

"private sector" betokened. Professor Galbraith's most famous observation can bear further quotation:

The family which takes its mauve and cerise, air-conditioned, power-steered and power-braked automobile out for a tour passes through cities that are badly paved, made hideous by litter, blighted buildings, billboards and posts for wires that should long since have been put underground. They pass on into a countryside that has been rendered largely invisible by commercial art.... They picnic on exquisitely packaged food from a portable icebox by a polluted stream and go on to spend the night at a park which is a menace to public health and morals. Just before dozing off on an air mattress, beneath a nylon tent, amid the stench of decaying refuse, they may vaguely reflect on the curious unevenness of their blessings.

A year after the kitchen debate, Galbraith became an adviser to the presidential candidate who defeated Nixon. John F. Kennedy campaigned in part against the complacency that abundance had generated, for it has "weaned and wooed us from the tough condition in which, heretofore, we have approached whatever it is we have had to do.... A nation, replete with goods and services, confident that 'there's more where that came from,' may feel less ardor for questing." Kennedy's campaign reflected the same anxiety that the representative of an earlier Massachusetts political family had articulated. "Will you tell me," John Adams had asked Jefferson in 1819, "how to prevent riches becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly?" Such were the cultural and moral contradictions of capitalism that loomed just over the horizon of the Cold War itself.

## 4

### PRAYING: GOD BLESS AMERICA

Two days after President Truman's disclosure of the loss of nuclear monopoly, a Protestant revival opened in Los Angeles in an atmosphere that was apocalyptic. "Do you know the area that is marked out for the enemy's first atomic bomb?" the thirty-one-year-old preacher asked. "New York! Secondly, Chicago! And thirdly, the city of Los Angeles!" The choice of Los Angeles was not due to the presence of industrial or military targets, but because it was a "city of wickedness ... known around the world because of its sin, crime, and immorality," meriting destruction as much as Sodom and Gomorrah. Also decisive to the threat hovering over Los Angeles in the fall of 1949 was Bolshevism: "Do you know that the Fifth Columnists, called Communists, are more rampant in Los Angeles than any other city in America?" How such details could have been known, and where the evidence was drawn from, were left unexplained. But no warning could have been more dramatic: "God is giving us a desperate choice, a choice of either revival or judgment. There is no alternative! ... The world is divided into two camps! On the one side we see Communism ... [which] has declared war , against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion! . . . Unless the Western world has an old-fashioned revival, we cannot last!" Despite so tense a moment in the Cold War and such charged rhetoric about "God's last great call," this revival attracted little significant interest until its fourth week, when the reactionary pub-

lisher William Randolph Hearst sent his editors a pithy memo from his home: "Puff Graham."

Such patronage might have struck Billy Graham as sordid. For the yellow journalism that had kept Hearst so rich depended upon popular fascination with wickedness and sin, and the publisher's own longstanding liaison with a blonde actress had openly flouted the vows of holy matrimony. But the provenance of such intervention did not seem even in retrospect to bother Graham, who was "convinced that God uses the press in our work, and it has been one of the most effective factors in sustaining public interest through the years." The evangelist's vigorous anti-Communism appealed to Hearst, who was pivotal in making him the most famous churchman of the postwar era. By the time the crusade folded its tent in Los Angeles late that year, attendance had reached 350,000, of whom 4,200 had made their way to the sawdust kneeling ground in front. Cecil B. De Mille, the fervently anti-Communist film director whose biblical epics were enlivened with steamy depictions of the sins that required repentance, even offered Billy Graham a screen test.

Certainly, his influence was to outlast the Cold War, and he probably remained the most consistently and deeply admired American of his time. But Graham's rise to prominence is unintelligible outside of the milieu of dread and anxiety in which he emerged. A preacher became more publicized than any American other than the president because of the message that he delivered—mixing the fear of Armageddon with the assurance of redemption. The concerns that he addressed, perhaps more than the solution that he provided, made Graham a phenomenon who seemed uncommonly attuned to the *Zeitgeist*.

In South Carolina, where his first revival after Los Angeles was held, the occasion was so exigent that Governor J. Strom Thurmond as well as James M. Byrnes, who had been secretary of state when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, made a point of attendance and endorsement. Magazine publisher Henry R. Luce flew down to Columbia to meet Graham and, over the next half decade, put the evangelist on the cover of *Life* four times. By the time the Graham crusade reached New York, the ground zero of wickedness, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr felt compelled to take into account "the evidence of 'mass' conversions under the ministrations of popular evangelists who arouse the religious emotions and elicit religious commitments with greater success than at any time since the days of Billy Sunday." Niebuhr clearly had the "Salesman of the Year" in mind.

When The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association was incorpo-

rated in 1950, only one secretary was employed in a one-room office. Within eight years a staff of two hundred was headquartered in a four-story office building in Minneapolis, where it became the largest user of the local post office, receiving and answering ten thousand letters each week and collecting and disbursing over two million dollars every year. Graham's weekly television program began in 1952, and his newspaper column was syndicated in 125 newspapers. He regularly landed near the top of the ten-most-admired lists as well as on the covers of *Newsweek* (half a dozen times) and *Look* (ditto). Preaching in a staccato manner first modeled on the machine-gun delivery of the radio gossip-monger Walter Winchell, Graham injected a strident urgency all his own into a mostly traditional message. Echoing evangelists like Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday, he insisted that allegiance to the divinely ordained village[ code of nineteenth-century America remained valid for all human beings, always and everywhere. Drinking, dancing, swearing, reading salacious magazines and books, and skipping church remained sins. The Bible was to be read literally for signs of the Lord's eternal plan, which dwarfed in significance the designs of mortals. "Many people are confident that legislation will solve our problems," Graham announced. "Our problem is deeper than that. It is the constant problem of the sinner before God," for which the immediate and only cure was conversion. Praying to a deity of mercy as well as justice, reading the Scriptures, saving other souls from the perils of damnation—how tempting for historical scholarship to see in Graham's solutions little more than an escape route from the post-Hiroshima world, where fear could be shown in a handful of dust. Indeed, he did proclaim that the old verities were still in force and that divine intervention might restore the world to its former coherence and meaning. "Billy Graham is a personable, modest[,] and appealing young man who has wedded considerable dramatic and demagogic gifts with a rather obscurantist version of the Christian faith," Niebuhr observed in 1956. "His message is not completely irrelevant to the broader social issues of the day but it approaches irrelevance." Such an interpretation missed, however, the extent to which Graham's crusades broke with the pietist tradition of his predecessors and were pitched explicitly to the culture of the Cold War. For Graham was neither otherworldly nor apolitical. Indeed, an early biography noted that "scarcely one of his Sunday afternoon sermons over a nine-year period has failed to touch on communism[,] and in his regular revival sermons he constantly refers to it to illustrate his doctrinal points.... Almost every time he mentions the need or value of a

revival[,] he does so in connection with the spread of communism. And several times he has devoted a whole sermon to the death-duel between Christian America and atheistic Russia."

