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The Indianapolis Archdiocesan Newspaper in the Raymond T. Bosler Years, 1947-1976

This chapter deals with Msgr. Bosler's relations with two archbishops-publishers with very different approaches with regard to their editor's independence. Bosler held that a diocesan paper ought not be a company newsletter filled with nothing but what is of "good report" of the Church, but rather deal with the pressing public foreign and domestic issues. Under Bosler's editorial hand, that meant the Cold War, NATO, the United Nations, immigration, medical care for the aged and disabled, right to work laws, race, housing, McCarthyism, the John Birch Society, Vietnam, the women's rights movement, and more.

In conducting the "Question Box" for so many years, Bosler dealt with the laity's concerns he judged both trivial (the proper disposal of religious articles) and substantive (no salvation outside the Catholic Church). During and after the '50s and '60s, thanks in part to Alfred Kinsey, frank discussion of sex made its way onto the public agenda and into newspaper pages as never before. Abortion, birth control, homosexuality, AIDS—all now grist to the journalist's mill—found their way into Bosler's Criterion.

A second chapter on Bosler's life and career, beginning with his dispatches on the four sessions of the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965, is also available. As with his liberal views on other matters that had attracted charges of "socialism," his championing of the council's progressivism found him out of step with conservative readers and later Archbishop George Biskup, not least in regard to his views on moral theology.

The Archdiocesan Newspaper in the Bosler Years, 1947-1976

“The ideal Catholic newspaper has yet to be published, and one that satisfies everyone will never be printed.”

Archbishop Paul C. Schulte, Indiana Catholic and Record, 1947.

“A Catholic paper must speak out boldly on the social question or risk being deserters or dupes.”

Msgr. Raymond T. Bosler, Indiana Catholic and Record, 23 April 1954.

After World War II, with increasing numbers of the laity graduating from college and rising from the working class to the middle class and beyond, the need for a quality Catholic press became ever more obvious. In 1946, newly installed Archbishop Paul C. Schulte, began plans for an improved archdiocesan newspaper in the hope of having every Catholic family subscribe.¹ If the parish of St. Mary's at North Vernon is any guide, getting parishioners to take the paper at a dollar a year was no easy sell: Fr. Omer Eisenman told his parishioners that he knew some were “prejudiced against” the Indiana Catholic and Record (IC&R) and he did “appreciate your feelings.” “But our Archbishop intends to change it entirely and make it a real paper . . . , with coverage of all the parishes, and much improved in quality.” To edit The Indiana Catholic and Record, in 1947 Archbishop Schulte chose Fr. Raymond T. Bosler. Convinced that nothing he did as archbishop was as important as seeing the archdiocesan newspaper in every home, Schulte instructed pastors that households that did not subscribe receive the paper anyway and the expense charged to the parish budget.² In two years, with a reported ninety percent of the pastors cooperating, 32,000 of the 36,000 households in the archdiocese were on the rolls.

Schulte's predecessor, Joseph E. Ritter, in sending Bosler to Rome's North American College, had marked him as a “comer,” even an *episcobilli*. Ordained in Rome, July 1938, in 1939 Bosler received his licenciate in sacred theology, L.S.T., from the Gregorian University. Prevented by the war from pursuing further graduate study, he returned home to serve as an assistant pastor at Holy Rosary Parish, chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor, chancery secretary, matrimonial tribunal notary, and member of the archdiocesan Home and Foreign Missions Board. Sent back on the first civilian ship to Europe after the war, Bosler began postgraduate study at the Angelicum, earning a doctorate in sacred theology, S.T.D. Before accepting Schulte's offer, still in Rome, Bosler set three conditions: that the archbishop's

¹ Ritter papers, Schulte letter, 18 January 1947.

² Schulte papers, 23 June 1949 letter, Box 29.

photograph not appear in the paper more than three or four times a year; that he could express his opinions freely as Catholic opinions, though not necessarily the Catholic opinion; and that the archbishop would not interfere unless he was confident that Bosler's opinions were heretical. It meant that Bosler would have a free hand and Schulte hands off. Extraordinary terms for any editor to set to management, let alone a priest to his bishop, Schulte accepted the terms by the next post, writing that he expected Bosler home as soon as possible. Bosler later said to his closest friend, "Schulte never bothered me one time."³ Schulte told the clergy and laity that he was convinced that of all his "acts . . . as your Archbishop, none has been or will be more important or produce more good" than putting the paper into every household in the diocese.⁴ As Bosler hurried to complete his doctorate, in June 1947, the IC&R announced that the new editor would work to make the paper "one of the best of its kind in America."⁵ His appointment effective upon his return, Bosler took up his post in late August 1947, aided by a single assistant.

What sort of editor would he be? In his 1992 memoir Bosler recalled that as a resident at the North American College in the 1930s he was an "ultra-conservative, a Biblical fundamentalist" who believed that "Protestantism was corrupting Christianity." One who "idolized the Pope" and saw "the Roman Catholic Church [as] the only bulwark against the evils spawned by the Age of Enlightenment." As chaplain to the Carmelites on Cold Spring Road his sermons "were the old heartless rationalistic theology straight from Rome's Gregorian University."⁶ As late as the early 1950s, "he was uneasy even going into the offices of the Protestant 'Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis.'" There had been, in his eyes, no cooperation or relations between Catholics and Protestants: "Actually, I was almost afraid to walk inside a public school."⁷ Such timidity didn't last: As one who worked with him at the newspaper recalled: "Ray Bosler's ideas were going to be there, that was true." He "had a lot of things on his mind and wanted to express them."⁸ One idea was that if the paper was to be any good it had to move beyond the Catholic

³ Author's interview, Fr. Thomas Murphy, 6 March 2006. See also Raymond T. Bosler, New Wine Bursting Old Skins: Memories of an Old Priest Longing for a New Church (self-published, Indianapolis, 1992), 53, 54.

⁴ Schulte letter, 23 June 1949, North Vernon, Box VI, "Catholic newspaper" file.

⁵ IC&R, 6 June 1947, 1.

⁶ New Wine, 43.

⁷ New Wine, 56.

⁸ Fr. James Doherty (no relation to the author) worked as associate editor from the mid-1950s to 1962. If Doherty showed Bosler something he didn't like, he'd say "No, Jim, that's not what we want." James Doherty interview, 28 April 2005.

ghetto and take an interest in the social and religious problems of the community. This would prove controversial.

As to the spirit and style of the paper, in January 1948 Bosler announced his intention to follow the example of G. K. Chesterton: To amuse the reader and have something to say. The editorials may be “flippant,” “breezy,” but the plan was to popularize “the teachings of recent popes on Christian democracy, socialism, communism, and the social problems which plague our world. . . . All this, plus the personal opinions of the editor, with which the readers may disagree vehemently and vociferously” in letters to the editor “designed for such a purpose.” In fact, shorthanded as Bosler was for the first five months, the paper carried editorials by a conservative Illinois priest. Help arrived in May in the person of Fr. Paul Courtney as associate editor. A “unique writer with a great sense of humor” who could turn out editorials quickly,⁹ for the next eighteen years the two worked at matching desks.

Publishing full-throated, expressive letters from unhappy readers never bothered Bosler; the real difficulty was that at first there were few letters and sometimes none. To disguise the dearth, the editor was not above having staff ghostwrite submissions. Judging Indiana Catholics “overly timid,” Bosler filled space (and hoped to prime the pump), by running letters published in other Catholic papers.¹⁰ When it wasn't the lack of genuine letters it was their triviality: The advantages and disadvantages of parochial school uniforms was debated every fall and complaints of babies crying in church ran throughout the year. When the IC&R criticized the University of Notre Dame for firing its young head football coach, the paper was attacked by both genuine alumni and the “streetcar” variety. That didn't bother Bosler; what did was that Catholics were shocked that Catholics would criticize Catholics. The IC&R wondered: “Is it really necessary or desirable that Catholics present a ‘united front’ on every issue that arises?” That “all Catholics think alike” is what the Church's critics say; it's “the Catholic ‘bogyman’ which bigots, honest and otherwise use to terrify the illiterate into anti-Catholicism.”¹¹ Citing Leo XIII and Pius XII in support, Bosler defended the policy of dealing with the issues of the day. Priests and a Catholic paper “must speak out boldly on the social question or risk being deserters or dupes.” Racial discrimination, unjust wages, dishonest “labor tactics” required the clergy to speak out. Anti-clerical attacks by readers proved that they

⁹ *New Wine*, 55. Courtney stayed for two decades until 1966 when he turned against Vatican II, becoming an ecclesiastical dyed-in-the-wool reactionary; his earlier liberalism followed by extreme conservatism is attested to by many priests of the succeeding generation. Until 1971 editorials, with few exceptions, went unsigned, but style and emphasis clearly differed, permitting educated guesses in assigning authorship.

¹⁰ IC&R, 9 April 1948, 4. “Have Indiana Catholics no opinions?”

¹¹ IC&R, 2 January 1959, 4. In the 1950s triviality was the problem with queries to The Question Box, too. Is it a sin to “take away” hotel towels; is it wrong to go to drive-in theaters; do the poor souls know we pray for them. IC&R, 28 July, 4, 11, 25 August, 20 October 1950.

were doing their job. We “could use a little more anti-clericalism.”¹² To deal with critics and educate subscribers, in January 1955 a disclaimer ran at the head of the editorial page for the first time:

The opinions expressed in these editorials columns represent a Catholic viewpoint--not necessarily THE Catholic viewpoint [emphasis orig.]. They are efforts of the editors to serve public opinion within the Church and within the Nation.¹³

Mirroring the crankiness of the country in the immediate postwar, within a few years there was no shortage of hostile letters. A reader, characterizing President Harry S Truman as a whiskey-drinking, poker playing Baptist [failing to mention that the president was also a 32 degree Mason], condemned the newspaper for its support of the administration’s “hogwash.” Anyway, the paper had no business in politics and Truman’s attempt to appoint a representative to the Vatican was just a “ploy” to get the Catholic vote.¹⁴ “T.T.” of New Albany was “sick of your attitude on labor questions.”¹⁵ An Indianapolis businessman found the IC&R “a pathetic example of Catholic journalism.” It lacked a religious editor, and needed to fire the labor editor, the political editor, the United Nations editor, “and your Racial Equality editor.” It would be pleasant to find some religion in the paper “instead of a lot of socialistic propaganda.”¹⁶

That the diocesan newspaper purveyed “socialist propaganda” was a perennial complaint, because in contrast with other developed countries of the West, Americans preferred individualism far more and social programs designed to benefit the general public far less. On this side of the Atlantic the connotations of “socialism” and “liberal” are routinely negative, and the expression “common good” rarely used in political discussion. In the 1930s, corporate America, having been shown to have no idea what to do about the Great Depression and smarting from the New Deal and the rise of trade unions, launched a campaign to recruit organized religion to condemn the state as inefficient, wasteful, corrupt--even pagan. Led by the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and such corporations such as Firestone, Hilton, Maytag, Luce, Hutton, General Motors, U.S. Steel, and Du Pont, influential Protestant ministers were recruited to conflate Christianity with capitalism and to promote what we now call the “prosperity Gospel.” Enlisting politicians was crucial in allying Christianity with business

¹² IC&R, 23 April 1954, 4.

¹³ IC&R, 14 January 1955, 4.

¹⁴ IC&R, 9 November 1951, 4.

¹⁵ IC&R, 26 November 1954, 4. The policy was not to publish anonymous letters, but names could be withheld upon request. Consequently, many letters carried only initials, or “a reader,” “a Catholic,” “a mother,” etc.

