbor, Pinchot maintained that the AFC was on the right side of history and feared that World War II would lead FDR to destroy American national identity and democracy, forcing the United States to join a world government.[565] In August 1942, shortly after AFC NYC formally dissolved, Pinchot nearly died by suicide, which his daughter Rosamond Pinchot Gaston had four years earlier.[566] He lived in a sanitarium until he died of an

[561] John T. Flynn to Amos Pinchot, December 13, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; H. Dudley Swim to John T. Flynn, December 12, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to H. Dudley Swim, December 29, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Amos Pinchot to H. Dudley Swim, January 20, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.
[562] Amos Pinchot to H. Dudley Swim, January 15, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; John T. Flynn to Amos Pinchot, February 10, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; America First Committee, New York Chapter, "Minutes of Meeting," February 24, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; John T. Flynn to H. Dudley Swim, February 5, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers; Arthur Young & Company, "Report on Examination of American First Committee, New York Chapter, Inc.," May 26, 1942, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.
[563] Moser, *Right Turn*, 149.
[564] "M'Cormick Spurs 'For America' Unit," *New York Times*, May 8, 1954, 6; "Flynn Talks Protested," *New York Times*, July 5, 1954, 6; "John T. Flynn, 81, Rightist, Is Dead," *New York Times*, April 14, 1964, 37; "Dudley Swim: National Airlines' Chairman," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, February 1, 1972, C6; American Legion, National Executive Committee, "Proceedings of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion" (December 1945): 47, accessed September 10, 2021, https://archive.legion.org/handle/20.500.12203/6568.
[565] Amos Pinchot to R. Douglas Stuart Jr., December 17, 1941, Box 64, Pinchot Papers.
[566] "Amos Pinchot Tries to Commit Suicide," *New York Times*, August 7, 1942, 1; Pinchot, "Amos Pinchot," 196.

unspecified illness in 1944.[567] Webster continued to work in finance but died by suicide in the late 1950s.[568]

Pinchot and Webster's mental health struggles complicate any evaluation of their work for AFC NYC, particularly in Pinchot's case as it likely overlapped with his isolationist activism. He was a prolific and talented writer, acerbic almost to a fault, with a keen sense for politics and the media, which he brought to AFC NYC. Pinchot played a peripheral role in many political movements of the early twentieth century, as a Progressive and early champion of the American Civil Liberties Union before becoming an anti-New Dealer and World War II isolationist.[569] He was a true American nationalist, seeming to believe that his life's purpose was to defend American democracy and individual liberty, yet he and Webster found common cause with fascist sympathizers because of their anti-Semitism and hatred of FDR and New Deal liberalism. Neither man's possible mental health struggles caused them to adopt those views but Pinchot's may have contributed to the paranoia and conspiratorial thinking that he frequently demonstrated in his work for AFC NYC. Pinchot, like many in the isolationist movement, believed he was defending American nationalist ideology by allying with those who would as soon destroy it.

One of the reasons the AFC appealed to hundreds of thousands of Americans was that it framed the political issue of intervention in nationalistic terms, turning what should have been a nuanced policy debate into a battle for the soul of the United States. Organizations in the Nationalist Network had always been political, founded on the premise that wealthy, American-born white people were fully entitled to American national identity and that workers, people of color, and immigrants must be taught to emulate the behavior of

[567] "Amos Pinchot Passes at 70," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1944, 6.
[568] "Webster, Banker, Found Shot Dead," *New York Times*, November 22, 1957, 36.
[569] Pinchot, "Amos Pinchot," 1942–193.

the former in order to truly become American. The AFC used everyday nationalism in its educational campaigns to argue that intervention was not only politically unwise but un-American. AFC NYC was a key example of how isolationist nationalism blended politics and nationalism while attenuating both. The anti-New Dealers leading the chapter, consumed by conspiratorial thinking, did not merely oppose Roosevelt's policies but believed he would seize dictatorial power. AFC NYC and the national organization gave a platform to far-right speech and even spread Nazi propaganda. Their goal of saving American democracy was secondary, at best, to saving right-wing control of American democracy.

Sedition and the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, 1942-1947

The America First Committee was not the only organization in the Nationalist Network to be implicated in spreading far-right propaganda in the 1940s. The American Coalition of Patriotic Societies was such a group, unique in how it masterfully manipulated the media and politicians to accept its unpopular ideas as representative of the general public. The ACPS was an umbrella organization which claimed to represent 115 patriotic and fraternal organizations in advocating against liberal policies at the federal level but in reality, it served only the narrow interests of the ultraconservative elites in its leadership.[570] The ACPS had even clearer ties to the far right than the AFC did, yet it maintained a significant level of influence into the postwar era because of its lower profile and its leaders' political and social connections.

The ACPS was an artificial imitation of a nationalist organization which exerted political influence because of its leaders' connections within the Nationalist Network,

[570] "The American Coalition: Why It Was Organized and What It Does," May 1940, 4, 6, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

particularly the Daughters of the American Revolution. The organization connected the immigration restriction and eugenics movements with anti-New Dealers, World War II isolationists, and fascist sympathizers in what Nick Fischer terms the "Anticommunist Spider Web."[571] The ACPS never engaged in the work of patriotic education or everyday nationalism like others in the Network but it claimed to represent those that did to Congress and the military. The ACPS should still be considered part of the Network because it used the language and aesthetics of patriotism to advance an agenda defining American national identity.

John B. Trevor founded the ACPS in 1929 to coordinate support among nationalist organizations for preserving the immigration quota system established by the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. The coalition's constitution listed as its primary purpose the mission "to keep America American."[572] Trevor was a lawyer who investigated foreign spies as an Army intelligence officer during World War I, becoming an anti-communist and immigration restriction activist in the 1920s. He advised New York's anti-communist Lusk Committee and authors of the federal Johnson-Reed Act.[573] Trevor was not simply elite; he was elitist in every sense of the term. He wielded substantial influence within the New York State Chamber of Commerce and regularly appeared with his wife in the *New York Times* society pages.[574] Trevor opposed organized labor on anti-communist grounds and was not only a director of the Eugenics Research Association but was close friends and allies with

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[571] Nick Fischer, *Spider Web: The Birth of American Anticommunism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).
[572] "Constitution of the American Coalition," May 8, 1934, 1, 3, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records; "John Trevor Dies; Urged Alien Law," *New York Times*, February 21, 1956, 33.
[573] Fischer, *Spider Web*, 86; Louis Adamic, "Aliens and Alien-Baiters," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* November 1936, 566.
[574] "John Trevor Dies;" "Chamber Assails U.S. Executive Bill," *New York Times*, February 4, 1938, 7; "Ballantine Scores 'Deficit Spending,'" *New York Times*, February 3, 1939, 6; Adamic, "Aliens and Alien-Baiters," 568.

eugenicists Madison Grant and Charles Goethe, who were also ACPS founding board members.[575] In the 1930s, Trevor became an anti-New Dealer, supporting the Dies Committee's investigations and blaming the Great Depression on undocumented immigrants. In the years before World War II, he became an isolationist, writing in an ACPS letter that "the New Deal needs war to…establish a personal dictatorship on the ruins of the American republic."[576]

Trevor used his position as leader of the ACPS to testify before Congress and write articles spreading his radical right-wing views. Constituent organizations used their affiliation with the ACPS to justify their own legitimacy but they exercised almost no power within the larger organization; Trevor and his hand-picked allies on the executive board had total control over the ACPS' activities.[577] What appeared to be a symbiotic relationship could also be interpreted as a parasitic one; the benefits organizations gained from belonging to the ACPS hardly compared to the platform it gave Trevor to propagate extreme right-wing views.

For some leaders in the Nationalist Network, working with the ACPS gave them an opportunity to pursue an openly right-wing form of nationalist work. In the 1930s, the DAR's Grace L. H. Brosseau, Julia Dent Grant Cantacuzène, and Flora A. Walker became officers of the ACPS, with Walker effectively assuming second-in-command as secretary. Brosseau and Walker had both served as DAR president-general during the 1920s and overseen the organization's purge of liberal members while Grant Cantacuzène was a

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575 "Tax on Childless Urged for Nation," *New York Times*, June 6, 1937, 43; ACPS Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 21, 1929, 11; Fischer, *Spider Web*, 127.
576 Jessie Ash Arndt, "Alien Laws Assailed at D.A.R. Meet," *Washington Post*, February 17, 1938, X15; "Dies Charges Justice Agents Are Making Inquiry About Him," *Washington Post*, January 25, 1939, 26; John B. Trevor, Circular letter, August 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
577 Adamic, "Aliens and Alien-Baiters," 567–568.

prominent DAR member.[578] When the new DAR president-general, Edith Scott Magna, withdrew the organization from the ACPS in 1933, the decision was unpopular among many DAR members and by 1938, the DAR had rejoined the ACPS and invited Trevor to speak at an event, even as other organizations withdrew based on the ACPS' anti-New Deal stance.[579] Walker also corresponded with Amos Pinchot in support of the America First Committee and although the ACPS appeared to never formally endorse the AFC, the coalition's sympathy for isolationism was well known.[580] Brosseau continued the ACPS' close relationship with the DAR into the 1950s.[581] The ACPS, without any term limits or accountability for its leaders, gave former DAR leaders like Brosseau and Walker even more freedom to spread radical right-wing propaganda as part of the Nationalist Network.