As early as 1947 Graham was denouncing Communism, for he doubted that his country was sufficiently vigilant in combating the Antichrist. Twice he delivered over the air, and distributed as a pamphlet, a sermon on "The Sin of Tolerance," which noted that "the word 'tolerant' means 'liberal,' 'broad-minded.'" And though such adjectives do not seem *les mots justes* in describing American policy toward the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Graham applied the term to appeasement of his country's Cold War adversary, reflecting "the easy-going compromise and tolerance that we have been taught by pseudo-liberals in almost every area of our life for years." Though a registered Democrat, Graham subscribed to the Republican critique of the conduct of foreign policy under Roosevelt and Truman, who were accused of betrayals at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam, and of leaving China's Chiang Kai-shek and South Korea's Syngman Rhee in the lurch. The evangelist exuded a pit-bull aggressiveness, urging the Republican administration to encourage armed rebellion in the "people's democracies" behind the Iron Curtain and hoping that Chiang and his "crack troops" might be unleashed against the Maoist regime on the mainland.

The Antichrist also nosed a danger *within* the United States. In sounding organizations that are communist or communist operated in this country. They control the minds of a great segment of our people." Indeed, "the infiltration of the left wing ... both pink and red into the intellectual strata of America" had become so advanced that American "educational [and] religious culture is almost beyond repair." In an article in the *American Mercury* in 1954, Graham amplified the charge: "The mysterious pull of this satanic religion is so strong that it has caused some citizens of America to become traitors, betraying a benevolent land which had showered them with blessings innumerable. It has attracted some of our famous entertainers, some of our finest politicians, and some of our outstanding educators." He backed Senator McCarthy's demand that witnesses before his committee not be permitted to shield themselves behind the Fifth Amendment.

[ Graham's economic views also coincided with the conservative Republican vision of "the American way of life." He shared a concern with the financial corruption and political ambition of the labor movement and opposed "government restrictions" that might obstruct "freedom of opportunity." Graham's description of the Gar-

den of Eden departed somewhat from the text of the Book of Genesis: the paradise of Adam and Eve had "no union dues, no labor leaders, no snakes, no disease." Like virtually all other evangelists, Graham assumed that Christianity and capitalism are as inextricably connected as the spiritual conversion of souls and their worldly success as selves. Were this the substance of Graham's ideology, he would have been indistinguishable from the more transparent publicists for the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. Were his hostility to the appeasement of Communism the heart of his views, Christian faith would not have been necessary to share them; nor does a Christian commitment to personal salvation even require involvement in social affairs. What made Graham so special

among the conservative anti-Communist voices of the 1950s was the root cause that he ascribed for the evil that the country confronted. "My own theory about Communism," he revealed in September 1957, "is that it is master-minded by Satan.... I think there is no other explanation for the tremendous gains of Communism in which they seem to outwit us at every turn, unless they have supernatural power and wisdom and intelligence given to them."

A 1953 sermon had also reported that "almost all ministers of the gospel and students of the Bible agree that it [Communism] is masterminded by Satan himself." In 1948, Chambers had written an article for *Life* magazine, "The Devil," but even the witness who had not returned empty-handed from Hell was unable to make so certain an identification. Graham's solution was nevertheless compelling: "Only as millions of Americans turn to Jesus Christ at this hour and accept him as Savior, can this nation possibly be spared the onslaught of a demon-possessed communism." For Graham, only Christianity could resist such a force, and only revivalism could save America itself. "If you would be a true patriot, then become a Christian," he advised. "If you would be a loyal American, then become a loyal Christian." An "old-fashioned Americanism" that was equated in 1954 with "the way of the Cross" was Graham's proposal for the most effective shield against "Satan's version of religion," which was Communism.

Yet the very act of transcending the premillennial pessimism in which revivalism was grounded landed Graham in logical inconsistencies. As an evangelist he stressed the turpitude to which America had succumbed, a sinfulness so pervasive that only a "heaven-sent, Holy Ghost revival" could offer hope of redemption. But operating within a political culture of self-righteousness, Graham was compelled to transform such wickedness into goodness. For with Ar-

ageddon approaching and the Antichrist to be defeated, it was obvious that "we were created for a spiritual mission among the nations." If Los Angeles and New York were not sinful, there would be no point to revival meetings and crusades like his own. But if Los Angeles and New York were not good, then the divine plan that such revivals promised to explain would have no meaning.

It is hard to see how these contradictory messages could be reconciled. And if the only hope lay in individual salvation, then the strong military policy that Graham persistently championed was as irrelevant as a weak defense, and a green light for the Nationalist Chinese forces on Formosa was as insignificant as a leash. If the Cold War could be understood only in terms of supernatural powers, the scope for American action, ingenuity, and will was drastically reduced—perhaps almost entirely. And if the policies of the Kremlin were literally diabolical, then the hope for permanent, successful opposition virtually evaporated. If changes in the hearts of individuals could solve not only personal problems but also all international and national crises, as Graham claimed, why then did he offer policy prescriptions to statesmen and legislators?

Any effort to resolve such internal contradictions might have confused or alienated audiences who heard his warnings and shared his fears. Any interest in challenging—much less ridiculing—popular superstitions about the devil might well have shocked many of his constituents. Any attempt to modulate his right-wing patriotism or to apply Arthur Koestler's incisive formulation that "we are fighting against a total lie in the name of a half-truth"—would have cost Graham his patronage as well. Indeed, those logical tensions emerged only because the premillennial tradition from which he came became so loaded with the contemporary obsession with Communism as the locus of evil. The resolution of such contradictions could not be achieved—only evaded, thanks to Graham's manifest dedication, integrity, and fervor. His wholesomeness could melt even the cynical Hearst. Formerly a Fuller Brush salesman, Graham had unloaded more from his sample case during a three-month high school vacation than any other salesman in North Carolina. "I believed in the product," he explained, and later revealed the secret of his influence: "Sincerity is the biggest part of selling anything—including the Christian Plan of Salvation."

Salvation was in enormous demand during the Cold War. But though atheists had apparently absented themselves from the foxholes of

World War II, the antecedents of the religious revival cannot be traced only to that conflict. For the United States was unique among Western nations in experiencing so dramatic an upsurge of postwar piety. It is more likely that certain historic traits reasserted themselves, such as the tendency to equate faith with individual success and prosperity, and the assumption that national well-being was a sign of divine approval. What intensified such beliefs was the need to combat a political system that was, above all, defined as godless.

