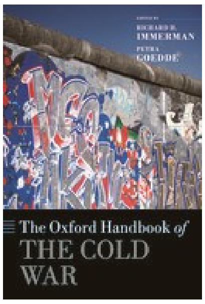

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CHAPTER

# 19 Power and Culture in the West

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## Abstract

This chapter, which analyzes the Cold War culture in the West, suggests that there are three major forms of western Cold War culture. These include the culture of anti-communist repression, the culture of progressive reform and inclusion, and the culture of popular resistance to elite-driven Cold War mobilization. The chapter provides a definition of culture and "west," and highlights the role of Catholicism in Latin America in Cold War culture. It also suggests that an analysis of western Cold War culture should start in the mid-1940s when the surge in leftist politics led moderate and conservative elites to pursue appeasement, repression, or a combination of both.

**Keywords:** Cold War culture, West, anti-communist repression, popular resistance, progressive reform, inclusion, Catholicism, Latin America, leftist politics, appeasement

**Subject:** European History, Cold War, United States History, History

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The phrase "cold war culture" conjures images of repression and fear: Joseph McCarthy waving a list of supposed communists in the US government, nervous filmmakers testifying on "un-American" activities in Hollywood, and suburbanites building bomb shelters. Each image captures a certain truth but fails to convey the full relationship between the cold war and domestic society in the West. After all, few homeowners in the United States or elsewhere built fallout shelters, and Hollywood never fully succumbed to anti-communist hysteria. A focus on McCarthyism also tells us little about the relationship between culture and the cold war outside the United States, particularly among those US allies with communist and socialist movements that were too powerful to persecute.

Taking a broader approach, this essay argues that scholars should recognize three major forms of western cold war culture. First, and most familiar to historians, was a cold war culture of anti-communist repression. This culture revolved around a transnational network of anti-communist elites, most notably US government officials, who sought to combat allegedly dangerous forms of political and cultural expression. The second form was a cold war culture of progressive reform and inclusion. Red Scare fears, to be sure, marginalized leftist radicals, but anti-communism also solidified progressive social reforms, especially in North America and Western Europe. The cold war's emphasis on international alliances also made the United States more cosmopolitan and diverse, in ways that many anti-communists never anticipated. Finally, this essay highlights a third form, a cold war culture of popular resistance to elite-driven cold war mobilization. Cold war culture in the West consisted of two battles. On the surface, it was a struggle between anti-communists and their ideological rivals. At a deeper level, it was a battle waged by a relatively small and often elite group of anti-communists (and by an even smaller number of communists) who wanted to prioritize cold war strategies over more private concerns. Yet western citizens often shirked geopolitical duty and pursued private lives free from cold war intrusions. Anti-communism in particular proved a fragile bond that could break down when challenged by private priorities such as household consumption, business profit, or religious ethics.

p. 324 By viewing western cold war culture as a struggle to mobilize societies, historians can construct a new narrative of culture's role in the cold war. Most analyses of cold war culture, focused on Red Scare repression, conclude in the late 1950s. By that moment, one historian writes, "the culture of the cold war" apparently "decomposed."[2] While anti-communist repression did decline, this model provides little help for understanding the Cold War's inclusive side, and it omits the long stretch of the cold war after 1960.

An expanded narrative of western cold war culture must start in the mid-1940s with a surge in leftist politics that led moderate and conservative elites across the West to pursue appeasement, repression, or a combination of both. These social pressures in turn exacerbated geopolitical tensions. To marginalize leftist rivals, anti-communists exaggerated the threat of Soviet expansionism. In this polarizing environment, both anti-communists and communists enjoyed great success mobilizing western societies. Still, popular resistance to politicization remained significant. By the 1960s and 1970s, those western societies that had achieved stable compromises between social welfare policies and market economics experienced even greater public resistance to cold war mobilization. Increasing disenchantment with the cold war pressured western politicians to negotiate with communist nations, contributing to cold war détente. Growing resistance and apathy frustrated anti-communists, but it posed bigger challenges to the West's faltering communist movements, particularly in France and Italy.

Domestic social pressures elsewhere in the West also shaped geopolitics. Those western societies that failed to reach stable compromises between socialism and the free market, such as Guatemala, Chile, and Greece, witnessed increasing societal mobilization along ideological lines. The intensification of the cold war in 1970s Latin America even contributed to a revival of US cold war consciousness in the 1980s. However, the revival failed to endure, in part because of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, but also because many westerners had decided to limit the superpower rivalry's intrusion into their own societies. Westerners' resistance to domestic cold war mobilization thus helped bring the geopolitical cold war to an end. Paradoxically, the West's long record of private resistance and indifference also provided a reason why the West outlasted the Soviet bloc.

