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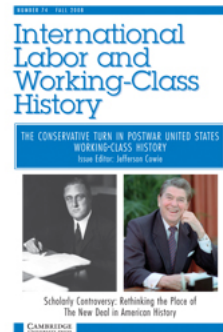
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The Racketeer Menace and Antiunionism in the Mid-Twentieth Century US

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Abstract

In the postwar era, conservatives manipulated concerns about union corruption and organized crime in order to score political points against New Deal Democrats and to win new legal restrictions on union power. The resulting racketeer menace had much in common with the contemporary red scare. Antiunion conservatives framed the issue of labor racketeering in terms that resembled the language then being mobilized against internal communist espionage and subversion. This rhetoric proliferated in the congressional debates of the postwar era. Proponents of the Taft-Hartley Act invoked the racketeer menace in 1946 and 1947. They depicted the law as an effort to curb racketeering and thus protect workers and the general public by restricting abusive union power. In the years that followed, a series of congressional hearings into union corruption kept attention focused on the issue of racketeering. For the Eisenhower Administration this campaign against labor racketeering offered a chance to peel the working-class vote away from the Democratic Party by politically dividing union members from their leadership. The culmination of this trend came at the end of the 1950s during the McClellan Committee hearings, which was the largest congressional investigation up to that time. Those hearings transformed Teamsters President James R. Hoffa into a potent symbol of the danger posed by labor racketeering. The committee's revelations and the publicity they received undercut the labor movement. Polls showed growing public skepticism toward unions, and especially union leaders. Such attitudes helped conservatives win a new round of legislative restrictions on organized labor in the form of the Landrum-Griffin Act (1959).

In 1947, Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin claimed, "We are confronted with a situation in which the American Garden of Eden has been invaded by the serpent of racketeering, which threatens to make this earthly paradise a European-like scene of chaos and conflict."¹ He made the claim during congressional debates over new legislation, the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), which supporters claimed would curb labor racketeering. Wiley's dramatic warning fits within a larger pattern in the postwar era of efforts by antiunion conservatives to invoke the menace of the racketeer. References to this menace first appeared in the late 1920s, but they achieved growing prominence in the 1940s and 1950s. The racketeer menace allowed conservatives to harness popular concerns about organized crime and union corruption to promote legislative measures that would limit the power of organized labor.

In Cold War America, this racketeer scare had much in common with the contemporaneous red scare. Both pictured an internal threat to the nation's security and warnings about both threats came from the same voices on the

political right, who frequently pointed out the parallel nature of these conspiracies. In 1958, conservative Senator Karl Mundt responded to testimony at a congressional hearing on labor racketeering by saying, "Everything you have said about the Mafia is equally true of the Communist cells of this country."² In an editorial in 1959, *Life* magazine warned that congressional hearings on the links between labor racketeering and the mafia had "revealed that a conspiracy, as secret as the Communist underground and certainly as dangerous, was operating without any of the surveillance and penetration which has all but destroyed the latter. "Pointing to the testimony at the most recent hearings on labor racketeering, *Life's* editors asked, "Just who's running this country anyway? Is it the legal government elected by citizens or is it an invisible government of hoods, thugs, gangsters, terrorists and murderers?"³

Both scares served a larger political agenda. Just as red-scare demagogues blurred distinctions between New Deal liberalism, Popular Front liberals, and Communist Party members, so too did the warnings against racketeering erase distinctions between conservative, militant, and corrupt union leaders. Conservatives found the charge of racketeering increasingly useful in the postwar era as the left-wing of the union movement faded and the once radical CIO moved away from its Popular Front roots.

This article traces the ways in which conservatives in the post war era drew on a broad construction of the term racketeering, one devised and promoted as part of an effort to denounce the growing power of unions. The term played a pivotal role in the debates over the Taft-Hartley Act in 1946–1947. In the years that followed the passage of that act, conservatives continued to invoke the menace of the racketeer by conducting a series of high profile hearings on union corruption. These hearings promoted an image of unions that belied organized labor's claims to champion the needs of working Americans. Instead exposés of union corruption tarred organized labor as a movement that victimized both the workers and the general public. Tapping into Cold War fears, conservatives depicted racketeers as comparable to communist conspirators, or as secretly allied with them. Labor's tarnished image eroded public support, while concerns about racketeering served as a potent campaign issue for Republicans and facilitated efforts by antiunion forces to pass more restrictive legislation in the postwar era.

Popularizing a New Term of Denunciation: Racketeering

Andrew Cohen has described how the Chicago Employers' Association, an anti-union group formed in the early years of the twentieth century, first coined the term racketeering in 1927. The root of the word, racket, had emerged in the early twentieth century as a colloquial term for criminal activity. By the 1920s, newspapers used racketeer to describe an individual who made his living through criminal activity; typically it was a reference to bootleggers. The Employers Association adapted the term to their need by making the new gerund, racketeering. They applied it to the efforts by Chicago craft unions to

control competition through collusive agreements with small employers. The large corporate members of the Employers Association resented both the power and the security that such agreements granted unions. Cohen explained how, in 1927, the Employers' Association secretary, Gordon L. Hostetter, "conceived the term [racketeering] to direct growing public concern about bootleggers like Al Capone against the [union] officials who enforced prices and wages in trades like construction, laundry and kosher foods." Hostetter "sought not to expose the power of men like Capone within the labor movement," Cohen asserted, "but rather to compare craft governance to extortion." The EA promoted this new term racketeering as a way of "comparing union officers to mobsters."⁴

While an employers' association coined the word, a crusading journalist promoted its widespread use. In the early 1940s, the conservative, antiunion newspaper columnist Westbrook Pegler helped popularize the term as a kind of broad denunciation of the New Deal era's resurgent labor movement. Pegler won a Pulitzer Prize in 1941 for his dramatic exposure of corruption scandals involving high-ranking officials in the Building Service Employees International Union and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. In a syndicated daily column that went out six days a week to 174 newspapers and reached an estimated ten million subscribers, he consistently argued that those cases represented only the tip of the iceberg.⁵ In February 1940, Pegler wrote, "I have recently named two racketeers in control of two big A.F. of L. international unions, but I could name a hundred thieves and gangsters, embezzlers and terrorists who hold office in unions of the American Federation of Labor. They infest the A.F. of L. to such a degree that the organization has negligently lost its right to public respect as a labor movement and has become the front for a privileged terror obviously comparable to the Mafia of Sicily."⁶

The CIO had long been attacked for its alleged radicalism, but Pegler's denunciation of the American Federation of Labor provided a line of attack to use against the larger, more conservative wing of the union movement. Now critics claimed that iniquitous forces had infiltrated both wings of the labor movement. In the fall of 1941, *Time* magazine ran a story headlined, "Holdup Men of Labor." The article charged, "President William Green's federation is infested with racketeers as the CIO is plagued with Reds."⁷ Indeed this theme had become such a mainstay of news coverage by November 1941, that one columnist in a union publication commented sarcastically, "As every newspaper reader knows by now, unions are bad because they are run by crooks, Communists or tyrants—or a combination of all three."⁸