Thus, church membership and a highly favorable attitude toward religion became forms of affirming "the American way of life" during the Cold War, especially since the Soviet Union and its allies officially subscribed to atheism. And conspicuously active church membership became the most effective shield against the suspicion of subversiveness. Reverence was so irreproachable that even the junior senator from Wisconsin could insert in his Wheeling, West Virginia, speech—the birth certificate of McCarthyism—a reference to the "final, all-out battle between Communistic atheism and Christianity.... The war is on." With the American Legion also sponsoring and organizing a "Back to God" movement, it was no wonder that in 1953 Professor Boorstin tried to convince HUAC that he had repudiated his youthful Communism by affirming support of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Chicago.

Religious affiliation was indeed rising. In 1910 and 1920, church membership in the United States had held steady at 43 percent of the population. By 1940 it had risen to 49 percent, then 55 percent by 1950, 62 percent by 1956, and 69 percent by the end of the decade; it then fell again to under 63 percent by 1970. In the twentieth century, formal church affiliation had never been as high as it was in the 1950s, and it would never be as high again. A 1954 survey revealed that nine Americans in ten believed in the divinity of Christ, and almost two in three accepted the existence of the devil'. Though no decennial census had ever inquired into particular religious beliefs or practices, the Current Population Survey of 1957 discovered that 66.2 percent of Americans professing a religion were Protestant, 25.7 percent were Catholic, and 3.2 percent were Jewish. When pollsters asked which group was "doing the most good for the country," the answers lifted religious leaders from third place in 1942 (after government and business leaders) to first in 1947. The proportion of Americans who thought that clergymen were the most useful citizens went up from 32.6 percent to 46 percent over the next decade.

Churches were by far the most trusted institution in American life—ahead of schools, radio and newspapers, and the government

itself. Moreover, a staggering 26.5 million copies of the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (1952) were sold within a year of its publication. Such was the prestige of religion that this particular bestseller was listed under the category of nonfiction, though such a status was dubious even by the most indulgent historical and scientific criteria. It was also symbolic of the 1950s that copies of G. David Schine's *Definition of Communism*, a preposterous six-page syllabus of errors that *Time* magazine called "remarkably succinct," were placed next to Gideon Bibles in the hotels his family owned.

In an era when admissions to mental hospitals were nearly doubling, when by 1956 mental patients were occupying more hospital beds than all other patients combined, and when over a billion tranquilizer pills were annually consumed, the most popular therapist of the age of anxiety was a man of the cloth: Norman Vincent Peale. His *Guide to Confident Living* was the number ten bestseller in 1947. Five years later came *The Power of Positive Thinking*—probably the most popular nonfiction book of the decade (other than the Bible itself). Peale's volume was number six on the charts in 1952 and rose to number two for the next two years (right behind the Bible). By 1955, *The Power of Positive Thinking* had skidded to third place (with the Revised Standard Version still first). But in 1957 the Reverend Peale was back, offering the sound advice to *Stay Alive All Your Life*; it ranked third that year. Peale assured his readers that "a Higher Power ... can do everything for you.... This power is constantly available.... This tremendous inflow of power is of such force that it drives everything before it, casting out fear, hate, sickness, weakness, moral defeat ... restrengthening your life with health, happiness, and goodness." It is noteworthy that the personal problems that prayer could lick derived from no social causes that readers might consider or confront.

Peale's success as an author was hardly freakish in an era when the most popular novels included Fulton Oursler's *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1949), Henry Morton Robinson's *The Cardinal* (1950), and Thomas B. Costain's *The Silver Chalice* (1952), and when readers were especially drawn to works of spiritual biography like Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), Catherine Marshall's *A Man Called Peter* (1952), and Jim Bishop's *The Day Christ Died* (1957). Nineteen fifty-nine was the first year in which no religious books reached the top ten in either the fiction or the nonfiction category.

One of the curios on the shelves of religious works of the 1950s, though not a bestseller, was *The J. Edgar Hoover You Ought to Know*, written—as its cover announces—by "His Pastor," Edward

L. R. Elson. Himself a Presbyterian, the director of the FBI had informed a conference of Methodist ministers in 1947 that crime was ultimately caused by secularism, of which the terminus was—no extra credit for guessing correctly—Communism. "The danger of Communism in America," he had concluded by 1953, "lies not in the fact that it is a political philosophy but in the awesome fact that it is a materialistic religion, inflaming in its adherents a destructive fanaticism. Communism is secularism on the march. It is a moral foe of Christianity.... The two cannot live side by side." In his own formidable bestseller, *Masters of Deceit*, Hoover urged regular attendance for children in church and Sunday School and dreamed: "Suppose every American spent a little time each day ... studying the Bible and the basic documents of American history, government[,] and culture? The result would be a new America, vigilant, strong, but ever humble in the service of God.... All we need is faith, real faith." The transition in Hoover's persona impressed his biographer to write as though "the nation's no. 1 G-Man had dropped his machine gun and picked up the cross," switching from public defender to defender of the faith.

Signs of spirituality were everywhere. By early 1952, even Mickey Spillane had found religion. Leaving Mike Hammer with a body count of forty-five corpses in six novels, the literary purveyor of such mayhem became a Jehovah's Witness. Seen handing out tracts and participating in baptisms by immersion, Spillane stopped writing for nine years. When he made a comeback in 1961, his piety had not ruined his popularity. Actress Jane Russell described in a magazine article her own path to the Lord, leading to the discovery that "when you get to know Him, you find He's a Livin' Doll." Upon becoming president of Harvard University in 1953, Nathan Pusey announced as his top priority the revival of the Divinity School and quickly raised five million dollars for the study of God. Hollywood also tried to cash in on holiness. In M-G-M's *The Next Voice You Hear* (1950), a fractious family in a California suburb tunes in on the radio to God's advice to appreciate the blessings of middle-class America. The family becomes harmoniously whole. And the Deity chooses sides in the Cold War in a United Artists movie entitled *Red Planet Mars* (1952), even speaking on the Voice of America to Russian peasants, who are so inspired by an abbreviated version of the Sermon on the Mount that they rip their portraits of Stalin from their walls. A rebellion follows, as Christians in the Soviet Union replace the Politburo with a new government. Churches are reopened, while the Western alliance navs homage to "a nation finding its soul."