Before proceeding further, two terms require definition: culture and the West. The word "culture" here carries two senses. First, it refers to the creative output of artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers, and others engaged in arts and entertainment. In this usage, cold war culture describes those aspects of the arts and popular culture that became entwined with the rivalry between communists and anti-communists. This essay also employs a second, anthropological definition of culture: the contested customs, codes, discourses, and practices that people use to make meaning of the world.[3] In this sense, cold war culture refers to struggles to control the meaning of words and ideas, not just in the arts but also in economic and political life.

Definitions of "the West" became a cold war cultural battleground. Anti-communists spoke of saving "Western Civilization," a phrase one historian called "the cultural equivalent of the Marshall Plan."[4] Yet communism itself was a western invention; the *Communist* ↳ p. 325 *Manifesto* was published by two Germans living in London. While recognizing the term's tangled heritage, this essay takes as western any nation in Europe and the Americas that allied with the United States during the cold war. Latin America deserves inclusion because it shared important patterns with North America and Western Europe. European colonization brought to both Americas Christianity, slavery, and then republican revolutions that struggled to reconcile new ideals of universal citizenship with pre-existing social and racial hierarchies. During the cold war, this common heritage contributed to shared political patterns and facilitated the movement of transnational actors, particularly religious leaders, throughout an Atlantic world. The inclusion of Latin America also highlights how Catholicism, often depicted as solidly anti-communist, played a more complicated role in cold war culture.

## The anti-communist international

A pivotal feature of cold war culture in the West was campaigns to repress communism and other forms of leftism. Political conflict between bourgeois and radical causes had long shaped western politics, particularly in nineteenth-century battles over industrialization. The cold war intensified these pre-existing struggles. Thanks to the cold war, each nation's internal politics acquired new geopolitical importance. Anti-communist activists, led by the US government, thus created transnational networks of government and private organizations designed to contain or even co-opt leftist radicalism.

There is no small irony in anti-communism's transnational nature. Anti-communists often cited the universal aspirations of the Communist International to prove communism's threatening nature. In this view, international communism, propelled by Moscow, violated individual nations' freedom. Yet anti-communists proved equally adept with international movements. Just as actual communist internationalism took different forms, what this essay calls anti-communist internationalism also lacked a single center. The US government was the most important hub, but conservative religious and business organizations and the British government also played key roles. Although every country displayed unique political conditions, each national experience bore the mark of a shared set of ideas and funds promoted by border-crossing anti-communist activists and diplomats.

In the anti-communist international's most influential base, the United States, a post-1945 Red Scare intensified earlier patterns of anti-radical repression. The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), created in 1938 by enemies of Franklin Roosevelt's liberal New Deal, attacked leftist radicals, whether communist or not. HUAC's investigations convinced many American leftists to refrain from overt political organizing. In its four investigations of Hollywood between 1947 and 1958, HUAC found no clear evidence of communist subversion. Yet studio executives responded by generating a "blacklist" that excluded about 2,000 screenwriters and other creative figures from studio work through the 1960s.[5]

While HUAC garnered media attention, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) quietly built a surveillance network with thousands of new agents monitoring potential subversives. Under J. Edgar Hoover's direction, the FBI even helped write, produce, and publicize a 1951 spy movie, *Walk East on Beacon*, which depicted the FBI as a bulwark against Soviet espionage.[6] To insulate his social programs from anti-communist accusations, Democratic President Harry S. Truman added to the Red Scare by supporting the 1947 Federal Employee Loyalty Program, intended to root out subversives from government positions. The Red Scare contributions of Truman and Hoover's FBI facilitated the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, who held unusual influence between 1950 and 1954. Although textbooks often refer to the early cold war as the "age of McCarthy," the senator's reckless accusations and smear tactics provided just one episode in a Red Scare that originated before and continued after his turbulent moment in the spotlight.[7]

More enduring than McCarthy were the many private organizations that carried anti-communist messages into everyday life. The American Legion and the Boy Scouts promoted anti-communism for ordinary

Americans at small-town parades and ceremonies. Religious leaders, from the Catholic Church to evangelical and mainline Protestantism, found the cold war useful for asserting the centrality of spirituality in American life. Meanwhile, the Advertising Council, a business-funded "public service" organization, linked the cold war to free enterprise in magazine and television advertisements.[8]

This public-private campaign created obstacles for leftist politics in the United States. Anti-communism did not preclude all social welfare reform in the United States, but it did impose constraints on leftist radicals and on the Democratic Party's more progressive members. Congress's 1947 Taft-Hartley Act required union leaders to sign statements disavowing communist affiliations. Meanwhile, numerous progressive policy goals—including price controls, public housing, and universal healthcare—floundered amidst charges that they could lead to communism.[9]

