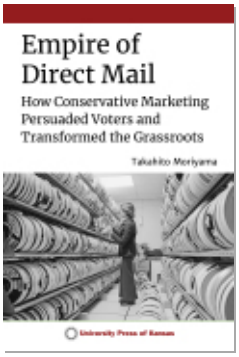
Chapter 2 The Development of Political Direct Mail



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CHAPTER 2

The Development of Political Direct Mail

After working with political consultant Robert Humphreys at the Republican National Committee (RNC), Arthur Summerfield resigned as the RNC chairman and was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to his cabinet as postmaster general of the United States in 1953. Summerfield was pleased by the new position because his father had been working as a letter carrier in Pinconning, Michigan, and the family had lived next door to a post office for many years. But he was simultaneously confused by messy operations of the US Postal Service (USPS). As he recalled, the Post Office Department in the early 1950s employed no single certified public accountant without any plans to develop efficiencies nor systematic training programs for more than five hundred thousand employees.[1]

The USPS went through a transformation from the 1950s to the 1960s. As political consultants adopted commercial advertising techniques for new electioneering, so did Postmaster General Summerfield modernize the postal services by introducing "the economical equipment used by businesses that must account for every penny of costs—modern conveyors, lift trucks, tying machines, label-printing machines, and many other devices new to postal operation."[2] Summerfield also proudly announced the plan of "missile mail"; on June 8, 1959, the US Navy submarine USS *Barbero* fired a Regulus I missile that landed with three thousand letters at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Mayport, Florida. Summerfield was quoted as saying that this project was "of historic significance to the peoples of the entire world." "Before man reaches the moon," he said, "mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to England, to India or to Australia by guided missiles." (However, the launch in 1959 ended up as the first and last missile mail experiment.)[3] In the early 1960s, the postal service rode the "wave of the future" as it offered facsimile mail in 1960, which instantaneously transmitted messages across the continent with the privacy perfectly preserved. Furthermore, the subsequent Postmaster General J. Edward Day adopted the Zoning Improvement Plan, or the zip code system,

in 1963. The zip codes were originally designed for streamlining mail delivery, but the new system enormously contributed to the evolution of mass marketing because it was critical to quickly and effectively pinpoint potential customers.[4]

Direct mail politics developed at the intersection of the advertising industry, political consulting, and the conservative movement during the 1950s and early 1960s. The years witnessed a revolution of mailing from *mass* mail toward *personalized* mail as technological innovations made it easier for marketers to reach out to individuals, rather than groups of people, according to personal tastes. Until the early 1950s, ad agents had used letters largely for mass advertisements: mail-order catalogues were dispatched to a cluster of customers for the purpose of transmitting the same message at one time. In this sense, mass mail functioned in the same manner as the mass media including the press, radio, and television. At the same time, direct mail appeared as a personalized medium targeting particular groups of individuals. Advertising agencies accumulated a huge body of information on each customer's preference, then compiled mailing lists to select out specific customers who were likely to purchase their products. The features of personalization and selectivity differentiated direct mail from other media forms as advertisers considered the new medium to be more flexible and efficient than conventional mass mail. As commercial advertisers began to pay attention to direct mail during the 1950s, so did political consultants in political parties and social movements. While Republicans zealously needed political consultants' expertise on media operation, conservative activists ardently searched for their own channels of communication. In the postwar years, conservatism was a peripheral movement in American society. Modern American conservatism began to take shape as an organized movement when William F. Buckley Jr. established the magazine *National Review* in 1955 to assemble antiliberal intellectuals and Robert Welch founded the John Birch Society in 1958, which became the largest grassroots anticommunist organization in the nation. These conservative groups financially depended on membership fees, big donations from philanthropists, and funds raised by conservative direct mail consultants. Direct mail provided conservative fundraisers with a new approach to collect small contributions from a great number of individuals in a period when liberal politics and the mainstream media had almost no room for right-wing activists.

Demonstrating both conflicts and interactions between liberals and conservatives in direct mail politics, three political consultants were engaged with mail fundraising in New York City during the 1950s and 1960s. Among the first direct mail fundraisers, Harold L. Oram founded his own consulting firm and committed himself to liberal and anticommunist organizations after the

Second World War. Working with Oram throughout the 1950s, Marvin Liebman learned how to raise funds via mail and to organize political movements. Unlike Oram's dedication to liberal causes, Liebman devoted his energies to conservative anticommunist movements, engaging with Buckley's *National Review* and other right-wing groups. Finally, Richard A. Viguerie joined Liebman's fundraising campaigns in the early 1960s, and cut his teeth before becoming the central figure of conservative direct mail in the following decades. Although conservatives were more successful than liberals in direct mail solicitation, a commonality of the three consultants indicates that the development of direct mail politics was characterized by the nuanced relationship between the left and right. Over the course of the 1950s, political consultants attempted to use direct mail through bipartisan efforts to include both liberals and conservatives under the banner of anticommunism. However, direct mail politics became more partisan as the conservative movement gathered steam by the early 1960s.