America risked the loss of its own soul, however, to judge by the concerns that religious figures often articulated. There was, for example, a rampant rise in and fear of juvenile delinquency, in which wild ones revving up their "cycles of outrage" might tear up a town; and the rock 'n' roll that teenagers made their own seemed merely spasms of libidinous abandon. Frank Sinatra tapped such adult anxieties in 1958 by informing congressmen that rock 'n' roll was "the most brutal, ugly, desperate, vicious form of expression it has been my misfortune to hear," for it was written and sung "for the most part by cretinous goons," and "by means of its almost imbecilic reiterations and sly, lewd-in plain fact dirty-lyrics ... [it] manages to be the martial music of every side-burned delinquent on the face of the earth."

Yet such music could also be incorporated into the proclivity toward piety. In the same year as Sinatra's sanctimonious testimony, Paul Anka, George Hamilton IV, and Johnny Nash recorded a song entitled "The Teen Commandments," a ten-point "code for today's teens." Its couplets included instructions to "be humble enough to obey / you will be giving orders yourself someday," and "choose a date who would make a good mate." Here is how *Time* described nineteen-year-old Tommy Sands, who starred in "The Singing Idol" on NBC in 1957 and in Twentieth Century-Fox's *Sing, Boy, Sing!* in 1958: "As uncomplicated as most of the songs he sings, Tommy neither drinks nor smokes, lives with his mother in a four-room Hollywood apartment, drives a red Ford convertible and, he says, reads philosophical and religious books 'to find out what makes people tick.' Tommy explains, his brown eyes watering, 'I think all religions are the greatest.'" Pat Boone, who was marketed as a square rival to Presley, refused for religious reasons to kiss his leading ladies on screen, thus deflating the romantic power of films like *April Love* (1957) and *Bernadine* (1957). Even Presley cut a Christmas album: and the kinetic Little Richard, whose raunchy songs got on enunciation of the lyrics, repudiated "the devil's music" after a religious experience.

Such evidences of the Holy Spirit bore little resemblance to the revivals that had punctuated earlier periods of American history. The 1950s did not constitute another Great Awakening. Peale and his confreres promised peace of soul and mind, not convulsive frenzy. Few religious passions were unleashed, few lives transformed by the imperatives of faith, few works composed that enlarged and ennobled the heritage of Christendom. What was revived was not so much religious belief as belief in the *value* of religion. The ben-

efits of devotion were not seen as mystical and metaphysical, nor existential, and less psychological or ethical than political and social. The faith of the fifties often took its cues from the "piety on the Potomac."

## 2

The theology of the fifties was based far less on, say, Aquinas's proofs for the existence of God than on the conviction that religion was virtually synonymous with American nationalism. Such a conception was irresistible to conservative politicians; in that form it had little to do with faith as such, as when Edward Martin (R-Pa.) argued for a peacetime draft on the Senate floor in 1950 by proclaiming that "America must move forward with the atomic bomb in one hand and the cross in the other." Nuclear weapons could be rattled at the Russians; but what America lacked, Dulles wrote in 1950, was a "righteous and dynamic faith." Liberals joined in too. In his 1952 campaign, Stevenson urged the electorate to adopt a militant faith, because Communism "seeks even to dethrone God from his central place in the Universe. It attempts to uproot everywhere [that] it goes the gentle and restraining influences of the religion of love and peace."

With such stark conceptions of how the Soviet threat was to be defined and resisted, it was not illogical for a leading District of Columbia clergyman to call an American atheist "a contradiction in terms." One consequence was the discrimination to which nonbelievers were subjected. A dozen states barred atheists and even agnostics from serving as notary publics, and in many other states as well agnostic couples were not allowed to adopt children. Religious agencies were given the responsibility of screening refugees and of determining their suitability for entry. Though public life had earlier contrived to find a place for those who did not believe in God, such as Justice Holmes and attorney Clarence Darrow, such "free thinkers" had disappeared by the 1950s. When Judge Kaufman sentenced the Rosenbergs to death, their "devoting themselves to the Russian ideology of denial of God" was apparently held against them, as though unbelief were itself shameful. For as even that or- nery liberal, Justice William O. Douglas, observed in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), Americans were "a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being."

In 1957, when the Census Bureau asked, "What is your religion?" an astonishing 96 percent of the populace could cite a specific affiliation. But one American who could not have done so five years

earlier was Eisenhower, who had confided to Billy Graham during the campaign that, in his career as a soldier, his own worship had been lax. Nevertheless, Eisenhower told Graham, "I don't believe the American people are going to follow anybody who's not a member of a church." The candidate conceded that he was not a member of any denomination, though his parents were River Brethren. Graham guessed that the denomination was close to Presbyterianism and recommended two particular Presbyterian churches in Washington because their pastors were supporting the GOP. Ike told Graham that for appearances' sake he did not wish to join until after the election, which did not prevent the Republican National Committee from identifying its candidate as "the spiritual leader of our times." He became the first president ever to be baptized in the White House and then, after some doctrinal instruction, was formally accepted into the Presbyterian church. It was the first time as an adult that he had joined a church.

Through both terms he kept on his bedside table the Bible that Graham had given him, and the president's first foreign policy speech inspired Graham to compare it to the Sermon on the Mount. At the first cabinet meeting, Eisenhower permitted Ezra Taft Benson, the secretary of agriculture who was also one of the Twelve Apostles of the Mormon church, to deliver an opening prayer. The cabinet voted to pray at all subsequent meetings. The chief executive also inaugurated a series of national "prayer breakfasts." But when Dr. Elson boasted in the Washington Post that his was the church of presidents, Eisenhower yelled to his press secretary an even more direct invocation of the Deity: "You go and tell that goddam minister that if he gives out one more story about my religious faith I won't join his goddam church."

The president thus sought to exemplify the faith that was so urgent during the Cold War, and in that spirit he gave perfect expression to the latitudinarianism that has historically characterized American religion: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith-and I don't care what it is." Since his interpretation of the origins of American democracy would have surprised a secular rationalist like Franklin or an anticlerical champion of deism like Jefferson, and since the connections between the Enlightenment and the varieties of religious experience were never elaborated, Eisenhower also found it difficult to explain this system of self-government to Soviet marshal Georgi Zhukov. "Since at the age of fourteen he had been taken over by the Bolshevik religion and had believed in it since that time," Ike recalled, "I was

quite certain [that] it was hopeless on my part to talk to him about the fact that our form of government is founded in religion."