The Red Scare also reduced freedom for American women, gays, and lesbians. Truman's loyalty program uncovered few communists but succeeded in driving from government service thousands of men and women suspected of being gay or lesbian. Homosexuals, the theory went, posed a security risk because of weak moral character and vulnerability to blackmail. For women in the United States, fear of communist subversion created pressure to remain at home. As housewives, women could raise patriotic children with the moral and physical strength needed to fight communism. Moreover, because the Red Scare discouraged public protest, many middle-class women addressed their frustrations through private methods, such as therapy and doctor-prescribed tranquilizers.[10]

The United Kingdom and Canada shared much with US cold war culture, even if their Red Scares were less intense. British anti-communists contributed key ideological concepts, most famously in Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech. Labor Party leaders proved equally invested in anti-communism. Laborites had first-hand experience of battling British communists for control of labor unions. With a strong anti-communist coalition, the British government employed their own Red Scare tactics. The Foreign Office covertly spread anti-communist news stories through the British and international media. British agents also quietly promoted George Orwell's novels, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, through Western and Eastern Europe. Orwell aided his government by providing names of potentially subversive artists, writers, and journalists who warranted government monitoring.[11] The Canadian government, which had banned Canada's communist party during World War II, subjected leftists in the early cold war to surveillance and harassment. The government's movie production agency, the National Film Board, underwent purges to root out radicals. Yet in both the United Kingdom and Canada, political leaders exerted tighter control over government institutions, which minimized the wilder forms of anti-communism that marked the US Red Scare.[12]

Elsewhere in the West, cold war culture took more diverse forms. In France and Italy, where the communist parties drew a quarter of national voters after World War II, geopolitical tensions helped conservative and moderate politicians exclude communists from governing coalitions. This political marginalization might have happened without a cold war, but the specter of Soviet aggression, alongside pressure from US diplomats, encouraged in both countries the formation of anti-communist coalitions by 1947. At the same time, French and Italian communists retained strong influence in unions, universities, and other cultural institutions. For instance, France's most famous post-1945 intellectual, Jean-Paul Sartre, advanced Marxist ideas and at times even associated himself with French communists.[13]

West Europeans did not pursue American-style Red Scares for another, more subtle reason: many European anti-communists distrusted the United States' growing power. Anti-Americanism, as much as anti-communism, defined cold war culture in Western Europe. For many Europeans, rising US influence threatened European sovereignty and cultural traditions. As a result, West Europeans often refused to see the cold war in binary terms of good versus evil.[14] These complex fault lines appeared most clearly among conservative nationalists. Cultural conservatives such as 1950s French populist Pierre Poujade denounced both the United States and the Soviet Union as purveyors of stultifying cultural standardization. Meanwhile, more forward-looking conservatives responded to the superpower rivalry by arguing that Europeans needed to modernize to remain independent. Charles de Gaulle exemplified how cold war anti-Americanism could promote a modernizing impulse. From French-designed nuclear reactors to gleaming high-rises, Gaullists trumpeted modernization projects as proof that France would remain free from US and Soviet domination.[15] Even British Labour leader Clement Attlee, a reliable US ally, spoke of creating a “Third Force” between Soviet communism and what he described as American “laissez-faire capitalism.”[16]

Compared to European leaders, Latin American anti-communists faced greater pressure to adhere to the binary logic of good versus evil. Latin American societies suffered deeper social and racial inequalities, which often contributed to polarized politics well before the cold war. More than in Western Europe, Latin American anti-communist leaders also depended on the US government or American corporations for economic investment. Just as in France and Italy, however, many leading Latin ↳ American intellectual and artistic figures, such as Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, maintained loyalty to communist parties or other leftist causes.[17]

Many Latin American societies, therefore, experienced both the Manichean anti-communism of the United States and the pro-communist subculture of France and Italy. The results could be violent. In Brazil, for instance, anti-communists associated leftist politics with sexual deviancy and promiscuity, much as US anti-communists did. Yet Brazil's more polarized politics resulted in the country's right-wing military dictatorship using the ideology of cold war domesticity in the 1960s to justify the imprisonment and torture of female leftists.[18]

The West's diversity of attitudes toward communism led anti-communists, especially the US government, to form transnational networks promoting strong cold war alliances. Throughout the cold war, US propagandists produced magazines, films, and traveling displays to defend US diplomacy and convince fellow westerners of the superiority of the American way of life. Cold war propaganda continued programs already under way in Latin America, where the US government had spent World War II trying to keep Latin Americans from sympathizing with the Axis powers. By the 1950s, the US government had developed new bureaucracies, most notably the US Information Agency (USIA), to expand its cultural offensive.[19]