Trevor also drafted many of his friends in the press to join the ACPS. Fred R. Marvin, who served as ACPS secretary before Walker, was a former newspaper editor who during the 1920s published the Key Men of America's *Daily Data Sheet*, an anti-communist newsletter popular among conservative nationalists which spread racist, anti-Semitic propaganda supporting Trevor's proposal for increased immigration restriction.[582] The *Christian Science Monitor*'s European correspondent, Demarest Lloyd, served as vice chairman of the ACPS in the 1920s and then became a prominent anti-New Dealer in the American

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578 See DAR section in this chapter for Brosseau's later work for the DAR. "Patriotic Session Will Hear Wilbur," *Washington Post*, April 28, 1932, 7; "Luncheon Session Held by Patriotic Societies," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1937; Fischer, *Spider Web*, 87.

579 "Alien Laws Assailed;" "Patriotic Units to Quit Group Over 'Politics,'" *Washington Post*, December 3, 1935.

580 Letter from Flora A. Walker to Amos Pinchot, August 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; Letter from Flora A. Walker to Amos Pinchot, October 29, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers; "Thank You, Mr. Fish," *Time*, April 1, 1946, 19; American Coalition of Patriotic Societies; Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

581 "Minutes - National Board of Management Regular Meeting," *DAR Magazine*, July 1954, 791.

582 The Key Men of America was a small anti-communist organization in the Nationalist Network. Key Men of America, "The Daily Data Sheet," July 11, 1927, Serial No. 135, Index No. 56, Report No. 3, MPIL Records; Key Men of America, "The Daily Data Sheet," September 12, 1928, Vol. II, Serial No. 437, Index No. 56, Report No. 42, MPIL Records; "'Key Men' Propaganda Is Suspended Due to Lack of Support," *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, June 26, 1929, 2; "Fred R. Marvin, 70, A Former Editor," *New York Times*, July 15, 1939, 20.

Liberty League.[583] After Marvin and Lloyd died in the late 1930s, Walter S. Steele became Trevor's key ally in the press. Steele published the anti-communist and anti-internationalist *National Republic* magazine and aided Trevor in attacking the Roosevelt administration's immigration policies in the 1930s.[584] Steele also had a small empire of Irish-American Catholic newspapers in New York, San Francisco, and Connecticut cannily identifying an underserved audience for American nationalist, anti-communist, and thinly-veiled anti-Semitic propaganda.[585] In addition to Trevor's social contacts at the *New York Times*, he cultivated conservative allies in the press to attract new groups to join the ACPS and further strengthen its credibility.

Racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia were fundamental to ACPS leaders' worldview. While major newspapers reported favorably about much of the ACPS' anti-immigration and anti-New Deal activity during the 1930s, they failed to truly reckon with Trevor and others' support for Nazi Germany. Trevor and Steele publicly endorsed Adolf Ehrt's pro-Nazi book *Communism in Germany* in 1933; Trevor also testified against offering German refugee children asylum in the United States and honorary president Charles Goethe openly praised Nazi eugenics.[586] Taken in conjunction with the ACPS' obsession with birth rates among white Americans, the ACPS did not hide its contempt for a multicultural society.[587]

Some in the press spoke out against the ACPS. As early as 1936, the journalist Louis Adamic recognized how the "alien-baiters" of the ACPS used the economic depression to

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583 ACPS Advertisement, *Washington Post*, January 28, 1929, 5; "Lloyd, Writer, Dies at Home in Maryland," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1937, 26.
584 "Dies Charges Justice;" Walter S. Steele, "'Democratic' Despotism," *National Republic*, January 1946, 13-14, 30; Fischer, *Spider Web*, 124.
585 Drew Pearson, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," *Washington Post*, May 11, 1945, 10.
586 "Landon Endorses Bill for Refugees," *New York Times*, April 25, 1939, 13; Fischer, *Spider Web*, 125.
587 "Colby Raps New Deal," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1934, 1, 4; "U. S. Spends Pile of Dollars 618 Miles High in Yr.," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1936, 4; "Tax on Childless."

scapegoat immigrants in a way that could serve as a "wedge for the opening of the way to fascism."[588] In 1940, the left-wing magazine *Friday* ran a series of articles entitled "American Merchants of Hate" which charged that Trevor, along with Henry Ford, the American Liberty League-funding DuPont family, and Sen. Robert Rice Reynolds (D-North Carolina) worked with groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Black Shirts, German-American Bund, and possibly even directly with Nazi agents to spread racist and anti-Semitic propaganda in the United States. A subsequent column in the *Chicago Defender* called on Rep. Martin Dies Jr.'s Un-American Activities Committee to investigate these allegations.[589] Dies ignored these articles and continued to speak at ACPS events, publicly praising its "splendid aid" to his investigations.[590]

On July 23, 1942, twenty-eight people were indicted by a federal grand jury for sedition, including the Nazi propagandist George Sylvester Viereck, Elizabeth Dilling, and William Dudley Pelley, leader of the Silver Shirts. The ACPS was named in the indictment as having given material aid to individuals publishing Nazi propaganda, along with the now-defunct America First Committee, Ku Klux Klan, German-American Bund, and several other anti-Semitic and isolationist organizations. No one among the ACPS leadership of Trevor, Brosseau, and Walker was personally indicted, despite having complete control over the organization.[591] Most of the indicted individuals were later tried in *United States v.*

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[588] Adamic, "Aliens and Alien-Baiters," 572.
[589] Accounts of the "American Merchants of Hate" series drawn from "Anti-Semitic Drive by Big Employers Exposed in Magazine 'Friday,'" *People's Voice* (Helena, MT), September 25, 1940, 1; "Magazine Charges Ford, DuPonts, and Weir in Fascist Aid," *Southern Jewish Weekly* (Jacksonville, FL), September 27, 1940, 21; John H. Sengstacke, "The Way of All Things," *Chicago Defender*, October 19, 1940, 14.
[590] "Investigate Martin Dies!" 24, 1942, the Weisberg Collection, Hood College, Frederick, MD, http://www.jfk.hood.edu/. This collection will be referenced as Weisberg Collection.
[591] "Named in Sedition Indictment," *New York Times*, July 24, 1942, 8; "28 Organizations Linked to Fascist Plot," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1942, 4.

McWilliams, the largest sedition trial in US history at that time, but the case was ultimately declared a mistrial and all charges were dismissed in 1946.

ACPS leaders likely escaped accountability for their seditious activities because of their social status and proximity to political power. Politically powerful individuals had evaded further scrutiny after implication in such activities before, as with Rep. Hamilton Fish III (R-New York).[592] After the Hill indictment, Rep. Dies had pledged to finally investigate Nazi propaganda in isolationist groups but focused mainly on German immigrants.[593] When the 1942 grand jury implicated the ACPS for sedition, the civil rights organization National Federation for Constitutional Liberties questioned Dies' close relationship to the ACPS and his committee's apparent unwillingness to investigate far-right organizations sympathetic to Dies.[594] "If Martin Dies is so bent on preserving the American way of life," a reader wrote to the *Washington Post*, "why is he quoted by the enemies of American democracy" named in the 1942 indictment, like the ACPS, Ku Klux Klan, George Sylvester Viereck, and German-American Bund leader Fritz Kuhn.[595] This was one of the rare instances in which Dies or Trevor were grouped with figures like Viereck or Kuhn in a contemporary newspaper, although they both openly championed similar radical right-wing views on white supremacy, immigration restriction, and the New Deal. Trevor fought viciously to protect his reputation years after the Brown Scare against fascists ended, a reputation which had given him the social respectability and political connections which likely shielded him from the sedition indictment in the first place. On the only occasion that

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[592] See AFC section earlier in this chapter. Fish lost re-election in 1944 mainly because of an anti-Semitic statement he made but the franking scandal was a minor issue in the campaign. Dillard Stokes, "8 Bags of Evidence;" Stokes, "Grand Jury Digs for Source of Hill's Cash," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1941, 1; "Legionnaires Say Fish;" "Fish's Farewell Speech."
[593] Dillard Stokes, "Dies Scans America First Roll for Nazis," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1941, 1.
[594] "Investigate Martin Dies!" 4, 1942, Weisberg Collection.
[595] L. A., "Who Quotes Dies," *Washington Post*, February 24, 1943, 10.

the *New York Times* mentioned the ACPS' inclusion in the indictment in the following decades, the editor quickly issued a correction denying it. Trevor went so far as to sue the *Atlanta Constitution* for libel for stating that he had personally been indicted and earned $1.55 million in damages as well as a front-page apology.[596]

After the war, the ACPS maintained a positive reputation despite having likely committed sedition. In 1946, the same year *US v. McWilliams* ended in a mistrial, the US Navy's Civil Liaison Section contacted ACPS secretary and former DAR leader Flora A. Walker to see if the ACPS would be willing to use its influence on behalf of the Navy.[597] The Civil Liaison Section had recently been established as a permanent office to coordinate with civic, professional, and veterans' organizations, including several in the Nationalist Network like the Veterans of Foreign Wars.[598] The Civil Liaison Section proposed that they collaborate with the ACPS on Operation Naval Reserve, a recruitment campaign, by publishing literature written by naval officials through ACPS member organizations, promoting the Naval Reserve at conferences, and organizing local recruiting units.[599] The ACPS was not the only organization which agreed to participate in this recruitment campaign but the Civil Liaison Section emphasized Walker's longstanding advocacy of increased naval funding and Walter S. Steele's recent anti-communist testimony to the House

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596 "Mr. Trevor Misquoted," *New York Times*, June 17, 1947, 13; "McGill, ANI Sued For $1,550,000 On Libel Charge," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 8, 1954, 28; Ralph McGill, "Misunderstanding Corrected," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 23, 1957, 1.

597 Rear Adm. Russell S. Berkey to Flora A. Walker, February 15, 1946, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records; Capt. Lyle O. Armel, "Civil Liaison Memorandum," February 15, 1946, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

598 US Congress, *Proceedings of the 46th National Encampment of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States*, 1946, 63–64.