From Mass Mail to Direct Mail

A few commercial advertisers knew of direct mail in the mid-twentieth century, but at first they never regarded it as profitable. "In the 1940's and 1950's direct mail had little intelligence," said Lester Wunderman, a prominent advertiser known as the "father of direct marketing." He was one of the first to devote attention to direct mail advertising immediately after World War II. However, as the US postal system did not yet use zip codes and the advertising industry did not actively employ computers at that time, direct mail worked poorly with mailing lists recording little information about customers except their names. Wunderman later remembered, "The system wasn't very sophisticated."[5] Other advertisers similarly pointed to the inferior status of mailing in the advertising community, saying that "it is not at all usual for a representative of a national advertising agency to be concerned with Direct Mail—except, perhaps, reluctantly."[6] Several entrepreneurs tried out direct mailing before putting it into practice, but as an advertiser lamented, "[T]he fact is that countless millions of letters and mailing pieces are sent out every year without benefit of tests."[7] Direct mail might have been sufficient as a local medium when small letter shops employed it in towns and cities, but advertisers failed to handle the medium on a national scale. Another reason why mail advertising did not work was that agencies used it in the same way as mass media. Advertising agencies dispatched direct mailings—or mass mailings—with uniform information to a mass of customers, but they had smaller impact on the market than radio and television

advertisements did.[8] Wunderman mentioned the lack of success, saying that, in the 1940s and early 1950s, "[in] an age of mass production, mass media, mass marketing and mass consumption, mail for a time was wrongfully positioned as a mass medium."[9]

However, several innovators gradually discovered ways to use direct mail more skillfully during the 1950s. If direct mail "is properly understood and appropriately used," an advertising agency opined in 1953, it could be "a national advertising medium possessing special characteristics of selectivity and personalization."[10] In the shadow of the mass media, direct mailing did not work well if advertising firms sent out standardized letters to their customers. Instead, as an association of direct mail advertisers observed, messengers set out to deploy direct mail as a "vehicle for transmitting an advertiser's message . . . by controlled distribution direct to selected individuals."[11] Some agencies realized that they needed to "fragment" the market to identify specific groups of persons who shared common characteristics. In doing so, direct mail appealed to prospects with words that were "phrased in very explicit, very meaningful, very personal terms."[12] Wunderman clearly contrasted direct mail with mass media, arguing, "Radio and television are truly mass media. They blindly reach out for everyone—without selection and discrimination. . . . Direct mail must increasingly use its power to address specific individuals of known demography and characteristics, if it is to come to full flower."[13] As such, by pinpointing selected individuals suitable for specific products without wasting effort on the people who would never buy the products, advertisers expected that they could get "higher readership than any other form of advertising."[14]

Intimacy, which is closely associated with the functions of personalization and selectivity, also characterized direct mail advertising. Direct mail pioneer Wunderman intriguingly put the medium in a tradition of personal correspondence such as essays, poetries, and love letters, which "made letter writing more than just a way of giving news, keeping in touch or building relationships."[15] Similarly, one advertising agent highlighted the effect of direct mail to intensify readers' emotion. Quoting Charles W. Eliot's poems, "Carrier of news and knowledge" and "Messengers of sympathy and love," that are inscribed at the corners of the mail post office in Washington, DC, the advertisers pointed to mail's dual roles of communication and intimacy, and anticipated the growth of direct mail advertisements.[16] By the end of the 1950s, as advertisers meticulously analyzed, classified, and identified groups of consumers, they used direct mail advertising quite distinctively from the mass media: direct mail advertisers approached people through selectivity and intimacy instead of standardization.

Wunderman maintained that the changed nature of direct mail shifting from mass toward personal marketing was not isolated from the transformation of America from a mass society into a postindustrial society. Wunderman contended that the mass media dominated communication in an age characterized by mass production, mass consumption, and mass marketing. Newspaper, radio, and television advertising flourished throughout the 1950s, and back then they were much less expensive than in the following decades. Drawing on Daniel Bell's study, Wunderman asserted that the 1960s witnessed the postindustrial revolution that shook "the foundations of direct mail, other business and all of our lives." As the baby boom generation grew up in the postwar years, they sought the alternatives to the mass culture and influenced consumption patterns. "The era of mass everything" did not fit what the baby boomers desired, Wunderman believed.[17]

Wunderman predicted that the revolution of communication technologies would result in an age of individualization. "[We] are living in an age of repersonalization and individuation," he said. "Automation, which we feared as being anti-people, has become pro-person. . . . Our automated, computerized, electronic, information society has created opportunities for personalized, individualized selling, which will surely replace mass marketing." Wunderman particularly stressed that computers caused a seismic change in marketing and advertising. When computers recorded detailed information on hundreds of millions of consumers, the advertising theorist forecasted that new forms of marketing would evolve into direct marketing "where the advertising and buying become a single action."[18] Another advertiser made a similar case that direct mail metamorphosed consumers from a mass to individuals, claiming that "there just aren't any masses any more. People today are individuals. . . . Difficult, suspicious, slow with a dollar, hard-headed, and even ornery individuals—as a lot of politicians found out just the day before yesterday."[19]

Whereas visionary advertising agencies were creating new strategies in the postwar period, the federal government played a role in paving the way for the new marketing. The zip code was another element that altered the nature of direct mail, becoming part of the growing information industry. When the Post Office Department introduced the zip code in the early 1960s, the Advertising Council appointed Wunderman's company as the volunteer agency for the department. Although marketers and advertisers would benefit from the zip code later, the community of direct mail advertisers initially resisted the new idea. But the Post Office Department's extraordinary efforts to persuade the public and the generous media budget of the Advertising Council overcame the resistance.

Following its adoption in 1963, the advertising community reorganized their database of customers based on the zip code, then it turned out the new technique facilitated the distribution of mail and information. Combining census data and polling information, marketing companies shortly utilized zip codes for targeting individual consumers according to their preferences and lifestyles.[20]

Also known as "microtargeting," direct marketing would develop into diverse advertising technologies including telephone marketing, outreach based on precinct data, and cable television advertising, among others. But, as political scientist R. Kenneth Godwin pointed out, direct mail was the most profitable and efficient of these.[21] Some political activists turned their attention to the new commercial tool. For instance, Billy James Hargis, an ultraconservative evangelist in Oklahoma, actively employed direct mail for his anticommunist activities in the early Cold War period.[22] However, it was on Madison Avenue, the center of the American advertising industry, that direct mail politics flourished during the 1950s and 1960s.