The president and his wife were in the pew of a Presbyterian , church in Washington early in 1954 when its pastor, the Reverend George M. Docherty, reached what he termed "a strange conclusion" about the Pledge of Allegiance: "That which was missing was; the characteristic and definitive factor in the American way of life. Indeed, apart from the mention of the phrase 'the United States of America,' it could be the pledge of any republic. In fact, I could hear little Moscovites [sic] repeat a similar pledge to their hammer-and-sickle flag in Moscow with equal solemnity. Russia is also a republic that claims to have overthrown the tyranny of kingship. Russia also claims to be indivisible." Docherty therefore suggested the addition" of "one nation under God"-a slight paraphrase of the Gettysburg Address, in which Lincoln had hoped "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom." This sermon aroused Congress to action: seventeen new bills were swiftly dropped into the hopper. Louis Rabaut (D-Mich. ), the first congressman to propose the expansion of the Pledge of Allegiance, reminded his colleagues that the Soviet Union "could not ... place in its patriotic ritual an acknowledgment that their nation existed 'under God.'" Senator Homer Ferguson (R-Mich.) added that "this modification of the pledge is important because it highlights one of the real fundamental differences between the free world and the Communist world." And though such a theological declaration would exclude millions of American nonbelievers, the president signed the pledge bill into law on Flag Day, June 14, 1954. He expressed satisfaction that schoolchildren would henceforth be affirming daily "the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty," especially in a world where so many others were "deadened in mind and soul by a materialistic philosophy of life," and where "the prospect of atomic war" hovered so perilously.

Although the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments eventually rejected the proposal of Ralph Flanders (RVt.) to put explicit recognition of the law and authority of Jesus Christ into the Constitution, a nonsectarian prayer room was constructed on Capitol Hill in 1955. A year later, all first- and secondclass mail had to be canceled with a die bearing the nondenominational request to "Pray for Peace." Also in 1956, Congress ordained as the nation's official motto a phrase used on coinage since the end of the Civil War: "In God We Trust." When the phrase was put on a red-white-and-blue eight-cent postage stamp, the president as well as the secretary of state put in a public appearance to cel-

celebrate the occasion. In the fervor with which the public was expected to embrace such formulaic reverence, it is hard to miss a note of anxiety, however, which forces the historian to wonder whether the devout politicians of the era were aware of the contradictions lurking beneath the surface.

For Graham had concluded his enormously successful Washington revival in 1952 by warning that Americans were "a desperately wicked people" whom God was about to destroy (unless they repented), since the Lord could not "long abide our sins of materialism." Yet it was the flood of material goods, pouring out in such huge quantities and advertised in such alluring ways, that the Republican administration was promising the citizenry. (To signify the importance of maintaining prosperity, the president granted a fixed weekly appointment to only one official: the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. He was, ironically, an unobservant Jew, a foreign-born intellectual named Arthur Burns.) An administration pledged to taking care of business offered not self-sacrifice or abnegation but increasing creature comforts. If, as Eisenhower told the Reverend Graham, "Billie, I believe one reason I was elected President was to lead America in a religious revival," why provide further temptations to sin? The chief executive never explained how endless consumer products were adding to the spiritual strength of the nation. And contrary to the Sermon on the Mount, the poor were not considered blessed in the 1950s. Indeed, they were rarely considered at all.

Though Eisenhower was very fond of words like "spiritual" (in contrast to Soviet materialism) and called "spiritual weapons . . . our country's most powerful resource, in peace or in war," such talk ceased when his administration asked Congress for military appropriations. During his two terms, the Department of Defense spent \$313 billion—in fact, \$354 billion when the costs of atomic energy, military aid, and strategic stockpiling were factored into the budget. The volume of Pentagon business exceeded *all* the profits that American businesses earned during those same years. No wonder that Marshal Zhukov would have been baffled had Ike stressed the spiritual roots of the American polity, and this believer in "the Bolshevik religion" might well have been skeptical about turning swords into ploughshares when capitalist investors were plowing shares into defense industries. Kremlin analysts of the national faith would have been misled by the decade's hottest nonfiction bestseller, in which the Reverend Peale called prayer "the most tremendous power in the world."

Given such obvious contradictions and such subterranean wor-

ries, the need for a holy alliance had to be fervently invoked, the quest for divine blessing conspicuously pursued, and the evidence for the superiority of the American creed eagerly sought. In 1947, Bill Mauldin drew a cartoon that depicted an unkempt young couple sitting beneath a picture of Stalin. "Two magazines are competing for exclusive serial rights," says one to the other, "if we convert." Indeed, ex-Communists were perhaps especially strong advocates of spiritual combat, hoping that the West would understand that the foe, though godless, was tenacious in its effort to make its ideology operational. Only a more powerful faith could dare to hope to defeat the creed that Chambers and Herberg had repudiated. "The Communist vision is the vision of Man without God," Chambers intoned. "It is the vision of man's mind displacing God as the creative intelligence of the world." Herberg, a self-made existentialist theologian, argued that "only a transcendental faith that finds its absolutes *beyond* the ideas, institutions, or allegiances of the world could meet the challenge of the demonic idolatry of Communism without falling into idolatry itself." Dedication to the ideals of human dignity inherent in democracy was not enough, for the West could be saved only by faith "in something more ultimate."

### 3

The faith that could most unequivocally present itself as combat-ready was itself one that Sidney Hook called "the oldest and greatest totalitarian movement in history." Roman Catholicism considered Communism the Antichrist itself, and a papal encyclical (*Nostis et Nobiscum*) had denounced the movement as early as 1849—soon after publication of *The Communist Manifesto*. The Communist desire to abolish private property challenged the papal assumption, that property was integral to an orderly society. The violence of Communist methods and the reductive materialism of "scientific socialism" were an affront to the Catholic affirmation of transcendent love. The explicit godlessness of the Marxist movement directly challenged the worldly power and the salvific claims of the church. In the 1930s, Catholicism openly allied itself with the Fascists during the Spanish Civil War, intensifying opposition to its atheist rival for bodies and souls. It was then that Orwell located the "sin" of the left intelligentsia in having been "anti-Fascist without being anti-totalitarian." But the church was anti-Communist without being antitotalitarian. Pope Pius XII never excommunicated any Nazis, never stifled their hopes of salvation after they had perpetrated genocide. But after July 1949 he excommunicated Catholics

who voluntarily "profess, defend and spread" Communist tenets, which were described as "materialistic and anti-Christian."