599 Capt. Winston P. Folk to Flora A. Walker, March 29, 1947, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8; Commodore Richard P. Glass to Flora A. Walker, May 9, 1947, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8.

Committee on Un-American Activities, the former Dies Committee.[600] The Civil Liaison Section appeared to view the ACPS as an important ally not only for their recruitment campaign but to potentially support the Navy's long-term goals.

Any competent naval officer should have considered the ACPS' sedition indictment and radical right-wing ideology. None of the Civil Liaison Section's records mention the indictment, but they described the "quality of personnel and leadership" of the organization as of "very reputable character."[601] All of its correspondence was with Walker rather than Trevor, but it knew that he was the organization's president and had long worked with anti-immigrant and eugenics groups.[602] More important than the question of whether Civil Liaison officials disregarded the ACPS' association with Nazi agents was that they certainly knew that the ACPS propagated radical right-wing ideas. The ACPS called the United Nations a "farce" and used the debate over Displaced Persons to call for a total cessation of immigration to the United States.[603] The Civil Liaison Section also had ACPS documents which accused the Truman Administration of using "methods by which Hitler gained domination in Germany" and using public funds to bribe members of Congress.[604] Months later, Trevor, representing the ACPS, testified before Congress with the now former Rep. Hamilton Fish III against giving further loans to the United Kingdom unless it surrendered

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[600] Rear Adm. Russell S. Berkey to Flora A. Walker, February 15, 1946, NARA Navy Records; "Pacifists Assailed at Naval Hearing," 1928, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records; James Walter, "Wallace Pushed as Front Man for Soviet's 'Legion' in U. S.," *Washington Times-Herald*, 1947, 1, 6, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

[601] File, 1946/1947, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

[602] John B. Trevor, "Report of the President to Annual Meeting of the American Coalition," January 25, 1946, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records; "Extract from Who's Who in America," 1946/1947, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

[603] "Report of the President," January 25, 1946, 3-4, 6, NARA Navy Records; "U. S. Must Take Some DP's, Says State Dept. Aid," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 7, 1947, 9.

[604] "Resolutions Adopted by the American Coalition at Its Annual Convention," January 25, 1946, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records.

all of its land in the Western Hemisphere and Antarctica to the United States. The event gained a great deal of press attention partly because the 92-year-old Jacob S. Coxey of the 1894 Coxey's Army unemployment protest joined Trevor and Fish, as well as for the three men's provocative proposal toward an Allied nation.[605] The ACPS had no qualms about working with Fish, whose aide George Hill had been convicted of using public funds to spread Nazi propaganda before World War II, and the Civil Liaison Section apparently had no objection to working with the ACPS on Operation Naval Reserve. The campaign ultimately enlisted over 630,000 people by the end of 1947, through the efforts of both the Navy and outside organizations.[606]

Neither the ACPS' isolationism nor association with fascist sympathizers prevented the Civil Liaison Section from requesting its help in Operation Naval Reserve. At least a dozen civic and veterans' associations participated in the campaign but the ACPS was the only one named in a federal sedition indictment four years earlier. The ACPS and its leaders not only escaped any legal consequences, Trevor and Walker maintained their "very reputable character" and were asked by Congress and the Navy to testify on postwar foreign policy and consult on military recruitment. By 1946 and 1947, the power and perceived social capital of leaders within the Nationalist Network was such that even the ACPS, which had almost no actual members beyond its leadership and exercised only dubious influence over its constituent organizations, was highly valued by the government and military. The institutions responsible for maintaining the domestic liberal democratic order and the

[605] John H. Crider, "Only 3 Witnesses Hit Loan to British," *New York Times*, March 21, 1946, 5; "Hamilton Fish Gen. Coxey 2 of 3 Speaking Against British Loan," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1946, 2; "Thank You, Mr. Fish."
[606] K. M. McManes, "The Armed Forces Reserve Act and Its Impact Upon the Programs of the Reserve Forces of the Navy," *The Military Surgeon* 112, no. 3 (March 1, 1953): 162–166.

postwar international order tolerated and implicitly endorsed an organization whose leaders had little but contempt for either.

The ACPS differed from nationalist organizations which engaged with the public through everyday nationalism and educational campaigns. It used its association with the Nationalist Network, particularly the DAR, to promote radical right-wing ideologies while masquerading as an apolitical group. Trevor, Brosseau, and Walker had long cultivated credibility as nationalist leaders, significantly with the press and politicians, and their reputations likely contributed to the Department of Justice's decision to formally accuse the ACPS, but not any of its leaders, of seditious activity during World War II. Their political beliefs did not differ greatly from the fascist sympathizers and collaborators in the indictment but their reputations did. Although it operated as little more than a hollow shell of a nationalist organization, the ACPS wielded a disproportionately high level of influence and incubated radical ideologies within the Network which would emerge in other organizations in the postwar era.

Postwar Anti-Internationalism and the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1947-1955

The Daughters of the American Revolution maintained a consistently influential and prominent role in the Nationalist Network over the first half of the twentieth century. Its members – 161,813 as of 1948 and growing – believed they had a birthright to define what it meant to be American and a duty to teach other Americans how to correctly perform patriotism.[607] This impulse to educate, or to popularize the DAR's ideas about what it meant

[607] "Department of the Treasurer General," *DAR Magazine*, August 1948, 613.

to be America, animated most of the organization's activities throughout its history. Not only did the DAR continue its patriotic education campaigns through formal school programs and the promotion of everyday nationalism, but by the 1950s it produced over four thousand radio and television broadcasts per year across the United States.[608] Historians have highlighted the DAR's rightward turn in the 1920s, purging liberal members and pushing anti-communism to the forefront of its patriotic education work, but the national society's embrace of some aspects of far-right ideology in the post-World War II period is a less-understood development.[609] After DAR leadership steered the organization more toward the center in the 1930s, the postwar era marked a renewal of the 1920s' rightward swing, with the organization now opposing anti-discrimination laws and international anti-genocide treaties, portraying them as un-American in organizational literature and educational programs. The DAR leveraged its reputation as an apolitical group of upper middle-class white women to propagate anti-liberal, racist, and anti-internationalist ideologies in the late 1940s and 1950s, blurring the distinction between American nationalism and the radical right.[610]

Before World War II, the DAR's reputation suffered when its longstanding racist policies against African Americans received national media attention. In 1939, the national society banned Marian Anderson, the internationally-renowned opera singer, from holding a

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608 Mrs. H. Grady Jacobs, "Radio and Television," *DAR Magazine*, June 1952, 791.
609 See Simon Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020); Simon Wendt, "Defenders of Patriotism or Mothers of Fascism? The Daughters of the American Revolution, Antiradicalism, and Un-Americanism in the Interwar Period," *Journal of American Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 943–969; Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America.* Kim Phillips-Fein argues that nationalism within conservative organizations has been understudied. Kim Phillips-Fein, "Conservatism: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (December 1, 2011): 723–743.
610 For the role of women activists in the radical right, see Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Catherine E. Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

concert in its Constitution Hall in Washington, DC because Anderson was Black, igniting a firestorm in the press. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resigned as a DAR member in protest as its leaders defended the organization's consistent erasure of Black patriots and soldiers from its literature on US history.[611] With the United States' entry into World War II in 1941, the DAR leapt into action for national defense, eager to prove its value and relevance. National leadership called on members to enlist in the Women's Army Corps or as nurses, in addition to collaborating with the Red Cross and Army and Navy Women's Auxiliaries to offer childcare and free meals to the families of enlisted men. Local and state DAR chapters sold war bonds and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to outfit soldiers with "buddy bags," sponsored Landing Craft Infantry ships' crews, and sent medical supplies to the front as well as film projectors and radios to veterans' hospitals.[612] The DAR's contribution to national defense during World War II demonstrated the power that the organization still had to mobilize their hundreds of thousands of members, many with wealth and social influence, for a common patriotic cause.

After World War II, the DAR moved further to the right politically as it redefined national defense as more than military preparedness but as the defense against communism which Americans must resist as part of their daily lives.[613] The organization had actively engaged in anti-communism educational campaigns since the 1920s, but both the tone and scope of its anti-communism work changed significantly in the late 1940s. "Our stand on national defense and the preservation of our system of government is one of the reasons Communists oppose the Daughters of the American Revolution," President-General May

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[611] Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 151–153.
[612] NSDAR, "Record of War Work of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution during the World War II from April, 1941, to May, 1946," 8-20, 1947, Printed Material Collection, 1895-2008, Box 4, Folder 16, NSDAR Archives.
[613] Mrs. E. L. Veasey, "What Is National Defense?" *DAR Magazine*, June 1951, 458, 522.

Erwin Talmadge stated at the Continental Congress, the DAR's national convention, in 1947. "I assure you this feeling is mutual."[614] Where earlier patriotic education programs and literature for immigrants and children focused on teaching US civics and history, postwar DAR committees centered communism in their campaigns and defined American identity in opposition to it. This increased the political polarization of the DAR's educational campaigns; rather than teaching that the United States was a liberal democracy where political and social change was slow and incremental by design, the United States became the final bulwark against a nebulous foreign authoritarian ideology. The DAR rarely defined what it meant by "communism" beyond that it posed an existential threat to Americanism – it was used interchangeably with other radical right-wing fears like political centrism, internationalism, and civil rights – but Americans had to take extreme measures to root it out of schools, universities, and possibly the federal government. National defense against communism thus became defense against many liberal, and even centrist, policies.