Although most USIA projects took place in public, US propaganda frequently relied on clandestine tactics. Continuing London's promotion of George Orwell, Washington covertly funded movie versions of *1984* and *Animal Farm*.[20] In Mexico, the USIA secretly produced one of the country's leading newsreels, bringing Mexican audiences favorable coverage of the United States and of Mexico's pro-US politicians.[21] The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funneled money to the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an organization of anti-communist intellectuals from Western Europe and the Americas. CIA funding allowed the CCF to organize high-profile conferences in which intellectuals warned of the perils of communism, at least until public exposure of the CIA's role in 1967 derailed the congress. The CIA even promoted abstract expressionist painting as a symbol of Americans’ cultural freedom, after learning that Soviet leaders viewed the avant-garde style as threatening to communist values.[22]

The US government's cultural campaign benefited from enthusiastic collaboration with private organizations and citizens. The discovery of CIA funding behind the CCF and abstract expressionism has led some scholars to treat anti-communist politics as a byproduct of government planning. A better perspective is to emphasize the genuine appeal of anti-communism among intellectuals and politicians in the West.[23] For example, in 1948 the US government, the Catholic Church, and private Americans helped Italy's center-right Christian Democratic party outpoll Italy's Communist party. While the CIA worked covertly to aid the Christian Democrats, Italian-American organizations conducted a grassroots campaign writing letters to their ancestral homeland. Italian-American celebrities such as Frank Sinatra added their own public endorsements.[24]

Other American social groups contributed to longer-term anti-communist projects. In part to deflect Red Scare accusations, the major US labor confederations, the p. 329 ↳ American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, sent advisors to Western Europe and Latin America to preach the virtues of moderate, non-communist labor activism.[25] Conservative women's organizations also forged transnational partnerships, stressing the common interest of mothers in resisting communism. The Committee of Correspondence exchanged letters and visits with women in seventy-three countries, a project aided by covert CIA funding. Anti-communist women's groups also helped marginalize those leftist women's groups that stressed mothers' interest in disarmament and peace.[26]

## Cold war culture's inclusive side

The repressive side of cold war culture, although significant, should not obscure how the cold war also helped secure progressive and inclusive reforms. Disadvantaged groups and progressive reformers could benefit from cold war tensions, if they were willing and able to cast their cause in anti-communist terms. The cold war also increased conservatives' willingness to accept expansions in social democracy, especially when those reforms promised to contain or co-opt calls for more radical change. In this way, the cold war helped make many western societies more democratic, inclusive, and even socialistic than they might have been otherwise.

In the United States, Washington's global propaganda battle against communism provided African Americans with an important tool in their struggle for political rights. As African and Asian peoples broke free from European colonialism, US policymakers feared that images of white racism at home would send the new nations into the communist camp. This logic led the State Department to argue on behalf of school integration in the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision. US diplomats even deployed such jazz musicians as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong on goodwill tours to show foreigners America's racial equality. The tours further helped African Americans claim status as true Americans.[27]

Anti-communism also allowed marginalized religious groups to enter the mainstream of American life. The cold war gave American Catholics common cause with the United States' largely Protestant social and political elite. Thanks to the cold war, American Catholics could be loyal to the Vatican and to the American flag simultaneously. Within Protestantism, anti-communism brought evangelical denominations like Southern Baptists closer to circles of power. The rise of Baptist preacher Billy Graham, who held rallies in Washington and frequently visited the White House, embodied the new-found respectability that anti-communism gave evangelicals.[28]

The superpower struggle also made the United States more ethnically diverse. At the cold war's outset, the United States maintained a racist quota system from the 1920s. The quotas restricted immigration from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and limited entries from less "desirable" European countries, particularly those with large Jewish populations. Much as with African American civil rights, US policymakers' p. 330 ↳ desire for non-white allies undermined discriminatory policies. After the Korean War, Congress relaxed immigration restrictions and allowed Americans to adopt babies from South Korea. By 1965, the need for allies, especially in Asia, contributed to the Hart-Cellar Act, which ended the 1920s immigration quotas and gave identical allotments to each nation in the world.[29]

Refugee policy further increased US diversity. Among the first cold war refugee arrivals were dissidents, often Jewish, from Hungary and the Soviet Union, precisely the social groups blocked by the 1920s quotas. Later refugee movements brought Southeast Asians, Cubans, and Central Americans to US shores.[30] In this perspective, Vietnamese fishing communities on the US Gulf Coast and Hmong communities in Minnesota represent a legacy of cold war culture. So, too, do American restaurants serving Cuban sandwiches and Salvadoran pupusas.

