

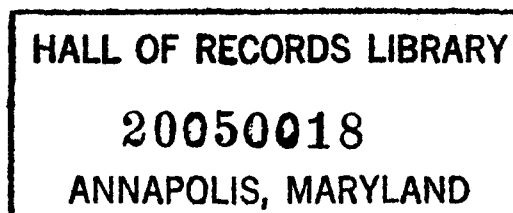
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**CRUSADER IN THE COLD WAR:
A Biography of
Fr. John F. Cronin, S.S. (1908-1994)**

by
John T. Donovan, M.A.

**A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of
the Graduate School, Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.**

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin
August 2000**



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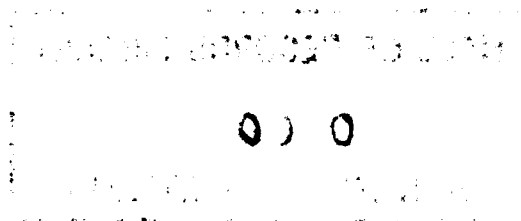
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To my mother, Mary Donovan,
and in memory of my father, Lawrence M. Donovan

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Margaret Cronin of Chevy Chase Maryland, who shared their recollections of their brother with me, as well as Msgr. George G. Higgins of the Catholic University of America, who also granted me an interview. (Msgr. Higgins, it should be noted, must receive the credit for the suggestion that I look for Father Cronin's congressional testimony.)

I am grateful to the community here at Marquette – my fellow students, the faculty and staff – for their friendship and support over the last three years. I especially wish to thank my committee: Dr. Patrick Carey of the Theology Department at Marquette, and Professors Alan Ball, John Krugler, Athan Theoharis, and especially Ralph Weber, who took on the task of directing this dissertation. Dr. Weber once said that it was his job to make us (his students) better historians than he is. Of course, that is impossible: as Jesus said, "No pupil is greater than his teacher (Mt. 10:24)." I can only strive to be as good as these scholars have been to me. Of course, I alone bear responsibility for any errors in the text, but I am happy that my committee's critical evaluation has weeded out a few mistakes that otherwise would have gotten through.

If the reader will excuse a rather pious Catholic convention, I also wish to thank the good Lord for bringing me to this point, and the prayers of many saints, both living and deceased, who have been my help. I can only join in the words of the last of the Divine Praises, "Blessed be God, His angels, and His saints!"

Preface

On August 23, 1956, Vice President Richard Milhous Nixon stood before the multitude at the Republican Convention in the convention center in San Francisco to accept renomination to the vice presidency. Nixon praised President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and spoke of America's strength and prosperity. Part of the speech included lines that could have been spoken by a liberal Democrat rather than a conservative Republican. He called on his countrymen to "move ahead with vigor and imagination to root out any pockets of poverty in our midst." He noted that farmers "do not yet have a fair share of America's increasing prosperity," and then that "our prosperity. . . must be fully shared by the seventeen million Negro Americans." "[W]e shall continue" the Republican vice president promised, "to drive forward until we reach the goal for which the first Republican President made the supreme sacrifice." He then turned to foreign policy, and again referred to Abraham Lincoln in his remarks, saying that the role of the United States in the world was incomplete "so long as the world is half slave and half free." He called for a strong military, and told the throng that Americans should "continue to develop a bold and imaginative program to win the minds and hearts of men to the ideals of freedom and democracy."¹

The reason the speech sounded as if it were written by a Democrat was because the first draft was written by a Democrat, a Catholic priest, John Francis Cronin.² Cronin had drifted somewhat into the G.O.P. in the late 1950s: one

¹ *The New York Times*, August 24, 1956, reprinted Nixon's speech on page 10.

² In an interview on March 17, 1978, Cronin told Fr. Thomas E. Blantz, C.S.C., that he wrote Nixon's speech. Cronin embellished the account, saying that "Pat [his wife] tore the hell out of him for the way he gave that speech." (Interview of Father John F. Cronin, S.S. by Father Thomas E. Blantz, C.S.C., March 17, 1978, pp. 18-9, courtesy of the Archives of the University of Notre Dame, cited here after as "Blantz interview.") Nixon wrote later ". . . with some

journalist wrote of Cronin, "Though he has not personal politics now, he was raised in a tough Irish ward of Glens Falls, N.Y., where [the label] 'Republican' is a fighting word."³ Cronin wrote Nixon's speech, but the vice president revised it before delivering it. Unaware of Cronin's help, the *New York Times* reported that Nixon worked "without assistance" on his acceptance speech before visiting his ill (and dying) father in Whittier.⁴

Cronin had first met Nixon in 1947 when the vice president was a freshman California congressman and a member of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Nixon was interested in Communism, and the priest had become an authority on the subject. Over time, Cronin was became Nixon's chief (albeit unpaid) speech writer. In August 1956, the vice president invited the cleric to accompany him to California, partly to assist with the speech, and partly for pastoral reasons – to assist the Quaker politician in dealing with his anxiety and grief over his father's illness. Cronin intended to keep his presence low-keyed, but did follow ecclesiastical formalities: while in Whittier, he telephoned the archbishop of Los Angeles, James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, to advise him of his presence. He later wrote McIntyre, "Apparently I was able to fulfill my mission without any publicity. I had two meetings with Mr. Nixon, but the conditions were [so] carefully arranged that no newsmen were around at the time." Without going into detail, he informed the cardinal, "I hope that the speech will strike a good blow against Communism. Under the circumstances, it

valuable help from my old friend Father John Cronin, I finished my acceptance speech just minutes before we had to leave for the convention hall," see Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978, 176. This was Nixon's only reference to Cronin in the work.

³ Earl Mazo, "The People Around Nixon," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 14, 1960, page number unknown. A copy of this article is located in the files of the Office of the General Secretary, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Archives of the Catholic University of America, Box 4, Folder 25. (Cited here after as OGS.)

⁴ "Nixon Worked on Speech in Flight to Convention," *New York Times*, *Ibid.*

will be no literary masterpiece. But I think it will be forthright and hard-hitting."⁵

Two years later, journalist Earl Mazo, a friend of the vice president's who at the time was working on a Nixon biography, approached Cronin. Concerned about how his presence with Nixon in San Francisco might be misconstrued, Cronin wrote Msgr. Paul Tanner of the National Catholic Welfare Conference:

The hardest nut to crack will be my presence in San Francisco in August, 1956. His [Mazo's] own boss saw me there, as did several reporters. If I cannot get that incident out [of Mazo's book], I shall try to get 1) a clear statement that my relationship deals with national and international economic and social problems, not partisan politics; 2) that a last-minute decision to discuss these issues was the reason that I was invited . . . to come to San Francisco; and 3) that I could hardly refuse to help a friend when his father was dying.⁶

This seemingly minor incident symbolized the important role Fr. John Cronin played in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. Trained in the application of morality to economics under his mentor, the legendary Msgr. John A. Ryan, Cronin started writing about labor during the Great Depression. At the request of a former student, he became involved in activities to contain the influence of the Communist Party in Baltimore, and in so doing he established close, if covert ties with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In 1944, he took a leave from his duties as a professor at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore to prepare a report on Communism for the American Catholic bishops. Cronin's work had a profound influence. In his 1972 Ph. D. dissertation, Peter Irons aptly summarized Cronin's importance, concluding that "More than any other person,

⁵ Cronin to James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, September 4, 1956. The author is indebted to Msgr. Francis J. Weber of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, for providing him a copy of the letter.

⁶ Memo, Cronin to Msgr. Paul Tanner, June 23, 1958; OGS, Box 4, Folder 18. Cronin did not need to worry – Mazo did not relate the story of the priest's help to Nixon. Cronin also avoided telling Tanner in this memo that he had drafted Nixon's speech.

Father Cronin helped build the foundation for the church's role in the Cold War crusade."⁷ Cronin provided an intellectual edge for the church's opposition to Communism,⁸ as well insights on papal teaching on economics and morality. Following this assignment, Cronin joined the staff of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) in Washington, where he remained there for the approximately twenty year period of 1946-1967. During his time in Washington, Cronin met Richard Nixon, and by 1956 he became his most important speech writer.⁹ In addition to helping draft speeches, Cronin gave Nixon sage political advice, encouraging the vice president to speak out on civil rights (as he was already doing) and suggesting in 1957 that the Eisenhower Administration should reach out to the People's Republic of China – fourteen years before Nixon, as president, would do exactly that. The priest also wrote the preliminary drafts of the American bishops' pastoral letters on race in 1958 and 1963, most of a 1959 letter on liberty (after the visit of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev) and a 1966 pastoral on race and housing.

Cronin's life serves as a linchpin for an understanding of several important American movements – given his influence in shaping Catholic and lay policies through his writings on religion, labor, anti-Communism and race relations. While his work has not been as highly regarded as the work of American Jesuit theologians like Gustave Weigel or John Courtney Murray, Cronin still made significant contributions in his own right. As his friend Msgr. George Higgins said in his eulogy, "In the 1940s and 1950s, Father Cronin, a

⁷ Peter Irons, "America's Cold War Crusade: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy, 1942-1948" Ph. D. diss.: Boston University, 1972, 177.

⁸ In this study, the words "Communism" and "anti-Communism" will be spelled in the upper-case (capital) "C," except when drawing from a quotation where the source has spelled them in the lower case (small) "c." The author hopes that this will cause no confusion.

⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987, 411.

competent scholar and a gifted writer, was the preeminent popularizer of Catholic social teaching in the United States . . . Perhaps no other American writer did as much as he to acquaint his contemporaries in the United States with the essentials of Catholic social thought."¹⁰

Cronin's influence has been barely touched on in several biographies of Richard Nixon and a 1992 article published in the journal *Labor History* by Professors Joshua B. Freeman and Steve Rosswurm, but no biography of him exists.¹¹ It has not been the subject of any biography. This work will help fill that void.

The history of the United States in the years of the Cold War does contain a repulsive side: McCarthyism, the growth of internal security, black lists, etc. These developments contradicted the American ideals of liberty, equality, and justice, which Cronin's race relations, responsible anti-Communism, religious and labor efforts promoted and advanced. Cronin genuinely sought the goals of a just society, joining, for example, with Protestant and Jewish clergy in supporting the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At times when his actions appear those of a comic Don Quixote, notably his attempts to ingratiate himself with J. Edgar Hoover, than a valiant El Cid; nevertheless, it would not be inaccurate to designate him a "Crusader in the Cold War."

¹⁰ See Appendix II below, pages 230-231.

¹¹ Joshua B. Freeman and Steve Rosswurm, "The Education of an Anti-Communist: Father John F. Cronin and the Baltimore Labor Movement," *Labor History*, 33: 2 (Spring 1992), 217-247.

Chapter One:
Early Years: 1908-1944

In the mid eighteenth century, before the American Revolutionary War, a Quaker from Dutchess County New York named Abraham Wing purchased land in upstate New York, about two hundred miles north of New York City. The Quakers who settled there met and chose Wing as their moderator in May 1766. The settlement became known as Wing's Falls, but soon thereafter Colonel Johannes Glens of Schenectady came to control the water rights. When a post office opened the site became known as "Glen's Falls." Later, the apostrophe was removed and it became simply "Glens Falls."¹

The settlers in Glens Falls included Daniel and Mary Cronin of County Mayo Ireland. The couple had five children. The eldest, Bernard, was born in Glens Falls on May 20, 1884. When Mary died, Bernard left school to work and help support the family, and eventually found employment in the paper mills of Finch, Pruyn and Company, a Glens Falls-based company. In subsequent years he married Nora Reardon. Like Bernard's parents, Nora was an Irish immigrant. Bernard and Nora had nine children: John Francis, the eldest, was born on October 4, 1908. He was followed by Mary, Bernard, Leonard, Robert, Anna (who died at birth), James, and twins, Paul and Margaret.²

Three characteristics influenced the Cronin children. First, the parents encouraged their children to study. Margaret Cronin later said, "Even though

¹ *Bridging the Years: Glens Falls, New York, 1763-1978*, Glens Falls: Glens Falls Historical Association, 1978, 11-13; Glens Falls was originally a Quaker community, however Catholics started to settle there by the 1830s. A parish was erected in 1834, and fourteen years later its name was changed to St. Mary's, see Joseph P. Kelley, *The History of St. Mary's Parish, Glens Falls, New York: 1848-1949*, Glens Falls: Glens Falls Post Company, 1949, 11-16.

² Interview of Msgr. James Cronin by the author, August 4, 1999, cited here after as "Msgr. Cronin interview," and Interview of Miss Margaret Cronin by the author, August 6, 1999, cited here after as "Margaret Cronin interview."

my father [only] had an eighth grade education . . . all eight of us graduated with college degrees." Second, the family grew up in an environment sympathetic to organized labor. Margaret recalled that her father was "a very strong union man, because he used to tell us stories about the problems he would have getting a decent wage, so he himself got involved in the unions." Third, the Cronins were devoutly Catholic: John and Paul became Sulpicians, James became a priest of the Baltimore archdiocese, and Mary entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The children were also influenced by the example of Bernard's brother Daniel who was also a priest.³

Young John Francis proved to be a remarkable student, graduating from St. Mary's Academy in 1923 when he was only fourteen years old. The prodigious future priest was also the second of three students to read an essay at the graduation ceremony. Cronin's approximately two thousand word essay became his first published piece. "[The] Coal Situation" was carried in the *Glens Falls Post Star*. In this essay he began by mentioning a coal shortage which had plagued the area the previous winter, and went on to distinguish anthracite from bituminous coal. His discussion of mining displayed characteristic sympathy for the dangerous working conditions which coal miners faced -- often laboring "from two hundred and fifty to fifteen hundred feet under the ground . . . [spending] many hours in the darkness and dirt of an underground coal seam . . . The chance of coal gas igniting, or explosions, [or] of cave-ins is constantly present." The fourteen year old recounted how the miners were paid "by the

³ Margaret Cronin interview. Mary Cronin became Sister Noel Marie, and taught mathematics at the College of St. Rose in Albany. She also established a program called GAP ("Growth and Progress") for inner-city children. She died on January 16, 1993. (Sr. Noel Marie Cronin file in the Archives of the College of St. Rose, Albany.)

James Cronin was ordained on March 17, 1945. He is now retired and resides at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Aberdeen, Maryland.

Paul Cronin was ordained a priest on June 15, 1946. He died on October 15, 1981.

number of tons . . . they send out or by the number of cubic feet cut." Cronin continued by discussing the transport of coal by rail to distributors, and concluded by declaring if "The objective is high production at low cost – operators and miners should work it out together."⁴

Following graduation Cronin moved to Worcester, Massachusetts, to study at Holy Cross College. After spending two years there, he applied for a scholarship to attend Basselin College, part of the Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, D.C. Cronin distinguished himself as a student at Basselin too, again being chosen valedictorian when he graduated with his M.A. in philosophy in 1928, after writing a sixty-one page thesis entitled "The Substantiality of the Soul."⁵ The Sulpicians must have impressed him, because although he originally studied for the Diocese of Albany, he applied for admission to the Sulpician Seminary.

Founded by Fr. Jean Jacques Olier in the seventeenth century, the Sulpician apostolate consists of educating of secular clergy (i.e., Catholic priests who are not members of religious orders but rather are assigned to a diocese). The first Sulpicians came to the United States in 1791, in part to escape the anti-clerical sentiment of post-revolutionary France. That October, the Seminary of St. Sulpice was opened in Baltimore. It's name was later changed to St. Mary's

⁴ "St. Mary's Academy Graduates Its Second Largest Class: John Cronin, 14, One of 61 Who Get Diplomas," *The Post Star*, June 28, 1923, 10; Msgr. Curtin, the pastor of St. Mary's, announced that Cronin was the second fourteen year old to graduate. The first, John L. Bazinet, was a month or two older than Cronin on graduating, making Cronin the youngest graduate in the school's history. John F. Cronin, "[The] Coal Situation [:] Subject of Essay," *The Post Star*, June 28, 1923, *ibid.*; Vincent M. Eaton, S.S. "[Obituary of] John Francis Cronin, S.S." Courtesy of the Sulpician Archives, Baltimore (Cited here in after as SAB).

Parenthetically, John Bazinet also became a Sulpician. He was born on August 23, 1900. As a priest, he taught at the seminary in Baltimore. He died on January 31, 1963 and was buried in Glens Falls. (See "John L. Bazinet, Sulpician, is Dead," *The Catholic Review*, February 8, 1963, 1, 12.)

⁵ John F. Cronin, "The Substantiality of the Soul," M.A. Thesis: Catholic University of America, 1928. (Courtesy of SAB.)

Seminary. Historian Christopher Kauffman wrote that St. Mary's was "the first fully developed American institution exclusively dedicated to theological education in the United States."⁶

The Sulpicians taught Cronin at Basselin, and operated the seminary adjacent to CUA. He completed his studies, and after receiving a dispensation (he was not yet twenty-four) was ordained a priest in 1932 by Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany. The following day he celebrated his first mass in Glens Falls, assisted by his uncle, Fr. Daniel Cronin of Bolton Landing. Father John was handsome: photographs show a man of youthful appearance, with frameless glasses set over blue eyes. His brown hair turned white while he was still young. He stood about five feet ten inches tall. As Msgr. James Cronin recalled, he was not overweight but was "slightly stout" and "walked with a rapid gait."⁷ Father John spent that summer doing parish work. The next fall he moved to Catonsville, Maryland, to enter the Sulpician novitiate.⁸

In the fall of 1933, Cronin started teaching economics at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. Those years were painful for America: the Great Depression was in its fourth year. Unemployment was high – even the reporter who coined the 1928 Republican Party slogan, "A chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage," was out of work. Many unemployed took rode freight trains in search of work. In 1932, two hundred homeless women slept nightly in

⁶ Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tradition and Transformation in Catholic Culture: The Priests of St. Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present*, New York and London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1988, 42.

⁷ Msgr. Cronin interview.

⁸ Eaton. "John Francis Cronin." SAB. Cronin's uncle, Father Daniel P. Cronin, was born in Glens Falls on February 13, 1889. Ordained on May 25, 1918, he was named the first pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bolton Landing in 1928, and pastor of St. Ambrose in Latham in 1938. He was named a monsignor (Domestic Prelate) in November 1963. He retired in September 1969 and died on November 8, 1969.

Grant and Lincoln Parks in Chicago. Unrecognized at the time were the long term effects of malnutrition: when America entered World War II, draft boards rejected forty percent of inductees, mostly for bad teeth. President Herbert Hoover, who had done so much to feed the starving in Europe after the First World War, could not solve the economic catastrophe taking place in his own country.⁹

Church officials, notably Msgr. John A. Ryan, grappled with the economic woes of the era. As a student of Msgr. Ryan at CUA, Cronin had extensive exposure to papal teachings in economics. Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, issued on May 15, 1891, proclaimed the wish to remind "each class of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of social justice." The pope added:

Religion teaches the wealthy owner and the employer that their work people are not to be accounted their bondsmen; that in every man they must respect his dignity and worth as a man and as a Christian, that labor is not a thing to be ashamed of . . . but it is an honorable calling, enabling a man to sustain his life in a way that is upright and creditable; and that it is shameful to treat men like chattels . . .¹⁰

Issuing his own encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI affirmed *Rerum Novarum*. "[I]t cannot be rash to say that Leo's encyclical has proved it-self to be the Magna Carta upon which all Christian activity in the social field ought to be based."¹¹

Imbued with the spirit of *Rerum Novarum*, and the Populism of his native Minnesota, Ryan took a lead in encouraging the bishops to develop a platform for social reform. In response, the bishops issued a pastoral letter in February 1919 entitled "[A] Program of Social Reconstruction." While the first draft was

⁹ William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974, 20-25.

¹⁰ *Rerum Novarum*, Par. 22.

¹¹ *Quadragesimo Anno*, Par. 39. Evidently Pope John XXIII like Pius' having called *Rerum Novarum* the Magna Carta of labor, because he also used that phrase in his *Mater et Magistra*, Par. 26.

Ryan's work, the letter underwent numerous revisions. Some of the proposals demonstrated considerable foresight: the bishops called for minimum wage legislation, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and the elimination of child labor.¹² In addition, many of Ryan's students at CUA went on to make history in their own right: Fr. Edwin V. O'Hara, later the bishop of Kansas City, wrote the first minimum-wage legislation to be upheld by the United States Supreme Court, and Fr. Francis Haas, later the bishop of Grand Rapids Michigan, was appointed to the National Labor Board by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Some officials regarded Ryan as too liberal – indeed, J. Edgar Hoover of the Bureau of Investigation (the predecessor of the F.B.I.) listed Ryan as a "leading radical" in the *General Intelligence Bulletin*, and one right-wing commentator labeled Ryan a "Communist sympathizer."¹³ Despite being viewed as a subversive by some, Ryan was unhappy with society's progress and the work done by the church. He lamented:

[T]he clergy of America have done comparatively little to apply the social teachings of the Church, or in particular of the

¹² "Program of Social Reconstruction." February 12, 1919, found in Hugh Nolan [ed.] *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops: 1792-1940*, Washington D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference, 1984, 1: 255-271.

¹³ Timothy Michael Dolan, *Some Seed Fell on Good Ground: The Life of Edwin V. O'Hara*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992, 29-39. In a decision released on April 9, 1917, the Supreme Court upheld the legislation O'Hara had written. The tie vote of four to four allowed a lower court decision to stand. Fr. Haas biography was written by Thomas E. Blantz, *A Priest in Public Service: Francis J. Haas and the New Deal*, Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.

In an interview Fr. Cronin had with Fr. Blantz in 1978, Cronin claimed that Haas's appointment as bishop of Grand Rapids was engineered by members of the hierarchy who found him too liberal for their taste, and wanted him out of CUA. "I think he was [sent] out there [to Grand Rapids] in exile. I don't know why they wanted him out of Catholic University, but they did." Blantz/Cronin interview, 42. "They" seems to have been Archbishop Samuel Stritch of Chicago.

The Bureau's criticisms of Ryan as a "radical" and "Communist sympathizer" are from Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism*, New York: The Free Press, 1995, 30 and 131.

Encyclical "On the Condition of Labor [*Rerum Novarum*]," to our industrial relations. The bishops who have made any pronouncements in the matter could probably be counted on the fingers of one hand, while the priests who have done so are not more numerous proportionally.¹⁴

Cronin followed his mentor in supporting the working man. Writing in the *Pittsburgh Catholic* in 1937, Cronin said that there was "a moral pressure, if not an obligation, on a workingman to join a worker's organization. No man can morally take a job under conditions that damage his fellows, provided he has real freedom of choice." He added:

The right to work is intimately bound up with the social system under which we live, and must be fitted in with the system of private property and private enterprise prevailing today. Because of large population, and therefore of industrial specialization, all industry is intimately connected with the community and the government. Accordingly, the earning of bread is tied up with the social order and the individual's life is qualified by and must qualify the social system.¹⁵

Even from the seminary in Baltimore, Cronin searched for ways to make America's economy work. During the Depression, Americans sought different economic remedies. Cronin was among those addressing labor economics. He drew from his mentor, Msgr. Ryan, whose dissertation, "A Living Wage: Its Ethical and Economic Aspects" tried to apply moral principles to economic issues. Revisiting Ryan's work, Cronin published a pamphlet entitled *A Living Wage Today*. A shortened version was published in *The Sign* in June 1938. Like Ryan's, Cronin's analysis of wages was rooted in natural law and Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, but he also cited Pius XI. He wrote that the average Catholic reading papal encyclicals would "find wisdom that is not of this earth," but he

¹⁴ John A. Ryan, *The Church and Socialism and Other Essays*, Washington, D.C.: The University Press, 1919, 159.

¹⁵ Quoted in Kenneth J. Heineman, *A Catholic New Deal: Religion and Reform in Depression Pittsburgh*, University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, 136.

did concede that the reader might often be left "more puzzled than he was before [reading the encyclicals]."¹⁶

Cronin conceded that papal statements could not be easily applied to specific economic topics. Yet, he did promote the Catholic church's position. "[D]ecent life includes . . . the right to marry and to raise a family in a fitting manner." Married life should not "be borne within the confines of a tenement hovel." American economic life should be based on "the dignity of man [which] implies that every man has basic rights . . ." Building on the natural law argument, he appealed to authority, drawing heavily from *Quadragesimo Anno*: "[T]he wage paid to the workingman must be sufficient for the support of himself and of his family."¹⁷

Cronin next turned to the level of salaries paid in the U.S. Various estimates on "a minimum wage" -- what today might be termed a "living wage" -- were set at approximately fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars annually. However, compared "with the average weekly wage in the manufacturing industry (around twenty dollars [or \$1,040 annually]), one sees a startling discrepancy." The priest then examined the morality of minimum wage legislation. "No man devoid of moral sense questions the justice of this standard. But many question its practical value . . . Industry simply does not produce enough wealth to allow this minimum ideal."¹⁸

¹⁶ Ryan published his dissertation under the title *A Living Wage: Its Ethical and Economic Aspects*, New York and London: Macmillan, 1912. A copy of Cronin's pamphlet *A Living Wage Today* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press, n.d.) was located in the Cronin Papers (AUND); Cronin. "A Living Wage Today." *The Sign*. 17: 11 (June 1938), 647. (References are to the article, instead of the pamphlet.)

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 649.

¹⁸ *Ibid*. In recommending a set annual figure in wages, Cronin may have been inspired by his mentor, Msgr. Ryan. Ryan had suggested in 1906 that an annual wage of six hundred dollars was a necessary salary, see Douglas P. Seaton, *Catholics and Radicals: The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and the*

Like Msgr. Ryan's, Cronin's view of the situation did take some hope in the New Deal. He urged unions and employers to cooperate.

But when this is not possible, or when outside help is needed, the State has a positive duty so [as] to direct the economic order that the aims of justice are achieved. This may even mean bankruptcy for a few men who are so inefficient that they cannot run a business with sweating labor.¹⁹

Besides the question of insolvent businesses, Cronin was also alarmed by the concentration of power in the hands of corporations. Some "industries are so secure" in their control of the market, that "They are able to dictate labor policies. Any position they take concerning labor is deliberate and calculated . . . This is the most ominous note about the entire situation." As he summarized, there were three difficulties: "unregulated competition, concentration of economic power . . . and the revival of stricken industries." "[A] Catholic sincerely seeking the ideal of a living wage," Cronin added, "can hardly oppose such clearly necessary means as a national minimum wage law, widespread unionization . . . [possible] family subsidies, and some effort to break through . . . industrial concentration."²⁰

In another article published nine months later, Cronin returned to the question of the concentration of power in corporate America. This topic had and continued to command broad appeal: the Populists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had supported the notion of diffusion of power, an idea that resonated (albeit with an anti-Semitic tinge) in the ramblings of Father Coughlin. In contrast to the Populists and Coughlin, Cronin rejected the idea of currency reform. The Populists had urged the use of gold and silver coinage, instead of just gold-backed money, to create inflation and thereby raise the price

American Labor Movement, from Depression to Cold War, Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1981, 35.

¹⁹ Cronin, "A Living Wage Today," 650.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 651.

which farmers would receive for produce. Coughlin wholeheartedly embraced this concept. Cronin instead proposed "the democratizing of industry, according to the ideals of Pope Pius XI." Industries should be compelled to base decisions in part on the rights of labor and on the public interest. "The concentration of economic power would be cut off at its source," and the influence of banking diminished.²¹

In 1939, Cronin published his first major work after his dissertation.²² *Economics and Society* was a hefty (more than four hundred page long) tome, picking up on some of the ethical themes he had studied under Msgr. Ryan. In the preface, he thanked both Haas and Ryan. Cronin intended the work to serve as "an average student's guide to economics." He rejected a view of the American economy "as an automatic machine, self-regulated by inherent checks and balances," and instead endorsed the need for government intervention. "[I]t is assumed (for reasons developed in the text) that some social adjustments are necessary and that the problem confronting the modern world is that of an intelligent choice of objectives and means," he wrote.²³ He further warned of the temptation of extremism:

Many proposals for reform advocate an extreme reaction to current economic problems. Some writers would replace the anarchy of competition or the dominance of big business by the other extreme, state control of all business. This control would be either fascist or communist in nature. Fascism subordinates all business to the well-being of the state, the while leaving intact the previously existing social classes. Communism destroys groups which are presumed to be the enemies of labor and professes to govern the economic system in the interest of the common man. The present work accepts neither philosophy.²⁴

²¹ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Money: Master or Servant." *The Sign*. 18: 9 (April 1939), 528.

²² Cronin's dissertation was published under the title *Cardinal Newman: His Theory of Knowledge*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1935.

²³ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Economics and Society*, New York: American Book Co., 1939, vii-viii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, viii.

Cronin's writing about unemployment displayed considerable sensitivity. In an article entitled "Hope Long Deferred," he wrote "Unemployment means tragedy. It is a death sentence to the hopes of millions . . . a corrosive that eats away strength and courage and manliness." After years of being with-out work, a man's "spirit may be broken," and he could be so emotionally traumatized as to be "psychologically unfit for steady work." The unemployed man "feels ashamed to face his children and confess that he cannot support them," leading him "to crime, to desertion or divorce, to a bitterness in which he curses God and abandons religion, yes, even to self-destruction."²⁵

Cronin attributed joblessness to three major causes: seasonal employment (like agricultural work), depressions, and displacement by technology. Published in February 1941, his article pointed out the continuing adverse effects of the Depression. Business output and corporate profits in 1940 exceeded those of 1929, but high unemployment still remained. Consequently, he argued that "The crisis in America today is a crisis of technology." New machinery and improved business practices were displacing workers. Cronin urged a rather capitalistic solution. Hope lay in "the discovery of new markets for the output of our factories." With a world war underway, and the world's economy unable to support a demand for American consumer goods, the priest also proposed the possibility of expanded domestic consumption. This would require either tax cuts, wage increases, or price reductions. He also hoped that "some discovery as yet undreamed of" would spur economic growth.²⁶

²⁵ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Hope Long Deferred," *The Sign*, 20: 7 (February 1941), 400. The human toll during an economic downturn would resonate in future depressions: in his book *The Secrets of the Temple* William Greider recounted the rise in divorce and suicide among laid-off workers during the recession of the 1980s. William Greider, *The Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, New York: Touchstone/ Simon and Schuster, 1987, 459 ff.

²⁶ Cronin, "Hope Long Deferred," 401-2.

Cronin and Ryan were alone in looking for economic reform. The economic upheaval caused by the depression, and the accompanying social dislocation, had driven many Americans to search for options to American free enterprise. Even before the onset of the Great Depression, Communism had offered an alluring alternative to the capitalism. One of those was a Columbia University student named Whittaker Chambers, who in 1925 approached Garlin Sanders, to convey his interest in joining the American Communist Party (CP-USA). The CP-USA was weakened and driven underground by attacks on it by President Woodrow Wilson's attorney general, A. Mitchell Palmer. Sanders – coincidentally like Cronin, a native of Glens Falls – put Chambers in touch with the Workers Party of America, a Communist front organization.²⁷

The devastating economic slump of the 1930s enhanced the appeal of Communism seemed even more enticing. Lincoln Steffens visited the Soviet Union and exuberantly declared, "I have been to the future and it works." This seeming, if temporary, attraction to Communism necessitated fresh ways of looking at the world's financial health. Catholic anti-Communism could no longer be simply reactive, but rather would have to develop a positive program based on the church's moral mission. Historians Kathleen Riley-Fields and Steve Rosswurm have noted that the Catholic clergy philosophically supported social justice and were convinced that church teachings provided the means to reinvigorate the world.²⁸ Some in the church hierarchy supported labor schools,

²⁷ Sam Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography*. New York: Random House, 1997, 44-45.

²⁸ Lincoln Steffens was quoted in Stephen Kotkin's introduction to John Scott. *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1973, 1989, xiii; Kathleen Riley-Fields. "Anti-Communism and Social Justice: The Double-Edged Sword of Fulton Sheen." *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*. 96: 1-4 (March-December 1986), 83-91; Steve Rosswurm. "The Catholic Church and the Left-Led Union: Labor Priests, Labor Schools and the ACTU," in Steve Rosswurm

at which church teachings could be applied to labor-management issues. In addition, priests like Fathers Peter Dietz of Cincinnati (later Milwaukee) and Father John Corridan, S.J., were actively involved with unions.²⁹ At the same time Catholic Church leaders were fearful that the church could lose the working class to the CP, and were particularly troubled by the increase in Communist influence among workers. The church's motivation in endorsing social and economic reforms was therefore both practical and ideological. Through the operation of the labor schools and contacts with the rank-and-file union members, some clergy became important sources of information for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), resulting in the initiation of a covert working relationship between the church and that arm of the state.³⁰

President Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration in 1933 led to the initiation of federal programs to assist the jobless. Many Catholics, including Msgr. Ryan, Fr. Charles Owen Rice of Pittsburgh, and Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker movement, supported some of FDR's reforms, and notably the formation of the National Labor Relations Board. Many of the clergy supported a worker's right to unionize: Fr. Haas said that laborers had a "sacred obligation" to join unions. Yet, the best-known priest of the 1930s, Fr. Charles Coughlin, was no friend of organized labor. A Canadian-born priest of the Diocese of Detroit, and pastor of

[ed.] *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992, 120.

²⁹ Mary Harrita Fox, *Peter E. Dietz, Labor Priest*, Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953; Colin J. Davis, "'Launch Out Into the Deep and Let Down Your Nets': Father John Corridan, S.J., and New York Longshoremen in the Post-World War II Era," *Catholic Historical Review*, 86:1 (January 2000), 66-84; James T. Fisher, "John M. Corridan, S.J., and the Battle for the Soul of the Waterfront," *U. S. Catholic Historian*, 16: 4 (Fall 1998), 71-87. Fr. Corridan later served as the model for the character "Fr. Barry," played by Karl Malden in the movie "On the Waterfront." Corridan died on July 1, 1984.

³⁰ For the FBI-church relationship, see Steve Rosswurm, "Manhood, Communism, and Americanism: The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the American Jesuits, 1935-1960," *Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism: University of Notre Dame, Series 28: 2* (Spring 1996).

the Parish of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan, Coughlin initiated a radio program called "The Golden Hour of the Little Flower," which originally had a religious format. He developed a considerable following: at one point, a poll rated his radio show as commanding a larger audience than such programs as "Amos 'n Andy," "Fu Manchu," Eddie Cantor, and Kate Smith. With the onset of the Great Depression, Coughlin ventured into politics, and supported FDR, saying "The New Deal is Christ's Deal." Having urged his listeners to vote for Roosevelt, Coughlin somehow concluded that the president would come to him in gratitude to seek his advice. When no such relationship developed, Coughlin became embittered with the president. Although Coughlin turned on FDR, the president was defended by Msgr. Ryan. Coughlin bestowed on Ryan the sobriquet "right-reverend spokesman for the New Deal."³¹

Coughlin had that the government adopt a bimetallic coinage, the use of gold and silver, to promote economic recovery, and he had used some of his income to purchase silver stocks, anticipating that FDR would make such a move. Not only did the New Deal not move toward such a program, but Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau later released a list of parties who had purchased stock in silver, which included Coughlin's name. Coughlin later told one of his biographer's "He [FDR] just used me and when he was through he double-crossed me on that silver business." The embarrassed priest now turned on FDR. His radio program became increasingly shrill, a sort of "combination of Will Rogers and Mussolini," and an anti-Semitic streak emerged in the priest's broadcasts. The Vatican in time called Bishop Michael Gallagher, Coughlin's

³¹ Francis Broderick, *Right Reverend New Dealer: John A. Ryan*, New York: Macmillan, 1961, 227; David J. O'Brien, "American Catholics and Organized Labor in the 1930's," *Catholic Historical Review*, 52: 3 (October 1966), 333; Neil Betten, *Catholic Activism and the Industrial Worker*, Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of America, 1976, 117; Richard Akin Davis, "Radio Priest: The Public Career of Father Charles Edward Coughlin," Ph.D. diss.: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 1974, 21, 49.

superior, to Rome to urge him to bring Coughlin under some control, and even sent Msgr. Joseph P. Hurley to Royal Oak to inform Coughlin of Rome's unhappiness. Neither Gallagher nor Coughlin seemed unduly concerned though.³²

Archbishop Edward Mooney succeeded Gallagher following the bishop's death, and the Detroit Archdiocese³³ now put some distance between itself and the curate of the Little Flower. In October 1937, Coughlin attacked the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) as "a Communist labor movement," even calling the anti-Communist John L. Lewis "the American Stalin." Archbishop Mooney immediately dissociated the Detroit Archdiocese from Coughlin's remarks, and lamented that Coughlin had not accepted "the prudent counsel of a friendly critic" – i.e., Mooney himself.³⁴ Msgr. Ryan said of Coughlin, "What he has done to the emotions and minds and souls of thousands of Catholics in this country is saddening and sickening to contemplate." Just a month after the outbreak of the second World War in Europe, Cronin visited Archbishop Mooney after the British battleship *Royal Oak* was sunk by a German U-boat. Cronin recalled, "He [Mooney] came into supper with a big headline in the

³² Coughlin quote on FDR is found in Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973, 70; On the Vatican's effort to curb Coughlin, see Charles R. Gallagher, "Patriot Bishop: The Diplomatic and Episcopal Career of Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley," Ph.D. diss.: Marquette University, 1998, 121 ff. In later years, Coughlin denied being an anti-Semite. Historian Charles Tull recalled hearing Coughlin give an anti-Communist speech at Notre Dame in the 1960s, at which a student asked Coughlin if he was "still anti-Semitic." Tull wrote, "Coughlin without hesitation roared: 'Nonsense, I never was!'" (See the *Catholic Historical Review*, 79: 2 (April 1993), 373.)

³³ The ecclesiastical status of Detroit was changed from a diocese to an archdiocese after Gallagher's death.

³⁴ Davis, 265 and 267; Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965, 180.

paper, 'Royal Oak Torpedoed.'" Referring to the curate of Royal Oak Michigan, Mooney said, "Well, my problems are over."³⁵

Fr. Coughlin's protestations about the CIO notwithstanding, the majority of Catholics supported organized labor. A minority remained vocal critics: the conservative Brooklyn *Tablet* charged in January and February 1937 that the 1937 sit-down strikes were proof of "a radical disturbing element with a definite link to communism." Jesuit Father Edmund Walsh of Georgetown University characterized the sit-down strikes as an "alien importation."³⁶

These criticisms admittedly reflected the reality of the involvement of the CP-USA in unions. American Communists had been encouraged by the Comintern to organize workers in the automobile industry and related industries. Nevertheless, many liberal Catholic clerics urged caution in zealously applying the "Communist" label by critics to unions. Fr. Charles Owen Rice of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh criticized Martin Carmody for his comment to *L' Osservatore Romano* that the CIO was "completely directed by Communist forces."³⁷ Many Catholics (perhaps more than half of the American Federation of Labor) were union members.³⁸ Cronin also warned against blanket condemnation of organized labor. There were instances, he conceded, of

³⁵ Davis, 596; Blantz/Cronin interview, 44. H.M.S. *Royal Oak* was sunk on October 14, 1939. In 1942, Mooney silenced Coughlin after Leo T. Crowley — acting at the request of Attorney General Francis Biddle — approached the archbishop to warn him that Coughlin risked being charged with violating sedition laws. By this time no longer on the air, Coughlin was publishing a newspaper called *Social Justice*, which ran editorials implying that America had entered the war as part of a British-Jewish conspiracy, see Francis Biddle, *In Brief Authority*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1962, 243-248.

³⁶ Neil Betten, 120. As late as the Second World War, some CIO affiliates advertised in Catholic newspapers to assure Catholics that they were not Communists. See for example, "Catholic Publications Deny CIO-PAC Is Communist," *The Catholic Review*, November 5, 1944, 15.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁸ Douglas P. Seaton estimated that one-third to one-half of the labor movement consisted of Catholics. A 1959 survey put union membership as being 39% Catholic, see Seaton, pp. 13, 24.

"racketeering" in unions connected with the American Federation of Labor and there were communists in the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Nevertheless, he urged that the public demonstrate "sympathy to the just claims of labor, [as] then we will be in a better position to warn labor against the few leaders whose allegiance is to foreign powers."³⁹ In July 1941, he wrote "Communism and racketeering are not major problems in the labor movement. They affect only a small segment of the whole." He further emphasized:

Are we to tell workers to get rid of successful leaders without doing anything to replace them? Before we condemn their attitude and tell the unions that they must purge themselves of Communism at any cost, we might well examine our own consciences. It may be that we have condoned the activities of dishonest politicians on similar grounds, that they have been doing a substantially good job and a few minor lapses might be over-looked. One wonders why long ago union leaders have not asked us why we are so free in advice to them and so sparing in admonitions to corrupt politicians of our own faith and nationality.⁴⁰

Cronin's concern about the influence of the CP-USA in labor soon brought about a new phase in his ministry. Anxious to educate his clergy about the church's attitude toward labor, Archbishop Michael J. Curley of Baltimore asked Cronin to establish a School of Social Action. Curley directed Cronin to begin classes for clergy in Baltimore in October 1938 and for the priests in Washington D.C. in January 1939. The courses ran twelve weeks in duration. Labor classes were also later run in parishes, and were usually attended by twenty-five to forty parishioners. Because of his teaching load, Cronin was forced to travel back and forth between Washington and Baltimore. The following April, plans were

³⁹ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Strife and the Worker," *The Sign*, 20: 9 (April 1941), 524.

⁴⁰ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Men Who Lead Labor," *The Sign*, 20: 12 (July 1941), 720.

announced to open a labor school in Baltimore.⁴¹ According to *The Catholic Review*:

Its purpose is to acquaint the Catholic workingmen with the teaching of the Church on such questions as the right and necessity of organization and the need of collective bargaining; wages, hours, and working conditions; the history of the labor movement; the mutual duties and rights of capital and labor; the place of the Government in economic life and the question of social legislation; the right and the duty of the Church to speak with authority on these subjects; the place of religion in everyday working life.⁴²

Cronin was to assist in the new school. Courses were to start at eight on Thursday evenings during the months of May and June, and were to last an hour and a half. "There will be no fees, no books to buy, and no assignments," wrote one journalist in *The Catholic Review*. Moreover, there would be additional time to allow students to speak with members of the faculty. Topics would be addressed thematically during weekly meetings. Thus, the first week would discuss the question "Why is the Catholic Church Interested in the Workingman?" The second week's topic was "Why Join a Union?" Other weeks included overviews of the AFL, CIO, and other unions, "Catholic Principles versus Communist Principles," etc. Cronin assisted in a similar series in Richmond. Two additional series of classes were planned to be held in Baltimore. Announcing the classes, *The Catholic Review* reported on a three-fold agenda: the schools were designed to help explain Catholic doctrine, train lay leaders, and combat Communism and other subversive influences. Cronin's writing and teaching helped sharpen his skills in the area of labor and economics. He did not simply speak out on moral issues: in one address, he recommended greater diversification in southern agriculture. In the Fall of 1940,

⁴¹ "Father Cronin To Direct School Of Social Action," *The Catholic Review*, September 30, 1938, 12; John F. Cronin, S.S., "Modern Society and the Social Order," *The Catholic Review*, October 7, 1938, 4.

⁴² "Labor School To Be Opened In Baltimore," *The Catholic Review*, April 21, 1939, 10.

he spoke on a radio program called the "Catholic Hour." He also continued to speak at labor schools. In 1941, Cronin took charge of the Institute of Catholic Social Studies at CUA.⁴³

On the fourth of July, one of Cronin's former students, Francis O'Brien approached him in Baltimore to convey his concern about a Communist take over of Local 43 of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA). Local 43 represented workers at the Fairfield Shipyard in Baltimore, a facility which built numerous "Liberty Ships" during the war years. O'Brien had first complained to the archdiocese and was sent to Cronin. At first skeptical about O'Brien's allegations, Cronin became convinced when he learned the same story in a visit by FBI agents.⁴⁴

⁴³ "Labor School To Be Opened Next Week," *The Catholic Review*, April 28, 1939, 12; "Labor School For Catholic Workers," *Ibid.*, May 5, 1939, 4; "Richmond Plans Catholic School, Social Action," *Ibid.*, September 8, 1939, 7; "Two Schools To Be Opened For Workers," *Ibid.*, September 29, 1939, 1, 4, 7; "Father Cronin Urges Diversity In Farming," *Ibid.*, October 20, 1939, 13; John F. Cronin, S.S. "The Church And The Modern Social Order," *Ibid.*, January 5, 1940, 4; "Social Action Resumed In Parishes," *Ibid.*, January 5, 1940, 12; John F. Cronin, S.S. "The Church And The Modern Social Order [Part II]," *Ibid.*, January 12, 1940, 4; "New Course, Social Action Is Announced," *Ibid.*, March 8, 1940, 12; "Social Action School Opens Next Week," *Ibid.*, March 29, 1940, 12; "165 Attending Opening, School Of Social Action," *Ibid.*, April 5, 1940, 14; "Father Cronin Will Be Heard, Catholic Hour," *Ibid.*, August 30, 1940, 12; "Fr. Cronin Urges Unity Of Good Will," *Ibid.*, September 20, 1940, 12; "Social Action School Begins New Season," *Ibid.*, September 27, 1940, 14; "Radio Talks To Be Given By Holy Name [Society]," *Ibid.*, October 4, 1940, 12; "Dr. Cronin, Speaker, Social Action Program," *Ibid.*, November 29, 1940, 5; "Social Action School Will Resume Lessons," *Ibid.*, January 31, 1941, 10; "Dr. Cronin To Speak At Birmingham Forum," *Ibid.*, April 11, 1941, 24; "Dr. John Cronin To Be Speaker, Catholic Hour," *Ibid.*, August 15, 1941, 1; "Dr. Cronin To Speak On Social Action Hour," *Ibid.*, October 10, 1941, 3; "Social Action Hour," *Ibid.*, October 24, 1941, 14; C. Joseph Nuesse. *The Catholic University of America: A Centennial History*. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1990, 311.

⁴⁴ Joshua B. Freeman and Steve Rosswurm, "The Education of an Anti-Communist: Father John F. Cronin and the Baltimore Labor Movement," *Labor History*, 33: 2 (Spring 1992), 232; Vernon L. Pedersen, "Red, White, and Blue: The Communist Party in Maryland, 1919-1949," Ph. D. diss.: Georgetown University, 1993, 270-274.

CP members had recently put forward a ticket of candidates in Local 43 elections called the "Rank and File Slate". The Rank and File Slate had four advantages over its non-Communist opponents. First, the slate put forward a positive agenda of fairly straight-forward goals: support for the war effort, high wages, and opposition to discrimination. To oppose the Rank and File Slate, O'Brien had organized an "All-American Slate" without listing any priorities. His platform simply read, "Brother Members of Local 43: There has come into our midst a Communistic element which is as deadly to our United and Democratic Union of rank and file as the Axis powers are to our United and Democratic Way of Living. Help us drive out this element." Second, the Communists were well organized. Third, they had made inroads among the African-American workers, capitalizing on the tremendous discrimination against black workers in different industries in the Baltimore area. Some of the anti-Communist membership of Local 43, like workers in many local facilities, were quite bigoted. (Indeed, in December 1943, white workers in an electrical plant had gone on strike to demand segregated toilets.) Fourth, the Communists benefited from worker apathy. Local 43 had (on paper) about fifteen thousand members, but only about two thousand bothered to vote.⁴⁵

Following the success of the Rank and File Slate in the local election, anti-Communists in the union staged wildcat strikes. The impact of these work stoppages, however, had minimal impact. In November 1942, the IUMSWA national leadership expelled six of the more egregious anti-Communist members from Local 43. Fighting broke out and the police were called in to a union meeting to restore order. A Coast Guard unit was called in to the Fairfield plant to help maintain peace.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Freeman and Rosswurm, 222-223, 232-233; Pedersen, 274-276.

⁴⁶ Pedersen, 276-279.

In the interim, Cronin wrote to the IUMSWA leadership to request an investigation into Local 43. In response, the national leaders came to Baltimore in December to investigate these charges. They concluded that there was "no tangible and compelling evidence of unquestioned character . . . to prove that any one of the accused was in fact a member of the Communist Party."

Undeterred, Cronin in January 1943 helped organize an effort to vote out the Rank and File Slate, putting together an anti-Communist slate called the "Victory Ticket." Cronin's efforts failed. The Rank and File ticket not only maintained control of Local 43, but also denounced the priest was denounced.⁴⁷ Cronin wrote to IUMSWA President John Green:

I write this under the double impact of an election defeat and a masterful smear by the *CIO News*. In regard to the former may I repeat that the election was eminently fair. No alibis. No regrets. In regard to the latter, I wonder what those Jews think I am. Irishmen, like Scots, are not noted for running away from fights.⁴⁸

Within just a few months though, the situation in Baltimore changed dramatically. First, the CP-USA encouraged a shift in tactics. The party had successfully tapped the resentment within the African-American community in recruiting new members, however the party now wanted to build a broader base of support. Al Lannon, an east coast Communist operative, explained this program. "The Communist Party is now fighting for its legality, and must reach out now, not only to the trade unions but to all the masses." CP leadership now downplayed the recruitment of black Americans.⁴⁹

Second, IUMSWA Local 43 was being challenged by a rival union. Local 37 of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), affiliated with the AFL, started to sign up crane operators at the Fairfield Yard. Although Local 37 succeeded in signing some of the crane operators, Local 43 brought the matter

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 285-286.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 294-296.

before the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB ruled in favor of Local 43 (and the CIO), but the IUMSWA was somewhat embarrassed by the matter. IUMSWA Secretary-Treasurer Philip Van Gelder conceded under examination that while Local 43 claimed twenty-eight thousand members, actual membership was only nine thousand. Although not involved in the AFL/Local 37 effort, Cronin was accused of being an accomplice in the matter. The leadership of Local 43 bestowed the sobriquet "the Cronin mob" on the anti-Communists, also calling them "Stool pigeons, Christian Fronters [a reference to Father Coughlin's followers], Fifth columnists, and Nazi sympathizers" whose goal was "to sell out to the AFL."⁵⁰

Cronin took his cause public. In May 1943, he published an article in *The Sign*. Moscow (and the CP-USA) hoped that Britain and the U.S. would invade France to divert the German war effort from the Eastern Front, and had called for a "Second Front" against Berlin. Cronin turned that phrase around, calling domestic communists a "Second Front Menace." He described the efforts of the CP to take control of labor unions. "This article," he began, "was born of bitter experience." He continued:

It is more like a communiqué written in the heat of battle than a leisurely analysis of a scholarly problem. During recent months this writer has been in the midst of a fight which for savagery and uncompromising fury rivals many of those fought in Africa and on the Pacific seas. It concerns the second front at home, the effort of the Communist Party to capture positions of great power while our attention is diverted elsewhere.⁵¹

Communists who entered the labor pool, Cronin continued, were simultaneously able to "avoid military service and. . . infiltrate into positions of power." Communists were particularly adept at securing employment in "war

⁵⁰ Freeman and Rosswurm, 240-241.

⁵¹ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Second Front Menace," *The Sign*, 22: 10 (May 1943), 583. The article was also printed in *The Catholic Review*, April 30, 1943, 11.

production, transportation, and food [processing and distribution]. To make the picture complete," he charged, "the Party is now trying to take over civilian defense and the child-care program for the war workers." The problem as he saw it was not foreign. More important for the success of the CP-USA than Red Army victories against the Wehrmacht was the "apathy and indifference" of non-Communists.⁵² He recognized and sympathized with the life of the average working man:

Men who are working seven days a week, eight to ten hours a day, have little time or energy for anything else. Literally, they work, eat, and sleep, with few outside interests. Here is a situation made to order for an organized, disciplined, and intelligent minority.⁵³

Cronin recommended "a middle way between feeding material to the [anti-New Deal] Dies Committee on the one hand and [syndicated columnist] Westbrook Pegler on the other."⁵⁴ Reliable anti-Communist leaders could be trained to oppose CP sponsored candidates for union positions. Although emphasizing the need to start at the parish level, Cronin nonetheless cautioned that workers outside of the Catholic faith should also be brought in "lest a Church plot be charged."⁵⁴

Cronin continued his writing and teaching at the Catholic Institute for Social Studies during the summer of 1943. In a commentary in *The Catholic*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 583-584.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 584.

⁵⁴ Rep. Martin Dies (1900-1972) chaired the House Committee on Un-American Activities until 1945. He once expressed the opinion that "[T]he New Deal is working hand in glove with the Communist Party." (See William A. Klingaman, *Encyclopedia of the McCarthy Era*, New York: Facts on File, 1996, 108.)

Westbrook Pegler (1894-1969) was also hostile toward FDR. He once called him a "feeble-minded Fuehrer" and on another opinion expressed regret that a would-be assassin "hit the wrong man" when he tried to shoot Roosevelt in 1933. Pegler contributed several articles to the John Birch Society organ *American Opinion* until 1964. (See "Westbrook Pegler, Columnist, 74, Dies," *New York Times*, June 25, 1969, 1, 43; Alden Whitman, "Free Swinging Critic," *New York Times*, *ibid.*, 43.)

⁵⁴ Cronin. "Second Front Menace," 585.