At the same time, Pegler branded a range of legal union activities with illicit labels, expanding the category of corruption to fit much of what all labor organizations, of any political stripe, did. Thus he labeled union dues as "tribute," and applied that usage of the term to include all labor organizations in general. "It is a notorious fact," Pegler claimed in a column in November 1941, "that many billions of dollars, stet [i.e. that is correct], many billions, not mere millions, have been wrung from the workers by professional unionneers and that only

pennies of this enormous tribute have been accounted for in the last eight years.”⁹ In other columns, he chose the harsher term “extortion” to label all union income, including dues. “But union income is not made up of gifts. It is obtained largely by extortion in the guise of dues, fees and assessments.”¹⁰ Pegler used this language to denounce both AFL and CIO unions; in fact, he applied it to any labor organization that had union shop agreements that obligated an employee to join the union. “The C.I.O. is not required by any law to account for the money thus taken, or extorted,” Pegler wrote in 1940, “from members who submit only because they must submit or go jobless.”¹¹

The columnist achieved a similar result by employing an expansive definition of the term racketeering. He applied it to unions such as the Teamsters or the Carpenters, which used tactics such as secondary boycotts to pressure employers to sign collective bargaining agreements. Such tactics were legal, but Pegler still equated them with racketeering. “This will take some time,” he wrote in October 1941, “but I have plenty of time and some of it will be devoted to the leaders of the Longshoremen and some to those of the Carpenters and Teamsters who think that antisocial and anti-American rackets are legitimate if conducted according to their own constitutions whatever the damage to the rights of ostensibly free Americans.”¹²

When used in this way these terms denigrated every labor organization. All unions, including affiliates of both the AFL and the CIO, as well as independents, charged dues or required initiation fees. Almost every labor organization sought to include union shop provisions in their collective bargaining agreements. Such provisions helped protect a union’s security by blocking, for instance, an employer from tactics such as favoring non-union members. Similarly almost any union that could employ secondary boycotts did so; it allowed them to avoid costly and often unsuccessful organizing campaigns that employers would resist fiercely.

But for Pegler all that this meant was that unions in general could be labeled as “rackets.” As he put it in a column in early 1940, “This is the swollen national racket which calls itself the body of Labor with a capital L.”¹³ His universal application of the term can be seen as well in a piece written two years later, in which Pegler denounced AFL and CIO efforts to broadcast their concerns on a weekly radio program. Pegler wrote that access should be given instead to “the man or woman who joins or refuses to join up as another unit of power in the hands of the master racketeers.”¹⁴

His use of language in this way was quite purposeful. Pegler openly acknowledged that the specific terminology employed in news reporting had the power to legitimize or delegitimize unions. He explained his views on such matters in a column that he addressed to “my revered bosses, the newspaper editors,” but which he also recommended to “a variety of other persons dealing in public expression, such as radio speakers, magazine editorialists and occupants of or candidates for public office.” Pegler explained to this audience that a union official should not be called a “Labor Leader,” because the term conferred an unwonted respectability. “‘Labor leader’ is inaccurate

and misleading when applied to most of the professional union leaders of both big camps [AFL and CIO] and the term 'Labor' is equally deceptive when applied to unions." The columnist asserted, "When you speak or write of such a man as Wrong John Lewis [the head of the United Mine Workers Union], for example, as a 'Labor Leader' you are suggesting that he is a popular leader of voluntary followers." Given Pegler's view of unions, that suggestion was both inaccurate and politically wrongheaded.

A better term, Pegler instructed the editors, was union "boss"; as he put it, "They are not leaders but bosses and most of them, dictators." The word boss, in turn, conveyed a central assumption about the nature of organized labor, which Pegler believed he had demonstrated in his columns. "It should be recognized now and kept in mind," Pegler instructed the editors, "that the union bosses may be and, in the absence of knowledge to the contrary, should be presumed to be, a boss if not an oppressor and exploiter of 'Labor.'"¹⁵

Pegler's broad usage of the term racketeer became an accepted convention, so much so that one can find it appearing in letters from ordinary Americans written in the wartime period. It became a common way to label the more controversial and aggressive tactics of organized labor. Louis Schaeffer, an insurance agent from Columbus, Ohio, used the term that way when he wrote to Congressman Howard W. Smith in November 1941. Schaeffer sent his letter to express his disapproval of closed shop contracts. "I feel that it is about time this government said that it would not be compulsory for a man to join a union before he could get work." In calling for legislation banning the practice, Schaeffer labeled it a form of racketeering. "I think that this is the most outrageous thing in our entire labor question, and I as well as many of my friends always have said that they did not understand why some thing was NOT done by this government that would protect a man from this union racketeering."¹⁶

In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, Thomas H. Greene wrote, "We fought the first World War to make the world safe for democracy. Are we to join the second World War to make America safe for labor racketeers?" He went on to complain that while soldiers, consumers and taxpayers all made sacrifices in the name of national defense, union leaders called strikes for "such racketeer privileges as the closed shop in defense industries."¹⁷ Even Harry Truman, writing home to his family from the senate during the war, embraced the term, denouncing John L. Lewis as a "racketeer" who had harmed the country's war effort by violating labor's No Strike Pledge.¹⁸

Postwar Uses of the Term

By the war's end, this language had become standard in the denunciations made against organized labor's growing power. Labor's critics embraced it as a term whose criminal overtones provided a way to tar union tactics and union power. This shift in language from the 1930s to the 1940s is marked. The concern about union power and union leaders was in itself not new. But previous

expressions of this concern lacked a term with the criminal overtones of racketeer.

For instance, congressional debates in the spring of 1937, which were held in the wake of the sit-down strikes, featured strident denunciations of unions by conservative critics. The speeches made in that earlier era rang with warnings of mob rule, anarchy, and radical schemes, but not the danger of the racketeer. In this earlier era, for instance, Michigan congressman Clare Hoffman, a vocal critic of unions from the 1930s through the 1950s, made not a single reference to racketeering. Instead, in a typical speech on the sit-down strikes, Hoffman warned in January 1937, "today in Michigan there exists a situation where there is already at hand all of the elements which go into a revolution, all of the elements which make for civil war."¹⁹ These earlier antiunion denunciations centered entirely on the CIO, which was depicted as a radical organization. The implication, and sometimes the actual claim, was that the conservative union leaders of the AFL presented no threat to the nation, and even perhaps provided a useful service.²⁰

Some ten years later, in the wake of Pegler's exposés, when critics invoked the racketeer menace, they warned about the danger of all types of unions because of the power labor organizations granted to their leadership. In May 1947, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an editorial entitled, "Unbridled Union Power Threat to Security." The editorial called for legislation that would ensure in the future "no aggregation of good Americans would long be led in any direction by racketeers, radical doctrinaires, demagogic exhibitionists or potential traitors."²¹

As a method of denunciation the racketeer blurred the distinction between the left and the right wings of the labor movement. Wilbert Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel, a senator from Texas, demonstrated this feature in 1947 when he spoke against "the communistic labor-leader racketeers, who do not toil, but who live in luxury at the expense of those who are honest and who toil to make an honest living." Labor leaders, he was asserting, were at once both radical ideologues and greedy criminals.²² A flamboyant, politically savvy populist, O'Daniel served as a spokesman for a right-wing group, the Christian Americans, who were dedicated opponents of the New Deal's prolabor policies. In playing this role, he found it useful to invoke the menace of the racketeer. On the floor of the Senate, he described how he had called for "legislation which would protect the honest workman of this Nation, who sought to follow a lawful vocation, from the assaults of the goon squads and the labor racketeers."²³