For American Catholics, the persecution of their co-religionists behind the Iron Curtain heightened not only their own anti-Communism but made their patriotism more impassioned as well. By inflating a historic hostility to Communism into the primary issue, they could embrace American nationalism and formulate an authentic Catholicism too. In 1946, two years after becoming archbishop, Richard J. Cushing of Boston told the Holy Name Society that the United States needed Roman Catholicism "as one of the greatest bulwarks against the inroads of Communism." A minority that had been subjected to a century of bigotry in Protestant America thus took out final citizenship papers. Cushing, an early ecumenicist, even felt it necessary that same year to warn against regarding the campaign against Communism as "an exclusively *Catholic* one." For "although Red Fascism threatens us Catholics and our institutions, it threatens with equal violence and fatal purpose all others who love God or seek to serve Him."

The most relevant sign of the Catholic investment in the culture of the Cold War was McCarthyism. The *Brooklyn Tablet*, for example, was the Catholic newspaper with the largest circulation in the United States. In June 1950, an editorial on its front page was boldly entitled, "PUT UP OR SHUT UP." Readers of the weekly were informed that "the presence of close to a hundred perverts in the State Department-even though Hiss has been forced out and convicted and the perverts fired-justify [sic] a complete and thorough search for further evidence of the Communist conspiracy within the departments of our government." Editor Patrick Scanlon, whose flair for sensationalism earned the admiration of Hearst himself, added that "it is time to put the direct question to each Congressman and Senator: 'What are You doing about getting rid of Communists in our government? It is YOUR job as well as Senator McCarthy's. What are You doing about it?'"

In 1954, there were over 920,000 members of the Knights of Columbus; though the organization gave no formal endorsement, its monthly magazine, *Columbia*, was pro-McCarthy. In January of that year, 58 percent of Catholics told pollsters that they approved of McCarthy, while only 23 percent said they disapproved of the senator's activities. In 1954, the Catholic War Veterans of New York City also bestowed upon him their "Americanism" award. After his death, the same organization gave to his widow, whose wedding had received papal blessing, a plaque that compared the late senator to the Savior. For when the Lord "saw fit to send us Joseph R. Mc-

Carthy, He showed His love for us.... Greater love than this no man hath-that a man lay down his life for his friends" in the struggle against "the menace of Atheistic Communism." To memorialize him, the Catholic War Veterans, which boasted over 200,000 members, established its annual Senator Joe McCarthy Gold Medal Americanism Award in 1957. It was to be given to a Catholic War Veteran who best represented the spirit of patriotism. Fittingly enough, the first winner had scoured the shelves of a high school library in Baltimore, and the discovery of some subversive and obscene books led him to organize a municipal campaign for their immediate removal.

But the decisions of the Catholic War Veterans to discontinue awarding such a gold medal and to stop celebrating its annual New York City mass for McCarthy suggest that Catholic support for McCarthyism can be overstated. Catholics generally remained Democrats even in his heyday, and polls did not demonstrate that Catholics were overwhelmingly more anxious about Communism than the rest of the population. Catholics serving in Congress were *less* likely to vote for the Mundt-Nixon Bill (1948), which required registration of the Party and its fronts with the Department of Justice, and for pro-HUAC legislation than was the House of Representatives as a whole. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.), who had once lived in Benedictine monastery, claimed to be the first congressman to condemn the methods of Joe McCarthy; and the first university president to denounce him was also a Catholic, George N. Shuster of Hunter College.

The auxiliary bishop for the archdiocese of Chicago, Bernard J. Sheil, proved that one could be notably anti-McCarthy as well as vigorously anti-Communist. Sheil's most famous condemnation, an April 1954 speech to the United Auto Workers, asserted that "antiCommunism is a serious business," not "a game to be played so [that] publicity-mad politicians can build fame for themselves." The church, he added, had to speak out against "lies, calumny, the absence of charity and calculated deceit." Though the *Brooklyn Tablet* sneered that Sheil's speech had lifted the *Daily Worker* to a state of "high glee," and though he was forced out as director of the Catholic Youth Organization that he founded, the ghosting of the bishop's speech by John Cogley, the executive editor of *Commonweal*, accentuated the consistent anti-McCarthyism that the magazine itself voiced.

McCarthy's deliberate "Alger-I mean Adlai" slur in a televised speech late in the 1952 campaign outraged the editor of *America*, Father Robert Hartnett, who happened to be very pro-Stevenson. Indeed, the Jesuits' magazine opposed McCarthy so vehemently that

St. Patrick's Cathedral canceled its subscription. Hartnett himself had to be silenced from Rome, which transmitted a direct order from the Father General of the Jesuits, who followed the injunction of St. Ignatius Loyola against exposure of church disputes. The Catholic liberalism that Cogley and Hartnett championed cherished civil liberties even amid the struggle against Communism, but its case was overshadowed by more truculent voices. The "shrill hyper-patriotism" that *Commonweal* attributed to the *Brooklyn Tablet* was far more representative of the Catholic press, even if Catholic attitudes in general were more tolerant and liberal. But because only 44 percent of Catholics told pollsters that they customarily read a Catholic newspaper or periodical, the church's leading historian of McCarthyism was not surprised that "the overwhelmingly McCarthyite Catholic press failed to have so little influence on the Catholic readership in America."

In making McCarthyism respectable and acceptable, the most powerful church prelate of the era deserves special attention for personifying the ardent ideological enmity of Catholicism toward Communism. Operating from a New York chancery that was nicknamed "the Powerhouse," unable-or unwilling-to scuttle speculation that he was destined to be the first American pope, Francis Cardinal Spellman did not need the Hiss case, or the Rosenberg case-much less the Wisconsin senator-to make him recoil before the specter of domestic Communism. More than anyone else, he was the chaplain of the Cold War. By 1946, Spellman was urging Catholic military chaplains to "protect America against aggression of enemies within her borders," and he conjectured that anti-Catholic bigotry-despite its ancient lineage in the United States-could be traced to the Communists.

"His language may have been clumsy and repetitive," Jesuit historian Donald F. Crosby concluded, "but no one could claim that his message was obscure." Whether in speeches throughout the country or in magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*, Spellman emphasized the menace of Communist infiltration within America and the destruction of the church abroad. The cardinal was a frequent guest on the explicitly anti-Communist radio programs that the Knights of Columbus broadcast over 226 stations in 1947. For him, patriotism and anti-Communism were synonymous. "A true American," he thundered in 1946, "can be neither a Communist nor a Communist condoner, and we realize that the first loyalty of every American is vigilantly to weed out and counteract Communism and convert every American Communist to

Americanism." Only later would the difficulty of squaring that "first loyalty" with civil liberties become more obvious.