Review, the Baltimore Archdiocesan paper, Cronin published Pope Pius XII's comments to Italian workers. Cronin was also invited to give some radio addresses on "The Catholic Hour," and spoke to different Catholic groups on economics.⁵⁵

In September 1943, CP activist Al Lannon approached Cronin seeking an alliance. Prior to agreeing to meet with Lannon, Cronin obtained "the necessary permission from government people and from my own Church."⁵⁶ At this meeting, Cronin asked for a withdrawal of Communist domination of Local 43. Lannon seemed open to the possibility of a reduced CP presence in Local 43's leadership, but was overruled by CP leadership. The following month, another Communist activist, Roy Hudson, joined Lannon to meet with Cronin to discuss the labor situation. Prior to this meeting, Cronin contacted the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the FBI in Baltimore to request that the FBI surreptitiously bug the meeting. The brazenness of Cronin's request would seem to indicate that a close relationship between him and the Baltimore FBI was already in existence.⁵⁷ When forwarding this request, the SAC in Baltimore concluded that Cronin's motivation might have been a desire to use the FBI tape as a means of countering allegations that Hudson and Lannon might later make against him. The Baltimore SAC conceded that "if these men ever 'put the bee' on Cronin, there is a remote possibility he might say that the FBI could prove his part [i.e. his innocence] in this." Nonetheless, the SAC ventured his "opinion that Cronin

⁵⁵ John F. Cronin, S.S. "To the Workers of the World: The Message of Our Holy Father," *The Catholic Review*, June 18, 1943, 13; "Father Cronin to be Speaker, Catholic Hour," *Ibid.*, July 30, 1943, 20. Cronin's five radio sermons were published in *The Catholic Review* between August 6 and September 3, 1943. On his lectures, see "Father Cronin Will Lecture, Mt. St. Agnes," *Ibid.*, October 8, 1943, 5, and "Father Cronin Addresses Men, St. Bernard's," *Ibid.*, December 24, 1943, 3.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Freeman and Rosswurm, 239.

⁵⁷ The author is indebted to Dr. Athan Theoharis for this insight.

would not do this, although he thought he should mention the possibility."⁵⁸ FBI Assistant Director Edward A. Tamm, Hoover's principal aide, gave the approval for the hidden microphone to be placed in Cronin's residence.⁵⁹ During this meeting, Cronin urged that the CP "lay under cover for a while" in order to maintain CIO jurisdiction (instead of rival AFL) over the shipyard workers. Lannon and Hudson refused to terminate CP activity in the yard, and the meeting ended without having reached a resolution of the problems faced in Local 43.⁶⁰

The following spring, Cronin resumed his writing about Communism and his experiences. "In the past," he observed, "we were more amused than angry at its tactics. In important spheres of life the party has gained real strength. It influences large unions; it stirs up racial tensions . . . and it is currently engaged in developing a powerful political action machine."⁶¹ Cronin attributed the growth of the CP to American sympathy toward the USSR, improved Communist propaganda and organization, and anxiety over the war.

This writer has spent the last eighteen months in aiding war workers in their struggle against Red domination of their unions. The facts uncovered in this struggle are startling. It is hard to believe that any American, whatever may be his religious or political beliefs, can remain indifferent to them. For this reason, it is hoped that readers of these articles will circulate them widely.⁶²

Cronin worried about the "Simple souls who believe that they can join hands with the Communists without being sullied . . ." For Cronin, efforts to

⁵⁸ Memo of J. K. Mumford to D. M. Ladd, October 18, 1943, FBI File: 94-35404-X, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (Handwritten on the bottom of the sheet are the words "OK as per EAT [Edward A. Tamm].")

⁶⁰ Freeman and Rosswurm, 240. Professors Freeman and Rosswurm cited a document they located in FBI file 100-7319-235. Disappointingly, no copy of this document seems to exist in Cronin's FBI file, 94-35404.

⁶¹ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Communism In Baltimore [:] The Menace of Communism," *The Catholic Review*, April 7, 1944, 18.

⁶² *ibid.*

work with the CP would only lead to absorption into the party. He cited an article published in the *Daily Worker* the previous month in which a writer asserted that "when good trade unionists wish to affiliate with the Communist movement in times like these, we need not doubt that they will rapidly assimilate its teaching."⁶³

Cronin published a second article the next week in *The Catholic Review* on the front page as the lead story. Headlined "Communists Are Active In Baltimore Shipyards And Munition Factories," Cronin charged that "there was a mass migration [of Communists] from New York to the war production centers. Thousands who had rarely lifted anything heavier than a pen became welders and riveters in our shipyards and factories." The priest then identified the specific plants having unions with CP members: the Fairfield, Key Highway, and Maryland Drydocks, the Glenn L. Martin aircraft plant, and the Bethlehem-Sparrows Point steel mills. CP control of a union, Cronin cautioned, did not necessarily mean the officers were Communists. The "preferred" Communist tactic, he wrote, "is to put into office ambitious but untrained men who know little of Communist teaching or methods." Such men became "helpless tools," dependent on "their backers for advice, for aid in writing speeches, issuing statements and the like." As in his previous articles, Cronin attributed CP victories to "their own skill and the indifference of thousands of workers . . . [A] strong minority, disciplined and organized [could] . . . handle the untrained and disorganized majority." Nonetheless, Cronin concluded on an optimistic note: "Even if ten percent of the membership took an intelligent part in union affairs, the present conditions could be remedied in six months. Those who sulk and talk of quitting are cowardly leaving the field to their enemies."⁶⁴

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Communists Are Active In Baltimore Shipyards And Munitions Factories," *The Catholic Review*, April 14, 1944, 1.

Cronin's April 14 article brought a sharp rebuke from Lyman C. Covert, the regional director of the IUMSWA. In a statement, Covert said "The Rev. John F. Cronin, S.S., today smeared the thousands of Baltimore area plant workers who are members of the CIO affiliated organizations as being dupes of a gigantic 'Communist Plot.' To your charges, Father Cronin, we simply say, produce your facts to substantiate them . . ." Covert attacked Cronin's "alleged 'labor school' in which parliamentary procedure was taught from the viewpoint of how to disrupt meetings." The anti-Communists "resorted to typical 'storm trooper' strong-arm tactics." Covert further accused Cronin of attempting to "destroy the CIO trade union movement in Baltimore," and cited the wildcat strikes "[Y]our followers have been the strongest advocates of stoppages and strikes in direct violation of labor's pledge." The IUMSWA regional director concluded:

Finally we ask you to keep your oft-repeated promise, to which you have never adhered, to dissociate yourself from interference with matters that are strictly rank-and-file, trade-union problems. We cannot permit anyone to inject themselves into our affairs any more than you could or would follow a trade unionist giving insistent advice on Catholicism.⁶⁵

Jack Flaherty of the United Electrical and Machine Workers of the CIO echoed Covert's complaint, observing that "Father Cronin would do well if he stuck to his job in giving spiritual guidance and left the running of their own unions to the workers, who are getting mighty tired of having that old red herring waved in their faces."⁶⁶

At the time Covert's reaction to Cronin's articles was published, the cleric was in West Palm Beach, Florida. The stress and workload must have been taking a toll, for when he was contacted by the *Baltimore Sun*, Cronin informed the editor that at the time he was in poor health. Nevertheless, he did wire his

⁶⁵ "Smear Charge Laid To Priest By CIO Leader," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 15, 1944, 16, 5.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

reply to many of Covert's comments. First he said, "As to the proof of Communist domination [of the unions], we have no less an authority than the [Maryland] State secretary of the Communist party," i.e., Al Lannon. Lannon had spoken of CP control "over several locals and several prominent union officials." Cronin denied having attacked the CIO, and reiterated that his criticisms were "directed against an organized and undemocratic minority." The editors of *The Catholic Review* also came to Cronin's defense. "Father Cronin is a priest of the Church whose Founder was a worker. He stands by such Papal Encyclicals as *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII and *Quadragesimo Anno* by Pope Pius XI." The editors further assured their readers that "Father Cronin has the respect and confidence of his ecclesiastical superiors."⁶⁷

In a third article, Cronin warned of CP efforts to attract young people. He specifically cited the "American Youth for Democracy," a Communist front organization which in October 1943 replaced the Young Communist League when that organization was formally disbanded. In the fourth and last article of the series, Cronin identified five tests to determine whether an individual or group, especially a union, was Communist. His first was a tendency to bring up civil rights, even at labor meetings where economic rather than social matters were to be discussed; second, CP members agitated for political change instead of focusing on economic matters; third, the use of the labor press for "name-calling and insults;" fourth, the use of language – referring to opponents as "fascists," or "reactionary." Finally, he observed, Communists employed "slandorous rumors" to provoke animosities between factions. He concluded by again calling for worker unity.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ "Priest Points To Communist Official Here," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 17, 1944, 20; "Father Cronin's Critics," *The Catholic Review*, April 21, 1944, 13.

⁶⁸ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Communists Are Slick In Deceiving Youth," *The Catholic Review*, April 21, 1944, 1, 13; John F. Cronin, S.S. "Father Cronin Tells How Communist Plans Can Be Defeated," *Ibid.*, April 28, 1944, 10.

May 1944 brought Cronin some welcome news, with his receipt of a thousand dollar award from the Pabst Brewing Company for a paper he had submitted to a contest. *The Catholic Review* later carried Cronin's paper, entitled "Problems Of Post-War Employment In America." Doubtless that essay formed the basis of a paper he later published in *The Sign* in July 1944. When the war ended, large numbers of servicemen would be demobilized and come home, and orders for war material would fall off. To avoid a post-war depression, Cronin recommended the need for some sort of preparation. Like other Americans, Cronin wondered what would become of America after the conflict's termination. "We must face the disturbing truth that American business activity must be enormous to absorb such a [large] working force," he wrote. Transition from a war-time to a peace-time economy would present a formidable task. Cronin, however, offered few specific recommendations beyond urging that the government to encourage business expansion through tax cuts, and carefully observe industry to prevent "unregulated license."⁶⁹

In addition to his extensive academic and anti-Communist writings, Cronin faced serious familial challenges. He helped his siblings as their parents aged. "One of the things that I feel very proud of was his ability to look for our unity as a family," recalled Msgr. James Cronin. "Several responsibilities that would ordinarily be passed upon to the parents he assumed because of his age and his ability to get along." When his brother Bob expressed an interest in acting, Father John helped him get into the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Having attended the academy for a year, was invited back for a second year, Bob was injured in an automobile accident. Msgr. James Cronin said, "I do recall him

⁶⁹ "Father Cronin Wins \$1,000 Prize In Competition," *Ibid.*, May 19, 1944, 5; John F. Cronin, S.S., "Problems Of Post-War Employment in America," *Ibid.*, July 14, 1944, 10. See also John F. Cronin, S.S. "Jobs or Dictatorship?" *The Sign*, 23 (July 1944), 692-693.

coming home that afternoon saying, 'I got a special call to go someplace,' and he'd be in touch with us . . . [T]hat evening, when he called, [he] broke the news to my parents that my brother Bob had been in the accident. So he was the one to be out there, to be with him, to support him, to strengthen him, and he was the one who sort of stood by guarding him, keeping his courage up, and looking for the best physical assistance that could be given to him." His injuries were of such a nature that he lost control of several muscles in his face, ending his chances of becoming an actor. Father John also helped the family in smaller ways: "We as a family wrote a letter once a month," Msgr. Cronin recalled. "We sent our letters to him, he in turn mimeographed them [and sent them out], so each month we received a communication from another sibling through him – and this in spite of his heavy work schedule . . ."⁷⁰

Father John also helped his sister Margaret. After working for a time at a bank in Glens Falls, she moved to Washington, D.C. She remembered:

My brother found me a place to live at a rooming house, which was a couple of blocks from where he lived . . . In fact, it was almost through him that I ended up getting my job at the AFL . . . [W]hen I first got a job, it was with a building contractor, but I didn't particularly like the job . . . My brother just happened to mention something to George Meany . . . [So] I was told to go there and apply for a job. And I still remember going into the AFL building which was down at Ninth and Massachusetts Ave . . . saying to some man 'Do you know which office is George Meany's office?' and he says [in reply] 'It's up on the eighth floor.' We both got off the elevator and he said to me 'I'm George Meany.' That's how I met George Meany!⁷¹

The mid-1940s proved a time of mixed emotions for the Cronin family. On January 2, 1945, Cronin's father died in Glens Falls. About two months later, Jim Cronin followed his brother John into the priesthood, and was ordained for

⁷⁰ Msgr. James Cronin interview. Robert Cronin later ran a laundry cleaning firm and taught history at the College of St. Rose, where Sr. Noel Marie taught math. He also served as mayor of Glens Falls from 1970 to 1978. He died in Glens Falls at the Cronin family home on Leonard Street, on December 12, 1986. See "Former Mayor Cronin, 71, Dies," *The Post-Star*, December 13, 1986, 1.

⁷¹ Margaret Cronin interview.

the Baltimore Archdiocese on St. Patrick's Day. The ordination ceremony was held in Albany rather than Baltimore to allow his mother to attend. About a year after that, Paul was ordained a priest. During his pre-med studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore he met several Sulpicians. Like John, Paul joined the order. In later years after Mrs. Cronin suffered a stroke, the family moved her to Washington and later to Baltimore. "It was kind of a family thing financially, everybody helped. Father John was especially helpful," recalled Margaret Cronin.⁷²

Before leaving Cronin's personal life, a final question should be examined: Did Father Cronin sometimes yield to racist temptations? In a previously-quoted letter to IUMSWA President John Green, he wrote "I wonder what these Jews think I am." Historians Joshua Freeman and Steve Rosswurm concluded that Cronin sometimes "played on widespread anti-cosmopolitan – [and] probably anti-Semitic – sentiments when he repeatedly blamed the Communist menace on imported New Yorkers." On the other hand, Professors Freeman and Rosswurm also pointed out that there were a number of Jews among the labor organizers at the time. Cronin's reaction may well have simply been a response to that presence.⁷³ In addition, Cronin at times later defended Jews. In April 1945 he wrote "[S]ome of the ablest fighters against Communism in Baltimore have been Jews."⁷⁴ Finally, had Cronin ever held personal ethnic prejudices, he soon

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Pedersen, 286; Freeman and Rosswurm, 222. Cronin later wrote that he believed New York City to be "the national capital of Communism," and he urged the American bishops establish a national office for dealing with the CPA in New York, see John F. Cronin, S.S., "Tentative Confidential Report on Communism," [Baltimore: April 1945], 35, located in OGS, Box 24.

⁷⁴ "Tentative Report," 33. In this same report, Cronin termed the question of Jews and Communism as "delicate." He asserted that a large percentage of American Communists were Jews ("probably as high as sixty-four percent"), but he estimated that the number of Jews who were Communists was extremely low (one percent), see his "Tentative Report," 29.

abandoned such demons when pressuring the American Catholic bishops to write on racial issues.

Chapter Two:
 "The Problem of American Communism in 1945"
 and Other Writings

For historian Richard Gid Powers, American Catholicism served as the "backbone" of American anti-Communism. The church opposed Communism dating from the time the movement was in its infancy. The opposition to the abolition of private property predated the writings of Karl Marx: In May 1846, two years before the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, Pope Pius IX attacked "that infamous doctrine of so-called Communism, which is absolutely contrary to natural law itself, and if adopted, would utterly destroy the rights, property, and possessions of all men, and even of society itself." In December 1878, Leo XIII referred to Communism as "the fatal plague which insinuates itself into the very marrow of human society only to bring about its ruin."¹ In an encyclical attacking Communism of March 19, 1937, Pope Pius XI wrote:

This modern revolution, it may be said, has actually broken out or threatens everywhere, and it exceeds in amplitude and violence anything yet expressed in the preceding persecutions launched against the Church. Entire peoples find themselves in danger of falling back into a barbarism worse than anything which oppressed the greater part of the world at the coming of the Redeemer.

This all too imminent danger, Venerable Brethren, as you have already surmised, is Bolshevistic and Atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundation of Christian civilization.²

Although condemning Communism, Pius was not blind to the excesses of capitalism. The pope reproved the global economic system for the "unusual

¹ Powers, 51; Pius IX and Leo XIII were quoted in Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris* ("On Atheistic Communism"), Paragraph 4. Some background can be found in Lillian Parker Wallace, *Leo XIII and the Rise of Socialism*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1966, 25 ff.

² *Divini Redemptoris*, Paragraphs 2-3. Pius issued the encyclical just five days after he criticized Nazi Germany, in the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*. Presumably the timing was designed to underscore an attempt at neutrality -- attacking both a Fascist and a Communist state in the same month.

misery [which] has resulted from the unequal distribution of the goods of the world."³ He conceded that the suffering caused by the world-wide Depression attracted many to Communism, noting that "the Communist takes advantage of the present world-wide economic crisis to draw into the sphere of his influence even those sections of the populace which on principle reject all forms of materialism and terrorism." Communists were "also proficient in exploiting racial antagonisms and political divisions and oppositions."⁴ Persecution of peoples was not an aberration inherent to Communist systems he cautioned, but rather was part of "the natural fruit of a system which lacks all inner restraint."⁵ He warned "Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever."⁶

In addition to theological criticism, anti-Communism permeated Roman Catholic spirituality. Some American historians have argued that American Catholics employed anti-Communism to prove their patriotism.⁷ While not inaccurate, this assertion simplifies a more complex reality. To certain Catholics, it seemed that the Apocalypse was at hand. On May 13, 1917, three Portuguese children reported that the Virgin Mary had appeared to them. On the thirteenth of every month for the next five months, the children returned to the site of the apparition, and again claimed to have seen the Blessed Virgin. The day of the last apparition (October 13, 1917), some fifty thousand people came to the location to pray. In 1922, the local bishop authorized a study of the apparitions, and ultimately authorized the cult of Our Lady of Fatima. The Virgin allegedly

³ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 58.

⁷ See for example Robert L. Frank, "Prelude to Cold War: American Catholics and Communism," *Journal of Church and State*, 34: 1 (Winter 1992), 56, and Lisa C. Moreno, "The National Catholic Welfare Conference and Catholic Americanism, 1919-1966," Ph. D. diss.: University of Maryland, 1999, iv.

told the children that "during the Pontificate of Pius XI another and more terrible war will begin," and also warned that Russia "will spread her errors throughout the entire world, provoking wars and persecution of the Church."⁸ Pius XI's successor -- Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pius XII -- was consecrated a bishop on May 13, 1917, the same day the first apparition took place. Elected in March 1939, Pius XII developed a devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, and concluded a Holy Year in 1951 by visiting the site of the apparitions.⁹ Marian piety was not the only form of spirituality colored by anti-Communism: in 1930 Pius XI added prayers for the conversion of Russia were added to the Holy Mass.¹⁰

Especially in the 1930s, the American Catholic press took up the anti-Communist banner. Reports were carried of measures taken against the church by leftist, anti-clerical governments. Starting in August 1936, *The Catholic Review* of Baltimore published a series of articles describing the persecution of the church in Spain. The featured essays carried titles like, "Many Priests And Nuns Are Murdered In Spain By God-Hating Reds," "300 Priests, And Bishop, Murdered In Spain; Reds Open Tabernacles And Trample On Sacred Hosts," "Execution Of Priests And Nuns Held Daily In Spanish Capital; Hundreds Murdered In Barcelona," "Priests Hunted Like Animals In Spain; Victims Are

⁸ John J. Delaney, *A Woman Clothed With the Sun: Eight Great Appearances of Our Lady in Modern Times*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961, 194.

⁹ See "Fatima" in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1967, Vol. 5: 855-856. See also Thomas A. Kselman and Steven M. Avella, "Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States," *Catholic Historical Review*, 72: 3 (July 1986), 403-424; "3rd 'Secret of Fatima' Fuels Millennial Fears for Some," *Los Angeles Times*, December 31, 1999, A-1, A-21.

One may question the timing of the Virgin Mary's comments: the Second World War officially started in Europe in September 1939, during the pontificate of Pius XII, not Pius XI. Yet, it can be asserted that the conflict started earlier: Japan invaded China in 1931 and Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy started their quest for *Lebensraum* during Pius XI's reign.

¹⁰ Powers, 110.

Butchered On Altar; 150 Seminarians Executed," and "Spanish Nuns Subjected To Torturing Infamies Before Reds Murder Them."¹¹

Americans were divided over the Spanish Civil War. Many Americans favored intervention in the war on the side of the Spanish Republic against Franco, noting that Franco was receiving help from Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. However, some saw Franco as the hero, opposing an anti-clerical government which was receiving material from the Soviet Union. The breakdowns also came along religious lines, with Catholics more inclined to look sympathetically on Franco's forces than Protestants. After the Spanish hierarchy issued a pastoral letter, one hundred fifty American Protestant clergy issued a letter criticizing the Spanish bishops. In turn, many Catholics sharply rebuked their Protestant brethren. Msgr. Michael Ready of the National Catholic Welfare Conference issued a lengthy rebuttal, concluding with a quote from the Spanish bishops: "Let not affliction be heaped upon the afflicted. Our sufferings have been made greater by lies, by subtle insinuation, and by tortuous interpretations of the facts." In addition to Ready's letter, 175 prominent Catholics, both lay and religious, issued a similar response. Some of the Catholic press also came to the defense of the Spanish bishops. *The Catholic Review* published a front-page editorial attacking the Protestant critics, and used adjectives to describe their criticism like "arrogant," "hypocritical," and "impertinent." A year and a half later when Franco's forces defeated the Republicans, 450 Protestant clergy published an open letter to Pius XII. This letter was far more conciliatory in tone, and they asked him to intercede with the Franco regime on behalf of the prisoners of war, many of whom were awaiting execution. *The Catholic Review* again criticized this

¹¹ See the front page of *The Catholic Review* of August 7, 1936, August 14, 1936, August 21, 1936, August 28, 1936 and September 4, 1936.

second letter, decrying the failure of most (perhaps all) of these clerics to have cited the atrocities Communists and their allies committed against the church.¹²

Catholic concern about Communism was temporarily sidetracked by the Second World War. With Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, American Catholics were put in a difficult position. Pius XI's admonition that no Catholic could assist Communism, was challenged by President Roosevelt's extension of lend-lease to Moscow, a decision that concerned many Catholics. Five days after Operation BARBAROSSA was begun, Msgr. John Ryan, together with five other priests and eight Catholic laymen (including William J. Donovan, who that year was appointed by Roosevelt to head the Office of Coordinator of Information, the forerunner of the Office of Strategic Services [OSS]), took out an advertisement in *The Catholic Review*. The top of the page read, "DON'T LET HITLER CONFUSE YOU!" Ryan and the others reaffirmed that "We know that Communism is the foe of all religion," but they qualified that statement by pointing out that the Nazis were "waging a relentless war of extermination on the Church in Germany, Austria, and Poland The murderer of priests, ministers and Jews does not overnight become the defender of religion just because he attacks another gangster who happens to be an atheist." The advertisement solicited assistance for a group called "The Fight for Freedom." In a July 6 radio address, Bishop Joseph P. Hurley of St. Augustine Florida defended the sending of aid to Premier Joseph Stalin. Five days after Hurley's address, *The Catholic Review* carried another advertisement, paid for by Catholics who opposed the extension of aid to Moscow. "DON'T LET ANYONE CONFUSE YOU!" the advertisement

¹² "Spanish Hierarchy Is Denounced Here," *New York Times*, October 4, 1937, 1, 12; "Catholic In Reply Hits Letter of 150," *Ibid.*, October 6, 1937, 6; "A Reply To An Open Letter," *The Catholic Review*, October 8, 1937, 1; "175 Catholics Reply To Open Letter," *Ibid.*, October 15, 1937, 1; "Protestants Plead To Pope On Spain," *New York Times*, April 7, 1939, 10. See also José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987, 193-195.

began. Signed by a bishop, nineteen priests (including two of Cronin's brother Sulpicians, John Barrett and John L. Bazinet), and six Catholic laymen, the signers warned that Americans should not "grasp the crimson-stained hand of Joseph Stalin Our sympathy for one side must not blind us to the murderous deeds of the 'worst butcher of Christians.'" This advertisement solicited support for the America First Committee.¹³

The advertisements and Hurley's radio address underscored the debate within the hierarchy over whether aid should be extended to the USSR. The American bishops turned to Rome, hoping that the curia would issue a statement announcing that aid to Russia could be tolerated, but the Holy See was itself under pressure from Fascist Italy to bless Hitler's attack as a sort of crusade against Communism, and was understandably anxious to remain out of the fray. With Rome's quiet approval, the American bishops issued a statement on November 14, 1941, which distinguished between support for the Soviet system (which was intolerable) and support for the Russian people (which could be tolerated). The distinction gave American Catholics a loophole to support the extension of lend-lease to the USSR.¹⁴

¹³ *The Catholic Review*, June 27, 1941, 11, and *The Catholic Review*, July 11, 1941, 11. (See also George Q. Flynn, *Roosevelt and Romanism: Catholics and American Diplomacy, 1937-1945*, Westport, Connecticut, 1976, 178 footnote 54. Bishop Hurley's speech is noted in Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy From 1870 to 1965*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Michael Glazier / The Liturgical Press, 1985, 272-274.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* The text of the bishop's statement, "The Crisis of Christianity," can be located in Nolan, *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops: (1941-1961)*, 2: 28-35. On pressure brought on the Vatican to support Hitler's invasion of Russia, see Owen Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican During the Second World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 193-196.

On February 25, 1946, Pius XII told the Vatican diplomatic corps, "We took special care, notwithstanding certain tendentious pressures, not to let fall from Our lips or from Our pen one single word, one single sign of approval or encouragement of the war against Russia in 1941." (See Robert A. Graham, *Vatican Diplomacy: A Study of Church and State on the International Plane*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959, 372.)

The U.S.-Soviet relationship was soon altered to that of ally following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Hitler's declaration of war on the United States four days later. Nevertheless, many American Catholics remained skeptical about the Soviet Union. Cronin shared these concerns. In October 1942 he wrote to Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit to recommend that the NCWC study on Communism.¹⁵ Cronin's trepidation intensified as the war progressed. As the Red Army pushed German forces across Eastern Europe, the USSR started to set up regimes friendly to Moscow in the "liberated" countries. By 1944, anti-Communism had once again become a campaign issue. Republican presidential nominee Gov. Thomas Dewey originally intended to make the President Roosevelt's health his main campaign issue. Warned against this strategy, Dewey instead decided to use Communism to attack Roosevelt.¹⁶ Dewey's concern corresponded to that of the American bishops. At a November 12, 1944 meeting of the bishop's conference, Archbishop Samuel Stritch of Chicago proposed that the Social Action Department (SAD) "study the spread of Communism in the United States." Seconded by Archbishop Francis J. Spellman of New York, the measure easily won approval. Two names were nominated to chair the study – Msgr. John O'Grady and Father John Cronin.¹⁷ Cronin's involvement in the IUMSWA Local 43 *cause celebre* had brought him to the attention of the hierarchy.¹⁸ Ultimately the bishops picked Cronin.

¹⁵ Earl Boyea, "The National Catholic Welfare Conference: An Experience in Episcopal Leadership, 1935-1945," Ph. D. diss.: Catholic University of America, 1987, 411-412.

¹⁶ Ted Morgan, *FDR: A Biography*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985, 738.

¹⁷ "Minutes of the Meeting of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference", 583, located in the Archives of the Catholic University of America.

¹⁸ In his interview with Father Blantz in 1978, Cronin recalled that he had written to different labor priests around the country to ask if Communism was a nation-wide problem. Writing these letters may also have helped bring him to the attention of the hierarchy. (Blantz Interview, pp. 16-7.)

Formally approached by Bishop Karl Alter of Toledo approached Cronin and he readily accepted the job. By late December, Cronin had drawn up a lengthy letter which he sent to the bishops of the United States, with additional sheets in which he posed sixteen questions, some having multiple parts. Cronin asked the bishops (1) "the current state of public opinion in regard to communism" in their (arch)diocese and whether "Soviet military success [has] influenced general thinking on communism;" (2) "What is the reaction in your diocese to communist political maneuverings in Europe?;" (3) "What was the general reaction to the charges of communism leveled during the recent [November 1944] political campaign? Is there a fear of communist influence in regard to . . . the CIO?;" (4) "Is there a fear of communism in the labor movement?;" (5) "Does the public understand that communists . . . have an influence beyond their numbers? What groups in your diocese are attempting to teach this lesson?;" (6) "If communism has any foothold in your diocese, would you kindly list the cities where it is strongest. If possible, estimate the number of members, sympathizers, and followers." Cronin also solicited the bishops for (7) lists of "locally or nationally prominent officers, followers, and sympathizers," their place of national origin, race, and whether they were apostate Catholics; (8) a list of "specific communist activities;" (9) a description of "communist influence on local labor;" (10) any information on as to whether the Political Action Committee of the CIO was "communist controlled or influenced;" (11) "evidence of communist activity among Negro groups;" (12) whether their diocese had a local branch of the American Youth for Democracy; (13) "evidence of communist influence among the foreign born;" (14) "indication[s] that federal government officials in your diocese are sympathetic to communism;" (15) "details on radical organizations . . . working to foster irreligion, anticlericalism or immorality;" and (16) "suggestions for programs or techniques . . . which would be effective in

combating communism and establishing a positive counterprogram."¹⁹ Cronin also sent a shorter questionnaire (ten similar questions) to 200 priests.²⁰ Yet Catholic clergy were not Cronin's sole source of information. Having become acquainted with different FBI agents, notably Ed Hummer and William Sullivan, and through them was granted access to FBI data.²¹ In addition, Cronin received some material from Benjamin Mandel, a former Communist turned anti-Communist, who worked for the House Committee on Un-American Activities, generally referred to as HUAC.²² Thus, Father Cronin had a vast reservoir from which to draw material to prepare the report.

By April 1945, Cronin had prepared a fifty-two page preliminary study, entitled the "Tentative Confidential Report on Communism." He reported that he had sent questionnaires to every diocese in the United States and "to a selected list of about two hundred priests known for their interest in social

¹⁹ Cronin to Joseph P. Hurley, December 23, 1944, Archives of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Box 41. The author is indebted to Dr. Charles R. Gallagher of the Archives of the Diocese of St. Augustine who brought the copy to his attention.

²⁰ A copy of the shorter questionnaire to priests is located in the John F. Cronin Papers (Folder 59) at the Archives of the University of Notre Dame (Cited here in after as JFCPP).

²¹ Cronin identified Hummer and Sullivan as his sources in Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistics: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970, 25 ff. In his autobiography (*The Bureau: My Thirty Years With Hoover's FBI*, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), William C. Sullivan did not mention Cronin. Cronin apparently returned 162 pages of material to the Bureau two years later, see L.L. Tyler to Tamm, June 28, 1947, FBI 94-35404-55.

²² Cronin inaccurately believed that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was unaware of the assistance his subordinates provided him. Professor of Political Science Peter Irons wrote, "Hoover had turned down a request to open the files to Father Cronin, but his contacts in the Bureau continued to supply him with files which he copied and returned: as he [Cronin] later put it, a great deal of material 'came from pilfered FBI files.'" See, Peter H. Irons, "America's Cold War Crusade: Domestic Politics and American Foreign Policy, 1942-1948," Ph. D. diss.: Boston University, 1972, 178. For Mandel's assistance to Cronin, see Peter H. Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism: The Cold War Crusade of the United States Chamber of Commerce," in Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1974, 82-83.

questions." He told the bishops that he had also studied a seven-volume HUAC study issued by Congressman Martin Dies.²³ Cronin wrote:

In the judgment of this writer, shared by those whose work brings them into actual contact with the communist problem, communism is a serious threat to the Catholic Church and to the welfare of the United States. Primarily this menace arises because of the Communist influence, actual or potential, in regard to American foreign relations. Secondly, it exists because of the real danger that in the future growing Communist power at home may affect adversely our domestic tranquillity.²⁴

Cronin continued by discussing the formation of the American Communist Political Association (CPA). In 1940, the CP-USA had formally withdraw from the Comintern (Communist International) to avoid having to register with the federal government as a foreign agent. The Comintern itself dissolved in 1943, "but only the invincibly naive accept this move at face value" he wrote. The CPA, Cronin wrote, was "centered in the Northeastern states (Maryland to Maine), the Great Lakes states, and the Pacific coast," and he estimated that there were seventy-five to one hundred thousand "card-holding, dues paying members."²⁵ Communism's main appeal "lies in the field of labor, racial and religious minority groups."²⁶ Given his experience with the unions in Baltimore, Cronin was understandably concerned about the CPA's influence with labor. He characterized the Transport Workers Union as having "a very large Catholic membership. Its president, Michael Quill, regularly goes to Mass and denies Communist affiliations" but still managed to receive favorable

²³ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Tentative Report," 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-8. At its tenth convention (May 20-22, 1944), the CP-USA voted to disband and become the CPA. Earl Browder, the head of the CP-USA/CP marked the occasion by addressing the delegates in a speech as "Ladies and Gentlemen," rather than as "Comrades." In July 1945, it was re-formed as the CP-USA and Browder was expelled. (See Guenter Lewy, *The Cause That Failed: Communism in American Political Life*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 70-75.)

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

publicity in *The Daily Worker*.²⁷ Nonetheless, he urged his fellow churchmen not to criticize all unions, emphasizing that "those who view the CIO as a branch of the Comintern are doing an injustice to many valiant warriors against Communism."²⁸

Cronin however, was disturbed by the attitude of American liberals. While never questioning Eleanor Roosevelt's patriotism, he believed "her generosity and broadmindedness [and] . . . her position of power make her gullibility the more dangerous."²⁹ Liberals unfortunately characterized the church as "authoritarian and repressive, to say nothing of being reactionary and satisfied with the *status quo*. Of course, there are liberal Catholics (among whom this writer [Cronin] is normally classified), but they are considered an exceptional development."³⁰ Cronin also decried the hypocrisy of some liberals: Their "hearts have bled for Sacco and Vanzetti"³¹ and they "oppose the lightest censorship and abhor the *Imprimatur* on Catholic books," yet "swallow the stark totalitarianism of the Soviet [system]"³²

Cronin distinguished among three types of Catholic response to Communism. The first, which he called "denunciation and avoidance," simply criticized Communism, and he cited examples in the addresses of Msgr. Fulton Sheen, the editorial pages of the *Brooklyn Tablet*, and the proclamations of the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

³¹ Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were convicted of murdering two men in Massachusetts and were executed on August 23, 1927. Their case became an international *cause celebre*, as many suspected that the two were convicted because of their ties to anarchist groups and their status as Italian immigrants. Recent studies indicate that Sacco's guilt or at least complicity in the crime is certain, as he was carrying a revolver at the time of his arrest, and ballistics tests carried out in 1961 and 1983 indicate that it was one of the weapons used in the murder. Vanzetti's guilt remains debated. See Francis Russell, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Case Resolved*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986.

³² *Ibid.*, 25-26.

Knights of Columbus. A second approach put forward a positive agenda, and here he noted the work done by the Social Action Department of the NCWC. The third approach he called "Counter Organization," i.e., the establishment of Catholic organizations like the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. Cronin recommended that "all three approaches must be used in an organized and harmonious manner."³³ He also recommended continuing his investigation, the establishment of a central office in New York ("the national capital of Communism")³⁴ to further the study of CPA, and that Catholic clergy, seminarians, and laity continue to study social questions. He bemoaned the dearth of publications on Catholic social teaching, noting that when he taught such courses at St. Mary's and CUA he was often dependent on "mimeographed notes."³⁵ There were other benefits to educating the clergy in the question of social justice, he observed, adding that "The writer feels that if he had five to ten trained priests assisting in recent struggles against Communism in Baltimore, giving the workers [the] help and leadership for which they begged, the result would have been the winning of thousands to the Faith."³⁶ He requested additional time to write a final report, as "Some of the more extensive diocesan reports did not arrive until the middle of March"³⁷ and he had not been able to incorporate that material.

In October 1945, just one month before finishing the, Cronin was still gathering information. He wrote to Monsignor Howard Carroll of the NCWC to ask "whether you would be in a position to do me a very delicate favor: I am told by competent informants that the very best information on Communist infiltration into government agencies is contained in the FBI reports to Congress

³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

on the Hatch Act." As it would be impossible for him to obtain the information from the Bureau, Cronin asked Carroll to approach "some senator on the committee which receives this report. The right senator," Cronin explained, "could be told in a general way and in confidence what we are seeking." Cronin assured Carroll that he would be discreet in dealing with the material and would not directly quote the FBI reports. "Where I have information of my own, as in the case of Alger Hiss (State Dept.) or Harold Young (secretary to [Commerce Secretary] Henry Wallace) I shall . . . [use] my own material."³⁸ Cronin then reported alarming news on military security:

On the atomic bomb, a recheck indicates that they [the USSR] have a formula, nearly complete, but not everything. They are currently seeking other vital war secrets. My informants tell me that a disclosure of what I know would imperil national security and hinder current counterespionage. Hence, I shall handle that subject in a theoretical manner . . . That should get the idea over, without the danger of a sensational leak which could be quite embarrassing to all concerned.³⁹

Carroll responded "I shall do what I can in the matter of your request and let you know the outcome."⁴⁰ Apparently Carroll found little if anything, for in a letter to Carroll two weeks later Cronin reported having almost finished the report, adding that "Unfortunately the section on government is by far the weakest part of the whole lot. This is unfortunate because many bishops are particularly interested in it . . . [Ray] Murphy [of the State Department] has been disappointing, mainly because he is hard to pin down. An expert cross-check on his data showed many suspected Reds to be merely liberal."⁴¹

Cronin finished and presented his longer report to the bishops in November, entitled "The Problem of American Communism in 1945: Facts and

³⁸ Cronin to Msgr. Howard J. Carroll, October 7, 1945, OGS, Box 24, Folder 18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Carroll to Cronin, October 8, 1945, *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Cronin to Carroll, October 21, 1945, *Ibid.*

Recommendations." In the Introduction, Cronin warned the bishops that it was "a confidential survey" [emphasis Cronin's] and that "restrictions . . . must necessarily govern the use of this Report." He had relied on "accurate but confidential sources," whom he could not identify because "The publication of such names would certainly lead to a challenge to produce proof and possibly a libel suit." Cronin further added that he had "solemnly pledged" not to divulge the sources of his information. As a means of corroborating his information, he said that "[A]dvance copies are to be sent to certain [members] of the group sponsoring the work, where it is known that these sponsors can have it verified by well-informed individuals."⁴²

Cronin's report described the CPA as "primarily a menace because it is a branch of world Communism . . . [and] a slavish tool of Soviet imperialism." The CP's aim was to create an atmosphere of "confusion and uncertainty" which would weaken American foreign policy and allow the USSR to impose Communism "by force of arms over extensive and heavily populated areas."⁴³ Cronin characterized the American press as naive about the threat posed by Moscow. "Most of the material [on Soviet imperialism] was not carried in the general American press. The Catholic press carried more articles on the subject, particularly in regard to Poland," he wrote.⁴⁴ Turning then to Soviet foreign

⁴² John F. Cronin, S.S., "The Problem of American Communism in 1945: Facts and Recommendations," [Baltimore: November 1945], ii. Copies of this report can be found in the JFCPP, Box 1, Files 25 and 26 (two copies), in the OGS Box 24, Folder 19, and in the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, Francis P. Matthews Papers, Box 10 (Cited hereafter as Matthews Papers). Among the individuals to whom Cronin sent advance copies was Archbishop Stritch, who used his FBI contacts to verify Cronin's information, see Boyea, 421.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. In the "Tentative Confidential Report," Cronin praised the *New York Times* post-war coverage of Communism (especially in the Balkans) and *The New Leader*. He said he could not recommend the latter publication publicly because it published material which ran "contrary to Church teaching." (See "Tentative Report," 6.)

policy, Cronin noted that Russia had "absorbed Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia" and "installed puppet governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Finland, and Soviet [-occupied East] Germany."⁴⁵ He further reported that Italy, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Iran, and China were also in danger of falling into the Soviet orbit. The American press, he said, was guilty of complicity in all of this, stressing "the silence of most of the American press permitted the Communist propaganda machine to work virtually unhindered."⁴⁶ Cronin questioned the wisdom of American policy in occupied Germany. Communist success in Germany depended "upon the administrative power. In the American zone under General [George S.] Patton, Communists got [the] short shrift. After his removal though, the trend was definitely to the left . . ."⁴⁷ He also worried that "the burden laid upon Germany by the Potsdam Conference," and subsequent "stripping of German industry" would result in "bitter poverty" and political upheaval.⁴⁸

In his second chapter, Cronin focused on American Communism. He distinguished four groups: Communists, Communist sympathizers (or "fellow travelers"), opportunists who sided with the CP "for personal gain," and Communist "tools" or "dupes." Cronin reported that there were only about seventy-five thousand Communists in the United States, with about twelve

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10. General George Patton (1885-1945) was removed from command of the U.S. Third Army after he was criticized for failing to remove former Nazis from the government in Bavaria. In a press conference on September 22, 1945, he made an off-hand remark to the effect that "The Nazi thing is just like a Democrat-Republican election fight." (See Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885-1945*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985, 287.)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 10. Soviet forces stripped a good deal of German machinery and sent it to Russia after the war, as described by Alfred M. de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Expulsion of the Germans from the East*, (Third Ed.) Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

thousand serving in the military. Among Communist sympathizers, Cronin listed various leaders in the CIO (Lee Pressman, John Abt, and Harry Bridges). He added "Alger Hiss of the State Department would fit into this niche."⁴⁹ Among the tools and dupes, Cronin wrote that many were "innocent victims of Communist deceit," while others were "weak individuals . . . pushed into prominence" by the CP-USA.⁵⁰

Cronin's experience with the IUMSWA in Baltimore not surprisingly ensured that organized labor rated an entry into his study. He reported that the CP sought control of unions in "industries strategic for general strikes and revolutions." Election of Communists to key union positions would permit the CP-USA propaganda advantages as well as the "plundering of union funds."⁵¹

Then the controlled minority becomes the majority. Paul Weber, of the Detroit ACTU [Association of Catholic Trade Unionists] could testify to meetings where important issues came to a vote at 2:00 A.M. It is the after-midnight meeting which sends a telegram to President Roosevelt demanding in the name of 40,000 members of Local 43, IUMSWA, that he free [Earl] Browder from prison or dismiss deportation charges against Harry Bridges. In addition, all the tricks of parliamentary law are used to confuse untrained unionists and impose the will of a minority or an unorganized majority.⁵²

Cronin was less troubled by the AFL, because owing to its structure, the national body had greater authority than locals, and that its leadership was better trained and more experienced than many of the smaller organizations. In the CIO he said, "the Communist problem is more serious." Although "the big

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16. This is Cronin's first reference to Hiss.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17. In the "Tentative Confidential Report," Cronin wrote that 1,600 signers of a petition carried by a publication called *The Protestant* were duped by the CPA into signing. "While many of these signers were merely bigots, the incident illustrates the success of Communists in channeling existing sentiment for their own ends. It is extremely difficult to estimate the total number in this group, but a million would be conservative." ("Tentative Report," 9.) By the time he wrote the longer report, Cronin removed the reference to the editors of *The Protestant* as being Communist dupes.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 32.

three" (Philip Murray, James Carey, and Allen Haywood) of the CIO were anti-Communist, Cronin identified the union's General Counsel Lee Pressman and Len de Caux of the *CIO News* as Communists.⁵³ Cronin added:

Incidentally, since some question of the Communism of Pressman, the writer [Cronin] has seen an affidavit by an editor of a nationally known general magazine [Whittaker Chambers of *Time*] stating that this editor was in one of the primary Communist cells to infiltrate the early New Deal (AAA in 1935), and that among his companions were Alger Hiss, John Abt, and Lee Pressman. It is reliably stated that this editor plans to release such a statement if Alger Hiss becomes [the] permanent secretary of the United Nations Organization.⁵⁴

While an official in the CIO, Pressman helped push through resolutions endorsing union support for a combined Socialist-Communist front in Italy, a relief shipment for Tito's Yugoslavia, recognition of the [Communist] Lublin government in Poland, support for the *Confederación de Trabajadores de la America Latina* (Confederation of Latin American Workers) under the leadership of a Communist, Vicente Lombardo Toledano. Cronin claimed that when Philip Murray contributed an article to a Soviet paper "it occasioned much glee"⁵⁵ in the American Communist press. Cronin also charged that the CIO's Political Action Committee was CP dominated, affirming that:

Dealing with indifferent and untrained workers, Communists estimate that they need not more than five percent of the [union's] members to be Communist, and they will control a local. But where workers have been trained and inspired to fight for their rights – and the ACTU and Catholic priests interested in labor have trained and inspired them – they have been able to put down this disruptive minority. The problem of Communism in the CIO will be solved at the local, not the national level. . . .⁵⁶

The fourth chapter of Cronin's report was entitled "Communism and the Public." This part treated such miscellaneous subjects as Communism and

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44a.

religion, the government, the armed forces, and the press. Conceding that the CP seldom attacked religion per se, Cronin observed that noted right-wing ecclesiastical figures like Father Coughlin were targeted, while in certain instances liberal churchmen received favorable notice: *The Daily Worker* once carried a speech by Chicago's auxiliary bishop, Bernard Sheil.⁵⁷ The CP, Cronin emphasized, appealed "to bigotry and distrust of the Church latent among so many Protestant clergy."⁵⁸ He cited an article about the "danger" posed by the Catholic Church to the United States, and noted that *The Protestant* carried a petition signed by 1,600 urging opposition to the notion of Vatican participation in any peace conference. Nevertheless, he concluded actual CP infiltration into Protestant clergy was "sporadic and minor." Ostensibly non-sectarian groups like the "People's Institute of Applied Religion" were often front organizations. The latter group convened in Baltimore concerning "Religious Fifth Columns in the Trade Unions." They denounced a "'fascist' Catholic priest who once wrote a book entitled *Economics and Society*," i.e., Cronin himself.⁵⁹

Cronin was optimistic about the CP's declining involvement in the federal government. The Hatch Act had prohibited federal employees from engaging in partisan political activities, and President Harry S. Truman's Administration was engaged in a process of "cleaning house and reshuffling bureaus."⁶⁰ On the other hand, Cronin criticized Truman's predecessor, affirming that "Communists did penetrate into key positions of government during the last ten years. Perhaps the infiltration was not so serious as Mr. Roosevelt's enemies charged, but it was much more extensive than his friends are wont to admit."⁶¹ Liberals in the Roosevelt Administration, Cronin concluded, had underestimated the

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

Communist threat, particularly in one of the cabinet departments. "In the State Department, the most influential Communist has been Alger Hiss," he wrote. Archibald MacLeish aided Communist propaganda, John Carter Vincent "instigated many of the attacks on [General Douglas] M[a]cArthur, with Dean Acheson merely deceived into following a Communist policy."⁶² Members of the CP were employed in the Labor and Treasury Departments, and the NLRB and the War Labor Board. The desire to work harmoniously with the USSR against Nazi Germany had compromised American military intelligence gathering. "Pressure originated at the White House" and was carried to "ambitious officers who felt that the way to promotion lay in pleasing high civilian sources."⁶³ One Army pamphlet published during the war contained "unexceptionable" material on Fascism, but followed the "party line" in treating Communism.⁶⁴

The Sulpician then evaluated the role of the responsibility of American liberals in the Communist threat. The American liberal believed in "broadmindedness," supported the freedoms enunciated in the Bill of Rights, and was "normally a fighter for justice."⁶⁵ Clearly liberals and Communists shared common ground, like support for social reforms and civil rights. Cronin, moreover, criticized knee-jerk reactions against reforms, noting for example that one group charged a Full Employment Bill was part of "a Communist plot."⁶⁶ Indeed, Cronin stressed the legitimacy of many New Deal programs:

Laws passed since 1933, most of which were accepted by the Republican platform of 1944, were labeled as Soviet-inspired. Not only were programs impugned, but individuals were slandered recklessly. The loose tactics of the Dies Committee led to the maligning of many liberals who were not only not Communist, but who were strongly opposed to Communism and hated by

⁶² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

Communists (Norman Thomas, David Dubinsky, A. Philip Randolph). Many groups were using the anti-Communist fight as a thin disguise for anti-Semitism. The result of all of this was a very natural tendency on the part of many Catholics, this writer included, to discount the "Communist scare" as exaggerated and inaccurate. Extremes tend to beget extremes, and loose charges of Communism breed loose denials of Communism.⁶⁷

Briefly turning to examine the role of the press, Cronin criticized *The Nation* and *The New Republic* for serving as "prime examples of amoral liberalism."⁶⁸ He also criticized Hollywood, especially such "Communists and fellow travelers" as Charles Chaplin, Bette Davis, Edward G. Robinson, Orson Welles and other actors and writers, some of whom would later be blacklisted.⁶⁹

His fifth and last chapter, "Communism and Catholicism," suggested the same changes he had made in the earlier "Tentative Confidential Report on Communism." He urged the preaching "of social justice, as a matter of justice and not merely as a weapon against Communism."⁷⁰ Borrowing from the success of the labor schools in the 1930s, he recommended "a well-organized program of getting Catholic social teaching to the workers" to prevent the CP takeover of unions. He urged re-opening the "Institute of Catholic Social Studies" at CUA, as well as requiring the study of social justice by seminarians and Catholic laity, both adults and high school students.⁷¹

Cronin utilized varying amounts of FBI material. Most of pages 81-95 of his report, which treats Communist press organs, is taken verbatim from a nineteen page FBI memo dated August 3, 1945.⁷² Likewise, fifteen FBI memos dated August 15, 1945, were copied into pages 114-133 of the document.⁷³ Part of

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 64-79.

⁷² Untitled memo, August 3, 1945, FBI 94-35404-55.

⁷³ See memos on "American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born," "American Russian Institute, Inc.," "American Youth for Democracy,"

a memo entitled "Exploitation of the Negro People and Their Organizations" was copied on the twenty-fifth page of Cronin's report. On the other hand, although Cronin included a section on CP infiltration of government agencies, he made little (if any) use of an FBI document on that subject, and used no information from a report on alleged Communist permeation of the armed forces, despite having also treated that subject.⁷⁴

Cronin also recommended the bishops disseminate information on Communism. In a memo to Msgr. Howard Carroll of the NCWC he proposed the formation of "lay groups completely independent of the Church" rather than clerically-dominated anti-Communist organizations. "Such disinterested groups would get a better reception than we would." Cronin further advised Carroll that some former FBI agents (presumably Kenneth Bierly, Theodore Kirkpatrick, and John Keenan) would be interested in "exposing and countering Communism." He suggested that they be hired under a five-year contract to guarantee that the organization "attract good men."⁷⁵ These former FBI agents would establish a journal called *Plain Talk*.⁷³ Msgr. Carroll in turn recommended an individual who could help fund pamphlets on Communism: Francis P. Matthews, a Catholic businessman with connections to the U.S. Chamber of

"Consumers Union of the U.S. Inc.," "Council for Pan-American Democracy," "Council on African Affairs," "Hollywood Writers' Mobilization," "International Labor Defense," "National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Inc.," "National Federation for Constitutional Liberties," "National Lawyers Guild," "National Negro Congress," "People's Institute of Applied Religion," "Southern Negro Youth Congress," and the "Southern Conference for Human Welfare," all dated August 6, 1945 and located in *Ibid*. Also see Appendix I, pp. 226-228.

⁷⁴ "Communist Infiltration of Government Agencies," and "Communist Influence in the Armed Forces," both August 25, 1945, *Ibid*. Cronin discussed these issues in "The Problem of American Communism," 47-52.

⁷⁵ [Unsigned] "Memorandum" [n.d.], and letter of Msgr. Howard Carroll to Francis P. Matthews, December 27, 1945, Matthews Papers. The names of the FBI agents are noted in Kenneth O'Reilly, *Hoover and the Un-Americans: The FBI, HUAC, and the Red Menace*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983, 89.

⁷³ *Plain Talk* would be edited by Isaac Don Levine and Ralph de Toledano.

Commerce. In late December 1945, Carroll wrote to Matthews and enclosed a copy of Cronin's memo. Nine days later, Matthews had lunch with Archbishop James Ryan of Omaha. On the recommendation of Chicago Archbishop Stritch, Ryan allowed Matthews to read Cronin's secret report.⁷⁶ Matthews and Cronin found kindred spirits in each other. In March 1946 Cronin wrote Matthews:

There is reason to believe that Soviet armies may be on the march in but a few weeks. Christianity through much of the world is threatened. Within the nation the Communist fifth column is functioning smoothly, especially within the ranks of government and the atomic scientists.⁷⁷

Cronin began to deliver speeches on the subject of Communism; in doing so he brought about some criticism from the FBI. On March 10, 1946, Cronin delivered a speech in which he asserted that two thousand Communists held jobs in the federal government. In his remarks to the Holy Name Society of St. Thomas More Parish in Arlington Virginia, Cronin said that Communists "regularly transmit reports to the Soviet [Union]." The CP-USA "has proved extraordinarily capable of influencing both Government and organs of public

⁷⁶ Msgr. Howard Carroll to Francis P. Matthews, December 27, 1945, Matthews Papers. Born in Albion, Nebraska on March 15, 1887, Francis P. Matthews did his undergraduate and law studies at Creighton University in Omaha, served as Supreme Knight in the Knights of Columbus from 1939 to 1945, and was made a Knight of St. Gregory and a Papal Chamberlain. He was appointed Secretary of the Navy in 1949. In August 1950, during his tenure in that post, he gave a speech in which he seemed to call for a preemptive strike against the USSR. (He suggested that America should declare the "intention to pay. . . the price of instituting a war to compel cooperation for peace.") Peter Irons erroneously argued that Truman fired Matthews for the speech, but in fact Matthews remained in the post until July 31, 1951. Truman biographer Roy Jenkins wrote that Matthews wanted out of the post, see Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," 79 and 303 [footnote 17], and Roy Jenkins, *Truman*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, 153. In any event, Matthews was appointed ambassador to Ireland. He died in Omaha on October 18, 1952. ("F. P. Matthews, 65, Envoy, Dies In Home," *New York Times*, October 19, 1952, 88.)