O'Daniel demonstrated how invoking the racketeer menace allowed conservatives to pose as protectors of working Americans even as they pushed for new restrictions on organized labor. The tactic offered political cover for attacks upon the New Deal. Republicans especially indulged in this strategy because the GOP pinned its postwar electoral hopes on winning back at least a portion of the working-class vote.²⁴

In speeches that they gave in support of legislation to amend the Wagner Act in 1946 and 1947, Republican congressmen depicted workers as persecuted

by union leaders. Senator Joseph Ball of Minnesota, a leading figure among the antiunion members of Congress, asserted, "There is no question about the fact that today individual employees are kicked around in American industry even more by unions and their agents than they are by employers." The stalwart anti-unionist Representative Hoffman from Michigan, denied that legislation proposed by Republicans in 1947 was "an anti-labor bill." He asserted, "Why this bill is a bill to protect the union man himself." "The only one who is condemned in this bill is the racketeer, the extortionist, the man who is hiding behind the cloak of unionism, masquerading as a union official, who is, after all," he continued, "nothing but a crook carrying on a crook's business." As another House Republican explained, voting for the proposed amendments to the Wagner Act was "a vote for the rank and file within the labor movement."²⁵

Citing the need to "stop labor racketeering," a Republican congressman from Indiana claimed that union leaders oppressed not just their membership, but the general public as well. "Our big job," he asserted, "is to protect the public from union leaders who have misused their power."²⁶

Conservatives offered this protection to union members, and the general public, in the form of new limits on union power: legislating restrictions on closed-shop contracts and secondary boycotts, among other things. These restrictions formed the centerpiece of the Taft-Hartley Act, which the anti-New Deal coalition pushed through Congress in the spring of 1947. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Minnesota's Senator Ball justified including a ban on the closed shop because, he said, "its abolishment by law would enable union members to oust 'racketeering and communist' leadership." The *Tribune* left the logic of that claim unexamined. Similarly, Senator Robert Taft, a cosponsor of the act, justified a proposal to restrict secondary boycotts by referring to them as a "kind of racketeering activity."²⁷

In what might be called a happy coincidence for conservatives, these measures to protect the rank-and-file worker—bans on closed shop contracts and secondary boycotts—were also the same measures sought by employers' groups, such as the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). Indeed NAM attorneys had played a role in drafting key sections of this legislation.²⁸

Not every proposal to protect the rights of workers was so vigorously sought by NAM, and not every proposal survived the legislative process. A combined House and Senate conference committee, dominated by Republicans, worked out the Taft-Hartley Act's final language in May 1947. This committee dropped a proposed bill of rights for union members from the final version of the law. As a result, Taft-Hartley did nothing to promote union democracy for organized labor's rank and file. An actual union reformer, faced with a corrupt union leader, had little if any chance of mounting a successful insurgency in the wake of the new law's passage. The columnist Pegler, who viewed himself as a champion of the rank-and-file union members, had seen this coming. In late 1946, he wrote about the legislative proposals then being circulated. "Not one of the reforms thus far offered would compel unions to respect the civic and human rights of the workers and to conform [union

governance rules] to the Constitution of the United States.” Judged by legislative results, the expressions of concern for the union rank and file that were voiced by Taft-Hartley’s proponents appeared more rhetorical than real.²⁹

It was rhetoric, however, that both sides in this legislative contest believed had strategic value. Historical accounts of Taft-Hartley’s passage have noted the range of issues and events that helped Republicans push this bill through. These events included a wave of strikes that followed the end of the war, especially the controversial walkouts by coal miners under the leadership of John L. Lewis.³⁰ But in the congressional debates over the Taft-Hartley Act, labor’s supporters noted the frequency with which conservatives invoked the menace of the racketeer. “Stirring speeches have been made about injustices and racketeering,” asserted Robert Twyman, a Representative from Illinois, “as well as the inroads made by communism into the labor organizations.” Or as Donald O’Toole, a Democrat from New York, put it, “You talk on the floor of this House as though labor was composed of villains, thieves and cut-throats.”³¹ Others pointed out the conservatives’ tendency to label a wide range of union practices, such as secondary boycotts, as examples of racketeering. An article in the *New Republic* observed “the persistent efforts of antilabor Congressmen to expand the antiracketeering laws, and to justify the expansion by listing a large variety of alleged offenses which are not ‘racketeering’ in any strict sense of the word.”³²

Citing the political value of this language, one congressman, Vito Marcantonio, even sought to turn the term back on labor’s opponents. Marcantonio represented a New York City district made up largely of poor and working-class immigrants, Italian and Puerto Rican mainly. He was quite possibly the most left-wing member of Congress in the postwar era and a spokesman for a host of causes that enjoyed little popularity in the increasingly conservative atmosphere emerging in Cold War America. He challenged the assumptions upon which the foreign policy of containment was being based, and he protested the legal tactics being adopted in the emerging postwar red scare. In the debates over labor legislation in early 1947 he questioned the conservatives’ very definition of the term racketeering.³³

Referring to the proposed legislation that would become the Taft-Hartley Act, Marcantonio observed, “You say that you are going to do this to get rid of the Communists in the unions, to get rid of the racketeers.” It was a claim, he asserted, that was based upon dubious motives and a politicized use of the word racketeer. It was also a rhetorical game that two could play. “Now about this talk of racketeering, let us see who are the real racketeers.” If racketeers victimized working people, Marcantonio argued, then “we find the real racketeers are the gentlemen who asked for free enterprise in order to raise prices.” He referred to the postwar phenomenon of spiraling inflation, which had been exacerbated after conservatives in Congress forced an end to most government price controls. Citing the punishing effects of that inflation on working Americans, Marcantonio shifted the label of racketeer to profiteering businessmen and their political allies. “They made billions and billions of

dollars in wartime. Now these are the men who are destroying the purchasing power of the American people and seek to destroy the rights of American workers. They are the real racketeers.”³⁴

But here, as usual, Marcantonio was on the losing side. Touted by its supporters as a law that “meant the end of the day of the labor racketeer,” the Taft-Hartley Act passed, even overcoming a presidential veto.³⁵

As an omnibus act it amended the Wagner Act in a number of ways, some more important than others. In many ways the new act simply codified an existing pattern of labor relations that had emerged over time, the product of accumulating court decisions and National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rulings. Thus, when Taft-Hartley specified new rules for NLRB procedures, one scholar has noted, it largely “formalized past practices” already instituted by that agency.³⁶

Other changes amounted to nothing more than empty gestures of reform. A new requirement that unions file financial reports with the Department of Labor (DOL), for instance, included no mandate for how those reports would be used. Ostensibly it was aimed to strike a blow at corrupt leaders who embezzled union funds. In reality it did nothing of the kind. The provision had no connection to any union democracy mandates and lacked a meaningful enforcement mechanism. Seeing through the legislative pretense, Pegler had denounced the filing requirement as meaningless posturing. He was right. When the law went into effect, the mandated financial reports simply gathered dust at the DOL. They were not available to the public, or to members of the unions which filed them. As one congressional investigator later discovered, both the DOL and the NLRB policy was that “as far as their departments were concerned, the reports did not even have to be true. It was necessary only that they be filed each year, regardless of their accuracy.”³⁷