The intellectual driving force behind the DAR's turn to the radical right in the late 1940s was Grace L. H. Brosseau.[615] Brosseau had served as president-general from 1926 to 1929 and under her tenure the DAR purged many of its liberal members in the name of anti-communism and devoted much of its efforts to defending the immigrant quota system established by the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924.[616] While the DAR shifted slightly toward the center as it dealt with the crises of the Great Depression and World War II, Brosseau continued her radical right-wing activism. As an isolationist and anti-New Dealer, she

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614 Vylla P. Wilson, "The Fifty-sixth Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, July 1947, 330.
615 Estella A. O'Byrne, "Introducing the New Editor of the Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine," August 1947, 407.
616 Key Men of America, "The Daily Data Sheet," January 27, 1928, Vol. I, Serial No. 301, Index No. 56, Report No. 22, MPIL Records; "Mrs. Brosseau, 87, Ex-Head of D.A.R.," *New York Times*, April 21, 1959, 35; Wendt, *The Daughters of the American Revolution and Patriotic Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 148, 168.

worked with the anti-communist Patriotic Research Bureau, founded by the isolationist anti-Semite Elizabeth Dilling, and the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies.[617] After World War II, Brosseau returned to the DAR and became editor of *DAR Magazine*, which printed articles on US history, genealogy, and the activities of local, state, and national committees. The magazine served as a means for the national society to set an agenda for state and local chapter leaders to follow. Brosseau regularly solicited articles from politicians, almost entirely right-wing Republicans, and authored highly political editorials herself. She increased magazine subscriptions to over sixteen thousand in a four-year period and normalized radical right-wing ideas for subscribers, who often held leadership positions in their local and state chapters and shaped patriotic education campaigns at those levels.[618] As magazine editor, Brosseau was succeeded by Gertrude Carraway, who continued to include articles on right-wing topics as well as ones written by Brosseau.[619] Carraway was also a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and would ascend to DAR president-general in the mid-1950s, wielding substantial power to influence the organization's right-wing agenda.[620]

Under Brosseau and Carraway, *DAR Magazine* frequently criticized the Progressive Era and the New Deal as a means of attacking contemporary liberal policies. A 1948 article, later lauded by the Magazine Committee chairman as one of the best it ever published, equated socialism with both Nazi fascism and Soviet-style statism and characterized the federal income tax, one of the triumphs of the Progressive Era, as "fatal" to American

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[617] See ACPS section in this chapter. Patriotic Research Bureau, "Christmas Round Table Letter, 1940," December 1940, 7, Box 108, Rickenbacker Papers; John B. Trevor, Circular letter, August 1, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[618] Dolores Billman Hill, "The Fifty-eighth Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1949, 472; "Increase in Subscriptions," *DAR Magazine*, January 1951, 71.
[619] Grace L. H. Brosseau, "Editor's Note," *DAR Magazine*, September 1950, 732; Gertrude Carraway, "News and Views," *DAR Magazine*, February 1951, 168; Grace L. H. Brosseau, "Who Killed Cock Robin?" *DAR Magazine*, December 1950, 921-922.
[620] "President General Honored by United Daughters of the Confederacy," *DAR Magazine*, June 1955, 745; Mrs. Thomas Burchett, "The Sixty-Second Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1953, 753.

liberty. Author J. M. Newcomb wrote that the "conservative, today, is actually the true liberal" because liberals had enacted a statist federal government during the Progressive Era and New Deal.[621] In another article, the historian of a Massachusetts DAR chapter blamed the New Deal for making civil rights a political issue. Before the New Deal, she argued, African Americans "were scarcely aware" of racism and had no racial consciousness, a statement only plausible to a privileged white audience willfully ignorant of groups like the NAACP and cultural movements like the Negro Renaissance.[622] Under Brosseau's editorship, the way that *DAR Magazine* villainized the New Deal, years after it ended, provided a template for how movement conservatives would define their politics in opposition to the liberal democratic state for much of the twentieth century.

The Fair Deal, Pres. Harry S. Truman's progressive policy agenda, presented a problem for Brosseau because the DAR needed to maintain a friendly relationship with the sitting president and First Lady Bess Truman. The national society historically asserted authority based in part on its public amicability with the White House and had suffered embarrassment when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt quit in protest of its racist policies.[623] Instead of overtly criticizing the Fair Deal, Brosseau's strategy entailed identifying individual policies within the Fair Deal as possible gateways to communism, fearmongering rather than engaging in good faith debate. She enlisted Republican congressmen and senators, doctors,

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[621] J. M. Newcomb, "Penetrate, Dominate, Confiscate: What Every Daughter Should Know," *DAR Magazine*, April 1948, 232, 234; Anne Carlisle Porter, "What Does the Magazine Mean to You?" *DAR Magazine*, September 1948, 684.
[622] Gertrude Alma MacPeek, "All the Blessings of Liberty," *DAR Magazine*, April 1950, 259.
[623] Harry and Bess Truman performed the president and first lady's traditional roles at the DAR's national convention throughout their tenure in the White House. President Truman also solicited DAR members to aid the FBI's anti-espionage work. Dolores Billman Hill, "The Fifty-Seventh Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1948, 411; Harry S. Truman, "Information Relating to Domestic Espionage, Sabotage and Subversive Activities," *DAR Magazine*, November 1950, 844.

school administrators, and other prominent Fair Deal critics to write articles and lend the magazine credibility.[624]

Some conservatives of the time made substantive arguments against the Fair Deal but Brosseau tailored *DAR Magazine*'s political content to appeal to its readership. Most women in the DAR viewed politics as a topic that respectable women should avoid in conversation yet they dedicated their time to a nationalist organization with inherently political aims, particularly in shaping how American politics influenced American identity. By framing individual Fair Deal policies as harbingers of communism and thus an existential threat to the United States, *DAR Magazine* normalized radical right-wing politics in a way that would not seem political to its many of its readers. This strategy mirrored isolationist groups like the AFC in framing a political issue in nationalist terms, as less a matter of right- or left-wing than as American or un-American.

One of the key facets of the Fair Deal that the DAR ardently opposed was universal healthcare. In the late 1940s, the national society adopted a "compulsory health insurance" resolution opposing "legislation designed to create State Medical care with its vast extension of a parasitic bureaucracy."[625] Resolutions passed at the organization's annual Continental Congress essentially served as the DAR's political platform. Brosseau and Carraway supported this anti-universal healthcare plank by writing editorials and publishing articles by doctors warning that the future of American medical research was at stake.[626] Few editorials

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[624] Ralph W. Gwinn, "The Implications of Federal Aid to and Control of Education," *DAR Magazine*, December 1947, 581-589; Daniel A. Reed, "Liberty Is Easier to Retain than to Regain," *DAR Magazine*, November 1948, 808-809; Alexander Wiley, "The Real Struggle: The Battle of Ideas," *DAR Magazine*, October 1949, 804-806; John C. McClintock, "Socialized Medicine, a Wedge for Socialism," *DAR Magazine*, March 1951, 183-186.
[625] DAR, "Compulsory Health Insurance," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 742.
[626] Grace L. H. Brosseau, "What Constitutes Good Citizenship," *DAR Magazine*, July 1949, 560; Ernest M. Irons, "Political Medicine and Medical Care," *DAR Magazine*, April 1949, 272-276; McClintock, "Socialized Medicine."

or articles criticized specific policy proposals but rather engaged in vague anti-communist fearmongering. Opposition to universal healthcare spread from the national society's magazine to seemingly unrelated committees. In 1950, the Americanism Committee declared universal healthcare to be un-American and began a letter-writing campaign to protect "our heritage" from "socialistic legislation now contemplated and pending in Congress."[627] Although the DAR was not the only reason that the Fair Deal's most ambitious healthcare policies were not enacted, this case illustrates how the national society covertly operated as a right-wing political organization which aimed to undermine liberal policies.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, *DAR Magazine* frequently published articles opposing civil rights and defending the national society's history of racism. After running a series of articles calling the Fair Deal's proposal for comprehensive federal aid to education communist, Brosseau included an article in 1949 written by conservative activist Myra Hecker which suggested that this was also a civil rights issue.[628] In "Discrimination Statutes (Masquerading Under the Guise of Democracy)," Hecker outlined her campaign against an anti-discrimination bill which had recently passed the New Jersey Assembly. Hecker warned that such state-level anti-discrimination legislation would "*create* difficulties and racial tensions rather than eliminate them" [emphasis original] by giving the government the power to police individuals' "freedom of thought." Racism was a long-standing societal issue, Hecker maintained, so punishing racist individuals raised in a white supremacist society was itself an injustice. By portraying the effect of the bill as expanding the "police and judicial power" of the state Department of Education and describing the target of the law as

[627] Beatrice K. Curtiss, "Americanism Committee," *DAR Magazine*, March 1950, 197.
[628] Gwinn, "The Implications of Federal Aid;" Reed, "Liberty Is Easier;" Ralph Harvey, "Federal Aid to Education," *DAR Magazine*, December 1948, 872-874.

individuals rather than discriminatory systems and institutions, Hecker delegitimized anti-discrimination legislation in education as well as throughout society.[629]

The DAR incorporated anti-Black racism throughout its work in the postwar period, at every level of the organization. When a Georgia DAR chapter protested Black schoolchildren singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the Black national anthem, in lieu of "The Star-Spangled Banner," it demonstrated just one example of how everyday nationalism, as wielded by predominantly white organizations, contributed to the broader social project of white supremacy.[630] Still, DAR leaders insisted that their organization was not racist, perhaps none more doggedly than Brosseau. She frequently defended the DAR's policy of discriminating against Black performers in editorials while pleading ignorance of racism as a northerner.[631] Brosseau's editorial decisions, particularly publishing Myra Hecker's article against anti-discrimination laws, did not suggest that her ignorance was authentic. Her own prolific contributions to the magazine more clearly revealed her beliefs. In 1948, Brosseau directly suggested that liberal internationalism could lead to the upheaval of white supremacist hierarchy in the United States, "a new kind of life, ordained by the habits, customs, mode of living, [and] thinking" of "a majority group in control which is not white."[632] Perhaps it was coincidental that Brosseau titled the article "Selling America Down the River," an allusion to the domestic slave trade, but DAR members prided themselves on their knowledge of US history. Brosseau claimed racial ignorance but clearly appropriated the historical language of enslavement to serve her own perceived victimhood.