⁷⁷ Quoted in Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," 80.

opinion. As a result they have confused and misled American foreign policy."⁷⁸ Cronin came to regret his discourse. The following day's *Washington Times-Herald* carried an article on the speech. Hoover ordered "See if we can get from Father Cronin [the] facts upon which he bases these statements."⁷⁹ That same day, the FBI Assistant Director of Domestic Intelligence D. M. Ladd of the FBI sent Hoover three memos concerning Cronin's remarks. First, Ladd told Hoover that Cronin had made favorable remarks about him. (Cronin reported a rumor that a Mr. Schwarzwaldler was to replace Hoover, and that removing Hoover would have a detrimental effect on America's internal security.)⁸⁰ In the second memo, Ladd attributed Cronin's information to sources in the U. S. Civil Service Commission. Having coincidentally called the FBI on another matter, and Cronin stated that he had not known that any reporters had been present (It is odd that a Communion Breakfast Speech would receive publicity), and that he added that he hoped his remarks had not prejudice any pending FBI cases. On the bottom of this memo, Hoover wrote, "I think the Reverend Father is making the mistake so many others have made – popping off too prematurely & thereby

⁷⁸ "2,000 Federal Jobs Held By Communists," *Washington Post*, March 11, 1946, 1, 3; "2,000 Red 'Spies' Employed in U.S. Jobs Here, Priest Says," *Washington Times-Herald*, March 11, 1946, 1, 11; and "Catholic Official Charges Communists Bore Into Federal Jobs," Religious News Service Press Release, March 11, 1946. (Copies of these articles can be found in the JFCPP Box 1, File 27.) See also O'Reilly, 104. Arthur S. Flemming of the Civil Service Commission stated after Cronin's speech that "as far as our resources permit, we screen out all Communists." See, "Priest's Charges About Commies Wide of Mark," *Washington Daily News*, March 11, 1946, 5. A copy of this article can be located in Cronin's FBI file.

⁷⁹ "2,000 Red 'Spies' Employed In U.S. Jobs Here, Priest Says," *Washington Times-Herald*, March 11, 1946, with Hoover's comments written on the bottom, found in FBI 94-35404-16.

⁸⁰ Memo of D. M. Ladd to J. Edgar Hoover, March 11, 1946, FBI 94-35404-2. Some of the FBI officials were identified by Susan Rosenfeld, "Biographies," in Athan Theoharis, *et. al.*, *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide*, Phoenix, Arizona: The Orgyx Press, 1999, 309-360.

giving his enemies basis for branding him a 'red-baiter.'"⁸¹ In his third memo, Ladd advised Hoover that part of Cronin's information came from the NYPD.⁸² Press commentary focused on Cronin's allegations about Communists in government – none of the papers reported the alleged movement to dump Hoover. Commenting on the reaction of the audience, one FBI agent wrote:

I got my information from [name deleted by censor], whom I know personally and who said that the reaction was like a bomb-shell[;] and that the men attending the meeting went out with blood in their eyes to think that such types of underground activities could be going on right here in Washington under their very noses. . . .⁸³

Cronin had blundered in delivering the speech, and he now feared that he would be subpoenaed to testify before HUAC. Accordingly, on Wednesday, March 13, he met with the FBI assistant director. In a memo to Hoover, Ladd said that Cronin "wanted some guidance, if possible, from the Bureau." Ladd counseled Cronin that "the Bureau could not prompt him as to what he should say" and that "any information which had been furnished to him by the Bureau had been done so on a confidential basis for his assistance" in preparing the report for the bishops. Ladd encouraged Cronin to "keep his discussion on Communism on a high plane and discuss such problems as the menace of Communism or the aims of the Communists without going into detail as to the names of individuals or Government agencies"⁸⁴ Ladd continued in his memo:

He stated [that] he agreed; that he had made a mistake in his talk which was publicized which he, of course, now regretted; that he had not known it was covered by the press. He also informed me that the information which he had used in his speech was not . . . from the material furnished him by the FBI but rather that he had obtained most of it from individual informants of his within

⁸¹ Ladd to Hoover, March 11, 1946, FBI 94-35404-3. (Emphasis Hoover's.)

⁸² Ladd to Hoover, March 11, 1946, FBI 94-35404-10.

⁸³ J. McGuire to Mr. Nichols, March 11, 1946, FBI 94-35404-11.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

the State Department and also from the New York Police Department.⁸⁵

In his meeting with Ladd, Cronin discussed his plans to create an independent anti-Communist investigative force or a news letter of some sort. Ladd discouraged Cronin, warning him that hiring former agents could result in "investigators falling over each other." In response, Cronin assured him that "he would confine contact work to the obtaining of information from confidential informants and similar sources, rather than to try any actual investigative work." Ladd also warned that the news letter might result in the "drying up" of his confidential sources, and the priest assured him that he would "confine it to an analysis of foreign news . . . and through a review of Communist publications." At the conclusion, Ladd asked Cronin to keep him advised on his progress. Hoover commended Ladd, writing "Well handled" on the bottom of the sheet.⁸⁶

That same day, Ladd advised Assistant to the Director Edward Tamm that "it was Mr. Hoover's opinion that if Father Cronin wants to make speeches and to have his name in the papers . . . he should attack Communism as such or their general broad basic policies but he should not become specific . . . [and] he should not name individuals." Ladd added, "[Name deleted by censor] said Father Cronin should have known better and he believed that he was a very sorry man for having done as he did."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Memo of Ladd to Hoover, March 13, 1946, FBI 94-35404-4. Although Cronin had told Peter Irons that the FBI files were "pilfered" (See footnote 17 above), the memo cited here would tend to demonstrate that Hoover was more aware of Cronin's FBI contacts than Cronin realized.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ D. W. Ladd to Edward Tamm, March 13, 1946, FBI 94-35404-5. Two days later, Cronin met F. J. McGuire of the FBI. McGuire wrote that "[Cronin] was rather worried about the Bureau's reaction to his talk, mentioning that he had never expected so much trouble to arise because of it." See Memo of F. J. McGuire to L. B. Nichols, March 15, 1946, FBI 94-35404-7.

Cronin's remarks had not just raised eyebrows at the FBI. Cronin's speech and the surrounding publicity troubled the NCWC. Before the publicity over the Arlington address, he had accepted an invitation to speak before a Brooklyn club. Cronin did not want to back out of the already scheduled talk, so he told Msgr. Carroll that he would try to "work out an approach which does not leave itself open to political misuse." "I trust you will be unusually cautious," Carroll wrote Cronin in response.⁸⁸ Others in the hierarchy was also unhappy with Cronin, and believed that he was to be silenced. Hoover's assistant Edward Tamm advised Hoover of having "received word from Chicago [presumably Cardinal Stritch] that Father Cronin has been instructed that he is to make no more speeches; no more press conferences; no more press contacts – no investigative organization."⁸⁹

Over the next few months, Cronin tried to cultivate ties with FBI officials, apparently hoping to create some sort of working relationship. He hoped to issue a statement that some State Department officials were supplying "misinformation" to the White House, that the *Amerasia* spy case would be reopened,⁹⁰ and that State Department individuals were hampering investigations of Soviet espionage. Agent Ladd warned Cronin that the FBI could not help him, that any public comments could hinder FBI investigations, and that such a statement might lead to a subpoena from HUAC.⁹¹ Accordingly,

⁸⁸ Moreno, 160.

⁸⁹ Memo of HWG [to Hoover?], March 15, 1946, FBI 94-35404-15.

⁹⁰ In June 1945, Emmanuel S. Larsen and John Stewart Service of the State Department, together with Lt. Andrew Roth (a Navy reserve officer), and Philip Jaffe of *Amerasia* magazine were arrested and charged with espionage after the journal published secret documents. No spying was ever proven though, and the charges were dismissed. The dropping of the investigation was a factor Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy later used to argue that the Truman Administration was riddled with security risks, see Harvey Klehr and Ronald Radosh, *The Amerasia Spy Case: Prelude to McCarthyism*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, 3-8.

⁹¹ D.M. Ladd to the Director, March 11, 1946, FBI 94-35404-18.

Cronin backed down. Despite his overtures, Hoover rejected an alliance with the priest. The FBI Director wrote at the bottom of a memo, "We should be most circumspect in giving any information to him."⁹²

Still hoping to publish an anti-Communist newspaper called *Plain Talk*, Cronin enlisted the assistance of two former FBI agents, John J. Keenan and William Higgins. In a meeting with an agent Keenan reported his plans, boasting that he and Higgins had "a short-talk with Cardinal-designate Francis J. Spellman," and that Spellman had promised to cooperate on condition that his connection with the publication not be made public. Spellman promised to tell Pope Pius about their venture, Keenan added that "their Washington man is Father Cronin, [of the] National Catholic Welfare Council [sic, Conference], who . . . has been promised cooperation by the Bureau only upon assurance that it would be carefully guarded and also that the corporation will furnish to the Bureau confidential information in return."⁹³ FBI Assistant Director Edward Tamm relayed the report to Hoover, "in view of the indications that Cardinal Spellman had been consulted and had apparently talked to the Pope about this program. Of course, the statements that Father Cronin has been assured Bureau cooperation are untrue." Hoover responded sharply, "There must be no further cooperation with Father Cronin as it is obvious he twists contacts into different meanings."⁹⁴ When Cronin solicited Tamm's opinion on whether or not Cardinal Spellman should be asked to write an introduction to an anti-Communist book, Hoover responded to the briefing "Absolutely no 'views' should be expressed to Father Cronin on any subject."⁹⁵ Hoover then explicitly instructed that there

⁹² L. B. Nichols to Mr. [Clyde] Tolson, March 21, 1946, FBI 94-35404-20. (Emphasis Hoover's.)

⁹³ "Attention of Assistant to the Director E. A. Tamm," June 25, 1946, FBI 94-35404-27.

⁹⁴ "Memorandum for the Director," June 27, 1946, FBI 94-35404-28.

⁹⁵ Edward A. Tamm to the Director, July 3, 1946, FBI 94-35404-26. (Emphasis Hoover's.)

should be no further contact with Cronin without approval, and that should any contact occur, a written request with background information was to be provided to Tamm.⁹⁶

The following September, Tamm advised Hoover of Cronin wanted to speak with him. Tamm assured Hoover that he "would be most discreet in my discussion with him." Hoover replied, "Yes be most discreet as he obviously talks too much & unwisely."⁹⁷ Cronin did stop by, but only to drop off a draft of an anti-Communist pamphlet he was writing for the Chamber of Commerce. If Cronin hoped for Bureau input he was disappointed, as Tamm did not comment on the publication, and he advised Hoover "I expressed no opinion on the pamphlet and said nothing that would directly or indirectly infer approval or disapproval"⁹⁸

In the aftermath of the Arlington fiasco, Cronin's speeches became more general in tone. For example, in a speech to the Rotary Club in Glens Falls, he declared that "America is waking up to the fact that it has been deceived, and grossly deceived, on its foreign policy." He lamented that "Secret diplomacy and deliberate manipulation of public opinion in this country" were characteristic of the Roosevelt Administration.⁹⁹ Cronin also continued writing, but now pamphlets for the Chamber of Commerce on the theme of CP penetration of the government. At Francis Matthews' request, the priest prepared a brief pamphlet entitled *Communist Infiltration in the United States: Its Nature and How to Combat It*. The thirty-eight page booklet began with a broad philosophical comparison of Fascism and Communism, Soviet foreign policy, and the relationship between the different Communist Parties and the Comintern. Cronin did not claim that

⁹⁶ Director FBI to SAC Washington, D. C., July 25, 1946, FBI 94-35404-29.

⁹⁷ E. A. Tamm to the Director, September 24, 1946, FBI 94-35404-35.

⁹⁸ Tamm to the Director, September 24, 1946, FBI 94-35404-34.

⁹⁹ James Gillis, "Truth Coming Out," *The Catholic World*, Vol. 164 (December 1946), 201.

CP involvement in the federal government was a manifestation of a deliberate policy, but rather the result of "the broadmindedness of the average liberal" who saw the New Deal as "humanitarian and reformist in its aims." Cronin explicitly criticized "the secret commitments at Yalta and Teheran [conferences which] were contrary to the spirit of democracy."¹⁰⁰ He specifically urged further education about Communism, exclusion of Communists from government service, and registration of the CP-USA as the agent of a foreign power.¹⁰¹

The Chamber of Commerce approved the publication of Cronin's pamphlet, but did not credit its author. Matthews helped chair a committee which was identified as responsible for writing the booklet. Despite FBI officials' disinterestedness with the Sulpician, he was warmly appreciated by the Chamber of Commerce. "There is only one way to describe the manner in which this report was received, and that is to say it was sensational," Matthews wrote to Cronin. He went on:

In the five years that I have been in the Board of Directors, I have never seen anything transpire in a meeting which began to compare with the reception that this report was received. It was unanimously adopted, approved and ordered given the widest possible distribution.

. . . at least half the members of the Board individually pronounced it the most important action ever taken by the Chamber. By a number of directors it was called the finest thing that the Chamber ever did, and the finest report that the Chamber has ever received.

Needless to say, I was simply delighted with its reception. Only, my heart ached that I could not tell them who the author of the report was . . . We all considered that necessary because of the unfortunate narrowness of some individuals who would have disregarded the excellence of the report if they suspected there was any Vatican influence in it¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ U. S. Chamber of Commerce, *Communist Infiltration in the United States: Its Nature and How to Combat It*, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Chamber of Commerce, 1946, 24, 36.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

¹⁰² Matthews to Cronin, September 23, 1946, Matthews Papers.

Ironically, *Communist Infiltration in the United States* – a work for which Cronin was not given credit – may well have been his most widely-read work. The Chamber of Commerce publicized the release of the booklet and more than two hundred thousand copies of the pamphlet were distributed within the month it was approved. Copies were sent to every Catholic bishop in the United States, and eighty thousand were sent to Protestant clergy. During the month of November 1946, twenty-five to thirty thousand requests for the study arrived *daily* at the Chamber of Commerce in Washington.¹⁰³

Despite the Chamber of Commerce's enthusiastic approval of Cronin's work was well-received by the Chamber of Commerce, the FBI officials continued to keep the Sulpician at a distance. By mid-October 1946 Cronin had been warned about dealing with former FBI agents. While hospitalized, Cronin forwarded to FBI Assistant Director Edward Tamm a copy of a letter Jack Keenan had sent him. Keenan assured Cronin, "it was never our intention to interfere with the Bureau in the slightest degree." Keenan then apologized, saying "We are very sorry to have caused any distress to the Bureau and sincerely hope that we have not interfered [sic]. We are most anxious to straighten out anything that may be wrong."¹⁰⁴ Somewhat sycophantically, Keenan added:

I hope the Bureau will realize that we have sincerely tried to avoid crossing any lines as we are all extremely proud of our association with the Bureau and we all have the highest respect for the Director and the great work he is doing. I am certain that none of us want to spoil the good records we made while agents and our

¹⁰³ See "Chamber Opens Campaign To Oust Reds in U.S. Posts," *New York Times*, October 10, 1946, 1, 20; Peter H. Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," 81-2. The figure of twenty-five to thirty thousand daily requests may have been an exaggeration, but in his "Report on Communism, April 1947" which he shared with the FBI, Cronin wrote that "The combined Chamber of Commerce pamphlets has passed the one million mark," See "Report on Communism, 1945," FBI 94-35404-53X.

¹⁰⁴ Keenan to Cronin, October 15, 1946, FBI 94-35404-44X.

only interest is in helping the Bureau and doing our patriotic duty as American citizens.¹⁰⁵

In January 1947, Cronin prepared another pamphlet for the Chamber of Commerce entitled *Communists Within the Government: The Facts and a Program*. Benjamin Mandel, the former Communist employed by HUAC who had earlier leaked information to Cronin in the preparation of his report for the bishops was the driving force behind the second pamphlet.¹⁰⁶ With Mandel's collaboration, Cronin wrote that members of the CP "have achieved positions in our government where they can do immense harm to [the] national welfare and security." Moreover, he wrote, "[I]t is clear that our government has shown appalling laxity in meeting this problem."¹⁰⁷ Cronin expressed the concern that "forces in the State Department are pushing the cause of the Chinese Communists against the constituted national government of China."¹⁰⁸ He further claimed that "General [William J.] Donovan had defended the employment in [the] OSS of such well-known Communists as Irving Goff, Irving Fajans, Milton Wolff, and Vincent Lossowski."¹⁰⁹ In addition, the report noted that: "It is well known that Communists organized most of the mutinous demonstrations which lowered American prestige and strength after the fighting ceased," he wrote.¹¹⁰ "It has been estimated that 400 [Communists] hold positions of importance in Washington," Cronin wrote.¹¹¹ Cronin sent a copy of the

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," 82-83.

¹⁰⁷ U. S. Chamber of Commerce. *Communists Within the Government: The Facts and a Program*, Washington, D.C.: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1947, 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

pamphlet to Tamm , but the assistant director responded perfunctorily that the Bureau could not comment on the work.¹¹²

The Chamber of Commerce released a third study in 1947. Entitled *Communists Within the Labor Movement: A Handbook on the Facts and Countermeasures*, it was largely Cronin's work, with the collaboration of John Frey of the AFL.¹¹³ The report was published at a time of heightened public concern about unions. In 1946 a coal strike angered many Americans with organized labor, and the Republican sweep in congressional races that year left labor's traditional ally, the Democrats, in a weakened position.¹¹⁴ Cronin remained sympathetic toward labor: his father had been in the union in the paper mill in Glens Falls and his mentor Msgr. Ryan (as well as Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI) wrote in favor of labor unions. Nevertheless, his experience with the IUMSWA in Baltimore and his research had heightened his anxiety about CP infiltration into unions.

In contrast to the Chamber of Commerce's warm reception, Cronin's overtures to the FBI were rebuffed. Cronin's self-assumed role as a fighter against Communism was not welcome by senior FBI officials. Telephoning FBI Assistant Director Tamm to inform him of his intention to interview one Ruth Fisher in New York, Cronin inquired whether the FBI had any questions they wanted him to ask! Briefing FBI Assistant Director Ladd about the conversation,

¹¹² Cronin to Tamm, November 13, 1946; Tamm to the Director, November 15, 1946; Tamm to Cronin, November 15, 1946, FBI 94-35404-45.

¹¹³ *Communists Within the Labor Movement: A Handbook on the Facts and Countermeasures*. Washington, D.C.: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1947. Frey's assistance to Cronin is noted in Irons, "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," 85.

¹¹⁴ See Nelson Lichtenstein, "Labor and the Truman Era: Origins of the 'Private Welfare State,'" in Michael J. Lacey, *The Truman Presidency*, New York: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars/Cambridge University Press, 1989 and R. Alton Lee, *Truman and Taft-Hartley: A Question of Mandate*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966.

Tamm reported "I told him there was no question that we desired to suggest at this time."¹¹⁵ When dropping off a copy of a draft of his *Communism: A World Menace to the FBI*, Cronin asked Mr. Tamm to check it, adding that he could eliminate "any data or information which might embarrass Bureau informants or operations."¹¹⁶ Briefed on this, Hoover responded, "I don't like this general idea. Since he doesn't receive anything from FBI I see no reason for clearing any of his writings. To do so gives him the opportunity to claim contact with FBI."¹¹⁷

In at least one instance the Bureau did help Cronin. The priest was approached by an individual who offered to print Cronin's anti-Communist sheet for two dollars per paper annually. In a memo to Tamm, FBI agent J. P. Coyne reported that "Father Cronin feels that the price is so ridiculously low that there must be something wrong"¹¹⁸ Cronin also asked Coyne for information on the "Women's Action Committee for Lasting Peace," and also told Coyne that he wanted to help an anti-Communist Rumanian refugee. Coyne also wrote:

In discussing this particular subject [the refugee], Father Cronin casually commented that he has been in touch with the Roumanian anti-Communist underground in the United States. This high-sounding title so closely approximates malarkey that I requested Father Cronin to advise us as to the identity of this character. With some reluctance Father Cronin advised in confidence that the head of the Roumanian anti-Communist underground is [a sentence and a half deleted by censor].¹¹⁹

Tamm remained unimpressed by Cronin's work and he advised Hoover:

¹¹⁵ Tamm to Ladd, October 24, 1946, FBI 94-35404-42.

¹¹⁶ Tamm to the Director, November 5, 1946, FBI 94-35404-53. FBI Assistant Director Ladd was somewhat critical of Cronin's pamphlet, although most of his criticisms were minor. He wrote, for example, that there were ten to eighteen million in the Soviet Gulags, not fifteen million as Cronin asserted, that the CP-USA had 65,000 members (not 75,000), and he said that some Soviet trials did allow some measure of latitude to the accused, see Ladd to Tamm, November 7, 1946, FBI 94-35404-52.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ J. P. Coyne to E. A. Tamm, April 9, 1947, FBI 94-35404-50.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

I don't think that fundamentally we should be making any checks or having any other traffic with Father Cronin. His lack of prudence is such that we can't deal with him on a confidential basis. You will note from the attached memorandum, however, that he furnishes some information concerning [name deleted] who, according to our files, is pretty much of a racketeer who has exploited a dozen causes for personal gain in the past 10 years or so. If you think it all right, I will indicate orally to Father Cronin that it would probably be just as well if he didn't have any deal with [deleted].

I don't think we should furnish any information concerning the Women's Action Committee for Lasting Peace, although this organization appears to be non-Communist.

Concerning [name deleted] I believe this man, who is presently held at Ellis Island, is probably a Communist agent. The Bureau has interviewed him and the story is at complete variance with the story apparently told to persons trying to interest Father Cronin in this man. In addition, the story told to the Bureau defies credence. I think, surely as an anti-Communist move, we should urge Father Cronin not to inject himself into this case.¹²⁰

Hoover wrote "I agree" on the bottom of the memo.¹²¹

The FBI had now started to regard Cronin with suspicion about his indiscretion. Cronin dropped off a copy of his brief analysis entitled "Report on Communism, April 1947" at the Bureau. Assistant Director Tamm advised Hoover that he thought the first two pages were helpful "because they undoubtedly represent a summation [of Communism] . . . obtained through the extensive facilities of the Catholic Church." He went on to say that he doubted Cronin had written the report because "the depth of the comprehension manifested in this report is considerably beyond his capacity."¹²² The insult was unnecessary: Cronin held a doctorate and had published extensively, more so than any FBI agent. It is also particularly ironic given that Hoover's books were ghost-written, and that Cronin's low estimate of the quality of Hoover's writing. (In 1962, Hoover's *A Study of Communism* was published, a work ghost-written by William Sullivan. After speaking with Cronin, Nixon aide Agnes Waldron told

¹²⁰ E. A. Tamm to the Director, April 15, 1947, FBI 94-35404-51.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Tamm to the Director, April 18, 1947, FBI 94-35404-53X.

Rose Mary Woods in a memo, "since Bill Sullivan wrote it he [Cronin] feels certain that it is OK, sound, and reasonable -- more so than if JEH [J. Edgar Hoover] wrote it.")¹²³

Nevertheless, Cronin had made some poor judgment calls: the Bureau's lack of enthusiasm for his work should have served as a warning. On the last page of the report, an agent warned of the connection of Cronin and former FBI agents was "puerile and dangerous in many respects. Some of the ex[-]agents in the set up are unethical in their tactics; they have given ample demonstration of the fact that they are untrustworthy; and their publicized data appears libelous in character . . . at the rate this outfit is going it may soon crumble in ignominious defeat."¹²⁴

Cronin's contacts with the FBI dropped off sharply but did not end. In a rather obsequious letter to Hoover in July 1948, Cronin sought to explain a speech he had given. The newspaper headline made the speech appear critical of Hoover, and Cronin wrote to assure the FBI Director that it was not an attack on him.¹²⁵ In June 1949, an FBI agent interviewed Cronin concerning an anti-Communist newspaper called *Counterattack*. Two former FBI agents who had founded the paper had been introducing themselves as former FBI agents, apparently in an effort to gain the confidence of those they interviewed. FBI officials were understandably unhappy about this. Advising the interviewing agent that the NCWC had severed its ties with *Counterattack*, Cronin offered to contact the two men to tell them to stop. Briefed about this, Hoover commented

¹²³ Rose Mary Woods to Agnes Waldron, September 18, 1962, RMNLB.

¹²⁴ "Report on Communism, April, 1947," FBI 94-35404-53X. In later years, the difficulty of dealing with former FBI agents must have dawned on Cronin. Cronin wrote that there were various "'experts' whose credentials should be scrutinized with care," including former FBI agents (John F. Cronin, S.S. *Communism: Threat to Freedom*, Washington, D.C.: NCWC, 1962, 37)

¹²⁵ Cronin to Hoover, July 28, 1948, FBI 94-35404-56. The letter was in reference to "Catholic Leader Prods FBI To Expose Reds in U.S. Jobs," *Washington Times-Herald*, July 28, 1948, 11.

acerbically on the memo, "This is just a lot of double-talk from Father Cronin as he has usually given us."¹²⁶

At times however, the FBI Director found Cronin helpful. Having written a letter of protest to CBS President William Paley after correspondent Charles Collingwood criticized the Bureau, Cronin sent Hoover a copy of his letter. "It is about time somebody got after the CBS outfit," the Director wrote on the bottom of Cronin's letter.¹²⁷ Another Cronin request even secured enthusiastic support. This involved a solicitation for FBI assistance for help with an unfavorable review Cronin was writing of Max Lowenthal's book on the Bureau. A. H. Belmont recommended that unclassified information concerning Lowenthal and factual errors be supplied to Cronin.¹²⁸ Cronin's critical review of the book not surprisingly pleased Hoover.¹²⁹ Cronin also received unofficial support from FBI officials for another anti-Communist pamphlet he was preparing, entitled *Communism: Where do we stand today?* (Cronin assured the FBI that he understood their comments on the work were unofficial.)¹³⁰ Although at times rash, Cronin was never considered an enemy of the Bureau. Indeed, in September 1953, an unnamed FBI agent could write on a memo concerning Cronin, "He is [a] good friend."¹³¹

Cronin's work, in any event, demonstrated not only his intellectual skills but his impressive self-discipline. At the time he finished the November 1945 report on the CP-USA, he advised Msgr. Carroll that "My new economics book is

¹²⁶ Guy Hottel (SAC Washington, D.C. Field Office) to the Director, June 8, 1949, FBI 94-35404-NR (not recorded).

¹²⁷ Cronin to Hoover, June 14, 1949; Cronin to Paley, June 14, 1949; Hoover to Cronin, June 24, 1949; FBI 94-35404-57.

¹²⁸ Belmont to Ladd, November 13, 1950, FBI 94-35404-58.

¹²⁹ Cronin to Hoover, November 27, 1950; Hoover to Cronin, November 30, 1950; FBI 94-35404-58.

¹³⁰ Nichols to Tolson, December 10, 1951; V. P. Keay to A. H. Belmont, December 7, 1951, FBI 94-35404-NR.

¹³¹ Untitled memorandum, September 22, 1953, FBI 94-35404-63.

finished after unbelievable printing delays."¹³² That work, *Economic Analysis and Problems*,¹³³ contained 592 pages of text and an extra eight pages of recommended reading lists. Praising Cronin at a meeting of the Catholic bishops in November 1947, Bishop Karl Alter informed his brother bishops that over a million copies of *Communism: A World Menace* had been distributed. Cronin also, Alter noted, had helped create an anti-Communist magazine called *Plain Talk*.¹³⁴ In 1948, he published *Catholic Social Action*, a work which discussed the education of Catholics for social action, labor relations, and Catholic work in the community and race relations. Cronin dedicated the book to the memory of his mentor, Msgr. John Ryan.¹³⁵

Cronin extensive writings were factually accurate. But were his conclusions accurate? American soldiers in Europe and Asia had after World War II protested to demonstrate their unhappiness with what they perceived to be the tardy pace of demobilization, yet Cronin blamed the riots on Communists. "It is a well known fact that Communists organized most of the mutinous demonstrations which lowered American prestige and strength after the fighting ceased," he said.¹³⁴ Admittedly, such protests benefited to Communist propaganda, and doubtless CP members in the military would fan the flames of discontent among American troops. However, Cronin failed to take into

¹³² Cronin to Carroll, November 6, 1945, OGS, Box 24, Folder 18.

¹³³ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Economic Analysis and Problems*, New York: American Book Company, 1945.

¹³⁴ "Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Bishops of the United States," ACUA (November 12-14, 1947), 14.

¹³⁵ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Catholic Social Action*, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing, 1948.

¹³⁴ *Communists Within the Government*, 11-12.

consideration the notion that many American soldiers simply wanted to go home.¹³⁵

Cronin also unqualifiedly asserted that "forces in the State Department are pushing the cause of the Chinese Communists against the constituted national government of China."¹³⁶ In reality, the question of State Department officials sympathy for Mao is more complex than simply alleged radical or Communist influence. To be sure, some journalists like Edgar Snow and Theodore White, and some State Department officials, like John Stewart Service, John Paton Davis, and John Carter Vincent, looked with disdain on the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek. Chiang did run an inept and dishonest regime. Theodore White called Chiang's government "a corrupt political clique that combines some of the worst features of Tammany Hall and the Spanish Inquisition."¹³⁷ Chiang refused to use American aid to fight the Japanese, preferring instead to let America and Britain defeat Japan, and saving his forces to turn them against Mao's forces. China had become a sort of black hole that sucked in millions of dollars in American aid; During the year after Tokyo surrendered, Washington spent six hundred million dollars supplying the Nationalist forces. As historian Barbara Tuchman wrote, "No infusion [of money and material] was enough because none of it was used effectively."¹³⁸ When China fell to Mao's forces in 1949, the State

¹³⁵ R. Alton Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," *The Journal of American History*, 53:3 (December 1966), 55-571; Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 405-410.

¹³⁶ *Communists Within the Government*, 9. In his report for the American bishops, Cronin wrote that "Communist propaganda had come within a hair's breadth" of directing American sympathy toward Mao Zedong's forces. (See Cronin, "The Problem of American Communism in 1945," 5.)

¹³⁷ Cited in Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1971, 460.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 529. Of course, one of the tragedies about the pursuit of real and alleged security risks in the State Department was the expulsion of the "China hands" from the foreign service. As David Halberstam wrote, "The young American foreign service officers in China warned that we had [to ?] come to terms with the failure of Chiang's order. It was a sad story that would repeat

Department's best-informed specialists on the Far East -- the China Hands -- were accused of sabotaging America's China policy. The notion that Mao enjoyed the popular support in China which Chiang Kai-Shek lacked was not a factor Cronin took into consideration.

Cronin's writings, popularized and spread through the financial backing of the Chamber of Commerce and the NCWC, helped to spread information on the CP. Cronin made one prescient observation which he applied to Socialism, which would be partially applicable to the social and political atmosphere in post-war America. He wrote: "[T]he tremendous bureaucracy and immense concentration of power which this system would entail would be a real menace. Ultimately, it would be as destructive of our liberties as the more ruthless Communist dictatorship."¹³⁹ Republicans and conservative Democrats charged that FDR had betrayed American principles at Yalta. Although Democrat, Cronin shared these suspicions. Stories of "secret agreements" were spread that Roosevelt was not mentally alert at Yalta, that Germany and Italy were to be compelled to pay reparations, or that Stalin was maintaining a slave labor force which consisted of former German prisoners of war.¹⁴⁰ Admittedly, some of the

itself in Vietnam. . ." (David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, New York: Random House, 1972, 110.)

¹³⁹ *Communist Infiltration in the United States*, 37.

¹⁴⁰ Athan Theoharis, *The Yalta Myths: An Issue in U.S. Politics, 1945-1955*, Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1970, 15-47. Secretary of State James Byrnes, who was present at Yalta, claimed to be unaware of some of the agreements reached at Yalta, see Theoharis, 19-20, 42.

Adding to the criticisms of Yalta was the forced repatriation of Soviet prisoners of war at the end of the war. Many Red Army soldiers, especially non-Russians, volunteered to serve in Wehrmacht or Waffen-S.S. units. Many of these soldiers were shipped off to Gulags or shot by the Soviet NKVD, see Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Secret Betrayal*, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1977.

And although the U.S. criticized Stalin's regime for preventing free elections in East Europe, Washington was attempting to keep Communists from being elected in West Europe. The CIA spent several million dollars to help the Catholic Church suppress Communists in Italy, see John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986, 94, and

agreements were not publicized: at Teheran, Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan six months after Germany's capitulation, and at Yalta he moved it up to three months. In return, the Kurile Islands and South Sakhalin, lost to Japan by Russia in the 1904 Russo-Japanese War, were to be returned to Moscow's hegemony.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, many of the stories of secret agreements were fabrications. Suspicions of New Deal diplomacy and bureaucratic controls helped lead to a G.O.P. sweep in the 1946 elections.

Change in the political climate forced President Truman to adapt. Laws already existed for dealing with internal security. The Logan Act prohibited Americans from working as foreign agents without government approval and the Voorhis Act required foreign agents to register with the federal government. "Stern vigilance along this line is the only road to safety" Cronin wrote, adding also that America needed a program "to protect our nation from persons of doubtful loyalty."¹⁴² Troubled by the Republican Congressional victories in November 1946, Truman tightened internal security. As one historian has noted, "Standards that would have been rejected in 1945 or 1947 as repressive and unfair . . . were accepted by 1951."¹⁴³

In the name of internal security, America was becoming less tolerant of radical dissent and radical movements. Cronin's work helped feed this intensifying anxiety in cold war America. Some of Cronin's anti-Communist

Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effect on the Cold War*, New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, 89-95.

¹⁴¹ United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1961, 427, 499-500, 563 and United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1955, 94-96.

¹⁴² *Communists Within the Government*, 22.

¹⁴³ Athan Theoharis, "The Escalation of the Loyalty Program," in Barton Bernstein [ed.], *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970, 263-4.

work had a comic edge: his interest in helping the FBI, although well intentioned, exceeded his personal abilities and his priestly duties. Although Hoover was officially uninterested in his help, Cronin had served the FBI's needs, and he did maintain contacts with lower-ranking FBI officials, and would soon be in a position to help a Republican congressman from California.

Chapter Three The NCWC and the Cold War

During the First World War, the American bishops had found it useful to coordinate their efforts and, in consequence, established the National Catholic War Council (NCWC). Following the war's end, the bishops opted to maintain the organization, dropping the word "war" and substituting the word "welfare." After a dispute with Rome, the word "conference" was substituted for "council." Thus, the organization became the National Catholic Welfare Conference.¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, the NCWC concentrated on coordinating studies of Social Departments of the different dioceses. It had been put on the defensive due to the efforts by the Ku Klux Klan in Oregon to outlaw parochial schools. (The help of the NCWC led to the Supreme Court's decision in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* that the state could not mandate that all children attend public schools.) With the onset of the Great Depression, many of the Bishop's 1919 Program for Social Reconstruction were incorporated into the New Deal. Cronin's principal activity for the bishops' conference involved working on the report.²

Although living in Baltimore during the time of his writing the report on Communism for the bishops in 1945, Cronin's work had begun to shift to focus on projects for the national leadership. He accordingly moved to Washington to work at the NCWC. The NCWC comprised of a number of departments, with Cronin was assigned to the Social Action Department (SAD). The SAD was

¹ The word "council" would imply the authority to issue doctrinal pronouncements – hence, "conference" was preferable. See Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., "The Authority of the National Catholic Welfare Conference," in Thomas J. Reese, S.J. [ed.], *Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical and Theological Studies*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1989, 85-103, and Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy From 1870 to 1965*, 214-220.

² Aaron I. Abell, *American Catholicism and Social Action: A Search for Social Justice*, Garden City, N.Y.: Hanover House, 1960, 225-234.

under the direction of Cronin's mentor Msgr. John Ryan, but following Ryan's death in 1945, it was placed under Fr. Raymond McGowan and Fr. George Higgins. Cronin assisted with work on labor, but given his 1945 report, his chief duty dealt with Communism.³

Following the end of the Second World War, the Social Action Department confronted a variety of different measures. During the war, a system of compulsory arbitration of grievances suppressed strike activities. When the war ended, the mediation machinery was terminated and some work stoppages occurred. In June 1945, Senators Joseph Ball (R.-Minn.), Harold Burton (R.-Ohio), and Carl A. Hatch (D.-New Mexico) proposed the Ball-Burton-Hatch (BBH) Federal Industrial Relations Act. BBH would abolish the National Labor Relations Board and the United States Conciliation Service, replacing them with a five member Federal Industrial Relations Board. One analyst called the legislation "paradoxical," noting that while it would exempt many industries from federal regulation, it would create a new bureaucracy "larger than the combined peak staffs of the Conciliation Service, the National Labor Relations Board and the National War Labor Board combined."⁴ The bill's authors believed that BBH would limit strikes by acting like the Railway Labor Act. Disliking the bill, Cronin outlined his approach in an article for *The Sign*, published the following September. In part he found the bill "so vague that it could be interpreted as a sweeping denial of the right to strike because of grievances, however legitimate."⁵

³ Gerald M. Costello, *Without Fear or Favor: George Higgins on the Record*, Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984, 27 ff.

⁴ Herbert R. Northrup, "A Critique of Pending Labor Legislation," *Political Science Quarterly*, 61: 2 (June 1946), 207; see also Harry A. Millis and Emily Clark Brown, *From the Wagner Act to Taft-Hartley: A Study of National Labor Policy and Labor Relations*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950, 358-360.

⁵ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Labor and the Law," *The Sign*, 25 (September 1945), 21. BBH was vetoed by President Truman, see Thomas R. Greene, "Catholic

Cronin also objected to the vagueness of the full employment bill proposed by Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney (D.-Wyoming). Cronin expressed concern about deficit-spending due to the creation of debt and inflation. He instead proposed reducing the tax burden on lower-income groups, to create more disposable income, allow the purchase of more consumer goods, and thus keeping factories busy and unemployment low. He also suggested refinancing the national debt and instructing the Treasury "to retire an equal amount of bonds each year by purchasing them from the Federal Reserve." Cronin had also begun to speak on labor issues: his 1945 address to a Kiwanis Club meeting so impressed one listener that he wrote President Truman's press secretary to urge the White House to consider employing the priest. "I was so impressed with the complete understanding and analysis of the various angles of capital vs. labor which Father Cronin discussed from the standpoint of experience and study that I thought the Administration might be interested in his services in the difficult period facing us," the correspondent wrote.⁶

In 1947, Congress enacted the Taft-Hartley Act. The new legislation made unions liable to lawsuits, required union leaders submitting complaints to the NLRB first file affidavits swearing that they were not Communists, and granted the president the authority to enjoin strikes in communications, interstate commerce, and public utilities. The National Association of Manufacturers had been trying to pass parts of Taft-Hartley since 1938, and the AFL and the CIO complained that Taft-Hartley was a "slave labor" measure.⁷ Taft-Hartley was also opposed by a coalition of Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic clergy, called the

Thought and World War II Labor Legislation," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 94: 1-4 (March - December 1983), 51.

⁶ John F. Cronin, S.S. and Joseph C. O'Mahoney, "The Full Employment Bill," *The Sign*, 25 (October 1945), 29; Letter of E. S. Pardoe to Charlie Ross, September 7, 1945, courtesy of Carol Briley of the Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

⁷ Millis and Brown, 389.

"National Clergymen's Committee on the Taft-Hartley Bill." Auxiliary Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago lambasted the bill as "inhuman" and claimed that it would set back organized labor by fifty years. President Truman seems to have been open to putting some restrictions on labor, but he vetoed the bill on June 20, 1947. On June 21, Congress overrode the veto.⁸

Despite his work on labor legislation, Cronin's attention would again be diverted to the issue of Communism. Although a Democrat,⁹ Cronin was willing to work with two Republicans. In early 1947, he met Rep. Charles Kersten, a freshman congressman from Milwaukee, and through Kersten met Rep. Richard Nixon, from Whittier, California.¹⁰ The G.O.P. was anxious to regain control of the White House and the Congress, which the Democrats since the 1932 election, and a group of Republican businessmen invited Nixon to run for a congressional seat in the 1946 election against incumbent Democrat Jerry Voorhis. Nixon's allies wanted to use Voorhis' liberalism to attack him. Nixon waged a relentless campaign and even implied that Voorhis was the candidate of the CP. In later years, Nixon allegedly said of the 1948 campaign, "Of course, I knew Jerry Voorhis wasn't a Communist [But] I had to win. That's the thing you don't understand. The important thing is to win" ¹¹

⁸ *Ibid.*, 391. For religious opposition to Taft-Hartley, see Thomas R. Greene, "Catholic Views on Post World War II Labor Legislation," *Journal of Church and State*, 33: 2 (Spring, 1991), 301-326

⁹ Sharlene Shoemaker, "The Other Priest Who Wrote Speeches for Nixon," *National Catholic Reporter*, September 22, 1974, 16.

¹⁰ Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1970, 25 ff. Cronin and Nixon might have first met in 1942, when Nixon worked in the Office of Price Administration in Washington, D. C., and Cronin worked on a war ration board in the Spring of 1942, see Roger Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1990, 351.

¹¹ Quoted in Ambrose, *Nixon*, 140. Whether Nixon made the remark or not, he denied reports which later surfaced to the effect that he expressed remorse over the 1946 congressional contest, or the 1952 senate race against Helen Gahagan Douglas, see Ambrose, 139, 458-9.

As a freshman, Nixon joined the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and worked with Rep. Karl Mundt (R.-South Dakota) in January 1948 to draft a bill intended to expose the CP-USA which soon became known as the Mundt-Nixon bill. While the bill was being drafted, Nixon approached Cronin to seek his counsel, to deal with the Communist threat "in the democratic tradition."¹² Nixon approached Cronin (whom he had met the year before) about the proposal, which became the Mundt-Nixon bill. On May 11, Cronin sent Nixon a copy of the NCWC's legal analysis of the bill, as well as a four-page memorandum he drew up on it. Cronin distinguished outlawing the CP from exposing it (as Mundt-Nixon pledged to do). He lauded Mundt-Nixon for promoting a tactic "advocated by most experts in the field, including J. Edgar Hoover."¹³ Cronin emphasized, "There is a definite need for a law which would expose Communists."¹⁴ The Sulpician was not concerned about ramifications involving civil liberties, declaring that "there is every reason to feel that the [proposed] law has been carefully drawn up and will not involve [attacking] honest liberals. Congressman Nixon is highly intelligent and moderate in his views, and he has been assisted by nationally known liberal lawyers."¹⁵ NCWC's legal analysis was more ambivalent about the proposed legislation, but did still support the basic premise. The legal staff wrote, "The bill has features unusual to our traditional concept of criminal law. But it must be remembered that we are faced with a situation new in the world's history." The legal staff also drew from historical precedent, writing, "We are reconciled to the thought that during time of war our civil liberties must be curtained [sic, curtailed] in the interest of the

¹² *Ibid.*, 161.

¹³ "Confidential Report: The Subversive Activities Control Act, 1948: Analysis of the Bill. . . Appraisal of Its Probable Effectiveness as a Weapon Against Communism," n.d., 1, located in the Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace, Yorba Linda. (Cited here in after as RMNLB.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* None of the "nationally known liberal lawyers" were identified.

common defense. The challenge of Communism is a kind of war. Perhaps the same principle applies . . . while legislation of this kind may be shocking . . . it is fundamentally sound under the circumstances now prevailing."¹⁶ In his cover letter, Cronin told Nixon he was "trying to get a number of organizations to support the bill." He then added, "We still have a tremendous publicity job before us . . . You may rest assured that I will do all on my part to help it along."¹⁷

Cronin's assistance included testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 27, marking the first time he spoke before a congressional committee. Identifying himself as a member of the NCWC's Social Action Department, Cronin emphasized that he spoke "as an individual" and not as a representative of the bishops' conference.¹⁸ He endorsed the Mundt-Nixon bill, saying "There is no foreseeable danger of an American Communist revolution. But there is the danger that the American Communist Party will confuse and mislead public opinion through its subtle propaganda methods."¹⁹ He specifically acknowledged the threat of Communist infiltration into government. He asserted that the Mundt-Nixon bill was "consistent with the American [legal] tradition." He also employed an interesting analogy. "Surely it is as important to protect the public against mislabeled propaganda as it is to safeguard it from mislabeled drugs, dishonest securities, or the use of mails with intent to

¹⁶ "Confidential Memorandum: The Subversive Activities Control Act, 1948: A Legal Analysis," RMNLB.

¹⁷ Cronin to Nixon, May 11, 1948, *Ibid.* See also National Catholic Welfare Conference, *Annual Reports, 1948: Social Action Department*, Washington, D.C.: NCWC, 1948, 24. (Cited here after as *Annual Reports*.)

¹⁸ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary, *Control of Subversive Activities: Hearings Before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eightieth Congress on H.R. 5852, An Act to Protect the United States Against Un-American and Subversive Activities*, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1948, 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

defraud."²⁰ Some of Mundt-Nixon's opponents had, Cronin added, "unconsciously been misled by indirect Communist propaganda. The bill would not affect non-Communist liberals, Socialists, or similar groups."²¹ It was necessary because "I do not consider the Communist Party a genuine political party; [rather] it is a subversive conspiracy."²²

Not everyone agreed with Cronin's analysis. Bishop Francis Haas of Grand Rapids wrote to Rep. Mary Norton, "[T]he bill contradicts itself. While it professes to combat totalitarian dictatorship, it gives the Federal Government such arbitrary powers over personal freedom as to make the Government, in effect, a totalitarian dictatorship." Haas added, "Communism is an evil to be removed, but it would be folly to destroy ourselves in removing it."²³ Albert Kohn of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order testified against the bill.²⁴ The CIO, the Progressive Party and liberal Republicans like Tom Dewey also opposed Mundt-Nixon. Although the House of Representatives passed the measure, Mundt-Nixon died in the Senate committee. Parts of it were later incorporated into the McCarran Act of 1950.²⁵

The Mundt-Nixon bill was soon overshadowed by events which would thrust Nixon into political prominence as the result of a highly publicized and controversial investigation in which Father Cronin played a supporting role. The seeds of the case had been planted some years previously. On the evening of September 2, 1939, Isaac Don Levine drove Whittaker Chambers to the house of Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle. Chambers, an editor for *Time* magazine, was a former member of the CP-USA, who had broken with the party the year

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 202.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 202 ff.

²⁵ Ambrose, 163-4.

before. Although reluctant to share information on the CP with the federal government Chambers had become concerned over some startling developments of the preceding few days. The previous month, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany concluded a non-aggression pact, which included a then-secret agreement to divide Poland. On September 1, Hitler's military struck against Polish forces, and Stalin sent units across Poland's eastern frontier. Levine warned Chambers that now Stalin could potentially share secret information with Hitler, and so exposing Communists in government took on an added urgency. Now seated in chairs outside Berle's house, the three men conversed for two or three hours, in which Chambers told Berle that Lawrence Duggan, and Alger and Donald Hiss of the State Department, were Communists. Chambers also told Berle that Franklin Victor Reno, who worked in developing the Norden bombsight at the Aberdeen Maryland Proving Ground, was also a Communist.²⁶

Several factors delayed executive branch investigation of Chambers story. First, Chambers himself had not been completely forthcoming: he avoided telling Berle that he and Alger Hiss were guilty of espionage, doubtless out of fear that he himself could be prosecuted. Second, many doubted the stories circulating about Communist infiltration of the federal bureaucracy. Columnist Walter Winchell approached President Roosevelt about the stories, and an angry FDR responded "I don't want to hear another thing about it! It isn't true."²⁷ Two years and eight months after the Chambers-Berle-Levine meeting, FBI agents interviewed Chambers. Assumed that Berle had notified the Bureau, Chambers telephoned the assistant secretary to ask if he could speak with the agents. (Actually, the FBI was told about Chambers by another former Communist.) The

²⁶ Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, New York: Random House, 1952, 463-5. Chambers noted that when the FBI visited Reno in 1948, nine years after his meeting with Berle, Reno was still employed at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

²⁷ Quoted in Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers*, 203-4. See also Chambers, 470.

Bureau did not reinterview Chambers until March 1945. Like FDR, FBI Director Hoover originally doubted Chambers' tale.²⁸

In the meanwhile, other sources started to confirm Chambers report on Hiss. A Soviet official who defected to Paris told Premier Edouard Daladier that "two brothers named Hiss" in the State Department were "Soviet agents." Daladier passed on the warning to Ambassador William C. Bullitt.²⁹ In September 1945, Soviet code clerk Igor Gouzenko defected in Canada, and told the Canadian government that an assistant to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius was a Communist. FBI agents were permitted to question Gouzenko. The Canadians concluded that Alger Hiss was the likely suspect, and Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King visited President Harry Truman and warned him.³⁰

Alger Hiss had some powerful allies in the State Department, notably Secretary Stettinius and Assistant Secretary Dean Acheson. When Stettinius left office, he was succeeded by James Byrnes. Byrnes wanted to fire Hiss, but Hiss enjoyed the right to a civil service hearing if discharged, and FBI Director Hoover warned Byrnes that it would be impossible to prove Hiss a Communist on the basis of the available information. Hoover instead recommended assigning Hiss to "an innocuous position where he would understand the situation and resign."³¹ In January 1946, John Foster Dulles offered Hiss a post with the Carnegie Endowment for World Peace. Although originally declining the offer, the following November Hiss reconsidered. He resigned from the State Department in December and took the Carnegie Endowment position, where he

²⁸ Allen Weinstein, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*, New York: Random House, 1997, 302-3. This work is a revision of Weinstein's 1978 work by the same title. Weinstein had some access to KGB archives for the revised work.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 511; Tanenhaus, 205.

³¹ Weinstein, 317.

started on February 1, 1947. About eighteen months later – August 3, 1948 – Whittaker Chambers testified before HUAC, at which time, he identified Hiss as having been a Communist.

Cronin's new friend from California, Richard M. Nixon was a member of HUAC. In an autobiography entitled *Six Crises*, Nixon later asserted that when Chambers testified, "This was the first time that I had ever heard of either Alger or Donald Hiss."³² Nixon's recollection was inaccurate. By 1945, Father Cronin had learned of the accusations against Hiss, and Cronin provided Nixon and Kersten information on the CP. (FBI agent William Sullivan leaked data to the priest, and Cronin was also provided a transcript of a State Department interrogation of Hiss.) Cronin told three Nixon biographers – Earl Mazo, Bela Kornitzer, and Ralph de Toledano – that he told Nixon about the charges against Hiss in February 1947, the same month Hiss started the job at the Carnegie Endowment.³³ Later, he told the same story to Garry Wills, Peter Irons, Sharlene Shoemaker, and Allen Weinstein.³⁴ In 1982, he repeated the same assertion in a letter to the editor of *National Catholic Reporter*.³⁵

Some scholars have questioned Cronin's account of his assistance to Nixon in the Hiss case. In 1990, Herbert S. Parmet published a Nixon biography in which he said that Cronin's version lacked "direct evidence" and rested "solely on

³² Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1962, 4.

³³ Earl Mazo, *Richard Nixon: A Political and Personal Portrait*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959, 51; Bela Kornitzer, *The Real Nixon: An Intimate Biography*, New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1960, 172-5; Ralph de Toledano, *One Man Alone: Richard Nixon*, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969, 76.

³⁴ Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes*, 26-7; Peter H. Irons, "America's Cold War Crusade: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy, 1942-1948," 181-2; Shoemaker, 16; Allen Weinstein, "Nixon Vs. Hiss: The Story Nixon Tells and the Other Story," *Esquire*, 84:5 (October 22, 1982), 32.

³⁵ Cronin's letter was published in *National Catholic Reporter*, November 26, 1982, 19. He wrote in response to Arthur Jones, "FBI Files Implicate Church Leaders," *National Catholic Reporter*, October 22, 1982, 32.

the basis of the repeated assertions by the priest that he and Nixon met in February 1947. . . ."³⁶ Moreover, according to Parmet, Nixon had no reason to keep the allegations about Hiss a secret if he knew that Hiss was suspect. Had Cronin told Nixon, presumably Nixon would have made the charges public.³⁷ Further, Parmet noted that Cronin conceded to Bela Kornitzer that it was Nixon's "correct *hunch* [emphasis added by Parmet] to trust Chambers"³⁸ – a term that implied that Nixon remained uncertain about Hiss's alleged connection with the CP. Journalist Tom Wicker also challenged the Cronin account, attributing the allegation that Nixon knew of Hiss's connection with the CP before Chambers' testimony to Nixon critics who seek to prove that Nixon was as duplicitous and underhanded as they long maintained.³⁹ In 1993, British Member of Parliament Jonathan Aitken published a Nixon biography. Aitken was permitted to submit questions to Nixon in writing. Nixon told Aitken "I did not meet [Cronin confidant Ed] Hummel [sic, Hummer] or discuss the case with Cronin until after we had broken the case by getting Hiss to admit that he knew Chambers on August 17th and August 25th."⁴⁰ In addition, Aitken interviewed Cronin (in September 1990) and the Sulpician qualified his previous story. Cronin had told Sharlene Shoemaker and Allen Weinstein that Nixon confronted Hiss with a "stacked deck." He told Aitken, "The stacked deck remark was unfair. Nixon might have read something about Hiss in my reports, I don't know whether he did or not, but we didn't discuss the case until after Hiss made his public denial. From then on I worked with Nixon a lot and gave him everything I had on Hiss.