¹⁶ IC&R, 28 October 1955, 4.

enterprise: In the 1940s the “prayer breakfast” was invented and both houses of Congress began weekly prayer meetings. At Protestant evangelist Billy Graham’s urging, in 1952 Congress established an annual “National Day of Prayer,” bringing “business and elites together in a common cause.” The first was held in February 1953 with President Eisenhower in attendance; the next day the president opened a cabinet meeting with prayer, another first, and the Pentagon, State, and other federal agencies followed suit. The Catholic Church was not behindhand: The Knights of Columbus, always at pains to insist on its patriotism, outpaced the American Legion as the moving force to add “under God” to the pledge of allegiance, in 1954. “In God We Trust” was added to paper money the same year and two years later it became the nation’s official motto. Call something “socialism” or someone a “socialist” and you were nine-tenths of the way home.¹⁷

Consequently, the Indiana Catholic and Record’s opposition to loyalty oaths in the 1950s and to the resumption of nuclear testing in the early 1960s did nothing to burnish its reputation with self-styled patriots. An aggrieved reader wrote: “If the Catholic Church is ‘God’s own anti-Communist organization,’ it is so in spite of the Criterion.”¹⁸ In the mid-1960s hostility to the civil rights movement called forth an “open letter to the Clergy of the Indianapolis Archdiocese,” the majority of whom “unwittingly” followed “a small band of priests and bishops . . . dedicated to change and liberal causes . . .” The writer indicted priests and nuns for “openly violating established law and order, engaging in civil disorders, preaching civil disobedience, associating with and aiding known communists, fellow travelers and assorted deviates.”¹⁹ Bosler saw no point in denying that the paper was seen as soft on communism, too sympathetic to blacks, too supportive of more generous immigration laws and greater social justice in industry. This was necessary because, as he told readers, much of the Catholic and secular press took the opposite position.²⁰

Responding to the charge that the Criterion was unrelievedly negative about cherished institutions, Bosler examined 53 editorials, September 1961 to January 1962, and found positive editorials outnumbered negative ones, 24 to 19, with 10 neutral. In his own defense, he had never said that the newspaper was “unanswerably right” and had printed “very many” severely critical letters.²¹ As for the charge of liberal bias, and “at the request of many readers,” in 1961 the paper began running the syndicated column of a conservative Arizona priest, John Doran. From his first column, an attack on “freedom riders” (blacks and whites, attempting to desegregate public transportation in the South), Doran

¹⁷ Kevin M. Kruse, One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America (Basic Books, 2015).

¹⁸ Criterion, 2 June 1961, 4. The name of the paper was changed in October 1960.

¹⁹ Criterion, 10 September 1965, 4.

²⁰ IC&R, 4 July 1958, 4; 28 February 1958, 4.

²¹ Criterion, 26 January 1962, 4.

delivered as expected. Predictably, conservative readers praised Doran and liberal ones abused him.²² Running a conservative columnist didn't mollify all critics: One, unhappy with Bosler's positions on race, "right to work," low cost housing, capital punishment, federal aid, and the United Nations--reviled the "celebrated Criterion" for practicing "a militant bigotry which will silence as far as it dares any dissenting opinion."²³

The reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) produced a spate of new complaints: the loss of the Latin Mass, liberal theologians, "heresy" in religion textbooks, and a new triviality--shouldn't women cover their hair in church?—for a time was the most frequent question asked.²⁴ Not limiting itself to airing the Church's minor intramural controversies (itself a source of scandal to many), worse, the newspaper drew attention to the existence of dissent, regularly carrying articles on both sides of issues--birth control, even abortion—as well as theological and doctrinal controversies and disputes between nuns and bishops. Two issues of the paper in July 1971 featured articles dealing with a Belgian cardinal worried that a proposed fundamental law of the church constituted a "denial" of the spirit of Vatican II; another revealed forgeries in the ordination of four missionary priests; an archbishop unaware that one of his priests headed Chicago's American Civil Liberties Union (the scandal being the ACLU's secularity and its views on separating church and state); the Vatican's proceedings against theologian Hans Kung, and a long article by the cardinal-archbishop of St. Louis condemning Kung's book on papal infallibility.²⁵ With Bosler as editor (1947-1976), and the conductor of the "Question Box" (1971-1984), there would be many occasions for conservatives to find fault.

Unlike his clerical predecessors who had largely limited coverage to what was happening at Rome and in the archdiocese, Bosler's interests ran more widely. A native Indianan raised and educated in America's isolationist heartland, the Midwest, living in Rome from 1935 to 1939 and travel through Europe with other seminarians in the summer vacations, gave Bosler an education and an interest in foreign affairs. Those years saw Italy invade Abyssinia, Germany rearm and occupy the Rhineland, the Spanish Civil War, Germany's forced union with Austria, the Munich crisis, and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. World War II did nothing to narrow his sympathies and interests: He showed his

²² Criterion, 16 June 1961, 5. Doran appeared weekly from 1961 to 1970. In January 1967 the liberal John Cogley, editor of Commonweal, joined the Criterion's columnists and after May 1974, Dale Francis, editor-publisher of the conservative National Catholic Register ran in the paper. Criterion, 16 October 1970, 4; 10 May 1974, 1.

²³ Criterion, 5 July 1963, 4. Such letters often carried the direction to "cancel my subscription," e.g., 12 July 1963, 4.

²⁴ Criterion, 17 July 1970, 4; 19 June 1970; 17 April 1970.

²⁵ Criterion, 23, 30 July 1971.

internationalist colors in his support of the Truman Doctrine, March 1947, undertaken to support “free governments [Greece and Turkey] from internal or external” communist subversion. Given the postwar obstructionism of the USSR, Bosler thought it obvious that the United States needed to shore up its western allies and remain in Europe “until recovery and stability are realized.”²⁶ Support for the United Nations was similarly axiomatic: True, the ideal of the United Nations had not been met, but the idea was sound. Neither isolationism nor imperialism could substitute for the UN.²⁷ It was not a world government, as critics charged, but a needed international parliament essential to peace. Moreover, it had papal support.²⁸ Congressmen who wanted to get out of the UN if Mao’s China became a member were “silly,” “childish.”²⁹

A director of the Indianapolis Council on World Affairs, Bosler subscribed to what came to be called as foreign policy “realism,” essentially a liberal cold warrior of the Reinhold Niebuhr-Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) school. While holding “no particular love for Spain’s Generalissimo Francisco Franco and his form of government,” clearly Franco was right to overthrow the Communists; Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary “provided the lesson.”³⁰ His internationalism brought Bosler to support a renewal of the draft, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The latter might prevent war, although if war came to Europe, America could not stay out. Since the Monroe Doctrine was dead, that could not be helped; George Washington’s dictum “no foreign entanglements” was gone; NATO was the way to stop Russia from waging “aggressive war.”³¹ As for isolationism, it was “basically unsuited to Catholic thought”--the brotherhood of man, the pope’s peace plan, the United Nations.³² Having embraced Truman’s containment policy, the IC&R supported the defense of South Korea (to demonstrate that that the U.S. is a dependable ally),³³ while rejecting General Douglas MacArthur’s adventurism.³⁴ Foreign aid had the newspaper’s support as consistently as did the United Nations; the former was needed to raise standards of living if communism was to be kept at bay. Why, Bosler wondered, did some Catholic editors fail to understand this?³⁵ There were limits: When Israel, Britain, and France conspired in 1956 to invade Egypt, humiliate President Gamal Abdul Nasser, and

²⁶ IC&R, 24 October 1947, 4.

²⁷ IC&R, 7 November 1947, 4.

²⁸ IC&R, 28 August 1953, 4.

²⁹ IC&R, 9 July 1954, 4.

³⁰ IC&R, 21 November 1947, 4, unsigned, probably Bosler’s.

³¹ IC&R, 25 March 1949, 4.

³² IC&R, 21 April 1950, 4.

³³ IC&R, 30 June 1950, 4.

³⁴ IC&R, 20 April 1951, 4.

³⁵ IC&R, 20 March 1959, 4.

retake the Suez Canal, the IC&R condemned Israel as deserving of “the unqualified censure of the whole world” for its “irresponsibility and appalling selfishness.” Britain and France were “equally reprehensible.”³⁶

When the Soviet tested a hydrogen bomb, in 1953, the IC&R joined the debate over the morality of employing nuclear weapons in war, an example of how politics and ethics intermingle. While many diocesan papers were happy to leave the issue to Catholic magazines and journals, not the IC&R: Bosler’s was the commonsense view that while nuclear bombs were terrible weapons their use could not be ruled out. Survival of the nation from an “unbearable tyranny” would justify their employment. They were a “legitimate, though terrible, instrument of warfare,” but “not intrinsically evil.” His reaction to the claim of a Catholic University ethicist that it would be immoral to retaliate if Russia used an H-Bomb was, “that can’t be right.”³⁷ Bosler understood that the entire rationale of nuclear weapons was to deter their use by an enemy, which required a credible willingness to use them *in extremis*. What also followed was the need to embrace peaceful co-existence, as Pius XII had (the IC&R printed the complete text of the pope’s January 1954 message endorsing it). After all, the pope can’t be accused of “swallowing the Communist line.”³⁸ “Nuclear Weapons Use” remained the “gravest moral problem of our age: Can we defend ourselves?” Still, the pope also held that atomic, biological, and chemical weapons, in making no distinction between combatant and noncombatant, were indiscriminate, and if they cannot be limited, immoral. Bosler’s tentative answer was that to renounce deterrence would be “collective suicide” and he called on Indiana’s Catholic theologians to take up the question.

In March 1955, a Jesuit of the order’s West Baden, Indiana, theologate did in defending hitting military targets, even if it meant “the accidental loss of a sizeable segment of the civilian population.”³⁹ The implication was that a quick, preemptive area strike against an enemy armed with nuclear weapons would be moral. A few months later Bosler weighed in that mere retaliation or usage to intimidate survivors to surrender (a fair reading of the two Atom bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945) was immoral. On the other hand, bombing the enemy’s “factories, vital communication centers, and heart of his war-making activities” to save the nation from destruction while killing hundreds of thousands of non-combatants would be moral. The principle of the double effect “remains sound.”⁴⁰ Three years later, in 1958, the pope,

³⁶ IC&R, 2 November 1956, 4.

³⁷ IC&R, 24 September 1954, 4.

³⁸ IC&R, 7 January 1955, 1.

³⁹ IC&R, 18 March 1955, 4; 29 April 1955, 4.

⁴⁰ IC&R, 24 June 1955, 4, 5.

in rejecting unilateral disarmament, accepted that atomic weapons could be used in a defensive, just war. To prevent war, it was necessary to possess nuclear weapons.⁴¹

Bosler proved as forthright a liberal on domestic matters as he was an internationalist in foreign affairs, one difference being that the former got him into more trouble. Using Leo XIII and Pius XII for support, he held that any priest-editor of a Catholic paper “must speak out boldly on the social question or risk being deserters or dupes.”⁴² Economic and social issues were political issues and the IC&R must not limit itself to religious questions.⁴³ Worried from time to time whether he was doing enough, Bosler would resolve to be more outspoken in political matters: In 1950, dissatisfied with his own reluctance to criticize the parties (the Democrats for “unfairly” attacking Ohio Senator Robert H. Taft, and the Republicans for red-baiting the Democrats), tired of “being shackled,” he promised to have his say (after all, the editors don’t speak for the Church, the bishops, or advertisers):⁴⁴ The nation had awesome responsibilities, Catholics were a quarter of the population, and “Catholic” and “universal” were interchangeable terms.⁴⁵ Subsequent editorials dealt with German unification, the Church in Poland, public aid to parochial schools, and charity and the welfare state.