Harold L. Oram and Liberal Anticommunism

The change of mail advertising throughout the 1950s and 1960s gradually influenced political consultants. Whereas radio and television were the mainstream of advertising in these decades, several consultants in New York City began to bring mail advertising into the political arena.[23] Harold Leon Oram was a pioneer of political direct mail on Madison Avenue. Born in 1907 in Butler, Pennsylvania, to an immigrant family who had migrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Oram was initially educated in his hometown, then studied history and economics in the University of Miami in Florida for two years. After graduating, Oram stepped into the world of journalism, moving to Texas where he was involved with a weekly newspaper called the *Fort Worth Monitor*. However, as the newspaper was unsuccessful, Oram left for New York to work for other newspapers in Hartsdale and Brooklyn while he earned a degree in law from New York Law School in 1934.[24] From then on, Oram's activities were based in New York City.

Oram's career as a political activist commenced in 1936 when dictatorship and warfare loomed large in Europe. As the Spanish Civil War erupted, he joined the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy in favor of the Loyalists. Oram also joined the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign, in which as the director of publicity and fundraising he made efforts to raise aid for Spanish refugees who left Spain after Francisco Franco rose to power.[25] In September

1939, Oram founded his own fundraising company called Consultants in Fund Raising, which was soon renamed Harold L. Oram, Inc. Before he enlisted in the army in 1942, he was responsible for funding projects to aid refugees and fight fascism in Europe. For instance, the Emergency Rescue Committee was engaged in assisting anti-Nazi intellectuals and activists. Oram's clients before World War II included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

After he came back from military service in 1946, Oram continued to involve himself with refugee relief and liberal activism. As the Cold War intensified from the late 1940s, Oram's attention shifted from antifascism to anticommunism with his interests extending to East Asia. Among the most notable examples of his philanthropic activities in the postwar era were the fundraising campaigns for Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI), American Friends of Vietnam, and Committee of One Million, all of which were programs to aid anticommunists in East Asia. Simultaneously, Oram remained involved with activities for European refugees, collaborating with the Citizen's Committee for Displaced Persons, which was aimed at securing "emergency legislation permitting the United States to admit its fair share of Europe's displaced persons." Oram also dedicated efforts to endorsing the United Nations by fundraising for the American Association for the United Nations (AAUN). His stance as a liberal anticommunist was evident as letters on behalf of these organizations had the signatures of prominent Democratic figures such as James A. Farley and Eleanor Roosevelt.[26]

Oram rose to prominence as a guru of mail fundraising in postwar politics, drawing on ideas and methodologies from commercial mail advertisers. In his letter to a client in May 1947, Oram indicated that he had raised approximately $775,000 after returning from the army in January 1946. Breaking down this total, he revealed that most of the money came from mail solicitation: $475,000 was raised through mailings, $175,000 through dinner and luncheon meetings, $60,000 by one telegraphic appeal, $50,000 through personal solicitation, and $15,000 via advertisements. In this letter, Oram strongly recommended fundraising via "the mass media appeals," which were solicitation by telegraph, mailing, and advertising, adding that "[s]uch a mass media campaign which is the only one I can recommend as having any possibility of success in the brief time, involves a considerable expense in comparison to an organized appeal by personal approach to a carefully selected list of large donors."[27] Although Oram regarded mail fundraising as a mass media approach, his solicitation methods relied on selectivity that direct marketers emphasized in the 1950s.

Oram's techniques of mail fundraising also built on the intimate approach of direct marketing. The sense of urgency characterized fundraising letters sent by the Harold L. Oram, Inc. Appeals usually began with the following words: "Every American is faced by the challenge of impending war, for many of us the possibility of the third great war in our lifetime."[28] Another appeal similarly urged letter receivers to take some actions by stating, "We believe that the rate of change in the modern world has produced a new predicament for man. Greater changes are coming in the future than any we have experienced. This Age of Change may be marked by violence and chaos, or it may be an Age of Reason."[29] While emphasizing the menace of the Cold War and the rapid transformations of the modern age, Oram's mailings impelled readers to take action, claiming that their choices were crucial for the world. One of his fundraising letters said, "Today we are making a historic choice which, in the end, will determine the fate of all mankind. By our words and our actions, we are deciding irreparably for war or for peace." The appeal also stressed, "We are today entering a most dangerous period. Recent events are already threatening to divide the world into two hostile camps."[30] As political scientists have pointed out, threatening language is important for direct mail because it effectively urges readers to take immediate action. Emotion, researchers have argued, is a key element. "The message has to be extreme, has to be overblown; it really has to be kind of rough."[31]

Whereas gloomy anticommunism dominated Oram's solicitation letters, nonpartisanship characterized Oram's fundraising campaigns. As President Harry Truman announced that he would attempt to contain Soviet's threats to Greece and Turkey in May 1947, ideological tensions increasingly grew between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Oram's appeal of September 2, 1947, on behalf of the AAUN, called for the cooperation of America with Russia. "We are today entering a most dangerous period," said the letter, but it added that the success of the United Nations as a universal organization hinged on Soviet–American cooperation from the outset. The only way to prevent warfare, Oram's letter stressed, was to convince Russian leaders that "cooperation, rather than antagonism, between the West and the East, is in their own interest."[32] Another mailing for the AAUN went so far as to say that a third world war was "more probable so long as our country is confused and divided by partisan passion."[33] One solicitation appeal on behalf of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions highlighted nonpartisanship as it stated that anybody was entitled to join programs for democracy. "We have ignored the labels of 'right-wing' and 'left-wing.' We have secured the participation of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, secularists, men who call themselves 'radicals' and others who

regard themselves as 'conservatives.'" Oram and his clients had no qualms about involving any religious and ideological groups in their campaigns. The appeal also boasted that the center had visitors from Western Europe, Latin America, South Asia, and even the Soviet Union.[34]

Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, Oram was working together with diverse agencies. Oram sent out his solicitation letters to government, businesses, foundations, and many individuals as potential donors for anticommunist causes. His clients were not only anticommunists such as Walter H. Judd, a conservative anticommunist congressman who supported the Chinese nationalist government, but also liberal activists and politicians including the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., William Fulbright, and George McGovern, and a long list of others.[35] According to Henry Goldstein, the current president of the Oram, Inc., the firm has served "liberal and left-wing counter-cultural organizations."[36] In the course of his philanthropic activities, Oram developed manifold fundraising techniques. He was responsible for direct mail appeals and also credited as the first to employ full-page advertisements in newspapers such as the *New York Times*. Moreover, he assembled and compiled lists of donors by using *Who's Who* as a mailing list. Using cutting-edge information technology, Oram accumulated the required data to seek potential contributors and made political mailing more efficient than ever before. Oram remained involved with liberal politics throughout his career of political consulting, yet his fundraising laid the groundwork for direct mail politics, including both liberals and conservatives.

Marvin Liebman and Conservative Anticommunism

In the early 1950s, Marvin Liebman took a step into direct mail politics on Madison Avenue. Born in 1923 in Brooklyn, New York, the young Jewish American was a communist in his youth. As a high school student in Brooklyn, Liebman was invited by his civics teacher to the American Students Union where he took part in far-left politics. Shortly, he joined the Young Communist League, which was an affiliate of the American Youth Congress that had many other communist youth fronts. The young Liebman became more profoundly engaged in pre–World War II communism when he came under the discipline of the Communist Party. He helped craft propaganda for the party, socialized with left-wing writers, and developed his affections for art and politics. "I was good at politics," Liebman later said, "and the Communists were putting on the best political show. I fell in them."[37]

Liebman enrolled at New York University. Yet he shortly left the university and plunged himself into the circle of the literary left in Greenwich Village. As the United States joined World War II, Liebman was drafted into the US Army Air Corps in 1942, serving in the army in North Africa and Italy until 1945. By the end of the war, Liebman became engaged with Zionism. In 1946, he was associated with the American League for a Free Palestine in Europe and Palestine. By early 1947, an anti-imperialist impulse pushed him to sign on with an Israeli military group known as the Irgun, whose aims were to liberate Palestine from British rule and to relocate Jewish refugees from Europe. After returning to the United States, Liebman helped raise money for the American League for a Free Palestine, then he became a fundraiser for the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), a successful charitable organization founded by Jewish Americans, and the American Fund for Israel Institutions. The UJA sent Liebman to its fundraising school, opening the door for his political consulting career.[38]

While Liebman developed his activism following World War II, his communist fervor faded away. In 1946, the Communist Party leader Earl Browder was dismissed from the party hierarchy after being accused of his attempt to achieve the cooperation between capitalists and communists during the war. Liebman, who adored Browder as a mentor and hero, realized that it was ideologically and emotionally hard to shift smoothly from the Popular Front to the Cold War. But it did not mean that his passion for politics died out. In 1948, Liebman headed for California and joined the campaign of Henry Wallace, whom he admired. At the same time when Liebman was engaged in this political campaign, he pursued his desire to be an artist and was temporarily employed as a screenwriter in Hollywood. Liebman's odyssey to the West Coast was short as he came back home to Brooklyn in 1951. When he reached New York, the May Day parade was held. Walking along with many other participants, however, Liebman noticed that he was "bored by the slogans, by the songs, and most of all, by the desperate earnestness."[39]

Following a suggestion by a member of Americans for Democratic Action in Los Angeles, Liebman visited Harold L. Oram, Inc. immediately after he returned to New York. Oram decided to employ the young ex-communist, saying, "I just may be able to turn you from an agitator into a fund-raiser."[40] In his autobiography, Liebman recalled that he had learned all he knew about fundraising when he was working with Oram. The walls of Oram's office were lined with metal shelves and drawers holding thousands of three-by-five cards, and each one was hand-typed with a name, address, and other pertinent information. Even though almost everything was done by hand and time consuming

at the time, this approach was relatively successful. Liebman not only learned Oram's solicitation methods but also improved them. Understanding that personalization was the key to successful direct mailing, Liebman came up with two ideas to make envelopes look more personal. He had volunteers at the office handwrite the addresses so that recipients would pay special attention to the appeals, and also affixed a first-class stamp instead of a Pitney-Bowes postage imprint. Working with Liebman during the 1950s, Oram regarded the young fundraiser's adroitness so highly that he promoted Liebman to vice president of Harold L. Oram, Inc.[41]

Bipartisanship defined Liebman's direct mail fundraising in the early 1950s. In the first years at Oram's fundraising firm, Liebman had many occasions to work with liberals, partly due to Oram's liberal policy and probably also because of Liebman's own experience of converting from communism. The first project Oram gave him was raising funds for the Liberal Party, the political arm of two major New York labor unions, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the Amalgamated Hatters Union. Liebman sent out approximately seventeen thousand letters to raise funds. He had no hesitation in working with liberals to develop a large network of anticommunists. He said, "[W]henever I organized a 'conservative' or 'anticommunist' group, I followed Oram's example and tried to include as many 'liberals' as I could on the letterhead to create the broadest possible base of support." The signature of an anticommunist organization with which Oram and Liebman were involved clearly demonstrated diverse supporters. It included poets Conrad Aiken and Siegfried Sassoon, cellist Pablo Casals, novelist John Dos Passos, psychologist Carl Jung, architect Walter Gropius, physicist Robert Oppenheimer, philosopher Bertrand Russell, historian Arthur Schlesinger, and the American Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas, to name only the most notable.[42]