But other provisions of Taft-Hartley had greater significance. There were new restrictions on the right to strike, which included bans on jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts. The Attorney General now had authority to obtain an eighty-day injunction to halt any strike which he declared would present a danger to the nation. Closed shop contracts became illegal and states could now pass legislation to do the same to union shop contracts as well. A number of states, particularly in the South, took advantage of this latter provision, creating a Southern tier of so-called right-to-work states where unionism remained weak. The ban on union shop contracts presented one more barrier to union organizing efforts in the region. As one textile union organizer complained, with such laws in place “any mill that wanted to could beat the union.”³⁸

Taft-Hartley also placed new limits on which types of workers unions could organize. Specifically the law denied supervisory employees the right to collective bargaining under Wagner Act protections. This effectively separated them from the union movement and made them potent allies in management’s efforts to resist union organizing campaigns.³⁹

In the name of restoring balance, Taft-Hartley lifted some previous restrictions on what employers could do or say during the course of a National Labor

Relations Board supervised election. At the same time the act imposed new limits on union conduct in such proceedings. The stated goal here was to curtail unions from engaging in coercive tactics against employers, tactics which could force a company's employees into a union against their will; this practice was sometimes called top-down organizing. The result of the new legislation, however, was to offer employers a way to string out NLRB proceedings by filing a series of unfair labor practice charges against a union engaged in an organizing campaign. The NLRB had to investigate and rule on each charge. Those rulings could be appealed, and in this way an employer could blunt a union's organizing campaign while also forcing it to incur prohibitive legal expenses.⁴⁰

In assessing the impact of all these provisions, labor leaders eschewed understatement. Asked to comment on the law's passage over a presidential veto, the *New York Times* reported that union officials offered responses ranging from "a step toward fascism" to "a triumph for reaction." On the West Coast, the longshoremen union's leader Harry Bridges said that for organized labor the day of the bill's passage was now, "Labor's Black Monday, the worst day in its history."⁴¹

Despite such rhetoric, the law's immediate impact was more muted. It did not wreak immediate destruction on organized labor. In fact unions continued to grow throughout the 1940s and into the mid-1950s. But the new restrictions circumscribed union efforts to organize in areas outside the manufacturing heartland or in the expanding professional and service sectors of the economy. In the words of one labor historian, "the legal straitjacket imposed by Taft-Hartley ensured that the unions reborn in the New Deal would now be consigned to a roughly static geographic and demographic terrain, an archipelago that skipped from one blue-collar community to another in the Northeast, the Midwest, and on the Pacific Coast." In time, employers would exploit this relative isolation, mechanizing more and more jobs, and shifting the factory work that remained out of this union archipelago. The disastrous effects of Taft-Hartley then would become manifest.⁴²

Maintaining the Racketeer Menace in the Post-Taft-Hartley Era

Even after the passage of Taft-Hartley, conservatives continued to ply the racketeer menace. Indeed the tactic became more useful throughout the postwar years as the left wing of the labor movement faded. Taft-Hartley required all union officials to sign an affidavit that they were not members of the Communist Party. At roughly the same time, an internal purge of communists and alleged communist sympathizers took place within the CIO. That antileftist campaign culminated in 1949, when the CIO expelled eleven unions because of their alleged communist affiliations. Labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein describes all of this succinctly as the "amputation" of the "trade union left." In its aftermath, it became harder and harder for antiunionists to raise concerns about union power by invoking the threat of a radical CIO.⁴³

Instead conservatives found that warnings against the role of organized labor were best framed by throwing the spotlight on the racketeer. Congressional investigations offered antiunion politicians a way to publicize that menace and the pattern for such investigations emerged in 1947. That year—for the first time since 1930—Republicans held a majority in Congress. They promptly used that majority to shift the investigative priorities of Congress and launched that body's first ever hearings on union corruption. Representative Fred Hartley, the cosponsor of the Taft-Hartley Act, chaired this initial probe, which looked into the alleged abusive practices of a Philadelphia local of the Teamsters Union.⁴⁴

The report issued by Hartley's committee came out in April 1947, just as the Taft-Hartley Act was working its way through Congress. Invoking the image of the racketeer who donned the mask of labor's righteous cause, the report strongly supported the ongoing campaign to amend the Wagner Act. "That such lawlessness masqueraded under the guise of union activity only serves to illustrate the ease with which, in the present state of Federal laws, persons of evil intent may falsely pose as benefactors, protectors and exponents of the cause of labor, while simultaneously using labor's banner as a cloak to shield their own extortionate objectives."⁴⁵ In the hands of conservatives such as Hartley, the hearings served to vindicate a cynical view of union leaders as men who assumed a righteous pose only to serve their own criminal ends.

These hearings and subsequent ones reflected not only the fact that actual problems with union corruption existed, but also that conservatives saw such investigative ventures as a chance to score political points. In this way too, the racketeer menace resembled the Red Scare. A campaign of Soviet espionage using domestic communists did exist, but conservatives such as Joseph McCarthy deployed investigations into espionage and subversion to wage a partisan conflict against Democrats and the New Deal. In the words of Philip Jenkins, author of a recent study on anticommunism in this era, "We can agree both that an authentic Communist threat existed and that the reaction to it was excessive, and often misplaced."⁴⁶ Or as another historian of the Red Scare has recently written, "The point here is not to minimize the espionage threat, but rather to demonstrate, once again, that the Right opportunistically exploited that threat in pursuit of objectives much broader than the eradication of the Communist Party."⁴⁷

Similarly, racketeering did exist in the form of the illicit use of some labor unions by criminal gangs. Estimating the extent of union corruption in the postwar era, however, is a problematic task, because it requires one to make a generalization based on the few instances where allegations led to indictments and convictions. It also requires separating charges that reflect genuine violations of trust by union officers, from criminal charges flowing out of legitimate, but aggressive, organizing activities. In the case of the Teamsters Union, which became notorious for corruption in the late 1950s, a careful reading of charges compiled against its officials reveals criminal charges involving between 1.5 to 2.5 percent the union's officers. The vast majority of the officials in the union's

800 locals remained untouched by scandal. But corruption involving the national leadership affected management of benefit funds and warped the union's governance structure in ways that impacted the entire membership. One can reject hyperbolic assertions about the union being "racket-ridden," while still concluding that corruption amounted to a significant problem.⁴⁸

Moving out from that one union to consider the state of the labor movement as a whole raises similar problems. In 1958, a conservative Democrat, Senator John L. McClellan, led the largest congressional investigation into labor racketeering and estimated that corruption affected national unions, which accounted for one-quarter of the labor movement. In his recent study, the legal scholar James B. Jacobs offers a more careful assessment. He focuses on union corruption in the 1980s and cites organized crime's influence over a significant number of local and national level leaders in the Teamsters Union. Through those officials, Jacobs notes, mobsters could manipulate the union's largest pension and welfare funds. The same situation applied to three other national unions notorious for their corruption: the Laborers Union, the International Longshoremen's Association, and the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. Jacobs concludes that endemic corruption "touched the lives of practically all US union members" in these organizations.⁴⁹

One could extrapolate his assessment back to the postwar era, when all four of those unions were already notorious for corruption and mob involvement. Their combined membership in 1960 reached nearly 2.5 million, or about 14 percent of the total for union membership in the United States. The result is a more conservative estimate of the scale of the problem of corruption than what Senator McClellan offered, but one that indicates it was still a serious problem.⁵⁰

The problem dated back to the early 1930s, when organized crime groups, such as the Chicago Outfit, had coopted some union leaders. Crime groups used such leaders to engage in a range of criminal schemes, including embezzling union funds and taking payments from employers in return for controlling worker militancy. These arrangements reflected problems with union governance in some labor organizations, but they also stemmed from the existence of a web of long-term corrupt ties in particular locales between employers, corrupt law enforcement and crime groups.⁵¹ Congressional investigations, such as the one led by Hartley, ignored those relationships and the complex pattern of corruption, focusing instead upon the misdeeds of labor leaders. Corruption, as it was exposed in these hearings, demonstrated the danger of union power. As with hearings on the communist threat, congressional investigations of racketeering pursued a broad political agenda.