In the 1950s and 1960s the newspaper’s causes included support for trade unions as a matter of social justice: Since “economic forces are blind to human needs and moral claims, [such forces] cannot be allowed to operate without some check or planning. Otherwise gross inequalities would result”).⁴⁶ Bosler opposed “right to work” laws and refused to attack union abuses because the city’s secular press did little else. Capital punishment was as unacceptable as right to work, and he claimed, wrongly, that “a large majority” of Indianans opposed it.⁴⁷ The IC&R opposed the death penalty, he wrote, not because murder was not so bad, but because of the evil effect it had on those who have to carry it out--wardens, guards, doctors, chaplains: “No one in a civilized society should have as a duty a task that is essentially and intrinsically degrading and brutalizing.”⁴⁸ Bosler knew of no chaplain who had observed an execution

⁴¹ IC&R, 6 June 1958, 4; in 1961, understanding that without continuing testing of nuclear bombs the growth in arsenals would be frozen and the arms race discouraged, the IC&R opposed the resumption of such tests. Criterion, 17 November 1961, 4.

⁴² IC&R, 23 April 1954, 4.

⁴³ IC&R, 9 November 1951, 4.

⁴⁴ IC&R, 12 January 1951, 4.

⁴⁵ Criterion, 10 November 1961, 4.

⁴⁶ 4 November 1955, 4; 28 February 1958, 4.

⁴⁷ IC&R, 30 March 1956; 3 April 1959, 4.

⁴⁸ IC&R, “Nice Occupation,” 4 December 1959, 4.

who supported death sentences nor did most prison officials. It is an “exercise in cold calculated brutality,” did not deter nor contribute to public safety, and was sometimes meted out to the innocent. Life imprisonment was the better way.⁴⁹

One of the most heated issues of the postwar was the Truman Administration proposal for federally insured medical care for the aged and disabled. Citing traditional conservative reasons, the IC&R in the person of associate editor Fr. Courtney, who had a physician brother, was at first against it. The worry was the intrusion of the government into medicine. With federal aid would come state control, the consequence being “little freedom and no individuality.” Raising fears of anti-Catholicism, he warned, “should the state fall into evil hands, we Catholics will be strictly back numbers.”⁵⁰ Rather than state action, voluntary organizations should be used “to achieve purposes which individuals or families singly could not attain.” Thus voluntary health groups were much better than “government medicine” and private charity was “infinitely more desirable than government charity.”⁵¹ The Kennedy Administration revival of “Medicare” found Bosler a sturdy supporter and a critic of the American Medical Association (AMA), with the result that he lost whatever physician-friends he had.⁵² When the Medicare bill was defeated, he blamed the doctors, “the high priests of the age.”⁵³ Evidencing the intense feelings generated over the issue, a local Catholic physician had called the newspaper “a propaganda organ for the betterment of the socialistic and, perhaps, communistic sympathizers who, though few, are present in this area.” Purporting to speak for the archdiocese’s Catholic physicians, the doctor compared the administration’s efforts to pass the bill as Hitlerian and charged the Criterion with having “impugned our [physicians’s] honor and soiled our heritage.” Bosler, certain he no longer had doctor friends to lose, quoted Shaw’s preface to “St. Joan” where the playwright compared doctors unfavorably to Medieval priests: at least the priests had no pecuniary motives--they did not starve when people were well. Bosler resented (and he believed others did, too), the intemperate remarks of doctors in social gatherings, their irate letters to the editor, and their abuse of the doctor-patient relationship by proselytizing patients and ridiculing Medicare’s supporters. When Medicare became law in 1965 and the AMA continued hostile to it, the Criterion judged its opposition “pathetic, and at times [a] frightening, display of arrogant irresponsibility.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Criterion, “Life at Stake,” 19 July 1963, 4; 22 January 1965, 4.

⁵⁰ IC&R, 10 June 1949, 4.

⁵¹ IC&R, 12 August 1949, 4.

⁵² Criterion, 30 December 1960, 2. A whole page was devoted to the issue, with a physician and a business professor on opposite sides. Criterion, 28 July 1961, 4.

⁵³ 20 July 1962, 4.

⁵⁴ Criterion, 2 July 1965, 4.

Right to work laws, capital punishment, immigration, loyalty oaths, health insurance—these were the stuff of state and national politics shortly after World War II. Racial inequality was different in being an issue one might encounter every day walking out the door. For Bosler, racial justice was the centerpiece of the struggle for social justice. From the start his Indiana Catholic and Record dealt sympathetically with issues affecting the black community: Within weeks of becoming editor he praised Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter's desegregation of Catholic high schools in St. Louis as showing the Church's determination "to lead the way against the race prejudice that makes our nation so vulnerable to Communist attacks,"⁵⁵ an argument that cold war liberals used to convince Catholics otherwise indifferent to appeals for justice and decency.⁵⁶ Likewise, he welcomed the Truman Administration's report, "To Secure These Rights," on the same grounds.⁵⁷ That racial injustice hurt America's standing in the world was also the State Department's position. Naturally, the IC&R found the 1954 Brown decision that overturned the "separate but equal" standard in public education "just and right."⁵⁸ Two years later the IC&R denounced Louisiana Catholics who opposed New Orleans Archbishop Joseph Rummel's desegregation of the diocesan schools.⁵⁹ When both the Indianapolis Star and the Indianapolis News characterized the federalization of the Arkansas National Guard to protect the handful of black students integrating Little Rock Central High School as an "invasion," the IC&R pointed out, not for the first time, that it was the federal government, not the states, which "is the defender of the rights of minorities."⁶⁰

Racially, there was a lot that needed doing in Indianapolis, a place where Catholic organizations still put on black face minstrel shows⁶¹ and the city's Knights of Columbus councils remained lily-white well into the 1960s.⁶² The city's postwar racial climate was "atrocious." Ray Bosler was one of a number of progressive clergymen—mainline Protestants, a Unitarian, a rabbi, the liberal Episcopal bishop at the time, Paul Moore, and others, who met monthly to "bemoan the conservatism of the town."⁶³ As a long-time

⁵⁵ IC&R, 26 Sept 1947, 4.

⁵⁶ So, too, the recent desegregation of Catholic colleges. IC&R, 22 April 1949, 45.

⁵⁷ IC&R, 26 December 1947, 4. The Truman Administration also began desegregating the military.

⁵⁸ IC&R, 21 May 1954, 4.

⁵⁹ IC&R, 17 February 1956, 4.

⁶⁰ IC&R, 27 September 1957, 1, 4. Both newspapers were owned by Eugene Pulliam.

⁶¹ IC&R, 28 Oct 1949, 4.

⁶² Criterion, 2 August 1963, 4. In 1954, when a southern Indiana K of C chapter refused to accept a black, the paper sarcastically deemed it no "injustice" since the K of C was not necessary for salvation. At the time, the Bloomington K of C had two black members and Tell City had one. IC&R, 5 March 1954, 4. To be fair, until the 1960s it took only one black ball to bar a prospective member, making it nigh impossible for even a well-meaning membership to accept black members. After 1964 one-third of the membership was needed to bar a person. Criterion, 28 August 1964, 1, 8.

⁶³ New Wine, 56; Paul Moore, Presences: A Bishop's Life in the City (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1997), 156, 157.

Indianapolis Star newsman recalled, before the civil rights laws and the urban upheavals of the mid-1960s, the Star “paid very little attention to blacks in the city.” It was common . . . to read a police report” concerning a body floating in the Indianapolis Water Company canal that ran along the west side of downtown. “[T]he first question asked by the desk editor . . . was, ‘Is it black?’ If so, the response would be, ‘Forget it.’”⁶⁴ When blacks were not being ignored, they were shunned. In close imitation of the South, most Indianapolis restaurants and drug store lunch counters refused to serve them, let alone employ them. As a youth, future NBA basketball star Oscar Robertson did not eat in a downtown restaurant nor venture downtown until his Crispus Attucks High School team was given lunch as part of the festivities of the 1955 state tournament basketball finals.⁶⁵ (Until 1949 the tournament had been closed to black schools.) When Attucks won the title, the IC&R labeled them the first “Real Champs.” Remarking on white fears that if Attucks won “there would be no living with them,” “Well, ‘they’ won.” In the event, the IC&R found “the celebration was mannerly and too restrained” and lamented that the new state champions were denied the traditional ride around Monument Circle. (The snub made for “hard feelings” and anger; a half-century later Robertson wrote, “I can’t forgive them.” “They took our innocence away.”)⁶⁶

A sportswriter for The Indianapolis Star, Bob Collins, another white champion of the Attucks teams, also bore the brunt of the racism of the time: Letters to the editor called him a communist, phone callers expressed hopes that his young daughters would be raped by one of the black players, cars drove past his home honking their horns. In 1954, before Milan, the state champion that year faced Attucks in the tournament, shouts of encouragement from whites to the Milan players as they walked as a team downtown were laced with racial slurs against the Attucks team.⁶⁷

That kind of racism led a group of Catholic men--lawyers, businessmen, educators--white and black, many of them Bosler’s friends, to found a Catholic Interracial Council (CIC) in Indianapolis in 1952. A movement begun in New York City in 1934, the Indianapolis CIC was one of the first ten CIC councils in the country. (That it took eighteen more years to add nine more cities to the movement is evidence of the

⁶⁴ Lawrence (Bo) Connor, Star in the Hoosier Sky (Hawthorne Publishing: Carmel, Indiana, 2006), 51. Connor spent 41 years at the Indianapolis Star, rising from police reporter to managing editor. Until the 1960s or later, when it came to black homicide victims “forget it” was also the operating principle at the New York Times, the Baltimore Sun, and doubtless, almost all mainstream newspapers. For the Times, see Arthur Gelb’s memoir, City Room (G.P. Putnam: New York, N.Y., 2003), 107.

⁶⁵ The Big O (Rodale Press, 2003), chapter 3.

⁶⁶ IC&R, 25 March 1954, 4. In his autobiography, Robertson describes the meeting of the Crispus Attucks principal, Dr. Russell Lane, and basketball coach, Ray Crowe, with Mayor Alex Clark. If Attucks won, the mayor feared a riot by its fans gathered on the Circle. Consequently, in 1955 and 1956 buses took the victorious Attucks team around the Circle before heading northward, which was not the tradition. The Big O (Rodale press, 2003, ch. 3.

⁶⁷ Star, 8 March 2015, C1, 3.

size of the beam in Catholic eyes.) As expressed in its constitution and by-laws, the CIC's long-term goal was "to establish equality by eliminating the consideration of race in all human affairs"; meanwhile, the primary effort would be to affect "the minds and conduct of members of the Catholic Church."⁶⁸ Perhaps its greatest merit was providing a place where blacks and whites could speak openly about race. The CIC joined with the Church Federation and Jewish community leaders to demand that the city establish a commission on human rights. In 1955 both parties' mayoral candidates having pledged to do so, the winner, Democrat Philip Bayt, Jr. followed through. Bosler served on the commission for eight years and believed it changed the racial atmosphere in Indianapolis. Its main job was to use moral suasion to educate realtors, restaurant owners, trade unionists, and others of the rightness and benefits of desegregation. One success was creating a board to review police court decisions regarding black complaints of police brutality.⁶⁹

Bosler wanted to deal with "The Race Problem" with impatience--get rid of it now. The city-dwelling Catholic, Bosler offered, was well placed to work on the race problem. It damaged the nation's reputation in the world and nurtured anti-Americanism. It was the ultimate test of one's Christianity. Communism itself was punishment for the sins of social injustice, racism, and the preference for nationalism over internationalism. What should one do? Join the Catholic Interracial Council, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, work for Negro employment, work and socialize with Negroes, support fair housing, and pray.⁷⁰ When the "war on poverty" was announced in 1964 the Criterion pronounced it "overdue." "[O]nly total victory will be acceptable."⁷¹

His efforts went well beyond complaints about the city's racial situation. A career- community activist, he joined the Marion County Health and Welfare Council, whose goal was to get prominent citizens interested in the "social and welfare problems of the community." As a director of the welfare council he did considerable lobbying in the state legislature. Through such efforts and his editorials, Bosler gained a national reputation in civil rights, bringing him to the attention of national Catholic leaders, such as John La Farge, S.J., on race; Fr. George Higgins, director of social action for the American bishops, on labor; and the president of Notre Dame, Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., on civil rights. Bosler's service on the Catholic Interracial Council led Hesburgh to appoint him to the Indiana advisory committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The advisory committee held formal hearings in the Federal Building in

⁶⁸ IC&R, 26 December 1954, 1. Tom Jordan, a business consultant then head of the CYO, took the lead and was its first president; Bosler served as chaplain. See chapter on Race for more on the CIC.