Another integrative feature of cold war culture came in its ability to promote cosmopolitanism within the West. Historians often overlook how cold war geopolitics required Americans and other westerners to see themselves as part of a shared community. While the cold war reduced western cultural and economic ties with communist nations, it intensified ties *within* the West. Western nations reduced tariffs, increased multinational corporate investment, and promoted academic exchanges and other border-crossing measures that laid the groundwork for post-1989 global integration. The US government even subsidized the construction of luxury hotels among cold war allies so that westerners could forge tighter economic and cultural bonds. Cold war geopolitics also sent millions of American men and women to military bases. The experience of life abroad often turned Americans into supporters of cross-cultural understanding and multilingual “world citizenship.” Many even formed interracial or bi-cultural families.[31]

The cold war likewise facilitated the rise of a cosmopolitan film culture, in which movie-makers and actors from western countries collaborated on border-crossing projects. Although these filmmakers did not typically define themselves as cold warriors, their multinational films projected what historian Vanessa Schwartz has called a “triumphant Occidentalism.” The popular 1956 movie, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, for instance, drew together the on-screen talents of Englishman David Niven, Mexican comic actor Cantinflás, and US television journalist Edward Murrow.[32]

A major integrative feature of the cold war came in the form of increased social democracy and welfare policies. While the cold war hurt leftist radicals, it also provided few victories for advocates of laissez-faire economics. Ideological rivalry with the Soviet Union made political moderates, and even some conservatives, eager to rebut communist accusations of capitalism's inherent flaws. The cold war thus created political space for the entrenchment of social welfare policies, or what West Germans called the “social-market economy.” Only in the 1970s and 1980s, when fears of communism subsided, did more radical free-market advocates gain a stronger foothold.

The rise of social-market economies originated largely in a wave of leftist populism that swept through the West in the 1940s. In Europe, communists had played leading roles in the underground anti-fascist resistance. In Europe and the Americas, wartime mobilization and Allied rhetoric on freedom generated popular expectations that the ↳ postwar world would offer economic benefits for average citizens. From Guatemala and Bolivia to the United States and France, workers and peasants in the mid-1940s went on strike and rallied around progressive causes. To steer this populist surge in moderate directions, many western politicians experimented with socialism. Canada's postwar conservative government pursued left-wing projects such as social security and full employment.[33] In West Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, conservatives such as Ludwig Erhard and Charles de Gaulle endorsed their governments’ nationalization of large industries. West Germany also established a system in which labor unions earned seats on corporate boards.[34] In the United States, politicians expanding social welfare programs argued that “a full stomach and a trained mind will never embrace either Nazism or communism.” Republican President Dwight Eisenhower, for all his warnings against big government, approved significant expansions of the 1935 Social Security Act.[35]

Typically, social-market compromises thrived only when a western nation's political landscape allowed for alliances between leftists and centrists. In countries with anti-communist center-left coalitions, US policymakers tolerated and even subsidized socialist reforms as a bulwark against communism. For instance, a center-left government in Bolivia nationalized the country's tin mines in 1953, with support from the Eisenhower administration. When centrists and leftists chose not to align, however, leftist reformers often turned to communists and other radicals for support. In Guatemala, President Jacobo Arbenz looked to Guatemala's small communist movement to help advance his otherwise moderate land reform program in 1952. Arbenz's leftward turn brought Eisenhower to authorize a CIA coup, even though the reforms were no more radical than Bolivia's. Chile's Popular Unity movement, led by Salvador Allende and overthrown in 1973 by a coalition of Chilean conservatives and US anti-communists, provided another example of how the cold war hindered reforms conducted without center-left alliances. Yet the examples of Guatemala and Chile stand alongside many other countries in which anti-communist politics proved conducive to substantial social reform.[36]