And in the postwar era such hearings proliferated; from 1947 to 1960, a dozen congressional investigations into union corruption occurred. The leading conservative antiunionists in the postwar era, from the perennial stalwart, Hoffman, to the rising conservative star of the 1950s, Barry Goldwater, regularly served on these investigating committees. In this same period, New York State, under Governor and two-time Republican presidential

candidate Thomas Dewey, held widely publicized hearings on corruption in the longshoremen's union. The 1954 blockbuster film *On the Waterfront* dramatized hearings on union corruption for millions of American moviegoers. That film, and the extensive media coverage of these various hearings, promoted growing public concern about the menace of the labor racketeer.⁵²

The heightened concern over racketeering, in turn, undercut organized labor's public image and responses to the film, *On the Waterfront*, illustrated this effect. Mark Starr, the Educational Director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, observed the film's impact first hand. Writing in 1955, he complained about how the movie "takes an exceptional instance of labor racketeering and corruption and presents it as a general pattern." And that general pattern, Starr claimed, became the standard image of organized labor for millions of Americans. Referring to the film, he wrote, "Its powerful impact strikes upon impressionable minds who only have heard about what is wrong with the labor unions." Because of his educational work, Starr had traveled widely while the film was in the theaters and met "hundreds of high school students." "I have been repeatedly told," he reported, "that the youngsters understand the longshoremen situation and the role of unions because they have seen this picture." The understanding they gained was that the union movement functioned not as a champion of the working class, but instead that it presented a national threat, one grown more dangerous in the wake of the recent merger of the AFL and CIO. Starr wrote that the film "strengthens the completely unjustified fear now current that unity in the labor movement will bring dangers to the community."⁵³

Nor had the film's portrayal of waterfront corruption strayed far from the message conveyed by the real-life hearings it dramatized. Charles Tobey, the New Hampshire Republican, chaired the US Senate's 1953 hearings on waterfront corruption and used them as a forum for attacking organized labor. In his typically flamboyant manner, Tobey summed up the results of his committee's investigation by telling his fellow congressmen "conditions on the waterfront are a sordid mess." It was a mess, he claimed, that highlighted the abusive power given to organized labor. "Who is running this country anyway, I ask—honest, God-fearing people, or crooked labor union leaders?" He used language that echoed the charges of the Red Scare. Labeling racketeers "un-American," Tobey warned, "It is about time the Senate, and the country as a whole, took notice of what is happening."⁵⁴

That theme of labeling the larger union movement as guilty by implication became a common way of treating the revelations that emerged about waterfront corruption. An article in the *New York Times* in May 1953, asserted, "It is a simple fact that in the recent years of spotlighting the ills of New York dock conditions, the element least interested in overthrowing the old system with all of its abuses, was labor itself."⁵⁵ Or as the *Brooklyn Eagle* asserted in regards to the scandalous reports coming out of the waterfront hearings, "Where has the A.F. of L. been, where is it now, while all this is going on?" It was a line echoed by the *New York Mirror*, which headlined one of its editorials

on the hearings, "Where is the Union?" Referring to the Longshoremen's Association, the editorial explained, "We don't mean the travesty of a 'union' that speaks for unionism in this case, though not for union men." "We mean the trade union movement," which the *Mirror* charged was "implicated" in the scandal.⁵⁶

The waterfront revelations also provided a chance to emphasize the theme of abusive union power and its impact not just on businessmen, but on the rank-and-file workers. Depictions of the labor movement as riddled with racketeers implied that, shorn of their lofty rhetoric, unions simply amounted to one more form of exploitation of workers. New restrictions on union power, the conservative opponents of organized labor could argue, were needed in order to protect workers from such exploitation. It was the same claim that supporters of the Taft-Hartley Act had offered in 1946 and 1947.

Now it appeared in the newspaper exposé which had triggered the waterfront hearings. In April 1948, the *New York Sun* sent Malcolm Johnson to cover a waterfront murder and working out from that case the reporter wrote a series of articles describing organized criminal activity in the New York harbor.⁵⁷ He labeled the waterfront an "outlaw frontier" where the power of racketeers "is such that they are able to levy tribute on every pound of cargo arriving at this port." Several articles profiled the violent gangsters who controlled different piers and the various kinds of extortion rackets they conducted on the port's shipping industry. In later pieces he traced the connection between these gangsters and the leadership of the International Longshoremen's Association. Johnson described the membership of that union as powerless, exploited by the very labor movement that was supposed to protect them. "As matters now stand," Johnson concluded, "the longshoreman in New York is the forgotten man of the labor movement."⁵⁸ In the same vein, Tobey's Senate investigating committee affirmed in its report on the waterfront hearings that "the real victims are the longshoremen themselves."⁵⁹

Warnings about the menace of racketeering in this era tended as well to allude to connections between organized crime and communist infiltration, blending together the two threats in a way that tapped into Cold War fears. In *The Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in Cold War America* (2002), Lee Bernstein asserts that in the 1950s, "The old menace of organized crime would prove compatible with, and would reinforce, the anti-communist worldview." Anticrime crusaders in this era, he observes, "often echoed and amplified the tactics of anticommunist Cold Warriors." Both groups invoked an internal menace in the interest of mobilizing public opinion around a range of broader political issues. Right-wing anticommunists sought to roll back the New Deal. For their part, Bernstein notes, anticrime crusaders had a range of issues on their agenda from immigration to regulation of drug use, vice, and gambling. They also often proved hostile to labor.⁶⁰

The alleged link between the racketeer menace and the Red Scare thus had baleful implications for the labor movement. The case of Victor Riesel offered a dramatic example of how such allegations helped shape labor's political fortunes

in this era. In the postwar era, Riesel produced a syndicated daily column, entitled "Inside Labor," that appeared in the *New York Mirror* and in over two hundred other newspapers strung across the country. His column portrayed a labor movement under siege from the allied threats of communism and organized crime. In 1956, he described his own reporting this way: "I had pounded away at the communists' effort to deal with the underworld and get into strategic spots on the Eastern waterfront." Riesel warned his readers that a nefarious alliance of criminals and communists threatened the nation's security. His warnings gained credence in 1956, when—apparently in retribution for his reporting—a hired goon threw acid in his face and permanently blinded him. The incident made Riesel into a symbol. "The attack on me," he wrote at the time, "was an attack on the entire free press, challenging its right to expose crime and injustice."⁶¹ It also seemed to vindicate his depiction of a labor movement that had been infiltrated by a dangerous criminal conspiracy.