³⁶ Herbert S. Parmet, *Richard Nixon and His America*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1990, 167. (Parmet interviewed Cronin in September 1978.)

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁹ Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream*, New York: Random House, 1991, 54-5.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Aitken, *Nixon: A Life*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993, 155.

He needed that help. He was very unsure of himself at the beginning."⁴¹ Finally, Nixon biographer Irwin Gellman has also asserted that Cronin's role in the Hiss investigation has been overrated, reiterating the preceding arguments.⁴²

Despite these criticisms, there is still ample evidence to suggest that Cronin's original story is in fact accurate. The first involved the lack of written evidence to substantiate the cleric's claim. Irwin Gellman documented this contention based on an examination of Nixon's personal calendars at the Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda. Cronin's name first appeared on April 12, 1948 – under the words "Father Cronin's man."⁴³ Four replies may be put forward here. First, the phrase "Father Cronin's man" implies that Nixon and his staff knew who Father Cronin was prior to April 1948. Second, Nixon's calendars may not be complete, as few calendars show meetings after 5:00 P.M.⁴⁴ Had Kersten and Nixon met Cronin for an evening appointment, these meetings would not have been recorded. Third, some of Nixon's meetings with Cronin may have been identified under other categories. For example, one notation on Nixon's calendar under the July 23, 1947 reads "Kersten – Catholic Univ[ersity]." As Kersten had introduced Nixon to Cronin, this notation may indicate a meeting with Cronin, even though Cronin's name was not specifically recorded. Fourth, the absence of written evidence confirming Cronin's claim overlooks the obvious: there could be no written evidence. In writing the digest for the bishops on Communism, Cronin had been careful to point out that the report could not be publicized because some of the revelations could invite a lawsuit. As a lawyer, Nixon understood confidentiality. Cronin had given him the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Irwin F. Gellman, *The Contender: Richard Nixon: The Congress Years, 1946-1952*, New York: The Free Press, 1999, 459.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴⁴ The author has also examined Nixon's personal calendars at the Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace.

information privately, and Nixon had no reason to violate that trust. (Indeed, Nixon had every reason to honor that trust, given Cronin's difficulty with the FBI the year previously.) Moreover, Cronin and Nixon knew that proving such charges in a court of law would be extremely difficult if not impossible.⁴⁵ As noted previously, when Secretary Byrnes approached J. Edgar Hoover about dismissing Hiss from the State Department, Hoover warned Byrnes that there would be insufficient evidence to prove Hiss's connection with the CP. Documentation – such as in the later provided in the form of the "Pumpkin Papers" – was necessary. Nixon clearly had neither an interest or opportunity to publicize the charges against Hiss before Chambers' testimony of August 3, 1948.

Nixon indebtedness to Cronin and Hummer, more so than he wanted to acknowledge, is further documented by another source. Cronin left an undated memo to Nixon (while the latter served as vice president during the Eisenhower Administration), which read:

Edward Hummer, lawyer in the Department of Justice, informs me that a further reduction in force may endanger his job. Ed was highly useful to us during the Hiss and other hearings. He is a lifelong Republican, although appointed during the last Administration. A phone call to Mr. [William] Rogers [the attorney general] on this matter would be appreciated.⁴⁶

In short, the documentation neither supports Cronin's story nor corroborates Nixon's version.

Cronin's changed story is not necessarily surprising. At the time Cronin was interviewed by Aitken, he was approaching his eighty-second birthday, and

⁴⁵ Nixon acknowledged this in later years, when he wrote "without corroborative evidence to back up his allegations Chambers could never prove them to any court's satisfaction." (Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978, 66.)

⁴⁶ Cronin to Nixon [undated], NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F; 1956; 2/2." Gellman also cited this document, but he only quoted the words "lifelong Republican," see Gellman, 234.

more than forty years had elapsed since the Hiss case. His memory would not be as good in 1990 as it was in 1958. What is important here is Cronin having changed his story, but rather it is the consistency of Cronin's original history of the matter between 1958 and 1974. In telling Aitken that "The stacked deck remark was unfair," he had simply emphasized Nixon's role in Hiss's exposure. This also explained Cronin's use of the word "hunch" with Bela Kornitzer, to which Herbert Parmet objected.

The assertion that the original Cronin story was intended to prove Nixon's deviousness is ridiculous. It is a non-sequitur to assert that anyone supporting the contention that Cronin supplied Nixon with material on Hiss was (or may still be) out to "get" Nixon. Indeed, three sympathetic Nixon biographies – those of Mazo, Kornitzer, and Toledano – all concluded that Cronin had supplied Nixon with data on Hiss before Chambers' testimony of August 3, 1948.

Had Cronin's previous accounts been inaccurate, one should ask, "Was Cronin's memory bad, or was he lying?" Cronin's 1958 recollection of the Hiss case could not have been faulty – only ten years would have passed since Chambers testified before HUAC. Would Cronin therefore have lied? He had no motivation to embellish his role. To the contrary, the priest was so averse about drawing any publicity to himself that he was reluctant to cooperate even with the favorable Nixon biographers. Cronin explained to Msgr. Tanner at the NCWC his reasons for agreeing to be interviewed by Nixon biographer Earl Mazo: "My first reaction was that it would be better, since the facts were to be published anyway, to co-operate in an *accurate if somewhat played-down version of the situation* [emphasis added], than to wait for some gossip columnist to break the news."⁴⁷ When approached by Kornitzer, the priest provided eight pages of

⁴⁷ Cronin to Tanner, June 23, 1958, OGS, Box 4, Folder 18.

double-spaced typed notes,⁴⁸ which he also passed on to Nixon's office, with the proviso that "Bela Kornitzer asked me to write up two items about the Boss. Both are highly personal and I think it best that he look over them before I send them on. I shall follow his judgment completely, *even to suppressing them if he should so wish* [emphasis added]."⁴⁹ Nixon's recent biographers have not used these materials, which confirm that Cronin was a man devoid of personal ambition, and anxious to avoid the limelight.

The question of Father John Cronin can also be asked of Congressman Richard Nixon. Was Nixon's memory poor, or did he lie about the Hiss case? Nixon published *Six Crises* in 1962, almost fourteen years after Chambers testified before HUAC. Conceivably in the course of writing, Nixon simply forgot about his conversation with Cronin. He might also have wanted to embellish his role in the case. Nixon portrayed himself as a cool, efficient, hard-working lawyer, out to expose a traitor, despite the Truman Administration's lack of interest in (and indeed, desire to thwart) the inquiry. However, at least one of Nixon's contemporaries took issue with his version. Speaking of Nixon's account, Robert Stripling, HUAC Chief Investigator, told Allen Weinstein, "*Six Crises* is pure bullshit."⁵⁰ By December 1948, Nixon was becoming frustrated with the case. His anxiety was understandable: Chambers was not as forthcoming as he should have been, and he held on to documents that would

⁴⁸ See also John F. Cronin, S.S., "Richard M. Nixon, Investigator of Communism," and "Vice President Nixon: A Character Appraisal." The reports (each four pages in length) can be found in the Bela Kornitzer Papers at the Drew University Library Archives in Madison, New Jersey. The author is indebted to Linda Connors of the Drew University Library Archives who located the material for him.

⁴⁹ Cronin to Woods, April 10, 1959, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2." Kornitzer's approach to Cronin was Nixon's idea. Cronin told Msgr. Tanner, "Since he [Kornitzer] already knew quite a bit, I felt that I had no alternative but to give him the facts. . . ." (Cronin to Tanner, March 1, 1960, OGS, Box 33, folder 14.)

⁵⁰ Quoted in Wicker, 66.

have proved Hiss had pilfered State Department files of which he (Hiss) or his wife had typed copies. In December 1948, just a month after his re-election, Nixon was scheduled to take a Caribbean cruise with his wife to Panama. Stripling encouraged him to remain in Washington, but the congressman snapped at him. "I'm so Goddamned sick and tired of this case, I don't want to hear any more about it and I'm going to Panama. And the hell with it, and you, and the whole damned business." Nixon "cussed me out real good" Stripling added.⁵¹ Later, Stripling encouraged Nixon to join him on a trip to Chambers's farm at Westminster, Maryland to question him. Nixon told Stripling, "Hell, I'm not going to Westminster. I'm going to Panama, and you can do what you damn want to, but I'm through with it." Stripling asked Nixon again, at which point the congressman finally relented, saying "Goddamn it, if it'll shut your mouth, I'll go." The two drove to the farm on the evening of December 1.⁵²

In addition to a possible desire to exaggerate his part in the inquiry, other factors encouraged Nixon to equivocate. Garry Wills proposed that Nixon first needed to lie in writing *Six Crises* because he wanted to protect Ed Hummer from J. Edgar Hoover.⁵³ Ralph de Toledano suggested that on hearing Cronin's tale that Hiss was a Communist, the congressman might simply have "brush[ed] it aside."⁵⁴ FDR and J. Edgar Hoover had doubted the story -- Nixon might simply have done likewise. Tom Wicker suspected that Nixon might have been too embarrassed to concede to his colleagues on HUAC that he knew in advance that Hiss had been a Communist.⁵⁵ Richard Nixon therefore seems to have more reason to falsify his account than Cronin.

⁵¹ Stripling is quoted in Weinstein's *Perjury*, 164.

⁵² *Ibid.* As Nixon recalled later, driving to the farm was his idea, not Stripling's, see Nixon, *Six Crises*, 164.

⁵³ Garry Wills, "The Hiss Connection through Nixon's life," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 25, 1974, 42.

⁵⁴ Toledano, 76.

⁵⁵ Wicker, 56.

Although not wishing to engage in psychohistory, one must also consider the significance of the Hiss Case for Richard Nixon and his career. In later years -- even as president, and especially when his administration was coming apart in the Watergate scandal -- Nixon continued to talk about Hiss. Garry Wills recounted the frequency of Nixon's references to the Hiss case during taped conversations in the oval office with his aides -- he mentioned the Hiss case three times in a conversation with John Dean on February 28, 1973, once with H. R. Haldeman on March 27, and again to Dean on April 16.⁵⁶ At his sentencing for his role in the break-in of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, Egil Krogh recounted that Nixon told him to read *Six Crises* "and particularly the chapter on Alger Hiss in preparation for this assignment."⁵⁷ Garry Wills added:

His first campaign sent him off to Washington at age 33. He pulled off the Hiss coup as a young stranger in Washington, 35 years old. He was elected Senator at age 37, and Vice President at 39. Having entered his thirties as a nonpolitical man, he ended them at the top of a brand-new profession And though there had been no sign of ruthlessness in him during his obscure years as student and lawyer, he rose through a rapid succession of envenomed struggles that destroyed the careers of his rivals -- Jerry Voorhis in 1946, Alger Hiss in 1948, Helen Douglas in 1950. The central event in this dizzying six-year rise, the most important one, the one that made him Vice President, was the Hiss case. No wonder for him it became *the* political experience -- the *mano a mano* in which one is made or broken.⁵⁸

Nixon's account might be accurate given the inconclusive nature of the documentation. We are therefore left with the question, "Which is the more

⁵⁶ Wills, "The Hiss Connection through Nixon's life," 8, 40. Wills emphasized Nixon's of understanding of the applications of history. Nixon said of Truman, "His error was sheer stubbornness in refusing to admit a mistake. He viewed the Hiss case only in its political implications and he chose to handle the crisis which faced his Administration with an outworn political rule of thumb: Leave the political skeletons hidden in the closet and keep the door locked." Had Nixon substituted the word "Watergate" for "the Hiss case," he could simply have been referring to his own presidency, see Wills, 40.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 44 and 46. Wills's emphasis.

likely scenario?" By late 1945 when he finished his report on Communism for the American bishops, Father Cronin knew that Chambers had identified Hiss as a security risk, and he mentioned Hiss four times in his report. Cronin and Nixon had met and discussed Communism before Chambers testified to HUAC on August 3, 1948. It seems extremely unlikely that Cronin would not have shared the reports on Hiss with Nixon.

Whatever the answer to the question, "What did Cronin tell Nixon before Chambers testified in August 1948?," the Sulpician certainly came to Nixon's aid in the days that followed Chambers testimony. Cronin told Garry Wills:

Ed Hummer was one of the FBI agents I worked with. He could have got in serious trouble for what he did, since the Justice Department was sitting on the results of the Bureau's investigation into Hiss – the car, the typewriter, etc. But Ed would call me every day, and tell me what they had turned up, and I told Dick, who then knew just where to look for things, and what he would find.⁵⁹

Cronin also told Allen Weinstein that he often telephoned Nixon (on the congressman's private line) between August and December 1948, supplying the information the FBI had gathered, to which Hummer had access.⁶⁰ Even Nixon conceded in later years that after August 1948, "we [HUAC] had some informal contacts with a lower-level [FBI] agent [Ed Hummer] that proved helpful in our investigations."⁶¹ Here again, Nixon was not telling the whole truth: the night of December 1, after he and Stripling drove to Chambers's farm in Westminster, he telephoned Louis B. Nichols of the FBI, either late on December 1 or very early on December 2. On December 2, Nichols informed Hoover that Chambers "still has documents and material that substantiate and vindicate his position," and

⁵⁹ Wills, *Nixon Agonistes*, 28.

⁶⁰ Weinstein, "Nixon Vs. Hiss," 76-7.

⁶¹ Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978, 58.

that Nixon had called him "merely to apprise the Bureau so that the FBI would not be caught off base."⁶²

With the help of the FBI and Cronin's intermediary services, the Hiss case propelled the young congressman on to the national stage. Hiss vehemently denied being a member of the CP. Ultimately, Chambers produced evidence which implicated Hiss as a spy, but the statute of limitations on espionage had expired. Hiss would, however, be accused of perjury, and a federal grand jury handed down two counts of perjury against the former state department official.⁶³ The first trial ended in a hung jury. (Of the four who voted "not guilty," one disgruntled juror said "The foreman was emotional, two were blockheads, and one was a dope.")⁶⁴ The defense asked for a change of venue to Vermont, in part because there were fewer Catholics in that state, and most Catholics on the jury voted to convict Hiss.⁶⁵ On January 21, 1950, Hiss was convicted in the second trial.⁶⁶ Nixon did not deserve all the credit for the Hiss case – Robert Stripling, HUAC's chief investigator and prosecuting attorney Robert Murphy also merited attention.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, former President Herbert Hoover cabled Nixon, "THE CONVICTION OF ALGER HISS WAS DUE TO YOUR PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE ALONE."⁶⁸ Nixon reaped much of the credit for the

⁶² Quoted in Athan G. Theoharis and John Stuart Cox, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988, 252.

⁶³ "Hiss Indicted For Perjury In Communist Spy Inquiry; New Jury To Meet Today," *New York Times*, December 16, 1948, 1.

⁶⁴ Weinstein, *Perjury*, 418.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 419-20.

⁶⁶ "Hiss Guilty On Both Perjury Counts; Betrayal Of U.S. Secrets Is Affirmed; Sentence Wednesday; Limit Ten Years," *New York Times*, January 22, 1950, 1.

⁶⁷ Stripling later told Tom Wicker that during Nixon's 1950 Senate race, Pat Nixon said to him, "Strip, we know you broke the Hiss case. [But] Do you mind if Dick claims credit for it?" Wicker added, "Stripling didn't then, but [he] decidedly does today." (Wicker, footnote on pp. 66-7.)

⁶⁸ Quoted in Nixon, *RN*, 69.

case. In later years, Fr. Philip Conneally, S.J., of Loyola High School in Los Angeles sent Nixon a copy of a sermon entitled "Can a Christian Forgive Alger Hiss?" The Jesuit concluded that Christians did not need to forgive Hiss due to "his continued unrepentance for his awful crime."⁶⁹

Cronin's cooperation with Nixon was, in any event, only one part of the Sulpician's work in 1947-1948. In his 1945 report on Communism, Cronin had recommended consideration of creating a non-Catholic, anti-Communist organization, which be trusted by Protestant Americans. In June 1946, Cronin helped establish a monthly journal, *Plain Talk*, with a \$50,000 gift from businessman Alfred Kohlberg. Kohlberg -- the founder of the American Jewish League Against Communism -- could not be accused of being a puppet of the Vatican. Kohlberg and Cronin also helped start another anti-Communist newspaper called *Counterattack*, following Kohlberg's differences of opinion with *Plain Talk's* editor Isaac Don Levine.⁷⁰ Cronin also was assisted by an unlikely source: Raymond I. Smith of Harolds Club, a Reno, Nevada-based gambling casino gave \$50,000 to the priest. Smith wrote Cronin that he believed "the only way to abolish communism is to have it outlawed." He confessed, "As you know, I am a professional gambler, and in the eyes of many persons, a member of the underworld gang. Laws can be passed and enforced, and regardless of how Mr. Hoover feels about it, there is a way in which it can be done." The Harolds Club assistance came to be known as "The Reno Fund," and was used to finance some of Cronin's anti-Communist activities.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Conneally to Nixon, October 25, 1952; Nixon to Connally [sic], November 28, 1952; NARA, Box 176, "Conneally, Father [Philip]."

⁷⁰ Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg*, New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1969, 196 ff.; For an obituary on Kohlberg, see *The Tablet*, April 16, 1960, 14, and "The Alfred Kohlberg Story," in *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷¹ Smith to Cronin, May 31, 1948; Smith to Cronin, May 4, 1949; Archives of the Catholic University of America, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Social Action Department (Cited here after as SAD), Box 9, Folder 69. See also Moreno, 203. In the May 1949 letter, Smith told Cronin "I am willing to appear before any

By 1949, Cronin had accumulated an extensive amount of material on the CP-USA. According the NCWC's 1949 *Annual Report*: "... Through established contacts we now have a complete list of Communist officials and the total membership for each of the thirty districts of the Communist Party, USA. The list is quite recent and furnishes a state-by-state picture of party work and success." The NCWC report called attention to a published Chamber of Commerce report, lectures "in various cities in over a dozen states," the continuation of "[i]nformal contacts . . . with Congressman Richard M. Nixon, in regard to methods for exposing Communist activities, particularly with regard to espionage," and meetings to inform visitors "from Europe, Asia, and Latin America" about Communism.⁷² That same year, the Holy Office issued a decree requiring Catholics to obtain permission to read Communist literature. Ever the faithful son of Holy Mother Church, Cronin dutifully applied for permission to read Communist material, and continued to do so as late as 1958.⁷³

From his Washington office, Cronin devoted a good deal of 1950 in anti-Communist endeavors. While the CIO had a reputedly been infiltrated by Communists during the 1930s, Cronin now reached out to the organization to oppose Communism.⁷⁴ Cronin was pleased by the articles published in *Plain Talk* and *Counterattack*, and the work of the American Legion. He lamented that "the FBI does not publish its material [on the CP]," unaware that such material was

secret branch of lawmakers, provided my name is kept secret, and tell of my own experiences [presumably in dealing with opponents]" Cronin specified the sum of money in a letter he wrote to William A. Reuben, June 24, 1974, JFCPP, Box 2, Folder 25.

⁷² NCWC, *Annual Report*, 1949, 12.

⁷³ Cronin to Tanner, April 24, 1958; OGS, Box 4, Folder 18. In 1542, Pope Paul II established the Congregation of the Holy Office – originally the Inquisition. On December 1, 1965, it was renamed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, see John L. McKenzie, S.J., *The Roman Catholic Church*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, 20.

⁷⁴ Cronin to Harry Read, February 14, 1950; Cronin to Msgr. Carroll, February 14, 1950; Carroll to Cronin, February 16, 1950; OGS, Box 24, Folder 2.

leaked by the Bureau to reporters who were sympathetic to the FBI. He added "The work of the [House] Committee on Un-American Activities is hampered by politics. So there is still need for an impartial, completely staffed and well-financed research group which could tell the facts about communism." The priest hoped such a group would maintain contacts with other groups to provide information and coordinate activities.⁷⁵ The brilliant American Jesuit scholar John Courtney Murray would help develop a Catholic theological position concerning the relationship between church and state. Cronin had little interest in the theory of that relationship, but he could understand the difficulties raised. He wrote in a memo:

. . . The position of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in regard to communism is somewhat difficult. It is naturally deeply concerned with the menace. At the same time, any program of action to meet it might have political overtones. As a religious group we respect the traditional American stand against organized political activity on our part. Hence, the Conference as such has no sustained action program against communism. We assist in reporting the facts, leaving action to Catholics acting as individual citizens or members of other groups.⁷⁶

One lay group with which Cronin became familiar was the "All-American Conference to Combat Communism." Having attended the May 13-14, 1950 meeting of the group in New York, a priest briefed Cronin on what transpired. "It seems that the Protestants are divided as to whether denominations as such should come in. Several Jewish groups were present. . . ." but they were made uncomfortable by the disagreement among the Protestants.⁷⁷ Cronin attended the next four meetings, which were held in New York City (in July), in Chicago (September), Buffalo (November), and Washington D.C. (December). In the July meeting, members decided to open a headquarters in Washington, D.C. (At the

⁷⁵ "Suggestions for the All-American Conference," 1-2, *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁷ B. G. Mulvaney to Cronin, May 17, 1950; OGS, Box 24, Folder 2.

end of the memo describing that meeting, Cronin wrote "Although this subject was not formally on the agenda, it was stated that in the event of war with Russia, the Conference will have served its purpose [!] and disband.")⁷⁸ Cronin also attended the September meeting. "Those present were strongly against dissolving the conference, even though it has not accomplished anything startling thus far," he wrote.⁷⁹ The All-American Conference published a semimonthly bulletin, edited by a former *Counterattack* staff member. Cronin asked the NCWC for permission to continue to attend the meetings, hoping the organization would serve as "a spark" for his dream of a research and information center on Communism. The priest also suggested that the NCWC's ties to the All-American Conference be financed by the Reno Fund.⁸⁰ He attended the December meeting, which seems largely to have been consumed by discussions of the mechanics of organization. A Protestant cleric, the Rev. Dr. Frederick C. Fowler, suggested having American children send scrapbooks to Europe, presumably extolling the virtues of American life and democracy to European children. Although Cronin found the notion "impractical and somewhat childish," Fowler was authorized "to explore the possibility of securing financial support for his project, without committing the Conference in any way financially."⁸¹ Cronin's superiors were somewhat wary of Fowler, and warned Cronin "of the violently anti-Catholic proclivities of the Reverend Fowler who is one of the prime movers in the POAU [Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State] movement in Pittsburgh."⁸²

⁷⁸ "Report on [the] All American Conference To Combat Communism; Executive Council Meeting, July 15-16 [1950]," *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Cronin to Mr. Work, October 3, 1952; *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ "Report on Executive Meeting [of the] All American Conference to Combat Communism," December 16, 1950, *Ibid.*

⁸² General Secretary to Cronin, January 26, 1951, *Ibid.* Although ostensibly non-sectarian, Catholic Church leaders had the feeling that POAU was decidedly

Cronin was involved in other activities in 1950. He published another book, *Catholic Social Principles*, a 726 page long tome which he dedicated to the memory of Pope Pius XI. His friend Bishop Karl Alter of Toledo wrote the introduction. This book treated many of the concerns covered in his previous works like child labor and Communism. He also addressed racial discrimination in the workplace. (By 1955, the book went through four printings.)⁸³ Also in 1950, his Republican ally Congressman Nixon initiated his bid for election to the Senate against Helen Gahagan Douglas. In October Cronin sent Nixon's office a memo offering suggestions for the campaign. "Hammer away at the rising cost of living" he wrote. "Hammer away on union-management harmony on a desirable goal" He also told Nixon, "You are a true liberal, because you believe in the utmost freedom for the individual [Y]ou are a real liberal, not a phony liberal who would hand over all power to Washington." He also encouraged Nixon to speak to the archbishop of Los Angeles, James Francis McIntyre. Under the heading "Catholic Support for Douglas," Cronin wrote "Since the main problem is in the Los Angeles area, it might be wise to talk directly but privately with Archbishop McIntyre. I feel sure that he personally supports your views, and he may have useful suggestions how to get other

anti-Catholic. Established in 1947, the organization was first dominated by Protestant clergy. In 1972, it was renamed "Americans United for the Separation of Church and State." See letter of Jamie Kiderman of Americans United for Separation of Church and State to the author, February 26, 2000.

Fowler later disappeared from the All-American Conference. In an October 1956 memo, Cronin wrote "There is every likelihood that even the nominal participation by Dr. Fowler will be terminated at the Annual Meeting in Omaha next month. I have definite commitments that he will not be re-nominated. The only situation might arise would be a floor action to return him to office. This is unlikely since his organization [membership ?] is not paid up and can be disqualified on these grounds," see Cronin to Carroll, October 30, 1956, OGS, Box 24, Folder 10.

⁸³ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Catholic Social Principles: The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church Applied to American Economic Life*, Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1950. The edition which the author examined was part of the 1955 fourth printing.

support."⁸⁴ Following Nixon's election victory, Cronin rejoiced. "It is hardly necessary for me to say how happy I am that you won," he wrote. He was "delighted at the margin of victory" and told Nixon that his victory was enhanced given that he achieved it "without any help from Governor [Earl] Warren."⁸⁵

Besides his work against Communism and in support of Nixon, Cronin took on another task. The NCWC sent representatives to Europe to study the post-war German church to see what kind of help could be rendered. Robert Johnson of the Johnson and Johnson Company in New Jersey donated \$1,750 to the bishop's conference for such a mission. He wrote Msgr. Howard Carroll, "I know from conversations with Father Cronin that he is most anxious to do some research in Europe on religious and social problems"⁸⁶ Scheduled to travel

⁸⁴ Murray Chotiner to Nixon, October 20, 1950; "Suggestions for Mr. Nixon," [n.d.], RMNLB. Greg Mitchell wrote that McIntyre favored Nixon, "secretly agreed" to help him, and ordered priests of the Los Angeles archdiocese to spend the month of October preaching against Communism as a means of helping elect Nixon and defeat Douglas. Greg Mitchell, *Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady: Richard Nixon vs. Helen Gahagan Douglas – Sexual Politics and the Red Scare, 1950*, New York: Random House, 1998, 177-8.

It is true that McIntyre wrote the clergy to encourage anti-Communist sermons, but the context of the times was broader than purely the Nixon-Douglas campaign. The Korean conflict was underway, and October is customarily a month in which Marian devotion is encouraged. In a letter of September 25, 1950, which McIntyre wrote to the Catholics of Los Angeles, he urged daily recitation of the rosary "for the welfare of our boys in Korea, for the restoration of peace, and the rejection of Communism." He also suggested that families pray the rosary. McIntyre's biographer Msgr. Francis Weber told this author, "Never have I come across any evidence that the cardinal [McIntyre was named a cardinal in 1952] 'secretly agreed to help Richard Nixon in the campaign.' That was surely not his style. It makes sense that he would have preferred Nixon to Douglas, but he would never have said that publicly or even to close friends." Letter of Msgr. Weber to the author, February 24, 2000.

⁸⁵ Cronin to Nixon, November 10, 1950, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 2/2." Cronin was not the only Democrat happy with Nixon's victory. Rep. John F. Kennedy (D. - Massachusetts) gave Nixon a \$1,000 donation from Kennedy's father. JFK told Nixon, "[I]t isn't going to break my heart if you can turn the Senate's loss into Hollywood's gain." See Nixon, *RN*, 75.

⁸⁶ Johnson to Carroll, November 16, 1949; OGS, Box 38, Folder 22.

to Europe in 1950, Cronin's trip was delayed until February 1951. That year he was attending meetings of the All-American Conference, reading galley proofs of *Catholic Social Principles*, and had teaching commitments at Catholic University, and a week-long institute at Notre Dame.⁸⁷ He spent three months in Germany studying labor-management relations, but he also participated in conferences in England, Holland, and Italy.⁸⁸

Cronin's friendship with Richard Nixon allowed him contacts with government even as his relationship with the FBI deteriorated. While continuing to write, publish, and speak, he also reached out to non-sectarian groups, in his effort to continue the struggle against Communism. Anti-Communism was by then fashionable. Ironically, though he felt that the threat to internal security had been underrated in the years before the Second World War, in the 1950s he would find it overrated, particularly as a senator from Appleton Wisconsin prepared to enter the stage.

⁸⁷ Cronin to Carroll, February 13, 1950; *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Cronin to Tanner, February 2, 1951; OGS, Box 38, Folder 9; *Annual Report*, 1951, 18; Cronin wrote a report, "Joint Labor-Management Control of Industry: With Special Reference to the Views and Influences of the Christian Churches," located in OGS, Box 38, Folder 22.

Fr. George Higgins of the Social Action Department spent four months in Germany in 1950 – the year before Cronin – serving "as liaison between the Religious Affairs Branch of OMGUS [Office of the Military Government, United States] and the German Catholic social action movement. . . ." See *Annual Report*, 1950, 7.

Chapter Four McCarthy and the Cold War

Anti-Communism emerged as a potent domestic political force by the late 1940s and early 1950s, based in part on religious anti-Communism. The astute White House aide Clark Clifford counseled President Truman before the 1946 election that the "controlling element" in the Roman Catholic vote was "distrust and fear of communism."¹ Yet, historians of the relationship between Catholicism and anti-Communism have often either exaggerated or erred when describing that relationship both during that era and up to the present day.² The most prominent anti-Communist figure of the early 1950s was undeniably a Roman Catholic. The original account held that Senator Joseph R. McCarthy launched his crusade against Communism after a January 7, 1950 dinner with attorney William A. Roberts, Prof. Charles Krause, and Fr. Edmund Walsh of Georgetown University. Columnist Drew Pearson first put forward the story that McCarthy was looking for an issue to attract the electorate, and that Father Walsh suggested Communism. McCarthy, Pearson claimed, leapt at the recommendation.

¹ Cited in Irons, "America's Cold War Crusade," 191.

² An example of such error is found in Dr. Robert Frank's assertion that J. Edgar Hoover was a Catholic, and thus in part motivated by his religious fervor in pursuing Communism. (Robert L. Frank, "Prelude to Cold War: American Catholics and Communism," *Journal of Church and State*, 34: 1 [Winter 1992], 48.) But Hoover was not a Catholic – he was a Presbyterian who joined a Lutheran congregation for a time. See R. Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, New York: The Free Press, 1987, 13-4.

Dr. Frank's error was picked up by Dr. Thomas Moriarty. In his dissertation, Moriarty asserted that Hoover was a "devout Catholic." (Thomas M. Moriarty, "The Catholic Lobby: The Periphery Dominated Center, Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1962," Ph.D. diss.: University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1996, 54.) Moriarty also added that Whittaker Chambers was a Catholic (p. 233). Chambers was not a Catholic either: he was a Quaker, who converted to the Episcopal Church, see Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers*, 474.

Many observers have continued to accept the story of the Walsh-McCarthy conversation at face value,³ but historian Fr. Donald Crosby, S.J., challenged that account. As Crosby pointed out, McCarthy had already received favorable publicity for asserting that a Wisconsin reporter had Communist leanings; His pre-1950 experience had already demonstrated that anti-Communism was an issue that appealed to the electorate, and McCarthy would not have needed Walsh or anyone else to suggest seizing on Communism as an issue. In addition, Walsh himself denied the story, calling Pearson a "liar," and Walsh's concern tended to be with external Communism rather than the CP-USA.⁴

Beyond Walsh's alleged suggestion to the junior senator from Wisconsin, there exists the larger question of whether McCarthy's shrill anti-Communism had its source in Catholicism. "It is more than an accident that the Senator from Wisconsin was a Catholic who attended the Jesuit Marquette University during the 'Red Decade,'" wrote one observer.⁵ This statement is a considerable oversimplification. As Father Crosby pointed out about McCarthy's student days:

Although Marquette gave him the legal background he needed to advance in politics, he did not seem to undergo any kind of transformation as a result of his stay there. As [an undergraduate and later] a student in the law school, he would certainly have heard something about the church's position on communism (and the related issue of social justice), but it seems to have made little impression on him. In sum, the Marquette Jesuits

³ Doctor Robert Frank – a communications teacher, not a history professor - wrote, "[I]t is more than an accident that the priest in the Colony restaurant in early 1950 who suggested that McCarthy use communism as a re-election issue was Father Edmund Walsh, the Jesuit who had directed the opening Catholic campaign against the 'red scourge' in America," Frank, 56.

⁴ Donald F. Crosby, S.J., *God, Church, and Flag: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Catholic Church, 1950-1957*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1978, 49-51.

⁵ Frank, 56.

seem to have had little impact on either McCarthy's character or his system of values.⁶

Catholics supported McCarthy more than their non-Catholic brethren, but Catholic support was only five to ten percentage points higher than that of Protestant Americans.⁷ Moreover, McCarthy seems to have had little interest in framing his anti-Communism in a religious context. Crosby wrote:

The blunt fact of the matter is that Catholicism had precious little to do with the senator's hunt for subversives. His designs were political and practical, as his friends, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Roy Cohn readily concede. Charles Kersten cannot recall a single occasion when McCarthy mentioned Catholicism in connection with his anti-Communist crusade.⁸

There was no "Catholic" position on McCarthy, but the American bishops came close to formulating a position. On November 18, 1951, the hierarchy issued a pastoral letter entitled "God's Law: The Measure of Man's Conduct." In their concluding paragraph, they wrote:

(Para. 28) In politics, the principle that "anything goes" simply because people are thought not to expect any high degree of honor in politicians is grossly wrong. We have to recover. . . that sense of public trust on the part of the elected official which give meaning and dignity to political life In their speech and in their actions they are bound by the same laws of justice and charity which bind private individuals in every other sphere of human activity. Dishonesty, slander, detraction, and defamation of character are as truly transgressions of God's commandments when resorted to by men in political life as they are for all other men.⁹

Did the bishops have McCarthy in mind? Many observers concluded that the passage (which was written by Cardinal Mooney) was indeed a slap at "Tail-

⁶ Crosby, 27-8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 230-1. Crosby cited a May 1952 Roper Poll, in which nine percent of Catholics surveyed credited McCarthy with suppressing domestic Communism, but fifty-six percent of Catholics credited the FBI. (Crosby, 87.) In a March 1953 poll, slightly more Catholics had an unfavorable impression of McCarthy than a favorable impression (17.4% to 16.6%). Incredibly, most Catholics had no impression of him (See Crosby, 119). See also, Vincent P. De Santis, "American Catholics and McCarthyism," *Catholic Historical Review*, 51: 1 (April 1965), 23-4.

⁸ Crosby, 38.

⁹ Nolan, 2: 143.

Gunner Joe."¹⁰ *The Christian Century* asked "Could 'detraction and defamation of character' have any reference to the performances of a certain Roman Catholic senator from Wisconsin?"¹¹ Father Crosby concluded it is certainly possible that Mooney had McCarthy in mind. In addition, Jesuit Father Thomas Reese has argued that the NCWC staff despised McCarthy and urged the bishops to include that paragraph.¹²

In assessing the relationship between Catholicism and anti-Communism, it is only natural that the name of Father John Cronin would surface. While visiting Milwaukee on one occasion, Cronin criticized McCarthy, saying that it was "unfortunate that Senator McCarthy went to such extremes."¹³ Columnist Drew Pearson concluded in February 1951 that Cronin had worked with McCarthy and that the bishops were helping finance his work. The reports were false, and happily Pearson never published them.¹⁴ Cronin attempted to contact McCarthy's office when the senator started his anti-Communist campaign. The priest wrote to historian Thomas Reeves, "[We] felt that he should have help so that he could face the problem more accurately. We offered to help his researchers (I do not think there was any direct contact with Senator Joe -- at least I never met the man).¹⁵ When our offerings were not used, most of us, including

¹⁰ Both Cronin and Msgr. Higgins told Crosby that Mooney added that part, see Crosby, 85-6.

¹¹ Nolan, 2: 112.

¹² Crosby, 86; Thomas J. Reese, S.J., *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops*, Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1992, 27, 78-9, 102.

¹³ "McCarthy 'Extremes' Deplored By Priest," *New York Times*, April 2, 1950, 3.

¹⁴ Crosby, 56-7. Pearson's reporting on the Catholic Church was quite inaccurate. At one point he was prepared to report that McCarthy had swung Catholics into the Republican camp in 1952, but in fact more Catholics voted for the Democratic candidate than for Eisenhower. (*Ibid.*, 115.) On another occasion, columnist James Reston mistakenly reported that McCarthy was receiving help from the Wisconsin bishops (*Ibid.*, 70).

¹⁵ This author has been unable to locate any correspondence between Cronin and McCarthy. Some of Nixon's personal calendars indicated that he had meetings with "Cronin and McCarthy" (on March 20, 1950 and July 3 and 9,

myself, gave up and wrote him off." Later, when the senator was facing censure, he sought the Cronin's help and that of the NCWC. By that time though, Cronin said, "I felt that the situation was hopeless and that Joe was so psychologically unstable that I must refuse the request, which I did."¹⁶ In addition, Cronin told Father Blantz in the 1978 interview "I was surprised to read . . . that the FBI was supposed to be feeding him [McCarthy] material. But again if they did, they were wasting their time because he simply wasn't using it."¹⁷

Although not involved with McCarthy, Cronin still managed to keep busy. In 1952, the G.O.P. nominated General Dwight D. Eisenhower to run for the presidency, and Senator Nixon secured the vice presidential nomination. Cronin promised Nixon some policy and speech recommendations, and in September 1952 he sent a two and a half page long, typed (single-spaced) memo with campaign material to the senator's office. Cronin put his party affiliation aside to show some decidedly pro-Republican leanings. On McCarthy, Cronin wrote "When [that] issue is raised, use it as a clue to lambaste softness towards Communism. Take the offensive on this matter, not the defensive."¹⁸ Cronin suggested connecting the Democratic nominee with the Hiss case. (Stevenson had testified in Hiss's behalf as a character witness.)¹⁹ The priest urged Nixon to ask, "Why did he [Stevenson] volunteer testimony? Who asked him to give it? Why did he not turn down the request as others did?"²⁰ Cronin also said that the

1951), but McCarthy in this case seems to have been Msgr. Thomas McCarthy, a priest of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. (See calendars in the RMNLB.) There is no evidence to support Greg Mitchell's assertion that Cronin was a McCarthy "mentor," see Mitchell, 178.

¹⁶ See the letter of Dr. Thomas Reeves to Fr. Cronin, June 4, 1977 and Cronin's response June 8, 1977 in the JFCPP, Box 2, Folder 15.

¹⁷ Blantz interview, 23.

¹⁸ "Comments on Campaign and Issues," [September 1952], NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 2/2."

¹⁹ Weinstein, 338, 400. Stevenson did later distance himself from Hiss, see Weinstein, 454-5.

²⁰ "Comments on Campaign and Issues."

Republicans could assert that "Korea is the unnecessary war, caused by State Department blunders," attack Secretary of State Dean Acheson "by name," and "Hit secrecy in foreign affairs, 'papa knows best' attitude, Yalta, etc." Eisenhower could reassure the public. Cronin wrote, "as a former soldier, he shares the hatred of war felt by the millions of Americans who were his fellows in arms" In the next sentences Cronin demonstrated his nasty side. "Hit Democratic record of promising peace and leading to war. Two Democratic Presidents [i.e., Wilson and FDR] maneuvered us into war and the third blundered us into one (in Korea)."²¹

Cronin also offered some positive suggestions. Cronin urged Nixon to "Advocate federal program[s] to publicize [the] best methods for securing racial justice [and] Promise to abolish segregation in D.C., Panama Canal Zone, etc." He suggested that Nixon not be too concerned about the attitudes of "the press on the McCarthy and containment issues," but rather listen to "grass-roots sentiment." He closed by recommending that Nixon write-off liberals. "Do not cater to the small group of intellectual liberals who will not vote for you anyway. . . . Don't be misled by phony public sentiment created by closed circles of long hairs in New York and Washington."²²

The election of the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket in November 1952 left Cronin with a more influential friend in Washington.²³ The two had grown closer. Cronin now started his letters to Nixon with the salutation, "Dear Dick." Cronin's first such letter was written early in the administration and concerned their friend Ed Hummer. Hummer had come under attack from the powerful Senator Patrick McCarran (D.-Nevada) for allegedly attempting to impede the

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Although Nixon's friend, Cronin never met President Eisenhower, Blantz interview, 29.

investigation of Owen Lattimore.²⁴ Cronin told the vice president, "If you could do something to straighten out the Senator and, if necessary, your people at Justice, you would correct an appalling injustice. As you remember . . . Ed took some enormous risks in the effort to fight Communism. He is about as soft as [the Rock of] Gibraltar on the subject."²⁵

The only government changes were not confined to Washington. On March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin died, ending twenty-nine years of rule in the USSR, and Georgi Maximilianovich Malenkov was quickly named premier. The new government reached out to the west, but Eisenhower reacted cautiously. In a message to NATO, the president said "[U]ntil the conditions for genuine peace have been firmly established it would be foolhardy for us to delude ourselves about the dangers confronting us."²⁶ A was a little more open to Moscow's overtures than was Eisenhower, Cronin told Nixon, "We cannot, both for domestic and foreign policy reasons, dismiss such moves as insincere With a new régime in Russia, I do not feel that we can push aside the possibility that a real change may have occurred. Even if we do conclude that no basic change has happened, we must show up the Soviet régime by playing along with the peace offensive until they and not we bear the blame for failure."²⁷ On a lighter note, Cronin commiserated with Nixon about his golf game. "[D]on't be discouraged

²⁴ Owen Lattimore (1900-1989) was a professor at Johns Hopkins University who specialized in Asia and China. McCarthy accused Lattimore in a speech of being the "top Soviet agent" in the U.S., charges which Lattimore dismissed as "pure moonshine." Although Lattimore had leftist leanings (and had defended the Soviet purge trials in the 1930s), he was actually persona non grata in the USSR when McCarthy made the charge. See Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992, 214-9.

²⁵ Cronin to Nixon, January 21, 1953, and Cronin to McCarran, January 21, 1953; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 2/2."

²⁶ "NATO To Push Arms Despite Soviet Bid," *New York Times*, April 24, 1953, 1, and "Eisenhower Message to NATO," *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ Cronin to Nixon, April 26, 1953, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 1/2." (Emphasis in letter Cronin's.)

at the golf problem. My nine-hole score would equal yours for eighteen."²⁸

Cronin spent a good deal of the rest of the year finishing a high school text on social studies. He also remained active in the All-American Conference to Combat Communism and did some work on economics and immigration.²⁹

On November 16, 1953, the NCWC's Administrative Board considered a proposal about discussing Communism at the parish level. The board rejected the idea, but Cronin was asked to prepare another report on Communism. This report was short (about twenty-one pages) and was prepared in time for the April 1954 bishop's meeting. Cronin's report began with a discussion of international Communism, in which he characterized post-Stalin Soviet Russia as "unstable" adding "the issue of supreme power [was] still unsettled."³⁰ He described the People's Republic of China as no "mere vassal" of Moscow, but "a junior partner with extremely limited rights."³¹ Domestically, the CP-USA had fallen in numbers to about 25,000. Cronin said that Communist influence on labor also had diminished.³² He could find "little evidence of any important Communist penetration into the federal government," but he lamented "[t]he shabby treatment given to former Communists by many Americans . . . [which] makes it difficult to get agents to break and tell their story."³³ The CP's work among minority groups was also in decline, and Cronin noted especially that Moscow's hostility toward the state of Israel had "disillusioned Jewish groups [which were previously] favorably inclined toward Communism."³⁴

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Annual Report, 1953, 14.*

³⁰ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Communism Today: A Digest Prepared for the April 1954 meeting of the Administrative Board [of the] National Catholic Welfare Conference," [Washington, D.C.: 1954], 1. Copies of this report can be found in the OGS Box 24, Folder 5, and in SAD, Box 10, Folder 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

Cronin treated the question of domestic security delicately, but he considerably exaggerated the number of security risks.

The loyalty program initiated under President Truman uncovered about 25,000 cases in which the evidence warranted a full-field investigation by the FBI. The actual number of Communists in this group has never been authoritatively stated. Many resigned while being investigated or when investigation was threatened. Some against whom evidence existed were retained by incompetent loyalty boards. This was particularly true at one time in the Department of State. Under President Eisenhower, security measures were tightened. An incomplete count, as of March, 1954, shows that the files of 383 discharged workers contained indications of subversive connections. It is highly probable that any known Communists or confirmed fellow travelers who escaped the net of the Truman loyalty program will be caught under the Eisenhower security program.³⁵

Cronin defended the House and Senate Committees investigating Communists. "Hostile criticism . . . has been a continuing feature of their operations" he wrote.³⁶ He praised the committees for employing "competent experts as staff members," but he added "Sometimes, in speeches outside of committee meetings, members have made serious errors."³⁷ Cronin cited four areas of criticism: violation of witness rights, release of unevaluated charges (thus condemning a person by association), exaggeration, and creation of "Hysterical and Intellectual Paralysis."³⁸ Cronin agreed that the second assertion -- concluding that one was guilty by association -- had "some merit."³⁹ However, he defended the committees against the other criticisms. He said that witnesses did not enjoy the same rights when testifying before a committee they would in a court of law, that the exaggerated charges were made by individual committee members (rather than the committees as a whole), and that "Much of the hysteria

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

has been generated by critics of the committees rather than by . . . the committees themselves."⁴⁰

The month after Cronin presented his report, the NCWC received a request from the Apostolic Delegate's office. The Vatican Secretariat of State sent the Apostolic Delegate a list of Communist organizations meeting in Europe, and asked that this material "be brought to the attention of organizations and persons [in the United States] for whom it would be useful without[,] however[,] revealing the Holy See as its source."⁴¹ The Vatican sent at least thirteen additional lists between 1954 and 1966.⁴² Cronin consulted "a friend in the Justice Department [presumably Hummer]" to obtain the information on the European organizations.⁴³

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Cronin participated in the establishment of various groups (the Chamber of Commerce and the All-American Conference to Combat Communism) and publications (*Plain Talk* and *Counterattack*) to oppose Communism, with some of his participation financed by the Reno Fund. In April 1954, he became involved in another such venture, the "Foundation for Religious Action," later the "Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civic Order," or FRASCO. FRASCO was the creation of an Episcopalian priest, Rev. Charles Lowry. The author of a book on Communism,⁴⁴ Lowry was kindly disposed toward the Catholic Church. (He published a sermon supporting the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴¹ Msgr. Bruno Vittori to Tanner, May 28, 1954; OGS, Box 24, Folder 6.

⁴² Cicognani to Carroll, December 20, 1955; OGS, Box 24, Folder 9. See also the letters of January 16, 1958; April 11, 1958; May 17, 1958; October 25, 1958; January 20, 1959; February 9, 1959; March 14, 1959; and May 15, 1959, all located in OGS, Box 24, Folder 12, and also the letters of October 19, 1964; February 13, 1965, and February 16, 1966, located in OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

⁴³ Cronin to Tanner, August 14, 1957, OGS, Box 24, Folder 5.

⁴⁴ Charles Lowry, *Communism and Christ*, New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1952.

establishment of diplomatic relations between Washington and the Holy See.)⁴⁵ Lowry was joined by the Rev. Dr. Edward L. R. Elson, the pastor of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. (where President Eisenhower worshipped on Sundays). Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington telephoned Cronin to ask him to consider joining.⁴⁶ Cronin wrote up a brief paper on the organization, noting that Lowry and Elson hoped to "unite all men of good will, who believe in God, to engage in common action against the great foe of religion."⁴⁷ Cronin's report noted that Popes Pius XI and Pius XII "called upon 'all who believe in God' and 'all men of good will' to unite in the struggle against Communism."⁴⁸ Furthermore, Cronin emphasized that a December 20, 1949 statement issued by the Holy Office concerning mixed meetings of Catholics and non-Catholics did not prohibit assemblies "in which nothing touching faith and morals is under consideration, but . . . [permitted discussion of] the advisable ways and means of defending, by concerted action, the fundamental principles of the natural law and the Christian religion against the enemies leagued together against God . . ." ⁴⁹ Such an organization Cronin maintained "could be helpful both in the general cause of fighting Communism and in promoting better public relations for the Church in the United States."⁵⁰ Of the latter consequence, he added:

From a public relations standpoint, participation may offer several advantages. A few Americans still consider the religious struggle against Communism as a Kremlin-Vatican affair. Many

⁴⁵ Charles Lowry, "Should America Be Represented at the Vatican? An Episcopalian Viewpoint," [October 28, 1951]. A copy is located in SAD, Box 10, Folder 10.

⁴⁶ Cronin to Carroll, April 8, 1954, OGS, Box 24, Folder 5.

⁴⁷ "Report on the Foundation for Religious Action," *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁹ Cited in *Ibid.* (Emphasis added by Cronin.)

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

have been influenced by Paul Blanshard,⁵¹ Bishop [G. Bromley] Oxnam,⁵² and their followers, to believe that here we have a struggle between two totalitarian systems [i.e., Catholicism and Marxism] Some feel that Catholics are so opposed to Communism that they do not care what means are used in the struggle – that we acquiesce to methods which involve injustice, lying, and denial of human rights. Apparently these views are fairly widespread, especially among the Protestant and Jewish clergy. Participation in a moderate program, espoused by a friendly group, might help sway those who are not confirmed bigots.⁵³

The Sulpician concluded "that much good is accomplished when properly trained Roman Catholics work with non-Catholics on social matters," and that it was "vital that we have allies in the struggle against Communism." Hence, he was "incline[d] toward encouraging Catholic participation" in FRASCO.⁵⁴

FRASCO started off well. A three-day conference was held in November 1954 by a related group, the "National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of American Democracy." Cronin moderated a session at which sociologist Will Herberg presented a paper, and President Eisenhower spoke at a luncheon.⁵⁵ There was still some concern. On November 27, Cronin, Msgr. Higgins, and Jesuits John Courtney Murray and Gustave Weigel met at the Jesuit seminary at Woodstock to review FRASCO's work. The four clerics were pleased that the conference had been characterized by "few 'nuts' [and a] high level of debate," yet also noted that it was "too amorphous to make any predictions" about its future. The group agreed to "Have one man (Cronin) in on the thing to see how

⁵¹ Paul Blanshard was a noted writer who in numerous articles and books attacked the church, asserting that Catholicism represented a threat to American democracy, see Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy*, 364-7; Clayton LeRoy McNearney, "The Roman Catholic Response to the Writings of Paul Blanshard," Ph. D. diss.: University of Iowa, 1970.

⁵² A liberal Methodist, Bishop G. Bromley clashed at times with Cardinal Spellman over church-state issues, see Crosby xiv-xv, 132-3.

⁵³ "Report on the Foundation for Religious Action," 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁵ Conference schedule of the "National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of American Democracy," November 8-10, 1954, SAD, Box 10, Folder 10.

it is going" They also agreed that Cronin should warn Lowry about the "danger of being 'used' even for good government policies," and suggested that FRASCO could publish pamphlets on Communism. They also expressed anxiety about some of the membership. According to the minutes of the Woodstock meeting, "Rabbi [Edgar] Magnin was considered particularly 'light-weight,'" and "Msgr. Higgins emphasized most strongly the naiveté of Dr. Lowry, and his tendency unduly to simplify matters."⁵⁶

Cronin's initial reservations about FRASCO grew. In a February 1955 letter to Archbishop O'Boyle, Cronin worried that the organization would come to be seen as more Catholic than non-sectarian. "While the Foundation . . . represents all major religious faiths . . . only the Catholic side has come up with representatives which could be called high-level and semi-official. Dr. Elson is not popular with the Protestant group and Dr. Lowry, while highly regarded in many circles, could hardly be described as a representative Protestant. Jewish circles are likewise reserved." Cronin saluted Lowry's "enthusiasm, his fine contacts, and his breadth of mind and depth of insight," as well as his being "unsparing in sacrificing himself for the cause." Nevertheless, Cronin also wondered about Lowry's contacts with the federal government. "I still suspect the shadowy hand of the CIA in the background," he wrote.⁵⁷

FRASCO continued to hold meetings and raise money.⁵⁸ Cronin continued working with the organization, and with the All-American Conference to Combat Communism.⁵⁹ Yet, neither organization gained popular appeal. In

⁵⁶ "Report on Conversations, Woodstock, November 27, 1954, Msgr. Higgins, Frs. Murray, Weigel, and Cronin," SAD, Box 10, Folder 31.

⁵⁷ Cronin to O'Boyle, February 18, 1955, SAD, Box 10, Folder 14.

⁵⁸ Notes from FRASCO Planning Committee Meeting, March 3, 1955; Cronin to Lowry, March 4, 1955; SAD, Box 10, Folder 31; Lowry to Cronin, September 7, 1955; SAD Box 10, Folder 8; Brochure from the "Second National Conference on Spiritual Foundations" (sponsored by FRASCO), October 24-6, 1985; SAD, Box 10, Folder 35.