Anti-communism's egalitarian side was more consistent and pronounced in its support of mass consumption. Western societies had been developing consumer societies well before the cold war, but the superpower rivalry amplified the symbolic value of mass consumption. Indeed, the cold war often made western consumerism more egalitarian than it might have been otherwise. Beginning with the Marshall Plan, the US government deployed "productivity" experts to help Europeans produce goods more cheaply, so that average Europeans could consume more. US public diplomacy programs often targeted socialists and moderate leftists. Under its Foreign Leader program, the US State Department brought non-communist Europeans on tours of the United States. When the programs worked, Europeans returned home impressed by American workers' consumer abundance.[37] US diplomats even pressured the French government to shift more of its tax burden onto the wealthy, so that French workers would have more to spend. With a new refrigerator, Americans argued, a worker would be less likely to vote communist.[38]

p. 332 Anti-communists' emphasis on consumerism and capitalist growth had another egalitarian, long-run effect: it undermined the ideology of female domesticity. Anti-communist leaders typically preached traditional family values, but in reality their economic programs encouraged women to leave the home and enter the wage labor force. Chile and the United States provide examples of how cold war culture could, over time, erode domesticity. In Chile, the ideal of the male breadwinner had long been a staple of left-wing politics. While fathers earned a fair wage, mothers stayed home to inculcate working-class consciousness in their families. When socialist governments led Chile, household consumption ran through institutions controlled by men. Chileans often received radios and cars through labor unions and state farms. In contrast, it was right-wing dictator Augusto Pinochet, seeking to expand Chilean export industries in the 1970s, who pushed Chilean women out of the home and into wage labor. Concurrently, the Pinochet dictatorship helped justify its repressive rule by cultivating consumerism among Chile's working class. Even if Pinochet himself espoused conservative gender values, his promotion of women's wage labor and consumerism encouraged Chilean women to exert more independence in their daily lives and in household finances.[39]

A similar, if less deliberate, process occurred in the United States. US labor unions, like Chilean socialists, had long emphasized male workers' "family wage." Yet for many middle- and working-class families, a single paycheck from the husband failed to sustain consumer dreams. Increasingly, women who had been stay-at-home housewives ventured into wage labor, often in part-time jobs meant to augment household consumption. Women's participation in the labor force would have likely increased without a cold war, but anti-communists' emphasis on consumer abundance accelerated the decline of domesticity as both ideal and reality.

## Everyday resistance to the cold war

The most ardent anti-communists hoped that all features of western society, including family life, could support their struggle. Yet this vision never appealed to all westerners. Some leftists explicitly opposed it. More commonly, westerners accepted anti-communism in principle but did not want to sacrifice private pursuits for the sake of waging cold war. Private resistance began at the very outset, grew in the 1960s and 1970s, and eventually contributed to the decline in superpower tensions. For anti-communist leaders, private defiance posed a dilemma. Personal freedom represented a key rationale for battling communism, but too much freedom could render the West weak and disorganized. For their part, western communists struggled to harness westerners' everyday lives to their cause. In this light, cold war culture in the west should not be seen as a coherent set of anti-communist values. Rather, it represented a struggle by both anti-communists and communists to combat popular indifference.

Throughout much of the West, ordinary citizens gave little attention to the cold war in their daily lives. Even during the height of the Red Scare, US civil defense officials ↳ hoping to prepare the nation for nuclear war floundered against widespread public apathy.[40] Americans who interacted with foreigners when traveling or living abroad showed little interest in representing their government's foreign policies. American teachers, including government-trained Peace Corps volunteers, often expressed doubts about the superiority of American values when interacting with their foreign hosts. American tourists visiting Western Europe frequently developed sympathy for European neutralism, a position directly at odds with US diplomacy.[41]

When forced to choose between personal economic interests and policymakers' specific cold war goals, westerners normally prioritized their private interests. Among the first to defy cold war demands were West Berliners, who defied anti-communist propaganda in the early postwar years and exchanged currency and goods in the less expensive Soviet-occupied zone of Germany. American tourists displayed a similar geopolitical nonchalance in the 1960s by ignoring President Lyndon Johnson's request to postpone overseas vacations, a move Johnson saw as necessary to retain dollars needed for his war in Vietnam. On a larger scale, British and French exporters led their governments into frequent battle with US diplomats over what goods they could sell to the Soviet Union and Communist China. US businesses increasingly followed suit in pushing for greater access to communist nations.[42]

Like multinational corporations, the Catholic Church proved to be an important but not always a reliable ally of the United States' anti-communist campaign. Certainly, the Church and most of its faithful rejected communism and its atheist principles. In 1949, Pope Pius XII even excommunicated all Catholics who advanced communist causes. Still, Catholics could disagree with US cold war policies. The two most important tensions concerned poverty and nuclear weapons, which many Catholics saw as pressing moral problems in their own right. Catholic concerns that the United States' militant foreign policies failed to address both moral dangers help explain why even Pius XII had by the late 1950s moved the Vatican closer to cold war neutrality, a shift continued by his successor, John XXIII.[43]