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[629] Myra Hecker, "Discrimination Statutes (Masquerading Under the Guise of Democracy): A Dangerous New Concept in American Law," *DAR Magazine*, July 1949, 574-576.
[630] Katharine G. Reynolds, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, June 1951, 465; Rosalind Ewing Martin, "National Defense Committee," *DAR Magazine*, January 1950, 22.
[631] Grace L. H. Brosseau, "An Able Defense," *DAR Magazine*, August 1947, 392; Brosseau, "Along Comes Mr. Arthur Godfrey," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 728-729; "Mrs. Brosseau, 87."
[632] Grace L. H. Brosseau, "Selling America Down the River," *DAR Magazine*, November 1948, 818.

In the 1920s, the DAR advocated for immigration restriction and it renewed this work after World War II by lobbying for literacy tests and limiting entrance of refugees and Displaced Persons (DPs).[633] Brosseau had orchestrated the organization's staunch nativist stance in the 1920s and in the 1940s she continued her anti-immigration activism, both within the DAR and as a leader of the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies.[634] As editor of *DAR Magazine*, Brosseau regularly wrote and published articles which called for a halt in immigration until returning veterans could find employment and used dehumanizing language to describe DPs, such as "hordes" arriving by the "boatload."[635] This language was soon adopted by committee chairmen throughout the DAR, with Beatrice K. Curtiss of the Americanism Committee describing DPs as "bitter, distrustful, desperate souls, with the strategy of an opportunist at their finger tips [sic]."[636] Nativism was nothing new to the DAR, but the venom directed at refugees displaced by World War II was particularly ugly.

However, *DAR Magazine* took an entirely different tone on the topic of people displaced by the Russian Revolution. In an article called "The Pattern of Communism," Julia Dent Grant Cantacuzène, a longtime DAR member and granddaughter of Pres. Ulysses S. Grant, recounted her experience among the White Russian émigrés as she fled the country with her aristocrat husband. The exiled Princess Cantacuzène described the Russian Revolution as a "holocaust" but argued against asylum for all World War II DPs, not only those from communist countries. Grant Cantacuzène asserted that DPs from Germany were

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633 Rosalind Ewing Martin, "Following Through with National Defense 1947-1948," *DAR Magazine*, December 1947, 591.
634 "Resolutions Adopted by the American Coalition At Its Annual Convention," Jan 24, 1947, American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Organization Liaison, 1945-1946, Box 8, NARA Navy Records. See also Wendt, "Defenders of Patriotism or Mothers of Fascism? The Daughters of the American Revolution, Antiradicalism, and Un-Americanism in the Interwar Period," 946.
635 "An Able Defense;" "What Constitutes Good Citizenship;" "All the Blessings of Liberty," 261; Gertrude Alma MacPeek, "Our Changing America," *DAR Magazine*, September 1950, 734.
636 Beatrice K. Curtiss, "Americanism Committee," *DAR Magazine*, April 1948, 245.

likely communist agents based on a highly convoluted conspiracy theory blaming German republicans for the Russian Revolution, which she insisted had been confirmed by a Nazi official she met at a dinner party.[637] Alongside articles championing the Founding Fathers, *DAR Magazine* printed a piece based largely on party gossip from a Nazi which demonized republican anti-monarchists as fundamentally un-American. Grant Cantacuzène's article, edited and printed by fellow ACPS member Brosseau, revealed a breathtaking degree of classist and likely ethnic bias toward DPs and contempt for the fundamental American values the DAR purported to stand for.

After World War II, the DAR formally supported the United Nations while covertly undermining its founding principle of liberal internationalism. Like its strategy with the Fair Deal, the DAR openly agreed with the idea of the UN but opposed nearly all of its actions and policies, including its humanitarian efforts as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.[638] By misrepresenting the actual work of the UN and conflating it with communist internationalism, DAR leaders sought not only to convince their members that the UN was un-American but also for DAR members to spread this idea through their patriotic education campaigns and other public work. The society's National Defense Committee incubated much of this anti-internationalism. During World War II, the committee focused on fundraising to support the military but after the war, it returned to its earlier mission of "education for citizenship" through formal classes for children and adults, distributing patriotic literature and posters to schools, and popularizing everyday nationalism

[637] Julia Dent Grant Cantacuzène, "The Pattern of Communism," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 743-746.
[638] Vylla P. Wilson, "The Fifty-sixth Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, July 1947, 328; Katharine G. Reynolds, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, December 1952, 1299-1301.

through traditions, rituals, and holidays.[639] It also lobbied for military spending and immigration restriction at the federal level and for right-wing textbooks at the state and local level.[640] Even as the DAR enjoyed political acceptance by centrists and liberals by officially supporting the UN, the National Defense Committee and other anti-internationalists waged a campaign of misinformation and fearmongering in its attempt to draw the organization further toward the radical right.

In its official reports and *DAR Magazine* articles, the National Defense Committee repeated conspiratorial ideas about the UN which preyed on the anxieties of DAR members. Brosseau's *DAR Magazine* regularly conflated the UN with the World Federalist Movement, which actually advocated for stronger internationalist institutions than the UN. Often in the same magazine issue, the National Defense Committee would connect world federalism to a communist conspiracy to destroy the United States.[641] The committee viewed the UN's opposition to the "extreme *nationalism*" [emphasis original] which had launched two world wars as a threat to the American family and "the first step toward communist supremacy" while the work of UNESCO was "propaganda for a world government to supersede our National Government."[642] The National Defense Committee also called on DAR members to organize against local chapters of the United World Federalists and outlined a plan to contact state legislators and governors to oppose world federalism as well as the UN

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639 "What The Daughters Do," 11, 1950, Printed Material Collection, 1895-2008, Box 5, Folder 13, NSDAR Archives; "Report of National Defense Committee," *Proceedings of the 58th Continental Congress*, NSDAR (1949), 318.
640 "Following Through," 591.
641 Dera D. Parkinson, "World Government versus Super Government," *DAR Magazine*, June 1949, 460-465; Lola Lee Brutington, "National Defense Meeting," *DAR Magazine*, June 1949, 476-477; Lola Lee Brutington, "World Government Score - June, 1949," *DAR Magazine*, August 1949, 665; Alfred C. Oliver Jr., "Objectives of the United World Federalists," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 751-752; George B. de Huszar, "The Myth of World Government," *DAR Magazine*, June 1950, 463-466; Harold C. Train, "The Fallacy of a Super-Government," *DAR Magazine*, September 1950, 725-728.
642 Frances Barrett Lucas, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, June 1951, 467-468.

Charter.[643] The national society then adopted resolutions opposing world federalism as well as changes to the UN Charter by 1950.[644] Other major organizations in the Nationalist Network collaborated with the DAR against the "left-wing" specter of world government, including the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.[645] By conflating the UN with the World Federalist Movement as well as with communism, the National Defense Committee made it seem like DAR members' core identities as Americans, mothers, and conservative women, were under attack by internationalist institutions.

Although the National Defense Committee had previously supported increased military spending as well as intervention in World War II, its arguments against the Korean War echoed pre-Pearl Harbor isolationist nationalists like the America First Committee. The Korean War was not the United States' to fight, committee secretary Frances Barrett Lucas wrote in a 1951 report, adding that it would lead to increased taxes and cost too many American lives. Paraphrasing a State Department official that the Korean War "SAVED the United Nations," Lucas pointed out that the UN was meant to "settle things at parliamentary meetings" and stop wars from happening in the first place.[646] Committee chairman Katharine G. Reynolds stopped short of calling for US troops to be sent home but accused the Soviet Union of being the real instigator of the conflict, as well as the UN of complicity by allowing communist countries to belong as member states. Reynolds compared UNESCO's education initiatives to Nazi Germany's and seemingly lamented US intervention in both world wars, writing, "We neither made the world 'safe for democracy'

[643] Lola Lee Brutington, "National Defense Committee," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 753-754.
[644] Dolores Billman Hill, "The Fifty-ninth Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1950, 461.
[645] Lola Lee Brutington, "National Defense Committee," *DAR Magazine*, July 1950, 594-595; Frances Barrett Lucas, "National Defense Committee," *DAR Magazine*, October 1950, 816.
[646] Frances Barrett Lucas, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, February 1951, 128-129.

nor retained that high regard previously given to us by most of the world."[647] In regards to the Korean War, the National Defense Committee repeated many of the same ideas as pre-World War II isolationists: The war was someone else's to fight, that it was caused by communists, that liberal interventionists used fascist propaganda tactics, and that the strides made toward democracy during the twentieth century were not worth the cost of war. While there was legitimate criticism to be made about US involvement in the Korean War, the DAR manipulated good-faith arguments to advance its radical right-wing anti-internationalist agenda.