But Liebman's activities at Oram, Inc. were linked primarily to anticommunism. As the second project for Liebman, Oram put him in charge of solicitation for the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Having been dedicated to antifascism and rescuing refugees from Nazi Germany during the Second World War, the IRC transformed itself toward a liberal and anticommunist organization, giving emergency assistance to over one hundred thousand people from Eastern Europe communist regimes, including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary. Oram's firm raised money for the IRC by means of mail, telegraph, advertising, and other ways. Oram sent Liebman to California to arrange fundraising meetings for Elinor Lipper, who had published a book on her seven-year experiences in Soviet prison camps. Liebman

flew to the West and set up a large rally, which San Francisco mayor and other local notables attended, and the IRC successfully raised funds by the time Lipper completed her West Coast tour.[43]

Another anticommunist organization for which Liebman raised funds was the Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI). Founded in 1952, the chief aims of the ARCI included resettlement, reemployment, and rehabilitation for Chinese intellectuals who had left the People's Republic of China. In 1952, Liebman founded offices in New York City, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, then initiated the operations to help refugees. With financial support from the CIA, the ARCI helped over 15,000 Chinese intellectuals leave the mainland for Hong Kong, 14,000 college graduates and their families relocate to Taiwan, and 2,500 refugees relocate in the United States and 1,000 in other countries. Unlike the two previous solicitation drives for the Liberal Party and the IRC, Liebman not only raised funds but also organized the project. He prepared an outline of the necessary steps and created the format based largely on his knowledge of how the left was organized. The establishment of the ARCI also provided Liebman with an opportunity to enlarge his network with other anticommunists as he allied with such figures as anticommunist Congressman Walter Judd and Christopher Emmet, who was Oram's friend and a staunch anticommunist.[44]

Solicitation for the ARCI indicated the nature of Harold L. Oram, Inc., demonstrating how diverse individuals and institutions were involved in its fundraising networks. To arouse sympathy among American intellectuals, the ARCI sent appeals to university presidents around the nation. Meanwhile, the organization also called on many citizens, politicians, and philanthropists to donate money for Chinese refugees. Many recipients sent back small checks such as $1, $3, or $5, while others donated a larger amount of money such as $750. The Lilly Endowment, a philanthropic institution that sent $25,000 to the ARCI, was one of the big contributors on Oram's mailing list.[45] Liebman also mailed out appeals to foundations including the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Pew Memorial Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The federal government, too, was one of the most important sponsors for the ARCI as the Department of State poured $250,000 into the ARCI. Sending out solicitation letters to sundry individuals and institutions, direct mail fundraising by Oram, Inc. was dependent on both small and large contributions.[46]

The respondents sent back not only checks but also letters to express their own voices. Several contributors opined in their letters that financial aid was not enough to fight communism. A recipient of the ARCI's appeal claimed that the

organization could give Chinese refugees "a chance to protect their own form of government," saying, "Instead of starving in Hong Kong they might welcome the chance to be given uniforms and equipment and be transferred to the Korean front to defend their ideals and pull a lot of our boys out of there."[47] Another person made a similar case in his letter by arguing, "There is no question in my mind but that we should have used all these anti-Communists in Formosa, Hong Kong or elsewhere—long ago in the fight in Korea, as they wanted to be used."[48] These responses revealed that several supporters wanted more action rather than philanthropic assistance in order to win the Cold War in East Asia.

Within the ARCI, the same controversies revolved around what it ought to do for anticommunist activities. As the organization grew in size, tensions and conflicts appeared between the "philanthropist" sponsors and the "activist" anticommunists. The philanthropists, including Oram and most of the directors, were the mainstream of the ARCI. And Liebman and other activists were frustrated by the philanthropic majority, believing that the ARCI as a political organization could overthrow Communist China by assisting armed forces from Taiwan under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. Liebman attempted to persuade other directors to change the group's aim, sending a memorandum to the ARCI executive committee. In the memo, Liebman stressed that the emergency or "newness" of the problem was essential for successful fundraising. He claimed that initial efforts to resettle Chinese refugees had been once urgent for many Americans, but "it has lost its novelty for the people who are our potential supporters." Therefore, he suggested the ARCI required an approach to help the Chinese refugees "in every way possible to reconstruct a free society."[49] However, Oram and many members did not change their humanitarian approach. They restated the ARCI's aims and objectives to reconfirm that all of the organization's projects "shall be concerned with resettlement or be directly contributory to facilitating as rapidly as possible the primary aim of resettlement."[50]

While Oram was engaged in fundraising for liberal causes, Liebman gradually leaned toward more activist and conservative anticommunism throughout the 1950s. In 1953, Liebman started to organize a new anticommunist conservative group while he continued to work at Oram, Inc. Following the armistice of the Korean War in July, Liebman set up a small meeting at New York's University Club in September. Along with several members of the ARCI, Liebman, Emmet, Judd, and Charles Edison, the inventor Thomas Edison's son and former New Jersey governor, discussed new problems after the war. Their primary concern was the issue of whether the international community should recognize the People's Republic of China as the legitimate regime of China, and whether

the United Nations should admit it. The members of the meeting tried to stem the wave of communism in Asia by denying Communist China's admission to the United Nations. Liebman and other participants decided that the goal of the organization was to influence public opinion through the media, publishing their own newsletter and booklets and using radio spots and newspaper ads. They also planned lobbying activities to promote their campaign. Setting up a headquarters on West 40th Street in New York, Liebman named the new organization the Committee of One Million. Then, as usual, Liebman initiated mail solicitation.[51]