Spellman's commitment to anti-Communism went beyond exercising his own freedom of expression. According to his biographer, he agreed to cooperate with the FBI in alerting employers to Communists in the ranks of labor unions. An FBI memo reported that on February 19, 1946, two days before his own elevation to the Sacred College of Cardinals, Archbishop Spellman approved the plan to provide a service to employers, presented in the form of a legitimate business, that showed how Communists could be eliminated from their union employees. Spellman was antagonistic to labor unions anyway, believing them to harbor men "who are afraid of work" as well as Communists. He agreed to help "ferret out and eliminate the Communists and fellow-travelers who are in positions of control in labor unions," the FBI memo stated, only if his own role were concealed-since such cooperation violated the principle of separation of church and state.

Such a principle did not govern Roman Catholic politics in Europe, where the fate of the church under Communist domination certainly haunted and angered him. In 1946, the regime of Marshal Josip Broz Tito inflicted a sixteen-year-jail term upon Aloysius Stepinac, the archbishop of Zagreb and Roman Catholic primate of Yugoslavia who had been a German collaborator and councillor of the Croatian dictatorship of Ante Pavelic during World War II. Spellman described his fellow prelate as "one of thousands of martyrs of every faith whom corrupt, ruthless dictators daily betray and befoul as they wield poisoned power."

Two years later, Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty was arrested in Budapest, where a secret police major stripped him of his clothes and had the cardinal dressed in the costume of a clown, while the jailers and other secret police officers shouted obscenities at him. When Mindszenty initially refused to sign a confession, he was put back in his cell and was beaten until he fainted. For a month he was interrogated, hit, reviled, and humiliated. In February 1949, a People's Court convicted the cardinal of treason, misuse of foreign currency, and conspiracy, and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Spellman was so disturbed by this particular persecution that he spoke from the pulpit of St. Patrick's Cathedral for the first time since V-E Day. "Unless the American people . . . unite to stop the Communist floodings of our own land," he warned, "our sons, for the third and last time, shall be summoned from the comforts, tranquility and love of their own homes and families to bear arms against those who would desecrate and destroy them." Having served as

military vicar of the U.S. armed forces, Spellman asked his parishioners to "help save civilization from the world's most fiendish, ghoulish men of slaughter."

The sense of imminent catastrophe close to home seems to have pervaded the Powerhouse, and, with the intertwining of Catholicism and Americanism, the front lines seemed near. In *Is This Tomorrow?*, the four-color comic book printed by the Catechetical Guild, a horde of crazed Reds was shown attacking St. Patrick's and nailing an angelic-looking cardinal to the front door of the cathedral. Because His Eminence feared the possibility that it could happen here, biographer John Cooney claimed that Spellman's private solution to the problem of domestic Communism was encapsulated in Spillane's *One Lonely Night*, which Spellman urged priests to read. The cardinal was taken with Mike Hammer's prescriptions: "Don't arrest them, don't treat them with the dignity of the democratic process of the courts of law ... do the same thing they'd do to you! Treat 'em to the inglorious taste of sudden death." Addressing the annual dinner of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick's in 1948, with President Truman on the dais, the cardinal warned that "America is no safer from mastery by Communism than was any European country. There we witnessed the killing and enslavement of whole peoples by Communists, who, with the shedding of blood, became as if drunk with it!" He added that "it is not alone in defense of my faith that I condemn atheistic Communism, but as an American in defense of my country. We stand at a crossroads of civilization, a civilization threatened with the crucifixion of Communism."

So persistent an overestimation of the Communist threat *within* the United States led to Spellman's public endorsement of Senator McCarthy. In the spring of 1953, McCarthy went to mass with New York City policemen at St. Patrick's, where the police chaplain eulogized the senator at the communion breakfast of the force's Holy Name Society. Then Spellman himself entered the ballroom, warmly grasped the hand that had held a list of names, turned to the policemen in the audience, and grinned as they screamed their approval. He sat at the head table near the senator and followed him to the podium, again to the cops' rousing applause and interruption. As Spellman explained to journalists, "He is against communism and he has done and is doing something about it. He is making America aware of the dangers of communism." McCarthyism had gotten an imprimatur.

Two months later, in Brussels, Spellman defended "Congressional inquiries into Communist activities in the United States." Such investigations were "not the result of any mad legislative whim,"

the prelate claimed. "We thank God that they have begun while there is still time to do something about it." For "Americans ... desire to see Communists exposed and removed from positions where they can carry out their nefarious plans.... No American uncontaminated by Communism has lost his good name because of congressional hearings on un-American activities." Such claims led President Eisenhower to the farfetched suspicion, according to his attorney general, that Spellman wanted to catapult McCarthy into the White House. In any event, the cardinal never repudiated the demagogue or expressed regret for encouraging him, and the "McCarthy Mass" at St. Patrick's was held every year on the anniversary of his death.

For all the savvy that guided the operations of the Powerhouse, Spellman could overplay his hand. Contrary to his own intentions, he helped expel the crime of blasphemy from constitutional law, and in the process demonstrated the extent to which his thought was fixed within the culture of the Cold War. The rigidity of his stance compelled him to view greater freedom of thought and expression as a danger to the social fabric rather than as a justification for resisting tyranny. In 1951, Roberto Rossellini's film *The Miracle* was released in the United States. Its subject was a demented woman (Anna Magnani) who, enveloped in religious frenzy, imagines that St. Joseph has seduced her. The mocking villagers convince her that the conception of her child, to whom she gives birth alone in a deserted church, is miraculous. *The Miracle* won the New York Film Critics award for best foreign film, which His Eminence had not bothered to see. But he ordered the drafting of a pastoral letter that condemned the movie, and that was read during every mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral as well as from the pulpits of the four hundred parishes around the archdiocese of New York. All Catholics were expected to boycott *The Miracle*. After the cardinal's appeal, the Holy Name Society picketed outside the Manhattan theater showing the film, shouting the ultimate deprecations of shame: "This is the kind of picture the Communists want!" and "Don't be a Communist-all the Communists are inside!" The Catholic War Veterans swelled the ranks to an estimated thousand, protesting the "Insult to Every Woman Not to Mention Children."

Virtually every resource was deployed to prevent others from seeing *The Miracle*. The fire commissioner suddenly issued a number of violations against the theater, which the police raided several times as well, claiming bomb scares. The New York Board of Regents, which supervised the licensing of movies, voted unanimously to hold a hearing in which the distributors of the film had to explain

why *The Miracle* should not be banned as "sacrilegious." When critic Frank Getlein gave the movie a favorable review in the *Catholic Messenger*, he was fired from his faculty teaching post at Fairfield University. "Spellman must have picked up the phone," Getlein later conjectured, since the Catholic university had offered him no explanation for his dismissal. After Professor William P. Clancy criticized the censorship of *The Miracle* as "semi-ecclesiastic McCarthyism" in the liberal Catholic journal *Commonweal*, Notre Dame University fired him from its English department.