In the early 1950s, the National Defense Committee called on local and state DAR chapters to undertake a write-in campaign to Congress in opposition to US ratification of the UN's Genocide Convention and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[648] The committee linked the Genocide Convention to the world government movement and principally objected to the inclusion of the phrase "mental harm" within the definition of genocide in Article II (b), arguing that leftists would use it to claim they were the victims of genocide. "If you called a Communist by his proper name, as a member of a group," read a committee report, you could be tried "before an international tribunal of aliens," thus imperiling freedom of speech and the American judicial system.[649] In this misreading of the Genocide Convention, Lucas and other committee leaders portrayed it as a burden to privileged white Americans and an unfair advantage for people of color, comparing it unfavorably to the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Most disturbingly, they obfuscated the document's

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[647] Katharine G. Reynolds, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, June 1953, 767-768.
[648] Frances Barrett Lucas, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, November 1950, 877; "National Defense," February 1951, 126.
[649] "National Defense," February 1951, 125; Katharine G. Reynolds, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, March 1951, 214.

intention to prevent mass killings of racial and ethnic minorities in the wake of the Holocaust.[650]

In addition to the Genocide Convention, the committee also minimized the international humanitarian protections of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It objected based on the falsehood that it would take precedence over the US Constitution domestically and destroy Americans' civil liberties, including the right to Christian marriage ceremonies.[651] By 1954, the DAR adopted resolutions opposing both documents at their national convention.[652] It joined with other conservative groups to lobby against humanitarian treaties, which likely contributed to Congress' failure to ratify the Genocide Convention until the 1980s. The reasoning behind the DAR's disapproval of anti-genocide and human rights treaties was entirely based on how these documents could mildly inconvenience white Americans' ability to express racist or anti-communist beliefs, making a mockery out of the murder and oppression of millions of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities worldwide. By frightening the privileged white and predominantly Christian women of the DAR with absurd hypothetical scenarios, the National Defense Committee equated radical right-wing beliefs like white supremacy and Christian nationalism with American nationalism and portrayed international human rights efforts as a direct threat to that.

Everyday nationalism provided another front for the DAR to oppose the UN, especially as some Americans chose to display the UN flag in front of their homes and businesses in the 1950s. The DAR, like many organizations in the Nationalist Network,

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650 "National Defense," November 1950, 877.
651 "National Defense," March 1951, 214-215; Katharine G. Reynolds, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, June 1952, 736.
652 Mrs. Thomas Burchett, "The Sixtieth Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1951, 464; Mrs. Frank B. Cuff, "The Sixty-Third Continental Congress," *DAR Magazine*, June 1954, 648.

believed that the American flag possessed an almost sacred meaning as the physical embodiment of American ideals, a totem of civil religion. During World War II, representatives from the DAR and other groups in the Nationalist Network like the USFA, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars actually attended a meeting to discuss popularizing the Four Freedoms flag, an early version of the UN flag, in the United States as part of the Allied war effort.[653] The campaign apparently never came to fruition and the DAR representative from the meeting later condemned the effort, stating that Congress had created too much "confusion" by replacing the Nazi-like Bellamy salute in the US Flag Code in 1942 and that no other flag could represent the "multitudinous freedoms" of the American flag.[654] The DAR and others in the Network concluded that the UN flag was both inferior to the American flag and a threat to national unity.

In the 1950s, the DAR led the charge among nationalist groups to portray the UN flag as un-American, inventing controversies in the field of everyday nationalism to reinforce its anti-internationalist political agenda. In 1950, the DAR and VFW expressed outrage in the press when they learned that the US Department of Agriculture was sponsoring a program encouraging women farmers to sew UN flags for schools and their local communities. "We do not want the U. N. flag to supersede Old Glory," said DAR President-General Marguerite C. Patton of this "un-American effort."[655] The driving force behind this program was not the Soviet Union, as the national commander of the VFW speculated, but the National Grange, an agricultural fraternal and lobbying organization

653 "Meeting to Urge Allied Flag," *Washington Post*, December 21, 1942, B1.
654 Elizabeth Malott Barnes, "The Stars and Stripes Forever," *National Historical Magazine*, July 1943, Committees (General) Collection, 1891-2008, Box 5, Folder 12, NSDAR Archives.
655 Robert Young, "D. A. R. Head Rips U. N. Flag Move as Un-American," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 10, 1950, 12.

which leaned right-wing, in support of US intervention in Korea.[656] Months later in *DAR Magazine*, Patton herself suggested that "subversive forces" spreading "unpatriotic propaganda" were behind the sudden popularity of UN flags and that DAR members were obligated to "preach the doctrine that no other symbol should supersede our Flag in our own land," suggesting that the mere sight of the UN and American flags flying on the same flagpole undermined American nationalism. While explicitly stating that the DAR had "more than once endorsed the United Nations Organization," Patton described the UN flag as "a phase of the current campaigns for World Government."[657] By propagating conspiratorial thinking about the UN mere paragraphs after a rote endorsement, Patton further muddled the DAR's position on the UN in an apparently deliberate way.

Following Patton's cue, members of the National Defense Committee ramped up their campaign against the UN flag. The committee printed commendations of DAR members who protested public displays of the UN flag, especially at public schools, and wrote editorials in their local newspapers. "Do we want a flag that represents even ONE Communist state to fly in the United States?" a Tennessee state leader wrote.[658] One New Jersey DAR member called this apparent conspiracy "a high-powered publicity scheme" to "sell" the UN to Americans, who already resented the disproportionate amount of "blood and money" they had given to the UN.[659] Her point, although rather bombastic, was not entirely unreasonable. Flags were an important symbol in American culture in large part because of the activities of groups in the Nationalist Network, which had socialized

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[656] Louis J. Taber, former master of the National Grange, had long dabbled in the Nationalist Network, attending the National Flag Conference of 1923 and serving on the national committee of the America First Committee until it disbanded. "V. F. W. Head Fears Plot on Old Glory," *New York Times*, October 9, 1950, 4; "Conference to Fix Civilian Flag Code," *Washington Post*, June 11, 1923, 8; Page Hufty, "Bulletin #647," October 23, 1941, Box 63, Pinchot Papers.
[657] Marguerite C. Patton, "Let's Keep Old Glory in the Place of Honor," *DAR Magazine*, December 1950, 937.
[658] "National Defense," March 1951, 216.
[659] Frances Barrett Lucas, "National Defense," *DAR Magazine*, January 1951, 42.

Americans to see meaning in flags by campaigning for their public display for decades. The ubiquity of American flags in public schools and government buildings was intended to strengthen American nationalism yet, in the eyes of these DAR members, to fly the UN flag beside the American one weakened their entire nationalist project. That the United States was one of the most powerful countries in the UN, even hosting its headquarters, appeared to have compounded their fears rather than quell them. If DAR leaders were to be believed, the UN was little more than a front for a communist world government and it was already in their backyard.

The effort by the DAR and other groups in the Nationalist Network to keep the UN flag subordinate to the American flag had further impact. Patton had argued that Congress should pass legislation requiring the UN flag to be flown below the American flag in the United States and its territories. Rear Adm. William Rea Furlong, one of the authors of the Flag Code from the National Flag Conference, contributed an article to *DAR Magazine* in agreement, suggesting foreign flags should be included as well.[660] Within a year, Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill and the rule was subsequently incorporated into the US Code, although it did not apply to UN headquarters in New York. While signing the bill into law, Eisenhower remarked that he did not see the purpose of it beyond affirming the American flag's "traditional place of honor and prominence when flown with other flags."[661] Like the rest of the Flag Code, it was not intended to be legally enforceable for private citizens but instead prescribed the way Americans should perform patriotism. There were likely few real instances where the UN flag was flown above the American flag as a sign of disrespect, but that was not the problem that the DAR and other nationalists sought to rectify. The newly-

[660] William Rea Furlong, "The U.S. Flag Code and the U.N. Flag," *DAR Magazine*, June 1952, 715-717.
[661] "President Signs Flag Bill But Calls It Ambiguous," *New York Times*, July 11, 1953, 13.

revised Section 7 of the US Flag Code should instead be read as a means of discouraging the general use of the UN flag in public settings and affirming the precedence of the American flag.

In the immediate postwar era, the DAR's Junior American Citizens (JAC) Committee had the farthest reach in spreading right-wing ideologies through everyday nationalism. The JAC Committee sponsored 11,232 JAC Clubs in schools, orphanages, and churches across the United States with a membership of 342,600 by 1950, funded entirely by the DAR.[662] JAC Clubs were intended to "supplement" public school education by teaching children American traditions and "stressing loyalty" to the United States and its flag, in addition to engaging children in community service work. According to President-General Estella A. O'Byrne, the JAC Committee was among the "most important of our organization because it reaches *all* children of every nationality, race, color or creed, rich or poor."[663] For a nativist, whites-only, upper middle-class hereditary organization, it was significant that the DAR's JAC Clubs were open to non-citizens, people of color, and working-class children. The DAR apparently did not keep records of all the racial and economic demographics of its JAC Clubs. It often highlighted its clubs for impoverished white children in Appalachia but it also sponsored clubs for Black children, including at a segregated school in Georgia where one DAR member wrote of her pleasant surprise at the enthusiasm of Black students and teachers.[664] This perspective demonstrated that the DAR maintained its belief that, as a group of documented descendants of white Revolutionary War patriots, it had the authority

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662 "What The Daughters Do," 10, 1951, Printed Material Collection, 1895-2008, Box 5, Folder 13, NSDAR Archives.
663 Shirley Kuenzel, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, May 1948, 532; Estella A. O'Byrne, "The President General's Message," *DAR Magazine*, September 1948, 7.
664 Dorothy Helm Martin, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, July 1948, 525; Mrs. William C. Robinson, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, June 1949, 479.

to determine what American citizens should believe and how they should act, but also that poor whites and African Americans were not naturally inclined to be American citizens. Racism and classism did not merely govern the DAR's membership policy; it shaped its ideas about which groups naturally belonged to the nation and which needed the guiding hand of those that did.