The sense of vindication was apparent during Riesel's appearance on *Meet the Press* in June 1956, two months after he was attacked. The journalists who interviewed him for that show included the influential *New York Times's* labor reporter, A.H. Raskin, who vouchsafed Riesel's depiction of corruption in the New York waterfront unions. "The mob is still in full control," Raskin asserted, "and, as you say, making an alliance with the West Coast communists that will give both of our vital sea coasts to the underworld and the political counterpart of the underworld."⁶²

Others would remind Americans that this potential alliance between racketeers and communists threatened the country's national security and demonstrated the need for drastic action. In 1959, citing reports of a potential alliance between the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union and the Teamsters, the Senate's Internal Security Committee warned that this "Communist-racketeer controlled transport octopus" planned "to spread its tentacles to Canada and the St. Lawrence seaway." The committee alleged that this proposed union alliance amounted to a partnership between professional criminals and dedicated communists. Looking back, we might be struck by the unlikely nature of such a combination, but the Internal Security Committee emphasized the basic similarity of the two groups. "The alliance includes among its distinctive forces two categories which are notorious for their defiance of the law, namely, Communists and racketeers." The committee also underlined the danger facing the United States in the Cold War context from such an alliance, if it were allowed to expand its control of the labor movement. "It is a definite menace to our national security both economically and militarily." And for that reason, the committee warned, the government could not "afford to deal with this situation, which involves gangsters and Communists, as if it were a normal union matter involving only law-abiding elements."⁶³ The danger posed by such a potential alliance justified dramatic action.

In a similar way, in 1956, Riesel used the attention his attack had brought to challenge political leaders, urging them to confront the danger of labor

racketeering as they had the menace of internal communism. As he put it during his appearance on *Meet the Press*, “There ought to be a watchdog [congressional] committee. We have a committee on internal security which goes after commies, why not a committee on this kind of corruption? Is there less of a danger in this underworld second government to the people, to the public, to the men on the street?”⁶⁴ It was an argument that many found convincing. After watching Riesel’s appearance on *Meet the Press*, several members of congress as well as President Dwight Eisenhower came out publicly in support of a powerful congressional investigation of labor racketeering.⁶⁵ An article in the *New Republic* in early 1957 referred to the “depths of public anger over labor racketeering, especially since the Victor Riesel case.”⁶⁶

The resulting congressional hearings marked the apogee of a movement that had begun with the hearings chaired by congressman Hartley in 1947. From 1957 to 1959, a select committee in the Senate, known as the McClellan Committee, held the era’s most extensive hearings on union corruption. As had been the case with its predecessors, political considerations shaped the course of this investigation. Conservative senators—Southern Democrats and Republicans—dominated the committee and thus controlled what was the largest staff yet assembled for any congressional investigation. That staff’s investigative agenda reflected the committee leadership’s hostile views of union power. Thus, in spite of the fact that the committee’s official title was the Select Committee to Investigate Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, the staff focused their attention on labor, not management; employer misconduct was largely ignored or glossed over.⁶⁷

In their private correspondence some members of the committee openly admitted their hopes for this investigation. In October 1957, Senator Carl Curtis of Nebraska, wrote, “I feel that we are, in the McClellan Committee hearings, giving the Congress an opportunity to make some long-needed corrections in labor practices. I believe that public attention to the unfairness of certain unions is about the best support I can get for the enactment of my legislation to prohibit secondary boycotts, as well as passage next year of legislation to outlaw compulsory union membership and to bring organized labor under the Anti-Trust laws.”⁶⁸ A personal letter from another Republican on the committee, Senator Karl Mundt of South Dakota, included his conclusion that a year into the investigation “we are making hay and that the dues-paying members of these unions are going to come more and more over to our [Republican] side.” The political gains were imminent. “Like you, I feel that this is helping the Republicans a great deal,” Mundt wrote. “We have certainly put the Democrats on the spot as being the pawns of the union leaders.”⁶⁹

The hearings were widely publicized in print media and on television and they transformed James R. Hoffa, the president of the Teamsters Union, into a national celebrity, a symbol of the problem of union corruption.⁷⁰ As Alan McAdams has noted in his history of labor legislation in this era, “To many

Americans 'labor' came to mean Teamsters, Teamsters to mean Hoffa, and Hoffa to mean arrogance and bossism." Hoffa's prominence, in turn, greatly aided the efforts of antiunionists. A 1959 editorial by the *Wall Street Journal*, entitled "The Virtue of Mr. Hoffa," highlighted the way in which the Teamster's notoriety helped the campaign to impose new restrictions on organized labor. "The difficulty in curbing labor union power thus far," explained the *Journal*, "has been that the people have not clearly seen, or believed, the danger." Hoffa, made into the embodiment of the racketeer, solved that problem. In a similar vein, the US Chamber of Commerce savored the effects of these hearings, which aided that group's efforts to win tighter restrictions on union secondary boycotts. As a member of one of the Chamber's legislative lobbying committees put it, "The McClellan hearings gave us the train to ride on; they were the bulldozer clearing the path." In 1959, conservatives drew on public concern about Hoffa to win a new round of amendments to the Wagner Act, further limiting union activity. The new law tightened existing restrictions on secondary boycotts and banned organizational picketing by unions.⁷¹

In promoting this legislation, the public rhetoric of McClellan Committee members hearkened to the threatening images of the racketeer menace that had emerged in the immediate wake of the Second World War. Senator Barry Goldwater, a rising conservative star in this period who served on the McClellan Committee, warned of the "menacing misappropriation of power" by organized labor. He quoted with approval the conservative ideologue F.A. Hayek, who asserted, "The whole basis of our free society is gravely threatened by the powers arrogated by the unions."⁷² In April 1959, the committee's chairman, Senator McClellan, told a radio audience of how the hearings had revealed "many, many legitimate businesses in which racketeers and underworld characters have become entrenched, and to that extent they are in the process of becoming the dominant force in our economy." Claiming that, "this situation creates a serious menace," McClellan warned that it "endangers the supremacy of our government."⁷³

In the face of such a menace, conservatives could once again, as they had done a decade earlier, point to the need to protect both the vulnerable union member and the general public. Senator Mundt described how "our hearings have disclosed . . . a collateral evil influence in the leadership echelons of the labor movement which is exemplified by certain unions whereby underworld characters and criminals of the worst type have imposed themselves as the dictatorial leaders of honest working men and women who are powerless to rid themselves of these social barnacles." His rhetoric emphasized the claim that union power victimized the rank-and-file workers; protection could only come in the form of new restrictions on that power. Mundt asserted that the government had a "definite responsibility to enact legislation protecting both laborers and the innocent citizens of all America."⁷⁴ In this way, Mundt and other conservatives in the late 1950s took advantage of the political groundwork done in the era of the Taft-Hartley Act. The menacing image of Hoffa, the call for

a particular kind of remedial legislation, both drew on the long established existence of a racketeer menace.