Catholic dissent against the cold war took sharpest form in the transatlantic travels of Catholic priests and missionaries. Inside a seminary in 1950s Belgium, a Latin American study center cultivated the leftist social ideas that later crystallized into liberation theology. Spanish, German, and US missionaries then helped spread liberation theology in Central America. The socialist revolutionary movements in 1970s Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua drew many leaders from progressive Catholic organizations. By one estimate, half of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas' *comandantes* had participated in Catholic study groups. Similar Catholic roots sustained Guatemala's Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC). While Guatemala's US-backed military government killed thousands of peasants to crush the CUC, early CUC meetings took place in church spaces, and leaders in the peasant movement, such as future Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú, had experience in Catholic organizations.[44]

Hollywood likewise proved only a partial ally in the anti-communist crusade. The ultimate arbiters of film content were ticket-paying audiences, not HUAC, and movie-goers throughout the West showed little desire to fight the cold war in theaters. p. 334 ↳ Hollywood's most explicit Red Scare movies, with titles such as *I Married a Communist*, fared poorly at the box office. When Hollywood blockbusters endorsed anti-communist values, the message usually came disguised in historical parable, as in Biblical-era epics such as *Spartacus* and *The Ten Commandments*. The creators of the James Bond movies learned their lesson. While the original Bond novels pitted Agent 007 against a Moscow-backed organization known as SMERSH, the movies replaced SMERSH with a mere crime syndicate, SPECTER.[45]

Movies and television shows revealed particular independence in their representations of nuclear weapons. As early as 1953, US television networks aired apocalyptic stories that contradicted official assurances on civilians' prospects for surviving a nuclear war. West European audiences displayed a similar fascination with nuclear nightmares. By the late 1950s, Hollywood caught up with television and produced science fiction movies that challenged US government statements on nuclear weapons. 1959's *On the Beach* led the Eisenhower White House to launch a public relations counterattack in hopes of limiting the film's impact on domestic and international opinion.[46]

Popular anxiety over nuclear weapons contributed to a major cold war turning point, the emergence of détente in the late 1960s and 1970s. In Western Europe, a rising generation of students and youth questioned anti-communists' Manichean rhetoric. Rather than spend entire lives in the shadow of nuclear annihilation, they pushed for cooperation with communist nations. The United States' unpopular war in Vietnam increased the urgency with which many Europeans sought resolution of the cold war. In part to co-opt these youthful protestors, policymakers such as the United States' Richard Nixon and West Germany's Willy Brandt scrambled to claim the mantel of "peace" and forge cooperative ties with their communist counterparts.[47]

Westerners' increasing rejection of cold war binaries weakened not just the culture of anti-communism but also the culture of communism. "Neither Ford nor Lenin," proclaimed one student slogan popular during France's May 1968 student and worker revolt. Student leaders like West Germany's Rudi Dutschke imagined European youth as allies of Third World nationalists, fighting a common struggle against both superpowers. To many leftist youth, personal freedom required leaving behind the rigid institutions of both capitalism and traditional communism. After May 1968, the French Communist party suffered a steady and steep decline, in contrast to its status as France's largest party during the early cold war. In the United States, a rock and folk music counterculture, fueled by Vietnam War protest, similarly emphasized personal freedom over rigid political doctrine. In Latin America, where rock music often sounded like Yankee cultural imperialism, youth created a folk genre, *nueva cancíon*, which provided the soundtrack for the region's non-communist leftist movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. West Germany's counterculture, aware of how the Nazis had exploited German folk traditions, instead gravitated toward avant-garde "Krautrock" and electronica to proclaim their freedom from the cold war.[48]

While cultural binaries faded in much of the West during the 1970s, the mobilization of culture to wage cold war intensified in parts of Latin America. Some Latin American countries such as Mexico forged social-market democracies, even if their p. 335 ↳ level of prosperity and political openness failed to match West European levels. Elsewhere, especially in Central America, the failure of centrist politics fueled political struggles that often turned violent. In Guatemala, a series of repressive right-wing governments encouraged Mayan peasants to fuse indigenous beliefs with Marxism. This combination of indigenous and communist culture, aided by the leftward turn of ocean-crossing Catholics, helped propel Guatemala's guerilla movement.[49]

Along with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, leftist insurgencies in Central America inspired in US conservatives a renewed commitment to militant containment. To a degree, Hollywood played along, offering anti-communist fare such as 1984's *Red Dawn*, in which Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan armies invade the Midwest.[50] Yet this anti-communist revival carried much less force than the earlier Red Scare. In the wake of the Vietnam War, Hollywood produced movies that went beyond atomic anxiety and explicitly criticized US cold war policies, especially in Latin America. During the Reagan era, for every *Red Dawn*, movie-goers could also watch movies such as Oliver Stone's *Salvador*, a 1986 critique of the US-backed right-wing government in El Salvador.[51]