Appeals of the Committee of One Million suggested that bipartisanship still characterized Liebman's fundraising after he shifted toward activist anticommunism. An appeal contended, "The Democrat and the Republican parties . . . have a unique opportunity to take the issue of the admission of Communist China to the United Nations out of American partisan politics." Adding that such bipartisan action would prove the solidity of American sentiments on the issue, Liebman tried to take inclusive approaches to anticommunism.[52] Another letter similarly held that the relationship of the United States with the People's Republic of China was unique because "it commands almost universal bi-partisan agreement." The letter emphasized that the bipartisanship was true under any circumstances, suggesting this particular issue was of supreme importance for American foreign policy.[53] Direct mailings of the committee incessantly stressed that the policy against the People's Republic of China was "so widely supported as our policy" in the United States that "every major American organization" adopted expressions against Communist China and "all the American people" refuted the appeasement of communism in East Asia.[54] Starting in 1953, the Committee of One Million dispatched direct mail campaigns to call for support among Americans.

Over two hundred recipients responded to the first appeal and signed its statement: forty-nine members of Congress, including twenty-three Democrats, coupled with twelve governors, thirty-three business magnates, twenty retired generals and admirals, fourteen religious leaders, and twenty-two scientists and educators. Many other individuals followed suit. One letter was sent to the Committee of One Million by a mother who lost her son in the Korean War. The mother joined the organization primarily due to the POW issue. While the son was fighting on the Korean Peninsula as a member of the 45th Infantry Division, he was reported "missing in action" on November 30, 1952. Believing that her son was captured by Chinese communists, the mother condemned that the People's Republic of China for not announcing he was dead or whether he

was a prisoner. Furthermore, she claimed that the United States joined in this effort "to wipe out the reality of my son."[55]

The Committee of One Million made efforts to mobilize the "grass roots sentiments" of American anticommunism in various ways. On October 22, 1953, the committee started a public campaign to distribute approximately 240,000 copies of a petition that the People's Republic of China shall not be admitted to the UN, and received about 150,000 signatures by January 1954. The committee finally sent the signed petition with the 1,032,017 signatures to President Eisenhower in 1955. The organization mentioned that their petition campaign gave impetus to similar drives in other countries including Canada, the Philippines, and Indonesia.[56] Liebman also launched full-page advertisements in nationally known newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.[57] In 1956, the Committee of One Million was working to have both Democratic and Republican national conventions adopt a joint plank against any move for recognition of China or resumption of trade with her. The committee set out a greater campaign by sending out a propaganda kit to every person who ran for federal office and arranging conferences at universities to promote the anti-Beijing campaign among intellectuals and students.[58]

Liebman's activist anticommunism went along with the transformation of modern conservatism's foreign policy from isolationism to fervent anticommunism overseas. In the mid-1940s, conservative Republicans, particularly Senator Robert Taft, had challenged the strategy of interventionism by voting against American participation in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Conservative Republicans in both houses also attempted to repudiate the Bretton Woods arrangements, a $3.75 billion loan for the recovery of Britain, and the Marshall Plan, all of which looked to the conservatives like the expansion of the federal government on a global scale. However, with the armistice of the Korean War and the death of Senator Taft in July 1953, conservative politicians began to highlight engaged nationalism. Senator William Knowland of California took a leading role in making conservatives fervent Cold War warriors, and conservatives became more hawkish than ever in American foreign policy.[59]

Liebman's political consulting converged on the formation of intellectual conservatism advanced by William F. Buckley. Buckley figured in modern American conservatism when he published his book *God and Man at Yale* in 1951 while he was still a student at Yale University. *Time* magazine writer Willi Schlamm, who conceived the idea of a new conservative journal, approached Buckley and asked him to become the journal's editor in chief. They began to organize an

intellectual forum for American conservatives by recruiting anticommunists, libertarians opposing big government in favor of individual liberties and the free enterprise system, and conservatives embracing religious and traditional values.[60]

Buckley and Schlamm made efforts to collect funds for the undertaking. According to Liebman, in 1955 Oram received Buckley's solicitation letter for his new magazine project, and Oram asked Liebman to meet with the young conservative. Although he was impressed by Buckley's vigor and intelligence, Liebman thought that the idea of publishing a new conservative journal would be unsuccessful due to the scarcity of a conservative audience in the mid-1950s.[61] Since Buckley founded *National Review* (initially called *National Weekly*) in late 1955, the enterprise was financially shaky all the time. Upon launching *National Review*, Buckley borrowed $100,000 from his father and received donations from Massachusetts candy manufacturer Robert Welch, Southern California's oil magnate Henry Salvatori, Eastern Airlines CEO Eddie Rickenbacker, and other conservative businesspeople. Nevertheless, Buckley's magazine was continually short of cash, and he attempted to cover the deficits by soliciting tax-exempt donations for nonprofit groups, which he then turned over to *National Review*.[62]

Still, *National Review* slowly established itself as a force in modern American conservatism as it gradually gave shape to ideas alternative to liberalism. At first, the average circulation of the magazine was relatively small with the readership reaching 30,000 in 1960, while Billy Graham's *Christianity Today* had a paid circulation of 150,000 by the early 1960s. Yet *National Review* emerged as a forum of opinion and disputation, contributing to the fusion of eclectic conservative philosophies, such as anticommunism, traditionalism, and libertarianism, which had common goals but sometimes conflicted with each other. Contributors to Buckley's magazine included ex-Marxist anticommunists, such as Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, and Frank Meyer, as well as traditionalists like Russell Kirk. Many *National Review* editors and writers were Catholic, including Buckley himself and L. Brent Bozell, while Jewish Americans appeared on the original masthead of the journal. As *National Review* provided channels of communication and opportunities to discuss conservatism from different strands of ideas, the magazine formed a conservative intellectual establishment, serving as the backbone of the conservative movement.[63]