⁶⁹ Bosler believed that under UNIGOV Mayor Richard Lugar appointed conservative suburbanites to the board and it slowly simply disappeared. *New Wine*, 57, 58. This was also the opinion of Alan Nolan, noted Indianapolis lawyer, novelist, and historian.

⁷⁰ *Criterion*, 19, 26 May 1961, 4, 5.

⁷¹ *Criterion*, 14 August 1964, 4.

Indianapolis to examine the conditions of migrant labor and prisoners at the Pendleton Reformatory.⁷² Invitations to workshops and conferences in New York from La Farge led to new friendships, among them Jewish and Protestant editors around the country.⁷³ In May 1961 Bosler's address to the National Conference of Catholic Men ("The Challenge to the Apostolic Layman"), was broadcast and rebroadcast on NBC's "The Catholic Hour." Arguing that the biggest problem facing the country was not communism but racism, he asked that Catholics not join extremist anti-communist organizations, but rather attack communism by attacking the "evils of segregation and discrimination." The National Council of Catholic Men was organized against indecent literature; why not organize against unjust racial practices? His talk elicited a greater national response than any other Catholic Hour address and was published in pamphlet form and distributed by the Catholic Interracial Council.⁷⁴

The 1950s was perhaps the last decade in which the average white American felt free, if so inclined, to publicly express hatred of blacks without qualm (until the rise of the internet where alt right racists and extremists of all varieties could contact others of like views). The IC&R received hate-filled letters, which Bosler willingly published in the hope that showcasing such vitriol would repel other readers. A sampling from the early fifties included "Mrs. C." of Indianapolis on acceptance of a black priest in their parish: "No, we would NOT welcome a colored pastor. . . I believe in colored priests, but not in white people's churches. This our non-Catholic husbands and wives would not accept."⁷⁵ While the IC&R insisted that racism "could not be squared with the teachings of Christ," "E.D." agreed with "Mrs. C": "These churches are ours, [we whites] paid for them and we don't care to have Negro Priests forced on us." It was bad enough that blacks were in school with whites; the next thing will be intermarriage. "If God wanted white and black to mix he wouldn't have made one black and one white. I say let them work with their own people."⁷⁶ For months the letters that followed ran the gamut--most, but not all, taking "Mr. C." to task and opposing race prejudice.⁷⁷ Among them were such genre classics as the admission that blacks "are God's children" but one "better never ask my daughter for her phone number . . ." In 1953 a "Disgusted reader" feared for her family's safety if she signed her name; "What with the NAACP and other organizations, I would not welcome being knifed in the back some dark night, or have my throat slit from ear to ear with a sharp razor."⁷⁸ Much later, in 1980, a reader suggested that one day both Martin Luther and his civil rights'

⁷² *New Wine*, 58, 59; editorials followed, e.g., 15 February 1963, 4.

⁷³ *New Wine*, 58, 59, 56.

⁷⁴ Bosler, *New Wine*, 58; Bosler papers, Catholic archives.

⁷⁵ IC&R, 15 Feb 1952, 4.

⁷⁶ IC&R, 22 Feb 1952, 4.

⁷⁷ IC&R, 22, 29 Feb, 4; 7, 28 March; 16 May 1952, 4.

⁷⁸ IC&R, 16 October 1953.

namesake might become saints; Bosler agreed, denominating King “a modern Christian martyr and, therefore, a saint rightly to be imitated by all who call themselves Christians.”⁷⁹

In the minds of many conservative Americans, full-blooded participation in the fight for civil rights for blacks went along with insufficient enthusiasm for anti-communism; they saw the movement not as the pursuit of justice, but part of the communist plot to sow division in America. That was the view of a Westerville, Ohio man who wrote Bosler to comprehensively complain of his “incredibly inflammatory and pseudo-liberal address.” He found it “incomprehensible that a mere dupe could so assiduously adhere to the racist party line” of . . . the Southern Conference Education Fund, Inc. You most certainly have done a wonderful job of parroting and passing on this Communist led . . . subversive line.” Stating that he welcomed his many Negro friends to his home, but the door was always closed to “provocateurs” like Bosler concerned with “devising ways . . . of causing racial strife while hiding behind the false façade of accelerated civil-rights acceptance.” A “pinko” like Bosler should stay with theology and the precepts of our great Church . . .” The writer imagined that Bosler’s “next tirade” would be an attack on the “House Committee on Un-American Activities and the Senate’s Internal Security Sub-Committee. Isn’t it strange . . . how all you who are opposed to anti-communism follow one straight undeviating line.”⁸⁰

Housing was another front in the battle. In 1954 the IC&R approached the city’s inadequate stock of decent, inexpensive housing as a racial issue and a matter for Congress, suggesting that manpower and energy reflecting the fear of communist penetration of government would be better directed to dealing with housing problems. The biggest need was for low cost housing, “especially for Negroes.”⁸¹ In 1960, a series of five investigative articles claimed that the shortage stood at 14,000 homes and faulted the city for refusing to take over the New Deal vintage Lockefield Gardens from the federal government. Of housing open to whites a quarter were substandard; of housing open to blacks, half were substandard.⁸² Federal money was available, but the city fathers refused to apply. Instead, the city tore down old buildings near downtown, replacing them with luxury apartments [Riley Towers]. The Criterion (after 7 October 1960 its new name) showed that tax dollars bought the land, cleared it, and sold it to a private corporation at a substantial loss to the taxpayers. Six years later housing conditions worsened when a new interstate highway displaced 20,000 people, many of them poor and minorities.⁸³

⁷⁹ Criterion, 7 March 1980, 8.

⁸⁰ Indianapolis Catholic Archives, “Bosler” box. Bosler wrote on the letter, “Typical of the mail from ‘admirers.’”

⁸¹ IC&R, 2 April 1954, 4.

⁸² Indiana Catholic (an old name for the paper revived for a brief period before it became the Criterion), 12 February to 11 March 1960.

⁸³ Criterion, 3 November 1961, 4; October 1966, 4.

In fall 1963 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held hearings in Indianapolis. The Chamber of Commerce and the Pulliam press (the Star and its sister paper the evening News) refused to entertain applying for federal aid for housing. It took a federal subpoena to get white power brokers to sit down with Negro realtors. The hearings discovered that black realtors could not belong to the Indianapolis Real Estate Board and that white realtors were conducting a “blockbusting” campaign from Meridian Street to Fall Creek Boulevard on the north side (which led Bosler and others to form the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association). In some areas blacks, “red-lined” by the banks, could not get financing; thanks to the hearings, that practice, the Criterion naively asserted, would stop. Instead, local banks having refused them, black professionals and businessmen built homes in the Grandview Avenue-Kessler Boulevard area, housing financed by a Louisville, Kentucky insurance company.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, intended to strengthen the 1964 act on equal accommodation, did not persuade the Criterion that a new day in racial relations had come; it passed only because Martin Luther King, Jr. had just been assassinated. Even then, the vote to get the bill out of committee was a narrow nine to six and the house vote to take the bill up was only 229 to 195. The Criterion saw it as but a token gesture toward open housing for minorities: many blacks didn’t have the money to move outside the ghettos and many states would doubtless flout the new law. Moreover, a loophole provided that if the owners sold the property they did not have to sell to blacks.⁸⁴ Over time, court decisions and greater acceptance of black neighbors in some areas led blacks out of the center city. In 1960 only one of ten blacks lived outside Center Township; by 1990 more than half did so.⁸⁵ Since the change was largely due to white flight to the surrounding suburbs, not that much had changed.

To approach anything resembling equity meant that employment opportunities for blacks had to improve. In May and June 1951, the graduation season, the IC&R called attention to Cathedral High School honors graduate, Donald J. Ferguson, a black student. Decrying the inability of blacks to get jobs commensurate with their education, it urged Catholics employers to adopt fair employment practices.⁸⁶ When state Republicans held their traditional Lincoln Day celebrations in 1953, the paper suggested that the best way to honor Lincoln would be to imitate those states that established their own Fair Employment Practices Commissions.⁸⁷ Four years after the Montgomery bus boycott and two years after the first civil rights law since Reconstruction, the IC&R, looking to its own bailiwick, canvassed the job opportunities and coverage of the black community provided by the local newspapers. The Indianapolis Times said it gave good coverage to Negroes in sports and believed its coverage was adequate. True, it had no black reporters, but that was because no qualified black had ever applied. According to the editor of The

⁸⁴ Criterion, 19 April 1968, 1.

⁸⁵ Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, 138.

⁸⁶ IC&R, 25 May; 9 June 1951, 4.

⁸⁷ IC&R, 13 Feb 1953, 4.

Indianapolis News, Eugene Pulliam, Jr. (son of the publisher), the paper did employ an able black reporter and he thought the paper's coverage adequate. As for its sister publication, The Indianapolis Star, editor Robert Early, a brother of a priest of the archdiocese, was adamant that printing news of Negro events would worsen race relations, not improve them. A black reporter wouldn't be accepted in Indianapolis, said Early, few blacks had the ability, and too few read the Star. Racial acceptance was a generation away. (The Star hired its first black reporter some five years later, the time of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.) The IC&R's reply, "Negro Acceptance," argued that there were a thousand Negro families in the city "whose standards equal those of the best whites," and called on the local newspapers to educate their white readers.⁸⁸ The exchange led Fr. Bernard Strange, an interracial pioneer and pastor for twenty-four years at St. Rita, a black parish, to wonder, "Are Catholics ready to stand up and be counted on the Race question?" For his part, the priest was "tired of doing it" by himself.⁸⁹

Reflecting Bosler's own fatigue at promoting racial equality, his bitter May 1962 editorial offered a "real commencement speech" to the black graduates of the city's Catholic high schools: Congratulations, he told them, "many who despise you" did not achieve as much. Unfortunately, the jobs awaiting you . . . will [be] in driving a truck, behind a broom or wheelbarrow while [your fellow white graduates] go to banks, insurance companies, department stores. Catholic employers did not differ in this. Perhaps your children will do better. Personal culture is no passport to the suburbs; for you they're 'out of bounds.' More than likely you will no longer be part of your white friends social orbit. 'Go forth now, dear graduates, to a world which is waiting for you. Nay, not just waiting--but lying in ambush for you.' Your education is not over. The hardest lessons are still to come.⁹⁰

Later that decade Bosler was active in Project Equality—an amalgam of 25 religious bodies operating together as the Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality (IICHE)--to push equal job opportunity statewide. Working to get businesses to join, it published a list of firms pledged to support the effort. Lafayette's Catholic bishop, Raymond Gallagher, headed the board.⁹¹ In 1970 the American bishops created the Campaign for Human Development (CHD), a program to encourage self-help and initiatives by the poor who devised and ran the programs themselves. From the start, the CHD was criticized from the Catholic right for funding organizations that had programs supporting abortion and birth control, which was true; before *Roe v. Wade*, the bishops found this acceptable in that no CHD money went directly to fund either practice.⁹² Bosler regarded the CHD the Church's most important anti-poverty

⁸⁸ IC&R, 24 July 1959, 1, 4.