Further evidence of anti-communism's weakening grip came with the “nuclear freeze” movement. Led by German Protestants, 300,000 West Germans rallied in Bonn in 1981 to protest against the deployment of US missiles in their country. A year later, close to a million Americans marched in New York City to call for “freezing” nuclear stockpiles at current levels. By 1983, the US-based National Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed a freeze and called for abolishing nuclear weapons. The mass media reflected and amplified popular dissent with graphic depictions of nuclear war, such as the 1983 television drama, *The Day After*. Just as nuclear stalemate and the Vietnam War fueled youth protest in the 1960s, Reagan's nuclear build-up helped popularize new forms of non-communist leftism such as West Germany's Green Party. Grassroots protest against nuclear weapons also pressured Reagan to accept Mikhail Gorbachev's overtures in the mid-1980s to engage in superpower negotiations.[52]

As Reagan discovered, the West's promise of cultural freedom at times challenged militant anti-communism, but in the end that freedom proved even deadlier to communism. Many of the cultural innovations that most alarmed cold warriors turned out to be assets. At one point, militant anti-communists expressed fear that student protest, jazz, rock, abstract expressionism, and an excessive devotion to material comforts would render western citizens unfit for resisting communism. Yet each of these cultural trends convinced many on both sides of the Iron Curtain that western societies offered more freedom and happiness than their Soviet-bloc counterparts. West German elites, for example, at first feared jazz and rock as threats to conservative gender values. In time, however, West German adults saw American-inflected youth culture as a healthy release valve for young Germans. In contrast, communists proved less capable of accepting mass culture. East Germany's communist leaders never developed the same therapeutic interpretation of jazz and rock, and they spent much of the cold war battling American-style youth culture within East Germany. West European communists suffered further from Soviet filmmakers’ inability to match Hollywood's popularity with western consumers.[53]

p. 336 The Italian Communist party exemplified communist failures in adapting to consumerism and mass media. Rather than embrace mass culture, Italian communists envisioned a vibrant subculture in which members could share proletarian values in social clubs and even in communist-oriented vacation villages. Party leaders prioritized relations with artists and intellectuals and sought to uplift Italian workers by democratizing high-culture traditions. Yet in an age of television and movies, those strategies proved increasingly ineffective. Hobbled by an ill-suited cultural program, the Italian Communist party managed to survive into the 1970s before experiencing a precipitous decline in the 1980s.[54]

Meanwhile, US propaganda proved most effective when government officials exercised the least control over its content. African-American jazz “ambassadors” frequently worried their State Department handlers by adopting a populist message on tour. Yet this free spirit impressed foreign audiences with Americans’ cultural freedom and creativity. US propagandists showed equal nimbleness with blacklisted Hollywood writers. Once blacklisted, leftist screenwriters such as Dalton Trumbo won popular followings in Western Europe and Latin America for their critical attention to racism, colonialism, and nuclear peril. In time, that popularity led US policymakers to reverse course and promote their work overseas.[55]

To be sure, the unruly freedom of westerners, especially western consumers, sometimes created liabilities for anti-communists. American gamblers and tourists flocking to Cuba helped fuel the popular revolution that put Fidel Castro in power in 1959.[56] Consumer appetites in the United States, and the importance of satisfying that demand with low prices, gave US policymakers an additional reason to distrust leftist social reform in Latin American countries that produced bananas, coffee, and other staple crops or raw materials.[57] In most cases, however, the vibrancy of the US consumer model won admirers in the West. From Mexico to West Germany, consumers and business leaders saw Sears, Coca-Cola, and other US brands as proof that American-style modernity could help their nation achieve a more prosperous future.[58]

## Conclusion

Anti-communists in the West dedicated substantial energy and resources to winning the loyalty of ordinary citizens. In part, they desired popular support to inoculate western societies against subversive influences. They also needed support to convince western citizens to accept the substantial costs required to wage a global cold war. Anti-communists thus repressed radicals, circulated propaganda, promoted books and movies, fostered transnational citizens' exchanges, and altered domestic social and economic policies. To a large extent, this mobilization of cultural and social resources worked. Nonetheless, western culture and society never became mere auxiliaries of the anti-communist crusade. Movie-makers, consumers, business executives, students, and religious believers provided inconsistent support for cold war aims. This independent streak within western societies in turn shaped the geopolitical cold war, by pressuring western politicians toward negotiation with communist nations, and also by helping discredit less vibrant communist social models. Far from a side show, the struggle to maintain popular loyalty in the West proved to be one of the driving forces in the cold war's entire history.

## Notes

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