Liebman became Buckley's close friend shortly after they met. In 1957, he founded his own public relations firm, Marvin Liebman Associates, Inc., in New York. Known as the "wizard of direct mail fundraising," Liebman assisted Buckley as the publicity arm of *National Review*, actively raising money for anticommunism and the nascent conservative movement in general. Buckley

and Liebman collaborated in organizing several conservative groups during the 1960s. After Fidel Castro established the communist regime in Cuba, the two conservative activists organized the Committee for the Monroe Doctrine to defend America's right to intervene militarily in the island nation and other countries of the Western Hemisphere. Liebman and Buckley also created the National Committee Against the Treaty of Moscow that opposed ratification of the treaty to ban the testing of nuclear weapons.[64] In his political career, Liebman's personality as a political entrepreneur was notable, working behind the scenes rather than moving forward to the center stage. He noted, "Part of the style I had developed was to keep out of the limelight and let other more prestigious people carry my plans. These techniques not only proved effective, it gave me an invigorating sense of power over events."[65]

Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) was another organization Buckley and Liebman founded.[66] As conservative students organized the Youth for Goldwater movement in May 1960, the *National Review* circle offered operational support for the youth. The political journal ran advertisements soliciting financial aid for the young conservatives. Elder conservatives also supported the leadership of newly emerging activists. For instance, David Franke, a student at Delmar Community College in Corpus Christi, Texas, who worked as an editor of *The Individualist* published by the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI), was hired as an intern at *National Review*. Liebman hired Doug Caddy at the Marvin Liebman Associates shortly after he graduated from Georgetown in the spring of 1960. Buckley realized that conservatives needed to develop conservatism from an intellectual circle toward a social movement by organizing conservative students across the country.[67]

Buckley issued a call for a meeting to form a new organization for the youth at his estate in Sharon, Connecticut. From September 9 to 11, 1960, approximately one hundred young conservatives gathered at the Sharon conference, in which the young people managed discussions but the *National Review* crowd indirectly influenced the participants. Caddy carried out much of the planning at the conference, Franke took the lead in discussions about the organization, and Bozell, Buckley's brother-in-law, gave a speech titled "Why a Conservative Political Youth Organization Is Needed," emphasizing the necessity of political movements in conservative politics.[68] M. Stanton Evans, editor of the *Indianapolis News*, drafted the "Sharon Statement," which represented YAF's three strands of ideologies. It stressed traditionalism, stating that "individual use of his God-given free will" was fundamental to humankind. The statement also reflected libertarian confidence in the free market and small government. But at

the same time, it claimed America's mission to fight against worldwide communism, which seemed to contradict the principle of limiting government. Fusing the three ideologies, the Sharon Statement declared the establishment of YAF and marked the emergence of a student activist movement in conservatism, like the Port Huron Statement in 1962 for the formation of Students for a Democratic Society on the left.[69]

Liebman was intimately associated with YAF from its foundation. He provided his office facilities when Caddy organized the Sharon conference. After YAF was established, Liebman not only offered his office on lower Madison Avenue for the national board but also gave financial support for the young activists. When YAF set out to publish its magazine, the *New Guard*, in March 1961, Liebman supported the publication with logistics. *National Review* publisher William A. Rusher was concerned that Liebman spoiled YAF members like "a rich and adoring uncle."[70] Meanwhile, despite Liebman's generosity, some YAF activists were frustrated with the elder mentor, claiming that Liebman embezzled YAF's funds for his other fundraising enterprises. After the internal conflict occurred within the youth organization, Liebman resigned in January 1962.[71]

As a political consultant, Liebman continued to be engaged in conservatism by raising funds and organizing other groups. Although the Committee of One Million, *National Review*, and YAF were confronted with financial crises over the years, these groups promoted the rise of the conservative movement in American society. YAF grew to a national vehicle for young conservatives discontented with liberal politics, opening the way for a new generation of right-wing activists to enter the political arena. Among the new conservatives was a Texan who would be a central figure of conservatism as the prominent direct mail fundraiser by the 1970s.

Richard A. Viguerie and Conservatism in the Early 1960s

While Liebman had learned fundraising for the anticommunist cause by working with the liberal Oram, Richard Viguerie developed his direct mail solicitation solely for conservative politics.[72] Viguerie's autobiography demonstrates that he shared a similar background with many other young conservatives of the 1960s, and simultaneously he had a peculiar identity as a political consultant. Viguerie was born to a Catholic family outside Houston, Texas, in 1933. His parents were of Louisiana French descent, and his mother retained a little of her Cajun accent. The Viguerie family had earned its living in real estate in south Louisiana, but they had lost almost everything in the financial panic of the early

1920s. Viguerie's parents moved to Texas in 1929 immediately before the Great Depression. According to Viguerie, his family had little higher education. His father had no college education while his mother had one year of college. Despite his educational background, Viguerie's father became a manager of Shell Oil Co. Viguerie himself went to Texas A&I and then to the University of Houston, where he received his BS in political science with a minor in economics. Dreaming to be a politician in Washington, Viguerie first wanted to be an engineer because he thought that he could make a great deal of money. But once he realized he was not good at algebra, his aims shifted toward law. However, after getting many Cs and Ds, Viguerie decided to enlist in the US Army Reserve program in March 1957 and served six months of active duty at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. At the end of the 1960s, he got a job as a clerk in an oil company.[73]

