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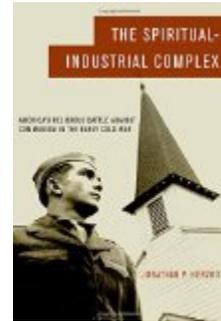
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Jonathan P. Herzog. *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 288 pp. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-539346-0.

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Jonathan P. Herzog presents an original interpretation of the domestic American Cold War from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. In his recently published work, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, Herzog suggests that one of the chief characteristics of the era is the sacralization of the Cold War against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the Soviet Union. Whereas Communism reflected a godless world in which mankind's accomplishments were acknowledged without the existence of a supreme being, the state religion being atheism, many Americans came to believe that their way of life was the direct antithesis to the Soviets' and far superior at that. In other words, the United States saw a revival of religious fervor where Americans constantly linked the superiority of American culture with religious faith, which they considered a solution to, and the correct antidote for, Communism.

The Spiritual-Industrial Complex analyzes the early Cold War era to explain how religion was used to define American culture, values, and institutions as the antithesis to those of the Soviet Union. Composed mostly of community studies, government documents, and manuscript collections, as well as a variety of newspapers, secondary sources, and the Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Herzog's book weaves an interesting argument suggesting that this "spiritual-industrial complex" was manufactured. The author writes that "important components of the 1950s revival came from the top down. In some ways, it resembled an orchestrated makeover painting a veneer of faith across the social and cultural landscape" (p. 8). Unlike the revivals of the nineteenth century, Herzog states, this complex "was conceived in boardrooms rather than

camp meetings, steered by Madison Avenue and Hollywood suits rather than traveling preachers, and measured with a statistical precision that the old-time revivalists ... would have envied" (p. 7). As a result, various aspects of American political, security, and social institutions began to reflect a religiosity that reminded Americans of faith's role in combating the spread of international Communism.

At the outset, Herzog lays out the intellectual foundations for the sacralization of the Cold War. From the 1920s through the mid-1940s, American society experienced an era of secularization influenced by industrialization, progressive education, and scientific research. By the end of World War II, though, as the postwar worldwide order began to emerge and as the Soviet Union exercised suzerainty over much of Eastern Europe, a small group of American theologians and former Communists, such as Whittaker Chambers and Louis Budenz, suggested that Communism reflected a secular religion of man. To stop the spread of such ideas, they concluded, the most "powerful weapon in the anti-Communist arsenal was genuine religious faith" (p. 45).

In the meantime, secular institutions and government leaders came to the same conclusion. For example, Attorney General Tom C. Clark hoped to evangelize Americans against Communism with the Freedom Train, which toured the nation displaying the country's founding documents. As the featured speaker, Clark persistently linked Christianity and the American way of life. What made the Freedom Train unique, though, was the cooperation of the federal government and corporations that provided transportation, subsidized costs, and heavy-

ily promoted events through advertising. Moreover, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover, who was no stranger to self-promotion and fearmongering, also used his position to link Americanism and faith as the antithesis to Communism. In pamphlets and speeches, Hoover declared that “‘Americanism finds its most lofty expression in terms of spiritual development.... The Ten Commandments cannot be improved upon, nor can the Sermon on the Mount be surpassed as a guide for ethical conduct’” (p. 85).

While political institutions seemed to lay the groundwork for a developing spiritual-industrial complex, Herzog further argues, security and social institutions cemented these values into the culture of the 1950s. Beginning with President Harry S. Truman’s Committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces, or the Weill Committee, security institutions that were linked together strengthened religious faith with the need to influence Communism. As a result, the role of the military chaplaincy was reemphasized as the service branches further sacralized their institutions with programs like Character Guidance, a chaplain-provided lecture series that fused family values, the Ten Commandments, and anti-Communism. Later, the Eisenhower administration used the United States Information Agency and the Operations Coordinating Board to advance propaganda and psychological operations that sought to contrast Soviet atheism with true American faith in God, thus leading many to believe that “American strength had spiritual guidance, or at least that was what everyone thought” (p. 134). Similarly, social institutions, such as schools, businesses, voluntary associations, the media, and the entertainment industry, followed suit and became an integral part of the spiritual-industrial complex. From reports published by the National Education Association that promoted moral education, to publisher Henry Luce’s anti-Communist speeches and his financial endowment of religious projects, to the science fiction and biblical epics released by Hollywood, the spiritual-industrial complex became, in essence, imbued within American culture as the means whereby international Communism could be countered. In other words, the military, schools,

the media, and the cinema became, as Herzog states, “Cold War classrooms” (p. 158).

But despite the changes that evolved in these institutions as a result of the Cold War and the movement’s initial success, there was no consensus for the movement’s continuation. Rather, as the initial crisis waned, many questioned the sacralization of the Cold War. The author suggests that for many Americans, “the usefulness of religion in the Cold War was not self-evident ... they needed direction” (p. 173). The movement’s leaders questioned the effectiveness of the very spiritual passion they encouraged. Even President Dwight D. Eisenhower began to back away from rhetoric of sacralization, and the Supreme Court, through the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) decisions (among others), “halted the march down the road of sacralization” (p. 189).

The Spiritual-Industrial Complex certainly provides an original approach to the history of the domestic Cold War. Herzog’s arguments are clear and convincing, and his supporting materials are well organized and professionally presented. Although it was not Herzog’s purpose to write a religious history, the book is grounded in twentieth-century religious and intellectual history, and shows how religion and politics intermingled to create a potent anti-Communist philosophy that polarized the early Cold War period. A cross section of political, social, and economic institutions further exacerbated this polarization and created a climate that led to a religious revival and may have helped to instigate the rise of the Far Right in the mid-1950s. But like all outstanding works of history, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex* leaves the reader wanting more. What role did Cold War sacralization play with the formation of the political Far Right in the mid-1950s? Moreover, did Roman Catholic religious leaders of Cold War sacralization help pave the way for John F. Kennedy’s election to the presidency in 1960 and settle concerns regarding a Roman Catholic president of the United States? All questions aside, though, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex* is a welcome addition to Cold War scholarship. Herzog has definitely broken ground in a very fertile field.

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