Conclusion

While organized labor's postwar decline has the air of inevitability to many Americans today, the situation back then appeared quite different. At the war's end, unions had organized 35.5 percent of the nonagricultural workforce and stood as champions of a broader vision of political reform. Unions were considerably more powerful than any other progressive organization, constituting what James T. Patterson labeled "a vanguard of American liberalism," in his seminal account of this period, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*.⁷⁵ Their power seemed undimmed even by the Taft-Hartley Act. By 1955, union members still made up a third of the nation's workforce and as labor historian Joshua Freeman has noted, "observers routinely portrayed 'big labor,' 'big business,' and 'big government' as a triptych of social and economic power."⁷⁶

Labor's political power appeared poised to grow even stronger with the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955. Internal memoranda reveal that Republican strategists viewed labor's potential political role with growing unease. Robert Humphreys, the campaign director for the Republican National Committee, wrote the Eisenhower administration's game plan for the 1956 elections. He asserted, "The most significant development of the 1954 elections, which saw the Democrats capture the US Senate and House, was the united support of the AFL and the CIO behind the Democrat candidates for the first time in labor history." "It was," Humphreys noted with some alarm, "in effect the political merger of the AFL and the CIO, a merger now becoming a reality on all counts."⁷⁷

For Humphreys, the Republican Party's only hope to regain majority status lay in an "attempt to separate the leaders of labor politically from the rank and file."⁷⁸ Humphreys' strategy documents laid out a number of ways of achieving that separation, but it was one tactic he did not mention that seemed to have had the most success: the racketeer menace offered a way to prod union members to question their loyalty to labor leaders who as a group had been tarred with the brush of corruption. In 1955, *Fortune* magazine reported on the fact that the Justice Department under Eisenhower had launched a major offensive against labor racketeering, opening up 1500 investigations. The magazine noted that, "The drive obviously has some political implications."⁷⁹

Those implications became clear enough by the fall of 1958 when the Republicans embraced an attack on labor racketeering as a key issue in the election campaign. The Republican National Committee advised its candidates to emphasize this issue in their speeches, and President Eisenhower took the lead in this effort, combining it with an attack on "spendthrift" Democrats in Congress.⁸⁰ Writing in the *New York Times* in February 1959, James Reston

cited “the President’s personal campaign in the election last November when he hit hard at ‘labor racketeering’ ” and attacked the Democratic Party as “dominated by ‘labor radicals.’ ” Reston noted that conservatives in the G.O.P. “have argued—and won the support of the Republican National Committee for their view—that the President’s tactics will split many workers from their labor union bosses and win the support of a growing industrial middle class that stands to lose by rising prices and a depreciated dollar.”⁸¹

For Republicans seeking to regain an electoral majority, the issue offered a potent tactic, a way for the G.O.P. to pose as the workers’ protector. As one news report noted, in the 1958 election campaigns Republican candidates told voters that “only a government controlled by Republicans in the Executive and the Legislative branches” could be counted on “to wipe out labor racketeering.”⁸²

The racketeer menace thus played an important political role in the postwar era. It served as a campaign issue for Republicans seeking to regain an electoral majority by peeling apart the New Deal coalition. It also offered a rationale for passing new restrictions on union organizing activities in 1959, just as it had earlier in 1947. Combined with the contemporary revelations of congressional committees, the campaign against racketeering undercut the union movement’s position with the general public. It discredited the labor movement’s claim to champion the needs of the working class.

Bruce M. Shanks illustrated this effect with his Pulitzer Prize winning cartoon of 1958, entitled “The Thinker.” A commentary on the revelations of the McClellan Committee, it pictures a “Rank and File” union member solemnly contemplating newspaper headlines reading, “Crooked Labor Leaders,” and “Fifth Amendment Dodge” (the latter a reference to union officials refusing to answer questions before the committee). According to the *New York Times* report, the cartoon depicted “the dilemma of union members confronted by racketeering union leaders.”⁸³

Explaining “the popularity of this cartoon,” Gerald W. Johnson, a prominent pundit of the time, wrote that it reflected the outrage many Americans felt in the wake of the McClellan Committee revelations. “The uproar was such,” Johnson wrote in 1958, “that in many minds the words ‘labor leader’ became hardly less opprobrious than ‘pickpocket,’ conveying, in fact, pretty much the same impression.” Johnson admitted that the McClellan Committee’s revelations concerned the conduct of “only a small percentage of the country’s labor leaders, but how they stank!” As a result, he explained, the reputation of all union leaders fell and “as far as public confidence is concerned organized labor was set back twenty years.”⁸⁴ The Gallup Opinion Poll bears Johnson out. By 1957, forty-three percent of Americans polled believed that “corruption and graft [were] pretty widespread in unions.”⁸⁵

While contemporaries such as Johnson recognized the political impact of racketeering charges, labor historians have tended to overlook this issue.⁸⁶ Indeed labor historians have avoided the subject of union corruption in general and this omission has necessarily undercut their ability to address the issue’s political ramifications. As the legal scholar James Jacobs recently

observed, "Despite the fact that labor racketeering has often been exposed by congressional and other hearings, investigative journalists, and in criminal and civil racketeering cases, it has not attracted much interest from university-based scholars." In seeking to explain why labor historians in particular have chosen not to write about the subject, Jacobs asserted, "Perhaps scholars of American labor wear ideological blinders. A number of people have suggested to me that it is *antilabor* to focus on labor racketeering."⁸⁷ Journalist Robert Fitch addressed the matter more directly in his recent indictment of union corruption, *Solidarity for Sale: How Corruption Destroyed the Labor Movement and Undermined America's Promise* (2006). He claimed that labor historians "found creative ways to sidestep the issue" in an effort to provide the union movement with "a more reputable past."⁸⁸

Anyone who has read much recent labor history would have a hard time squaring Fitch's portrait of labor historians with the articles and books they produce. Rather than ennobling the union movement, labor historians tend to describe its various shortcomings, from its historic problems with race and gender discrimination to its deadening bureaucratization and loss of radical vigor. True, labor historians do not write about union corruption (and I count myself as an exception here), but their reticence on this subject reflects, I believe, an implicit understanding of its political dimensions; they recognize the way in which the issue has been manipulated in the past. Still, avoiding the subject has left a significant gap in labor history scholarship. Among other things it has weakened our ability to explain a key factor in organized labor's decline. Corruption and racketeering were issues of great importance in the postwar era. This article has sought to demonstrate that conservatives vigorously wielded the racketeer menace in their efforts to curb the power and tarnish the public image of the union movement in an era when organized labor stood at its zenith.

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47. Landon R.Y. Storrs, “Attacking the Washington ‘Femmocracy’: Antifeminism in the Cold War against Communists in Government,” *Feminist Studies* 33.1 (Spring 2007): 143.

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49. An interviewer asked Senator John L. McClellan to estimate the proportion of the union movement “run by dishonest officers.” He responded by saying, “It would be hard for me to name a percentage.” Instead he described the scale of his committee’s investigation, having noted earlier that “in areas where we have expected dishonesty ... where we have pursued it, in most instances we’ve found it to exist.” “After all, we have investigated in areas where the total membership, I suppose, of those unions—internationals—that we’ve investigated would run to some 4 million members. That’s about one-fourth of the total membership of all organized labor in this country. We have covered 10 or 12 international unions and there are, I believe, close to 200 international unions.” “Can the Labor Racketeer Be Stopped: Exclusive Interview with Senator John L. McClellan, Chairman of Senate Investigating Committee,” *U.S. News & World Report* October 10, 1958: 52–53; James B. Jacobs, *Mobsters, Unions, and Feds: The Mafia and the American Labor Movement* (New York, 2006), 56.

50. Leo Troy, “Trade Union Membership, 1897–1962,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 47 (February 1965): 94, 98; “Deal on Docks,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1959: E2.

51. David Witwer, “The Case of the Two Percent Assessment and the Question of Union Susceptibility,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 9 (Summer 2006): 102–126; David Witwer, “The Scandal of George Scalise: A Case Study in the Rise of Labor Racketeering in the 1930s,” *Journal of Social History* 36.4 (Summer 2003): 917–40; David Witwer, “Chapter 2: The Outfit: Organized Crime and Labor Racketeering,” in *Shadow of the Racketeer: Scandal in Organized Labor*, (Forthcoming: Urbana, 2009).