⁵⁹ Cronin to Carroll, October 30, 1956; OGS, Box 24, Folder 10.

the words of the NCWC's 1955 *Annual Report*, they "suffer[ed] from financial starvation and broad public apathy."⁶⁰ There also seemed to be coordination problems, especially in the case of FRASCO. After Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's (originally secret) speech criticizing Stalin became public knowledge, FRASCO attempted to "take advantage of the present confusion in Communist ranks to address an open appeal to perplexed members of the Party."⁶¹ Publication of such a letter, Cronin argued, would capitalize "on the present apparent confusion in Communist circles," and perhaps encourage prominent former Communists like Whittaker Chambers to sign the document.⁶² Cronin and Lowry further hoped that some of the bishops would sign the document. None seem to have done so, and the idea seems to have been quietly shelved.⁶³

FRASCO was never able to heal the breach between Catholics and non-Catholics over Communism. Cronin wrote, "there is not any great enthusiasm for the Foundation in official Protestant and Jewish circles."⁶⁴ Bishop John Wright shared Cronin's view. He told the Sulpician:

I share your impression that there is no enthusiasm in Protestant or Jewish circles for this project. As a matter of fact, I have definite indications to that effect from responsible Protestant clergy to whom I have taken occasion to mention the work. As recently as a week ago . . . I found myself next at table to an influential Protestant clergyman who was asking my co-operation for a project connected with world peace. In the course of the conversation I asked him what he knew about this work [i.e., FRASCO] and he said that he knew little or nothing -- and he made it perfectly clear that he was not disposed to learn more.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *Annual Report, 1955*, 10.

⁶¹ Cronin to Bishop John J. Wright, July 3, 1956; SAD, Box 10, Folder 36.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Cronin to Bishop Fulton Sheen, July 16, 1956; Sheen to Cronin, July 18, 1956; Lowry to Bishop Michael J. Ready, July 20, 1956; *Ibid.* This author has been unable to locate the draft of the letter and is unaware if it was ever published.

⁶⁴ Cronin to Carroll, March 20, 1957; OGS, Box 24, Folder 11; Cronin to Ready, March 21, 1957; SAD, Box 10, Folder 20.

⁶⁵ Wright to Cronin, March 23, 1957, SAD, Box 10, Folder 20.

In March 1957, FRASCO approved a measure calling for a meeting of Jews, Muslims, and Christians to discuss the Middle East. Cronin told Msgr. Carroll, "Frankly, I am disturbed at the way these grandiose suggestions are thrown out without adequate consideration . . . I am concerned over the way Dr. Lowry operates. . ."⁶⁶ Cronin told Lowry that he was "somewhat disturbed" by the resolution. He said that "the first inkling I had of the recommendation was when it was read at the luncheon," adding that, "it had been conceived in such haste that there was no exact wording available when it was submitted . . . for approval." Besides the matter of procedure, Cronin argued that FRASCO was "not technically competent" to negotiate a settlement of the Middle East.⁶⁷ He added:

[S]uch a proposal is impractical in view of FRASCO's limited resources and in view of the complexity of the problem. A second point is that, in our Church, matters of international import are handled exclusively by the Vatican, at least to the extent of prior consultation and approval. You can imagine the difficulties that George Dugan's article in the *Times* might have caused in this regard.⁶⁸

Cronin ended his letter to Lowry by expressing "regret that it is necessary to strike this negative note, but I feel we will all be better off in the future for having faced the matter frankly." He closed "With warm personal regards . . ."⁶⁹ Lowry replied shortly thereafter, assuring the priest that the resolution called for the recommendation of an interfaith conference: "[I]t is that [a recommendation] and nothing more." Lowry also said "you can rest assured that we will do nothing without full consultation with you It may, indeed, be that the whole

⁶⁶ "Religious Parley In Mideast Near," *New York Times*, March 21, 1957, 3; Cronin to Carroll, March 21, 1957, SAD, Box 10, Folder 20.

⁶⁷ Cronin to Lowry, April 5, 1957, OGS, Box 24, Folder 11.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* The George Dugan article is the one referred to in footnote 66.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

idea is a chimera, nevertheless I cannot escape the feeling that some kind of effort should be made."⁷⁰

FRASCO limped along until 1960 when it fell apart. Lowry divorced, remarried, and according to a press account, renounced his ministry in the Episcopal Church.⁷¹ Dr. Elson withdrew from the organization.⁷² Cronin wrote to Bishop Wright:

I have discussed this matter briefly with Archbishop O'Boyle and he feels that this is the death knell for FRASCO. . . . I think that the Archbishop hopes that Dr. Lowry will have the good sense to fold up the organization quietly. I doubt this, knowing his temperament, and knowing that he has elected a replacement for Dr. Elson -- a layman.⁷³

Cronin also warned Father Theodore Hesburgh of the University of Notre Dame. Hesburgh responded, "I am sincerely sorry to hear about Charles, as I always thought he was a very sincere person and meant to do good in his own way Perhaps someone should get to him and persuade him to fold the thing quietly, as you suggest."⁷⁴ FRASCO slipped quietly into oblivion, "dormant, due to the withdrawal of several prominent religious leaders from active participation," in the words of the NCWC's *Annual Report* for 1960.⁷⁵

The FRASCO fiasco disconcerted for Father Cronin. Catholics in the organization were plagued by the perception that some of the Protestant and Jewish members were not as anti-Communist as they were. Then followed the difficulty over the Middle East resolution, and finally Lowry's divorce and remarriage and Elson's departure. All of this left the Sulpician with the feeling

⁷⁰ Lowry to Cronin, April 8, 1957, SAD, Box 10, Folder 21.

⁷¹ "Dr. Lowry Renounces Episcopal Priesthood," [Publication and date unknown], located in SAD, Box 10, Folder 24.

⁷² Elson (1906-1993) made no mention of Cronin, Lowry, or FRASCO in his autobiography, see Edward L. R. Elson, *Wide Was His Parish*, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1986.

⁷³ Cronin to Wright, March 1, 1960, SAD, Box 10, Folder 24.

⁷⁴ Hesburgh to Cronin, March 10, 1960, *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Annual Report*, 1960, 6.

that folding up the organization was the best move. Things did at least improve for Lowry, who was restored to orders and later worked at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Southern Pines, North Carolina, where he died on September 6, 1998.⁷⁶

Organizations like the All-American Conference and FRASCO had little impact in fighting the Cold War. Presumably the average layman of that time would have been more drawn to groups like the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the Knights of Columbus. The prosperous years after the Second World War had erased many of the painful memories of the Great Depression, and Communism no longer commanded the attention that it had in the 1930s. Although some fear and anxiety about Communism remained, by the late 1950s the challenge of race started to emerge as a more important issue.

⁷⁶ Daphne Gerig of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington to the author, February 17, 2000.

Chapter Five:
"Rome is anxious for us to take a position:" 1956-8

Beginning in late 1955, Father Cronin's contacts with Vice President Richard Nixon increased. The "new Nixon" had emerged – not inclined to label his opponents Communists, less combative, more inclined to speak out for civil rights and a moderate to liberal social policy. The press commented favorably on the vice president's change in style. Writing in the October 18, 1955 *New York Times*, James Reston speculated that Eisenhower's coronary of September 24 may have had a sobering effect on the vice president. "Ever since the illness of President Eisenhower a month ago, Mr. Nixon's friends have been urging him to couch his public speeches in less extreme terms, and to concentrate on themes that will unify rather than divide the country."¹ The evening after Reston's article appeared, Eric Sevareid praised the vice president in a radio address. In a radio address, he called an October 17 Nixon speech (which Reston had also praised), "perhaps the best written speech he has ever given . . . exactly the kind of speech Mr. Eisenhower would give in his best moments." Sevareid added, "Mr. Nixon is a shrewd and daring man of politics; but the speech can equally be interpreted as revealing a high sense of public responsibility on the part of the young Vice President."²

Father Cronin brought Reston's article and Sevareid's radio address to Nixon's attention. He also wrote CBS and asked for a copy of Sevareid's remarks, which he then forwarded to Nixon's office.³ The priest delighted in the praise heaped on Nixon's speech: after all, he wrote it. Cronin's work included

¹ James Reston, "The Nixon Reputation," *New York Times*, October 18, 1955, 41.

² Transcript of "Eric Sevareid, CBS Radio News Analysis, October 18, 1955," located in NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 2/2."

³ Cronin to Nixon, October 19, 1955; Cronin to Nixon, October 24, 1955; *Ibid.*

cautions about dealing with the Communist bloc, but also expressed interest in continuing dialogue. Cronin/Nixon said:

... we are taking calculated risks in the gamble for peace. Our great President knows the terrible reality of war. He also knows the danger of weakness and irresoluteness. There will be no appeasement under his administration. Neither will there be rashness or military adventuring.⁴

"[F]rom 1953 to 1960, I was his [Nixon's] only speech writer," Cronin told Garry Wills.⁵ This may have been an exaggeration – Nixon sought input from various sources, but when he campaigned for the vice presidency in 1956, Cronin was assuredly Nixon's chief speechwriter.⁶ "I take credit for what was called the new Nixon that time around," Cronin told Wills. "I was able to give a little background to his treatment of social questions, which I had been studying all my life."⁷ Here again, Cronin may have been exaggerating: President Eisenhower wanted Nixon to tone down some of his attacks on the Democrats, and Nixon sincerely held more moderate views than many of his Republican colleagues. (On one occasion, Nixon asked Cronin for more material on race relations than the priest had supplied.)⁸ Cronin had emerged as an important if unofficial advisor to the vice president.

The same year as Eisenhower and Nixon ran for re-election a future Nixon opponent attempted to break out on the national scene. Senator Jack Kennedy

⁴ "The Challenge of Peace," October 17, 1955, 5-6; NARA, Box 192, "Speech Drafts." A line quoted by Reston in his column ("We must avoid the bluster which might blunder us into war.") had actually been added by Nixon to the third page of the speech.

⁵ Wills, 28.

⁶ Ambrose, 411.

⁷ Wills, 28.

⁸ Ambrose, 413. Cronin also conceded greater credit to Nixon in a 1974 letter. He wrote, "[T]his does not mean he was a speech-writer's creation. We had long talks during those years and what was written [by Cronin] reflected his [Nixon's] real convictions. For example, he was far more liberal than Eisenhower in the matter of race relations." Cronin to William A. Reuben, June 24, 1974, JFCPP, Box 2, Folder 25.

launched a bid for the vice presidential nomination, and the Kennedys sponsored a study to prove that a Catholic candidate could be more of a strength to the Democratic ticket than a liability. Obtaining a copy of the report, Msgr. George Higgins shared it with Cronin. Columnist Arthur Krock printed a summary of the report – later called the Bailey Memorandum – in the *New York Times*. According to the report, Catholics (in the 1950s) "voted not as union members, or farmers or women or old people, but as Catholics." Paulist Father John Sheerin and Fr. Thomas McAvoy of the University of Notre Dame criticized the Bailey Memorandum. Cronin shared the report and related information with Nixon, at the same time encouraging the vice president to put together a "Catholic file."⁹ (Subsequent studies have confirmed that Catholics tend to vote for the Democratic Party, albeit Catholics generally defected to the Republican presidential candidate in 1972, 1980, and 1984.)¹⁰

Cronin's ideas for speeches followed. In August, he floated the idea of having Nixon put together a lecture series which could form the basis for a book, which Nixon would base on a "general philosophy of government" and domestic matters, "including labor and the farm issue." He further recommended that "some consideration be given to your previous voting record, 1947-1952, and particularly to points where you have either changed your views or where conditions have changed and a previous vote might be misunderstood today." In this way the vice president would have "in position his writings well in

⁹ Msgr. George Higgins to Tanner, July 9, 1956, and Tanner to Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, July 11, 1956, OGS, Box 20, File 32; Cronin to Nixon, July 13, 1956; "Catholic Voters and the Democratic National Ticket – An Analysis of Available Data and Polls," [undated report, but probably May or June 1956]; NARA, Box 192, "Catholic Vote" file.

¹⁰ George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The American Catholic People: Their Beliefs, Practices and Values*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1987, 126-138; Andrew Greeley, *The American Catholic: A Social Portrait*, New York: Basic Books, 1977, 90-111.

advance of 1960"¹¹ In September, Cronin sent Nixon speeches on foreign policy, labor, small business, a political speech praising the administration and a memo suggesting changes on different talks he was supposed to give.¹²

On October 6, Nixon and Cronin tried to plan strategy. They agreed that there was "insufficient emphasis on [the] problems of minority groups, particularly the Negroes." Nixon would speak out on civil rights "in addition to the high-level talk at the Al Smith dinner." It was suggested that the Democrats be criticized for bottling up legislation on "civil rights, labor and education."¹³ Two days later Cronin sent Nixon another memo with some speech ideas. On the bottom, the priest wrote, "Keep that calm and relaxed attitude you showed in TV. Very effective for exuding confidence. Also if you feel calm there is less chance of a wrong remark that might cause trouble. Just imagine you are Larsen. (N.Y. Yankees -- that is.) No hits, no runs, no errors."¹⁴ On October 10 Cronin sent Nixon another memo, advising him of a speech he completed for the vice president and alerting him to his own travel plans.¹⁵ On October 13, he sent Nixon more suggested changes for a labor speech. "You are being attacked as anti-labor by the Dems and their union allies," he wrote. Of a speech he wrote for Nixon to deliver to Polish-Americans, Cronin expressed the opinion that "the Polish one can also be very useful in reaching powerful ethnic minorities in this

¹¹ "JFC to RN on Proposed Lecture Series," August 14, 1956, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 1/2."

¹² "Suggestions for Political Speech," September 7, 1956; "Labor Talk [Second Draft]," September 19, 1956; "RN, Rose [Woods] and Marge [unknown], from JFC," September 22, 1956; "Foreign Policy Talk -- Draft No. 2," September 24, 1956; "Small Business," September 26, 1956; all located in NARA, Box 192, "Speech Drafts."

¹³ "Summary of RN-JFC Conversation of 10/6/56 and Projects following therefrom," NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F."

¹⁴ "JFC to RN: 10/8/56," NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.; Speech Drafts."

¹⁵ "JFC-RN; October 10, 1956;" Cronin also sent a speech entitled "Youth and the Future of America." Both in NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.: Speech Drafts" file.

country. It has the double advantage of claiming a measure of liberation and indirectly defending the exchange of visitors program By taking the offensive, you [can] put a peace and liberation label on the program" He also told Nixon that an Eisenhower television appearance "was not so good as yours," and he noted the favorable press coverage he was receiving.¹⁶

Nixon's press coverage had indeed improved, due in no small part to his more conciliatory style. When a Republican woman asked him about Adlai Stevenson's divorce, he replied "I think that any personal life of a candidate should not be a proper political issue." When speaking at Marquette University in Milwaukee, he chose not to invite Sen. McCarthy or even mention his name. He canceled his reservation at a hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida because it did not allow Jewish guests, and avoided a Philadelphia hotel because of a labor dispute.¹⁷ *Time* magazine described one of his television appearances:

Nixon staged a nationwide TV press conference, a bright stunt that ranged eight newsmen against him in eight U.S. cities by remote TV pickups. He distressed professional newsmen because he turned the questions into take-off points for snippets of campaign speeches, but he nonetheless put on the most vigorous and impressive national political performance of his career.¹⁸

Eisenhower and Nixon handily defeated the Stevenson-Kefauver ticket, by thirty-five million to twenty-five million votes, but the Democrats retained control of both houses. America's attention, however, was quickly diverted from the election results to Hungary. In October, street fighting had broken out, and after the elections the Red Army suppressed the uprising. One hundred thousand refugees crossed the Hungarian border into Austria. After conferring, Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles asked Nixon to go to

¹⁶ "To RN from JFC, October 13, 1956, *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "The Vice Presidency: High Type v. Tintype," *Time*, 68: 16 (October 13, 1956), 32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Austria. Nixon left for Vienna on December 18. He visited the border and met some of the refugees.¹⁹ Nixon returned to Washington on Christmas Eve, and Cronin was among those who met him at the airport.²⁰ In January, Cronin wrote to tell Nixon that the press coverage of his trip to Austria had been "excellent." He also told him that he knew of "a minor Democratic politician in New York who (secretly) voted your ticket, mainly because of the Cornell telecast. . . ."²¹ (Nixon stood up to some students at Cornell University when they criticized him.) "[Y]ou showed poise and real dignity with a bunch of smart-aleck student editors, and [Americans] liked you accordingly."²²

On January 14, Cronin urged Nixon to consider "[a] strong but constructive civil-rights speech" and a Lincoln's Day address.²³ That same day, Cronin prepared another memo, warning Nixon about possible political ramifications surrounding a proposed visit by President Josef Tito of Yugoslavia. Cronin thought that a Tito visit would aggravate Catholics, Croatians, Slovenes, labor, and veterans. "The strategic gains of buttering[-up] Tito do not seem to offset the outrage done to the American people." He recommended instead a "visit by [Wladyslaw] Gomulka [of Poland] would be better, if [an] independent Communist is to be cultivated." Interestingly, Cronin also added, "Even [Premier] Chou-en-Lai [of the People's Republic of China] would be better. Protests would be more violent, but [the] gains of disengaging China [from Moscow] might be worth the price if we felt we could really get somewhere."²⁴

¹⁹ Ambrose, 422-6.

²⁰ Nixon to Cronin, December 28, 1956, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-58; 2/2."

²¹ Cronin to Nixon, January 5, 1957, *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.* According to Stephen Ambrose, this was the only time during the 1956 campaign that Nixon lost his temper with his staff, see Ambrose, 418.

²³ "RN-JFC: Memorandum on Future Speeches (1/14/57)," NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-58; 2/2."

²⁴ "RN-JFC: Memorandum on Tito (1/14/57)," and an NCWC press release, "This World of Ours: What Should Be Our Attitude Toward Tito?" by Richard

Cronin did not share with Nixon the NCWC's unhappiness with the proposed Tito visit. Cronin spoke with Christopher Emmet who was raising money to take out advertisements of protest in the secular press. The State Department, Emmet apprised Cronin, had come to the conclusion that inviting Tito had been a mistake.²⁵ Happily for all concerned, Tito chose to put off the visit citing the "conditions and atmosphere in the United States."²⁶

On January 19, Cronin and Nixon spoke about the possibility of Nixon delivering a speech on race relations in the South. Nixon did hold sincere convictions on the race issue: Growing up in California, he had known Mexican-Americans, and he surprised his friends while studying law at Duke University in North Carolina, by telling them that he had eaten at table with African-Americans.²⁷ In the 1956 campaign, Nixon more than once described his black acquaintances as being "as fine Americans as anyone could want to meet. I am

Pattee, January 14, 1957, both found in *Ibid.* It is interesting that Cronin would urge Nixon to reach out to Beijing, given that as president Nixon would do exactly that fourteen years later. Of course, the country would not have been ready for détente with the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1957. When Eisenhower left the presidency in 1961, he warned Kennedy that he would oppose recognition of the PRC or its admission to the UN. (See Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993, 33.) In later years, Cronin must have forgotten about his suggestion to Nixon. After Nixon announced his intention to visit the PRC as president, Cronin wrote him to say "the historic and statesman like stance [you have taken] on China compels me to write a letter of commendation. You may appreciate this the more, since we both shared a different viewpoint ten and twenty years ago. . . I hope and believe it will improve relations with the Soviet Union, after they get over their initial shock." (Cronin to Nixon, July 19, 1971, JFCPP, Box 2, File 25.)

²⁵ Cronin to Carroll, January 18, 1957, SAD, Box 9, File 67.

²⁶ "Tito Cancels Plans For April U.S. Visit," *New York Times*, February 2, 1957, 1.

²⁷ Ambrose, 80. Unhappily, at times Nixon did in later years make bigoted remarks in private conversation. As president, Nixon made disparaging remarks about Jews in the Internal Revenue Service when an audit was begun of his friend Rev. Billy Graham. On September 14, 1971, he told H. R. ("Bob") Haldeman, "You see, [the] IRS is full of Jews Bob. . . That's what I think. I think that's the reason they're after Graham is the rich Jews." (Quoted in Stanley I. Kutler, *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes*, New York: The Free Press, 1997, 32.)

proud to count them as my friends and my fellow citizens."²⁸ As historian Stephen Ambrose added, "By the 1980s, such words would sound condescending, but in the mid-fifties, Nixon was almost the only prominent politician in the country saying them, and certainly the only candidate for high office doing so."²⁹ President Eisenhower was not enthused about race relations: after he appointed Earl Warren to the Supreme Court, he defended segregationists. He told Warren, "All they are concerned about is to see that their sweet little girls are not required to sit in schools alongside some big black bucks."³⁰ If Eisenhower was unhappy with the 1954 *Brown* decision, Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, hesitated to embrace it. (Worse, Stevenson's vice presidential candidate, Estes Kefauver, supported segregation.) In Texas, some Democrats publicized Nixon's membership (albeit honorary) in the NAACP.³¹

Cronin solicited the views of Agnes Waldron, a Northerner who had moved to the south, for a race speech. (Waldron later resigned from NCWC to work for Nixon, and went on to work for him when he was president.)³² Cronin forwarded her letter to the vice president, in which she cautioned that one had to tread lightly on race relations on the southern "side of the corn pone curtain." She added, "Let me be very blunt and say that I don't think any Yankee living outside of the South can really appreciate how loaded [underlined twice] this

²⁸ Ambrose, 413.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ As quoted in David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, New York: Villard Books, 1993, 421.

³¹ Ambrose, 413-4.

³² Waldron went on to work in the Ford and Reagan White Houses as well, see "Agnes Waldron Dies; Ex-Aide At White House," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 1991, B-5. Pat Buchanan delivered the eulogy at her funeral, a copy of which is located at the Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda.

situation is. You may recall the Scottsboro Trials³³ more or less -- suffice it to say that in all probability there has been no essential change in attitude in the Southland [since then] . . . I just don't think it would be to Mr. Nixon's advantage to make a speech in the South on the race problem" Nixon would be hamstrung by having to "support the Gov't[.] position," was rejected by most of the south, and he "couldn't possibly please [both] Southern Whites and Negroes by any statement [he would make]" Doubting that the G.O.P. would ever gain ground in the South, she recommended delivering a speech on race "in another part of the country." She added "Many, Many [sic] Southerners do not consider the Negro a human being -- but some lower form of animal life. When you think about this attitude it is pretty difficult to talk about a meaningful speech. At what point does one begin? The South is still in many ways a medieval society (Medieval in the worst sense [of that term])." ³⁴

Despite the negative tone of Waldron's letter, Cronin attached a memo to urge the vice president to speak out on race anyway. He said his suggestion was not to make a speech "for political advantage in the South, although analyses of 1956 voting [patterns] show that the Negro vote may be important in some states which the President and Vice President carried." Rather, Cronin lamented the "void" among American leaders on dealing with race. He argued that Nixon

³³ On March 25, 1931, black and white transients fought on a freight train traveling between Chattanooga, Tennessee and Huntsville, Alabama. The train was stopped and the hobos were arrested. Two white females on the train were among those removed, and they alleged that they had been raped by the black men, who were tried in Scottsboro, Alabama. Eight of the nine blacks were convicted and sentenced to death. (The ninth black man was a juvenile, and his trial resulted in a hung jury.) The case wound through a lengthy appeal process, and as late as the 1950s some of the black men remained in jail, although it was not clear that a rape had occurred at all. William Manchester noted that one of the alleged victims "gave evidence in language so foul that reporters could not use any of it." The last of the imprisoned black men died of cancer, see Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 21-2.

³⁴ [Undated] Memo of Agnes Waldron to Cronin, and Cronin to Nixon, January 27, 1957, NARA Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2."

could "[a]ppeal to the important Negro vote both in the North and in the South," and such a speech would help enforce Nixon's image as "liberal," "courageous," "prudent and moderate," and "capable of exercising independent judgment on difficult problems." Ultimately he maintained "the South will gradually feel that it must face up" to race, and that such a speech "would continue the process of attrition that has worn off some of the hostility in liberal areas of the press [toward Nixon] and other media for influencing public opinion." He concluded that a discourse on race relations would be of overall value "even if the speech were a complete flop in the South."³⁵

In February, Nixon was asked to make a state visit to Africa. On February 10, Cronin sent Nixon a memo asking if he had given any consideration "to the possibility of having one or two distinguished Negro citizens accompany the Vice President and Mrs[.] Nixon?" Such a gesture "should have a good impact in Africa and Asia, or anywhere where the color question is a sensitive point. [Moreover,] It should do good among the Negro groups in this country." E. Frederic Morrow, a member of Sherman Adams' staff and the first African-American to have an office in the White House, was invited along.³⁶ In the meanwhile, Cronin had been invited to help mediate a labor dispute in Wisconsin. "Somebody dreamed up the bright idea that three clergymen might settle the Kohler strike, so I shall probably be out in Wisconsin," the priest wrote Nixon. "If the trip could help," he said unenthusiastically, "I would not mind, but I suspect that it will be useless."³⁷

³⁵ "J.F.C. Comment on Miss Waldron's letter," [n.d.]; Memo "To R.N. from J.F.C.," February 10, 1957, NARA Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2;" Letter of Fr. Cronin to Vice President Nixon, March 18, 1957; *Ibid.*

³⁶ Untitled memo, February 10, 1957, *Ibid.* Stephen Ambrose noted that Morrow accompanied Nixon, Ambrose 431-2. Despite having a White House job, Morrow was subject to numerous indignities, see Halberstam, 424-8.

³⁷ Cronin to Nixon, February 10, 1957, *Ibid.*

Cronin's reluctance was understandable. Workers at the Kohler plant, a manufacturer of plumbing fixtures in Sheboygan Wisconsin, had been on strike two years and ten months when the proposal to bring in three clergy to try to resolve the matter was made. The Kohler Company had broken strikes in the 1890s, 1920s, and early 1950s. Cronin, together with Rev. Dr. Cameron Hall of the National Council of Churches in Christ and Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman of the American Hebrew Congress, met with Kohler's management and then with Local 833 of the United Auto Workers in an attempt to bridge their differences. Cronin noted that the community of Sheboygan was "seriously divided" over the matter.³⁸ One strike historian wrote, "Father Cronin, an old hand at arbitration, suggested that he would like to achieve clarification [of issues] rather than bargaining . . . to establish a framework so that details could be hammered out later."³⁹ Three meetings were held in February, another in March, and two more in April. The meetings were the first held in eleven months, but they were unsuccessful. Cronin later described the acrimony:

We came in here, not only to do what we could to help get the strike settled, but to help the community as well. Even after the strike is settled, there will be a terrible problem in this community. Without settlement, the problem will be even worse. The bitterness will last several generations.⁴⁰

Kohler's management refused to lay off the non-union laborers hired to replace the striking workers. Cronin raced back to Washington to take care of some business (including arranging a papal audience for Vice President Nixon),⁴¹

³⁸ Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor*, New York: BasicBooks, 1995, 347; "HVK Hasn't Had Enough; Still Refuses To Bargain," *UAW Local 833 and Kohlerian Reporter*, 19: 40 (March 3, 1957), 1-2. A copy of this article is located in SAD, Box 9, Folder 70. "Parley's Resume In Kohler Strike," *New York Times*, February 17, 1957, 53.

³⁹ Walter H. Uphoff, *Kohler on Strike: Thirty Years of Conflict*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, 298.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 298-9.

⁴¹ Cronin to Tanner, February 28, 1957, SAD, Box 9, Folder 67. Nixon saw Pius XII on St. Patrick's Day, see "Pope Sees Nixon And Praises U.S.," *New York*

and to try to get some help on the strike. Cronin and Nixon had apparently spoken of the possibility of awarding Kohler a defense contract, which would stimulate demand to such an extent that the company could hire back the striking workers and keep the non-striking workers as well. Writing to Nixon, the priest said, "You indicated earlier your willingness to help, so I am now suggesting the possibility that we may phone you"⁴² However on his return to Wisconsin, he found management ambivalent about a military agreement, saying that defense contracts were "troublesome, liable to cancellation. . . and hence a greater financial risk than is involved in continuing the strike." Still, the priest hoped a Pentagon deal would encourage a settlement. He told Nixon that a strike settlement might work to his political advantage, and added, "You should have asked His Holiness for some special prayers for this problem. It is a miniature Gaza strip."⁴³

In April, Cronin sent Nixon copies of two editorials and congratulated him on his Africa report. "It showed great balance and insight – I cannot remember a finer job under similar circumstances" he wrote. Cronin had turned down Nixon's invitation to join him and Pat on a vacation. "I would have been delighted to come, but I have speaking engagements most of this week. . . and

Times, March 18, 1957, 1. The visit was not well received by some Americans: Cronin wrote a memo later noting that the mail to the NCWC on Nixon's visit was "rather light, less than 50 adverse letters. . . ." Mrs. Nixon kissed the pope's ring, which led to some angry mail. "In view of the wide publicity on television given to this action, I am surprised that the mail is so light," Cronin wrote. "Apparently, the Vice President's visit, as such, evoked practically no protest." Nixon later wrote to thank the pope for giving him and Mrs. Nixon a rosary and a medal, see Cronin to Carroll, April 1, 1957; Cronin to Carroll, April 3, 1957, SAD, Box 9, File 67; Nixon to Pius XII, April 5, 1957, NARA, Box 605, "Pope Pius XII" file. In 1963, President John Kennedy met Pope Paul VI and made it a point not to kiss his ring. "Norman Vincent Peale would love that," he remarked. See Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 539-40.

⁴² Cronin to Nixon, March 22, 1957, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2."

⁴³ Cronin to Nixon, March 22, 1957, *Ibid.*

my sister goes into the hospital on Monday for surgery."⁴⁴ Later that month, he sent the vice president drafts of speeches he [Nixon] was to deliver at the Chamber of Commerce and the Anti-Defamation League. Cronin was also scheduled to return to Sheboygan to take up the matter of the Kohler strike, about which he remained pessimistic. "I expect the Kohler effort to be concluded, unsuccessfully, probably on Friday the 26th . . ."⁴⁵ The priest was particularly troubled by the remarks of UAW President Walter Reuther. In a speech attacking corporations for corruption (and defending unions against the same charges), Reuther said "the most reactionary, anti-labor, immoral employer in America, [is] one Herbert Kohler up in Wisconsin."⁴⁶ Cronin wrote Nixon, "[T]he strong company reaction to some remarks Mr. Reuther made during the Convention makes me feel that it is impossible to proceed any further. It was unfortunate that Walter was not more restrained, considering the work we were doing, but that cannot be helped now . . ."⁴⁷ Cronin's analysis was correct: the clergy were unable to resolve the matter, and the strike was not resolved until 1960.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Father Cronin's brother, Fr. James Cronin, was preparing a celebration in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Father John's ordination. Msgr. Higgins wrote the vice president, "If it hasn't already come to your attention . . . our good friend Father John Cronin will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood on May 21. Please don't tell him where you got this information . . ."⁴⁹ Father John invited Nixon's staff. He told

⁴⁴ Cronin to Nixon, April 8, 1957, *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Cronin to Nixon, April 20, 1957, *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Reuther Seeking Broader Inquiry," *New York Times*, April 8, 1957, 16.

⁴⁷ Cronin to Nixon, April 20, 1957, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2." Cronin also expressed pessimism in his letters to Rabbi Lipman of March 28 and April 29, 1958, SAD, Box 9, Folder 70.

⁴⁸ "Kohler Strike Ended," *New York Times*, September 3, 1960, 3; "Rehiring Offered To 1,400 By Kohler," *New York Times*, September 15, 1960, 32.

Rose Mary Woods, "In regard to the Boss, I know his time is limited, and I want him to feel free to come to either [the Mass or the reception], both, or neither, as his situation warrants." Nixon came to both. Cronin also received a papal medallion.⁴⁹

In late spring and early summer of 1957, Cronin sent Nixon additional speech drafts.⁵⁰ In early July, he returned to the notion of a trip to the South to speak on race. He advised Nixon that Waldron had warned him "that there are quite a few booby-traps that should be charted." Cronin also returned to the idea of turning a series of speeches into a book. He spoke to Professor William Elliot of Harvard, who supported the idea and told him that Nixon could use the Harvard Summer program as a launching point for his addresses.⁵¹ Besides the intellectual prestige Harvard offered, the speeches would be delivered in the backyard of the vice president's chief future rival. Cronin wrote:

For the immediate future, you will be competing mainly with Senator Kennedy for public interest. He has immense financial backing for all the research and public relations work that he can possibly use. You have practically no funds and must rely to a considerable degree on volunteer assistance. . . . I think that you can still match Kennedy, but you will have to give thought to the best possible organization and the most effective utilization of the resources at your disposal⁵²

On July 12 Cronin met Paul Williams of the Southern Regional Council, Prof. Elliot, and Miss Waldron to brainstorm a Nixon speech on race in the South. Elliot thought it "uncertain that the Vice President can gain the Negro vote. He should not try to outbid extreme Northern liberals." Cronin dissented,

⁴⁹ Msgr. George Higgins to Nixon, April 29, 1957; Cronin to Woods, April 29, 1957; Memo entitled "FYI -- everybody -- GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT," May 23, 1957; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2." Both Msgr. James Cronin and Msgr. Higgins remembered Nixon's having attended Father John's anniversary Mass in interviews with the author.

⁵⁰ Cronin to Nixon, May 30, 1957; "To RN from JFC," June 18, 1957; *Ibid.*

⁵¹ "Dear Dick," [unsigned], July 5, 1957; *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

pointing out that black voters had helped swing many states to the Republicans. Williams said that a visit "would create deep Southern resentment," and that if a talk were to be given, "it should be lofty in tone, not querulous or critical." Miss Waldron said that a speech on race in the South "would be disastrous." Their strong reservations caused Cronin to waiver. He now counseled "private meetings and [especially] in connection with the work of the Commission on Government Contracts . . . He [Cronin] agrees with the others that it could do more harm than good."⁵³ Ten days later, Cronin met with Fred Routh of the Southern Regional Council. Cronin wrote to the vice president that Routh believed "a special expedition to the South for the purpose of lecturing them would be fatal." On the positive side, Routh said that "the thesis of the solid South united in massive resistance [to integration] is overdone," and that opposition to such change was "cracking." Disagreeing, Waldron told the priest that Routh was "too optimistic on the ability of the South to change for decades to come,"⁵⁴ citing:

. . . the flat opposition of New Orleans Catholics to Archbishop [Joseph] Rummel. He had everything in his favor – a strongly Catholic population; the liberal French influence; and the American Catholic tradition of obedience without hesitation to an Archbishop speaking on a moral problem. Yet, he was flatly repulsed and forced to back down. The same treatment was given to Bishop [Vincent S.] Waters in [Raleigh] North Carolina. On that basis, it is only fair to conclude that resistance to racial equality is very deep[ly] rooted, and that attempts to change the situation are not likely to succeed, at least not at this time.⁵⁵

⁵³ "Memorandum on Race Relations and Proposed Southern Visit. JFC: RN. 7/12/57;" *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ "Memorandum: JFC-RN, on race relations and Southern trip," July 22, 1957; Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Waldron's assertion that Rummel was "forced to back down" is not entirely accurate. Rummel integrated Catholic schools, and excommunicated three church members for opposing him. "The same treatment" may have been "given to Bishop Waters" too, but Waters stood his ground against segregationists. (See "Archbishop Joseph Rummel Dies; New Orleans Foe of Segregation," *New York Times*, November 9, 1964, 33, and "Bishop Waters, Led Diocese of Raleigh," *New York Times*, December 5, 1974, 50.)

Cronin did not only press Nixon for a civil rights statement: Race was an issue for American Catholics as well as politicians, and the church was not of one mind on the question. In 1956, Cronin received a memo from a Miss F. B. Kelly concerning an economic boycott directed against African-American families in Mississippi and South Carolina. She told Cronin that the National Council of Churches met with representatives of the Southern Regional Council, the Red Cross, the National Sharecroppers Fund, the Department of Agriculture, and the Catholic Interracial Council. They suggested immediate relief supplies and a long-term strategy of "bank credit, employment, job placement and relocation of families." Cronin forwarded the memo to Msgr. Carroll.⁵⁶ He then wrote to Bishops Richard Gerow of Natchez and John J. Russell of Charleston.⁵⁷ Bishop Gerow told Cronin in his reply that he was "amazed" to learn of the accusations of a boycott. "Priests engaged in work among the Colored tell of some instances where Negroes have been unjustly treated[,] and I published in our Diocesan paper 'The Banner' a statement to the effect that economic boycott which takes away a man's livelihood, etc., is unjust and sinful and a Catholic can have no part in it" Nevertheless, he characterized suggestions that the Red Cross or the Department of Agriculture should intervene as "rank nonsense." He added, "I hope the NCWC will not stultify itself by rushing into a situation about which the National Council of Churches seems to have been greatly misinformed." Cronin passed Gerow's response on to Msgr. Carroll, adding "We have heard nothing further on the matter, so I assume the matter [was] more complicated than they originally felt."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ F. B. Kelly to Cronin, February 20, 1956; Cronin to Carroll, February 21, 1956; OGS, Box 89, Folder 13.

⁵⁷ Cronin to Carroll, February 23, 1956; Cronin to Gerow, February 23, 1956; Cronin to Russell, February 23, 1956; *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Russell to Cronin, February 28, 1956; Cronin to Carroll, March 8, 1956; *Ibid.* The author was unable to locate a response by Bishop Gerow, if he in fact sent one.

Father Cronin also started lobbying the American bishops for a pastoral letter. He left for a European vacation, but was troubled by press reports reaching Europe on American racial tensions. In August 1957, Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas asked for an injunction against integrating Little Rock's Central High School, claiming that civil unrest would result. Actually, there were no signs of trouble, but Faubus told an acquaintance, "I'm going to run for a third term, and if I don't do this, Jim Johnson and Bruce Bennett [his opponents] will tear me to shreds [in the election]."⁵⁹ Faubus called out the National Guard to prevent the nine African-American children from enrolling in the school. In response, President Eisenhower sent in the 101st Airborne to enforce the integration order. Ten percent of the northern and western population opposed Eisenhower's decision to send in the army, but in contrast two-thirds of southerners opposed the decision.⁶⁰ Cronin was in France and Italy during the Little Rock fiasco. He later wrote that it made him "ashamed" to be an American, and on his return to the U.S., he urged Cardinal Mooney of Detroit (then the head of the NCWC) to issue a pastoral letter on race relations. He wrote a draft, and at Msgr. Higgins request, also drew up a statement on traffic safety.⁶¹ Higgins passed on both drafts, saying "In my opinion, the [race] statement is very well done."⁶² Cronin sent a copy of the proposed race pastoral to his friend Bishop Martin J. O'Connor of the North American College in Rome. He told O'Connor, "I gravely feel that silence on our part would be interpreted as

⁵⁹ Manchester, *Glory and the Dream*, 800. Faubus' crass strategy succeeded. He was reelected to a third term with 255,086 votes. The next highest-ranking candidate received only about a fifth that amount.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 808-9.

⁶¹ The five-paragraph long declaration on traffic safety was approved far more quickly than the race statement. "A Statement on Traffic Safety" was authorized on November 17, 1957. (See Hugh J. Nolan, ed., *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops: 1941-1961*, Washington, D.C.: NCCB/USCC, 1984, 2: 200.)

⁶² Higgins to Carroll, November 4, 1957, OGS, Box 4, Folder 18.

weakness. I know that Rome is anxious for us to take a position, but there are some sources here who oppose it. This seems to me a tragic mistake and I am praying that we will come up with a good statement next week."⁶³ It was too late, Mooney replied, to prepare a statement for that year, and instead suggested that the Sulpician submit a draft to be considered for the next bishops meeting.⁶⁴ Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington recommended some changes: the addition of "direct quotations" from Pope Pius and the American bishops, "Explicit treatment of segregation," and the deletion of passages "particularly those dealing with Communism." Cronin made the changes and showed the new draft to Jesuit theologian Fr. Gustave Weigel, who "was enthusiastic about the revised statement."⁶⁵

For Father Cronin, 1958 started with a hectic itinerary. He was 49 years old, and his medical problems complicated matters. The priest suffered from Meniere's Disease, an inner-ear infirmity characterized by "sudden attacks of vertigo, usually accompanied by nausea," which lasted two to fourteen hours in duration. The attacks had become more frequent in late 1957. He asked Tanner for permission to go to New York for what was termed "minor reconstruction work on the nose and Eustachian tubes" to be followed by "postoperative work." After the treatment was begun, Cronin lamented "Alas, I am on a 'no smokes, no drinks' regime until about the end of the month. What a time to have all these [New Years] parties!"⁶⁶ He kept Nixon's office aware of his frenzied schedule. He went to New York, and then to Altoona, Pennsylvania where his NCWC

⁶³ Cronin to O'Connor, November 8, 1957, SAD, Box 10, Folder 49.

⁶⁴ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Bishops' Statement on Race Relations, 1958," unpublished, found in Cronin Papers AUND. This brief paper was incorporated into his "Religion and Race," *America* 150 (June 23-30, 1984): 472.

⁶⁵ Cronin to Archbishop Karl Alter, October 22, 1958, SAD, Box 10, Folder 51.

⁶⁶ Cronin to Tanner, January 2, 1958; Cronin to Tanner, January 11, 1958; "Memorandum on Fr. Cronin's Treatments for Menibre's (sic) Disease," February 12, 1958; OGS, Box 4, Folder 18.

friend Msgr. Carroll was being installed as bishop, followed by trips to Chicago (to give a pro-labor speech), Ohio, and Baltimore. He told Rose Woods that he could "do anything the Boss may want" on his trips, "since I must travel by train while the ear is being treated."⁶⁷ During his trips he continued to send Nixon suggestions. He told the vice president that he had asked a friend, "a Jesuit who is a shrewd agricultural economist, to draw up some suggestions about the farm problem" which he promised to send. He saluted one of Nixon's television performance as well, confessing "I only saw your talk for the first five minutes, since I was [the] host at a party and had to get back to my guests."⁶⁸ After outgoing Soviet Ambassador Georgi Zaroubin bade the vice president farewell, Cronin described Zaroubin's visit as "a neat little propaganda triumph," adding that nonetheless the "reaction on their part should be considered a plus for you . . . [Y]ou should get along better with them, on a long run basis, than someone like [former Minnesota Governor Harold] Stassen,"⁶⁹ a potential Nixon rival for the 1960 Republican Presidential nomination.

Cronin was also sometimes put in the position of having to ask Nixon for modest favors. The Detroit Council of Catholic Women requested a meeting with Nixon (Nixon's schedule did not allow for the meeting.), and Cronin also asked for a congratulatory letter for his sister, Sr. Noel Marie, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of her profession.⁷⁰ Cronin wrote Rose Woods that he was revising a

⁶⁷ Cronin to Woods, January 6, 1958; Cronin's Chicago speech was summarized in NC News Service release, "[Cronin] Warns Against Anti-Union Laws As Result of Revelations of Labor Movement Corruption," January 27, 1958; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 1/2."

⁶⁸ "RN – JFC," January 20, 1958; Cronin to Nixon, January 23, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ "Comment upon the Zaroubin visit," January 26, 1958; *Ibid.* "Soviet Envoy, in Call on Nixon; Backs Wider Visitor Exchange," *New York Times*, January 25, 1958, 1, 2.

⁷⁰ Cronin to Woods, February 19, 1958; Woods to Cronin, March 4, 1958; Nixon to Sr. Noel Marie, March 7, 1958; Mr. Robert Cronin to Nixon, April 10, 1958; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8, 1/2."

book for publication, and told her of his health, "Treatments seem to be O.K., no dizzy spells and somewhat better hearing."⁷¹

In 1958, America slid into a recession and Cronin urged Nixon not to support federal intervention. "I am still in the majority (along with Mr. Martin of the Fed[eral] Res[erve]) that feels we should wait for a few corrections before turning on the gas. Hence I think that the less said for the moment. . . the better. Frankly, I would like to get through this year's collective bargaining with a slump giving business the courage to fight unreasonable demands [by labor]." He encouraged Nixon to "play up the European trip, and try to avoid [any] recession comment."⁷² He later expressed concern to Nixon about an "upturn with inflationary forces out of control," or a sort of 1934-8 scenario of "both deficits and unemployed [workers] for the next few years."⁷³

In April and May, Vice President Nixon and his wife as well as aides including his secretary Miss Woods took a trip to South America. Angry mobs threw stones and spat on the Nixon entourage in Lima Peru and Caracas Venezuela. On his return, Nixon was met at the airport by President Eisenhower, the cabinet, and numerous congressmen and senators. Federal employees were given the afternoon off.⁷⁴ Cronin telephoned Nixon's office before his return to offer his support. Assistant Loie Gaunt wrote that the priest "Thinks RN did exactly the right thing, [and was] pleased [the domestic U.S.] reaction is so good . . . Thinks [the attacks] should help to point up [the] fact that this is a lesson to everyone that the Communists will not allow freedom of speech and debate. Overall benefit of focusing attention on importance of better relations with South American countries and realization of Communist danger

⁷¹ Cronin to Woods, March 6, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁷² Cronin to Woods, marked "Washington's Birthday [February 22] 1958; *Ibid.*

⁷³ "To RN from JFC," March 25, 1958, *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Ambrose, 480

will be very great."⁷⁵ A Richmond group which Nixon had turned down for a speaking engagement renewed its request and asked Cronin to intercede with the vice president's office, "on the basis that the honor of having this man with them would be so great that [they] feel they must try again to get him."⁷⁶

In June, Cronin sent a labor speech draft to Nixon's office. He urged the vice president to refrain from attacking labor leaders, even those who were criticized by rank-and-file labor, because "Outsiders don't belong in family quarrels."⁷⁷ The Cronin-prepared speech was well-received by *America* magazine. *America* noted that Nixon praised the AFL-CIO for "a splendid job in Latin America, as well as other parts of the world, in encouraging the development of free trade unions as opposed to Communist unions."⁷⁸ Despite Nixon's reaching out to labor, many in the labor movement remained suspicious of him. The Michigan G.O.P. chairman sent Nixon a copy of a May 13 UAW sponsored radio broad, with recommendation that Nixon seek an FCC investigation. Nixon aide Charles McWhorter wrote in a memo, "This is one of the most vicious attacks on you I have ever seen, and it was financed from the general treasury of the UAW from compulsory dues."⁷⁹ Written in colloquial English, the program contained the following dialogue:

Mike: Hey Louis!

Louis: Yeah.

Mike: I see our esteemed Vice President, Mr. Nixon, is still here in South America.

Louis: Yeah. Wish I knew somebody personally down there.

⁷⁵ Untitled memo, April 8, 1958, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 1/2."

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, and Cronin to Woods, May 10, 1958, *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Cronin to Bill [Key?], June 7, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ "Mr. Nixon on Latin American Labor," *America*, 99 (July 26, 1958), 446-7.

⁷⁹ McWhorter to Nixon, June 29, 1958; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 1/2."

Mike: Yeah? How come . . . what for?

Louis: To send them a personal letter of apology. After all, does the good neighbor throw ragweed in the other guy's yard?

Mike: Eh, you're right. I wonder . . . I wonder why Nixon went down there anyway.

Louis: Why not? Him and the senior partner got things so smooth up here, so it figures he's got to spread some of the Republican sunshine down there. Of course, if Mr. Nixon stays down there long enough, it also figures that tamales is [sic] going up a couple of million pesos in price, and a couple of million rhumba [sic for rumba] dancers is going to be laid off and thrown out on the streets right on their cucarachas.

Mike: Yeah

Louis: He ain't too popular.

Mike: I read where he's getting some boos from the crowd.

Louis: Naturally. The señor[e]s and señoritas down there, they got a lot more experience than we got with phonies. I bet if he gives them the speech down there with the dogs . . . you know, where he explains where he got his campaign dough while the tears is going down the cheek, I bet down there they swear him in to be Vice President with a lie detector.

Mike: Yeah. He's some guy to be sending to other people on a good will tour.

Louis: Mike, if after Nixon's been down there a couple of weeks, the South Americans don't declare war on us, we really got good friends down there.⁸⁰

Given the danger Nixon, his wife, and his staff were in during the South American tour, the irreverance of the program was if nothing else quite insensitive. Concluding that a direct attack was unwise, he passed the matter on to his aide Bill Key and Father Cronin. Cronin and Msgr. Higgins had lunch with Walter Reuther, and the UAW chief conceded that radio emcee Guy Nunn,

⁸⁰ "Excerpt from 'Shift Break,' UAW-sponsored radio program, Tuesday, May 13, 1958; *ibid.*

who broadcast the dialogue, at times came out "with some wild stuff."⁸¹ He asked Cronin for a transcript of the offending program. Cronin wrote Nixon, "Walter was his charming best yesterday He made no defense of Guy Nunn and his attacks upon you."⁸² Later, Reuther wrote Cronin, "I fully and completely agree with you that some of the remarks from this broadcast are uncalled-for and are in extremely bad taste" and he assured Cronin that he would investigate the program.⁸³ Cronin passed Reuther's letter on to Nixon with a cover letter asking that Reuther's letter not be circulated "outside your office."⁸⁴

Between August 12 and September 21, Cronin traveled extensively: to Florida, back to Washington, D.C., North Carolina, back to Washington, and then to the Catholic Interracial Meeting in Chicago. He then was scheduled to go to Dubuque, Iowa, to a retreat at a seminary in Michigan, a conference at Notre Dame, and finally back to Washington. He told Rose Woods that if Nixon needed him he could skip the conference and the retreat.⁸⁵ Demands on Cronin's time were increasing as the 1958 election drew near (and Nixon needed speeches), and he was also returning to the proposed race pastoral.

While at the Chicago conference, Cronin heard Minnesota Gov. Orville Freeman speak. Freeman, a rising Democrat, praised the Church, and said "Responsible leaders in every field must take a positive stand, however difficult or politically hazardous such a stand may be, because when responsible leaders remain silent, then those who are irresponsible will take over."⁸⁶ Impressed by Freeman's sixteen and a half page-long speech, Cronin sent copies of it to the NCWC and to Nixon. The priest skipped the retreat and returned to

⁸¹ Cronin to McWhorter, August 5, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁸² "On Walter Reuther," August 6, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁸³ Reuther to Cronin, August 7, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Cronin to Woods, August 11, 1958; *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Orville L. Freeman, "Inter-Racial Justice – An Urgent Goal," August 30, 1958, 15. Copies of the speech can be located in *Ibid.* and OGS, Box 89, Folder 13.

Washington. On September 4, he wrote Cardinal Mooney, sending him a copy of Freeman's speech and a draft of his proposed race statement, saying "I know the difficulties you face in that matter, but my conscience would not be at ease if I did not make another try. As Governor Freeman said last Saturday, 'If responsible leaders of the community will not give leadership, then it will be assumed by the irresponsible and by the demagogues.' He was referring to President Eisenhower, but I feel that our duty is equally grave."⁸⁷ Realizing that a statement might well offend some Catholics, Cronin added, "Even if . . . we lost some Catholics in the South, I still think that we would be far ahead arithmetically in a few years, to say nothing of the worldwide impact of our moral leadership."⁸⁸ Cronin sent a copy of the letter to Archbishop O'Boyle of Washington. He told the archbishop, "I think that history will judge President Eisenhower harshly for his lack of leadership in this matter. I desperately hope that the religious leaders of the United States will not share the verdict."⁸⁹

About a week and a half later, *Time* magazine carried a highly critical article entitled "Catholics & Negroes."⁹⁰ Cronin again wrote to O'Boyle, "We [Higgins and Cronin] are concerned, not only over the snide remarks about our Department, but also because of the negative treatment of a really inspiring meeting in Chicago." He also assured O'Boyle that neither he nor Higgins had spoken with *Time* reporters or those of "any secular publication."⁹¹ That same

⁸⁷ Cronin to Mooney, September 4, 1958, OGS, Box 10, File 50. The Freeman quote may have been the one referred to in the previous footnote, but the discrepancy in wording between the two might have been a memory lapse on Cronin's part, or perhaps when delivering the speech Freeman had altered it.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Cronin to O'Boyle, September 4, 1958; OGS, Box 89, Folder 13.

⁹⁰ "Catholics & Negroes," *Time*, 72:11 (September 15, 1958), 53-4.

⁹¹ Cronin to O'Boyle, September 10, 1958, SAD, Box 10, Folder 50. Cronin's protests notwithstanding, there was clearly a good deal of work that the Church needed to do to encourage its own members to practice greater Christian charity. Fr. John E. Kelly of the NCWC staff noted in a memo that Fr. John W. Kordsmeier of the Diocese of Little Rock told him (when asked if African-

month, the NCWC sent out copies of the proposed race statement. Archbishop William O. Brady warned Cronin that his draft "might please no one. Some will think it is not strong enough, some who live in the middle of the [race] matter will plead to be left alone But we will likely be cowards if we do not take cognizance of this matter which is of both religious and civic importance."⁹²

Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis agreed with Cronin that it was imperative that the bishops make a statement. "My conscience disturbs me too and since the survey [came out] in this weeks 'Time Magazine' which I think is substantially true, I am ashamed."⁹³

October was marked by a heightened awareness of the need to act. Archbishop Rummel in New Orleans issued a race pastoral.⁹⁴ Archbishop O'Boyle wrote to Cardinal Mooney to recommend that a statement be issued, O'Boyle told Mooney that it was necessary for the "moral guidance to our people," and because "the American public will feel that silence on our part would mean acquiescence." In addition, O'Boyle wrote "major Protestant groups . . . have already issued formal statements on the subject."⁹⁵ The bishops were soon encouraged by a higher authority. Bishop Tanner, then the NCWC general secretary, leaked a draft of Cronin's race statement to the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, who in turn passed the proposal on to Rome. In October 1958, Pope Pius XII ordered the American bishops to issue the draft. Rome sent Cicognani a cable reading, "Statement approved. Let Bishops issue it

American children would be accepted into predominately white Catholic schools), that "Other things being equal, I suppose we would accept them – but I hope they don't apply right now." See memo "Not For Publication," October 21, 1958, OGS, Box 89, Folder 13.