The JAC Committee developed a patriotic education curriculum for its clubs and sponsored essay, poster, play, and music contests to fully engage its members, developing a strategy for citizenship education lauded by others in the Nationalist Network, including the American Legion.[665] As an example, the JAC Club at a school in Colorado Springs collaborated with history, language, and art teachers to produce a patriotic play for the state DAR conference, informally teaching the children about American history and citizenship by engaging them as they wrote the script, made puppets, and built the set. The school principal also noted that being a member of the JAC Club "carries a certain prestige" among the children and that they self-policed bad behavior within the club, "the offender dislik[ing] the disapproval of his classmates."[666] In this way, JAC Clubs not only taught schoolchildren about civics and patriotic traditions but they shaped members to be rule-abiding and reliant on approval from their social peers, very much consistent with the DAR's upper middle-class values. This also fell in line with the JAC Committee's goal of crime deterrence, providing an alternative to joining "gangs" and working with police youth outreach programs.[667]

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[665] Mabel Hoffman, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, September 1949, 758-759; Mabel Hoffman, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, September 1948, 688-689; James F. O'Neil, "The Boys' Forum," *DAR Magazine*, December 1948, 882.
[666] Kathryn J. Morgan, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, April 1948, 247.
[667] "Junior American Citizens Committee," May 1948.

Like much of the DAR's work in the postwar era, the JAC Committee was explicitly anti-communist. In a report urging more local DAR chapters to form JAC Clubs in their communities, JAC Committee national chairman Mabel Hoffman characterized it as the "D.A.R.'s weapon for fighting Communism and subversive organizations."[668] This echoed President-General O'Byrne's earlier assertion that JAC Clubs undermined the Soviet-backed youth groups that she believed had infiltrated American society.[669] In this apparent moment of crisis, JAC Committee leaders actually articulated that their work was inspired by fascists. "Hitler and Mussolini began with youth groups," Hoffman wrote in a 1949 report, continuing, "Youth is flexible, impressionable, and susceptible to persuasion" by communists, so adults must be "aggressive" in forming anti-communist youth groups.[670] Hoffman did not appear to be troubled that her goal of creating a national network of anti-communist youth groups mirrored fascists in Italy and Germany a decade or so earlier. "Children are our first line of defense" against communism, Hoffman wrote in another report, extolling Hitler, Mussolini, and now Stalin's left-wing statist work of "training [youth groups] to be leaders in the government they wanted."[671] In the context of the DAR's descent into radical right-wing ideology in the postwar era and its attacks on the liberal Fair Deal, civil rights, immigration, and the UN, Hoffman's explicit support of authoritarian propaganda tactics targeting children demonstrated that the organization's extremism was not limited to its official resolutions or magazine articles. That the JAC Committee openly took inspiration from authoritarian regimes in its goal of protecting American nationalism,

668 Mabel Hoffman, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, October 1948, 766.
669 "The President-General's Message," September 1948.
670 Mabel Hoffman, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, December 1949, 978.
671 Mabel Hoffman, "Junior American Citizens Committee," *DAR Magazine*, March 1950, 198.

purportedly in the name of democracy, should have been more troubling to the self-described patriots of the DAR than it apparently was.

The DAR had dabbled in radical right-wing ideology in previous decades, especially in its anti-immigrant and anti-communist activism in the 1920s, but during the late 1940s and early 1950s the organization embraced a much broader right-wing agenda. Its leaders preserved the veneer of amicability with the political establishment while covertly undermining the liberal policies of the Fair Deal. The DAR's anti-internationalism, particularly its opposition to the work of the UN and to the Korean War, even put it in conflict with postwar centrism and moderate Republican politics. To classify the DAR's postwar right-wing turn as simply anti-communist overlooks the depth and breadth of the racism, classism, nativism, nationalism, and conspiratorial thinking that *DAR Magazine* and the National Defense Committee spread to members. In the years after World War II, the DAR viewed the liberal democratic order and postwar internationalism as fundamental threats to American nationalism, an ideology which its members believed they were entitled to define because of their ancestry, race, and economic privilege.

Conclusion

There had always been some sort of tension within the Nationalist Network between the inherently political nature of its work and the belief that its work transcended politics. The Network's leaders generally leaned center-right but prioritized their proximity to power, particularly the office of the presidency, until the postwar era. The prewar isolationist movement, despite the largest nationalist organizations' attempts to marginalize it, incubated far-right ideologies and suggested a new way forward for conservative nationalists dismayed by the political popularity of liberalism and internationalism. The case of the ACPS showed

that right-wing nationalists could participate in seditious activity during wartime without the consequences faced by their more openly fascist peers, shielded by their social status and the respectability of the Network. After the war, some of the most radical right-wing nationalists returned to positions of influence in large organizations, further emboldened to use the Network to spread anti-liberal and anti-internationalist ideologies. The Cold War marked a new era for the Network, with its few remaining organizations focused less on creating and spreading patriotic traditions than advancing radical right-wing policy goals.

Conclusion

The Nationalist Network created, revised, and popularized a series of patriotic traditions in the early twentieth-century United States. Equally as important, these self-appointed guardians of American national identity promulgated the notion that patriotism must be publicly performed on a regular basis, using their prescribed traditions. The Network used this concept of everyday nationalism to gradually change how Americans thought of their national identity, first by advocating for the incorporation of patriotic symbols and rituals in schools and public entertainment and sports gatherings, then by lobbying the federal and state governments to endorse these traditions. One reason why everyday nationalism and two of the Network's traditions, the Pledge of Allegiance and "The Star-Spangled Banner," endured into the twenty-first century was because they were adopted by popular assent, and often popular ambivalence, before they were enforced by the state. Not all of the Network's invented traditions succeeded in the long term, but its efforts to create a consensus that patriotism must be seen and performed to be believed continued for decades after the Network itself faded. By the 1950s, the Network was no longer a dynamic coalition of organizations dedicated to inventing and spreading patriotic traditions. Its surviving societies, the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, still encouraged the practice of existing traditions but focused more of their efforts toward advancing anti-communist and right-wing policy goals.

While the Nationalist Network represented a minority of Americans, mainly white, upper middle-class, Christian, and American-born citizens, it exercised a significant and disproportionate influence on American national identity in the twentieth century. Because nationalism is inherently ideological, considering the ideological motivations of nationalist activists is essential to understanding their impact. Starting in the 1920s, the Network

became more ideologically polarized, generally leaning rightward, aside from a period of left-wing Popular Front nationalism in the 1930s. It used patriotic culture to advance specific ideas about what it meant to be American, which shifted over time but became associated with militarism, anti-communism, white supremacy, nativism, and the political right by the 1950s. These ideologies had existed in the United States before the Network emerged, but it tied them to patriotic traditions and incorporated those traditions into everyday life. The Network represented a small percentage of Americans, demographically and ideologically, but exercised a disproportionately large influence on the way that many Americans conceived of their national identity. These nationalist organizations created a culture in which those who protested the ideological meaning behind these traditions, or their compulsory performance, were often viewed as unpatriotic.

Examining how American nationalists used patriotism to advance their own ideological beliefs about national identity demonstrates how nationalism, as an ideology, relies on people's emotions and desire to belong. Scholars will likely continue to debate and conflate nationalism and patriotism, but this study uses the framework of everyday nationalism to suggest that patriotism is not an ideology but an emotion. Patriotism existed before the invention of the nation-state but nationalists often appeal to patriotic emotions to make their ideologies broadly appealing. Patriotic symbols and rituals have social and cultural meaning, but this meaning is imposed on them and enforced through repetition. Everyday nationalism, which ensures this repetition, was not unique to the United States, but it first emerged there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through the efforts of the Nationalist Network. American nationalists of this era believed that people of their own race, ethnicity, and class were inherently more patriotic than other groups. By influencing their behavior, the Network believed they could cultivate patriotism among people they

viewed as more vulnerable to "un-American" ideologies like pacifism and communism. Because the Network aimed to influence both hearts and minds, their activities extended beyond the scope of patriotism and into the realm of nationalism.

Between the 1920s and 1950s, the Nationalist Network vacillated between an exclusive and inclusive vision of American national identity. Right-wing leaders generally dominated this era and wielded the most power in the 1920s and late 1940s, advocating an exclusive interpretation of what it meant to be American. These conservatives pushed liberals and centrists to the margins of the Network and supported immigration restriction and anti-communist policies. The dual crises of the Great Depression and rise of global far-right movements in the 1930s interrupted this exclusionary trend. New Deal programs like the Federal Theatre Project offered liberals and leftists the opportunity to create nationalist art with an inclusive interpretation of American identity, advancing anti-racist, pro-labor, and anti-fascist themes. Instead of rejecting inclusive nationalists, established organizations sometimes collaborated with them. This brief period when the Network incorporated, or at least tolerated, more inclusive and left-wing nationalism illustrated that its ideology was flexible. The Network's subsequent reversion toward exclusion was not inevitable but was largely a decision made by its leaders. Despite the dominance of right-wing nationalism in the early twentieth-century United States, liberals and leftists influenced the development of American nationalism as well.

The period between 1920 and 1955 is an often-overlooked period in the historiography of American nationalism. By examining it through the lens of everyday nationalism, we see that during this era, many Americans adopted the belief that patriotism should be publicly performed, and adjusted their behavior to reflect that. While everyday nationalism is particularly well-suited to the study of this time period, historians should use it

and other frameworks from social science disciplines to examine how nationalism changed over time in the United States and other countries. Historians could take a transnational approach to the rise of nationalist symbols and rituals in the interwar era, as efforts to protect the sovereignty of small nations by liberal internationalists were threatened by far-right nationalist movements. There is also an opportunity to consider the connections between the Nationalist Network and movement conservatism in the United States. Movement conservatives adopted many of the radical right-wing policy positions advocated by the later Network and used patriotic language and symbols to make these policies more broadly appealing. This framework of using patriotic traditions and culture to examine the spread of nationalist ideology should not be limited to the Nationalist Network in the twentieth-century United States, but is sufficiently flexible to suit any number of historical contexts.