⁸⁹ IC&R 24 July 1959, 4.

⁹⁰ Criterion, 24 May 1962, 4.

⁹¹ Criterion, 12 September 1969, 4; 21 December 1969, 1, 9; New Wine, 56, 58, 59.

⁹² Criterion, 17, 24 November 1972, 4.

effort and as a way to develop greater sensitivity among Catholics to poverty while helping the poor achieve self-help.⁹³

The issue that aroused the greatest passion in the Bosler years was Communism. In view of its condemnations of socialism and communism over the past century, the Catholic Church was well defended from its legions of critics on that score. Its attacks on Reds had long placed it in the vanguard of the anticommunist movement.⁹⁴ Having never embraced America's Russian ally in World War II, enmity to "godless communism" was almost part of the priests' and nuns' job description. In the 1940s and 1950s, Catholic parochial school students "prayed for the conversion of Russia" while their parents in the Holy Name and Rosary societies were admonished to oppose Reds wherever found. In 1947, two months before Winston S. Churchill announced the beginning of the Cold War in his "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri, the supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus, in a widely publicized address, called on the government to confront the Soviets. John E. Swift asserted:

All the world knows that Godless Russia has torn the Atlantic Charter to tatters and enslaved millions of our fellow Catholics all the way from Finland and Poland to Catholic Austria and Czechoslovakia and almost to the gates of Rome. By one shameless appeasement after another we have failed to uphold our American ideals. . . . Has not the time arrived for some group or some leader to arise in forums of the world and in challenging tones cry out to Russia—"thus far thou shalt go, and no farther." ⁹⁵

An American archbishop's policy of refusing absolution to Communists⁹⁶ made news in 1948, and the next year Pius XII decreed that Catholics "cannot belong to the Communist Party or publish, read, or disseminate texts in support of Communist doctrine. Those who do cannot receive sacraments and those who defend, profess, or spread communism, are excommunicated."⁹⁷ By then the two leading American Catholic churchmen, Fulton Sheen and Francis Cardinal Spellman, were busy denying any possibility of peaceful co-existence with Soviet Russia. Thus the Cold War--the ideological, military, and economic struggle for mastery between the Soviet Union, its satellites, and like-minded regimes on one side and the United States and its allies on the other, made its appearance almost before the guns had cooled. The years between Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 1945, and June 1950 when the Korean War

⁹³ Criterion 16 November 1973, 1, 4.

⁹⁴ Richard Gid Powers, Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism (New York: Free Press, 1995), 51, cited in Hugh Wilford, The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2008), 167.

⁹⁵ Kauffman, Faith and Fraternity, 359, 360.

⁹⁶ IC&R, 5 March 1948, 10.

⁹⁷ IC&R, 22 July 1949, 4.

erupted, saw the lines between the two camps harden abroad, while at home the question of the size of the domestic communist threat roiled and divided Americans. Among the exacerbating factors were the failure to achieve agreement on atomic weapons (1946); the Truman Doctrine and aid to Greece and Turkey (1947); the “loss” of China to Communism and Russia’s successful test of its own atomic bomb (1949), and the finding that Alger Hiss, formerly of the State Department, was a communist agent and guilty of perjury (1950).

Catholicism’s influence in Western and Eastern Europe, South East Asia and South America--all areas of contention with radical movements during the Cold War, made it an attractive resource to the U.S. government, not least to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). So valuable was the Church that the agency willingly violated separation of church and state and ignored its own charter’s prohibition against operating domestically. (The CIA was also enmeshed in the labor movement and college student organizations, and utilized journalists, intellectuals, writers, filmmakers, and artists at home and abroad.) Of particular interest to the CIA were Dr. Tom Dooley, a Catholic physician active among the peasantry in Vietnam and viewed by some as a lay saint, and Irish-born Fr. Patrick J. Peyton, C.S.C., founder of the Family Rosary Crusade. The CIA’s interest in Fr. Peyton stemmed from his wildly popular open-air crusades in Latin America. To the CIA, arousing the “intense piety” of “working class Catholics might prove effective as a prophylactic against the contagion of communism” in that part of the world.⁹⁸

As intent as it was to arouse fear, in the 1950s anti-communism also had its unintended comical side: There was a campaign to pull “Robin Hood” from public school libraries on the ground that it implied that the rich were undeserving; the Cincinnati Reds, baseball’s oldest professional team, felt the need to change its name for a time to “Redlegs,” “Red Sox” already being taken by Boston; in Washington, D.C. a license to sell second-hand furniture was denied a man who had invoked his Fifth Amendment rights in an inquiry into communism. Communists could not draw unemployment benefits in Ohio; Pennsylvania barred them from state aid; Nebraska school districts inspected texts for foreign ideas and had its children spend hours each week singing patriotic airs. “Reds” were ordered to leave Birmingham, Alabama (punishment for failure to do so unspecified), and it was a crime in Jacksonville, Florida, to communicate with current or former communists. To seek to overthrow the Tennessee’s government was a capital offense. At Madison, Wisconsin (locale of the flagship state university and the “Wisconsin Idea” of using the university’s scholars to produce progressive legislation), of 112 citizens asked to sign a petition containing nothing but quotations from the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, 111 refused.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Wilford, Mighty Wurlitzer, 168.

⁹⁹ Haynes Johnson, The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism (Harcourt Brace, Inc.: New York, 2005), 169, 170.

The American people swam in a sea of anti-communism and Indiana was as susceptible to the mania as any other state: professional wrestling, with a sure grasp of the commercial value of patriotic posturing, required its grapplers to sign loyalty oaths (also common for city employees). An Indianapolis priest remembers being encouraged by parishioners to attend a gathering at a private residence to hear a speaker from the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade explain the nature of the communist threat. One of the things the man said was that “Beetle Bailey” in the comics was part of the communist plot designed “to make us scorn our military.” The priest remembered thinking, “This is insanity,” “this is Loonytoons.”¹⁰⁰ Loony or not, a number of readers of the IC&R similarly discerned that the cartoon it carried, “All Angels Parish,” a gentle spoof of priests, nuns, and laity was subversive: one reader had “always thought” the cartoon “to be communist inspired”¹⁰¹

Indicative of the city’s thinking in the 1950s and 1960s was the pride the leadership of the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) took in the system’s “national reputation” for its “commitment to free enterprise,” having received “the lions-share of awards” from the right-wing Valley Forge Freedoms Foundation. In its virulent anti-communism and praise of consumerism and the good life, IPS took the business corporation as its model. To those who disapproved of the emphasis on materialism, the superintendent responded with the *non-sequitur* that most of the staff were practicing Christians who led their students in morning prayers and Bible readings.¹⁰² One of the leading anti-communist entrepreneurs of those days, Dr. Benjamin Fred Schwarz, an Australian, founded the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade in 1953. Two years later Schwarz left his medical practice in Sidney to come to the U.S. In 1963, the IPS superintendent and his top aides sponsored Schwarz’s appearance--a four-day “anti-communism school” at the Indiana War Memorial.¹⁰³ When Bosler sent an editorial from Rome scorning Schwarz as a “four flusher” as welcome as “ringworm,” the crusader, feeling ill-used, sued the Criterion for \$510,000. Informed of the suit by the archdiocesan lawyer, Archbishop Schulte was unmoved: “If Mr. Schwarz can find that kind of Criterion assets, we will be happy to divide them with him. Evidently, he needs some publicity.”¹⁰⁴

In late 1953 a group of liberal Indianapolis residents were moved to found a branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. Reflective of the state’s anti-communist hysteria, the Indiana War

¹⁰⁰ Peter Doherty, interview, 28 April 2005; It was probably Dr. Benjamin Schwartz or possibly a John Bircher. For Schwartz see below.

¹⁰¹ IC&R, 22 February 1952, 4.

¹⁰² Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, Education article, 83.

¹⁰³ Becker, Indianapolis Church Federation, 76.

¹⁰⁴ Criterion, 25 October 1963, 4. Chancellery files, letter from Cornelius B. Sweeney to John O’Connor, archdiocesan lawyer, 15 October 1964. The editorial was judged not libelous in Hancock Circuit Court, 21 October 1966. On 19 January 1967, when Schwarz failed to file a new complaint within 90 days, the decision stood. Criterion, 27 January 1967, 1.

Memorial Board, acting on the American Legion's claim that the ACLU was a communist front, refused to rent the War Memorial Auditorium for the meeting, as did the Indianapolis-Marion County Central Library, the Claypool Hotel, and the YMCA. The Knights of Columbus offered space, but then withdrew the offer as too controversial. Fr. Victor Goossens, pastor of St. Mary's Church downtown, offered its parish auditorium: As Fr. Goossens stated on Edward R. Murrow's televised program, "See It Now," "I had no reason to believe them unfit or unworthy . . . There's something much more basic involved here than the idea of a meeting place."¹⁰⁵ In 1957 the War Memorial Commission again refused the ICLU use of the public facility for a lecture by the respected Methodist bishop of the city, justifying their refusal on information from the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that the organization was "a defender of communists." To permit it "would desecrate this sacred soil."¹⁰⁶ (In defending the First Amendment, the ACLU defends all sorts of unpopular people). The Criterion, called the Legion's action "un-American," stating it would want the ACLU around to defend the Church were anti-Catholicism to enjoy a revival.¹⁰⁷

Bosler's own critique of communism, judged insufficiently rabid, accounted for many of the newspaper's detractors. As a liberal priest out of sympathy with knee-jerk anti-communism probably made the most difficulties for him. He would never qualify as a fellow traveler (whatever his critics might say). Anyway, his was not the only editorial hand, with the result that on the communist issue the newspaper was more nuanced editorially than most of the press.¹⁰⁸ In 1948 an editorial took a hard line against Henry A. Wallace's run for president on the Progressive ticket, a danger sufficiently serious to overcome any niceties about keeping the Church out of politics. Surely, the writer argued, no Catholic who read the pope's warning to the Italian people in their election that year about the need to "vote for candidates who recognize the laws of God and the rights of the Church" would support Wallace. Being "in the hands of the Communists," either a "deluded captive of the Reds [or] a dishonest stooge," a "vote for Wallace was a vote for Joe Stalin."¹⁰⁹ A serio-comic editorial, most likely Fr. Courtney's, employed an argument between a "zealous young priest" (zyp) and a "wise old pastor" (wop) to make its anti-communist point: Learning

¹⁰⁵ Star, 7 October 1999, A2; Criterion, 20 November 1953, 4; 5 July 1957, 4. The Indianapolis episode almost made the cut for the 2006 Oscar nominated movie about Murrow, "Good Night and Good Luck." Criterion, 25 May 1962; 15 June 1962, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Commonweal, 6 December 1957, 248.

¹⁰⁷ Criterion, 25 May 1962, 4; 15 June 1962, 4. The War Memorial ban of the ICLU held for twenty years until the Indiana Supreme Court overturned it, 5 to 0, in October 1973.

¹⁰⁸ Since editorials were not signed until 1971, it is not possible to attribute particular editorials to their authors. Besides Fr. Courtney, some of the others were Fr. James Doherty, Fr. Bernard Head, Michael Bowles, John Acklemire and his wife, B.H. Acklemire. Paul Fox interview.