⁹² Brady to Cronin, September 11, 1958, OGS, Box 89, Folder 13.

⁹³ Ritter to Cronin, September 12, 1958, *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ "Archbishop Rummel In Pastoral Letter Deplores Growing Racial Tensions," NCWC News Service [press release], October 6, 1958, SAD, Box 10, Folder 51.

⁹⁵ O'Boyle to Mooney, October 20, 1958, *Ibid.*

at once." This was Pius's last message to the American hierarchy. He died the next day.⁶⁶

Cicognani called an emergency meeting of the American hierarchy to discuss the matter, but as some of the bishops had not yet seen the letter, they were angered by its having been sent to Rome. The cardinals were on their way to bury Pius and to elect a new pope. Archbishop O'Boyle instructed Cronin to wire Mooney in Rome to obtain permission to release the statement. Mooney hesitated, and Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles telephoned O'Boyle and asked him to wait. The next day, Mooney died. After the conclave elected Angelo Roncalli Pope John XXIII, O'Boyle requested a meeting with McIntyre and Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York at the Washington airport. McIntyre was now outvoted, and Cronin's statement was presented to the bishops. Approved it on Wednesday, November 12, the statement was released to the media the following day.⁶⁷

Cronin started the pastoral letter by quoting a November 1943 letter, entitled "Essentials of a Good Peace." In that letter, the bishops wrote that because of the years of injustice endured by Black Americans they were owed "a special obligation of justice," including political, economic, and educational opportunities, as well as "good housing without exploitation." Some progress had been achieved, and the church "preferred the path of action to that of exhortation." However, it was troubling that "the march toward justice and equality has been slowed if not halted in some areas," and that the "transcendent moral issues involved" in race relations were being neglected.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Cronin, "Religion and Race," *America*, 150 (June 28-30, 1984), 472.

⁶⁷ *ibid.* See also John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 90-91.

⁶⁸ Nolan, 2: 201.

"Our nation now stands divided by the problem of compulsory segregation of the races and the opposing demand for social justice. No region of our land is immune from [the] strife and division resulting from this problem," Cronin wrote. He then wrote, "The heart of the race question is moral and religious. It concerns the rights of man and our attitude toward our fellow man." Christians bore a special responsibility to love mankind. "Our Christian faith," he wrote, "knows not the distinctions of race, color, or nationhood." Extending the obligation to non-Christians he continued, "Even those who do not accept our Christian tradition should . . . acknowledge that God has implanted in the souls of all men some knowledge of the natural moral law and a respect for its teachings."⁹⁹

In the fourteenth paragraph, Cronin attacked segregation as morally indefensible. First, racially-based separation "by its very nature imposes a stigma of inferiority upon the segregated people." Second, he contended that historically "segregation in our country has led to oppressive conditions and the denial of basic human rights for the Negro." Nor were African-Americans the only victims of prejudice: "[W]e are told that Negroes, Indians, and also some Spanish-speaking Americans differ too much in culture and achievements to be assimilated. . . Some decades back the same charge was made against the immigrant, Irish, Jewish, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, German, [and] Russian." Cronin added that "It is vital that we act now and act decisively. All must act quietly, courageously, and prayerfully before it is too late." He concluded, "For the welfare of our nation we call upon all to root out from their hearts bitterness and hatred."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 202-3.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 204-6. The delayed approval of the bishop's statement allowed it be released at the same time the Methodist Church issued its own statement, see "Catholics and Methodists Appeal for Desegregation," *New York Times*, November 14, 1958, 1, 16.

Archbishop Joseph Ritter of St. Louis wrote to thank Cronin for his work. "[T]he compliments should all go to you and to Archbishop O'Boyle," Ritter told Cronin. "Letters have been coming in from various sources and most of them with few exceptions are high in praise. Many pastors here reported that the statement was listened to with rapt attention and was well received." He also wrote, "[Jesuit] Father [John] LaFarge is right in saying it was a miracle and I for one never thought it would be gotten through the Administration [sic for Administrative] Board. This was done most capably by Archbishop O'Boyle. Without reflecting on the departed [Cardinal Mooney], I am of the opinion that it would never have gone through under the former presiding officer. As much as I liked him I am sure he would have handled the thing, unconsciously of course, in such a way that the rest would not want to disagree."¹⁰¹ Mathew Ahmann of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice in Chicago also thanked Cronin for the pastoral. "I would like to express appreciation for whatever part you might have played in impressing the Bishops with the need for their recent statement . . . And I am sure you played a big part . . . [T]he statement has already had obvious constructive effects, in encouraging people to work with us, and other things. And it is certainly quotable."¹⁰²

Not everyone welcomed the pastoral. A Catholic from Shreveport Louisiana wrote to the NCWC:

I was raised by an Irish Catholic mother, educated by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. I think I have a Christian conscience and, if I have, the influences mentioned above and the clear teaching of the Catholic Church have resulted in very positive convictions as to right and wrong.

¹⁰¹ Ritter to Cronin, December 3, 1958, OGS, Box 10, Folder 53. Cronin sent Fr. LaFarge (1911-1963) a copy of the statement before it was released. The Jesuit apparently once chastised the Sulpician for not treating racism in his earlier work, see David W. Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1996, 319.

¹⁰² Ahmann to Cronin, December 9, 1958, OGS, Box 10, Folder 53.

The Catholic Church, until recently, taught clearly that to deliberately seek out and associate one's self with an "occasion of sin" is an actual mortal sin. To associate with persons when it has been proved that such association is physically, mentally, morally [sic] and spiritually harmful is a mortal sin.

Now I am commanded by the Catholic Bishops to associate with such persons and not only that but to commit what I believe to be a more heinous sin, or crime, namely to expose little, innocent, helpless children to harmful, degrading influences which will affect their whole lives and in particular the salvation of their souls. This I consider nothing less than a hideous departure for the former clear teaching of the Church.

Ever since Archbishop Rummel of New Orleans stated almost three years ago that segregation was "wrong and sinful" I have been unable to attend the Sacraments. However, I have continued going to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Now I don't see any sense in that.

I want you to know that your pronouncements have driven one practical Catholic out of the Church. I think that there are thousands of others. At least I think that there should be.

The next time you make a public statement, please have a little "charity" for the people who have been taught by your church to love and protect their children.¹⁰³

Clearly, there would remain some Catholic resistance to integration.

While pushing for the anti-discrimination pastoral, Cronin was also continuing to assist the vice president. Throughout 1957 and into 1958, Cronin sent Nixon memos and letters as well as speech outlines on race relations. In an October 1958 note, Cronin suggested that the vice president keep the speech "fairly nonpolitical, but it would be all right to note that Republicans are not divided upon this issue." He also counseled that the speech should contain "A strong statement on the moral principles involved," and suggested he "Appeal to all elements of the community to rally around a constructive program."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ E. A. B. to Archbishop Francis P. Keough, et. al., December 14, 1958, *Ibid.* Written on top of the letter were the words, "Father Cronin, For your file." See also E.A.B.'s letter to the Shreveport *Journal* of November 30, 1958. A copy is located in the same file.

¹⁰⁴ "Memorandum on Future Speeches," January 14, 1957; "Memorandum on Race Relations and Proposed Southern Visit," July 12, 1957; "On Civil Rights," August 7, 1957, all found in NARA Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2;" "Outline Ideas for a Race Talk," [undated] and "Personal Comments for R.N." October 5, 1958, NARA, Box 193, "Cronin, John F.; Speech Drafts."

Father Cronin achieved some notable successes in 1958. His various speeches for Vice President Nixon were receiving positive reviews, although the press was seemingly unaware that a Catholic priest had authored many of the vice president's speeches. His work, together with that of Archbishop O'Boyle, had led to the promulgation of the pastoral letter on race. His work and age were admittedly taking a toll, and he needed to be careful of his health. Soon his enthusiastic work for Nixon soon came to an end, and he began to devote more time and energy to race relations.

Chapter Six The Conclusion of the Nixon Alliance, 1959-60

Into the year 1959, Cronin continued to supply Nixon with speech drafts and advice. The speeches continued to go through an editing process. In a speech Cronin prepared in March, he wrote ". . . emotional reactions give the superhuman drive and energy that characterizes sublime acts of patriotism, from our own Valley Forge to the epic of Hungary written in blood and betrayal in 1956 . . ." In a revision, Nixon deleted the "s" from the word "characterizes," crossed out the last eight words of the clause, and replaced the word "Hungary" with "Cuba."¹ Cronin also relayed requests to Nixon's office -- a request to speak to the Catholic War Veterans (Nixon turned it down because he thought he could only address the VFW or the American Legion.), or write an introduction to a biography of the late Cardinal Stritch (also turned down).²

Like Nixon, Cronin kept an eye toward the upcoming presidential election. He wrote to Rose Mary Woods, ". . . one of our 'boys' [a priest at the NCWC] who travels around the country most of the time says that JFK does not rate well with the 'boys' [Catholic clergy] he meets. It is not so much the *Look* article³ as the fact that he gives them the deep freeze when he meets them at banquets, etc. All of which makes life very interesting."⁴

¹ "Building Democracy in a Troubled World," March 31, 1951, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

² Woods to Cronin, March 26, 1959; Marie C. Buehrle to Cronin, Easter 1959; Cronin to Woods, April 2, 1959; Buehrle to Cronin, April 13, 1959; Cronin to Woods, April 13, 1959; NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 2/2."

³ In an interview in the March 3, 1959 issue of *Look* magazine, Senator Kennedy said he opposed federal aid for parochial schools and the recognition of the Holy See by Washington. His interview caused some commotion in the Catholic press. See Timothy J. Sarbaugh, "Champion or Betrayer of His Own Kind: John F. Kennedy's *Look* Interview," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 105: 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1995), 55-70.

⁴ Cronin to Woods, April 27, 1959; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 2/2." These perceptions of JFK were not unique to Cronin's priest associates. Fr. Donald Crosby reported that Kennedy "never went out of his way to greet the

Cronin also worked at the bishops' conference. Msgr. Higgins was scheduled to testify before a Senate committee in support of an increase in the hourly minimum wage to \$1.25. Because Higgins was out of the country, Cronin prepared his statement.⁵ Cronin also published a revised economics book.⁶ Sending a copy to Nixon, he wrote "Knowing how busy you are, may I suggest that you [simply] page through the chapters on Communism, pp. 99 ff[.]; and Racial Discrimination . . ."⁷ In the following months, Cronin traveled around much of the East Coast and Midwest giving lectures. He also prepared a speech for Nixon to deliver at a meeting of young Republicans in Denver.⁸

Nineteen fifty-nine was a hectic time for Nixon. In February, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was diagnosed with cancer, and after his death Nixon published a brief tribute to him in *Life* magazine. Nixon suggested in vain that President Eisenhower meet with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, who had come to Washington to speak to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Nixon met with Castro on April 19, and the two had a three-hour long meeting.⁹ In July, eager to build his foreign policy prowess, Nixon went to Moscow to meet Khrushchev. Eisenhower was decidedly unenthusiastic about Nixon's trip, and he even reminded the vice president that he was "not a normal part of the negotiating machinery."¹⁰ Nixon's trip was further complicated by the passage of

clergy and . . . even seemed embarrassed by the presence of priests," see Crosby, *God, Church, and Flag*, 35.

⁵ Cronin to Woods, May 8, 1959; "Statement of the Very Rev. Msgr. George G. Higgins. . . May 8, 1959;" NARA, Box 192; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 2/2."

⁶ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Social Principles and Economic Life*, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1959. Cronin dedicated the book to his mother, who died a few months later.

⁷ Cronin to Nixon, May 15, 1959; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 2/2."

⁸ Cronin to Woods, June 3, 1959; Cronin to Nixon, June 19, 1959; "For a Better America: For a Stronger Party; Talk to Young Republicans, Denver, June 19, 1959;" *Ibid.*

⁹ Ambrose, 515-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 520.

the "Captive Nations Week" resolution. The resolution, which had become routine since the G.O.P. took control of the Congress in 1953, required the president to issue a proclamation calling on Americans to pray for Communist-dominated countries. Eisenhower issued the proclamation shortly before Nixon's departure.¹¹

Nixon's reception in Moscow was quite cool. Furious over the "Captive Nations Week" resolution, Khrushchev launched into a harangue against the vice president. It was on this trip that Khrushchev and Nixon engaged in the famous "kitchen debate." While Nixon was in Moscow, Eisenhower -- against the advice of Nixon and the advice of the State Department -- announced that Khrushchev would be invited to visit the United States that year. Nixon described himself as "depressed" when he left Moscow, but warm and enthusiastic crowds in Warsaw met him on his way back to America.¹²

Nixon's trip may have done more good than he realized. Father Cronin sent the vice president an article from the domestic Communist press. "The enclosed copy from *The Worker* should be quite interesting to the Boss," he wrote Nixon aide Robert Finch. "The relatively favorable tone is the best indication that he has made a deep impression in the USSR."¹³ Nixon asked Cronin to gauge the sentiments of the Catholic press toward the coming Khrushchev visit. Cronin sent samples of favorable and unfavorable editorials, adding "I suspect that on balance, the papers will be against [meetings with Khrushchev]."¹⁴ While vacationing in Florida in the late summer on vacation, the priest wrote Nixon, "Bebe [Rebozo] and Bob [Finch ? Bob Cronin ?] send their best and wish you

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 521.

¹² *Ibid.*, 520-8, 532.

¹³ Cronin to Finch, July 31, 1959; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

¹⁴ Cronin to Woods, August 8, 1959; NARA, Box 192; "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

could come down." Nixon had appeared on CBS and NBC television on August 9 to discuss his earlier visit to Moscow. Cronin told him "We all enjoyed last nights telecasts. Amazing the number of Democrats the trip won over"¹⁵ He also encouraged Nixon to cultivate ties with Khrushchev:

[Journalist] Earl Mazo has [a] suggestion worth considering -- that you and K [Khrushchev] become pen pals in a private fashion -- if that is possible. Earl suggested a note on how unnecessary censorship red tape antagonizes American correspondents in Moscow. I thought Earl might write an article on that point which you could forward.

Idea is that letters could be unofficial and off-the-record -- two men interested in peace.¹⁶

The Eisenhower White House was quite anxious about the reaction of American Catholics to the Khrushchev visit. The State Department sent Robert Murphy to visit Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, in an effort to head off criticism of the Khrushchev stay by the cardinals. Cardinal Cushing of Boston had already publicly opposed the plan. Spellman assured Murphy that neither he nor John Cardinal O'Hara of Philadelphia would speak out. Spellman did warn Murphy about Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles though, saying "As for Los Angeles, you had better speak to him yourself."¹⁷ A Republican businessman from Los Angeles wrote Robert Finch, saying:

I would hope that as soon as convenient, Nixon would make it a point to meet with Cardinal McIntyre. The Cardinal is much more of a conservative than Bishop [Charles] Buddy [of San Diego], but I am confident that "our man" [Nixon] can make a lasting impression upon him if they have time to talk out some of the nation's foreign relations problems.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cronin to Nixon, August 10, 1959; NARA, Box 192; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Spellman was quoted in Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, *Catholic Bishops: A Memoir*, Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1983, 98-9.

¹⁸ W. B. Ross to Finch, August 14, 1959; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

Finch in turn contacted Cronin, seeking his advice on how to deal with the cardinal archbishop of Los Angeles. "I agree with you that the Boss should see our friend in Los Angeles," the cleric wrote in reply. "However, it will be difficult at best to hold him in line. He does not stay put readily."¹⁹

Cronin also continued to monitor the Catholic press on the impending arrival of the Soviet premier. He told Nixon "The general [editorial] tone was negative But fortunately, there was relatively little hysteria, and there will be no organized campaign on our part to interfere with the visit."²⁰ To Cronin, part of the problem was the White House's failure to argue persuasively how a Khrushchev visit could be beneficial. He wrote,

. . . 1) We do not want war. 2) The Soviets will not release satellites without war. 3) The Soviets will not collapse. 4) Hence the only hope for peace is to use exchanges to liberalize conditions within the USSR, and, later, the satellites.

I think we should pursue this aim, plus disarmament discussions, but keeping our strength until we have deeds, not words, in regard to [the] security of all nations both from attack and from subversion.²¹

Cronin flew to Rome in September and was there during Khrushchev's visit. He wrote to the vice president that the visit was well-covered by the Italian press. "I feel that, from the viewpoint of American policy, the trip was a substantial success. If nothing else, our people got a good understanding of the complex personality of Mr. K." He was unsure about the reaction of American Catholic bishops and clergy. "On the ecclesiastical side, surprisingly, I am very poorly informed about USA conditions Understandably my friends may not want to put certain things in writing."²² He added:

But these facts are significant. 1) *Osservatore* [i.e., *L'Osservatore Romano*, the official Vatican newspaper] reported the K

¹⁹ Cronin to Finch, August 25, 1959; *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cronin to Nixon, August 20, 1959; *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Cronin to Nixon, September 30, 1959; *Ibid.*

visit in detail, factually, and with no editorializing except one obscure item. . . ["less authoritative" written in the margin by Cronin] 2) It did not print a word about the reactions of American churchmen, but Vatican radio did carry brief items on their reactions; 3) the Pope approved the meeting of the two Presidents; 4) in his Encyclical issued yesterday [*Grata Recordatio*, on praying the rosary, was issued by Pope John XXIII on September 26, 1959.] he made this significant distinction: he will oppose ideologies and practices that are irreconcilable with Christianity. But in the next sentence he said: "But God made men and nations curable!["]. . .²³

Concluding his letter, Cronin assessed the implications of the visit in the coming presidential elections. "Delayed Eisenhower visit [to Russia] should avoid danger of your peaking too early. Suspect matter discussed above will hurt Kennedy if I can sense American public reaction."²⁴

Cronin's time in Rome was spent in part giving a retreat for seminarians at the North American College, which happened to coincide with the institution's hundredth anniversary. The celebration was marked by a papal visit. The seminarians were observing silence during their retreat, so Cronin thoughtfully posted updates on the world series.²⁵ Cronin also supplied Nixon with a draft of a religious speech the vice president had been invited to deliver.²⁶ In addition, the Sulpician sent Nixon a clipping from an Italian newspaper with an imaginary evening at the Khrushchev residence. A child in the account warned the premier that he would telegraph his friend "Dick" in America. "[I]t shows that you are quite well known here, and the spoof is genial and [a] friendly one."²⁷

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ "Baseball in the Cloister," *Newsweek*, October 19, 1959, 83.

²⁶ "JFC Suggested Remarks, Rosary Hour," November 2, 1959, NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

²⁷ Cronin to Nixon, November 9, 1959; "Papenka, avevi promesso di portarci in America strillavano le figlie spalleggiate da Nina Petrovna," ("Papa you promised to take us to America screamed the daughters [supported by] Nina Petrovna") *Il Tempo*, September 9, 1959; *Ibid.* The author is grateful to Simona Alessi, a Marquette graduate student of Journalism and Political Science, for translating the title.

On his return to America, Cronin was given another task. The American bishops wanted to issue a pastoral letter on peace. "A Statement on Freedom and Peace" was issued on November 19, 1959.²⁸ Cronin sent Nixon a copy. "I have marked the part which is largely my writing" he told the vice president. (The marked parts consisted of paragraphs 8-24 in the thirty-paragraph long statement.) Cronin also wrote, "the remainder was added as a result of our recent distinguished visitor."²⁹ In the same letter, the Sulpician cautioned Nixon about a potential refugee problem. The State Department apparently had anticipated a decline in foreign aid appropriations, and one official warned "Yugoslav escapees will be given less priority than other escapees"³⁰ Cronin relayed the memo to Nixon's office warning:

If our policy does not change for the better we are going to launch an all-out campaign to win over public opinion. It would be unfortunate if this were to occur in an election year, but our people feel that they have exhausted every resource in trying to get humane treatment for this type of refugee from communism.³¹

Underscoring Cronin's concern, the bishops issued a pastoral on refugees on the same day that they issued the "Statement on Freedom and Peace." The bishops concluded the "World Refugee Year and Migration"³² statement with a quotation from Matthew's Gospel:

(Para. 40) I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; Naked and you covered me; Sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me. (Mt. 25: 35-40)³³

²⁸ Nolan, 2: 214-220.

²⁹ Cronin to Nixon, November 19, 1959; NARA, Box 192; "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

³⁰ James H. Sherrard to John J. Chenard, October 30, 1959; *Ibid.*

³¹ Cronin to Nixon, November 19, 1959; *Ibid.* See also, "Adequacy of U. S. Refugee Aid Questioned by Catholic Bishops," *New York Times*, December 11, 1959, 2.

³² Nolan, 2: 226-231.

³³ *Ibid.*, 230.

This author has been unable to ascertain how the Yugoslavian refugee situation was resolved, but it does seem to have been handled in a manner the bishops found satisfactory. In late November Cronin sent Nixon a memo on the matter. After Cronin met Nixon at his house, the priest wrote, "I wish to thank you formally for the arrangements on the matter we discussed at length at your house [on] Sunday, November 29th. Our top people are very appreciative." In the same letter, Cronin raised Nixon's coming presidential race. "Last evening I was thinking about the future and reached a strong conviction that it is not too soon for you to do some preliminary thinking about the Cabinet."³⁴

Although anxious to help Nixon, Cronin was a little apprehensive of the 1960 campaign. In the first amendment to the Constitution, the founding fathers wrote that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Nixon was a Quaker. Cronin's assistance posed no threat to American religious liberty, but the priest was a little anxious that his assistance to Nixon might have the appearance of stretching the relationship between church and state, and possibly convey the impression that Nixon had some sort of official Catholic sanction. After being interviewed by Earl Mazo in preparation for his book on Nixon, Cronin wrote Msgr. Tanner of his need to cooperate with Mazo "to scotch any charges (except from POAU)³⁵ that the Church is trying to take over the government." He added that he was "not on the Vice President's payroll," noting that he was not even reimbursed for the money he paid in cab fare riding to Nixon's office. "Financially this is a

³⁴ Nixon to Cronin, December 9, 1959; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 1/2."

³⁵ In February 1957, POAU convened in Los Angeles and one of the speakers complained that "Vice President Nixon once hired a Catholic as his personal secretary," i.e., Rose Mary Woods. Cronin sent a copy of the report to Woods and wrote on it, "For your amusement. Do not bother RN with this." See "Two-Day POAU Meeting Turns Into Continuous Attack on Catholicism," NCWC News Service release, February 11, 1957; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1957-8; 2/2."

distinctly losing proposition."³⁶ (The priest was also concerned about an article Mazo later published, but to his relief, there was an "almost total lack of reaction" to Mazo's story. He told Tanner, "I had no phone calls from strangers and no letters . . . [except for] one postcard from a Catholic asking the titles of my books.")³⁷ Bela Kornitzer also interviewed Cronin for his biography of Nixon. Cronin again warned his superiors at the NCWC of the impending publication of that book. "I realize [Cronin wrote] . . . that none of us want publicity of this type, especially during a Presidential campaign . . . My only option was to control stories for inaccuracy, not to prevent their publication entirely."³⁸ He remained concerned about his work for Nixon. In a letter to the vice president of August 20, 1959, the Sulpician warned "I strongly suspect that my own activities will be severely limited by Church authorities after the Convention next summer, until the Election."³⁹

The birth control question heightened Cronin's apprehension. In 1959, President Eisenhower appointed a committee, under former Assistant Secretary of the Army William Draper, to study whether the federal government should supply information on contraception to those countries which requested such assistance. The sale of contraceptives was still illegal in some states in the United States: such rules were first struck down as unconstitutional in the 1965 *Griswold v. Connecticut* decision. In July 1959, the Draper Committee recommended that the federal government provide information on birth control to those countries asking for such assistance. The Catholic press attacked the idea -- one writer said that dispensing information on contraception would constitute a "propaganda

³⁶ Cronin to Tanner, June 23, 1958; OGS, Box 4, Folder 18.

³⁷ "The People Around Nixon," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 14, 1960; Cronin to Tanner, March 21, 1960; OGS, Box 4, Folder 25.

³⁸ Cronin to Tanner, August 20, 1959; "Cronin, John F.; OGS, Box 33, Folder 14.

³⁹ Cronin to Nixon, August 20, 1959; NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

bonanza" which the Eisenhower Administration would "hand Soviet Russia." In October 1959 though, the Protestant World Council of Churches issued a statement warning of a population explosion.⁴⁰

The month after the World Council of Churches issued its declaration, the American bishops – on the same day they issued the pastoral letters "A Statement on Freedom and Peace" and "World Refugee Year and Migration" – issued a third letter attacking the Draper Committee's suggestion. In "Explosion or Backfire," the bishops characterized the theme of birth control assistance as a tool of Communist propaganda. They wrote:

(Para. 10) The Soviets, in their wooing of economically underdeveloped countries, do not press artificial birth prevention propaganda on them as a remedy for their ills. Rather they allure them into the Communist orbit by offering education, loans, technical assistance and trade . . . Yet the prophets of "population explosion," in alleging that contraception will thwart Communism, naively emphasize its specious attractiveness in these areas.⁴¹

The bishops also warned of what they termed the "very amusing terrorism and bland misrepresentation of data" presented by advocates of contraception.⁴²

This debate could hardly have come at a worse time for a Catholic seeking the nomination for the presidency. Senator John Kennedy had to confront an issue which meshed religion and politics. James A. Pike, a California bishop of the Episcopal Church, asked if the bishop's statement was "binding on Roman Catholic candidates for public office." The Rev. Edwin J. Dahlberg said that a Catholic president's view "should not be determined for him by [the magisterium of] the Catholic Church," and added "[A]s a member of the Protestant faith, I would think it should be left to the individual conscience to make such a

⁴⁰ J. J. Gilbert, "U.S. Birth Control Promotion 'Soviet Bonanza,'" *The Tidings*, August 14, 1959, 1; "Catholics Oppose Use of Aid Funds in Birth Control," *New York Times*, November 26, 1959, 1, 43.

⁴¹ Nolan, 2: 223.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 224.

decision." In response, Senator Kennedy issued a careful statement saying that if he were elected president he would make a decision on the basis of the national interest and not his religious affiliation.⁴³

The controversy precipitated by the Draper Committee's recommendation encouraged President Eisenhower to reject it. Asked by a reporter, Cardinal Spellman said he thought birth control should not become a campaign issue, and he added that Eisenhower's statement "cleared the atmosphere on that."⁴⁴

Cronin took the liberty of drafting a statement which he hoped Vice President Nixon would issue. He suggested Nixon say "[I]t is time that some of us should stop baiting their Catholic fellow citizens," and affirm the right of ecclesiastical bodies to make doctrinal statements. Moreover, he hoped Nixon would add "I think that this divisive and un-American practice of baiting candidates for their religious beliefs should stop. Specifically, I am convinced that Senator Kennedy, or any other Catholic in high office, would act like thousands of other Catholics have acted in public office, and millions of other Americans have acted in the armed forces: for the best interests of our nation." Telephoning Nixon's office, Cronin told Rose Mary Woods that he had run the statement by "objective people" who assured him it would not appear that Nixon was "making a bid for the Catholic vote."⁴⁵ Nixon, however, chose not to speak out on the matter.

Cronin continued to send Nixon suggested policy memos through early 1960. In January he recommended that the vice president oppose federal aid to education, except for money for the construction of schools. Cronin also

⁴³ "Pike Voices Criticism," *New York Times*, November 26, 1959, 43; "Birth Control Held Personal Choice," *Ibid.*, December 6, 1959, 1; "Kennedy Opposes Advocacy of U. S. Birth Control," *Ibid.*, November 28, 1959, 1, 12; "President Bars U.S. Help for Birth Control Abroad," *Ibid.*, December 3, 1959.

⁴⁴ "Spellman on Trip," *Ibid.*, December 16, 1959, 22.

⁴⁵ "Comment on Birth Control Statement of Catholic Bishops," [undated]; Woods to Nixon [also undated], NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1959; 1/2."

recommended that Nixon support money for the construction of private schools. In February, he sent Nixon a speech on inflation which he had delivered in Florida. "To my surprise, the reception [of the audience to his speech] was most enthusiastic." He suggested that Nixon might want to use it for a speech he was scheduled to deliver in Detroit. In March, Cronin sent Nixon a copy of a speech to be used in Nebraska.⁴⁶

In April 1960, Nixon commented to a group of Protestant news writers on the Draper Committee's findings, and remarked that "If the underdeveloped nations seek birth control information from the U.S., we should give it to them." Nixon's remarks received scant attention.⁴⁷ To Cronin, "The content [of his remarks] was no surprise, since he told me his views on the subject." Nevertheless, as he later told Archbishops Patrick O'Boyle and Karl Alter, he was "deeply disturbed" by Nixon's words, and suspected that Nixon was trying "to make a 'Protestant' impression without descending to the level of bigotry." Cronin believed that Nixon's remarks constituted "a deliberate public dissociation from the views outlined by our Bishops last November." The Sulpician continued:

⁴⁶ Cronin to Nixon, January 27, 1960; Cronin to Nixon, February 12, 1960; "Inflation" by John Cronin, NARA, Box 191; "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 2/2," and Cronin to Nixon, March 23, 1960, NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

⁴⁷ This author has been unable to locate any press reference to Nixon's remarks. The quote above was read back to Nixon by a reporter in Minneapolis when Nixon was there on September 17, 1960. Nixon did not deny the quote, but he did qualify the statement saying that the U.S. should not force birth control on foreign countries. The account is located in *The U. S. Senate's Commerce Committee's Freedom of Communications: Final Report of the Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, Prepared by the Subcommittee of the Subcommittee on Communications, Pursuant to S. Res. 305, 86th Congress: Part II; The Speeches, Remarks, Press Conferences and Study Papers of Richard M. Nixon, Vol. II.; August 1 Through November 7, 1960, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961, 170.* The author is indebted to Susan Naulty of the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda for locating the quote.

When he became president, Nixon supported the distribution of birth-control information to other countries, as documented in a series of articles by Mary Meehan in *Our Sunday Visitor*, October 5-November 2, 1997.

Other patterns in his current appointment list also give me the impression that he is cultivating Protestant church contacts. My interpretation is that he expects Kennedy to be nominated, and will use anti-Catholic contacts without in any way directly or indirectly promoting actual bigotry. I would find it difficult to prove these statements if challenged. Yet, one can hardly be associated with a man for thirteen years without getting some intuitive sense of his method of working.⁴⁸

Were Nixon were elected president, Cronin observed, his relationship might work well to the church's advantage. He nonetheless added that were his analysis of Nixon correct, he would be forced to ask whether "it is worth the price. Allowing for the maneuvers and cynicism of politics, there is a matter of the dignity of the Church that may be involved." He now saw that he was caught in a moral dilemma:

None of these maneuvers would give me any concern if Mr. Nixon were dealing with the Church from a distance. After all, Mr. Kennedy is doing much of the same thing. . . . But would silence on my part be interpreted as acquiescence in what may turn out to be an ugly business? And would such acquiescence be considered as an indifference to principles or a willingness to tolerate anything for the sake of future power?⁴⁹

Cronin admitted that these concerns might be in error, and that he might be too hasty in rendering a judgment. Nonetheless, he was coming to the conclusion that he should have "no direct dealings with the Vice President until the Kennedy situation is clarified either way. Indirect requests would be relayed through subordinates until the Vice President is prepared to decide on his attitude toward the Catholic vote." He also expressed concern about "the very bitterness of the religious issue." While acknowledging that a break with Nixon might "cost us possible White House contacts," he believed it better to consider the "long-range interests of the Church" rather than the "short-range benefits."

⁴⁸ Cronin to Alter, April 19, 1960; Cronin to O'Boyle, April 19, 1960; OGS, Box 5, Folder 30.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Cronin finished his letter to O'Boyle and Alter assuring them "that I shall follow with complete obedience any decision that should be given to me."⁵⁰ This author has been unable to locate the response of O'Boyle and Alter, although O'Boyle may have conveyed his instructions verbally. In any event, Cronin began to distance himself from the vice president.

On April 26, Cronin prepared a letter to Nixon. "The forthcoming Presidential campaign has been a source of some concern to me in recent months," he wrote. The NCWC could not "take a partisan position in relation to our government and its political parties," and it would be impossible for Cronin to completely separate himself from the bishop's conference. "We [priests at the NCWC] could hardly act as private persons on such matters in the way that might be possible to a priest who is a university professor or a pastor." While Cronin's work for Nixon was "primarily both a personal relationship and an effort to render a service to the nation," he was concerned that "an extremely different interpretation would be given" to their relationship in a presidential race. "Hence the interests of our Church, and the long-range interests of church-state relations in the United States, call for a change in our relationship during the election period."⁵¹

Cronin went on to "spell out in detail what this decision means." He could not write campaign speeches and could not visit Nixon's office "unless the reason for my presence were governmental rather than partisan." He added "if any member of your staff wished to consult me on such areas as race relations, international peace, national economic policy, communism, housing, and related subjects, there would be no difficulty." Cronin concluded, "May I repeat that this decision is entirely impersonal. It in no way changes my admiration for you, or

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Cronin to Nixon, RMNLB. (A draft can also be found in OGS, Box 5, Folder 30.)

my availability for any service you desire after November 6th, regardless of the outcome. And of course, I am equally attached to your wonderful family and devoted staff."⁵²

Cronin sent the letter to Nixon's office on April 28. He attached a cover letter for Rose Mary Woods, telling her that he had already verbally informed Nixon aide Jim Shepley.⁵³ Not yet aware of the priest's letter, Nixon sent him a memo in which he had suggested that "a very effective letter to the editor of the *Washington Post* could be written" – doubtless, Nixon hoped, by Cronin – "with regard to their comments to the effect that I was off base in suggesting that if a candidate for President had 'no religion' this would be a legitimate [campaign] issue."⁵⁴ Some Catholic clergy did extend help to Nixon. A Pasadena California businessman wrote to Nixon to tell him that Msgr. James E. Dolan of Los Angeles had made a pro-Nixon pitch during his remarks at a hospital fund-raising event. (Nixon wrote Dolan to thank him.)⁵⁵ In July, Congressman William Broomfield (R.-Michigan) contacted Nixon's office to relay a message from Fr. Charles E. Coughlin, the "radio priest" of Royal Oak. Nixon aide Charles McWhorter wrote, "Coughlin was most insistent that Broomfield convey to the Vice President the views of Coughlin to the effect that Nixon could defeat Kennedy if the Republicans did not try to put [out ?]-promise the Democrats." Broomfield asked McWhorter to have Nixon's office acknowledge Coughlin's suggestion. McWhorter was reluctant to commit to contacting Coughlin, but "Broomfield said that Coughlin [still] had a strong following in the Detroit area." McWhorter warned, "I do think it is highly important that the Vice President in no way become involved with Father Coughlin, who as you know, during the

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Cronin to Woods, April 28, 1960, RMNLB.

⁵⁴ Nixon to Cronin, April 27, 1960, *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ John Krehbiel to Nixon, April 29, 1960; Nixon to Msgr. James E. Dolan, May 19, 1960; NARA, Box 219, "Dolan, Rt. Rev. Msgr. James E."

30's acquired a reputation as a crack-pot, anti-Semite, pro-fascist and rabble-rouser." Nixon aide Robert Finch responded to McWhorter's memo, "There should be no note from anyone in this office . . ." and instead asked McWhorter to telephone Coughlin, which he did on July 16.⁵⁶

Cronin was concerned when *Business Week* magazine referred to him as a Nixon advisor: he thought about writing to correct them, but he eventually decided it would be best to simply leave the matter alone. Cronin started to conscientiously keep track of Nixon's contacts with him after the April 28 letter. Nixon did not contact the priest until June, when he telephoned and made some small talk.⁵⁷ In August Nixon asked him to comment on a paper on Communism. Cronin told Msgr. Tanner that he thought the request was in "the spirit of the instructions I received and accordingly gave the comments requested."⁵⁸ Cronin did forward to Nixon's office a request from the magazine *Catholic World*, which intended to submit questions to both the vice president and Senator Kennedy and run their responses in an article.⁵⁹

After Nixon delivered his acceptance speech at the Chicago G.O.P. convention in late July, Cronin did send the vice president a laudatory letter. "Everything – content, tone, delivery, manner – added to its impressiveness," Cronin wrote Nixon. He also told him that Kennedy did not have the Catholic vote sewn up. "Two Virginia Catholics tell me that, as of today, you still have their vote. A surprising number of the clergy tell me the same thing . . ." Presumably with some sadness, Cronin concluded the letter, "[N]aturally, I felt a desire to be with you. However in God's Providence, I feel sure I can do more

⁵⁶ Charlie [McWhorter] to Robert Finch, July 13, 1960, and Finch to McWhorter [n.d.]; NARA, Box 184, "Coughlin, Fr. Charles E."

⁵⁷ Memos of Cronin to Tanner, June 10, June 17, and June 20, 1960; OGS, Box 5, Folder 30.

⁵⁸ Cronin to Tanner, August 30, 1960, *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Cronin to Woods, August 5, 1960; NARA, Box 138, "Catholic World."

help by prayer and faithful adherence to the instructions of my superiors here about refraining from purely partisan activity."⁶⁰ Following Kennedy's election in November, Cronin sent letters of sympathy to Nixon and Rose Woods. He also commended Nixon for showing "dignity and real principle" in his campaign.⁶¹

Cronin and Nixon nevertheless remained in contact. On April 11, 1961, Nixon wrote to the priest to point out that the Kennedy Administration's first hundred days were almost over, and to ask the cleric for any suggestions he might have for speeches Nixon was scheduled to give. "I believe it is vitally important for our opposition party viewpoint to be more effectively presented than has been the case up to this time," Nixon wrote. Nixon also assured Cronin "I shall, of course, keep your recommendations in confidence and will take personal responsibility for whatever I may say publicly."⁶² In reply, Cronin expressed the opinion that it was difficult to criticize the new administration because its direction "was not yet clear." The priest added, "In spite of the extraordinary activity on the part of the President, I find it difficult to pin down concrete achievements or even proposals." In a two-paged typed (single-spaced) memo, Cronin recommended that Nixon move slowly. "It might be well, at first, to use the same approach the Democrats used in regard to Eisenhower -- attacking the people around him, or positions of his party, rather than hitting the President himself. Until he becomes more vulnerable, I would stress your own positive proposals . . ."⁶³

⁶⁰ Cronin to Nixon, July 29, 1960; NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

⁶¹ Cronin to Woods, November 10, 1960; Cronin to Nixon, November 10, 1960; NARA, Box 192, "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

⁶² Nixon to Cronin, April 11, 1961; *Ibid.*

⁶³ Cronin to Nixon, April 14, 1961; [Memo on] "The Kennedy Administration," April 15, 1961; *Ibid.*

In late 1961, Nixon started to weigh entering the California gubernatorial race. "RN would like a note to go to Fr. Cronin to ask whether he has some thoughts on the governorship thing," Rose Woods wrote to another Nixon aide. Cronin was in Rome at the time, but he did cautiously encourage him to run. "I think you can keep in the public eye without running for office . . ." he wrote. However, there seemed to be no other G.O.P. hopeful for the California contest, and Cronin added that "Executive experience would be a plus if you were to enter the White House in 1964 or 1968." When incumbent Pat Brown defeated Nixon in 1962, Cronin sent him another letter of condolence.⁶⁴

Correspondence between Cronin and Nixon declined thereafter. Nixon took the liberty of sending Cronin an advance copy of *Six Crises*. ABC television broadcast a program after Nixon's 1962 defeat entitled "The Political Obituary of Richard Nixon," which included an interview with Nixon's erstwhile nemesis Alger Hiss. ABC received thousands of letters of protest, including one from Cronin. The priest sent Nixon a copy of the letter.⁶⁵ In an interview with Sharlene Shoemaker for *National Catholic Reporter*, Cronin admitted having met Nixon in 1968 in Florida, and having offered assistance. (By that time he was no longer connected with the bishop's conference.) Nixon referred him to speech writer Pat Buchanan. "No dice on that one," Cronin said.⁶⁶ The two had drifted apart.

The Cronin-Nixon break was expedited by birth control. This is ironic for two reasons: First, Nixon's views were generally not well known and seem to have received little (if indeed, any) publicity. Second, as Cronin told

⁶⁴ "Woods to LGG [Loie Gaunt], August 26, 1961; Nixon to Cronin, August 26, 1961; Cronin to Nixon, September 4, 1961; *Ibid.*; Cronin to Nixon, November 7, 1962; RMNLB.

⁶⁵ Nixon to Cronin, March 13, 1962; NARA, Box 192; Cronin to Nixon, November 13, 1962; Cronin to ABC News, November 13, 1962; RMNLB.

⁶⁶ Shoemaker, 16-7.

Archbishops Alter and O'Boyle, he already knew the vice president's feelings on the matter. However, even before the question of contraception came up, Cronin felt apprehensive about the coming presidential campaign – in his letter to Nixon of August 20, he expressed concern about how a priest advisor to a candidate might be (mis)construed by the media, the hierarchy, and the public at large.

The question should also be asked: Was Cronin right about Nixon's campaign? Was Nixon attempting to subtly make a bid for the anti-Catholic vote while simultaneously attempting to maintain the appearance of not being anti-Catholic? This is a tougher question to address, but Cronin may well have been wrong. To some extent, Nixon understood that his need to be careful in any dealings with Cronin: in a 1956 memo Nixon warned his staff that if they were sending anything to Cronin's office at the NCWC "during the campaign period," it was to be mailed in "a plain envelope" rather than one with Nixon's name on it. If the staff telephoned, they were told "just leave your name but do not say that the Vice President's office is calling."⁶⁷ Certainly there was a knee-jerk reaction to a Catholic candidate (even as lukewarm a Catholic as Jack Kennedy) running for the presidency. In August 1960, for example, the Minnesota Baptist Convention declared that Catholicism represented "as serious a threat to America as atheistic communism," and later a California Baptist minister said that in nominating a Catholic, the Democrats "transformed 10,000 Baptist preachers into active politicians."⁶⁸ Nixon was never comfortable with this blatant prejudice. In *Six Crises*, he wrote "I, personally, would never raise the [religious] question and

⁶⁷ Rose Woods to Staff, September 11, 1956; NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 1/2."

⁶⁸ Quoted in Timothy J. Sarbaugh, "John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the Catholic Issue, and Presidential Politics, 1959-1960," Ph. D. diss.: Loyola University, 1987, 95; Thomas C. Reeves, *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy*, New York: The Free Press, 1991, 191.

would not tolerate any use of the religious issue by anyone connected with my campaign."⁶⁹

Nixon however could not control all factors in the campaign. He became ill and had to be hospitalized, and while recovering, he learned that his friend the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale expressed doubt that a Catholic politician could act independently of the hierarchy. Nixon later appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press" and took pains to distance himself from Peale's remarks.⁷⁰ Another friend, the Rev. Billy Graham, seemed more anxious to oppose Kennedy. Graham offered to write an article supporting Nixon for *Life* magazine, but Nixon turned him down. The evangelist also urged Nixon to select as a running mate Congressman Walter Judd (R.-Minn.), a former minister and missionary, telling the vice president that Judd's nomination would "bring about a dedicated Protestant vote to counteract the Catholic vote." Graham closed the communication by asking Nixon to destroy the letter after reading it.⁷¹

Nixon was caught in a conundrum: he stayed away from the Kennedy's Catholicism, and was therefore accused of implicitly raising the religious question as a campaign issue. Historian Stephen Ambrose wrote:

Kennedy partisans charged that each time he deplored bigotry, he was actually making religion an issue – Tricky Dick at his worst. It is difficult, however, to see what more Nixon could have done to keep the issue out of the campaign, and impossible to see how he could have been more sincere about his abhorrence of bigotry.⁷²

In short, Cronin was unaware of the more concerted efforts by some Protestant leaders to raise the dire specter of a Catholic in the White House, and apparently overreacted to Nixon's position on birth control. Such a conclusion is

⁶⁹ Nixon, *Six Crises*, 307.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 328.

⁷¹ Ambrose, 547.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 566.

easier to draw today insofar as many Catholics increasingly reject the Church's ban on contraception. Nixon was not comfortable with the kind of hostility toward Catholicism displayed by many Americans during the 1960 campaign, and his differences with Catholicism were theological in nature. In any event, it probably was wise for Cronin to distance himself from Nixon during the course of the campaign. Public knowledge of a priest working for Nixon would have alarmed both the Kennedy campaign and POAU.

Although rebuffing Cronin's offer of assistance in 1968, Nixon did receive help from another priest. Fr. John McLaughlin was a forty-four year old Jesuit when he joined Nixon's staff in 1971. McLaughlin unsuccessfully ran for a Rhode Island Senate seat, but was defeated by incumbent Democrat John O. Pastore. McLaughlin -- like Cronin -- was a speech writer, but he had much greater visibility than Cronin (and unlike Cronin seems to have been on a salary). After being hired by the White House, McLaughlin told the *New York Times*, "Politics and the priesthood are both rooted in the same thing -- service and healing."⁷³ After Nixon's resignation, McLaughlin left the priesthood to marry and to become a television talk show moderator.⁷⁴

Cronin was not completely shut out of the Nixon White House, however his contacts with Nixon were very limited. Many remained devoted to Nixon even during the most difficult time of his administration. Rose Woods told the Sulpician, "Along with the thousands of others who have known this man and his wonderful family over the years, I have no doubt whatsoever of the outcome

⁷³ "Priests in Politics: 2 Viewpoints," *New York Times*, October 15, 1972, 44.

⁷⁴ "Jesuit, an Ex-Nixon Aide, Marries," *New York Times*, August 24, 1975, 22; McLaughlin also seems to have a much greater ego than plagued Cronin. For a rather unflattering view of the former Jesuit, see Jack W. Germond, *Fat Man in a Middle Seat: Forty Years of Covering Politics*, New York: Random House, 1999, 189-198.

of this disgraceful 'Watergate' affair . . ."⁷⁵ Cronin tried to stay in touch with the former president after his forced resignation in 1974. In January 1975, Nixon wrote the priest, "I want you to know how deeply I appreciate the letter you sent me after I left office and returned to California. We have passed through a very difficult period, but it is at such times that one learns who his real friends are; I am proud to number you among them." On the bottom of the typed letter, Nixon added in handwriting, "I shall always cherish our friendship – over the years."⁷⁶ The next December, he wrote, ". . . I want you to know how deeply I have appreciated your loyal friendship and support over the years. Only during difficult periods does one learn who his real friends are. I am grateful that you have always been in that group."⁷⁷ This author has been unable to locate any correspondence between the two after this letter.

The Cronin-Nixon friendship crossed political boundaries as well as religious boundaries. Cronin's work for Nixon may have struck some observers as posing a dangerous threat – that of religious influence on public policy. Actually, their relationship in no way endangered the freedom of religion, and demonstrated the positive influences of religious values in the political sphere.

⁷⁵ Woods to Cronin, July 6, 1973; JFCPP, Box 2, Folder 25. Miss Woods was presumably unaware whose the disgrace would be.

⁷⁶ Nixon to Cronin, January 15, 1975; *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Nixon to Cronin, December 15, 1975; *Ibid.*

Chapter Seven:
Challenges on the Right and Left: The Early 1960s

Despite his strong anti-Communism, Cronin was not conservative enough for some extreme anti-Communists. In 1956, he found a letter to the editor in a publication which complained about an earlier published article in which some author "was so cowardly in his methods that he dared not give an analysis of the intrinsic moral theology of the question. All he could do was to quote such scoundrelly pro-Marxist priests as the Rev. John Cronin, S.S., and the Rev. William Smith, S.J. . . What heresy, what abomination, has not found priest supporters!" Cronin sent Vice President Richard Nixon a copy of the letter with a note, jokingly admonishing him about the "dangerous company you keep."¹

By the early 1960s, Cronin had come to the conclusion that the Communist threat to America's national security had diminished. Writing in the Jesuit magazine *America*, Cronin now concluded that "the area of [Communist] danger is external, not domestic."² Concerned about the allure Communism held for poorer nations, he nevertheless believed the CP-USA to be numerically smaller than the ten thousand adherents it claimed. He found it "astonishing that well-financed movements [still] exist . . . to fight this drastically weakened Communist party here." Cronin cited two organizations in particular, the John Birch Society and the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation. His statements then became general without identifying particular entities, as he lamented their tendency to "envision a vast, secret, conspiratorial Communist apparatus that is widely subverting government, schools and universities, research organizations,

¹ See letter of "D.C." to unknown publication with letter of Fr. Cronin to Vice President Nixon, February 29, 1956, NARA, Box 191, "Cronin, John F.; 1956; 1/2."

² John F. Cronin, S.S., "Anti-Communism and Freedom," *America*, 105 (April 22, 1961), 172.

the churches and various media for affecting public opinion."³ Cronin concluded:

Communism is an external danger that demands from us the utmost in vigilance and sacrifice. But let us not be blind to the danger involved in policies of unbounded suspicion and the use of ruthless methods in so-called anti-Communist activities. If we become a nation of hate and distrust, then spiritually we are like the Communists. In fighting for the faith, we have lost charity. In defending our freedoms, we have ceased to be free men.⁴

Cronin was most concerned about the John Birch Society. Established by candy magnate Robert Welch (1899-1985), the John Birch Society was named for an American Army officer and Baptist missionary who was killed by Chinese Communists in the final year of the Second World War. Welch called Birch the "first [American] casualty" in the war on Communism. Welch held extreme, almost paranoid views, on the subject of Communist influence. He even called President Eisenhower "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy," and held similar views about Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and CIA Director Allen Dulles. He also later called Ronald Reagan – arguably the most anti-Communist president in American history – a Communist "lackey."⁵ The John Birch Society was not the only extreme right-wing group however. Although their membership peaked at around 100,000, they were well-organized and vocal.⁶

In 1961, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a series on the John Birch Society. One article reported Welch's 1958 attack on then Vice President Richard Nixon, in which Welch characterized Nixon as "one of the ablest, shrewdest, most

³ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵ In 1961, Welch softened his criticism of Eisenhower, claiming "They [Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers] were being used by Communists. I never said they were Communists and I don't say it now." (See "Robert Welch Jr. Dead at 85; John Birch Society's Founder," *New York Times*, January 8, 1985, B-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, and Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *The Radical Right: Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies*, New York: Vintage Books, 1967, 6-8.

disingenuous and slipperiest politicians that ever showed up on the American scene." Nixon, Welch asserted, used his "tremendously overrated and over-publicized" role in the Hiss case to propel himself into national politics. He called Nixon's support for Eisenhower in obtaining the 1952 G.O.P. nomination "the dirtiest deal in American political history," in part because the Eisenhower Administration "put [Earl] Warren on the Supreme Court."⁷ After the *Times* series concluded, the publishers ran a front-page editorial on the Sunday, March 12 issue. Entitled "Peril to Conservatives" and signed by publisher Otis Chandler, the editors emphasized the "disgust and dread" with which they regarded the "godless materialism and blood-soaked tyranny of the Communist conspiracy." The editors then warned against adopting "the techniques and rules of conspiracy to fight Communists in [a] Communist fashion."⁸ They asked:

What are we to think when our last three Presidents, Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower, are accused either of being Communists or Communist dupes?

What are we to think when these charges are leveled against Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, against his brother Allen who heads our own vital Central Intelligence Agency, against the Chief Justice [Warren] of our Supreme Court?

What are we to think when the honor and integrity of the Vice President of the United States, the Republican Party's nominee for President, are questioned?

What are we to think when we are told that our nation's press almost without exception is Communist infiltrated and inspired?

What are we to think when we are told that our churches almost without exception are corroded with active agents of Moscow?

What is happening to us when all loyal Americans are accused of being Communist dupes unless they subscribe to the radical and dictatorial direction of one self-chosen man?

All sincere conservatives must ask themselves these questions. And they must answer them.

The *Times* believes implicitly in the conservative philosophy

⁷ "Birch Society's Plan Outlined," *Los Angeles Times*, March 7, 1961, Part I: 2, 23. As the attack on Earl Warren indicated, the John Birch Society was not committed to civil rights.

⁸ "Peril to Conservatives," *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1961, I: 1.

... But the *Times* does not believe that the argument for conservatism can be won. . . by smearing as enemies and traitors those with whom we sometimes disagree.