52. In addition to the [1] “Dock Street Case,” there were the following congressional investigations from 1945 to 1960: [2] “Investigation of the Effectiveness of the Hobbs Amendment in Suppressing Racketeering,” *Hearings and First Intermediate Report*, House Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Department, 80th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947); [3] “Strikes and Racketeering in the Kansas City Area,” *Hearings*, Special Subcommittee of the House Committees on Education and Labor, and Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1953); [4] “Investigation of Racketeering,” *Hearings*, Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor, and Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1953); [5] “Welfare and Pension Plans Investigation,” *Hearings*, Subcommittee on Welfare and Pension Funds of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 84th Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1956); [6] “Investigation of Welfare and Pension Funds,” *Hearings and Interim Report*, Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor, 83rd Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1954); [7] “Investigation of Welfare Funds and Racketeering,” *Hearings*, Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor, 83rd Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1953); [8] “Investigation

of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field," *Hearings*, Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, (McClellan Committee), 85th Cong., 1st Sess. To 86th Cong., 1st Sess., February 26, 1957 to September 9, 1959; [9] "Investigation of Racketeering in the Cleveland, Ohio, Area," *Hearings*, Special Anti-Racketeering Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1954); [10] "Investigation of Racketeering in the Minneapolis, Minn., Area," *Hearings*, Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1954); [11] "Investigation of Racketeering in Pittsburgh, Pa., Area," *Hearings*, Special Anti-Racketeering Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1954); [12] "Investigation of Racketeering in the Washington, D.C. Area," *Hearings*, Special Anti-Racketeering Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington, D.C., 1954).

Examples of Hoffman's prominent role in these investigations can be found in Willard Shelton, "Unions and Rackets," *New Republic*, 116 (April 21, 1947), 34; "Record of Union in Inquiry Gone," *New York Times*, November 28, 1953: 32. The role of Goldwater and conservative Republicans in the McClellan Committee is described in Anthony V. Baltakis, "Agendas of Investigation: The McClellan Committee, 1957-1958," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Akron, 1997), 37-67, 118-122, 223-43, 275-76.

The New York State hearings are New York State Crime Commission, *Public Hearings (No. 5) Conducted by the New York State Crime Commission Pursuant to the Governors Executive Orders of March 29, 1951 and November 13, 1952*, (Albany, 1952). "On the Waterfront," Columbia Pictures, 1954.

A search of the *Readers' Guide* for the term "labor racketeering" in the time period from 1945 to 1960, comes up with 278 articles, most of which are on the congressional or New York State's investigations.

53. Mark Starr, "Anti-'Waterfront'", *New York Times*, April 10, 1955: X5.

54. *Congressional Record*, July 14, 1953: v. 99, part 1, 8722.

55. George Horne, "N.Y. Waterfront Crisis Feared Over 'Reforms,'" *New York Times*, May 17, 1953: E8.

56. "Has A.F. of L. No Responsibility for Its Locals Involved in Scandals?" *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 24, 1952; "Where is the Union?" *Daily Mirror*, December 26, 1952. Both in Microfilm Reel 108, Thomas Dewey Newspaper Clipping Scrapbooks, microfilm ed., University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

57. Haynes Johnson, "Forward," in Malcolm Johnson, *On the Waterfront: The Prize-Winning Articles That Inspired the Classic Movie and Transformed the New York Harbor*, (New York, 2005), vii, xvii-xx.

58. Malcolm Johnson, *On the Waterfront*, quotes are from 3, 176.

59. Paul P. Kennedy, "Senate Unit Finds Port Here is Sick," *New York Times*, July 26, 1953: 1.

60. Lee Bernstein, *The Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in Cold War America*, (Boston, 2002), 10.

61. Victor Riesel, "The Night That Changed My Life," *The Saturday Evening Post* September 15, 1956: 32, 98.

62. "Victor Riesel, Labor Columnist," *Meet the Press*, June 3, 1956, CD of recording of broadcast provided by Jerry Haendiges Productions, Whittier, California, 2008.

63. "Racketeer and Communist Dominated Unions," *American Mercury* 88 (April 1959): 94, 111.

64. *Ibid.*

65. "Why the New Move to Investigate Racketeering in Labor Unions," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 15, 1956: 124.

66. "Cleaning House," *The New Republic*, February 11, 1957: 5.

67. David Witwer, *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union* (Chicago, 2003), 183-204, 210-211.

68. Carl T. Curtis to Wilford I. King, October 28, 1957, Folder: "Investigation Improper Activities in Labor + Management," box 82, Carl T. Curtis Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

69. Karl Mundt to Richard W. Robbins, May 15, 1958, Reel 126, Record Group III, Mundt Papers.

70. Witwer, *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union*, 183-204, 210-211.

71. "The Virtue of Mr. Hoffa," *Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 1959: 12; "Bulldozer," Alan K. McAdams, *Power and Politics in Labor Legislation*, (New York, 1964), 69–70; Witwer, *Corruption and Reform*, 204–211.

72. Lee Edwards, *Goldwater: The Man Who Made a Revolution*, (Washington, D.C., 1995), 73, 75.

73. Transcript of John L. McClellan's Concluding Comments to "Sound of Violence," (TV broadcast, April 29, 1959 & July 8, 1959, on Armstrong Circle Theater, Folder: Armstrong Circle Theater, Drawer D, File 30, John L. McClellan Papers, Ouchita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

74. *Congressional Record*, August 27, 1957: 14627.

75. James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*, (New York, 1996), 40.

76. Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, (New York, 2000), 99.

77. Robert Humphreys, "Memorandum" [Draft Notes re Labor], n.d., box 13, Robert Humphreys's Papers, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.

78. "Can Anything Be Done About Labor?" [chapter draft history of the 1958 campaign], n.d., box 13, Humphreys Papers.

79. "Labor Racketeering," *Fortune*, 52 (July 1955), 50, 54. The quote continues across both pages.

80. James Reston, "To Nixon Goes the Laurels," *New York Times*, October 22, 1958: 26.

81. James Reston, "G.O.P.-Labor Feud," *New York Times*, February 20, 1959: 17.

82. James Reston, "To Nixon Goes the Laurels," *New York Times*, October 22, 1958: 26.

83. Harrison E. Salisbury, "Newspaper in Little Rock Wins Two Pulitzer Prizes," *New York Times*, May 6, 1958: 1.

84. Gerald W. Johnson, *The Lines Are Drawn: American Life Since the First World War As Reflected in the Pulitzer Prize Cartoons*, (Philadelphia, 1958), 216.

85. George Horace Gallup, *The Gallup Poll, 1935–1971*, (Wilmington, Delaware, 1972), 1484.

86. Two surveys of labor historiography which demonstrate the fact that labor historians have not addressed this topic are Joshua B. Freeman, "Labor During the American Century: Work, Workers, and Unions Since 1945," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America* (Malden, Massachusetts, 2002), 192–210; Ronald W. Schatz, "Into the Twilight Zone—The Law and the American Industrial Relations System since the New Deal," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 36 (1989): 51–60.

87. James B. Jacobs, *Mobsters, Unions, and Feds: The Mafia and the American Labor Movement* (New York, 2006), xii, xiv.

88. Robert Fitch, *Solidarity for Sale: How Corruption Destroyed the Labor Movement and Undermined America's Promise*, (New York, 2006), "sidestep," 69; "reputable," 70.