¹⁰⁹ IC&R, 13 August 1948, 4. The language smacks too much of the Catholic ghetto and is too harshly personal in tone to be Bosler's; it's likely to be Courtney's. The editorial of 27 May 1949 cited below, does sound like Bosler. Again, one can't be certain.

that “Danny Hoolihan” was going to speak to the Holy Name Society about communism, the zyp decried Hoolihan’s credentials: “What does he know about communism?” “Well,” answered the wop, “he’s got ten kids and he’s against it. That’s good enough.”¹¹⁰ In the atmosphere of fear that prevailed in the 1950s and later, a good many Catholics were of the opinion of the wise old priest.

More Bosler’s style was the 1949 editorial, “Not So Bad.” Yes, there might be 70,000 Reds in America, but there were more than 2,000 Catholic high schools, more than 100,000 Catholic educators, and 400,000 Catholic college graduates: Rather than fear-monger, “We prefer to be optimistic.”¹¹¹ A 1952 editorial (“Tired of Hearing About The Red Menace? So Are We”) sensibly argued that Americans were the least likely to be attracted to communism and that Europeans were dealing with the communist issue “without witch-hunting and frightening the populace half out of [its] wits.”¹¹² The editorial inspired lengthy letters, nearly all hostile, for more than a month. The charge that the newspaper was soft on communism, even pro-communist, were frequent and perennial: An anonymous letter to Archbishop Schulte blamed Bosler for fomenting anti-hysteria hysteria and suggested he be investigated for income tax evasion and “sent back to Ukraine.” Bosler responded that his remarks were “intended to bolster, not weaken our country’s defense against the evil.” The problem was how to fight communism while not curtailing liberty.¹¹³ Nevertheless, a good many readers persuaded themselves that the paper was “socialistic.”¹¹⁴ “Truly Disappointed” believed that many articles in the IC&R had a communist slant and suggested that some “leftist” had infiltrated the paper: “So go through your staff with a fine tooth comb--before it is too late.”¹¹⁵ When the paper attacked the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act as “monstrous” for its discrimination against southern and eastern Europeans and contrary to social justice, it stirred a reader to bracket the editor with the Daily Worker, the Communist party, the National Lawyers Guild, Americans for Democratic Action, and “every Red, Pink, and Punk in the country.”¹¹⁶

It was left to a Catholic, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R. Wisc.), to lead the way in stoking the fear that communists honeycombed the leading institutions of the republic. The pall cast over America by this “second Red Scare” (the first followed World War I), was considerable. McCarthy, like Richard Nixon and John Kennedy—was an ex-serviceman who entered Congress in 1946; He attracted national attention for

¹¹⁰ IC&R, 9 June 1950, 4. Almost certainly authored by Fr. Paul Courtney, a man well known as a wit; Bosler would not cavalierly denigrate knowledge in that way and was not only not Irish, as Courtney was, but found Irishness tiresome.

¹¹¹ IC&R, “Not So Bad,” 27 May 1949, 4.

¹¹² IC&R, 27 May 1949, 4.

¹¹³ IC&R, 21 November 1952, 4.

¹¹⁴ IC&R, 29 August 1952, 4.

¹¹⁵ IC&R, November 1952 1952; See also *Criterion*, 18 May 1962, 4.

¹¹⁶ IC&R, 16 January 1953, 4; 6 June 1952, 4; 20 June 1952, 4; 30 January 1953, 4. Bosler would no doubt admit sharing the views of the liberal cold warriors of the ADA.

the first time with a Lincoln Day speech in February 1950 at Wheeling, West Virginia, charging that communists had found a home in the State Department.

The first mention of the junior senator from Wisconsin in the Indiana Catholic and Record was to publicize an upcoming McCarthy speech, "What Congress Is Up Against," at the 13th Annual Indianapolis Catholic Forum, held at the Indiana War Memorial, October 1947.¹¹⁷ McCarthy's appeal to conservative Catholics was that he burnished the Church's anti-Communist reputation and simultaneously skewered the WASP establishment for its putative softness on communism; at the same time, for non-Catholics, McCarthy personified their distrust of the Church's power.¹¹⁸ He also divided Catholics: Cardinals Francis McIntyre of Los Angeles and New York's Francis Spellman, the Catholic War Veterans, the Knights of Columbus, The Brooklyn Tablet, and the city of Boston were dedicated McCarthyites, while Chicago's Bishop Bernard Sheil, the city of Chicago, and liberal Catholics were hostile. Sheil's public opposition to McCarthy dated to his 1946 Wisconsin senate race, having been brought in to speak against McCarthy by the state Democratic Party.) Catholicism's intramural divide could be explosive: Attending a convention of North American College alumni in Cleveland, Bosler got into "a violent argument" with his table companions, "all of whom were ardent, even rabid, supporters of McCarthy." The heated confrontation, combined with rushing to catch a plane caused Bosler to faint at the airport and he had to be hospitalized; in his memoir, he facetiously blamed McCarthy for his ensuing heart problems.¹¹⁹

The strongest predictor of attitudes regarding the Wisconsin senator was party preference. And while there were more Catholic Democrats than Republican ones, pro-McCarthy Catholics outpaced "the antis" by about ten percent.¹²⁰ Bosler protested that the constant accusations of communism and socialism against government leaders by McCarthy, Indiana Senator William Jenner, and others "distorted recent history." Lamenting that "Some Catholic Readers Live in a Nightmare World," in 1951 the IC&R pointed to real policy successes, such as, Marshall Plan, 1947, responsible for the economic recovery of Western Europe; the defense of Greece and Turkey, 1947, the Berlin Airlift, 1949, and the defense of South Korea against invasion from the North, 1950, all of them helpful actions. Yet "a large part" of the press remained "hysterical" and as a consequence "Americans are bewildered and in danger of losing confidence in their form of government."¹²¹ The bishops themselves, moved by the billingsgate of McCarthy and others on the right, issued a pastoral in November 1951 ("God's Law: The Measure of

¹¹⁷ IC&R, 17 October 1947, 1.

¹¹⁸ Fuchs, JFK, 127.

¹¹⁹ New Wine, 59, 60.

¹²⁰ Crosby, God, Country, Flag, 230-245; On the other hand, Morris, American Catholics, 243, rightly regards that ten percent edge for McCarthy among Catholics as making a big difference politically.

¹²¹ IC&R, 13 June 1951, 4.

Man's Conduct"). Without naming names, it lectured politicians to be bound by justice and charity: "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."¹²²

Believing that few Catholic editors "had the courage to denounce" the senator, the IC&R would do so in hard-hitting anti-McCarthy articles and editorials. It gave extensive coverage to a speech at Notre Dame University, May 1953, by George F. Kennan, former ambassador to the USSR and author of America's Cold War containment policy. Like the bishops, Kennan named no one, but his rebuke of most of what passed for anti-communism as a sort of "semi-religious cult," blind, intolerant, anti-intellectual, vulgar, left no doubt of who and what was meant. Such people "distort and exaggerate." "They sow timidity where there should be boldness; fear where there should be serenity; suspicion where there should be confidence and generosity." Bosler thought the speech "masterly."¹²³ A fortnight later the IC&R expressly denied that being a good Marine, a practicing Catholic, and loyalty to country made McCarthy a great American or a great Catholic, as some Catholic clergy would have it. Nor was it just to label McCarthy's critics "fellow travelers and communists."¹²⁴ In March 1954, while announcing his refusal to deal any further with the McCarthy issue, Bosler asserted that while both the senator and Catholicism were anti-Communist, they were not the same.¹²⁵ Quoting Thucydides' remarks on the evil effects of the Peloponnesian War, Bosler drew the contrast:

The customary meaning of words was arbitrarily distorted to cover the conduct of those who employed them. Reckless irresponsibility was treated as courageous loyalty, cautious reserve as cowardice masked under a high-sounding name, restraint as a cloak for poor-spiritedness A frenzied fanaticism was the popular idea of conduct Violence of feeling was a warrant of honesty, depreciation of violence a signal of suspicion.¹²⁶

¹²² Bishops Pastorals, Vol. II, 1941-1961, 143; see also Donald Crosby, God, Church, and Flag: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the Catholic Church (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), and Mark S. Massa, Catholics and American Culture (New York, 1999), chapter 3.

¹²³ IC&R, 22 May 1953, 1, 3, 4; William Pfaff, "Wise Men Against the Grain," New York Review of Books, 9 June 2011, 59-61.

¹²⁴ IC&R, 5 June 1953, 4.

¹²⁵ IC&R, 12 March 1954, 4.

¹²⁶ IC&R, 9 April 1954, 4.

Soon after, in a dispute originating over the senator's attempt to gain preferential treatment for the close friend of his chief of staff, McCarthy recklessly took on the U.S. Army. Charge and counter-charge flew at the televised Army-McCarthy hearings (22 April to 17 June 1954). Just prior to the hearings Bosler ran a lengthy article by the senator's nemesis, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil. Although professing to speak as a private citizen, Sheil noted that the Church did take stands "on lies, calumny, the absence of charity and calculated deceit," and that thanks to Joseph McCarthy ("a pitifully ineffective anti-communist"), "We have been victims . . . of a kind of shell game."¹²⁷ The article produced two highly critical letters: "Your modified version of the communist party line," in running the bishop's "nauseating rehash" was "a new low." Stung by the animosity shown, Bosler announced that no more letters on the McCarthy controversy would be published.¹²⁸ Even the Senate's censure of McCarthy, 67 to 12, December 1954, did not appear in its pages. McCarthy would be mentioned in the IC&R only twice more; in 1956 bracketed with Elvis Presley as comparable "screwballs" that the press should ignore,¹²⁹ and at his death in 1957: Embracing the maxim *nihil nisi bonum de mortuis* (of the dead, speak only good), the IC&R allowed that perhaps "Joe McCarthy" was "the man of the hour" with his "vigorous exposure of the dangers of communist subversion." But Catholics value means as well as ends.¹³⁰ Many Catholics, like William F. Buckley, thought otherwise, as did the 39 priests and 14 monsignors drawn to McCarthy's funeral at St. Mathews Cathedral in Washington, D.C., Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle presiding.¹³¹

Bosler's criticism of the John Birch Society (JBS), the ultra-right, anti-communist organization made him more enemies. Founded in Indianapolis in 1958, he objected to its extreme anti-Communism, holding it responsible for some of the "most vicious anti-Catholic literature distributed in the Middle West" during the 1960 election. It was "contrary to Catholic social teaching and subversive to American civil liberties."¹³² Yet Catholics joined in large numbers; according to the society, forty percent of its members were Catholic. While the Criterion doubted that, a 1965 Indianapolis dinner honoring its founder, Robert Welch, drew 1,300 persons at fifty dollars a plate, tangible evidence of its popularity.¹³³ And there were plenty of others among Criterion readers, in whose eyes the editor was "ignorant," "commie-sympathizing," "un-Catholic and subversive." A Clarksville reader complained of the Criterion's "prejudicial diatribe smearing" the society and questioned whether it was "a Christian paper or a propagandizing publication for the radical-left Liberals."¹³⁴ Such hostility hurt, especially when denunciations that the Criterion was

¹²⁷ "Sheil Scores Anti-Commie Methods," IC&R, 16 April 1954, 1, 2, 3.

¹²⁸ IC&R, 30 April 1954, 4.

¹²⁹ IC&R, 30 November 1956, 4.

¹³⁰ IC&R, 10 May 1957, 4.

¹³¹ Johnson, Age of Anxiety, 454.

¹³² Criterion, 7, 14, 21 April 1961.

¹³³ Criterion, 3 December 1965, 4.

¹³⁴ Criterion, 14, 21 April 1961, for pro and con letters; 8 January 1965, 4; Clarksville letter, 2 September 1966, 4. Criterion, 1, 8, 15 December 1961.