Subversion, whether of the left or the right, is still subversion.⁹

Richard Nixon was among those who wrote to thank the *Times* editors. Nixon wrote that "It is the responsibility of those in positions of leadership . . . to revitalize our existing organizations and set up new political action organizations . . ." ¹⁰ In an editorial three days later the *Times* publishers saluted Nixon's remarks. ¹¹ Father Cronin also commended Nixon for his words when he asked him for a copy of the letter. ¹² Nearly two months passed, but Nixon did send him a copy of the letter, and in his cover letter to the priest he wrote that "although 75 per cent of the all the mail on the subject has been 'unfavorable,' it has been surprisingly mild. This has been particularly so when the correspondent identifies himself as a Society member -- a calculated attempt to give an air of 'sweet reasonableness' to the organization. Or am I being too suspicious?" ¹³ Cronin wrote to thank Nixon, saying "I am afraid that we have not heard the end of the problems represented by the John Birch Society and related groups . . . I am very much afraid of internal dissensions in the United States at a time when national unity and sober thinking are badly needed." ¹⁴

Cronin's concern about Communism had diminished. In 1959, he described the CP, saying, "There's some life left in the old buzzard. The Party remains an internal problem that we must treat with sensible vigilance, without putting our faith in loyalty oaths and investigations that trample on people's

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ "Richard Nixon Advises Caution in Combat Against Subversives," *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1961, III: 4.

¹¹ "A Nudge From Richard Nixon," *Ibid.*, March 21, 1961, II: 2.

¹² Cronin to Nixon, March 21, 1961, NARA, Box 192, File "Cronin, John F; 1960; 1/2."

¹³ Nixon to Cronin, May 15, 1961, *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Cronin to Nixon, May 22, 1961, *Ibid.*

rights."¹⁵ Cronin's concern about right-wing groups led him to prepare another pamphlet. In March 1962, the NCWC released *Communism: Threat to Freedom*.¹⁶ Cronin covered a good deal of familiar territory when preparing this booklet: parts were taken from his earlier publications. (The section on the theory of Communism seems to have been lifted verbatim from *Communism: A World Menace*.)¹⁷ But Cronin now took a different slant toward Communism. He said that "the frequently made charge that 7,000 Protestant ministers are either members of the Communist Party or sympathizers is based largely on lists of clergy who were duped into joining concealed Communist fronts," and that these individuals "signed without realizing the true nature of the organization that appealed to them."¹⁸ Cronin also cautioned about exaggerated concern regarding the CP:

In spite of the clearly evident weakness of the Communist Party, U.S.A., there is more concern about internal subversion in the United States today than at any time during the last forty years. Even the Hiss case and the sensational revelations by legislative committees during the years 1948-1950 did not arouse an organized public reaction remotely comparable to that evident in 1962. . . {W]hy such a furor at a time when the Communist Party is at its weakest? This point deserves consideration. . .¹⁹

Cronin noted that anti-Communist groups were well-organized and vocal, and he expressed concern about the apparent "hysteria and suspicion." Such a turn of events demonstrated a "virulent form of disunity [which] is weakening us in the world struggle against communism, and performing a disservice in the

¹⁵ Bob Senser, "Father John F. Cronin: optimist," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 47: 50 (April 12, 1959), 1.

¹⁶ John F. Cronin, S.S., *Communism: Threat to Freedom*, Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1962.

¹⁷ The section on "Communist Theory" found in *Ibid.* pp. 7-8 is the same as that in *Communism: A World Menace*, 4-5.

¹⁸ *Communism: Threat to Freedom*, 24-5. Cronin later added (pp. 42-3) "Communist influence among the Protestant clergy today is virtually nonexistent."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

name of militant anti-communism."²⁰ In some areas, Cronin expressed decidedly conservative opinions, fretting about high taxes and lamenting "an apparently irreversible trend toward increased federal power." He argued that social pressures had increased as a result of "racial desegregation and . . . increased crime and delinquency."²¹ He also complained that, "Supreme Court decisions in the civil rights fields appear to have hampered the states in fighting crime, subversion, and commercialized smut. We seem to be moving toward moral decay at a time when utmost resolution and strength are needed."²² Thus, he asserted:

It is understandable then, under these circumstances, that many citizens feel betrayed and strongly desire to strike back against those who failed their country. . . Hence millions of Americans who were ready to believe those who assert continuing Communist domination of government and agencies that mold public opinion. Since apparently, we are unwilling or unable to strike back against our enemies abroad, at least we should root out subversion here at home. Such reasoning has been exploited by the so-called extremists of the right.²³

Cronin did not however, identify any specific organization. He merely referred to groups which present "an inaccurate or distorted view of the Communist threat. Any of the following points indicate a false picture of the actual situation: (1) Wild exaggerations of the number of Communists and their sympathizers . . . in the United States; (2) Charges that a communist take-over here is a current threat; (3) Connecting the Communist menace with unpopular social philosophies or movements; and (4) Using the reaction against Communism to attack groups not favored by the organization involved . . ."²⁴

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 34-5

²² *Ibid.*, 35.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35-6.

The Sulpician characterized as "bad logic and worse history" attacks FDR's New Deal or JFK's New Frontier.²⁵ He defended the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), writing that "Negro leaders and the overwhelming majority of the Negro people have rejected Communist influence . . ."²⁶ He noted the presence of anti-Semitism among some anti-Communist groups, as well as an isolationist streak among those who attacked the United Nations.²⁷ He approvingly quoted J. Edgar Hoover, who said:

There exists today in our land a vital "rift" which the communists are exploiting. Unfortunately, this involves certain people across the country who engage in reckless charges against one another. The label of "communist" is too often indiscriminately attached to those whose views differ from the majority. . .²⁸

"[T]he basic threat of communism is external, not internal," Cronin reiterated.²⁹ Our foreign policy could not proceed on a self-righteous basis, he warned, adding that "It would be arrogant on our part to assume that we are always right."³⁰

What should Americans do about Communism? Cronin wrote that "there is very little the average citizen can do about communism, if his only concern is to root out the traitors in our midst." Such an effort constituted "a pathetic misdirection of energy." The average citizen should "help strengthen our military might, clarify our foreign policy, or participate in some foreign program outside our borders."³¹ In *Mater et Magistra*, the priest pointed out that Pope John

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 43. Of Isolationists Cronin wrote, "Catholics who deny our international responsibilities do so in the face of repeated papal assertions of our moral obligations to seek world order, world prosperity, and world peace."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

XXIII had called on wealthy nations to help the poor, and that colonialism was no longer an acceptable policy. Cronin praised the Peace Corps, but he also called for educating students from poorer nations. Communism could be fought by raising "funds for scholarships for students" in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.³²

Domestically, Cronin lamented the injustice suffered by people of color, especially African Americans. Race "should be primarily a matter of moral responsibility and Christian love," but it had been "permitted to degenerate into legal struggles and battles of pressure groups."³³ In short, Cronin was calling for a (re-)conversion. He said:

For the average citizen who asks: What can I do to fight communism? the answer might be: Devote all your strength and energy, in concert with your fellow Americans, to building national unity and moral strength. Practice your religion, and make it a vital force in your community. Even in dealing with moral evils, concentrate less on denunciation and more on giving leadership and example. Be a man of integrity in your work. Make your family outstanding by the quality of parental love and discipline you show. Unite with your neighbors for a high moral standard in your community. Work for racial justice and harmony. Do your part to make this a better and stronger nation, and we shall not fear what the Communists plot and scheme against us.³⁴

On March 1, Cronin held a press conference to announce the release of the pamphlet. During the meeting, Cronin expressed his hope that the booklet would launch "a campaign for sanity."³⁵ Reporting the release of the booklet on its front page, the *New York Times* article began with the words "The Roman Catholic Church began a national campaign today to discourage participation in extreme anti-Communist movements such as the John Birch Society."³⁶ The *Times* reported Robert Welch's estimate that forty percent of the membership of the

³² *Ibid.*, 55.

³³ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

³⁵ "Catholics Assail Right Extremists," *New York Times*, March 2, 1962, 1, 26.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

John Birch Society was Catholic, although Cronin thought Welch's estimate to be exaggerated. *Newsweek* saw Cronin's remarks as "semiofficial," despite having quoted his warning to the press that the entire hierarchy would not agree with his conclusions.³⁷ On March 4, the *New York Times* editorially saluted Cronin and the NCWC for making "an important contribution to sanity in American politics." The editors opined that *Communism: Threat to Freedom* deserved "wide circulation among Americans of all faiths, particularly those Americans who have been impressed by the pseudo-experts the extremists are using today as salesmen for their hysteria."³⁸

James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, the archbishop of Los Angeles, reacted sharply to Cronin's booklet. Extremely anti-Communist, McIntyre's views were reflected in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Tidings*. *The Tidings* had carried an article defending the John Birch Society just a month after the *Los Angeles Times* series criticizing the organization. A *Tidings* writer called a Robert Welch speech a "dispassionate recounting of the Communist influence in the U.S.," and described the "receptive audience" as "well-dressed, orderly and dignified, [and] scarcely matched the description of the John Birch Society as delineated by some commentators There was no evidence of crackpotism, paranoia or the lunatic fringe."³⁹ *Tidings* coverage of the Vietnam War portrayed the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem sympathetically.⁴⁰ The paper once carried a four page insert written by a Jesuit from Marquette University High School entitled, "Our Moral Obligation To Oppose Communism," and carried announcements and advertisements for anti-Communist rallies which high-lighted such Hollywood

³⁷ "Setting Things Straight," *Newsweek*, 59:60 (March 12, 1962), 60-2.

³⁸ "Voice of Reason," *New York Times*, March 4, 1962, IV: 10.

³⁹ George N. Kramer, "U.S. Is Losing Will to Resist," *The Tidings*, April 14, 1961, 2.

⁴⁰ See for example issues of *The Tidings* between May and July 1961, especially the articles by Fr. Patrick O'Connor.

celebrities as Pat Boone, Walter Brennan, Nancy Davis, Ronald Reagan and Roy Rogers.⁴¹ McIntyre's politics would be inclined to view Cronin's work with suspicion. In addition, McIntyre tended to be suspicious of Episcopal conferences like the NCWC. One of his few interventions at Vatican II involved the role of national conferences and their authority vis-a-vis that of bishops.⁴²

McIntyre was in Rome when the NCWC sent out Cronin's booklet to the bishops on February 26.⁴³ He returned to Los Angeles the day after Cronin's press conference, and he fired off an angry letter to Msgr. Paul Tanner of the NCWC. Conceding that he had not yet read the booklet and that he was basing his comments on press reports, McIntyre complained that Cronin "gave what is apparently an unauthorized statement . . . Father Cronin has no privilege or right to express as the opinion of the bishops what is his opinion only. I recommend strongly that he should make a statement denying that he was authorized by the Bishops of the country to speak for them in this matter."⁴⁴

The day McIntyre wrote to the NCWC, Cronin wrote to the *New York Times* to deny that he spoke for the bishops. He wrote "it is not accurate to say that the Bishops as a group speak through such publications," His letter, however, was not published until March 21.⁴⁵ Msgr. Tanner sent McIntyre a response, and included a copy of Cronin's letter to the *Times*. Tanner told the cardinal that "the headline that was put in his [the journalist's] reporting job was

⁴¹ Cletus Healy, S.J. "Our Moral Obligation To Oppose Communism," *The Tidings*, October 4, 1961 [no pagination]. Anti-Communist rallies were noted in *The Tidings* of June 22, 1961 on the second page, and advertised in the December 7, 1961 issue on page 7. Unhappily, *The Tidings* gave little attention to the remarks to the celebrated theologian John Courtney Murray, S.J., who told an audience at Loyola-Marymount University, "The real enemy is not Communism - it's the idiot," see "Idiots, Not Reds, Worst Danger," *Ibid.*, May 5, 1961, 3.

⁴² McIntyre's speech is reprinted in Vincent A. Yzermans, *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967, 379.

⁴³ Tanner to Bishops, February 26, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

⁴⁴ McIntyre to Tanner, March 2, 1962, *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Issuance of Catholic Literature," *New York Times*, March 21, 1962, 38.

completely the opposite of what Father Cronin had said."⁴⁶ McIntyre again wrote to Tanner on March 7 to acknowledge Tanner's response, but he complained again that Cronin's views probably did not conform "to the minds of the Bishops of the country."⁴⁷

McIntyre's letter of March 7 might have closed the matter, but the next day the cardinal received a copy of the NCWC press release on *Communism: Threat to Freedom*. On March 8, he sent his third letter to Tanner to complain that the press release was even more offensive than the coverage Cronin was given in the *New York Times*. McIntyre was troubled by the reports of the "launching [of] a campaign . . . without a commission from the Bishops."⁴⁸ He added:

This issue will be a very serious one in California in coming months. In order to establish our policy of not partaking in a political discussion, we shall publish in this weeks *Tidings* a formal repudiation that Father Cronin represents the Bishops of the country in the attitude of his book.⁴⁹

The next day's *Tidings* contained a front page editorial, assuring its readers that *Communism: Threat to Freedom* "represent[ed] his [Cronin's] personal views on the nature of the Communist threat . . ." Addressing Cronin's view of Communism as being primarily an external rather than an internal danger, *The Tidings'* editors wrote "There are others of equal authority and repute who disagree . . ."⁵⁰ The editorial assured its readers that Cronin did not speak for the bishops, and concluded:

⁴⁶ Tanner to McIntyre, March 5, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

⁴⁷ McIntyre to Tanner, March 7, 1962, *Ibid.* McIntyre apparently had some sort of disagreement with Cronin in the Fall of 1961. In this same letter, he wrote "It would also seem that the experience of Father Cronin last Fall on this same subject made no impression, [and] that he capitalizes his association with the Bishops for the propagandizing of his own viewpoints. The effect this way has been very bad, and we hope there will be no repetition."

⁴⁸ McIntyre to Tanner, March 8, 1962, *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ "Clearing the Record," *The Tidings*, March 9, 1962, 1.

We refuse to believe that Father Cronin would deliberately foster the impression that he was voicing an official policy and viewpoint in the name of the American hierarchy. As a matter of fact we are reliably informed that Father Cronin, subsequent to published reports of his news conference, definitely repudiated in writing any such impression as to his position. It is regrettable that this repudiation was not made more widely known.⁵¹

There was some confusion about the nature of the pamphlet, and some of the more extreme anti-Communist laity took up the matter. A Milwaukee, Wisconsin Catholic wrote to Cardinal Cushing in Boston to ask "Is Father Cronin speaking for the Church or is he expressing personal opinions? In conversation I have been saying it is the latter."⁵² Cushing forwarded the letter to the NCWC, and Tanner wrote her back, assuring her that Cronin "was not speaking for the Roman Catholic Church." He nonetheless urged her to judge the pamphlet "on its own merits."⁵³ Cardinal Spellman forwarded a letter from a Catholic who had also asked if Cronin spoke for the Church.⁵⁴ Another Catholic from West Lafayette, Indiana also wrote to Spellman to complain. The following quotation, although lengthy, captures the feeling some Catholics had about their faith and Communism:

As a Catholic, I was shocked to read of the "anti-anti-Communist" booklet recently published by the National Catholic Welfare Council.

... I should like to know by what right a Church group presumes to speak out on this problem. The extent of Communist influence on opinion-making circles in this country is a question of fact, not one of faith or morals. Differing opinions as to the correct internal and external policies towards Communism are political opinions, not religious ones. What Catholics think of our current foreign policy, domestic policy, or [the] administration is outside the span of clerical authority. And they have a right to speak out

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² L. M. to Cushing, March 4, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

⁵³ General Secretary [Tanner] to L. M., March 8, 1962, *Ibid.* Cushing also later issued a statement distancing himself from Cronin's position, see "Cardinal Refutes Claim Reds Are No Internal Threat," *The Tidings*, March 23, 1962, 1.

⁵⁴ H. P. to Spellman, March 8, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

without being smeared as "divisive" by their own Church. Must we all walk lock-step toward statist totalitarianism?

I am sure that Father Cronin realizes, as I do . . . that, at least in the East, Catholics are the backbone of the anti-Communist movement, as they should be. I can see no other reason for the publication of this booklet other than to break that backbone, which might be pleasing to the extreme left wing but certainly not to patriotic, God-fearing Americans.⁵⁵

Tanner asked Cronin to draft responses to the letters Spellman had forwarded, which went out over his (Tanner's) signature.⁵⁶

Others wrote directly to the bishop's conference. A Los Angeles attorney ordered a copy of Cronin's booklet, and then asked about Cronin's "background and qualifications," how the NCWC was organized, and the conference's "moral authority." Cronin replied him that the publication of the pamphlet "was approved by General Secretary [Msgr. Tanner] and the Episcopal Chairman of our Department [Archbishop William Cousins of Milwaukee]. Such approval does not make its contents a matter of official church policy."⁵⁷ Cronin also received some supportive mail, including a letter from a Protestant congresswoman who thanked him for defending Protestant clergy, and thanks from different Protestant clergy. Unfortunately, those letters were not saved in the NCWC files or his personal files.⁵⁸

Conservative elements in the Catholic press exacerbated the imbroglio. Cronin later wrote that much of the press "took off in a cold fury."⁵⁹ *The Wanderer*, a conservative Catholic paper published in St. Paul, Minnesota,

⁵⁵ D.B. to Spellman, March 7, 1962, *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ John J. Maguire to Tanner, March 14, 1962; Memo of Tanner to Cronin, March 15, 1962; Cronin to Tanner, March 20, 1962; Tanner to H.P., March 21, 1962; Tanner to D.B., March 21, 1962, all in *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ P. J. K. to the NCWC, March 8, 1962; Cronin to P. J. K., March 15, 1962, both found in *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Cronin noted the letters of thanks in his "Father Cronin on His Critics," *Ave Maria*, 95:21 (May 26, 1962), 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

editorialized that Cronin's assertions were "silly and preposterous." The writer conceded that Cronin's views were held by "many Catholic intellectuals of unquestioned sincerity and patriotism. But the point is . . . he does not represent the teaching authority of the Catholic Church . . ."⁶⁰ With greater understatement than he realized, the author continued, "For example, he surely does not speak for Cardinal McIntyre, whose repeated and timely warnings about the dangers of UNESCO and similar liberal pets are well known . . ."⁶¹ Another columnist expressed sympathy for Catholics who found themselves "vilified [allegedly by Cronin]. . . as crackpots, superpatriots, etc."⁶² The next week, *The Wanderer* carried the March 9 *Tidings'* editorial on the first page and resumed its own attacks on the Sulpician.⁶³ Cronin had been quoted in the March 1 press conference as referring to some anti-Communist organizations as a "racket." One group, the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation of St. Louis, protested that they had "never solicited any money from anyone."⁶⁴

The Tablet, the organ of the Diocese of Brooklyn, savagely attacked Cronin. In its March 10, 1962 issue carried the headline "FRESH DISPUTE IS UNDERWAY ON 'ENEMY WITHIN.'" The paper vigorously defended the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation.⁶⁵ In that same issue two other articles and an

⁶⁰ J. Lorac, "Fr. Cronin's 'Extremists,'" *The Wanderer*, March 8, 1962, 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Walter L. Mott, "On This And That," *Ibid.*

⁶³ "Fr. Cronin Speaks For Himself Not For The Hierarchy," *The Wanderer*, March 15, 1962, 1, and Walter L. Mott, "On This And That," in the same issue, page 4. There were also several letters to the editor which attacked Cronin on page 6.

⁶⁴ "Private Anti-Commie Crusades Said Rackets," *Our Sunday Visitor*, March 11, 1962, 2; "Mindszenty Foundation Answers Cronin Criticism," *The Wanderer*, March 15, 1962, 7.

⁶⁵ "Fresh Dispute Is Underway On 'Enemy Within,'" *The Tablet*, March 10, 1962, 1.

editorial explicitly criticized Cronin, and two other articles on Communism implicitly reproved him.⁶⁶

At least two prominent Catholics writing in the secular press also took on Father Cronin. One of them, William F. Buckley, never hesitated to express his differences with Holy Mother Church. After John XXIII issued the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, Buckley's *National Review*, disdainful of the pope's call for assistance to poor nations, carried the line "*Mater sí, Magistra no.*"⁶⁷ Buckley found Cronin's call for conversion naive. "Be honest, more tolerant, encourage national unity and racial integration, be charitable toward those with whom you disagree – and you will go to heaven to be sure, but your passage there might very well be expedited by a Soviet bullet."⁶⁸ Syndicated columnist Westbrook Pegler similarly criticized Cronin's booklet, saying that he had heard from a priest who described "Pere Cronin" as "one of the few pastel pink in the clergy who are among the mental grandchildren of Msgr. John A. Ryan. That great man builded better than he knew, [and] was enchanted by FDR, as were not all of us for a while?"⁶⁹ In another column complaining about Cronin, Pegler queried "Haven't the bishops got a woodshed in the national headquarters?"⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Robert Morris, "Why Minimization Of Enemy Within?;" "Father Cronin Stresses Threat From Without," Msgr. John J. Cleary, "'Extreme Rights' Called Reds Smear Term," "Says U. S. Reds Never More Active," and "To Undermine the Right?," *The Tablet*, March 10, 1962. See also James A. Wechsler, "Tablet's War," *New York Post*, March 12, 1962, 26.

⁶⁷ Quoted in John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, 186. Judis notes that Buckley was inspired by the anti-Castro line, "*Cuba sí, Fidel no.*"

⁶⁸ William J. [sic] Buckley, Jr., "Needed: More Concern for Slaves of Reds." A copy of the article was located in NARA, Box 192, File "Cronin, John F.; 1960; 1/2."

⁶⁹ Westbrook Pegler, "'Calls Cronin Book Attack on Anti-Reds,'" *New York American Journal*, April 11, 1962 [?], located in FBI 94-35404-79.

⁷⁰ Westbrook Pegler, "Questions Raised By Cronin Booklet," *New York American Journal*, April 3, 1962 [?], also located in FBI 94-35404-82. Additional criticisms of Cronin were published in John Cross, *What Are the Facts Behind the Smearing of Anti-Communist Americans?*, Kenosha, Wisconsin: Cross Publications, 1964, 87-98; See also Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 303-4.

Yet, Cronin was praised by some senators. Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D.-Minn.) said "We are indebted to Father Cronin for this excellent book." Sen. Claiborne Pell (D.-Rhode Island) called it "remarkably succinct, well-balanced and penetrating." Sen. Joseph S. Clark (D.-Pa.) asked that parts of *Communism: Threat to Freedom* be printed in the *Congressional Record*. Cronin's work, he emphasized, merited "the careful attention of all of us who are interested in national unity and a sound approach to national and international social and political problems." He then added, "Those who would have Americans concentrate on a minor threat of domestic subversion . . . are effectively aiding the Communist cause. . . ."⁷¹

Communism: Threat to Freedom caused something of a stir at the FBI. Cronin had mailed a copy of the pamphlet to J. Edgar Hoover on February 27, just a day after it went out to the Catholic bishops.⁷² In his memo summarizing the booklet, FBI Supervisor Milton A. Jones called it "a thoughtful, reasoned analysis of the problem of communism, both internal and external." Jones further emphasized that "Cronin's mention of Mr. Hoover and the FBI is favorable."⁷³ A less impressed Director Hoover commented, "I do not share Father Cronin's downgrading the internal threat of Communism in the U.S."⁷⁴ The matter was assigned to the FBI's Communist expert, Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, who reported:

As this matter is of serious concern to the Bureau, I called Father Cronin this week and asked to have a talk with him. I went over with him this booklet and the nature of the internal communism [sic] threat generally. Father Cronin was quite

⁷¹ N. P. Callahan to Hoover, March 6, 1962; N. P. Callahan to Hoover, March 13, 1962; and N. P. Callahan to Hoover, March 16, 1962; all located in FBI 94-35404-NR.

⁷² Cronin to Hoover, February 27, 1962, and Hoover to Cronin, March 2, 1962, in FBI 94-35404-74.

⁷³ M. A. Jones to C. D. DeLoach, March 2, 1962, FBI 94-35404-73.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, and M. A. Jones to DeLoach, March 5, 1962, *Ibid.*

surprised that anyone would think he had underestimated the dangers of internal communism. He said that he thought he had pointed out very clearly in his study that while the Communist Party had suffered serious reversals it was still very active and must be given constant attention by investigative agencies.⁷⁵

Hoover responded, "Well his book doesn't sustain this."⁷⁶

On April 16 Cronin wrote Hoover seeking to assuage the Director's feelings. "I have been considerably distressed to note that some persons have claimed that my account of Communism differs drastically from your own," he wrote, and to having learned from his conversation with Sullivan that "quite a few persons think that I might have underestimated the danger of Communism in the United States." Defending the booklet, Cronin contended that most of his critics had "not read the booklet itself." He assured Hoover "I had no intention . . . of disparaging the excellent work of the FBI and other capable agencies. On the contrary, I gave the Bureau explicit and warm endorsement."⁷⁷ Hoover responded, thanking Cronin for his "kind comments" and expressing his gratitude for the priest's "support over the years . . . [and his] standing offer of cooperation."⁷⁸

Msgr. Tanner hoped to defuse the matter. He met with Archbishops O'Boyle of Washington and Cousins of Milwaukee. They drew up a statement, checked it with Cardinal Spellman, and released it.⁷⁹ The statement said:

Communism: Threat to Freedom, written by the Rev. John F. Cronin, S.S., was recently released as an aid to a rational study of communism. In the heat of the current liberal-conservative controversy the press mistakenly and unfortunately implied that the publication was a solemn pronouncement authorized by the American hierarchy. It was reportedly the first step in the Church's

⁷⁵ W. C. Sullivan to A. H. Belmont, April 14, 1962, FBI 94-35404-80.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Cronin to Hoover, April 16, 1962, FBI 94-35404-81.

⁷⁸ Hoover to Cronin, April 18, 1962, *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ The process was described in Msgr. Tanner's letter to Cardinal McIntyre of March 16, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

launching of a full-scale attack upon extreme rightist groups. This interpretation has no basis in fact.

The author is a recognized and highly regarded authority in the field of communism. He writes against the background of long years of experience. His reputation makes him a valued asset to the Social Action Department of the NCWC. It was with the knowledge and consent of this Department that the book was published. It should be understood, however, that no Department of [the] NCWC, through its Episcopal Chairman or any of its staff, speaks for the Body of the Bishops.⁶⁰

Cronin thanked Tanner for his "strong support in the present crisis. . . It means more than I can express to have the feeling that I am not alone when the roof is caving in."⁶¹ Tanner sent McIntyre a copy of the press release, doubtless hoping that it would be the last word on the matter. It was not to be: McIntyre replied by asking what the role of some of the NCWC's tasks were (implying that the public might become confused), and also objecting to a Paulist Press advertisement for the book, which billed *Communism: Threat to Freedom* as "the Catholic position on Communism and the controversial 'Extreme Right.'"⁶² Tanner dutifully replied, going over the NCWC's role with the cardinal, and pointing out that he had "no control over the advertising literature of Paulist Press."⁶³

The National Catholic Welfare Conference's *Annual Report* of 1962 carried a notice about Cronin's pamphlet.

The publication of Father Cronin's *Communism: Threat to Freedom* was widely noted. Considerable publicity in the secular press was occasioned by an erroneous report in the *New York Times*, which called the publication of the pamphlet a crusade by the Catholic Bishops against right-wing extremism. Twenty-six

⁶⁰ "Statement of His Excellency, Most Rev. William E. Cousins," March 16, 1962, *Ibid.* "Catholics Disclaim Anti-Rightist Drive," *New York Times*, March 17, 1962, 23; "Archbishop Clarifies Fr. Cronin Controversy," *The Tidings*, March 23, 1962; "Cronin Book Not Signal Of U.S. Catholic Push," *Our Sunday Visitor*, March 25, 1962, 1.

⁶¹ Cronin to Tanner, March 19, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17.

⁶² McIntyre to Tanner, March 20, 1962, *Ibid.*

⁶³ Tanner to McIntyre, March 23, 1962, *Ibid.*

Catholic newspapers syndicated the booklet in a condensed form. One syndicated the full text. Editorial comment in both the secular and Catholic press was generally favorable, although strong dissent was registered by two Catholic newspapers⁸⁴ and by two secular columnists.⁸⁵

The NCWC continued, noting that the CP-USA was weakened by "public revulsion against Communist aggression; strong legal action by the FBI and the Department of Justice; exposure by Congressional Committees; and economic prosperity in the United States." The report called Cronin's analysis of right-wing groups "factual."⁸⁶ This time the report named distinct organizations: the John Birch Society, the Christian Crusade, We the People, The American, the International Council of Christian Churches, The Circuit Riders, the National Education Program, and the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade. The Mindszenty Foundation was not mentioned.⁸⁷

Cronin defended himself and his conclusions. In the May 26 issue of *Ave Maria*, he pointed out that he attempted to correct the *New York Times* after reading the March 2 article. The bishop of Dallas, he noted, wrote an editorial in which he said Cronin did not speak for the bishops, but the bishop did urge people to read the booklet. The magazine *The Priest* asserted that Cronin had probably made twenty-five thousand dollars from sales of the pamphlet. In fact, Cronin only made about two hundred dollars, most of which went to the NCWC. He said "the bulk of the mail [was] . . . favorable in tone," although he admitted that "[t]here were, of course, some 'drop dead' letters."⁸⁸ Cronin denied that he had labeled the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation "a financial racket," and wrote

⁸⁴ Actually, at least three Catholic newspapers objected to the pamphlet: *The Tablet*, *The Tidings*, and *The Wanderer*.

⁸⁵ National Catholic Welfare Conference, *Annual Report, 1962: Department of Social Action*, Washington, D.C.: NCWC, 1962, 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸⁸ Fr. John F. Cronin, S.S., "Father Cronin on His Critics," *Ave Maria*, May 26, 1962, 6.

that they had not bothered to check with him to ascertain the veracity of this alleged comment. Further, he stated the Mindszenty Foundation did not even bother sending their information to the NCWC.⁸⁹ The Sulpician wrote that his critics lacked his experience in dealing with Communism. Those who dismissed him as "soft on communism . . . do not know of the Communion breakfast talk in Arlington 16 years ago that nearly terminated my career at the NCWC." They did not know "I named such names as Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss, two years before public testimony was given about these officials," or that "I narrowly escaped being called up before Congress to 'put up or shut up.'"⁹⁰ Cronin asserted that "Several Bishops asked for a revised and updated version of the 1947 study [*Communism: A World Menace*]," and that *Communism: Threat to Freedom* was the result of that request.⁹¹

That June, almost four months later, a final letter of complaint about *Communism: Threat to Freedom* arrived at the NCWC. An Elm Grove, Wisconsin woman wrote "To say I am a confused Catholic is to put it mildly. Shocked is a better word when prominent Priests and members of our clergy advocate out and out socialism and books by men who are anti-God. The National Catholic Welfare Conference seems to me to be a completely left-wing socialist 'outfit' dedicated to the downfall of all America . . ."⁹² In later years, Cronin recalled having a conversation with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, in which he told

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* *Our Sunday Visitor* quoted Cronin as saying that some organizations were "financial rackets," and as saying "I am convinced that three-quarters of these groups are in it for the money." Of the Mindszenty Foundation, Cronin was quoted as saying he found it "a Catholic version of the John Birch Society." (See "Private Anti-Commie Crusades Said [to be] Rackets," *Our Sunday Visitor*, March 11, 1962, 2.)

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* Actually, Cronin did not identify White and Hiss in his Communion Talk, in which he maintained that there were two thousand Communists in the federal government.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹² Mrs. R. F. to Tanner, June 25, 1962, OGS, Box 33, Folder 17. Emphasis in the original.

Cronin that he enjoyed cover from public criticism enjoying, "You have the protection of the collar." Then, in reference to the controversy over *Communism: Threat to Freedom*, he conceded "It hasn't been much help [to you] lately."⁹³

A few months after the debate over Cronin's pamphlet had subsided, an ecumenical conference generated another discussion involving Communists. In January 1963, Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic leaders met in Chicago to discuss religion and race in America. On February 28, William Patterson of the Communist-affiliated Gus Hall-Benjamin J. Davis Defense Committee, wrote to the NCWC to state that he was "deeply impressed by scope and content of the National Conference on Religion and Race . . ." He went on to assert that "we see a definite inter-relation between the struggle you outline and that which we wage to guarantee continued use of freedom of speech, assembly, the press, etc." He expressed "fearful[ness]" over the possibility that a religious attack on race could bring the churches "into conflict with those who seek to enforce the restrictions of the McCarran Act upon the category of 'fellow travelers' and of those whose demands parallel those made by what they term 'Communist action organizations.'" He urged the NCWC to examine some literature he had enclosed, and added, "May we add that we do not believe that what is called the 'Negro Question' can be isolated. We believe it is. . . part of a much larger struggle to save our country from moral degeneracy and the bankruptcy of its national integrity."⁹⁴ Cronin replied on March 19, calling Patterson's request for joint action "interesting," but unlikely to bear results, as the church and the CP

⁹³ Blantz interview, 30.

⁹⁴ Patterson to the SAD/NCWC, February 28, 1963, FBI 94-35404-86. For a chronology of these events, see John F. Cronin, S.S., "The Communist Party and the National Conference on Religion and Race," [March 23, 1963 ?], located in the JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23, and in OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

grew "from totally opposed ideologies and social philosophies. Given such a cleavage, I fail to see where any grounds for collaboration exist . . ."⁹⁵

Loathe to take no for an answer, Patterson responded on March 21, acknowledging the differences between the church and the CP, but praising Pope John XXIII for "bridging the gap" between the church and secular philosophy. "Perhaps when confronted with such evils as racism men of different philosophies should seek not the cleavage but the mutual aims."⁹⁶ Cronin nonetheless saw in Patterson's letter a familiar ploy utilized by the party in the 1930s and 1940s. "It is true that in recent months there has been evidence, both in the CP[-]USSR and the CP[-]USA, of a certain tactical revision along the lines of the classic united front technique. The long history of this technique is known to us. Its results . . . offer further reasons why the collaboration you propose would be undesirable." Thanking Patterson for his favorable references to the papal peace efforts, Cronin added that international policies "cannot automatically be transferred to matters of internal social policy."⁹⁷ Msgr. Tanner forwarded copies of the correspondence to the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Vagnozzi, and Cronin advised FBI Assistant Director William Sullivan about the CP's proposed olive branch.⁹⁸

On March 29, Patterson again wrote to Cronin. He conceded that he was cognizant "of 'the left-sectarian attitude' [which] at times [had been] assumed by leaders of the CP[-]USA. The recognition of its harmfulness elicited wide debate in that body and the sharpest self-criticism. Mistakes had been made." However, Patterson noted that the churches too, had confessed their

⁹⁵ Cronin to Patterson, March 19, 1963, FBI 94-35404-86.

⁹⁶ Patterson to Cronin, March 21, 1963, JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23 and OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

⁹⁷ Cronin to Patterson, March 22, 1963, *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Tanner to Vagnozzi, March 26, 1963, OGS, 24, Folder 13; William Sullivan to A. H. Belmont, March 26, 1963, FBI 94-35404-86.

imperfections. The Chicago conference issued a statement "repent[ing] our failures and ask[ing] forgiveness of God. . . [and] of our brothers whose rights we have ignored . . ." Patterson added that "the Church asked forgiveness [which] . . . I hope will not be denied." Writing with some passion, Patterson continued "A 'free world' must begin at home," and racism could not "be handled by it [the church] alone."⁹⁹

On April 1, Cronin replied to Patterson. He informed Patterson that a "total and absolute" philosophical difference between Marxists and Catholics would not lend itself to dialogue. Cronin also pointed out that the March 17 issue of *Pravda* reiterated "the fact that communism cannot practice ideological coexistence with competing systems of thought and belief." He cited the continuing persecution of the church by Communist regimes in Poland and Hungary, and added on a personal note, "Your own files will probably show that my knowledge of Marxism-Leninism is not purely theoretical – I have been in the thick of long and bitter fights to protect American unions from minority Communist control. I have first-hand knowledge of Communist tactics and have been the subject of smear attacks from Communist groups during the early 1940's -- you may check with Al Lannon for details."¹⁰⁰ Still displaying considerable persistence though, Patterson again wrote the priest to urge a united front against racism.¹⁰¹

Patterson's letter might have closed the matter, but in early April Pope John XXIII issued another encyclical, entitled *Pacem in Terris*. The pope returned to many of the themes he had addressed in *Mater et Magistra*. In four paragraphs, Pope John emphasized the need to improve race relations, and to

⁹⁹ Patterson to Cronin, March 29, 1963, JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23.

¹⁰⁰ Cronin to Patterson, April 1, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Patterson to Cronin [undated], *Ibid.*

ensure arms reduction.¹⁰² Gus Hall of the CP hailed the new encyclical. According to the party newspaper (*The Worker*), Hall "emphasized that American Communists would welcome the opportunity to work with Catholics and all other Americans . . ." Hall called *Pacem in Terris*, "a sincere effort to bring the position of the Roman Catholic Church into harmony with the progressive direction of history." He later said, "There is a need for all forces of progress to reexamine and perhaps readjust our overall estimate of the Roman Catholic church as a social institution."¹⁰³ Triggered by Cronin's comment on the encyclical in the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, Arnold Johnson, the public relations director of the CP-USA, wrote to Cronin to suggest "an informal conference to discuss relations between Catholics and Communists."¹⁰⁴ A few days later, Patterson also wrote "impelled by the magnificent message Pope John XXIII uttered April 10th," to urge a united front against bigotry.¹⁰⁵ Cronin passed the communications on to Msgr. Tanner, writing of Patterson, "He certainly is quite eloquent."¹⁰⁶ In turn, Tanner sent the correspondence on to the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi.¹⁰⁷

Cronin approached his superiors, He first wrote to Archbishop Cousins, the chairman of the Social Action Department. While the pope might want to engage European Communists "for the purpose of promoting peace and securing greater religious liberty," Cronin observed, he doubted that such dialogue would be productive in an American context. "I can see no good, and much harm, in

¹⁰² Race was addressed in *Pacem in Terris* in Paragraphs 94-6 and 100. Weapons reduction was encouraged in Paragraphs 109-113.

¹⁰³ "Gus Hall Greet's Pope's Message as Aid to World Peace," *The Worker*, 28: 132 (April 21, 1963), 1, 11, and "Notes by Gus Hall in Opening a discussion on the Importance of the Encyclical, "Peace on Earth," issued by Pope John XXIII on April 10, 1963. Copies of both are located in the JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23.

¹⁰⁴ Arnold Johnson to Cronin, April 25, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Patterson to Cronin, April 29, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Cronin to Tanner, April 30, 1963, April 30, 1963, OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

¹⁰⁷ Tanner to Vagnozzi, April 30, 1963, OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

any united-front endeavors in this country." He presented three possible lines of action. First, the offer could be rejected without publicity. Second, the offer could be rejected and the Catholic press told of the rejection. Third, he proposed "Temporizing in regard to the offer, merely asking further particulars. . . The only purpose of this would be to find out, through the Apostolic Delegate, whether there would be any advantage to the Holy See in listening to the proposals of the Communist officials here."¹⁰⁸ Cronin also sent a copy of the letter to Archbishop O'Boyle, advising him that he had "warned our Protestant and Jewish friends" about the matter. Cronin told O'Boyle that he did not want to reject the CP's approach "in a way that might interfer[e] with any negotiations that may be in process between the Holy See and Mr. Khrushchev."¹⁰⁹ At the same time, Cronin kept FBI officials aware of this situation. He told William Sullivan that the offer of collaboration would be rejected, but he offered to determine for the Bureau precisely what the CP had in mind.¹¹⁰ (The FBI was presumably uninterested: no written response exists in Cronin's file.) While awaiting instructions, Cronin wrote Patterson pleading that he was beginning "a very busy season" and would be "traveling a great deal." He did not try to encourage Patterson to continue, and he closed by saying "I hope to have some more observations for you later."¹¹¹ A few days later, Cronin suggested that the American bishops collectively be informed of the correspondence.¹¹²

On June 4, Archbishop Vagnozzi advised Msgr. Tanner Cronin's third (a non-committal one) proposed response was preferable. Vagnozzi asked that Cronin's reply "be limited to a simple acknowledgment couched in vague and

¹⁰⁸ Cronin to Cousins, April 29, 1963, JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23.

¹⁰⁹ Cronin to O'Boyle, April 29, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Cronin to Sullivan, April 29, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Cronin to Patterson, May 6, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹¹² Cronin to Cousins, May 10, 1963, *Ibid.* A report seems to have been drawn up for the bishops, but no copies could be located by the author, see Cronin to Tanner, May 28, 1963, *Ibid.*

general language."¹¹³ Cronin actually drafted a letter which was probably more blunt than the apostolic delegate wanted: Pope John XXIII's death in June may have encouraged him to write the letter of rejection. In his letter to Arnold Johnson, Cronin stated that "since united-front action must be ruled out, there does not seem to be any point in abstract discussion of an academic nature. If I were a university professor, I might enjoy the challenge of debate. But the pressures on my time are tremendous, so I cannot indulge this interest."¹¹⁴ Johnson was tenacious though. He wrote to the Sulpician to invite him to the impending trial of some CP members and to say that their right of due process was a major issue. Not inclined to look sympathetically on their plight, Cronin answered that the CP "brought much [sic] of these troubles upon itself" due to its secretive nature. Johnson challenged Cronin's assertions and said he would "send material to clarify some of the facts."¹¹⁵ Some additional correspondence followed, closing the proposed détente between the church and the CP-USA.¹¹⁶

In a July 1963 editorial, *Ave Maria* magazine acknowledged that Communists were offering to visit Catholic colleges to "debate" *Pacem in Terris*. The editors noted that Cronin, who had been recently criticized for allegedly underrating the internal threat posed by the CP in *Communism: Threat to Freedom*, had urged the "utmost caution" be used in dealing with the American Communist Party.¹¹⁷ In the NCWC's *Annual Report: 1963*, the Social Action

¹¹³ Vagnozzi to Tanner, June 4, 1963, *Ibid.*, and OGS, Box 24, Folder 13.

¹¹⁴ Cronin to Johnson, June 5, 1963, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Johnson to Cronin, June 13, 1963; Cronin to Johnson, June 19, 1963; Johnson to Cronin, July 1, 1963; Cronin to Johnson, July 2, 1963; Johnson to Cronin, July 2, 1962 [sic]; and Cronin to Johnson, July 8 [?], 1963, all located in *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Johnson to Cronin, August 1, 1963; Cronin to Johnson, August 19, 1963; Johnson to Cronin, August 23, 1963. These are located in the JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 23. The Communist rapprochement was touched on in David O'Brien, *Public Catholicism*, New York: Macmillan, 1989, 222.

¹¹⁷ "Catholic-Red 'United Front'?", *Ave Maria*, July 20, 1963, 16.

Department noted that the CP had adopted "a more conciliatory approach to religion and the Catholic Church in particular." Nevertheless, the report indicated that "All available evidence indicates that this new approach is merely a tactical move, aimed at gaining respectability for the Communists by disarming Church groups. This department has firmly rejected overtures for discussions and united-front activities in such areas as race relations, peace, and unemployment."¹¹⁸

Ten years later, in the early 1970s, some Catholic thinkers in Latin America tried to reconcile Christianity with Marxism in a movement called Liberation Theology, an effort to ally the church with the poor and suffering to prevent injustice. Even then, this notion remained controversial and came under fire from authorities in Rome.¹¹⁹ The overtures of CP officials to Cronin concerning Pope John's encyclical provided a harbinger of this future controversy.

¹¹⁸ *Annual Report, 1963*, 8. Some of the Catholic press also picked up the story about the attempted rapprochement between the Church and the CP, see "Fr. Cronin Cautions On Reds," *The Tidings*, July 5, 1963, 5.

¹¹⁹ F. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Liberation Theology," in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington, D.C. and New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979, 17: 350-1.

Chapter Eight Continuing Work on Race, 1960-1966

There remained a healthy fear of Communism in the U.S. in the early 1960s, with the establishment of a Marxist regime in Cuba and with a war heating up in Southeast Asia. However, the American population no longer feared domestic Communism as it had in previous years, particularly after the ugliness and pain of the McCarthy era and investigations by Hoover's FBI. The weakening of the CP-USA had not resolved all of America's problems.

Father Cronin accelerated work on civil rights in the 1960s. In a March 26, 1960 speech before the Catholic Interracial Council in Washington, he attacked the use of union shop to prevent the employment of African-Americans. "Special mention should be made of the problem . . . of local unions that refuse Negro members and bar the door to opportunities for their training as apprentices." He praised AFL-CIO President George Meany for his opposition to the practice, but criticized "existing practices of relegating Negroes to menial jobs. We hear that many in fact lack skills without realizing that lack of opportunity means lack of incentive." Cronin went to the campus of the University of Detroit to speak at the National Conference for Interracial Unity. The Detroit speech formed the basis of an article entitled "Interracial Justice: The Catholic Record," which was later published. In it, he praised the work done by various Catholics, especially the Catholic Interracial Councils. However, he warned that "[I]n far too many cases, Catholic laity and clergy have not followed the strong call for leadership given by their bishops." He entreated Catholics to continue work in areas like better housing and employment.¹

¹ "Discrimination by Unions Hit by Cleric," *The Washington Post*, March 27, 1960, A-26; "Conferences of Catholics Are Scheduled in August," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 19, 1960 [or 1961], 8. Copies of these were found in NARA, Box 192. A copy of Cronin's Detroit speech can be found in *On Racial Justice: A Documentation and Symposium*, Derby, N.Y.: St. Paul Publications, [n.d.], 96-106,

In January 1962, Cronin testified before a House committee in support of legislation to bar discrimination in employment. In his brief statement, he identified himself and quoted the bishop's 1958 pastoral on race (which he had written). He then said: "The moral principles enunciated in these quotations do not need elaboration. From a religious viewpoint they express the God-given dignity and rights of all men. From a political standpoint, they express the rights guaranteed by our constitution."² The denial of rights led, he pointed out, to high minority unemployment, which reduced the "incentive to seek proper education," and added to "crime, delinquency, and vice."³

Cronin was not the only cleric to address the Senate that day. Rabbi Joachim Prinz preceded him, and Dr. Dana McLean Greeley of the Unitarian Universalist Association followed him.⁴ Noting the presence of three clergy, one of the committee members pointed out that "the whole matter of discrimination has a far higher meaning than would appear on the surface."⁵ Opposition to discrimination was a cause which united people of different faiths, especially after the 1950s. For Catholics, the common ground was aided by the Second Vatican Council and Rome's approval of a more active role for the church.

The effort to promote an ecumenical civil rights crusade became a principal aim of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, or

and seems to have been expanded into an article, "Interracial Justice: The Catholic Record," *Social Order*, 11: 8 (October 1961), 345-350.

² U. S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Education and Labor. *Equal Employment Opportunity: Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee on Labor of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Eighty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on Proposed Federal Legislation to Prohibit Discrimination in Employment in Certain Cases Because of Race, Religion, Color, National Origin, Ancestry, Age, or Sex*. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962, 974.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Rabbi Prinz's statement began on *Ibid.*, 968. Dr. Greeley's statement started on *Ibid.*, 976.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 974.

NCCIJ, a Chicago-based organization under Mathew Ahmann. A thirty-one year old native of St. Cloud, Minnesota, and an alumnus of the Benedictine St. John's University in Collegeville, Ahmann moved to Chicago with his wife in 1952. He had first worked for *Today* magazine, and then for the Chicago Department of Welfare before establishing the NCCIJ.⁶ With the Synagogue Council of America and the (Protestant) National Council of Churches, the NCCIJ planned to co-sponsor a Conference on Religion and Race to be held in January 1963. Ahmann wrote Cronin to ask him to invite Archbishop William E. Cousins of Milwaukee. Ahmann also hoped that Cousins would invite President Kennedy.⁷

Ahmann also sought the active participation and financial support of the bishops. Even beyond the matter of promising racial justice, he hoped to promote interfaith cooperation. After the Supreme Court struck down mandated school prayer in the 1962 *Engle v. Vitale* decision, Ahmann wrote to Cronin, "it struck me as important that the NCWC consider hiring someone who would work with Protestant, Jewish, and humanist groups" on matters which touched on church-state relations. "It seems to me that something like a \$100,000 or \$150,000 spent in this area sould [sic] be very cheap for the [hoped-for] result"⁸ Finding Ahmann's suggestion "interesting," Cronin passed it on to Msgr. Tanner. "While Mr. Ahmann's suggestion may not be practical, I agree with the idea that contacts can often head off difficulties."⁹ Ahmann's recommendation was not pursued however, doubtless because of financial considerations: in 1963, Cronin suggested that SAD contribute five hundred dollars to the National Conference on Religion and Race. Tanner then informed Cronin that SAD was

⁶ "Matt Ahmann Key Figure In Chicago Race Conference," *The Catholic Review*, February 1, 1963, 6.

⁷ Ahmann to Cronin, March 28, 1962; "Conference on Religion and Race," [Undated invitation draft]; Cousins to Cronin, April 6, 1962; OGS, Box 89, Folder 14.

⁸ Ahmann to Cronin, July 5, 1962; *Ibid.*

⁹ Cronin to Tanner, July 9, 1962; OGS, *Ibid.*

already overdrawn by \$646.78, and instead suggested "a token offering of \$100.00."¹⁰

The year 1963 was also dominated by the efforts of the Kennedy Administration to pursue civil rights legislation. On June 17, the White House scheduled a meeting for various religious leaders. Hampered by poor organization, Cronin protested to White House aide Ralph Dungan, "you should know of some of the widespread criticism I heard from Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic sources." On arriving at the White House, many "including some who were old and sick, had to wait on Pennsylvania Avenue" for periods of time up to half an hour in length. Worse, "[m]any felt that the meeting itself was not well prepared. . . . To ask people to come a great distance, with no more clearcut proposal than an apparent last-minute decision to ask Mr. [Irwin] Miller to head up a committee, was felt by many to be an imposition." The poor organization had hindered contact between ecclesiastical figures and the president. "Most of us felt that scrambling for recognition was rather undignified," he wrote. A smaller group would have allowed "a more substantial discussion." Despite his disappointment, Cronin closed the letter on a positive note, saying "It will be a pleasure . . . for any Catholic nominees to work with him [Miller] on the Committee."¹¹ Together with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., A. Philip Randolph, UAW President Walter Reuther, NAACP head Roy Wilkins, and Mathew Ahmann, Cronin met President Kennedy the White House on Saturday, June 22. He was happier with this second parley. He wrote, "The meeting lasted nearly

¹⁰ Cronin to Tanner, January 8, 1963; General Secretary [Tanner] to Cronin, January 9, 1963; OGS, Box 89, Folder 15.

¹¹ Cronin to Ralph Dungan, June 19, 1963; OGS, Box 85, Folder 8.

two hours and was mostly concerned with civil rights legislation. It was very satisfactory, in contrast to that held on Monday with religious leaders."¹²

Not all Cronin's meetings took place at the White House. He had been approached (through the Social Action Department) by an attorney from the NAACP who wanted to discuss the possibility of a representative Catholic cleric testifying in favor of S. 1732, a bill which would prohibit segregation in airports, and bus and railroad stations. Two years earlier, the problems confronting African-Americans were dramatized when thirteen members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) -- seven black and six white -- left Washington D.C. to travel through the South and challenge the segregation of bus station waiting rooms, restaurants and restrooms. Calling themselves the "Freedom Riders," they first encountered no resistance, but newspaper accounts alerted bigots in communities to which they were traveling. Some Freedom Riders were beaten in Rock Hill, South Carolina. In Alabama, Klansmen bombed the Greyhound bus they were riding in, and in Anniston eight men boarded the bus and beat some of them. Warned that the Freedom Riders would be met in Birmingham by individuals who had bombs, FBI officials relayed the warnings on to the local police, who did nothing. A mob in Birmingham attacked the bus, and three of the group were beaten seriously enough to require hospitalization. Asked why the police had done nothing, Police Chief T. Eugene "Bull" Connor joked that the force was short-handed that day. (The Freedom Riders arrived in Birmingham on Mother's Day, and he claimed that many policemen had the day off.)¹³

With the memory of the Freedom Riders still fresh, Cronin asked Archbishop Cousins' permission to testify. "This request is not a result of the

¹² "Report of Civil Rights Meetings," June 24, 1963; *Ibid.*; Martin Adam Zielinski, "Doing the Truth: The Catholic Interracial Council of New York, 1945-1965," Ph.D. diss.: Catholic University of America, 1989, 446-7, 454-5.

¹³ Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 936-9.

[June 17 and 22] White House meetings, but was decided on before that time on its own merits," the priest told Cousins.¹⁴ Cronin did appear before the Senate Commerce Committee on July 25 with Rabbi Irwin Blank of the Synagogue Council of America and Dr. Eugene C. Blake of the National Council of Churches. In his statement, Cronin told the senators:

Racial discrimination and segregation still continue to deny persons basic human rights in this country 100 years after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. There is growing determination on the part of Negroes to achieve full rights and opportunities for all people regardless of color, race or national origin, now.

Negro people, as well as the religious groups submitting this testimony, are clearly aware of the disabilities [placed] upon Spanish-speaking Americans, Indian-Americans, as well as upon people of Asian background. The Supreme Court has indicated that civil rights are "present rights." The actual opportunity to exercise these long overdue rights must be made available to all people now. There is growing dissatisfaction with gradualism and promises of future progress. The heroic courage and suffering involved in direct action in many parts of the country are indications of the firm resolve to achieve these goals now.¹⁵

In addition to the moral dimension, Cronin also responded to some of the arguments put forward by opposition of the legislation:

. . . In many states and cities, discrimination in such facilities [stores, etc.] is currently prohibited by law. The broadening of such prohibition by a Federal law is not a drastic step. Nor is it an invasion of property rights as some have claimed. Neither law nor morality sanction the concept of absolute right of property. Both

¹⁴ "Request for Testimony on Civil Rights Legislation," June 24, 1963; OGS, Box 85, Folder 8. (See also the letter of Cronin to Cousins, June 24, 1963, in the same file.)