By the mid-1950s, the Nationalist Network had achieved its goal of normalizing the public performance of patriotism through traditions. Its major remaining organizations, the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, continued to argue that patriotic traditions should remain part of everyday life but no longer invented new rituals or pushed for existing traditions to be further incorporated into society. The Network had long been political, and during the Cold War, its organizations focused on advocating right-wing policy goals, particularly anti-communist ones. While these organizations maintained and sometimes increased their membership during the second half of the twentieth century, the Network no longer existed as a dynamic collective advancing everyday nationalism.

Other types of organizations took on the mantle of changing patriotic traditions to advance ideological goals. In 1954, Congress added the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of

Allegiance to distinguish the United States as a religious nation, in contrast to the atheist Soviet Union. The driving force behind this amendment was not the Nationalist Network but the Knights of Columbus, an international Catholic fraternal organization. Catholic and Protestant anti-communists in Congress came together to support the legislation and the DAR and American Legion celebrated its passage.[672] Beyond the Pledge amendment, the Knights of Columbus was not extensively involved in everyday nationalism, but in this instance, its interests aligned with the kind of work the Network was known for. The Knights of Columbus advocated for the phrase "under God" not because it was or wanted to be a nationalist organization, but because the Network had so effectively incorporated the performance of patriotism into American society that the organization viewed amending the Pledge as a means of advancing its own ideological goals.

There was little protest at the time that requiring the recitation of the amended Pledge of Allegiance in public schools might be a violation of the First Amendment. Some state legislatures required public schools to perform the Pledge ritual on a regular basis, but often this tradition was simply mandated by local school boards or enthusiastic school administrators. In 1988, Republican presidential candidate George H. W. Bush criticized his Democratic opponent, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, for vetoing a Massachusetts bill which required teachers to lead a daily Pledge ritual. Dukakis had actually consulted with the state's highest court to determine the constitutionality of the bill, and vetoed it on the court's recommendation. Still, Bush portrayed his rival as unpatriotic and, after attacking his character on multiple fronts, ultimately won the election. Richard J. Ellis estimates that after 1988, at least twenty-six state legislative bodies passed laws requiring

[672] "Phrase 'Under God' Inserted in Flag Pledge," *DAR Magazine*, August 1954, 869; "Putting the Pledge in Our 'Pledge of Allegiance,'" *DAR Magazine*, April 1956, 355, 369; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 130–137.

regular Pledge rituals in public schools.[673] Since then, the Supreme Court generally refused to hear cases about whether requiring public schools to hold Pledge ceremonies violated the Establishment Clause, except for 2004's *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*. The Court ruled that the plaintiff did not have standing to bring the suit in the first place, leaving the core issue unresolved. In 2022, forty-seven states have laws requiring regular recitations of the Pledge in public schools.[674] Even after the decline of the Nationalist Network, the Pledge evolved and became even more ingrained in American society.

The Nationalist Network's other significant tradition, the performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner," remained an important site on which Americans asserted and contested their national identity. In contrast to the Pledge of Allegiance, in the 1950s the Network openly rejected the federal government's efforts to pass a law which standardized the music and lyrics of the National Anthem. While the Network had long worked to prevent Americans from performing modern interpretations of the song, the DAR, VFW, and Legion objected to Rep. Joel T. Broyhill's (R-Virginia) bill to standardize "Banner" because he had consulted with a group of musicians affiliated with UNESCO. The right-wing ideologues running the Network were so convinced that UNESCO was a communist front that they actively campaigned against their own interests, and the bill never passed.[675] This episode illustrated how the Network ended not because its constituent organizations dissolved, but because their work shifted toward advancing right-wing policy goals at the expense of inventing and popularizing patriotic traditions.

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673 Ellis, 175-187.
674 Brad Dress, "Here Is a Breakdown of Laws in 47 States that Require Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance," *The Hill*, April 2, 2022, https://thehill.com/homenews/3256719-47-states-require-the-pledge-of-allegiance-be-recited-in-schools-here-is-a-breakdown-of-each-states-laws/.
675 Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 203.

After the government's efforts to standardize the National Anthem failed, musicians participating in the ritual of its performance at public events had the opportunity to experiment with new interpretations of the song. At a World Series game in 1968, the popular Latin crossover musician José Feliciano performed a slow, soul-inspired acoustic version of "Banner." Feliciano changed the melody and rhythm to more closely resemble popular music. While the press balked at his version, often noting unfavorably that he was Puerto Rican and blind, the music-buying public embraced Feliciano's "Banner," which charted for five weeks on the Billboard Hot 100.[676] While Feliciano always maintained that his version of the song reflected his own patriotism, the rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix, who often incorporated "Banner" into his set list from 1968 to 1970, used the anthem to subtly contemplate and criticize his American identity. As a Black man and former army paratrooper turned anti-war activist, Hendrix demonstrated a nuanced understanding of what the United States represented at home and abroad, telling a music magazine, "I still love America. It has so much good in it, you know, but it has so much evil, too."[677] His performance of "Banner" at the Woodstock festival in 1969 incorporated feedback and distortion to evoke the chaotic din of warfare.[678] By incorporating the anthem into his art, Hendrix made a powerful statement that he was as entitled as any citizen to claim "Banner" and use it to express his own identity.

Athletes who deviated from tradition during national anthem ceremonies faced professional repercussions, particularly Black athletes who spoke out against racism and

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[676] Feliciano's "Banner" reached #50 on the Billboard chart, a first for the national anthem. "Billboard Hot 100, Week of November 30, 1968," *Billboard*, https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1968-11-29/; Clague, *O Say Can You Hear?*, 219–223.
[677] Mark Clague, "'This Is America': Jimi Hendrix's Star Spangled Banner Journey as Psychedelic Citizenship," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 8 (December 5, 2014): 450.
[678] Clague, "'This is America,'" 436, 461.

white supremacy. The Nationalist Network's efforts to popularize "Star-Spangled Banner" rituals at sports events did not occur in a bubble; starting in 1921, the Olympic Games formally required that the national anthem of the event winner's country be played at each medal ceremony.[679] In 1968, two African-American sprinters, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, bowed their heads and raised a single, gloved fist while "Banner" played after Smith won gold. Smith and Carlos both belonged to the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which protested institutional racism in sports and the inclusion of apartheid states in the Olympics. Smith and Carlos intended to use their global platform to respectfully draw attention to these human rights issues, but the predominantly white press seized on the opportunity to portray them as political radicals. The International Olympic Committee, run by the American sports impresario Avery Brundage, expelled Carlos and Smith from the rest of the Games for politicizing the anthem ceremony, although it declined to punish a white Czechoslovakian gymnast who turned her back during the Soviet national anthem. Smith and Carlos were not invited to the US Olympic Team for the 1972 Games, but two other African American sprinters, Wayne Collett and Vince Matthews, were permanently banned from the Olympics after chatting during a medal ceremony that year. Although Carlos and Smith later found success in professional football, they and Collett and Matthews, who numbered among the fastest sprinters in the world, had their track careers cut short simply because they deviated from the prescribed anthem ritual.[680] Their offense was magnified due to the increased scrutiny they faced as Black men.

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[679] Comité International Olympique, *Statuts: Règlements et protocole de la célébration des Olympiades Modernes et des Jeux Olympiques Quadriennaux*, 1921, 10, accessed June 8, 2020, https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Olympic-Studies-Centre/List-of-Resources/Official-Publications/Olympic-Charters/FR-1921-Charte-Olympique-Statuts-Reglements-et-protocole.pdf#_ga=2.250920966.1464556491.1591631686-94699884.1591631686.
[680] Ferris, *Star-Spangled Banner*, 228–230.

The quarterback Colin Kaepernick faced similar repercussions when he kneeled during NFL anthem ceremonies to protest police violence toward Black people in the mid-2010s. Not only did Kaepernick deviate from the ritual as prescribed by the Nationalist Network, he said that his intent was to highlight racist civil rights abuses. By implying that "The Star-Spangled Banner" had certain ideological connotations, Kaepernick also subverted the fiction that the Network and its successors in enforcing the performance of patriotism had no ideological aims. If standing with one's hand over their heart while "Banner" played were an ideologically neutral act, politicians and the media would not have spent months and years vilifying Kaepernick for not performing this ritual. The Network had imposed meaning on this act by making it a tradition performed as part of everyday life in the United States, as well as by using this tradition to advance particular ideological beliefs about what it meant to be American. Although the Network no longer played the role of arbiter of patriotic culture in the twenty-first century United States, its legacy continues to shape American national identity.

The notion that certain types of people were inherently less American, based on race, class, religion, country of origin, or politics, was fundamental to the mission of the Nationalist Network. The Network's leaders believed that they were uniquely qualified to define American national identity and that by popularizing patriotic traditions and enforcing conformity in how those traditions were performed. Except for a brief period in the 1930s, between the 1920s and 1950s the Network was dominated by right-wing leaders who used the veneer of patriotism to obfuscate the ideological nature of their work. In so doing, they equated patriotic traditions with their own policy goals, connoting these symbols and rituals with anti-communism, white supremacy, immigration restriction, and even liberal internationalism. It was not inevitable that patriotic traditions would have right-wing

connotations. During the Popular Front, liberals and leftists created and popularized their own forms of patriotic culture that championed an inclusive vision of the United States. In the twenty-first century, patriotic traditions remain an important site on which Americans claim and contest their national identity. The Network may have normalized the compulsory performance of these traditions, but these symbols and rituals only maintain their meaning and importance through popular assent. It remains to be seen whether American patriotic culture will always retain its twentieth-century ideological connotations, but traditions can always be reinvented.

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