Even the Vatican did not seem sufficiently wary of the peril that tolerance of *The Miracle* portended. When it was learned that *L'Osservatore Romano* had given the movie a mixed review, Spellman was furious. "Satan alone would dare such perversion," he wrote in a pastoral letter. "To those who perpetrate such a crime as *The Miracle* within the law[,] all that we can say is: How long will enemies of decency tear at the heart of America? ... Divide and conquer is the technique of the greatest enemy of civilization, atheistic communism. God forbid that the producers of racial and religious mockeries should divide and demoralize Americans so that the minions of Moscow might enslave this land of liberty." Beginning with the morally correct stance that Communism was repugnant, he had sniffed Communism in *whatever* was repugnant.

The cardinal's overreaction transformed *The Miracle* into a *cause célèbre*. Never before had a foreign film benefited from so prominent and indefatigable a publicist. Until Spellman had called for a boycott, the Manhattan theater that had booked the film was doing little business. After the Powerhouse swung into action, however, the lines for every showing of *The Miracle* stretched around the block. And in 1952 the Supreme Court erased blasphemy from the criminal code. Citing both Getlein and Clancy, justice Frankfurter's concurring opinion in *Burstyn v. Wilson* found the vague notion of "sacrilege" inconsistent with the First Amendment, for such censorship was "bound to have stultifying consequences on the creative process of literature and art."

Perhaps, in the cardinal's mind, the defense of Catholic sexual values had assumed an even larger significance than the political and military threat that Communism posed. Or perhaps the distinction between the two issues had blurred beyond recovery. In any event, on December 16, 1956, Spellman mounted the pulpit during mass for the first time since his denunciation of the jailing and torture of Cardinal Mindszenty in 1949. This Sunday, the target was *Baby Doll*, a movie which, though not yet released, "has been responsibly judged to be evil in concept and which is certain to exert

an immoral and corrupting influence on those who see it." Thus was inaugurated perhaps Spellman's biggest campaign of censorship ever. Priests were assigned to the lobbies of theaters where *Baby Doll* was showing and were expected to write down the names of parishioners attending it, under "pain of sin" for their mogoing tastes. Though Spellman himself had not seen the film, the reviewer for *Time* magazine had, and called *Baby Doll* "just possibly the dirtiest American-made motion picture that has ever been legally

exhibited." Though the advertisements showed actress Carroll Baker wearing a slip, and her constant thumb-sucking was perhaps intended to suggest oral sex, neither director Elia Kazan nor scenarist Tennessee Williams served up anything very explicit in the film itself.

A line of defense that stretched from Budapest to *Baby Doll* could not be maintained for the duration, and indeed the very excesses of so vigilant and inflexible a stance guaranteed a waning of the cardinal's influence. Kennedy's election in 1960 automatically ended Spellman's role as the nation's most powerful Catholic. Before his death in 1968, the papacy was welcoming dialogue with the "godless goons" whom "the American Pope" had made a vocation of denouncing and was urging a negotiated settlement with the Com

munists in Vietnam. The Church Militant was becoming demobilized.

## 4

But even during the Cold War, one religious thinker demonstrated the possibility of being deeply Christian without smugly accepting the status quo and proved that theistic belief was compatible with the struggle for social justice. Unlike Spellman, who encouraged self-righteousness and hypocrisy by defining the Cold War as "slavery against democracy, evil against good, might against right, Stalinism against God," Reinhold Niebuhr was attentive to the paradoxes and ironies of the American predicament without becoming an accomplice to overweening pride-and without the escape hatch of otherworldliness. With subtle intelligence, Niebuhr showed how to be a political progressive without shallowness, an anti-Communist moralist without fanaticism, a religious believer without delusion. Though an ornament of the Union Theological Seminary, Niebuhr was no apologist. He knew that religion was "a good thing for honest people but a bad thing for dishonest people," and that "the Gospel gives no special securities or exemptions from the frailties of men and the tragedies of life." Though a liberal founder and

chairman of the ADA, he did not yield to exaggerated hopes for reform and modestly defined democracy as "a method for finding proximate solutions for insoluble problems."

His influence was virtually everywhere. Graham claimed to "have read nearly everything Mr. Niebuhr has written, and I feel inadequate before his brilliant mind and learning." When George Kerman became head of the State Department's new Policy Planning Staff in 1947, Niebuhr was appointed chairman of its Advisory Committee, helping to sustain the strategy of containment and offering ideological mobilization against the Soviet threat. Yet as early as 1932, his trenchant *Moral Man and Immoral Society* had proposed civil disobedience as the most effective instrument of black emancipation in the United States. It was piquant that, a generation later, his writings would influence Martin Luther King, Jr., in divinity school. Despite the experience of growing up black in the segregated South, King claimed to have learned from Niebuhr of the "potential for evil," though he "still believed in man's potential for good." For Niebuhr had assaulted the illusions of utopianism in the name of Christian realism and political pragmatism. In insisting upon the inclusiveness of sin, which warps leaders as well as constituents and which corrupts the well-meaning as well as the cynical, he spoke for the Augustinian persuasion. But Niebuhr also spoke to the complacent pride of the 1950s in acknowledging that "the Church does not seem to realize how unethical a conventionally respectable life may be."

# 5

## INFORMING: MANY ARE CALLED

**Western society** has not allocated a high status to the informer. The central human villain in Christianity is the disciple who betrays Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Among the Jewish villagers of Eastern Europe, it was traditional to bury counterparts of Judas by placing the corpse on a garbage wagon, which was dragged by a lame horse to the cemetery. Even in prisons, where the most degenerate of our species are confined, the "stoolie" has been considered especially loathsome. In John Ford's indelible 1935 film, *The Informer*, Gypo Nolan (Victor McLaglen) is told by the Irish rebels' court of inquiry that an informer has "got to be wiped out like the first sign of a plague as soon as he's spotted. He's a common enemy." In that same year, the Group Theatre's legendary production of Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* introduced a young actor named Elia Kazan, who raced on stage to reveal an informer: "The son of a bitch is my own lousy brother!" Even though circumstances might occasionally justify "squealing," even though the presumption against it might be effectively rebutted, this stigma has an ancient and durable lineage.

The culture of the Cold War was distinctive for having punctured the abhorrence of informing, which "in our time ... is a duty," Chambers's autobiography quotes Soviet defector Walter Krivitsky as proclaiming. Harvey Matusow, a professional informer who eventually fingered 108 Americans as Communists before recanting his testimony, discovered that though he "was on the lowest rung of the ladder of life" his advice was solicited by pillars of respectable