¹⁵ United States Senate Commerce Committee, *Civil Rights -- Public Accommodations: Hearings Before the Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, Eighty-Eighth Congress, First Session on S. 1732; A Bill to Eliminate Discrimination in Public Accommodations Affecting Interstate Commerce, Part 2*, Washington, D.C.:

U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963, 812. According to a draft of Cronin's statement, which is located in the archives at Catholic University, Rev. Dr. Blake was supposed to speak in behalf of the three, but for some reason Cronin did instead. (See "Testimony On Civil Rights Legislation Present to [the] Committee on Judiciary, House of Representatives (sic for Senate) . . . July 24, 1963," *Ibid.*)

insist that the property owner must use his property in a socially responsible fashion. We have zoning laws, traffic ordinances, license and inspection requirements, as well as scores of other rules and regulations that currently enforce the concept of socially responsible ownership. If we can protect citizens from the injuries caused by blaring television sets, surely we can give equal protection against the deep affront and humiliation caused by racial discrimination in public accommodations.¹⁶

Praising Cronin's presentation, Sen. Norris Cotton (R.-New Hampshire) observed "It is from a moral, [and] spiritual standpoint absolutely unanswerable." Nevertheless, Cotton said that there were aspects to discrimination which were "not quite as simple and forthright as the moral problem."¹⁷ Cotton asked if there were limits as to the government's involvement. Cronin replied "I don't think that law and morality should be coextensive; that the public welfare should be the determining factor in deciding when civil laws should be enforced or when enforcement is morally right." Senator Cotton then cited the example of Prohibition as "an unfortunate result . . . [of] the moral forces -- and these I may say, perhaps, were the religious forces of the country"¹⁸ in controlling legislation. There was a moral imperative to assist African-Americans, Cotton conceded, adding that some diplomats accredited to Washington and the U.N. had experienced American racism when driving outside of the capital.¹⁹ Cotton then asked Cronin, "Would you agree . . . that the final drafting of this measure should be confined to those facilities that are really in the full sense public?" Cronin replied:

. . . My own feeling is that there is a very basic distinction between public wrong and private wrong, and that it is not the function of law to compel all good or inhibit all evil. But sometimes private wrongs must remain matters of the conscience of the individual who inflicted or who was the victim of such wrongs.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 814.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 829.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 830.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 831.

But I do feel that when a person offers facilities for public use, for sale to all comers, the only distinction being the basis of color, to me this does become a matter of public right and wrong, that you are perpetrating something which has historically assumed tremendous proportions. Actually as we know the tea tax in Boston wasn't a very important thing in itself. [But] At a given time and circumstance in history, it sparked off a revolution. As you say it is [more] important for a Negro to have a good job, to have education, decent housing, than to have access, say, to a hotdog stand. But we are in the point of history today, with the emergence of [an independent] Africa, with the decline of colonialism throughout the world, and with the very emergence of the Negro himself toward the full realization of rights That is why I hesitate to draw any distinction further than the distinction between public right and private right.²⁰

Senator John O. Pastore (D.-Rhode Island) then questioned the Sulpician, and as an example, asked whether civil rights legislation should mandate a female homeowner renting rooms to rent to people of color.²¹ Cronin replied that he would not distinguish private lodging from public facilities in such an instance.

Father Cronin: To me she has every right to insist that people who come into her private home are well-dressed, well-behaved, mannerly, the type of person that she would like to associate with. But I cannot morally accept the decision that color is the basis for discrimination. I simply can't do it. How about you Rabbi?

Rabbi Blank: Senator. . .

Sen. Pastore: Nobody wants to, Father. This is a question that has been tossed around quite a bit, about "Mrs. Murphy's" [a mythical female renter] exception. I think we ought to get that clearly on the record.

Father Cronin: To me I can't make that distinction.²²

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 831-2.

²² *Ibid.*, 832. The Supreme Court handed down two decisions in 1964 which recognized the authority of federal antidiscrimination laws in private business. In *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* and *Katzenbach v. McClung*, the court ruled that hotels and restaurants could not discriminate against customers as the businesses were dependent upon interstate commerce and thus subject to federal commerce legislation and Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment, see Melvin I.

Despite the technicalities raised by Cotton and Pastore, the senators were actually sympathetic to the legislation. In thanking the three clergymen, Senator Philip Hart (D.-Michigan) said "I only wish you and your colleagues were present in this room a week or so ago to give aid and comfort and theological background when I had a visit with the Governor of Alabama," i.e., George Wallace.²³ Hart added, "Father Cronin, I propose to send to Governor Wallace this printed copy of your testimony with my compliments."²⁴

In addition to testifying before the Senate, Cronin was also preparing another pastoral letter on race, "On Racial Harmony," released on August 23, 1963.²⁵ The pastoral was shorter (only eighteen paragraphs), and drew from the 1958 letter (which, of course, Cronin had also drafted), on Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris*, and the pronouncements of the recently-elected pontiff, Paul VI. The hierarchy had an interest in the statement's speedy release: five days after it was promulgated, two hundred and fifty thousand marchers descended peacefully on Washington, D.C. Archbishop O'Boyle, who had integrated parochial schools in Washington in 1948 (and was Cronin's ally in the fight over the 1958 letter), recited an invocation at the beginning of the rally at the Lincoln Memorial.²⁶ Writing in the *New York Times*, James "Scotty" Reston commented

Urofsky, *A March of Liberty: A Constitutional History of the United States*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, 792. The author is indebted to Prof. Peter K. Rofes of the Marquette University Law School, for his assistance.

²³ *Ibid.*, 834. Gov. George Wallace was elected as an ardent segregationist. He concluded his inaugural address with the words, "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod on this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny. And I say: Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!" (Quoted in Manchester, 978.)

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 836.

²⁵ Nolan, 3: 17-19. In a letter to Arthur Newcomb, Msgr. Tanner wrote, "The first draft of the racial statement was done by Father John Cronin, but it was gone over by all the Bishops several times. . ." (Tanner to Arthur Newcomb, September 20, 1963, OGS, Box 89, Folder 17.)

²⁶ O'Boyle threatened at one point to withdraw from the program. He objected to a sentence in a speech to be delivered by John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Lewis' speech draft included the sentence,

"... it will be a long time before it [the capital] forgets the melodious and melancholy voice of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. crying out his dreams to the multitude."²⁷ Cronin joined a group of clergy who met with government leaders to endorse passage of the proposed civil rights bill.²⁸

Father Cronin was assigned the task of polling different dioceses on race relations. Of ninety-four dioceses that replied (out of a total of 143 U.S. dioceses and archdioceses in 1963), fifty-one reported "substantial race problems," and only thirty-four had "concrete plans for interracial activities." Cronin believed nonetheless that the study underrated racial problems, many dioceses not having bothered to respond to the questionnaire, with some bishops, who indicated that no race problems existed in their jurisdictions, probably having answered out of ignorance. And although thirty dioceses planned activities, Cronin noted that there existed a list of sixty-two cities "in which interreligious interfaith programs" were underway or were being planned. Like many priests, Cronin also preached on civil rights.²⁹ "[O]rganized forces of religion are marching arm in arm -- priest, rabbi, and minister -- proclaiming the dignity of man as a child of God," the priest told the congregation in a mass for civil rights.³⁰

Cronin temporarily set aside his civil rights work to testify before a Senate committee in support of a plan to permit prepaid medical care for the elderly on

"We will march through the South, through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did." Happily, the offending passage was modified. ("Prelate Objects To Rights Speech," *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, 20.) On O'Boyle, see "Archbishop O'Boyle's Role," [Letter to the editor signed by various ecclesiastical figures, including Cronin] *New York Times*, November 14, 1964, 28.

²⁷ James Reston, "I Have a Dream. . .," *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, 1.

²⁸ Margaret Cronin interview.

²⁹ "The Race Problem and the Social Action Department Budget," by Rev. John F. Cronin, S.S. [undated but probably November 1963]; OGS, Box 89, Folder 17. It is unfortunate that the bishops did not commission a thorough study in the way that Cronin's 1945 report on Communism was undertaken.

³⁰ "Catholic Welfare Aide Urges Faiths to Unite for Civil Rights," *New York Times*, November 17, 1963, 84.

November 21.³¹ The following day, President Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas. Five days later, President Lyndon Johnson spoke before a Joint Session of Congress to push forward on the Civil Rights Act. "[N]o memorial or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long," the new president said. He added, "We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for a hundred years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law."³²

In January 1964, Cronin and other religious leaders met with the Senate Republican leader Everett Dirksen (R.- Ill.). "To our surprise, the Senator had only mild objections [to the Act]," Cronin later recalled.³³ The bill, however, immediately was subjected to a Southern-led filibuster Senate. The following month, E. W. Kenworthy concluded a *New York Times* editorial with the words:

There is one imponderable, however, that could change almost total defeat for the Southerners. That is the unknown impact on Senators in an election year of the church-affiliated groups that, for the first time, are throwing their weight behind a civil rights bill. It is conceivable that the strength of these groups could persuade some Senators to change their minds on closure.³⁴

A coordinated program was proposed by the National Council of Churches and the Synagogue Council of America. They approached the NCWC to invite the church's participation in "a joint manifestation of our concern for the

³¹ U. S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Ways and Means, *Medical Care for the Aged: Hearings Before the Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Eighty-Eighth Congress, First and Second Sessions, on H. R. 3920; A Bill to Provide Under the Social Security Program for Payment for Hospital and Related Services to Aged Beneficiaries*, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964, 897-902.

³² "Transcript of President Johnson's Address Before the Joint Session of Congress," *New York Times*, November 28, 1963, 20.

³³ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Religion and Race," *America*, 150 (June 28-30, 1984), 472.

³⁴ E. W. Kenworthy, "The Coming Filibuster," *New York Times*, February 23, 1964, 10 E. A copy of the editorial was sent to the bishops with O'Boyle's letter of February 26.

civil rights of Negroes," which would "be timed to coincide with Senate filibuster on the Civil Rights Bill."³⁵ The NCWC sent out a letter to members of the American hierarchy, over the signature of Archbishop O'Boyle. The letter contained three questions: "(1) Do you favor in principle such a convocation? (2) If so, should it be sponsored by the NCWC, or by the Department of Social Action? (3) Should it be held on the eve of the Bishop's meeting, or at a later date?"³⁶ The NCWC questionnaire elicited at least thirteen responses which survive in the NCWC archives. Eight unreservedly supported the idea of participating in the convocation: Cardinals Cushing, Ritter, and Spellman; Archbishops Alter, Cody, Connolly, Dearden, and O'Boyle.³⁷ Albert Cardinal Meyer of Chicago supported the convocation, but he cautioned that holding it at the same time of a filibuster would constitute a circumstance which would make it "very difficult to rise above partisan politics."³⁸ Archbishops Krol of Philadelphia and McGucken of San Francisco were not enthusiastic about the assembly but offered no objection.³⁹ Bishop Emmet Walsh of Youngstown wrote cryptically, "I do not favor in principle such a convocation, but I am not prepared to say that I will oppose it."⁴⁰ Cardinal McIntyre opposed participation in the convocation. He argued that taking a role would constitute "the introduction of religion into a political situation . . . [which] puts [organized] religion in a very embarrassing and frustrating situation." For McIntyre, the moral question was

³⁵ Archbishop O'Boyle to the bishops, February 26, 1964; OGS, Box 85, Folder 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ritter to O'Boyle, March 2, 1964; Spellman to O'Boyle, March 3, 1964; Connolly to O'Boyle, March 3, 1964; Cody to O'Boyle, March 9, 1964; Dearden to O'Boyle, March 19, 1964; *Ibid.* Cushing and Alter wrote their responses on O'Boyle's letter to the bishops of February 26. O'Boyle also wrote his response on a copy of his February 26 letter.

³⁸ Meyer to O'Boyle, February 29, 1964; *Ibid.*

³⁹ Krol to O'Boyle, March 2, 1964; McGucken to O'Boyle, March 3, 1964; *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Walsh to O'Boyle, March 3, 1964; *Ibid.*

not one of racism, but of church-state relations: "I fully recognize that my associates have demonstrated an unwillingness to recognize this moral situation"41

Bishops who favored the assembly thought that the leadership role should be assumed by SAD, rather than the NCWC as a whole. Some bishops had no preference. There was greater division over whether or not the convocation should be timed to coincide with the bishop's meeting. Four bishops (Alter, Connolly, Krol and McGucken) preferred having the convocation on the eve of the bishops' assembly, and five (Cody, Dearden, Meyer, O'Boyle and Walsh) wanted it held later. Cardinals Cushing, Ritter, and Spellman had no opinion.⁴²

Cronin drafted a memo on the work being done by the NCWC. He was underfunded and overworked. He noted that in the South there would "be massive demonstrations this summer, mostly connected with public accommodations and voting rights. In the North and West, demonstrations will center around de facto school segregation and lack of job opportunities."⁴³ The priest pleaded for money (\$50,000), as well as the assistance of another priest. In one memo he cited the fact that he was "the sole representative of our Church in many national activities where other religious groups can divide the work among dozens of full-time workers. Efficiency suffers under such conditions. Nor are they conducive to health."⁴⁴

Msgr. Francis T. Hurley of the NCWC assumed a great deal of the work in preparing for the convocation, which was now scheduled for April 28. Cronin

⁴¹ McIntyre to O'Boyle, March 26, 1964; *Ibid.* McIntyre did make a public statement praising the president after he signed the Civil Rights Bill though, see Msgr. Francis J. Weber, *His Eminence of Los Angeles: James Francis Cardinal McIntyre*, Mission Hills, Ca.: St. Francis Historical Society, 1997, 2: 480-1.

⁴² A summation of the early responses can be found in the letter of Msgr. Tanner to Archbishop O'Boyle, March 4, 1964; OGS, Box 85, Folder 9.

⁴³ Untitled enclosure with letter of Cronin to Cousins, March 20, 1964; *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* The \$50,000 request was made in Cronin's letter to Cousins of March 20, 1964, *Ibid.*

hoped some of the bishops would attend. Archbishop O'Boyle attended the convocation and gave the invocation. (He also later joined some of the Protestant and Jewish clergy who went to visit the White House.)⁴⁵ O'Boyle wrote to thank Hurley, and told him, "I give you a [grade of] plus AAA; I have given the same rating to Father John Cronin."⁴⁶

The religious coalition in support of the civil rights act held. On vacation in Key Biscayne Florida when the bill passed, Fathers John and Jim Cronin were on the beach, and a hotel clerk inquired "Is there a Father Cronin here?" Fr. Jim asked "Which one?" The clerk responded, "Father Cronin, there's a call from the White House. Will you take it?" As Msgr. Cronin recalled, Father John returned and said, "I've got bad news for you: we've got to pack up and leave."⁴⁷ Johnson was going to sign the Civil Rights Act, and the Sulpician was to be among those who were to be present for the ceremony. President Johnson signed the bill into law, and later sent one of the sixty-eight pens used to sign the bill to Cronin. One Georgia senator (probably Herman Talmadge) later complained over the bill's passage, saying the "goddamned preachers beat us."⁴⁸ An interfaith prayer service was held after the bill was signed, and Cronin was among those who spoke. "We rejoice that this nation had the moral greatness to face up to its failures and to seek to implement fully its ideals," he said. In praising the Congress, he added, "Because of your patience and wisdom, we will soon have a law that implements in sound legal terms the values and ideals that represent the American heritage."⁵⁰

⁴⁵ "Interfaith Rally In Capital Backs Civil Rights Bill," *New York Times*, April 29, 1964, 1, 29; "Johnson Exhorts Clerics On Rights," *Ibid.*, April 30, 1964, 1, 5.

⁴⁶ O'Boyle to Hurley, April 30, 1964; OGS, Box 85, Folder 9.

⁴⁷ Msgr. James Cronin interview.

⁴⁸ Cronin, "Religion and Race," 472.

⁵⁰ "Religious Leaders Mark Rights Bill Passage," NCWC News Service [Press release], June 22, 1964, JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 27.

A decade later, in August 1975, " Msgr. George Higgins appraised Cronin's contribution:

The conference -- in the person of Father John Cronin, who was my associate in the Social Action Department -- lobbied more persistently and more effectively in favor of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Bill than it has ever lobbied before or since on any other single issue. The record will show that Father Cronin, working in close cooperation with his Protestant and Jewish counterparts in a then unprecedented ecumenical task force, spent almost all of his time on this issue for a period of many months. . . There was a general consensus in 1964 that Father Cronin and his associates in the ecumenical task force played a major role in persuading the Congress to adopt the 1964 Civil Rights Act.⁵¹

America's civil rights endeavors took on international significance. While attending the Second Vatican Council in 1963, Bishop Robert E. Tracy of Baton Rouge encouraged the bishops to explicitly add a condemnation of raced-based discrimination to a statement being considered which would condemn bigotry based on gender or place of national origin.⁵² Pope Paul VI received Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in an audience in September 1964. Three months later it was announced that King would receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Father Cronin had mixed feelings about King: he confided in Garry Wills in 1968 that his friends in the FBI had provided him with "raw files" about the civil rights leader.⁵³ Cronin advised Msgr. Tanner to expect an invitation to attend a dinner in King's honor. He told Tanner that if he preferred the invitation could be referred to SAD. He also wrote: "Whatever may be our views of Rev. Mr. King, I think we will have to go along with this. After all, he had a private audience with the Pope and won

⁵¹ Quoted in Gerald M. Costello, *Without Fear or Favor: George Higgins on the Record*, 153.

⁵² "U. S. Bishops at Rome Ask Clear Race Equality Stand," *New York Times*, October 25, 1963, 1, 15.

⁵³ Garry Wills, "'Sanctity' Not Always Sufficient to Plug FBI 'Leaks,'" *Baltimore Sun*, March 23, 1973 [page number unknown]. A copy of this article is located in JFCPP, Box 1, Folder 27. The FBI also may have provided material on King to Cardinal Spellman in the hope of preventing King's audience with Pope Paul, see McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 155.

the Nobel Peace Prize, so I do not see how we can avoid going along with the accepted image of the man."⁵⁴

About the time of the scheduled dinner, a new tragedy was brewing. King was preparing a renewed voter registration drive among African-Americans, with Selma, Alabama, a focal point – a city in which only 325 (out of fifteen thousand voting-age) blacks were registered to vote. Protesters planned a peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery, to take place on March 7, but Gov. Wallace quickly banned it. The demonstrators started their walk anyway, and were met at the Edmund Pettis Bridge by Alabama State Troopers, who drove them back with tear gas and clubs. Two days later, Dr. King joined the demonstrators. This time they walked as far as the bridge, knelt down and prayed, and then they turned around and returned to Selma. Gov. Wallace seems to have been looking for a way to turn the matter over to the federal government without explicitly asking for Washington to step in. He told President Johnson that the state of Alabama lacked the funds to protect the marchers, so Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard, and sent in the FBI, U. S. Marshals, and two Army MP battalions. On March 21, 3,200 marchers left Selma. Four days later, a crowd, now 25,000 strong, arrived in Montgomery.⁵⁵

Many Northern Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic clergy joined the protesters. Northern sympathizers were regarded with disdain by the locals, and the first fatalities came from their ranks. On March 10, a Boston Unitarian minister, Rev. James Reeb, was beaten outside a Selma restaurant. He died the next day in a hospital. Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo, a white Detroit housewife who volunteered to ferry marchers home, was shot and killed by Klansmen on her

⁵⁴ Cronin to Tanner, March 1, 1965; OGS, Box 89, Folder 18.

⁵⁵ Manchester, 1058-62; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 212-9.

last trip. (An FBI informant was riding in the car from which Mrs. Liuzzo's murderer fired on her.) An Episcopalian seminarian from New Hampshire was killed by an off-duty policeman who claimed to have acted in self-defense. The murderers of Mrs. Liuzzo and the seminarian were acquitted, although Mrs. Liuzzo's killers were later convicted of a violating her civil rights.⁵⁶

The Catholic archbishop of Mobile was unhappy with the protesters. Archbishop Thomas Toolen, told a St. Patrick's Day gathering that priests were not "equipped to lead groups in disobedience to the laws of the state." He expressed annoyance that the priests and nuns who came to Selma had not asked his approval before doing so, and he asked, "What do they know about conditions in the South? I am afraid they are the only eager beavers who feel there is a holy cause here." Toolen further claimed that Dr. King was "hurting the cause of the Negro rather than helping it."⁵⁷

Many Catholics disagreed with Toolen, including Cronin. In a speech before the National Conference on Religion and Race the month after Selma, Cronin said "We should be in the forefront of demonstrations to show our support for the civil rights movement."⁵⁸ He also testified in favor of legislation to strengthen the Fifteenth Amendment.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Manchester, 1060-1.

⁵⁷ "Alabama Bishop Attacks Marches By Priests, Nuns," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 19, 1965 [page unknown]. A copy of this article was located in OGS, Box 89, Folder 18. Catholic schools in the Mobile Archdiocese were segregated until September 1964. ("Alabama Catholics Integrating Schools," *New York Times*, April 27, 1964, 1; "Archbishop T. J. Toolen Eulogized By Sheen at Funeral In Alabama," *New York Times*, December 10, 1976, D 10.) Toolen found an ally in Cardinal McIntyre. The irascible cardinal archbishop of Los Angeles wrote the apostolic delegate, saying that "the participation [by priests and nuns] as manifested in Selma and other cities" was "entirely reprehensible." He thought that "priests, religious and sisters had no place in Selma and should have stayed home and attended to their own business," see Weber, 2: 628.

⁵⁸ "Clergy of All Faiths Urged to Take Part in Racial Protests," *New York Times*, April 14, 1964, 25.

⁵⁹ U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Voting Rights: Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 5 of the Committee on the Judiciary*,

Cronin continued speaking and writing on civil rights, and he began to address the related question of fair housing. Some areas allowed "restrictive covenants," that is, a clause inserted into contracts for the purchase of a house forbidding the purchasing party from selling the residence later to an African-American or a Jew. In California, the Rumsford Fair Housing Act prohibited the practice of writing restrictive covenants. In response to the Rumsford Act, a ballot measure, Proposition 14, was introduced to repeal of the Rumsford Act. In August 1964, the California bishops reasserted their opposition to "discrimination based solely on race, color, nationality or religion," but did not explicitly criticize Proposition 14. The electorate approved the repeal measure. A year later, angered by poor housing, high unemployment, and shoddy public transportation, the Los Angeles black enclave of Watts exploded into rioting.⁶⁰ Whereas formerly a great deal of the violence in the civil rights struggle had been in the South, it had spread to the North and West.

In 1966, Cronin twice testified before Congress on civil rights legislation. On May 18, he appeared before the House Judiciary Committee with Dr. Benjamin Payton and Rabbi Richard Hirsch (of the National Council of Churches and the Synagogue Council of America respectively) to support modification of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. "In our judgment, housing discrimination is a pernicious form or racial injustice," he said.⁶¹ Later he added:

House of Representatives, Eighty-Ninth Congress, First Session on H. R. 6400 and Other Proposals to Enforce the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965, 505-8.

⁶⁰ Weber, 2: 468-9.

⁶¹ U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Civil Rights, 1966: Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 5 of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Eighty-Ninth Congress, Second Session on Miscellaneous Proposals Regarding the Civil Rights of Persons Within the Jurisdiction of the United States, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966, 1466.*

America wears a badge of shame before the world, when it is known that discreet efforts must be made to secure housing for diplomats in Washington and at the United Nations, simply because they are persons of color. We urge upon formerly colonial nations the virtues of democracy. Yet in every part of our Nation men are refused housing because of race. This is an infamy which a nation professing our ideals, and burdened with our worldwide responsibilities, can ill afford to bear.⁶²

Despite this simple moral appeal to justice, Cronin was challenged by Rep. Emanuel Celler (D.-N.Y.). The congressman asked Cronin if the proposed legislative ban ought to be applied to discrimination on a religious basis as well as racial grounds. Cronin said that he doubted "in this ecumenical age that any religious group would be asking for a special exemption . . ."⁶³ Celler's skepticism led Rabbi Hirsch to add that he knew of some Orthodox Jewish institutions that might prohibit non-Jews due to dietary restrictions. Rep. William C. Cramer (R.-Florida) also challenged the clerics, and he cited a number of hypothetical situations: should fraternities, sororities, or Masonic homes also be required to accept people of color? Dr. Payton then pointed out that a university, or related institution, like a fraternity or a sorority, was already required by federal statute to prohibit discrimination.⁶⁴ Cronin joined Hirsch and Payton in appearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, but this time he lent moral support, and permitted Hirsch and Payton to do the talking.⁶⁵

In the June 25, 1966 issue of *Ave Maria*, Cronin directly addressed the question of housing. "Many persons think that a major source of the [1965] Watts riots was the vote on Proposition 14 . . . To the people imprisoned in Watts,

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1473.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1474-8.

⁶⁵ U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Civil Rights: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, on S. 3296, Amendment 561 to S. 3296, S. 1497, S. 1654, S. 2845, S. 2846, S. 2923 and S. 3170, Part 2*, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966, 1489-1507.

Proposition 14 was more than an insult. It meant that it would be impossible for them to find homes where there were jobs. And Los Angeles is not geared to easy public transportation over long distances." Some parties suspected that the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) was the chief supporter of Proposition 14, but Cronin defended NAREB. The realtors approached the NCWC, the National Council of Churches, the Synagogue Council of America, and the National Association of Evangelicals in an attempt to work out a means toward equal housing; however some suspected that the four church organizations had sold their ethical standards to NAREB. Cronin noted that Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis had successfully changed the climate by meeting with Catholic realtors. "It took over a year of patient effort before [even] a relatively modest interreligious accord was signed with the realtors." Still, Cronin counseled that "Those who may be unwilling to tackle their problem on the basis of conscience may well [need to] do so on the basis of self-interest."⁶⁶

The next November, the bishops met again in Washington. In the late 1960s, American cities became battlegrounds as racial tensions and the continuing war in Southeast Asia triggered rioting. Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore visited the NCWC offices and spoke with Cronin and Msgr. George Higgins. Shehan wondered if the bishops should issue statements on race and on the Vietnam War. Higgins was asked to write a statement of Vietnam – not an easy task, as Higgins had not yet formulated a position on the conflict. Cronin was assigned the task of writing a statement on race.⁶⁷ Dated November 19, 1966, Cronin's declaration, "Race Relations and Poverty," incorporated his interest in race and economics. He later wrote his family, "I had done an outline which he [Shehan] approved, so that night I stayed up late, writing the

⁶⁶ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Are Realtors Blocking Fair Housing?" *Ave Maria*, 102 (June 25, 1966), 11-13.

⁶⁷ Costello, 234.

statement." Shehan picked up the draft which was debated by the bishops. "One of the younger bishops, an expert on race relations, spoke from the floor for strengthening the statement. So we met that night with his committee and around midnight I typed the final version It was approved unanimously. . . with the motion for approval coming from Cardinal McIntyre."⁶⁸

Cronin's declaration began by emphasizing "We are grateful that much progress in civil rights legislation has been made in recent years," citing the fact that "Comprehensive programs to eradicate poverty have been begun." Yet, he also wrote that "[C]ivil strife is an ever-present danger. There have been riots in our cities. Racial antagonism has been fostered and continues to be fostered under many emotionally charged and irrational slogans. Moreover, we are still confronted with the depressing problems of poverty, joblessness, and urban and rural slums." He admonished Americans to allow "dialogue [to] replace slogans," and called for continuation of the war on poverty. He did not use that phrase: President Johnson had called for a "war on poverty," and Cronin doubtless wanted the document to be free of political endorsements. Nevertheless, some of his language resembled that of the administration's approaches. He wrote that some aspects of poverty "require a strong governmental intervention at appropriate levels." Specifically, he suggested more funding for education, "welfare relief . . . [which respects] human dignity," but also programs which offered incentives for "part-time or temporary employment." In the last section, he called for decent housing.⁶⁹

Cronin continued in his published writings to address the escalating friction in America. He decried "Black nationalism and the white backlash [which] tend to feed upon one another," leading to "a real polarization of the

⁶⁸ Cronin to "Dear Family," November 21, 1966. A copy of this letter was provided the author by Msgr. James Cronin.

⁶⁹ Nolan, 3: 84-7.

community and an almost total breakdown in communications." Cronin did not criticize Black nationalism per se: "[I]f black nationalism means pride in one's race, it might well be applauded rather than condemned." He found Stokely Carmichael's cry of "Black Power" to be "[e]qually ambiguous." He instead urged his readers to recognize that the civil rights movement had heightened tensions, and suggested Americans focus their efforts on programs which were more likely to produce results and legal action when needed against slum lords.⁷⁰

The same time (April 1967) that Cronin's paper on race riots was published, a speech he delivered before an organization called "Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam" was published in *The Catholic Mind*. The anti-Communist priest now counseled caution in evaluating American policy. "As religious leaders we are deeply concerned about peace, and we deplore the bloodshed and hardship of war. Yet we are equally concerned about freedom and human dignity," he said. He also expressed concern that "We may become so preoccupied with Vietnam that we lose sight of other issues I refer particularly to prevention of the spreading of nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-free zones in great regions of the world, the lessening of Cold War tensions in Europe, the possibility of more friendly relations between the United States and the several communist governments in Europe, and similar opportunities . . ." He considered it "within the realm of morality and prophecy to press for a negotiated conclusion to the war," adding "I consider it a political judgment, not a moral decision, to insist that a particular course of action, such as halting bombing in the North, will lead to peace negotiations." He went on to urge that the clergy not attempt to impose "a guilt complex" on elected officials, and to urge protesters raise their voices "humbly, not arrogantly." The editors of

⁷⁰ John F. Cronin, S.S. "Must We Have Race Riots?," *The Sign*, 46 (April 1967), 17-19.

The Catholic Mind noted in a preface to his remarks, that his statement was "rejected by a minority of those present."⁷¹

Cronin's views changed considerably in the years after the Second World War, as had those of the Catholic Church. Communism had ceased to be a major issue, and prodded by religious leaders, politicians, and court decisions, America had by the late 1960s moved to make good on the phrase "liberty and justice for all." Cronin's civil rights work was to be the conclusion of his work for the bishop's conference though, as he returned to teaching in Baltimore.

⁷¹ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Clergymen and the Conflict in Vietnam," *The Catholic Mind*, 65 (April 1967), 7-9.

Conclusion

The NCWC was split into two bodies in 1966, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference.¹ In addition, Father Cronin left the NCWC to return to teaching at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore in 1967.² This author has been unable to determine why Cronin left the bishop's conference. Both Msgr. Higgins and Msgr. James Cronin said that Father John's health was still good in 1966.³ Cronin may conceivably have wanted a change. In any event, the Sulpician returned to teaching. He also found some time to take on projects for the Baltimore Archdiocese, notably helping with Project Equality, an effort to encourage businesses to hire minorities.³

Throughout his work, he had drawn heavily from the encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and later John XXIII. Nineteen seventy-one marked the fortieth anniversary of *Quadragesimo Anno*, but by then Cronin's books had gone out of print, and his work in applying morals to economics, like his mentor Msgr. Ryan and his friend Msgr. Higgins was no longer in style. Some Catholic seminaries stopped offering the kinds of courses related to economics and morality. Cronin himself expressed some reservations about his earlier work. In a 1971 article entitled "Forty Years Later: Recollection and Reminiscences," Cronin spoke of some of the difficulties the NCWC had in attempting to apply *Quadragesimo Anno* to the United States. Msgr. Ryan, together with Msgr. Francis Haas (later the bishop of Grand Rapids), and Father Raymond McGowan argued that the pope had called "for total social controls, including price-fixing. Some of us, however, doubted the economic wisdom of their interpretation of the encyclical"

¹ Reese, *A Flock of Shepherds*, 30-2.

² "Many Tributes Are Paid To Rev. John F. Cronin on Social Action Retirement," *The Post Star*, May 12, 1967, 11.

³ Higgins and Msgr. Cronin interviews by the author.

³ Spalding, *The Premier See*, 456. As Spalding noted in his work, Project Equality had limited results.

Cronin recollected that Ryan told him later to continue to seek his own understanding of the encyclicals and their application to the U.S. "[W]hen this writer went to see him [Ryan] at his death-bed in 1944," Cronin said, "Ryan told him to continue his independent ways."⁴

Cronin then recalled visits with some European theologians who expressed some chagrin at American Catholics. German Father Oswald von Nell Bruening told him that he thought the Americans "had totally misinterpreted" part of *Quadragesimo Anno*. In Rome, another Jesuit, Father Gustav Gundlach met Cronin.

Gundlach waxed vehement on the theological naiveté of American Catholicism. He taxed us for interpreting encyclicals like biblical fundamentalists. He also said we were foolish to be expecting new leads from Rome every year or so, instead of developing our own social analysis which could guide Rome in its thinking. Particularly he found it unbelievable that complex social documents would be studied at the high school level.⁵

Cronin raised a criticism that an English Catholic economist, Professor Michael P. Fogarty, had once expressed of one of his books. Fogarty asserted that the living wage was chiefly "a matter of social justice," whereas Cronin argued it "was due in strict justice and hence was an obligation of the individual employer." After corresponding with Nell-Bruening, Cronin "came to the conclusion that Fogarty was right."⁶ Were he now approaching social and

⁴ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Forty Years Later: Reflections and Reminiscences," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 164: 5 (May 1971), 310-313.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 313. Years earlier (April 1945), when Cronin was preparing his report on Communism for the American Catholic bishops, Cronin wrote that he found Nell-Bruening's work "too much in the abstract" and not applicable "to American Conditions." (See John F. Cronin, S.S., "Tentative Confidential Report of Communism," 38.)

⁶ *Ibid.* Also of interest is the possibility that Cronin was influenced by an exchange with Fr. F. H. Drinkwater. See Fr. Drinkwater, "Reminiscences of Money Reform," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 122: 6 (December 1950), 437-442, and John F. Cronin, S.S., "Further Reminiscences of Money Reform," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 126: 3 (March 1952), 213-6.

economic questions, Cronin wrote, he would develop and employ "a more sophisticated hermeneutic, [and]. . . avoided several methodological errors."

One [error] would be to avoid concentrating upon a single phrase, clear as it seemed, without considering the context of the encyclical as a whole, with its strong emphasis upon social justice. Another would have been to consider the entirety of the magisterium, since Pius XI in *Casti Conubii* took primarily a social-justice approach to the living wage. Finally, there should have been a warning that sound morals and sound economics should not clash. . .⁷

Continuing, Cronin confessed "It never occurred to us that these documents were both historically and culturally conditioned." Although *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* were obviously "addressed to the major industrial nations . . . it did not occur to us how much of the mind set was Italian and Germanic. Most of us had never heard of form criticism [a means of scriptural analysis]. Probably we would not have dared to use it on documents of the magisterium, even had we known what it meant."⁸

This did not mean that the Americans had completely misunderstood the documents. "There were notable positive points which we seized upon . . ." he wrote. With the Second Vatican Council, Catholics increasingly turned toward the Bible, but Cronin had drawn almost nothing from scripture in his analysis of economics. He concluded on a melancholic note:

Today the tendency is to learn by doing and not by reading. Involved clergy and religious go to Selma or even go to jail for acts of civil disobedience. Values are sought directly from the Scriptures, not through the mediation of the magisterium. Prediction is hazardous, but it seems that the golden era of Catholic social thought, beginning in 1891, has ended by 1971. There is a loss here. For all its limitations, it was a noble example of truly Christian concern for the wretched of the earth.⁹

Cronin's reflections raised a series of troubling questions. Had Msgr. Ryan, *et. al.*, been wrong all along? Were they naive? What factors might have

⁷ Cronin, "Forty Years Later," 314.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 314-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 318.

colored Cronin's musings by 1971? In March 1967, Paul VI issued a strikingly liberal encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, in which he called on the wealthy nations of the world to share their resources with the poor. The *Wall Street Journal* dismissed the statement as "warmed-over Marxism." Regrettably, Cronin expressed no opinion on Paul's letter. It is certainly tempting to speculate whether Cronin's age, or his reaction to *Populorum Progressio*, might have influenced his *mea culpa*, but this of course is simply conjecture. "Forty Years Later: Reflections and Reminiscences" may well have simply been the ruminations of an honest scholar, reflecting about the course of his life and work at the twilight of a lengthy career.¹⁰

These reflections raise another question: is the "golden era" of American Catholic social thought over? The 1980s witnessed the American bishops examining the American nuclear and economic policy, as well as asking questions about the Reagan Administration's policy in Central America, and the Gulf War. This constituted a refreshing development, as during the Cold War years such debate was confined previously to only a few Catholics (like Dorothy Day). And despite the fulminations of European clergy, some Catholic high schools still require the reading of different encyclicals. Perhaps the American Church is on the threshold of a new era in social teaching. His friend Msgr. Higgins said he thought Cronin "jumped the gun" by saying that the best years of Catholic social work were at an end.¹¹ But as Cronin himself prefaced his conclusion, "[p]rediction is hazardous."

Father Cronin retired from teaching in 1975. As his brother Msgr. James Cronin remembered, Father John helped in nearby parishes on weekend, and

¹⁰ Paul VI. *On the Development of Peoples: Populorum Progressio*. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1967; *Wall Street Journal* comment can be found in Higgins and Bole, *The Church and Organized Labor*, 225.

¹¹ Higgins interview with the author. See also Higgins comments in his eulogy for Cronin in the appendix.

was well-liked by the parishioners. He had begun slowing down, and started using a cane to walk. His eyesight worsened, and only reluctantly did he give up driving. His health weakened, and when he attended a 1980 Labor Day dinner honoring his colleague Msgr. Higgins, Cronin was in a wheelchair. He moved to St. Charles Villa, a retirement home for Sulpician clergy. He occasionally received special recognition: on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, the City of Glens Falls passed a resolution in his honor, and Baltimore Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin declared "Father John Cronin Day."¹² His brother, Msgr. Cronin, was approached by doctors who wanted to amputate one of Father John's legs. For Msgr. Cronin, the decision brought back painful memories, for his father's legs had been amputated before his death. A second opinion was sought from another doctor, who suggested trying to save his leg, but by then it was too late. Father Cronin died on Sunday, January 2, 1994, at the age of eighty-five.¹³ His friend Msgr. Higgins preached at his funeral on January 6.

Cronin lived to see the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The changes forced many to revise their thinking. Msgr. Charles Owen Rice of Pittsburgh -- "the oldest and most celebrated of all the so-called labor priests" in the words of Msgr. Higgins¹⁴ -- once wrote in apology for his own anti-Communism. "We exaggerated the danger, we went overboard, we were unAmerican and uncharitable, we lost our

¹² City of Glens Falls "Special Proclamation," September 27, 1988, in possession of Msgr. James Cronin; "Though unrecognized, Monsignor [sic] Cronin was among key civil rights leaders," *The Catholic Review*, July 19, 1989, B-7, B-14.

¹³ Costello, 59; Msgr. James Cronin interview; "John F. Cronin, 85, Priest and an Expert On Race Relations," *New York Times*, January 5, 1994, D 21; "Father John F. Cronin dies, advised presidents, bishops," *The Catholic Review*, January 5, 1994, 1, 11; "[Obituary for] Rev. John F. Cronin, professor and author," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 6, 1994 [page unknown, copy provided by Msgr. James Cronin].

¹⁴ Msgr. Higgins interview.

perspective . . ." he wrote in 1989. Later he added, "No longer do I regard my battle against the Left Wing (Communist) unions as being glorious. It engrossed me then but now I find reflection upon it depressing."¹⁵ Yet Rice changed his mind again after the fall of Soviet Russia and the partial opening of Soviet archives. "I would sometimes change my mind and backtrack, but not anymore," he recently wrote.¹⁶ Msgr. Higgins told the author, "I think if Cronin were alive today, and if anybody challenged him, he'd say 'You thought I went overboard, but look what they're saying now.' . . . I'm sure his answer would be exactly the same as Rice's."¹⁷

The oddest episode in Cronin's life was his association with the FBI. In some ways though, it is not too surprising that he was attracted to the Bureau. As a young man, Bishop Joseph P. Hurley of St. Augustine applied to West Point, and Cardinal Spellman relished his role as military vicar, and "back-channel" between FDR and Pius XII.¹⁸ As exciting as their roles were for Hurley and Spellman as papal diplomats, Cronin too presumably looked on working with "G-men" as being more electrifying than preparing reports for the bishops. In addition to this excitement, working with the FBI provided Cronin with a means of fighting Bolshevism. In a 1960 memo, Archbishop O'Boyle wrote Cronin, saying, "If Richard [Nixon] is elected [president], you will probably be made a Cabinet member with the title of Chief of the Department of Espionage."¹⁹ Cronin was doubtless flattered.

¹⁵ Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, "Confessions of an Anti-Communist," *Labor History*, 30: 3 (Summer 1989), 449, 462.

¹⁶ Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, "Labor's Flirtation with Communism," *Pittsburgh Catholic*, July 2, 1999, 5. The author is indebted to Msgr. Higgins who brought the article to his attention.

¹⁷ Msgr. Higgins interview.

¹⁸ Gallagher, "Patriot Bishop," 11-13; Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., "Francis J. Spellman: American and Roman," in *Patterns of Episcopal Leadership*, New York and London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1989, especially 224 ff.

¹⁹ O'Boyle to Cronin, March 3, 1960, OGS, Box 4, Folder 25.

Although a great deal of Cronin's writing consisted of his effort to reconcile economics and race -- like that of his mentor, Msgr. Ryan -- he seems to have had his greatest impact in the area of race. While priests like William H. DuBay in Los Angeles and James Groppi in Milwaukee spoke out and even challenged their superiors, Cronin's work tended to be within official church structures, and had a longer-lasting impact than his more vocal clerical brethren.

Cronin's theologizing tended to parallel official pronouncements. As Father Charles E. Curran noted, Cronin was much more dependent "on authoritative papal and hierarchical church teaching" than had been Ryan.²⁰ The post-Vatican II church is better equipped to analyze questions using scripture, and the bishop's 1986 pastoral letter on the economy contains a lengthy section on the "Biblical and Theological Foundations" of morality and economics. Such an approach was not part of the milieu in which Father Cronin earlier wrote. Nevertheless, Cronin did grapple and present social and theological issues in a manner helpful to American Catholics of his time, and into the present.

²⁰ Charles E. Curran. *American Catholic Social Ethics: Twentieth-Century Approaches*. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, 174-175. The bishop's pastoral did contain an extensive section on scripture and economic ethics, see "First Draft -- Bishops' Pastoral: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy." *Origins: NC Documentary Service XIV: 22/23* (November 15, 1984), 343-6. Cronin's *Catholic Social Principles* was referred to at least four times in the notations. In Part I "Christian Vision of Economic Life," it was cited in footnote 30 (p. 378), and in Part IV, "A New American Experiment: Collaborating to Shape the Economy," it was cited in footnotes 4, and 23 (p. 380), and was quoted in footnote 8 (*ibid.*).

**Appendix I:
FBI Material Used in 1945 Report**

Below is a list of the FBI data provided Cronin for the writing of his 1945 report on Communism for the American bishops. The material came from FBI 94-35404-55, attached to a memo from L.L. Tyler to Edward A. Tamm, dated June 28, 1947. The memos were "blind," i.e., not typed on FBI stationery (or signed).

<u>Document</u>	<u>Where used in report</u>
"CPA Organizations and Tactics" (5 pp.; August 7, 1945)	This memo has sub-headings dealing with Labor, African-Americans, etc. As the subsequent memos treat these topics, no use of this document necessary.
"CPA School System" (12 pp., undated)	Incorporated into p. 19.
"Financial Resources of the Communist Political Association" (8 pp.; June 13, 1945)	Incorporated into pp. 107-8.
"Communist Activities in the Labor Movement" (27 pp., August 30, 1945)	Cronin's third chapter, pp. 31-45, treats labor, but he made little use of the information presented in this document.
"Communist Infiltration of Government Agencies" (3 pp.; August 25, 1945)	Although he treated this topic, Cronin made little if any use of this memo.
"Communist Infiltration of the Armed Forces" (5 pp.; August 25, 1945)	Information presented in this memo is theoretical. Cronin did not use it.
"American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born" (2 pp.; August 6, 1945)	Copied verbatim to pp. 114-5.
"American Russian Institute, Inc." (2 pp.; August 6, 1945)	Copied verbatim to pp. 115-6.
"American Youth for Democracy" (3 pp.; August 6, 1945)	Copied verbatim to pp. 116-8.
"Consumers' Union of the U.S., Inc." (1 p.; August 6, 1945)	Copied verbatim to pp. 118-9.

- "Council for Pan-American Democracy"
(1 p.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 119-120.
- "Council on African Affairs"
(3 pp., August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 120-2.
- "Hollywood Writers' Mobilization"
(1 p., August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to p. 123.
- "International Labor Defense"
(2 pp.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 123-4.
- "National Council of Soviet-American Friendship" (1 p.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 124-5.
- "National Federation for Constitutional Liberties"
(1 p.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 125-6.
- "National Lawyers' Guild"
(1 p.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 126-7.
- "National Negro Congress"
(1 p.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to p. 127.
- "People's Institute of Applied Religion"
(3 pp.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 128-130.
- "Southern Negro Youth Congress"
(2 pp.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 130-1.
- "Southern Conference for Human Welfare"
(4 pp.; August 6, 1945) Copied verbatim to pp. 131-3.
- "Exploitation of Negro People and Their Organizations"
(21 pp.; August 7, 1945) Pages 3 and 4 were copied to page 25 of the 1945 report.
- "Overseas News Agency"
(1 page, August 25, 1947) Copied verbatim to pp. 95-6.
He supplemented the material with data from a source "known to the General Secretary of the NCWC."

- [Untitled: First heading:]
"Periodicals Presenting the
Soviet Point of View"
(19 pp.; August 3, 1945)
- "Orthodox Eastern Churches"
(13 pp.; July 11, 1945)
- "The Protestant"
(12 pp.; July 11, 1945)
- "Attacks Upon the Vatican"
(11 pp.; August 3, 1945)
- Copied verbatim to pp. 81-95.
- No use of this memo, but Cronin discussed the Kremlin's use of the Orthodox Church to criticize the Vatican, p. 47.
- No direct quotes from this memo, but Cronin discussed *The Protestant* on pp. 45-6.
- No direct quotes, but a discussion of Soviet criticism of the Vatican on pp. 46-7.

Appendix II:
 Homily for the Funeral Mass of Father John F. Cronin, S.S.
 January 6, 1994
 by
 Msgr. George Higgins

In my own sufferings I filled up what is lacking in the
 sufferings of Christ for the sake of His Body, the Church.
 (Col. 1: 24)

Father John Cronin's illustrious biography is known to all of you, or surely to most of you. There is no need, then, to catalog in detail his many accomplishments as a seminary professor, prolific author and journalist, distinguished public speaker, influential civil rights advocate, eloquent spokesman for the U. S. bishops on a wide range of public policy issues, an ecumenist before his time, a ghost writer for bishops and leading public figures, including one who became a President. The list goes on and on. John was a towering figure in Twentieth century American Catholicism. The Church and all of us are indebted to him for his effective leadership in the field of Catholic social thought and social action. In summary, it will be enough to say, with the late [John] Cardinal Wright, that John was an extraordinarily gifted and talented priest who spent almost his entire adult life promoting and defending the dignity of the human person. Cardinal Wright put it this way as the keynote speaker at a testimonial dinner [given] in John's honor as John prepared to leave the Bishops' Conference in the late 1960s and return to teaching:

It is fashionable to speak of men like Father John Cronin as working in the spirit of Pope John XXIII, and I would be he last to say a word which would diminish appreciation of Pope John. However, the saintly Pope would be the first to point out that his own essential witness, as that of Father John Cronin, has roots much more ancient than his pontificate.

It has roots in the Hebrew prophets, in the Christian Gospel. In our times it was marvelously tempered by Pope Pius XI during whose pontificate Father Cronin made his studies and was

ordained. That Pope summed it all up in his magnificent humanism concerning the way in which all things are ordained to the service of the person It was valiantly defended by Pope Pius XII who battled for the primacy of the person against the threat of the eugenic state, the communist state, the fascist state, the nazi state, and even the democratic state when it becomes divorced from its spiritual and moral roots. The concept of the person which has been central to Father John Cronin's work was luminously defended by Pope Paul, nowhere more than at the historic meeting of the U.N. which he addressed.

Perhaps the special contribution of Pope John was the incandescence of his own personality. That intensely personal witness to the dignity of the person long central to Catholic social teaching has been Father John Cronin's great contribution. A shining personality, he has given lively and loving example of what we mean by the dignity of the person he has asked us to recognize and to serve in all our social action theories and social legislation.

Speaking for myself, as a long-time associate, friend and admirer, let me pull together some thoughts about John that came to me a few years ago as we observed the one hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the first of the great social encyclicals of modern popes.

While attending regional and national conferences on the Centenary of *Rerum Novarum*, I recalled with respect and gratitude several former colleagues -- some deceased, some still living, but long since retired -- who in years gone by played a significant role in the Catholic social movement in the United States but have never been given the credit they deserve. One name in particular came to mind -- Father John Cronin, who had been hospitalized as an invalid for many years but, thank God, was at that time still mentally alert and was still able to get around in a wheelchair and able to keep up with the news of the day.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Father Cronin, a competent scholar and gifted writer, was the preeminent popularizer of Catholic social teaching in the United States. His several excellent books on this subject -- long out-of-print, unfortunately -- were required reading in seminaries, colleges and universities. Perhaps no other American writer did as much as he to acquaint his

contemporaries in the United States with the essentials of Catholic social thought.

On 1971, writing in the now defunct *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Father Cronin published his personal "Reflections and Reminiscences" on the way in which Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* was received and implemented in the United States. After citing a number of ways in which Catholics, in his view, read the encyclical too simplistically or, in some cases, misinterpreted the document, he was both pessimistic and optimistic about the future of Catholic social action in the United States. "Interest in the encyclical," he wrote, "and in social action began waning in the United States during the 1950s. . . . After 1966, there developed a sudden and dramatic turning away from the traditional methods of Catholic social teaching and social action. Encyclical courses were dropped from colleges and seminaries. Even updated books based on the social Magisterium ceased to sell Today the tendency is to learn by doing and not by reading Values are sought directly from the Scriptures, not through the mediation of the Magisterium. Prediction is hazardous, but it seems that the golden era of Catholic social thought, beginning in 1891, had ended by 1971. There is a loss here. For all its limitations, it was a noble example of truly Christian concern for the wretched of the earth."

I feel certain that Father Cronin before he died was more than happy to concede that history had invalidated this prediction – happy, that is, to observe in his declining years that interest in Catholic social thought and social action, far from having ended in the late 1960s or early 1970s, seems to have taken a new lease on life.

It remains to be seen, of course, whether or not and to what extent the Church in the United States will be able to capitalize on this unexpected renewal of interest in Catholic social teaching with follow-up programs of study and

scholarly research and with new and innovative forms of Catholic social action. A born optimist, I am personally inclined to think that the widespread observance of *Rerum Novarum* means that we are at the dawn of a new era in the field of Catholic social thought and Catholic social action. But who knows? We shall see. Meanwhile, it is appropriate to pay tribute belatedly to people like Father Cronin who kept the flame alive in earlier generations. To repeat, we owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

Up to this point I have been speaking about John as a distinguished public figure – and to repeat, a towering figure in the history of American Catholicism, whose accomplishments for our good and the for the good of all his Church were truly awesome. I think you will agree, however, that in God's mysterious Providence, John performed his greatest service to the Church and did his most effective teaching after his long and debilitating illness forced him to retire from public life and to serve the Lord silently as an invalid confined to a wheelchair. For fifteen years or more he could honestly say with Saint Paul, "In my own flesh, I will fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His Body, the Church."

This must have been an excruciating experience for a man of John's prominence and intellectual brilliance, but he was always very cheerful and, to the best of my knowledge, was never once heard to complain about his illness, even on his worst days.

We thank God for the heroic example of men like John who understand the redemptive value of suffering in the economy of salvation. Their silent witness of patient and cheerful suffering is a challenge to all of us to enter into the deeper meaning of life. There is a great mystery about this kind of Christian witness. The Christian – in our case the Christian priest, John Cronin – who has suffered long and patiently and has died in peace and with dignity, has lived the

Gospel. John's funeral, then, is the celebration of the power of the grace of God, and a dramatic lesson to all of us on how to be truly human, how to rise to the challenge of illness in ways that are enriching and life-giving, and above all a proclamation that the destiny of human beings is to be with God in eternal happiness.

As I have noted, John was a distinguished teacher for half a century, but most of all during the last fifteen years of his life when, not by printed and spoken word, but by example, in his own flesh, he "filled up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His Body, the Church."

May the angels lead him into Paradise, may the martyrs come to welcome him and take him to the Holy City, the new and eternal Jerusalem.

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