Anticommunism was kindled in Viguerie's mind during the 1950s through the influence of political figures such as Douglas MacArthur and Joseph McCarthy. He worked for the Eisenhower campaign in 1952 and 1956 as chairman of the Harris County Young Republicans. An anecdote showed that the conservative cause was more important than party politics for Viguerie. One day he invited Jack Cox, a solid conservative Democrat in Texas, to speak at a Young Republicans barbecue. While several people criticized Viguerie because Cox was not a Republican, Viguerie claimed that he did not understand why they accused him. He involved himself in conservative politics again in 1960, when he was named Harris County campaign chairman for Republican John Tower who challenged Lyndon Johnson for a seat in the US Senate. Viguerie helped write one-page fundraising letters for the Republican candidate. Tower ended up losing the election, receiving 41 percent of the vote, but he won the special election for Johnson's old seat in early 1961.[74]

In 1961, Viguerie responded to a classified advertisement in *National Review*, which required four field men, and he decided to move from Texas to New York. At first, Viguerie met with *National Review* publisher William A. Rusher. Rusher interviewed Viguerie for the position as executive secretary of Young Americans for Freedom. And then Rusher introduced Viguerie to Liebman, who offered his office to YAF and would become Viguerie's mentor for fundraising. As Viguerie was learning how to effectively collect money and gain support during the early 1960s, the young political fundraiser became known as "the 'new' Liebman" in conservative circles.[75]

Viguerie's ideological, religious, and social backgrounds—anticommunism, Catholicism, the South, and relatively poor educational level—were shared by many other conservatives in the 1960s.[76] However, a unique feature of Viguerie's

activity was notable during this time in YAF. Viguerie was surprised to find that the organization, not one year old, was $20,000 in debt with only two thousand paid-up members, although YAF claimed a membership of twenty-five thousand, and just a couple of weeks' operating money remained on hand. So he got involved in making the student group financially successful.[77] In his words, "Plenty of young conservatives were boning up on conservative philosophy, and many others were studying the technique of political organization. Nobody . . . was studying how to *sell* conservatism to the American people." Viguerie acknowledged that he was not able to be a prominent political intellectual. He was instead determined to "stick to your brand" and to be the best "marketer" in conservative politics. Therefore, he perused many books on marketing and psychology rather than politics or political philosophy. He even confessed that he barely read *National Review* or *Human Events*.[78] Viguerie as a political consultant used rhetoric, including several commercial vocabularies such as "sell," "market," and "branding." By doing so, he forged his identity as a political consultant, bridging politics with business through rhetoric and methodology.

With his unique orientation toward political advertising within the conservative movement in the early 1960s, it was not accidental that Viguerie shortly noticed the potential of direct mail. His direct mailings for YAF showed his inclination for political business as well as the conservative movement. From 1961 to 1963, as administrative secretary of YAF, Viguerie dispatched letters several times.[79] A mailing in November 1961, for example, recommended that YAF members subscribe to *National Review* and purchase *Revolt on the Campus* written by M. Stanton Evans, who had drafted the Sharon Statement when YAF was founded in 1961. Advertising the political magazine and monograph as the best conservative publications in scope and literary quality, Viguerie's letter stressed the significance of distributing conservative philosophies to individuals, noting, "In the past, conservatives have not been as effective as they might have been, because they failed to *sell themselves* and their point of view on a personal basis to all segments of the population."[80] Another mailing of March 22, 1962, also claimed that what the United States needed was "dynamic young conservative leadership capable of *selling conservative ideas* to the American voter," as it reported that more than 180,000 conservatives gathered in Madison Square Garden on March 2, 1962, for the "Rally for World Liberation from Communism" sponsored by YAF.[81] The New York City rally had major addresses delivered by well-known conservatives such as senators Barry Goldwater, Strom Thurmond, and John Tower, and delegations represented a young generation of American conservatives from many universities. Viguerie's other direct mailings

informed YAF members of the organization's activities, including producing anticommunist films, establishing local chapters around the country, and staging demonstrations in several states. His appeals at the same time called for donations to sustain these undertakings. "YAF's treasury is now empty and the entire future of Young Americans for Freedom is endangered. If additional contributions are not forthcoming immediately from our past supporters, our work may have to cease."[82]

As YAF aimed at promoting conservatism on campuses, Viguerie's direct mailings also highlighted conservatives' struggles with the dominance of liberalism in American universities. One of the main targets of YAF was the National Student Association (NSA), a national confederation of college student governments dominated by liberals.[83] A direct mailing to YAF members raised the question, "Are American students really moving to the left?" "But the NSA is in real trouble," the letter claimed, and mentioned that YAF had launched a nationwide campaign to drive NSA off of the campuses, creating a report on the NSA and urging schools to withdraw from "the far left-wing" organization.[84] Saying "Young Americans for Freedom is engaged in a critical battle with the left-wing professors in our nation's colleges and universities for the minds of our youth," another solicitation appeal emphasized the necessity of organizing young conservatives to resist the influence of "the left-wingers."[85] Even though YAF attempted to remain a nonpartisan organization without commitment to the Republican Party, partisan rhetoric characterized its activities and direct mail politics that emphasized ideological battles between liberalism and conservatism in American politics.

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Imported from the advertising industry on Madison Avenue, direct mail was increasingly colored by partisanship in American politics throughout the 1950s. New York political consultants who were not affiliated with political parties, such as Harold Oram, Marvin Liebman, and Richard Viguerie, demonstrated how direct mail politics developed in the hands of both liberals and conservatives in the postwar years. Fundraisers initially employed the medium for bipartisan drives or purposes that leftists and rightists could share. Yet coupled with the resurgence of the conservative movement, ideological struggles came to characterize direct mail politics by the time Viguerie started his solicitation activities in New York in the early 1960s. However, nothing revealed as clearly the ideological conflicts between liberals and conservatives during the sixties as the Goldwater movement in the presidential election of 1964.