“un-Catholic” and “subversive” found their way in letters to Rome.¹³⁵ To protect its flank from the right, in December 1961, the Criterion brought in a conservative columnist, Fr. John Doran. In the series of Doran’s articles on the Birchers in 1965, even Doran, who found nothing objectionable in much of the society’s manifesto, saw it as too dismissive of government, intolerant of divergent views, and its founder, Robert Welch, an authoritarian. In Doran’s judgment, the Catholic conservative would not find answers in the Birch Society.¹³⁶

The political and economic benefits of anti-Communism, inside government and out, were so robust that it seemed impervious to real world Russian setbacks. But Khrushchev’s secret speech in 1955 to the 20th Party Congress denouncing Stalin and Stalinism proved deeply injurious to the Communist Party in the United States (CPUSA), as did the Soviet’s crushing of the Hungarian revolution the next year. By December 1956, the party’s numbers had collapsed from its postwar high of 80,000 to 5,000. Of the latter, about 1,500 were FBI informants, leading J. Edgar Hoover to contemplate controlling the party by having its FBI agents and informants support one or another faction at the CPUSA’s February 1957 convention. By the 1960s FBI informant-members’ dues “supplied a hefty part of American Communist Party budget and membership.”¹³⁷ Yet in important ways the moribund nature of the American Communists didn’t matter. Like the living dead, the anti-communist mania proved impossible to kill: FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, well aware of the real weakness of America’s communists, did not disclose the facts. The bigger the menace could be made to seem, the bigger the manpower, budget, and influence of the FBI. Thus, the Bureau refused to supply Attorney-General Robert Kennedy with a white paper on the Communists Party network for fear it would “compromise” informants.¹³⁸ The public, left in the dark, was persuaded by the memory of the Hiss case, atomic spies, Castro’s Cuba “ninety miles from our shores,” and the Missile Crisis, October 1962, that the domestic danger to the nation remained “clear and present.”

If he failed to give conservatives satisfaction on McCarthy and the Birchers, on Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution the IC&R proved more prescient than the coverage of either the New York Times or the bishops’ Catholic News Service (CNS). The support of Castro’s movement by the Times’ correspondent in Cuba, Herbert Mathews, became notorious. As for the CNS, throughout 1959 CNS articles carried in the IC&R denied that Castro was a communist, even painting him as inspired by the social encyclicals. While the IC&R could not find support, in any papal pronouncement, for the new

¹³⁵ Criterion, 15 October 1965, 1, 9.

¹³⁶ Criterion, 1, 8, 15 December 1961.

¹³⁷ Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63 (New York, 1988), 211, 563, 564, 567, citing FBI files and Richard Gid Powers, Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover (Free Press), 1987.

¹³⁸ Branch, Parting the Waters, 678.

regime's "drumhead trials and bulldozer burials of one's enemies,"¹³⁹ Bosler held his editorial guns until the situation became clearer. In January 1960 the Catholic News Service correspondent had to admit that Castro's "Extreme leftists to the forefront" and reformers and middle class Cubans were frustrated and fearful.¹⁴⁰ In its first editorial on Castro, May 1960, the IC&R could "see clearly that there is a Communist element" in the regime and by August portrayed Castro as having betrayed the revolution.¹⁴¹ In September an editorial admitted that the U.S. was "reaping the harvest" of its past support of dictators, such as Cuba's Batista and Trujillo of Santo Domingo, nevertheless, Cuba's "open and defiant subjection of their policy and economics to the Communist bloc" had caused justifiable "fear and anger" in the U.S. The regime's "audacious lies" including "wild talk of assassination plots" hatched by the U.S. government were worse than even the confiscation of property.¹⁴² Soon the paper headlined a "campaign of persecution against the Church,"¹⁴³ with "Catholics bear[ing] the brunt of Castro's reprisals." Following the fiasco of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, at least one Cuban bishop, a hundred priests, and tens of thousands of Cubans were imprisoned. And there was fear that Castro might establish a schismatic church.¹⁴⁴

Then there was South East Asia: Nothing did more to divide the nation than the Vietnam War. A French colony from the mid-1800s, Catholic missionaries followed the *Tricolour* to establish the Church's stake in the country. That, combined with anti-Communism and the Cold War, put Vietnam high on the list of the Catholic Church's concerns. In 1954, during the throes of the decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the IC&R ran a series of articles from Saigon by an American priest lamenting the communist victory. Influential Catholic congressmen promoted the nomination of the Ngo Dien Diem for president of South Vietnam (a Catholic mandarin with a brother an archbishop). Despite the strong Catholic stake, Bosler, cringing at press references to Diem's "Roman Catholic government," took on the unpopular role of opposing U.S. involvement. In 1963, still two years before the American anti-war movement began to stir, the paper asserted that Diem was "not our man" and reminded readers to "Remember when Franco could do no wrong?" The Criterion did carry pro-Diem articles by the National Catholic Welfare Conference's correspondent in South Vietnam, Fr. Patrick O'Connor, an American priest and Columbian missionary-journalist. O'Connor stuck with Diem to the end, writing just days before Diem and his brother were

¹³⁹ IC&R, 16 January 1959; 14 August 1959, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Indiana Catholic, 8 January 1960, 3. Note that for a brief period the paper went back to the original title of 1910.

¹⁴¹ Indiana Catholic, 27 May 1960, 4; 26 August 1960, 7.

¹⁴² Indiana Catholic, 2 September 1960, 4. Of course, there were assassination plots, some eight in all, during both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. It would take the Vietnam War to persuade journalists and the man in the street that the United States of America was capable of premeditated immoral acts of great evil.

¹⁴³ Criterion, 14 October 1960, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Criterion, 28 April 1961, 1; Criterion, 26 May 1961, 1.

murdered, 2 November 1963 (by coup plotters encouraged by the Kennedy Administration, that his Buddhist opponents were “selling the U.S. a ‘bill of goods.’”¹⁴⁵ Kennedy’s death followed twenty days later.

The Criterion’s disenchantment with the war was rapid: By the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Criterion designated Vietnam “a mess” and wanted “no wider war.”¹⁴⁶ By November the war had become “ugly,”¹⁴⁷ and in the spring and summer of 1965, it was obvious that “power alone, in the form of bombs and guns, is unlikely to solve the Vietnamese riddle for either side.” The war, “growing more critical by the hour,” was moving toward “total U.S. entanglement on the Asian land mass.” What then? Armageddon? The Criterion wanted the United Nations to get involved.¹⁴⁸ More and more “a show of American muscularity,” the war was becoming “the sort of thing that will make ours the most hated nation on earth.”¹⁴⁹ In September 1965, judging the escalation in American forces over the last seven months “a failure,” the Criterion urged the U.S. to submit to a UN ceasefire, otherwise the war could go on for years.¹⁵⁰ Bosler found solace in Pope Paul VI’s address at the United Nations, October 1965 (“no more war, never again war”) with its stress on international themes--support for the UN itself and its subsidiary organizations UNICEF and UNESCO, both *bete noires* of the Birchers. Yet the editor wasn’t impervious and attacks could hurt: With some emotion, Bosler revealed that several persons in the city had “reported to Rome that the Criterion is un-Catholic and subversive” The pope’s words at the UN gave Bosler cover against his critics and he expressed his gratitude.¹⁵¹ At Christmas the Criterion again appealed for a ceasefire.¹⁵²

In 1966 the anti-war movement was in full cry and the Criterion filled with editorials on the war. Senate hearings in January “proved” that opposition to the war was “not a matter of beatniks, left-wing radicals, or right-wing war hawks.” What was needed was a real debate.¹⁵³ Denying that the 1954 Geneva Conference committed the U.S. to South Vietnam, the newspaper denominated South Vietnam’s government “a bloody, corrupt little dictatorship.”¹⁵⁴ When readers answered with “foul-spoken letters and telephone calls accusing [the Criterion] of being pro-Communist or worse, or of somehow undermining

¹⁴⁵ Criterion, 9 August 1963, 4, 12. O’Connor also covered Korea in the 1950s. Diem was murdered 2 November 1963; President Kennedy was assassinated 22 November.

¹⁴⁶ Criterion, 14 August 1964, 4.

¹⁴⁷ 6 November 1964, 4.

¹⁴⁸ 30 April 1965, 4.

¹⁴⁹ 9 July 1965, 4.

¹⁵⁰ 10 September 1965, 4.

¹⁵¹ Criterion, 15 October 1965, 1, 4.

¹⁵² 24 December 1965, 1.

¹⁵³ 25 February 1966, 4.

¹⁵⁴ 4 March, 4; 18 March 1966, 1. For two letters critical of the March 18 editorial, see 1 April 1966, 4.

America's brave sons on the field of combat,"¹⁵⁵ Bosler was not deterred: Vietnam was a "poor boy's war" and the draft "a mess," with draftees and deaths disproportionately young black men.¹⁵⁶ More than three years before the revelation of the massacre of more than 400 old men, women, and children at a place called My Lai, the Criterion drew attention to the "innocents . . . being killed by Americans . . . some . . . intentionally." How can we justify "fire bombing of entire villages, poisoning of [the] rice crop and killing of innocent women and children?"¹⁵⁷ Condemning the war's escalation, the paper beseeched Congress to recapture the war power.¹⁵⁸ When the Johnson White House announced a Christmas truce, the Criterion wanted the bombing stopped permanently.¹⁵⁹

In March 1967 a 600-word "An Open Letter on Vietnam to the Catholic Clergy and Laity of the United States" drew numerous signatures, including that of the auxiliary bishop of Minneapolis-St. Paul and nine Catholic college presidents, among them Msgr. Francis J. Reine of Indianapolis' Marian College.¹⁶⁰ The Criterion drew the line against draft card burning, but was highly critical of the American Legion's July "Back the Boys in Vietnam" parade held in the city, not least because of the presence of the John Birch Society. Its editorial against the parade produced many letters, mostly critical, including two from pastors of the archdiocese.¹⁶¹ But that summer, support for the war continued to erode with 24 percent of Catholics opposed (versus 16.5 percent of Protestant America).¹⁶² In **the** fall four bishops called for immediate negotiations and an end to bombing,¹⁶³ an action that may have inspired the letter signed by twenty-nine professors and seminarians of St. Meinrad Seminary in support of draft resisters, a bombing halt, and immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. Illustrative of the division among Catholics, within a week eight other St. Meinrad professors and 78 students demurred, on the ground that it was not clear that the war was morally unjust.¹⁶⁴ The Criterion had no doubts, likening the need to speak out to the failure of "good Germans" to do so under the Nazis,¹⁶⁵ a harsh, even cruel comparison, given the area's heavily German population.

¹⁵⁵ 15 April 1966, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Criterion, 27 May 1966, 4. Blacks, 10.8% of the male population, age 20 -24, were 14.8% of military in Vietnam.

¹⁵⁷ 1 July 1966, 4. Four letters attacked the editorial, 29 July 1966,4.

¹⁵⁸ 22 July 1966, 4.

¹⁵⁹ 9 December 1966, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Star, 19 March 1967, si, 23. It was to appear as an ad in eight Catholic publications.

¹⁶¹ 14 July 1967, 3; 21 July 1967, 4.

¹⁶² Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 426.

¹⁶³ Criterion, 1 September 1967, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Criterion 20, 27 October 1967, 5. A number of St. Meinrad alumni also weighed in against the critics of the war, 3 November 1967, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Criterion, 27 October 1967, 4.

The Criterion's opposition to the war drove some readers mad: One, unhappy with "Your Commie-loving editorials," returned her copy, suggesting that it be sent to Moscow: "They will love it and also get a big laugh out of your stupidity. May God have mercy on your soul."¹⁶⁶ A Greenwood resident also wanted her subscription cancelled because of the editor's "ultra-liberal attitude" and who likewise "truly feel sorry for your soul."¹⁶⁷ A Cathedral high school graduate, "sick and tired of your socialistic, liberal garbage" for having editorially supported: guaranteed incomes, a public Mass for a conscientious objector, "nuns marching with dirty hoodlums and arsonists and Viet Cong flag wavers, . . . sexually frustrated [Dutch priests], but don't think we are all that dumb."¹⁶⁸ More tempered were the letters of E. J. Dowd of Indianapolis who lamented that the paper was never factual and appealed only to emotion--in short, was "demagogic, irrational, intemperate." Nonetheless, confessing his own need for year-round Lenten penance, Mr. Dowd enclosed a check for his subscription.¹⁶⁹

When the communist Tet offensive, February 1968, led the commanding U.S. general to appeal for over 200,000 troops to add to the 510,000 already in Vietnam, the Criterion declared the request "an admission of defeat" and denominated the Vietnam War "the dirtiest, most evil war the United States ever blundered into."¹⁷⁰ "Today Vietnam is a shambles . . . Millions of refugees roam the land, stunned, hungry, maimed and diseased." Citing a Gallup poll in which 49 percent said that intervention was a mistake (even Fulton J. Sheen had come to support a pull out), the Criterion supported holding a few strategic centers--an "enclave strategy."¹⁷¹ Having concluded that the war was unjust and "morally indefensible," the paper saw virtue in selective conscientious objection, a theme of many editorials in 1968 and 1969, even to the point of the archdiocese providing counseling for young men on how to avoid the draft.¹⁷² By 1969 a majority of Catholics supported de-Americanizing the war and a ceasefire. A year later a clear plurality objected to the invasion of Cambodia, a "desperate gamble" in the eyes of the Criterion.¹⁷³

Although Pope Paul VI frequently condemned the Vietnam War, the American bishops were notably reticent. As late as 1966 they were of the mind that "it was reasonable to argue that [the American] presence in Vietnam is justified." By their November 1968 meeting the bishops raised questions regarding the just war proviso of proportionality (the waste of resources), welcomed the bombing halt, but still

¹⁶⁶ Criterion, 17 November 1967, 5.

¹⁶⁷ Criterion, 28 May 1969, 5, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Criterion, 30 October 1970, 4. (The Dutch clergy supported making celibacy optional.)

¹⁶⁹ Criterion, 4 April 1969, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Criterion, 16 February 1968, 4. The Criterion carried many articles on dissenters to the war, e.g., 8 March 1968, 1,2.

¹⁷¹ Criterion, "The nobler course," 15 March 1968, 4.

¹⁷² Criterion, 10 May 1968, 4; 15 October 1969, 1; 7 November 1969, 4.

¹⁷³ Criterion, 8 May 1970, 4.

offered no definitive judgment; two years later they remained as divided on the war as the public.¹⁷⁴ Finally, in 1971, they conceded that whatever the good aimed at for Vietnam was “now outweighed by the destruction of human life and of moral values which [the war] inflicts.” A “speedy ending of this war is a moral imperative of the highest priority.”¹⁷⁵ Tardy they may have been, but it was the first time the hierarchy had ever dissented from a major American military effort. Even so, they did not question the righteousness of the cause—anti-communism--only that the war was a losing proposition.¹⁷⁶ Despite an 8 to 1 Supreme Court ruling against selective conscientious objection, March 1971, the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) came out in its favor, and in October called for amnesty for draft resisters as well.¹⁷⁷ When a conscientious objector of the archdiocese was convicted of violating the selective service act, fourteen priests publicly praised him for his witness.¹⁷⁸ By 1971 four of five Catholics nationally--and the Criterion (“Bring the boys home--now!”), wanted all American troops withdrawn.¹⁷⁹ Bosler drew comfort from the shift in opinion. He had lost friends for his stand, especially in the earlier Kennedy-Johnson years of the war. He drew comfort in the belief that the newspaper’s opposition was never political or ideological, but based on the moral and social grounds enunciated by two popes and the American bishops.¹⁸⁰

In a real break with American Catholicism’s patriotic tradition, the Criterion began to question the practice of supplying chaplains to the military.¹⁸¹ Fighting America’s wars had been the practical riposte to the canard that Catholics were compromised by an allegiance to a foreign pope. Now there were more Catholic conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War than any other single denomination.¹⁸² By 1972 even B.H. Ackelmire, the relatively conservative editorial voice of the Criterion wanted the troops out--”at long last common sense and compassion have persuaded us that we must get out of Vietnam.” And when President Gerald Ford blamed Congress for South Vietnam’s final collapse, in April 1975, the Criterion charged him with “unmitigated hypocrisy.”¹⁸³ The Vietnam War ravaged American self-esteem. As for its many supposed “lessons,” one has proved durable: for the first time, many Americans came to the

¹⁷⁴ Bishops Pastoral Letters, **vol. III, 229.**

¹⁷⁵ Bishops Pastoral Letters, vol. III,

¹⁷⁶ Brynes, Bishops and American Politics, 95, 96.

¹⁷⁷ “The consciences of those who follow the just war tradition should be respected.” Criterion, 19 March 1971, 4; Bishops’ Pastoral Letters, vol. III, 283-286.

¹⁷⁸ Criterion, 30 April 1971, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Criterion, 30 April 1971, 4; Brynes, Bishops and American Politics, 104.

¹⁸⁰ Criterion, 12 February 1971, 4.

¹⁸¹ Criterion, 14 May 1971, 4.

¹⁸² Gallup and Castelli, 76-90.

¹⁸³ “Telling it straight,” Criterion, 4 April 1975, 4.

conclusion that the United States was capable of doing real evil in the world, not through error, misjudgment, or bad luck, but intentionally.¹⁸⁴ This was new and its importance cannot be over emphasized: The morality of America's conduct henceforth would become a perennial consideration in judging every American political and military intervention in world affairs.

Until recently, Vietnam was America's longest war; an even longer conflict is the struggle over women's rights. In the fifteen years under the priest board, 1932-1947, the archdiocesan paper held fast to the most retrograde tenets of patriarchy. Even under Bosler's thirty years as editor, from time to time the paper exhibited the taint of male chauvinism: A 1956 a column by a monsignor, "Is Woman Man's Equal?" was a classic: Striking most of the notes in the "second sex" songbook, "A man," he explained, "detests an independent woman"; wishing to command, he needs to have her dependent on him. "A woman," the priest was sure, "likes to feel that she has a master." Of course, men, lacking the subtlety and cunning of the female, are by indirection guided by the woman to get her "master" to do what she wants. In the final analysis, "One must complete the other."¹⁸⁵ Less than two years on, perhaps reflecting the contemporary influence of anthropologist Ashley Montague's critique of "Momism"--the dominance of women in American families, the IC&R praised a priest's novena sermon critical of "Dad" for letting "Mom" take over the family. Seconding the message, an editorial pleaded "Let the fathers come out of retirement," "reassert their authority and reassume their child-training responsibilities."¹⁸⁶

It is unlikely that Bosler wrote that editorial or shared such views, for he seems to have stood out in his sympathy and respect for women's abilities. That he differed from the general run may have been due to family circumstances: His father was a successful dentist and something of a free thinker, but his homemaker-mother suffered mental problems, problems manifested in harshness toward the four girls, particularly the eldest daughter, Helen; the three boys, especially Raymond, the eldest, seemed to have escaped the mother's sternness. Despite the employment of a cook and a housekeeper, raising seven children caused or exacerbated the mother's difficulties. Privately institutionalized in 1935 (three years before her son's ordination), later a resident in the state mental hospital, for the last eight or nine years of her life (she died age 90 in 1966) were spent in a Catholic nursing home. To attribute Ray Bosler's pastoral sympathy to women in difficulties to the hard life inflicted on his sister Helen--and the suffering of his mother as well--does not seem too far a reach. One may conjecture that Bosler's sensitivity when

¹⁸⁴ Which is what I used to tell my American history students.

¹⁸⁵ IC&R, 9 November 1956, 5.

¹⁸⁶ IC&R, 18 July 1958, 4. This is another case of an editorial that does not read like Bosler—not even the 1950s' Bosler.

treating reproductive issues in editorials and his syndicated Question Box column was owed to family experience.¹⁸⁷

Whatever the source, Bosler had advanced views on the position of women in society and in the Church. In 1976, retiring as editor, but still conducting the Question Box, readers of the archdiocesan newspaper discovered that a Pontifical Biblical Commission by a vote of 12 to 5, contradicting bishops, theologians, and hallowed tradition, found nothing in scripture to bar women priests.¹⁸⁸ A first year college student wrote that she wanted to be ordained. What should she study? Bosler was not optimistic, but thought that in thirty years or so--by the time the young woman was 50--he suspected that women would be ordained.¹⁸⁹ He agreed with another reader that men and women certainly differed, which was precisely, he observed, why women ought to be ordained. "Anxious to share" his opinion, Bosler recruited a number of arguments in favor of women priests, among them that, like most people, his earliest religious education had come from women. Mentioning Christ's use of domestic examples to illustrate his teachings (yeast, sweeping the floor, etc.), he called attention to the women doctors of the Church--which gave the lie to women's supposedly low intellectual endowment. Citing St. Paul ("neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female"), nothing in scripture prevented their ordination. He was so convinced that women should and would be ordained that in future Catholics would view the ban on women priests as slavery came to be regarded: How could Catholics ever have held such a view?¹⁹⁰

But St. Paul could take away as well as give: his dictum that women should be silent in church was one hurdle to women's ordination.¹⁹¹ Tongue in cheek, a woman wrote of an organization she and other homemakers had founded: The Interdependent Gals Rejecting Evil Scholastic Sophistry (TIGRESS). Its three founding families (wives, husbands, and children over twelve), pledged that until women can be priests to give no money or support to the Church. The children will go to public schools and the families had revised their wills. Bosler replied that he knew enough about bishops and had read enough about popes to know they would not be intimidated by such an organization. His advice to women was to work from the grassroots--become lectors, Eucharistic ministers, parish council members, and

¹⁸⁷ *New Wine*, 1, 2.

¹⁸⁸ The commission hedged by voting unanimously that women were not excluded from ordination by scripture alone, that is, there could be other grounds. *Criterion*, 18 June 1976, 1.

¹⁸⁹ 17 September 1976, 5.

¹⁹⁰ *Criterion*, 5 November 1976, 5. Bosler thought so much of this response he included it in his 1992 memoir, *New Wine*, 96.

¹⁹¹ *Second Corinthians*, 14: 34, 35. Many scripture scholars regard these sentiments as not authentic St. Paul, having been added later.

clamor for a diocesan pastoral council.¹⁹² As he interpreted scripture the day would come for “God does not treat the inspired writers as puppets, but allows them to be true authors, who reflect the limited knowledge and ignorance of their times.”¹⁹³ Thus St. Paul, while a giant of the Church, could not speak for all times in all matters. To a reader disgusted with the wedding rite telling wives to be submissive and subject to husbands “as to the Lord,” Bosler, noting that different readings were now available, cited the more palatable ones. The scriptures simply incorporated the secular household codes of responsibility contemporary to that time and customs and attitudes had changed.¹⁹⁴ In the Church’s defense, he would point out that reputable historians credit the Church with raising the position of women and noted, too, that nuns already ran important institutions. His reward were the women who congratulated him for his support; wrote one “Take good care of yourself, Monsignor. With all the gynophobic Latin members of the hierarchy, we need you.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² What To Ask About Marriage, 119, 120.

¹⁹³ What To Ask About Marriage, 117.

¹⁹⁴ Genesis 2:15-24; Romans 8:31-39; I John 4: 7-13, What To Ask About Marriage, 106, 107.

¹⁹⁵ What To Ask About Marriage, 114.